

SUBSCRIPTION

Kuwait Times



THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2016

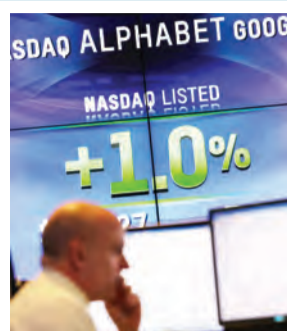
RABI ALTHANI 24, 1437 AH

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No Zika virus cases detected in Kuwait: Health Ministry



Alphabet passes Apple as biggest company



Egypt actress Youstra aims to raise Mideast AIDS awareness



McIlroy inspired by 'unreal' Djokovic



150 FILLS
NO: 16775
40 PAGES

PACI TO INCREASE CIVIL ID FEES TO KD 5 FROM APRIL 1

SILK CITY TO BE FINANCED THROUGH BOT, PPP



Min 07°
Max 21°
High Tide 07:38 & 18:33
Low Tide 01:16 & 12:22

WHITE HOUSE RACE WIDE OPEN CRUZ BESTS TRUMP, RUBIO • CLINTON EDGES SANDERS

DES MOINES, Iowa: The US presidential race looked suddenly wide open yesterday after frontrunners Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton suffered chastening evenings in Iowa, the first step on the long road to the White House. It was a particularly humbling experience for Trump, who cut a forlorn figure after Republican archrival Ted Cruz streaked to victory in the Iowa caucuses, staking his claim as the new standard bearer for the conservative camp going on to New Hampshire.

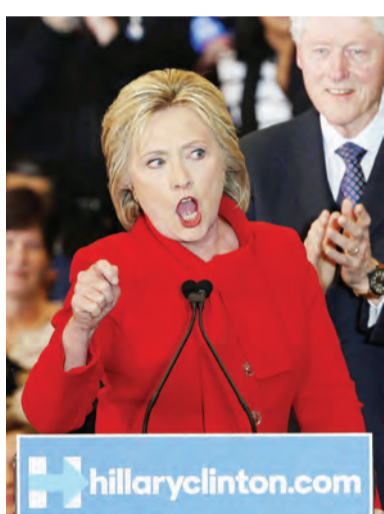
And if she was in any doubt before Iowa, former secretary of state Clinton now knows that she has a real fight on her hands in the shape of Bernie Sanders, after she saw off the self-proclaimed Democratic Socialist by the thinnest of margins. The months-long presidential contest now kicks into high gear, with Democratic and Republican debates this week building up to next Tuesday's New Hampshire primaries.

Trump, the billionaire real-estate mogul and reality television star



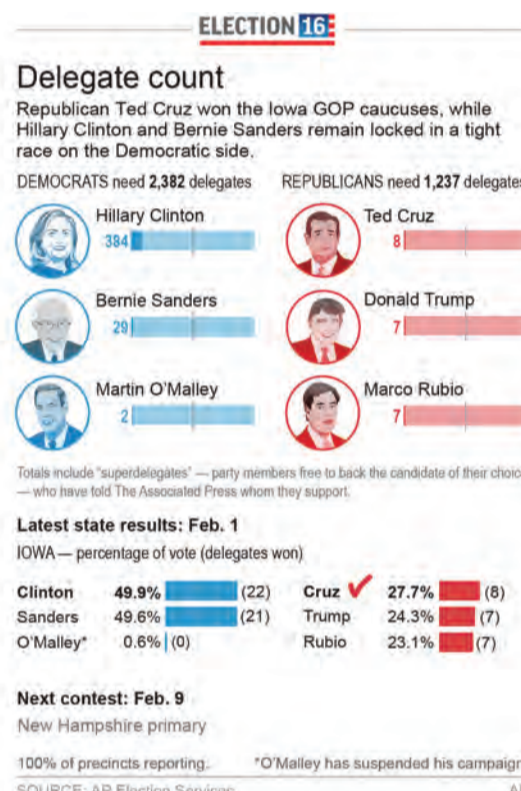
DES MOINES, Iowa: (Left) Republican presidential candidate Sen Ted Cruz speaks during a caucus night rally at the Iowa State Fairgrounds on Monday. (Right) Democratic presidential candidate and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaks to supporters during her caucus night event at the Olmsted Center at Drake University on Monday. — AP/AFP

whose populist campaign turned conventional politics - and wisdom - on its head, also now faces a second genuine threat: From Marco Rubio,



who chalked up more than 23 percent to Trump's 24 percent in the Iowa caucuses.

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By A Saleh and B Izzak

KUWAIT: Director of The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) Musaed Mahmoud Al-Asoussi said that PACI will increase the charges collected for issuing civil ID cards from KD 2 to KD 5 and the charges for issuing a replacement from KD 10 to KD 20 from April. Asoussi explained that the fee increases had been recommended by the Audit Bureau because the actual cost of issuing ID cards exceeds KD 4.5, while the current fee is only KD 2.

Asoussi said PACI had accordingly finished adjusting its systems and that the recommendation had been reviewed by the fatwa and legislation department and PACI's board of directors before Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammed Al-Abdullah decided putting the new fees into effect from April 1.

Asoussi added that PACI has around 136,000 cards ready for collection and urged citizens and expats to hurry up and collect them because the new fee would be applied even if the card had been issued before April 1 but collected after this date. He said PACI would soon receive a new printer to meet growing demand. "PACI issues around 9,000 ID cards and distributes 8,000-10,000 cards daily," he underlined.

Meanwhile, head of the National Assembly priorities committee MP Youssef Al-Zalzalah said yesterday that the mega Silk City project will be funded through several means of finance including the Build-Operate-Transfer and Public Private Partnership schemes. The lawmaker said the project is very huge, which involves building a new city in Subbiya besides other facilities. The project is scheduled to be debated by the Assembly on Feb 9 along with government proposals to lift or cut subsidies.

The government is expected to brief the Assembly with a comprehensive plan to cut spending and introduce economic reforms after the finance ministry announced the 2016/2017 budget with a record budget of over KD 11.5 billion.

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GOLAN: Ultraorthodox Jewish youths (left) argue with Arab boys at the Israeli Mount Hermon ski resort on the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights on Jan 21, 2016. — AFP

SKIING IN GOLAN, ON EDGE OF SYRIA'S WAR

MOUNT HERMON: The snowy ridge of Mount Hermon separates two worlds. In one, Syria's war rages. In the other, Israeli tourists slalom down ski slopes or drink mulled wine to the sound of techno music. On a clear day Damascus is visible from the top of the ski lift 2,200 m above sea level in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights where tourists reapply their sunscreen. The Syrian capital is only 40 km away but there is no access to it as Israel and Syria are still officially at war.

Israel seized most of the Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War and later annexed the territory in a move never recognized by the international community. For Israelis, the Hermon range, straddling Lebanon and the Syrian and Israeli-held sectors of the Golan, is a highly strategic area under close surveillance. But every year when the snowflakes fall, Mount Hermon becomes a ski resort unlike perhaps any other in the world. Skiers thinking of venturing off-piste are discouraged by the large signs warning of landmines, while in the distance antennas mark vast Israeli military bases. Soldiers are everywhere. Chair lifts are

close to military outposts where soldiers scan the horizon with binoculars. "If Syrians want to infiltrate here then they should be very good skiers," jokes Nabir Abu Saleh, head of the ski patrol station, pointing to the steep slope forming a natural buffer adjacent to the Syrian side. "And if it is summer, they would have to be motocross champions."

The Israeli army is less fearful of infiltration than of stray shells fired by the Syrian military or rebels. "We have already had to evacuate the site on several occasions. We're very well organized," Liron Mills, the director of the site, told AFP. "We do not feel the war here. It is protected. There is the army, the police and we are in complete coordination with them," says Mills, who is also a ski instructor with reservists for the Israeli army.

In his spare time, he introduces young conscripts deployed to the area to ski basics. Despite their white camouflage dress, soldiers are easily identified on the slopes, rifles strapped around their necks as they carefully practice manoeuvres amid more skilled skiers.

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ISRAEL RAZES EU-FUNDED BUILDINGS

TATA RENAMES 'ZICA' CAR AS VIRUS SPREADS

NEW DELHI: India's biggest carmaker Tata Motors said yesterday it would rename its new Zica hatchback as global alarm grows over an outbreak of the identical-sounding Zika virus. Tata Motors has in recent weeks been heavily promoting the small Zica - whose name stands for "zippy car" - with a marketing campaign starring Barcelona footballer Lionel Messi. But its launch comes at an unfortunate time, with the mosquito-borne Zika virus spreading rapidly through Latin America, where it has been blamed for a surge in brain-damaged babies.

"Empathizing with the hardships being caused by the recent 'Zika' virus outbreak across many countries, Tata Motors, as a socially responsible company, has decided to rebrand the car," the company said in a statement. The car, aimed at young people, is due to go on public show at India's Auto Expo 2016 which opens in New Delhi this week. "While it carries the 'Zica' label for the duration of the event, the new name will be announced after a few weeks, ensuring all necessary consumer/branding and regulatory aspects are addressed, and the launch will take place thereafter," the statement said.

The World Health Organization on Monday declared an international health emergency over the Zika virus, which has spread to more than 20 countries and territories. It said the disease was "strongly suspected" to be linked to a large number of babies

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JERUSALEM: Israeli forces demolished 24 Palestinian buildings in a disputed military zone in the West Bank yesterday, including 10 funded by the European Union, leaving families homeless, authorities and residents said. Soldiers destroyed the structures in and around the village of Khirbet Jenbah south of Hebron, the Association of Civil Rights in Israel said. Israeli officials said the buildings were illegal. An EU spokesman denounced the demolitions

and said that 10 of the buildings had been constructed with funds from ECHO, the European Commission's humanitarian arm.

The soldiers arrived at around 7:00 am (0500 GMT) and carried out the demolitions, leaving 12 families temporarily homeless, said Nidal Younes, head of the local council of a neighboring village. "In total it is around 80 people," he told AFP.

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MUSAFIR JENBAH: Palestinian children search for toys in the remains of their home after it was demolished by Israeli bulldozers in this area which includes several villages, south of the West Bank city of Hebron yesterday. — AFP

NEW OIL DEAL CAN DRAW LESSONS FROM '98

LONDON: After a year of secret diplomacy and hushed-up private talks around the world, OPEC's mighty Saudi Arabia and rival Venezuela were persuaded to cut a deal by non-OPEC Mexico which overcame mutual acrimony and led to a much-needed rise in oil prices. It was 1998, trust had long broken down within the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and it took outside mediation as a last resort to stop the squabbling to clinch deals at secret meetings in Riyadh, Madrid and Miami.

Now, with oil prices touching their lowest level since 2003, OPEC officials and deal brokers are looking back nearly two decades and asking whether a behind-the-scenes deal to curb oil output between OPEC and non-OPEC Russia could be struck. Some see OPEC rifts as insur-

mountable and Russia as a wild card that cannot be trusted, but others say economic necessity to boost oil revenue could overcome acrimony and distrust and lead to a global deal to cut supply and mop up the glut.

There are plenty of reasons, however, to dispel optimism. Unlike in 1998, the challenge goes beyond rebuilding bridges between just two OPEC producers. It pitches the interests of Saudi Arabia alongside fast-rising OPEC producers Iran and Iraq as well as non-OPEC Russia, the world's largest oil nation. All four are involved in conflict in the Middle East but also desperately need money to keep their oil-dependent economies afloat and meet social costs.

"The 1997/98 deal brokered between Saudi, Venezuela and Mexico took over a year to negotiate and it was touch and go as to whether it

would get done or not," said veteran OPEC-watcher Yasser Elguindi of Medley Global Advisors. But low prices are making producers desperate. Prices sank to below \$30 per barrel this year from as high as \$115 a barrel just 18 months ago due to one of the worst oil gluts in history.

This perfect storm was due to a boom in the extraction of oil from shale rock in the United States and a decision by the Saudi ruling elite to ramp up crude supply to regain market share from higher-cost producers. Saudi Arabia has pushed its output to record highs over the past year above 10 million barrels per day, almost equal to Russia. Iraq also raised production sharply above four million bpd over the past months as foreign investment in oil fields paid dividends.

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Moroccan Ministers of Interior as well as Economy and Finance, Mohamed Hassad and Mohamed Boussaid respectively. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Abdulaziz Al-Fayez.

CROWN PRINCE MEETS MOROCCAN MINISTERS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Moroccan Ministers of Interior as well as Economy and Finance, Mohamed Hassad and Mohamed Boussaid respectively. The two ministers handed a letter from King of Morocco Mohammed VI to His

Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, which discusses bilateral relations and means to boost them.

The meeting was attended by Advisor at His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Dhari Fahad Al-Othman, Deputy Minister of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, and head of Protocols at the Diwan

of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf received Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Abdulaziz Al-Fayez, who handed a letter from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to His Highness the Amir Sheikh

Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Earlier, His Highness received Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaleid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah tours a gallery organized as part of the Kuwait festival for formative creativity. — Amiri Diwan photos



KUWAIT CELEBRATES FORMATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL

KUWAIT: Kuwait Society for Formative Arts celebrated the Kuwait festival for formative creativity late Monday, as part of the 'Kuwait Capital of Islamic Culture 2016' festival. In his opening speech at the ceremony, the society's chairman Abdulrasool Salman said that 107

artists participated in the tenth round of the festival with 62 artists. The winners were competing for three prizes including His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah prize, Sheikhha Salwa Al-Sabah and Sheikhha Futooh Al-Sabah prizes, he added.

The ceremony, held under the patronage of the Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs and honorary chairman of the society Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, was attended by Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his wife, as well as senior

officials from the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) and a number of artists. Later, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad received yesterday the formative society's Chairman and members, wishing them the best in their future endeavors. — KUNA

ZAIN EXECUTIVES RECEIVE ITU SECRETARY-GENERAL HOULIN ZHAO

KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading mobile technology innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and North Africa announces that its CEO, Scott Gegenheimer, and the CEO of Zain Kuwait, Eaman Al-Roudhan, have met with the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Houlin Zhao at Zain Group headquarters in Kuwait.

and the private sector, is the main global forum through which all parties work together to achieve consensus on a wide range of issues that affect the direction of the ICT sector.

The two Zain executives' discussion with Zhao centered on the information revolution currently occurring within the ICT industry, and an exchange of views on the vision and work of the ITU, which

improve the regulation of the ICT industry, which is quite an undertaking given the rapid evolution of the sector.

Efforts and priorities

On his part, Zain Group CEO, Scott Gegenheimer commented, "The ITU's efforts and priorities correspond to initiatives launched by Zain Group across the Middle East and Africa, which seek to

well as across the globe, and it was highly beneficial to receive many of his insights." In her conversations with Zhao, Zain Kuwait CEO, Eaman Al-Roudhan noted the challenges and constraints affecting the mobile communications industry in the region. The discussions revealed the extent to which the ITU needs to support the region with respect to the allocation of spectrum for additional growth in the mobile communications, given the explosion of mobile data services regionally. Roudhan also highlighted the positive impact the ITU continues to have on the ICT sector globally, where its efforts in interacting with national regulators has helped to lay the foundation for the improvement in access to ICT, and the rapid uptake of broadband services, which in turn is narrowing the digital divide.

Take the lead

For his part, Zhao expressed his pleasure in visiting with Zain, stating, "I had the honor to meet the leaders of Zain, and admire that it is a company which has been able to take the lead in the ICT industry in the Middle East and Africa, and has established itself as a model of how to successfully run a mobile operator in regions of the world that face unique challenges."

Zhao continued, "We are following the stunning development of the ICT industry in the Middle East, and the positive impact it is having on the lives of people and economies of nations. We note that Zain is an integral part of driving this success, which we hope shall continue long into the future."



Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Houlin Zhao meets Zain officials.

Zhao was on a visit to Kuwait, attending the second annual gathering of the 'Global Forum on Emergency Communications (GET-2016) Saving Lives' and made time to visit and engage in discussions about developments in the telecom sector internationally with the Zain executives.

The ITU was founded on the principle of international cooperation between governments (member states)

operates as a global mediator to facilitate the developments of communications technologies around the world. The ITU's mandate also extends to recommending the best use and distribution of global resources based on the development of a seamless global communications system.

Both Gegenheimer and Roudhan praised the ITU's initiatives and activities, given the organization's drive to

utilize technology to best effect and lower the total cost of ownership of communications services so that all the people in the regions we serve - wherever they live and whatever their means are connected." Gegenheimer continued, "We were delighted to host the Secretary-General of the ITU at our headquarters, where we exchanged ideas on many of the issues facing the ICT industry today, both in the region as

In my view

PAKISTAN-KUWAIT RELATIONS STRONG



By Javid Ahmad

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The Pakistan-Kuwait relations are brotherly, based on shared history, traditions and common culture. Both countries have always enjoyed their bilateral, friendly, trade and cultural ties with enormous respect of their commonality and cultural traditions. The bilateral relations exist both at the official-government level and at the peoples' level. Time has proved that both countries have stood for each other in their most difficult and testing times. Pakistan was among the first countries that sent troops to Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion in 1990. Nine Pakistani soldiers were martyred during mine clearing operations.

Kuwait also responded well to its friendly country and has been the first among countries that have ever extended generous help to Pakistan in difficult times. The Kuwait government donated generously to Pakistan during the deadly earthquake in 2005 and at the time of devastating floods in 2010. Kuwait has contributed almost \$25 million to flood-affected people in Pakistan.

Almost 150,000 Pakistani expatriates in all fields are currently working and living in Kuwait. They remit around \$750 million a year to Pakistan. This is one of the important foreign exchange sources for balancing the external accounts of the country. In addition to this, there are regular visits of Pakistani naval ships to Kuwait. Pakistan has also trained a number of naval officers of Kuwait in Pakistan. Both countries are part of a joint ministerial commission (JMC) - an active body extending its role towards further strengthening and extending their bilateral relations in all fields.

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah visited Pakistan in 2006. HH the Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah visited Pakistan in 2013 and the Speaker of the National Assembly of Kuwait Marzouq Al-Ghanem and the Air Force Chief also visited in 2015.

Although bilateral Pakistan-Kuwait political relations historically remain very strong, however their bilateral economic cooperation has not progressed much. There are several reasons which characterize the certain geopolitical, strategic and security obstacles. Bilateral trade volume between both countries almost touches \$2.5 billion a year, though it is far from satisfactory relative to their size and composition of their domestic production and external trade volumes. Pakistan is largely importing crude oil from Kuwait and Kuwait mainly imports, fruits, vegetables, rice and cotton products.

Successive Pakistani ambassadors have tried their best to further strengthen bilateral relations. The current Pakistani ambassador to Kuwait Mohammed Salam Khan, contrary to his predecessors, plays a very active and commendable role towards enhancing and strengthening bilateral trade and cultural relations. He has taken a number of initiatives during his short stay as ambassador of Pakistan in Kuwait. With his efforts, last year's Expo Karachi and investment conference saw the participation of a large number of Kuwaiti businessmen and other trading groups.

He has taken a number of initiatives such as organizing a mango festival/exhibition. A large number of trade groups from Pakistan such as rice exporters, and chambers of commerce of Karachi and Sialkot, have also been invited to exchange their business interests with Kuwaiti counterparts. A wonderful gathering on the anniversary of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the founder of the country, was organized at the Kuwait Teachers' Association. On the anniversary of the Peshwar tragedy, a dignified meeting was organized at the embassy premises.

The outgoing ambassador is largely supportive of cultural and other activities and plays an active role to represent his community. Recently, the embassy and the Kuwait National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters organized a wonderful musical event in which a very popular singer from Pakistan, Farha Pervaiz, performed with her beautiful voice and mesmerizing performance, which captivated her audience.

Hardly any ambassador in the recent past in my memory of 35 years in Kuwait has played such an active role towards strengthening these cultural and trade ties in a very short span of time. The ambassadors are usually posted for fixed tenures of three or four years, extendable at the discretion of appointing authorities based on their performance. It is heartening for the Pakistani community to know that the ambassador is reaching his superannuation, which means his retirement.



KUWAIT: Director General of Saud Al-Nasser Diplomatic Institute Ambassador Abdulaziz Al-Sharekh speaks at a seminar hosted recently by the institute. — KUNA

NATIONAL DIWAN REMINDER OF HUMAN RIGHTS' SIGNIFICANCE: OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: Forming the National Diwan for Human Rights should serve as a reminder to the government of the significance of human rights, Director General of Saud Al-Nasser Diplomatic Institute Ambassador Abdulaziz Al-Sharekh said yesterday. He made these remarks at a seminar entitled, "The Role of National Organizations in Human Rights," held at the Saud Al-Nasser Diplomatic Institute.

Kuwait has won praise from international organizations for its commitment to human rights, Sharekh said, which indicates that the country has made rapid strides in protecting human rights. This seminar should help shed light on the importance of this issue and just how pivotal it is to a country's international relations, Sharekh noted.

Moreover, speaking on behalf of Assistant Foreign Minister on Coordination Affairs Nasser Al-Subaih, Deputy Director on Coordination Affairs Hassan Zaman said that the seminar comes as part of the Foreign

Ministry's efforts of bolstering Kuwaiti contributions to humanitarian causes. Kuwait has made eight pledges on human rights, including the formation of the National Diwan for Human Rights, which Zaman called a national tool to safeguard human rights.

Regional Representative of the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Arab region Dr Abdulsalam Sayed Ahmad said that the UN attaches great precedence to the issue of human rights, calling it a pillar of the UN. Ahmad also called on nations to set up special councils tasked with protecting human rights on a national level.

Meanwhile, head of the newly established office of human rights Talal Al-Mutairi said that Kuwait's commitment to human rights is actually ingrained in the country's constitution. Kuwait, in 2010, had vowed to initiate a council for human rights, Mutairi noted, saying that the decision reflected the country's obligation to protect human rights. — KUNA

KUWAIT RANKED 74TH IN ECONOMIC FREEDOM INDEX

STATE LISTED AS 'MODERATELY FREE' AHEAD OF FRANCE

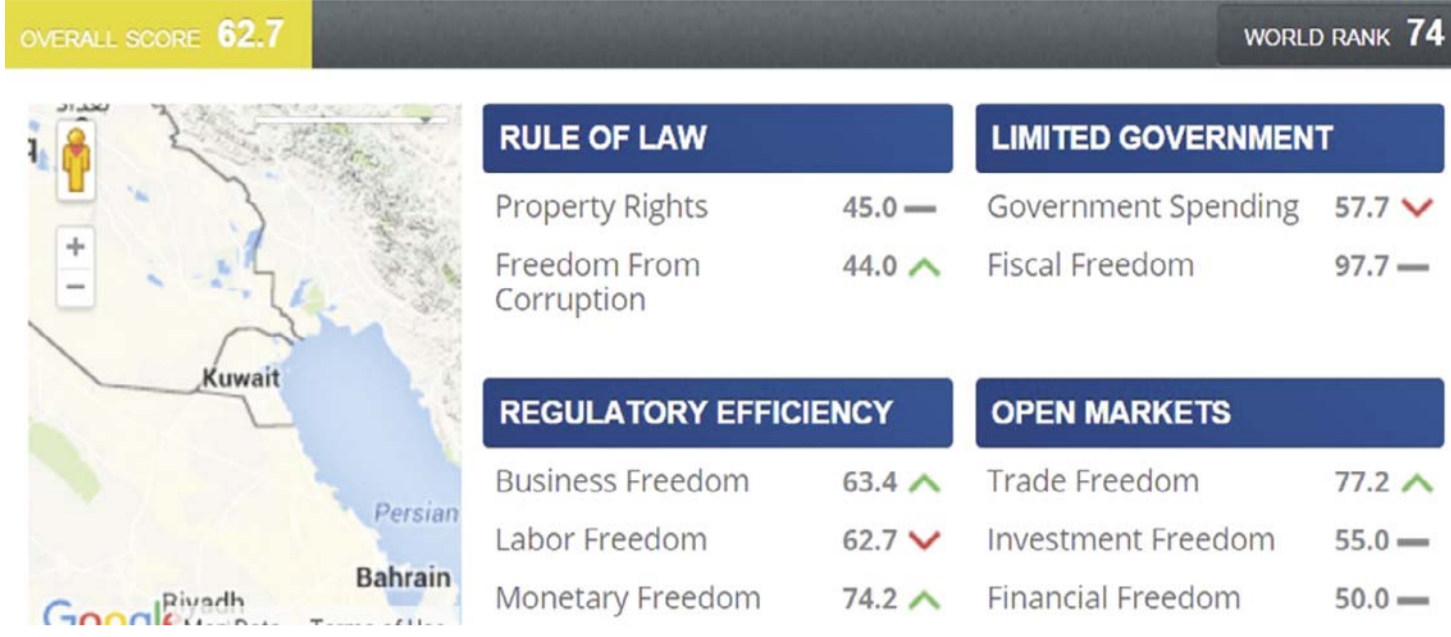
KUWAIT: Kuwait retained its 74th rank globally in the latest economic freedom index released by the Heritage Foundation. Kuwait earned a score of 62.7 out of 100, putting it as a 'moderately free' country ahead of France, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, and with states like Poland, Belgium, and Spain in the same category. Kuwait made only a 0.2 improvement compared to last year's index.

The 2016 Index of Economic Freedom indicates that despite efforts to modernize and diversify Kuwait's economy, oil production remains dominant. The private sector is largely dependent on government spending and expatriate labor, and the labor market is highly segmented. The public sector employs about 80 percent of the labor force; expatriates are employed mostly in the small private sector.

Regarding rule of law, the report indicates that inadequate transparency in government spending and operations is exacerbated by the weak rule of law. "The legal system is not well developed, and foreigners face difficulties enforcing contract provisions in local courts. Only citizens of Gulf Cooperation Council countries may own land," the report reads. Yet, it indicates that Kuwait saw improvement in freedom from corruption.

Income tax

The report further points out the fact that Kuwait does not tax individual income. "In practice, foreign-owned firms and joint ventures are the only businesses subject to the corporate income tax, which is a flat 15 percent," the report reads. "Duties on international trade and transactions account for most other tax revenue." And while the report indicates that government spending has dropped, it says that the spending



Source: The Heritage Foundation's 2016 Index of Economic Freedom.

equals 37.5 percent of GDP, and public debt is less than 10 percent of GDP. "Oil revenues allow tax rates to be kept low while maintaining government revenue," the report reads.

With regards to regulatory efficiency, the report indicates that progress in regulatory reform has been gradual and uneven. "Bureaucratic hurdles add to the cost of completing licensing requirements," the report says. "Labor regulations lack flexibility, and the labor market remains highly segmented. Reflecting the reality of long-term

lower oil prices, the government has initiated a five-year (2015-2019) development plan to phase out Kuwait's extensive system of subsidies, currently 9 percent of GDP." In general, the index indicates that labor freedom in Kuwait has regressed, while business and monetary freedom has improved.

Trade freedom

As for trade, the report says that Kuwait's average tariff rate is 3.9 percent. "Government pro-

cesses favor domestic firms," the report says. "The government screens new foreign investment and restricts investment in some sectors of the economy. The financial sector continues to evolve. The number of non-performing loans is declining, and the banking sector remains well capitalized. The Capital Markets Authority took on a supervisory role in September 2011." According to the index, trade freedom in Kuwait improved last year, while no similar improvements were seen in investment and financial freedom.

Economic Freedom Snapshot

- * 2016 Economic Freedom Score: 62.7 (up 0.2 point)
- * Economic Freedom Status: Moderately Free
- * Global Ranking: 74th
- * Regional Ranking: 7th in the Middle East/North Africa Region
- * Notable Successes: Trade Freedom and Monetary Freedom
- * Concerns: Rule of Law, Business Freedom, and Labor Freedom
- * Overall Score Change Since 2012: +0.2

Quick Facts

- * Population: 4.0 million
- * GDP (PPP): \$284.0 billion
- * 1.3 percent growth
- * 3.3 percent 5-year compound annual growth
- * \$71,020 per capita
- * Unemployment: 3.0 percent
- * Inflation (CPI): 2.9 percent
- * FDI Inflow: \$485.8 million

The index ranks Kuwait in sixth place among Arab countries, trailing Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Jordan and Oman respectively. It argues that political tensions remain high, and economic policymaking has been constrained by political disputes. Kuwait controls roughly 6 percent of the world's oil reserves. Oil and gas account for nearly 60 percent of GDP and 95 percent of export revenues.



A truck parked in a planted area in violation of the environment protection law.

NINE VISAS RENEWED ON FAKE COMPANY'S FILE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Residency detectives uncovered forgeries in official documents that belong to a contracting company owned by female citizen. When the commercial license of the company was being checked, doubts came up with regards to the authority of the contract and rent receipts, so the companies' department was contacted to make sure about the license and copies were requested of the original renewal transactions. Meanwhile, the building owner was summoned, and when he saw the contract and receipt, he said they are forged and have nothing to do with his company. When the file of the company was checked, it was found that residencies of nine workers were renewed after vacating the premises, and all were renewed according to the forged license, and the owner of this 'fake' company was the one who submitted the transactions. The case was sent to Khaitan police station and charges of forgery were made.

Body found

A security source said the body of an unidentified person was sent to the coroner for identification and determining the cause of death, as marks on the body suggest foul play. The body was found between trees in Mahboula.

Scores arrested in Ahmadi campaign

Ahmedi Security Directorate launched a campaign targeting violations of law and order. The campaign covered the areas of Hadiya, Abu Halifa, Mahboula, Mina

Abdullah and Fintas, resulting in the arrest of 26 violators, while 13 traffic tickets were issued. Six persons were arrested at a suspected liquor factory, while a citizen and an Asian were detained on suspicion of having drugs and drug paraphernalia on them. Seven persons were detained on debt cases, one wanted to serve five years in jail, while five persons were arrested as their residencies had expired.

Environment protection law

The Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Information Department said environment police officers spotted a vehicle that belongs to an agricultural company parked on greenery behind Kuwait International Airport, which is a violation of the environment law, as it damaged the plants. The violation was sent to the public prosecution, based on articles 33 and 171 of the environment protection law no. 42/2014. Separately, environment police officers ticketed a truck for the negligence of its driver of environment safety conditions while hauling some goods, which dropped on top of Niqwa Bridge on 7th Ring Road, snarling traffic. The scattered goods were removed with help from the municipality, while the driver and truck were sent to concerned authorities.

Thief caught

Hawally detectives closed eight cases related to the theft of transformers with the arrest of a Pakistani man. The arrest was made in Zahra and he confessed to all eight crimes. He said that he wanted to send the batteries abroad.

JUWAIHEL FINED KD 20,000

By Meshal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: A court yesterday sentenced Mohammed Al-Juwaihel to a KD 20,000 compensation in case filed against him by former MP Musallam Al-Barrak. The two former lawmakers have a history of conflict. In March 2011, a court sentenced Juwaihel, a political activist and owner of the satellite channel Al-Sour, to a year in prison for slandering Barrak and another lawmaker; Sadoun Al-Otaibi during a 2009 live television broadcast. However, Juwaihel was released in April after the court suspended his sentence, contingent on good behavior, and fined him 200 dinars (\$720). Then in July 2012, a Twitter account in the name Mohammed Al-Juwaihel was used to insult Barrack's tribe. Juwaihel denied any connection to the account but the lawmaker's election tent was burnt down by thousands of Mutairi tribesmen in response to the remarks. It is not clear what specific case yesterday's verdict decided.

In other judicial news, a court yesterday annulled Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Subaih's decision on dissolving Ardhya Cooperative Society's board of directors. Meanwhile, a court

yesterday rejected a case filed by a citizen against the government accusing it of wasting its budget in traffic projects that, according to him, harmed both his family and house.

Domestic workers

According to a document leaked on social media networks, the Interior Ministry allegedly published a list of countries from which Kuwaiti families could get domestic laborers including Morocco. The document also showed official approval of bringing domestic laborers from African countries that do not have embassies in Kuwait, provided the laborer's passport is valid for at least three years.

Tents removed

Kuwait municipality yesterday announced removing three tents that had been pitched on public property without prior permission from the municipality that had been used as cafes at Sulaibiya industrial area.

In addition, Jahra municipality inspection teams also removed three abandoned vehicles and three truckloads of debris and used tires.

VAT CRUCIAL TO ECONOMIC STABILITY: ECONOMISTS

KUWAIT: Two Kuwaiti economists agreed that levying of a value added tax (VAT) is crucial to stability of the state's economic policies and offsetting the budget deficit under the current low prices of oil. VAT has a distinctive feature, that is the provision of a high cash yield to the state, Dr Nayf Al-Shemmeri, professor of economics at Kuwait University (KU), said in statements.

"This tax is linked to the value of consumption and is applicable to a large variety of goods and services; its ratio is set according to the difference between the cost of a product and the consumer price," he said.

"VAT is one of the most important indirect sources of income; it is levied in more than 150 countries. It distributes the burdens of tax payments among the various stages of production and selling before the end user of a product or service recipients," Dr Shemmeri pointed out.

VAT is an important economic and social leverage that influences both the state economic policies and individuals' behaviors since encourages the tendencies to saving, investment and rational consumption, besides promotion of exports and economic development, he explained. On the VAT disadvantages, he said they include adding burdens to consumers through raising the prices of goods and services.

Budget imbalance

Dr Shemmeri added that the objective of taxation and cutting of subsidies is to increase the sources of income and address the imbalances of the state budget, but what is more urgent is



to diversify the sources of the national income.

He called for better utilization of the economic resources of the country, encouraging the local and foreign investment particularly in industry, and improving the work environment. Furthermore, he warned that unless the government adopts urgent measures to diversify the sources of state revenues, the citizens will bear the brunt of the taxation and subsidy cuts.

Dr Wa'el Al-Shuwa'i, KU professor of economics, affirmed meanwhile that VAT generates a high cash yield and is applicable to a large variety of goods and services. "VAT stimulates economic growth and represents one of the main economic reforms," he said.

"This tax plays a great role in increasing the state revenues, promotion of saving practices and economical usages of resources, and cor-

recting the lifestyles relating to consumption," Dr Shuwa'i noted. In the meantime, he cautioned that the VAT will lead to higher prices of goods and higher inflation rates in the short run, thus negatively affecting the low-income people.

Tax relief

Dr Shuwa'i suggested alleviated such negative impacts through tax relief for staples and provision of selective subsidies or aid to the low-income people. He also suggested addressing the budget deficit through a comprehensive restructuring of the national economy, and reducing reliance on the oil revenues to ensure sustainable financial stability.

"The industrial sector has to account for a greater percentage in the GDP through directing more investment in the energy-intensive industries, such as the petrochemical industry," he stressed. He highlighted the need of increasing the competitive edge of the private sector and creating new economic sectors with a high value added that could, in turn, create more jobs and contribute to economic development.

"The current low prices of oil brought to the fore an essential imbalance in the economy policy which is the overreliance on oil revenues as virtually the sole source of income," Dr Shuwa'i noted, urging for comprehensive economic restructuring. The state budget for FY 2015-2016 aims to bridge the gap of KD eight billion in budget deficit through a range of measures including the VAT to be levied in Kuwait and other GCC states. —KUNA

EXPERTS: OIL SECTOR'S BROAD KNOWLEDGE COULD BE IMPARTED TO STATE INSTITUTIONS

OFFICIAL CALLS FOR CHANGING CRUDE OIL PROPERTIES

KUWAIT: The consensus amongst oil experts yesterday was that Kuwait's oil sector possesses broad knowledge and an unlimited potential to impart that knowledge to government institutions, for the betterment of the country's economy.

The Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) has acquired vast experience, especially in the realm of human resources, KPC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Nizar Al-Adsani said during the fifth session of a national conference on modern state jobs, from an economic perspective. Sharing of knowledge between international oil companies and local ones is taking place, Adsani added.

Kuwait was amongst the first countries to implement projects of renewable energy, particularly solar, but the environment and cost of these projects dictate their success or lack thereof, Adsani noted. Kuwait oil companies are conducting numerous studies aimed at reducing the cost of renewable energy projects, through employing the latest means of technology in that field, the KPC CEO said.

Moreover, Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (SCPD) Dr Khaled Al-Mahdi said that a robust economy is crucial to diversifying revenue sources, stressing the need to rely on experience and knowledge amongst government sectors.

EQUATE President and CEO Mohammed Hussein said that Kuwait should seize the opportunity to diversify its economy, suggesting that the country should focus on the petrochemical field given the "competitiveness of this sector." New inventions in the petrochemical sector could prove beneficial, Hussein noted, saying that EQUATE boasts a team of specialists that stands ready to examine any ideas related to projects in this field.

Oil priorities

Meanwhile, a Kuwaiti official said yesterday that it is a necessary factor to change the properties of crude oil and to seek to find additional sources of income. The government's austerity policy has not affected so far the petroleum sector, especially the Petroleum Research Center (PRC), Meena Marafi, executive director of Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), told reporters on the sidelines of the 17th Kuwait-Japan Joint Symposium

Advancement in Petroleum Industries.

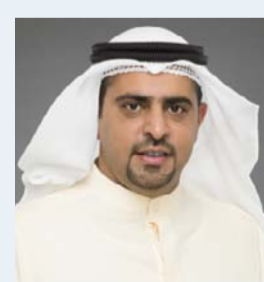
She referred to the necessity of making Kuwait petroleum products in accordance with international standards, especially diesel whose large amounts are exported.

She noted that the refining sector is facing some challenges in terms of producing clean fuel for electricity and water. Marafi called for using the best means of technology to address these challenges at forums during consultations with presti-

gious world companies so as to share knowledge. Suad Al-Radhwan, Manager of Research Technology at Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC), told reporters meanwhile that the event discussed research topics for environmentally-friendly products attracted by the European markets. Producing competitive products is a major challenge facing the oil sector, she said. "We are currently working on developing catalysts and how to use them in heavy oil," she said. —KUNA

LAWMAKER DEMANDS LISTS OF EXPATS BETWEEN 2003-2015

KUWAIT: MP Rakan Al-Nisf asked Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah to provide him with lists of expatriates who were granted residency visas in the period from 2003 to 2015. The lawmaker also asked for detailed statistics about each of those years.



MP Rakan Al-Nisf

'Original Kuwaitis'

Following his argument with his colleague Mohammed Tana Al-Enezi, MP Jamal Al-Omar repeated his accusations of Enezi of not being an 'original Kuwaiti'; that he had come from the "north" and does not deserve to represent the people in parliament. His newest remarks came in the form of questions he sent to the interior minister, asking him for lists of Kuwaitis who had been given Article 1 Kuwaiti citizenship although they had not been in Kuwait before 1920 - a prerequisite for the highest classification of the citizenship.

Postal privatization

Minister of Communications and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Essa Al-Kandari said that a law on privatizing postal services would be finalized within a few days and submitted to the Cabinet pending referral to the parliament for voting. "Postal services will accordingly be commercially administered to provide better revenues

to state treasury and better services for the public," he explained.

Fishermen's demands

Head of Kuwait Fishermen Union Thamer Al-Sowayan urged the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources to look into fishermen's demands, especially since the new fishing season is about to start while those demands had not been met yet. Sowayan expressed a wish to meet His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah to explain the problems fishermen face and that fish prices would be positively affected if these problems were resolved. He added that unlike other sectors in Kuwait, fishermen received the least amounts of subsidies.

Death sentence

The criminal court yesterday sentenced two suspects to death over charges of drug smuggling and trafficking.

Weapons seized

Weapons detectives seized a number of heavy weaponry and military attire from a Farwaniya stable, said security sources, noting that the weapons included six AK-47s, an RPG, a machinegun, nine shotguns, a large quantity of ammunition and military clothing. The sources added that the stable owner is at large.



KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait's General Manager and CEO, Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdullah Al Thani is seen with top state officials and participants at the Global Forum on Emergency Telecommunications.

OOREDOO CONCLUDES SPONSORSHIP OF GLOBAL FORUM ON EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATIONS

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of the international Ooredoo Group, has announced the successful conclusion of its sponsorship of the Global Forum on Emergency Telecommunications, hosted by Kuwait's Ministry of Communications and the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority. The Forum was held between 25 and 28 January, 2016, under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

GET 2016, organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), is considered one of the most globally recognized events that discuss the role of the telecom industry in disaster management, especially with the current rapid changes in the telecommunications sector and the major developments in the information technology arena. More than 500 participants from around 90 countries attended the forum, including telecom ministers, director-generals of regulatory authorities, CEOs, and more.

Commenting on Ooredoo's participation, Mijbil Alayoub, Director of Corporate Communications at Ooredoo Kuwait said: "We are honored to be part of the GET Forum and very proud that Kuwait was the country of choice to host the 2nd round of this event. We strongly believe in the significant role the telecommunications sector plays in disaster management and we are committed to making the necessary contributions to ensure the safety of Kuwait and its people."



Mijbil Alayoub, Director of Corporate Communications at Ooredoo Kuwait (left) and other Ooredoo employees are seen in attendance.



Ooredoo Kuwait's General Manager and CEO, Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdullah Al Thani stands between Minister of Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah and Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Houlin Zhao.



Ooredoo Kuwait's General Manager and CEO, Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdullah Al Thani and other officials attend the event.

CONSTRUCTION LAW AMENDMENT ADDRESSES SHORTCOMINGS: MINISTER

KUWAIT: Minister of Communications and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Essa Al-Kandari said a draft law approved by the government on Monday aimed at addressing legislative shortcomings related to construction, among others issues. The government approved a draft law that amended 14 out of 42 articles of Law No. 5/2005, pertinent to regulation of work of Kuwait Municipality and Municipal Council, and punishing violators of construction in fines and jail terms.



Minister Essa Al-Kandari

by them would be punished for up to two years if they erected a building without obtaining a permission from the Municipality. He said the municipality would force them to remove the violating parts at their own expense and fine them KD 1,000 (\$3,300), as well as cutting power supply from the construction site.

Other amendments aim at facilitating work flow within the municipality, explained Kandari, in addition to doubling the number of elected Municipal Council members to 20, in addition to 11, from current six, appointed by the government. He said the amendments took place in coordination with the Public Facilities Committee at the parliament, and would be addressing many negative aspects. — KUNA



AGRICULTURE AUTHORITY TO PLANT 35 MILLION SEEDLINGS

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) yesterday announced the adoption of a plan aimed at planting 35 million seedlings for the rehabilitation of Kuwait's wild environment to produce seedlings from fungal plants inside a number of reserves on an area of 1,600 square kilometers. The (PAAAFR) is currently working on implementing a number of pergolas in Al-Abdali area

with an area extended over 40,000 square meters to acclimatize the fungal plants, said Ghanim Al-Sanad, PAAAFR Director of Agricultural Guidance department. The authority is also working to build a field in Al-Abdali in order to produce seeds and reserves seedling production as well as creating an area in Al-Ardiya for cooled reserves to produce fungal plant seedlings, in addition to a

farm in Wafra for fungal seed production threatened by extinction, he said. The authority is seeking through the fungal plants center to document the wildlife in Kuwait, where Kuwait environment is rich in many wild plants that grow naturally without human intervention and are adapted to the environment. These plants preserve the bio-diversity that preserves the ecological balance. — KUN

SCIENCE CLUB CAPTURES RARE PHOTO OF JUPITER

KUWAIT: The Astronomy and Space Sciences Department at Kuwait Science Club (KSC) captured a rare photo of the planet Jupiter, an official said in a statement yesterday. The rare photo of the huge planet showed Jupiter's most famous feature, a giant spinning storm called the Great Red Spot, said Bader Al-Amirah, Head of the Astronomy and Space Sciences Department at Kuwait Science Club. Jupiter is a giant gas planet and its atmosphere is made up of mostly hydrogen and helium, just like the sun, Amirah said. He added that Jupiter is the fifth planet from the sun, is about 1,400 times larger in volume than the Earth, and its interior is made of rocks and metallic hydrogen. — KUNA



BIDAA ROUNDABOUT TO GET UPGRADE

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) will spend KD 14 million to upgrade the Al-Bida'a Roundabout in a bid to ease traffic flow. It is unclear when construction will commence or the schedule for completion but the project includes widening of the Balajat and Taawon roads on the seaside and a grade level exchange. The three lane Balajat and Taawon streets will be converted at the roundabout into a two-lane ground-level road and a two-lane flyover for both the north and southbound lanes to ease congestion. Al-Bida'a roundabout will continue to be open during the construction. Mushrif Trading and Contracting (MTCC), a Kuwait Stock Exchange-listed company, has won the contract, the second it has won in the last few months. The contractor had previously outbid nine other bidders to win a KD 83 million deal for a 40km road serving Sabah Al-Ahmad, Mina Abdulla, and Al-Wafra areas. The tender is one of several projects in the MPW's pipeline to upgrade and improve Kuwait's overburdened road network.



KUWAIT: This archive photo shows an artists' rendition of the planned renovation of the Bidaa Roundabout. — KUNA

NO ZIKA VIRUS CASES DETECTED IN KUWAIT: HEALTH MINISTRY

GOVT COMMITTED TO PROTECTION OF PATIENTS' RIGHTS: OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: No cases of the mosquito-borne Zika virus, which spread in Latin American countries, were registered in Kuwait, the Ministry of Health (MoH) said in a statement, reiterating its ability to detect related infections.

The MoH has been carrying nationwide surveillance of insects and there was no evidence that the Aedes aegypti mosquito, which carries the Zika virus, exists in Kuwait, Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Dr Majda Al-Qattan said in a statement. She said the MoH was in contact with the regional office of the World Health Organization (WHO) to know the latest developments about the virus and how to deal with it.

Qattan said the MoH instructed all hospitals and clinics to immediately contact preventative health department and laboratories to adopt necessary preventive measures in case they discovered signs of Zika virus on any traveler. She said the virus would not transmit among humans but through the mosquito, which could only happen if a person travels to countries with the insects.

Qattan said symptoms of Zika virus would be fever, skin rash and eye inflammation, which might extend from 2-7 days. She said the WHO did not yet issue any travel warning to

infected countries, however the MoH was advising against traveling to Zika-hit nations unless necessary. The WHO said earlier today that a rise in birth defects in Latin America was strongly suspected of being caused by Zika virus.

Patients' rights

In other news, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health Dr Khaled Al-Sahlawi confirmed his ministry's unshaken commitment to provision of healthcare starting from primary health at medical centers to preventive and treatment services at public hospitals.

"The medical centers and specialized clinics, which are fairly distributed countrywide, have seen remarkable improvement in the recent years," Sahlawi said Monday on the occasion of the Gulf Patients' Rights Day, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The declaration, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948, includes an article stipulating patient right to equitable medical treatment to ensure human dignity.

During their meeting in Kuwait in January, 2014, the health ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states designated February 1,

as Gulf Patients' Rights Day meant to raise awareness about these rights and the need to strengthen the relationship between patients and medical service providers.

Sahlawi said the Ministry has provided all public hospitals and medical centers with the latest equipment and drugs, and the most qualified medical personnel. "The Ministry works constantly to expand the occupancy of the health facilities and build new facilities in order to keep abreast with the growth in population in addition to providing the medical personnel with specialized training regularly," he pointed out.

Medical errors

Regarding the medical errors, he said the Ministry spares no effort in investigating them and setting strict regulations and controls to prevent their recurrence in the future. "The Ministry works to raise the awareness of patients and their families, on one hand, the medical staff, on the other, about the possible risks a patient might face during treatment in order to let both sides share the responsibility in this regard," Dr Sahlawi went on.

He noted that healthcare and the patients' rights are enshrined in Kuwait's constitution which stipulates that the state is responsible for public health and that healthcare is the cornerstone of development.

"The GCC health ministers' council attaches great importance to the patients' rights, thereby adopting guidelines in this regard to serve as a single law for all GCC states. In December, 2015, the first GCC conference on patients' rights was held in Saudi Arabia under the slogan "patient first, to review the measures and regulations on patient safety and roles of the health facilities and medical personnel in this connection," he recalled.

Dr Sahlawi added at the behest of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Ministry of Health set a comprehensive vision for guaranteeing the patients' rights, prioritizing the people with special needs and preventing medical errors. — KUNA



TEGUCIGALPA: Fathers with their children crowd a hospital in Tegucigalpa, on February 1, 2016. Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez on Friday declared the country on a preventive state of alert due to the Zika virus which in the last 44 days killed a person and infected some 1,000. — AFP

THE TOURISTIC ENTERPRISES COMPANY (TEC) ANNOUNCES

TEC is announcing a possession of some Lost & Found Items which belongs to Entertainment City Visitors should go back to claim to the Visitors Entrance Gate at Entertainment City during working hours from 4:00 pm 12:00 am Sunday till Thursday and from 1:00 pm -10:00 pm on Friday and Saturday.

Be well informed that Administration will not be responsible for any Lost Item claim after a month from this announcement.



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WHISPER OF BLAME

By Dr Nermin Al-Houti

As we hear the news and decisions to reduce the state's budget, the initiatives of the Amiri Diwan and the Cabinet to face the economic crises that face the entire world and not only Kuwait, we find that the National Assembly did not give any proposal or positive action towards the crisis, and with a whisper of blame to the nation's house, I remember an incident that happened with me when the respected Jassem Al-Khorafi, may Allah bestow His mercy on him, was speaker of the Assembly.

I was heading to Cairo, and when I got on the plane, and everyone was in their seats getting ready for take-off, the door was not closed waiting for five passengers. Suddenly we found "Uncle Jassem", with four MPs, boarding the plane. The doors closed and the plane took off for the Arab Republic of Egypt. When the seat-belt sign was switched off, I headed to the seat of Uncle Jassem to greet him and ask why he was visiting Egypt. He replied: Official delegation to attend an Arab League meeting. I told him: Why didn't you take a private jet? He said: Why should I incur costs for the state?

May Almighty Allah bestow His mercy on Uncle Jassem Al-Khorafi, and from that incident, my whisper of blame starts with the nation's deputies. It was expected that the nation's house to be the first to relieve and reduce the burden on the state's budget, as our MPs have many things that they can forgo to help rationalize the budget, and some of these are for example, and not limited to:

* The vehicles given to them. Just a suggestion - the purchase of those vehicles must be stopped, and each MP should be given a token amount of money instead.

* Buffets that are laid between sessions. I believe that while we face a collapse in oil prices, such meals should stop as a kind of rationalization.

* Juices, dates and incense. Why are these bought and brought to the nation's house at the current time?

* The lights that are on most of the time in the offices of our Assembly, without having anyone of them. Is it not time for the rationalizing principle be activated in the nation's house?

* Reducing the number of employees for each MP.

A final word: Our words today are just a whisper of blame.

— Translated by Kuwait Times

MARRIED FEMALE ABSCONDERS CAN SHIFT TO DEPENDENT VISA

KUWAIT: Security sources said Interior Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Nationality and Passport Major General Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah issued decisions to reduce the number of those on the absconding list. Al-Jarrah ordered the "absconding" be lifted from married females on Article 18 visas and transfer their residency to Article 22, under their husbands as dependents. The husband must have a valid residency and salary that allows him to sponsor his wife. The wife must be reported absconding by her sponsor. Any women transferred to Article 22 visas in this way will not be allowed to hold an Article 18 visa in the future. It was not clear from initial reports how many female expatriates in Kuwait fall into this category. — Al-Anbaa



Major General Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah



Al-Jarrah

النابا Al-Anbaa

TEN YEARS OF AMIR'S WISDOM

By Thaar Al-Rasheedi

Kuwait celebrated the tenth anniversary of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah's ascendancy on Jan 29, as on the same day in 2006, he assumed power in a most democratic and constitutional way to be the first Arab leader to be fully appointed by public demand through the parliament.

I fail to find the exact words to give an accurate description of the past decade since His Highness assumed power but I can only describe those 10 years as the 'ten years of wisdom' due to the alarming radical developments that locally, regionally and internationally took place over the past 10 years, during which many of the once-thought-of as unbreakable and unchangeable concepts gave way. However, thanks to His Highness's wisdom, Kuwait managed to steer through such developments safely.

Regardless of arguments over some recent decisions, time proved that those decisive decisions were 100 per cent correct and were the direct reasons for the political stability we enjoy nowadays, which are also agreed upon by politicians who used to disagree with them.

The decisive decisions His Highness made during a

period of political instability had a very good impact on enhancing the pillars of our democracy and bringing things back to the right tracks with minimum damage. For instance, following the issue of the one-vote decree, the country regained a state of political serenity that was followed by the achievement of many projects on the course of boosting development. His Highness's wisdom was also behind reinforcing national unity after some parties tried to strike it for the sake of temporary political goals.

His Highness was behind bringing things back on track on many political issues - things that would have not been so smoothly administered if it were not for the wisdom of His Highness and capabilities to solve the most complicated issues. Ten years of wisdom have regained our country's elegance, and despite challenges, placed us politically, democratically and developmentally back on the right path towards a better Kuwait. Finally, we need to highlight that ships sail and move on water's surface by sailors but need to be still led and commanded by captains.

— Translated by Kuwait Times

HEALTH MINISTER CALLS FOR REDUCING PRIVATE HOSPITAL BUILDINGS' AREAS

KUWAIT: Health Minister Dr Ali Al-Obaidi has called on Kuwait Municipality to reduce land area restrictions for private hospitals in order to allow smaller private hospitals to be built. Obaidi added that according to earlier regulations, a general private hospital's area was required to be at least 5,000 square meters and a specialized hospital had to be on land of at least 3,000 square meters.

The minister requested however that given Kuwait's small size and limited availability of land to allow private hospitals reduced area requirements of 3,000 square meters (for general hospitals) and 1,300 square

meters (for specialty hospitals) respectively.

"Lands available for building medical projects like private hospitals are limited in view of Kuwait's area," the minister said, noting that medical facilities' efficiency was measured by hospital performance and competence rather than its size and that such requirements were unreasonable. Further, Obaidi noted that the health insurance law that had been passed by the parliament required the presence of medical facilities providing profound health care services and that Kuwait needed such hospitals. — Al-Qabas



Health Minister Dr Ali Al-Obaidi

Crime

Report

More bribes for travel ban escape at the airport

KUWAIT: A policeman from Kuwait International Airport to the prosecution for enabling an Egyptian man who is banned from traveling, to leave the country without documenting his movement in the computer. Director General of Residency Detectives Department Brig Saud Al-Khader learned from an undercover source that an Egyptian left the country without having his departure documented in the computer at the airport.

Concerned authorities asked Interpol whether the suspect entered Egypt or not, and the answer was that he did on 5/5/2015, and it was learned from the stamp on the boarding pass the identity of the policeman who said that the stamp is his but was not on duty on the day of the incident, but data proved otherwise, and showed that he processed more than 450 transactions that day. Investigations are ongoing to find out the rest of the network members and discover the amount of bribe he received. This is the third report in recent months of custom officers at border points accepting bribes to allow residents or citizens facing travel bans to leave Kuwait.

Family stabbing

Ahmadi detectives are looking for a citizen who stabbed his cousin following a family dispute between the two at the victim's house. A security source said that a citizen in his 30s told Fahad Al-Ahmad police that a cousin of his went to his house to talk about a problem, then an argument erupted and an exchange of blows took place, then the suspect pulled a knife and stabbed him in the arm. The man filed a complaint of attempted murder.

Thefts cases closed

Criminal detectives closed several theft cases, arrested several wanted people and drug dealer. A security source said that Hawally detectives arrested an addict who stole cars, and was under the influence of drugs.

In Jahra, detectives arrested a wanted citizen to serve a jail sentence on a drugs case and a wanted Afghan national was arrested in the scrap yards and will be sent to serve an outstanding three year jail sentence. They also arrested an Iranian in Saad Al-Abdallah, and an Indian who sold heroin and hashish, and had one kilo of heroin with him.

Weapons traders arrested

Four citizens were sent to the public prosecution for trading in weapons, a charge that may be punished for 10 years in jail and fines of up to KD 50,000, an AK47, pistols and ammunition were sent with the case files. Detectives received information that there are weapons in three homes in areas of Hadiya, Sabah Al-Salem and Egaila, and that four citizens are trading in them. One of the suspects was lured into a deal to sell a pistol, and was arrested and weapons were found in his house. The three others homes were raided and weapons found. All four confessed to trading in arms for extra income.

Adan hospital imposter

A strange incident took place at Adan hospital when a drunk man entered the ICU at Adan hospital and examined a patient. The suspect was taken to Hadiya police station. A security source said that a citizen reported that his father was in the Adan ICU, and when he went to visit him, he found a man inside the room examining his father. The man was in an inebriated state and so the citizen called hospital authorities. He was prevented from escaping and found not a doctor. — Al-Rai, Al-Anbaa

GROWING DEMAND FROM FOREIGN BANKS ON DINAR

KUWAIT: Official sources from three Kuwaiti banks said that demand for the Kuwaiti dinar has remarkably increased on Interbank and that interests paid on three to six-month deposits had jumped to 3.5 and 3.75 per cent after they used to be only 0.8 per cent last year. Experts explained this growing interest rate by the growing demand on deposits in local currency from both foreign and local banks, which made them wonder about the reason behind getting liquidity at such high cost compared to a few months earlier.

The sources said that several reasons might be behind this trend, such as the possibility that foreign and local banks need to increase liquidity, especially when the government only restricts its deposits to local banks. Other bankers explained this increase by the fact that some foreign banks were increasing demand on Interbank to make up for deposits that had been withdrawn and avoid a drop in its liquid deposits in Kuwaiti dinars. — Al-Rai

MINISTRY BANS DRONES FOR SECURITY REASONS

KUWAIT: The recent seizure of a remote-control drone hovering above the Ministry of Interior's (MoI) headquarters call for immediate and strict measures to prevent the threats such drones pose to national security, said security sources. The sources explained that MoI has contacted the civil aviation department, the ministry of commerce and industry and the customs demanding a ban on importing such aircraft without prior permission from MoI. The interior ministry also decided confiscating any drones that had been already imported without permission and referring importers to relevant authorities for evading taxes and importing banned items without permission.

The sources highlighted that a decision was made banning all companies and individuals from importing Phantom drones without MoI's written approval. The decision also includes referring individuals arrested with the possession of any of these electronic aircraft to state security for investigation, especially after realizing the threats they pose to national security.

Moreover, the sources said MoI's undersecretary Lt Gen Suleiman Al-Fahd called a meeting between MoI's concerned officials and relevant ones in other state bodies like the customs department, the ministry of commerce and the civil aviation department to discuss the measures. — Al-Rai



KUWAIT: (From right) Mohammed Ameen, Senior Specialist Learning and Development at Apparel Group Kuwait with Sheikha Fatima Al-Sabah, Vice Chairperson and Executive Director of K'S PATH and Samir Dogra, Manager of Human Capital and Training at Apparel Group Kuwait, with other staff members. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



A group of people participating in a beach cleanup activity, removing waste from the shore.

K'S PATH, APPAREL GROUP ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Society for the Protection of Animals and Their Habitat (K'S PATH) announced that Apparel Group Kuwait has become the first partner of its new program - the Corporate Friends

Program 2016. Sheikha Fatima Al-Sabah, K'PATH's Vice Chairman and CEO said that as a partner, Apparel Group Kuwait and employees will demonstrate their corporate social responsibility by participating

in a number of community activities including volunteering at beach clean-ups and sponsoring the care of three shelter animals. As part of the partnership, 60 Apparel Group employees participated in

a cleaning campaign at the Harmony beach in Shuwaikh, featuring 105 volunteers. A total of 3,760 kilograms of waste were removed during the two-hour campaign.





N Korea getting better at hiding nuclear tests

INDIA'S SUPREME COURT TO REVIEW LAW CRIMINALIZING GAY

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US, ITALY WARN OF RISING IS THREAT IN LIBYA

ISLAMIC STATE EXPANDING ITS REACH

ROME: The United States and Italy warned yesterday that the Islamic State (IS) group is expanding its reach, threatening to seize Libya and launch attacks in Western countries. But as representatives from the 23 countries of the US-led coalition battling the jihadists' self-declared "caliphate" reviewed their progress at talks in Rome, Italy and France made it clear military action against IS's Libyan wing is not on the immediate agenda. Italian Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni and US Secretary of State John Kerry opened the talks by telling their allies that, since their meeting six months ago, the IS group had suffered setbacks in its core territory in Syria and Iraq.

But the hosts warned that the group is adapting to the pressure on its heartland and is redirecting its efforts towards Libya, where it has seized new territory, and into attacks like those in Paris, Ankara and San Bernardino, California. "We are surely not here to brag about anything," Kerry said, after saying IS fighters have lost 40 percent of their territory in Iraq and 20 percent in Syria. "We're here to recommit, we're here to re-evaluate, we're here to make judgments about things we have started that we could do better," he said.

Gentiloni said the challenge facing the coalition of mainly Western and Arab nations is stark. "We know that we have in front of us an organization that is very resilient and able to plan strategically and so we should not underestimate it," he said. "If anything we need to be ever more wary and more watchful because we know that the more Daesh is squeezed in its core territories, the more tempted it is pursue its terrorist activities elsewhere," he warned, using an Arabic acronym for IS. "We are witnessing renewed activity in Libya and in sub-Saharan Africa," he said. Within the coalition, Italy has taken the lead in planning

how to address the IS threat which is just a short boat ride from its southern shores, in and around the Libyan city of Sirte.

No military intervention

Rome's focus is on trying to rally the international community behind efforts to create a national unity government in Libya that is capable of stabilizing its former colony. Direct military intervention against IS fighters is not on the immediate agenda, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius told reporters, rubbishing reports that Paris was pushing for strikes. "There is absolutely no question of military intervention in Libya," Fabius said. "There is pressure (for that) but that is not the position of the government." Gentiloni told the *Messaggero* daily time was running out to stabilize Libya but stressed there was no enthusiasm in Rome or the international community for "hasty military intervention." Washington says it has built a 66-nation coalition to fight the IS group, with Afghanistan becoming the latest country to join, Kerry said.

But a so-called "small group" of 23 nations has taken the lead in carrying out air strikes in Iraq and Syria and training and arming local forces to fight the jihadists. Kerry said the effort now needs to be stepped up, citing the example of Washington's deployment of small numbers of special forces troops inside Syria. The allies need to "push ahead with a strategy we have learned will work and to do so relentlessly, giving Daesh no time to regroup, no place to run, no safe havens in which to hide," he said. Fabius said France also supported intensified strikes in Syria but suggested "more strategic" targeting was required while peace talks are under way in Switzerland. "We cannot bomb in Syria and negotiate in Geneva," he said in an explicit allusion to Russia's air campaign in Syria. — AFP



MAHIN: Syrian government troops fire at Islamic State group positions near Mahin, Syria. The nearly five-year Syrian conflict has left at least 250,000 people dead, forced millions to flee the country and given an opening to the Islamic State group to capture territory in Syria and Iraq. — AP

NINE MIGRANTS DROWN

ANKARA: The Turkish coastguard yesterday recovered the bodies of nine migrants including two babies after their boat sank just a short distance from land while trying to reach Europe. The coastguard said it discovered the boat half capsized only 25 metres (yards) from the coastline after it set off from the western town of Seferihisar in an apparent bid to reach Greece. Two survivors had been rescued, the coastguard said in a statement, adding that the search was continuing in the Aegean.

The nationalities of the victims were not immediately known. The deaths come after 37 migrants drowned off another part of the Turkish coast on Saturday in harrowing scenes reminiscent of the death of Aylan Kurdi, the Syrian toddler whose tiny body was found lying face down on a Turkish beach in September. Turkey reached an agreement with the European Union in November to stem the flow of migrants bound for Europe in return for three billion euros (\$3.2 billion) in financial assistance. But the agreement has failed to check the tide of arrivals, many of them refugees from Syria fleeing the conflict in their homeland. Turkey, which is hosting at least 2.5 million refugees from Syria, has become the main launchpad for migrants fleeing war, persecution and poverty to Europe.

Tougher penalties for smugglers Brussels is pressing Ankara to implement tighter border controls because neither the Turkish-EU deal nor harsh winter conditions appear to have deterred migrants, many of whom pay people smug-

glers thousands of dollars for the risky crossing. The Turkish government said on Monday it was working on new legal measures to strengthen penalties for human smuggling by making it an "act of terror and organized crime". The International Organization for Migration (IOM) said Tuesday that the number of refugees and migrants who perished in the Mediterranean in January alone topped 360. In January, almost 62,200 migrants and refugees entered Europe through Greece, according to the IOM. Surveys by the Greek authorities indicate that 91 per cent came from three countries—Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, it said.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday his country had spent more than \$9 billion (8.2 billion euros) in services for the refugees. "Turkey has opened its doors without distinction to more than 2.5 million Syrian and Iraqi refugees," he said on a visit to Chile—a figure that dwarfs the one million who reached Europe last year. Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus told reporters on Monday that the costs were increasing by the day. "Nobody should see this issue as a problem only for the east. This is an issue of the humanity," he said. He said the EU funds would not go into Turkey's budget but be spent directly tackling the humanitarian crisis. EU member Italy has questioned how much of the money should come from the EU budget, and how much control the bloc will have over how Ankara spends the funds. — AFP



ANAKKALE: The body of migrant child is washed ashore on the beach in Canakkale

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IRAQ AWARDS ITALY'S TREVI CONTRACT TO FIX IMPERILED DAM

BAGHDAD: Iraq announced yesterday that it has awarded Italian firm Trevi a contract to repair and maintain the country's largest dam, which is in danger of catastrophic collapse. The Mosul Dam was built on an unstable foundation of soils that erode when exposed to water, and a lapse in maintenance after the Islamic State group seized it in 2014 weakened the already flawed structure.

The dam has long been in danger of collapse, which US officials have warned could send a huge wave crashing into IS-held Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) away. The Iraqi cabinet, with the agreement of the Ministry of Water Resources, awarded Trevi the contract "to carry out the project of rehabilitating and maintaining the Mosul Dam," a government statement said. The deal has yet to be signed, according to the statement, which did not specify how much Trevi would be paid for the work.

Italy's prime minister announced in December that it would deploy 450 troops to defend the dam, a decision linked to Trevi's interest in the project. Italian forces are already in Iraq training police as part of international efforts to counter

IS. Italy also deployed forces to Iraq as part of the US-led coalition that overthrew president Saddam Hussein, and a truck bomb killed 19 Italians south of Baghdad in 2003. Lieutenant General Sean MacFarland, the commander of the military operation against IS, said last week that the US had put measuring devices on the dam to monitor how much it is "moving or deteriorating over time".

Since the dam's completion in 1984, the Iraqi government has sought to shore up the foundation by injecting mortar-like grout into the subsoil and cavities and controlling seepage. But that essential maintenance stopped in 2014 when IS briefly seized the dam. In 2007, the US ambassador to Iraq and the top American military commander in the country wrote a letter warning that the dam could fail with devastating results. "A catastrophic failure of the Mosul Dam would result in flooding along the Tigris River all the way to Baghdad," the letter said. "Assuming a worst case scenario, an instantaneous failure of Mosul Dam filled to its maximum operating level could result in a flood wave 20 meters (66 feet) deep at the city of Mosul," it said. — AFP



Photo shows a general view of the Mosul dam on the Tigris River around 50 kilometers north of the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. Iraq announced yesterday that it has awarded Italian firm Trevi a contract for the repair and maintenance of the country's largest dam, which is in danger of catastrophic collapse. — AFP



RAMADI: Iraqi forces keep position during clashes with jihadists from the Islamic State group in the eastern suburbs of Ramadi, the capital of Iraq's Anbar province. — AP

IRAQIS RUNNING OUT OF FOOD, MEDICINE IN BESIEGED FALLUJA

ISLAMIC STATE MINED ENTRANCES, KEEPING RESIDENTS FROM LEAVING

BAGHDAD: A senior Iraqi official has appealed to the US-led coalition to air-drop food and medicine to tens of thousands of civilians trapped in Falluja, the Islamic State stronghold under siege by security forces. The city's population is suffering from a shortage of food, medicine and fuel, according to residents reached by phone, and local media said several people had died due to starvation and insufficient medical care. Insecurity and poor communications inside the city make those reports difficult to verify. Sohaib Al-Rawi, the governor of western Anbar province where Falluja is located, said an air-drop was the only way to deliver humanitarian supplies to residents after Islamic State mined the entrances to the city and prevented civilians from leaving.

"No force can enter and secure (the delivery) ... There is no option but for airplanes to transport aid," he said in an interview to Al-Hadath TV late on Monday, adding the situation was deteri-

orating by the day. Falluja, a long-time bastion of Sunni Muslim jihadists located 50 km west of Baghdad, was the first Iraqi city to fall to Islamic State in January 2014, six months before the group that emerged from al Qaeda swept through large parts of northern and western Iraq and neighboring Syria. The Iraqi army, police and Iranian-backed Shiite militias have together imposed a near total siege on Falluja since late last year.

After recapturing the city of Ramadi - a further 50 km to the west - from Islamic State a month ago, Iraqi authorities have not made clear whether they will attempt to take Falluja next or leave it contained while the bulk of their forces head north towards Mosul, the largest city under the militants' control. The US-led coalition estimates there are around 400 Islamic State fighters in Falluja, though some military analysts put the figure closer to 1,000. The coalition, which

includes European and Arab powers, has not previously committed significant resources to humanitarian operations. Rawi said the militants were using civilians as human shields like they did in Ramadi - a tactic that slowed the advance of Iraqi forces.

He said media reports of up to 10 deaths due to starvation and insufficient medical care were accurate, but Iraqi officials could not provide details. Lise Grande, UN humanitarian coordinator in Iraq, described conditions in Falluja as "terrible". "We're incredibly worried about the unconfirmed reports of people dying because of lack of medicine and widespread hunger," she said. The United Nations appealed on Sunday for \$861 million to help Iraq meet a big funding gap in its 2016 emergency response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the war against Islamic State which has left 10 million people in need of urgent aid. — Reuters

SYRIAN REFUGEE TEACHERS HELP FILL EDUCATION GAP

QAB ELIAS: In the refugee camp in eastern Lebanon where Fatima Khaled lives with her two daughters, only three children found a spot in the local school. So when parents found out that Khaled was an educator, they begged her to teach their children. An unemployed teacher who fled Damascus three years ago, Khaled could not find work in Lebanon. "I came here and tried to find a job, but no one would hire me," she said. "Parents here suggested the idea. They told me I could teach and help the children."

Khaled, 30, has been teaching literacy and basic arithmetic for over a year, first out of her living room, and now out of a shed built by her husband. While humanitarian actors meet in London on Thursday to fund the education of Syrian refugees, Khaled's is one of a multitude of anonymous shoestring initiatives filling the gap on the ground. With local schools overwhelmed and aid money so far falling short, only 59 percent of Lebanon's 338,000 school-age Syrian refugees receive an education, according to the UNHCR.

Some 238 public schools offer a second shift to accommodate more refugees, yet the United Nations estimates that twice as many second shifts are needed to accommodate them all. Such teaching initiatives help fill more than an educational void for refugees. Ahmed Shareef's teaching career nearly came to an end when a Tunisian fighter from the Islamic State group summoned him, in his village of West Atchan outside the Syrian city of Aleppo. As principal of the local school, Shareef had ordered a teenage

student to trim his beard and the militant wanted to know why.

"I didn't ask him to shave it, just trim it," Shareef told him. The fighter told him to scrap philosophy and history from the curriculum because those courses were "blasphemy" and demanded that girls leave school after the 6th grade. When Shareef asked why, he says the man replied: "When you grow a beard I will tell you why."

Not long afterward, 38-year-old Shareef packed his bags and fled to Lebanon with his wife and children. Two years later, Shareef teaches Syrian children how to read and write out of a plywood and tarp-covered tent in Qab Elias, a village in the Bekaa valley of Lebanon where most of his fellow villagers had resettled to flee the fighting.

Since none of the camp's approximately 100 children found a spot at the local school and Shareef couldn't find a teaching job, he gives free lessons to children aged 5 to 12 who have had their education disrupted by the conflict. On a normal day, over 30 rowdy students sit on the floor. The class schedule is determined by the weather; when rain floods the tent, class is dismissed. Like Khaled, Shareef does not earn a salary. He lives on the \$100 a month the UNHCR allocates his family. But Khaled admits that money is hardly a motivation for her. The work, even if unpaid, is as much a lifeline for herself as it is for her students. "I cannot not teach," she says smiling. "I've been teaching since I was 18 and when I arrived here I couldn't stand doing nothing." — AP

CIVILIANS STARVING TO DEATH IN SOUTH SUDAN WAR ZONES

JUBA: South Sudanese civilians are dying of starvation as warring forces flout a peace deal, the chief ceasefire monitor said yesterday, adding he was "staggered" at conditions after two years of war. The United Nations say thousands have fled recent fighting in the previously peaceful southern farming region around Mundri in Western Equatoria, close to the border with Uganda.

"I am staggered that things have been allowed to get this bad, and I continue to urge you, the leaders of South Sudan, to do whatever you can to ensure the humanitarian effort is successful," said Festus Mogae, a former Botswana president, who is pushing efforts to form a unity government. Mogae heads the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), set up as part of a stalled August peace deal by the regional bloc IGAD. Fighting continues, and the conflict now involves multiple militia forces who pay little heed to paper peace deals, driven by local agendas or revenge attacks.

East Africa's IGAD bloc last week called on rival forces to allow food into conflict zones on the brink of famine, where aid workers have warned tens of thousands may be

dying of starvation. "I was told this morning that one of the ceasefire monitoring teams, which recently visited Mundri, found people there are starving to death," Mogae said, in a speech read to government and rebel peace delegates in Juba. Both the government and rebel sides have been accused of perpetrating ethnic massacres, recruiting and killing children and carrying out widespread rape, torture and forced displacement of populations to "cleanse" areas of their opponents.

A report by JMEC released on Sunday, the latest in a long list of atrocities, detailed how government forces suffocated some 50 people by stuffing them into a shipping container in baking heat. South Sudan is the world's youngest country, breaking away in 2011 from Sudan after decades of war. In 2012, the two nations battled in a six-month border conflict. In December 2013, civil war erupted in South Sudan. "Every day we spend here, I think of the children I met growing up without the chance of education, the chance of bettering their own lives denied through no fault of their own," Mogae told leaders. "When will independence make a difference for these people?" — AFP

JORDAN LOOKS TO DONORS TO EASE SYRIA REFUGEE BURDEN

AMMAN: On the doorstep of Syria's conflict, Jordan is pinning hopes on this week's donor conference in London to ease the burden on its debt-riddled economy of hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees. King Abdullah II, one of dozens of world leaders due to attend Thursday's meeting, has warned his country is at "boiling point". "Sooner or later, I think, the dam is going to burst," he told the BBC, pointing to strains on employment, infrastructure, education and healthcare. Jordan hosts more than 630,000 of the roughly 4.6 million Syrian refugees overseas, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The Jordanian government gives a much higher estimate of 1.4 million, because many of them are unregistered.

The influx has overwhelmed the resource-poor country of 9.5 million people including migrants and refugees-much of which is desert. "Jordan can no longer continue to provide aid to Syrian refugees without long-term international assistance," Planning Minister Imad Al-Fakhoury said Sunday at a meeting with representatives of donor countries. He warned the kingdom could be "forced to take painful measures that will lead to a greater influx of refugees to Europe if Jordan is left on its own to deal with the consequences of the Syria crisis". In 2016 alone, the refugees will

cost Jordan \$2.7 billion, according to Amman. "We're asking the international community to help us with this sum so that we can continue to fulfill our duties towards the refugees," Prime Minister Abdullah Nusur said during a weekend visit to a refugee camp. Jordan last year started to limit the inflow, insisting it must screen newcomers to ensure they are genuine refugees and not jihadists seeking to infiltrate the country. The kingdom is now only allowing in a few dozen refugees each day after the screening process. Jordan is dependent on international aid to deal with the consequences of the conflict in Syria as well as in Iraq, another neighbor. Jordanian authorities say the Syrian crisis has cost the country \$6.6 billion over the past five years.

Debt mountain

Ferid Belhaj, World Bank director for the Middle East, pointed out that the closure of frontier posts previously used for commercial traffic has heavily impacted Jordanian trade. The massive influx of refugees on the jobs market and reliance on utilities such as water and energy as well the health and education systems have also weighed down Jordan, he said. Belhaj noted that the World Bank together with the United Nations and Islamic Development Bank had been offering Jordan low-cost financing mechanisms.

SYRIA DONORS MEET IN LONDON IN BID TO STEM REFUGEE CRISIS

LONDON: World leaders gather in London tomorrow to try to raise \$9 billion (8.3 billion euros) for the millions of Syrians hit by the country's civil war and a refugee crisis spanning Europe and the Middle East. The donor conference, the fourth of its kind, hopes to meet the United Nations' demand for \$7.73 billion to help in Syria plus \$1.23 billion assistance for countries in the region affected by the crisis. British Prime Minister David Cameron will host more than 70 international leaders at the summit.

They will include German Chancellor Angela Merkel, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Jordan's King Abdullah II, Lebanese Prime Minister Tammam Salam and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Jordan hosts more than 630,000 Syrian refugees and Abdullah on Tuesday warned his debt-riddled country needed help to ease the burden or Europe would face the consequences. "Sooner or later, I think, the dam is going to burst," he told the BBC. He said the kingdom could be "forced to take painful measures that

will lead to a greater influx of refugees to Europe if Jordan is left on its own to deal with the consequences of the Syria crisis".

The Syrian war, which began with protests against President Bashar Al-Assad in March 2011, has claimed more than 260,000 lives and caused a

major humanitarian crisis. The conflict has forced 4.6 million Syrians to seek refuge in countries in the region - Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt - while hundreds of thousands have attempted to reach Europe, sometimes paying with their lives while making the risky Mediterranean Sea crossing. From toddler Aylan Kurdi-found drowned on a Turkish beach to the death by starvation of 16-year-old Ali in the besieged Syrian town of Madaya, the eyes of the world have recently been opened to the civilian impact of the ongoing violence.

In response, donors need to do more than just dig deep financially, Cameron urged. "We need to agree concrete action," he said, calling for the provision of jobs and education in countries neighboring Syria as the living conditions of refugees deteriorate by the day. "This is not just in the interests of Syria and her neighbors," he added. "It is in the interests of Europe too. The more we do to enable people to stay in the region, the less likely we are to see them coming to Europe." — AFP



GENEVA: High Negotiations Committee (HNC) (Syrian opposition body) spokesman Salem Al-Meslet kisses a banner showing pictures of children killed during the Syrian war at the Plac des Nations outside of the United Nations Offices yesterday in Geneva. — AFP



DES MOINES: Hayley Kibbe holds her 8-month-old son Beau at Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's Iowa Caucus night gathering in Des Moines, Iowa. — AFP

VIRTUAL TIE RAISES DOUBTS: CAN HILLARY CLINTON CLOSE THE DEAL?

IOWA TOSS-UP REVIVES MEMORIES OF CLINTON'S LOSS TO OBAMA

DES MOINES: Hillary Clinton's struggle in Iowa to fend off underdog Bernie Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist, reignited questions about her ability to close the deal with Democratic voters and turned up the pressure on her high-profile White House campaign. The Democratic presidential front-runner, whose campaign ran off the rails in Iowa in 2008 against Barack Obama, was dealt another setback on Monday in the Midwestern state that begins the 2016 race for the presidency. The former secretary of state, Clinton, 68, was pushed to a virtual tie with Sanders, a 74-year-old US senator from Vermont. Next up is New Hampshire, which holds its primary on Feb. 9. Sanders has been leading in opinion polls there and has an advantage because it neighbors his home state. A Clinton loss would start to set off alarm bells with her supporters.

"She has had every possible structural and organizational advantage and Sanders fought her to a draw," said Dan Schnur, director of the Jesse M Unruh Institute of Politics at the University of Southern California. "This is almost a moment by moment rerun of 2008," Schnur said. "The difference is her competition is not as tough this time." Clinton insisted at her post-caucus rally that she was the candidate who could unify her party and prevail against a Republican challenger in the Nov. 8 election but the sense of disappointment was palpable. Her subdued, six-minute speech contrasted with the ebullient tone of Sanders' 16-minute speech.

With no clear victory to announce, Clinton's campaign scrapped a plan to have her daughter Chelsea and her husband, former President Bill Clinton, introduce her. They stood alongside her instead, with Bill Clinton wearing his campaign logo badge upside-down. Aides removed the TelePrompster at the last minute, supporters at the Drake University rally told Reuters, in a further indication of last-minute changes in plans. While the race in Iowa had tightened in recent weeks, her aides had appeared to draw some confidence from a Des Moines Register/Bloomberg politics poll over the weekend that showed Clinton with a three-percentage-point lead over Sanders among likely caucus-goers. Into the early hours of yesterday morning, Clinton and Sanders remained separated by less than a single percentage point. The race was so tight that several precincts were forced to decide whether Clinton or Sanders got the winning votes - and one more delegate - by a coin toss, following the state Democratic Party's advice. The MSNBC television network finally called the race for Clinton at nearly 3 a.m. CST (0900 GMT), and Clinton's Iowa state director Matt Paul issued a statement declaring victory with "no uncertainty."

Opinion polls show Clinton still faces an enthusiasm gap with Sanders and her Republican rivals, whose race attracted a record turnout in Iowa. Voters have persistent doubts about her honesty and trustworthiness after months of controversy over her use of a private email server for government work while

secretary of state. Sanders, who launched his campaign nine months ago with a small, sparsely attended news conference on Capitol Hill, has excited liberal activists with an anti-establishment message that calls for eradicating income inequality, breaking up the big banks and providing free college tuition.

A popular movement

Iowa was a good state to test that message, given the heavy liberal bent of the Democratic activists who dominate the caucus process. Entrance polls of Iowa caucus-goers showed 68 percent described themselves as very or somewhat liberal. Fundraising figures reported on Sunday by Sanders underscored the extent to which his campaign has grown into a popular movement. Clinton has raised more than Sanders' campaign brought in \$109 million last year compared to his \$73.5 million. But 75 percent of his haul came from donations of \$200 or less, in contrast to only 18 percent of Clinton's, and far more of Clinton's donors have hit the \$2,700 donation limit.

Still, Sanders faces significant challenges when the Democratic nominating contest moves to the more diverse states of Nevada and South Carolina before expanding to 11 states on March 1, "Super Tuesday," including seven in the South where Clinton's advantage with African-American voters could begin to pay off. "Iowa was built for Bernie Sanders," said Democratic strategist Joe Trippi, who nevertheless said the strong showing by Sanders means "this race goes on longer than Clinton wanted it to." — Reuters

ENTRANCE POLLS: DEMOCRATS DIVIDED BY AGE AND IDEOLOGY

WASHINGTON: Democratic caucus-goers were deeply divided by age and ideology, with younger participants in the Iowa caucus supporting Vermont Sen Bernie Sanders and older voters turning out for former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, entrance polling showed in a too-close-to-call race between the two candidates. Republicans who said they want a candidate who shares their values propelled Texas Sen Ted Cruz to victory on the GOP side, according to the survey of those arriving at caucus sites conducted by Edison Research for The Associated Press and television networks. Here's a closer look at the attitudes of the electorate:

Deeply divided Democrats

More than 8 in 10 Democratic participants under 30 supported Sanders, as did 6 in 10 of those between 30 and 44. But nearly 6 in 10 caucus-goers between 45 and 64 and 7 in 10 of those 65 and older came out to support Clinton. Sanders has worked hard to appeal to younger voters with his populist campaign focused on issues including income inequality and affordable college. A majority of caucus attendees who identified as Democrats came to support Clinton. But among the 2 in 10 Democratic caucus-goers identifying as independents, 7 in 10 favored Sanders.

Clinton was favored by 6 in 10 moderates and Sanders by 6 in 10 of those who said they are very liberal, while those who were somewhat liberal narrowly favored Clinton. Women were more likely to support Clinton, while men were more likely to support Sanders. Six in 10 non-white participants supported Clinton, but they accounted for just 1 in 10 caucus attendees. Clinton won strong support among those who wanted a candidate who could beat the Republican nominee and who had experience, while Sanders was supported by large margins among those wanting a candidate who is honest or cares about people like them.

Values count

More than 4 in 10 Republicans arriving at caucus sites said the candidate quality that mattered most in their vote was that the candidate shares their values. Among those who said so, Cruz won the support of nearly 4 in 10, versus just 2 in 10 for Rubio and less than 1 in 10 for Trump. Trump edged out Cruz to gain the support of the 2 in 10 wanting a candidate who can bring needed change, while Rubio was the top choice of the 2 in 10 who said they want a candidate who can win in November. Two-thirds of those who wanted a candidate who "tells it like it is" supported Trump, but that quality lagged

behind the others as the most desirable. Cruz was the top choice among very conservative caucus-goers, while Trump was the top choice of moderates. Those who said they were somewhat conservative split between Rubio and Trump, followed by Cruz.

Voter discontent

Four in 10 Republicans say they are angry and half say they're dissatisfied with the federal government. Angry caucus-goers were split between Trump and Cruz as their top candidate. GOP caucus-goers were split between those wanting an outsider versus someone with political experience. Trump was the top candidate of those who preferred an outsider, while those preferring someone with experience were split between Rubio and Cruz. Trump and Cruz both have been trying to tap into voter discontent on the campaign trail.

Biggest issues

Government spending was the top issue for just over 3 in 10 Republicans, followed closely by the economy and terrorism. Just over 1 in 10 said they cared most about immigration. A third of Democratic caucus-goers said the economy is the top issue facing the nation, while about the same proportion chose health care and slightly fewer said income inequality. Less than one in 10 said terrorism is the top issue. More than half of Democratic caucus-goers want a candidate who will continue President Barack Obama's policies.

First timers and late deciders

Over 4 in 10 Democrats say they're first-time caucus attendees. Six in 10 first-timers favored Sanders, while 6 in 10 previous caucus attendees favored Clinton. Nearly half of Republicans were first-time caucus-goers, and they tended to support Trump. But Cruz supporters were slightly more likely than those supporting Trump or Rubio to say they were contacted about caucusing for their candidate.

Forty-five percent of GOP voters said they decided on a candidate in the last week, and they broke for Cruz and Rubio over Trump. The survey was conducted for AP and the television networks by Edison Research as voters arrived at 40 randomly selected sites for Democratic and Republican caucuses in Iowa. The survey includes preliminary results from interviews with 1,660 Democratic caucus-goers and 1,794 Republican caucus-goers. The survey had a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 4 percentage points for both Democrats and Republicans, with higher margins of error for subgroups. — AP

CRUZ: TEA PARTY FIREBRAND STRIKES FIRST BLOW IN IOWA

DES MOINES: Once reviled by fellow Republicans as a "wacko bird" eager to shut down the US government, Ted Cruz proved with his Iowa win that his arch-conservatism may yet propel him into the White House. He has spent months seeking to out-manuever his many rivals. When he did so Monday night, surging

past frontrunner Donald Trump as he rode a wave of enthusiastic support, it appeared to validate-if only for a few fleeting hours before the presidential race resumes-the political positions that have made Cruz such a compelling but controversial figure. Cruz, who has fought hard to maintain a prominent place for faith in American life, is battling not just for the Republican nomination. He sees himself in a battle for the very soul of the country. "Tonight is a victory for courageous conservatives across Iowa and all across this great nation," Cruz said in his caucus victory speech.

"We're seeing conservatives and evangelicals and libertarians and Reagan Democrats all coming together as one, and that terrifies Washington, DC."

As a US Senate freshman, the 45-year-old Texan-an intellectual proponent of a grassroots movement that has simmered for years under the Republican mainstream-has barely three years under his belt in national politics. But in the 2016 presidential race, his outsider status has played well with the right-wing base furious with what he derides as the "mushy middle" GOP establishment unwilling to play hardball against US President Barack Obama. For Democrats, Cruz is a dangerous demagogue they love to hate.

To religious conservatives, he is a patriot, a thinking man's champion of the common folk sent to Congress-and perhaps to the White House-to disrupt the ways of the go-along-to-get-along establishment and fulfill the principles of smaller government. — AFP

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 - Bachelor's Degree in Pharmacy
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 - Salary Range: 400 to 700 KWD
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 - Bachelor's Degree in any discipline
 - Minimum 2 to 4 Yrs of experience in Warehousing
 - Good Communication Skills
 - Salary Range: 200 to 220 KWD
 - Accountant**
 - Bachelor's Degree in Finance/Accounting
 - Minimum 2 to 4 Yrs of experience
 - Good Communication Skills
- NOTE:**
Applicants must be having a transferable residence in Kuwait. Candidates from outside Kuwait will not be eligible to apply. Mention the Position you are applying for in the subject line of the email.
- Interested candidates can send their CV to: cv.amdq8@gmail.com

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TENSIONS RISE IN SWEDEN AFTER KILLING OF ASYLUM CENTRE WORKER

STOCKHOLM: Masked men chased migrants in Stockholm this weekend in a rare act of overt violence against refugees, but one that reflects smouldering tensions in Sweden as it grapples with the consequences of a record influx of migrants. The attack came just days after a teenaged asylum-seeker killed a young woman working at an asylum residence. Between 50 and 100 masked and hooded men chased and reportedly beat up "people of foreign appearance" on Friday evening at the Sergels Torg plaza in the heart of the city and handed out leaflets calling for "the street children of North Africa to get the punishment they deserve". Police swiftly chased off the assailants, but footage of the racist attack shocked many Swedes as they struggle with conflicting emotions regarding the flood of arrivals.

On the one hand there is a deep-rooted, longstanding sense of humanity and willingness to give refuge to those in need. While on the other, there is a grim realization that the country's infrastructure is overwhelmed after welcoming more migrants per capita than any other European Union country in 2015. "What is going on in Sweden?" asked daily Expressen on Sunday, listing a growing number of issues linked to migrants, including arson attacks on asylum residency centres and cultural as well as religious tensions.

On both the left and right wings, the Swedish media have squarely placed the blame on Prime Minister Stefan Lofven - a Social Democrat whose party has hit record lows in the polls - accusing him of downplaying the challenges facing the country.

"Those who dared discuss the link between the number of (migrant) arrivals and the capacity to welcome and integrate them were accused of painting a pessimistic picture and playing into the hands of the far-right," the centre-right daily Svenska Dagbladet wrote last autumn.

'Never thought this was possible'

But in an editorial on January 26, the newspaper called for migrants who commit crimes to be expelled - a proposal published the day after the fatal stabbing of Alexandra Mezher, a 22-year-old asylum centre social worker. Mezher, of Lebanese origin, was knifed by a 15-year-old boy as she tried to break up a fight in a centre for unaccompanied minors where she worked in Molndal, a suburb of Gothenburg in southwestern Sweden. "We would never have thought this was possible in Sweden. We hold the government and the prime minister responsible," the victim's uncle said.

Lofven responded quickly, visiting the scene hours after the killing, but his reaction stunned commentators. "There's no easy solution," the prime minister said, prompting Sweden's paper of reference Dagens Nyheter to conclude: "Lofven has nothing to say." A few days later the government announced it wanted to improve its efficiency at deporting asylum seekers whose applications are rejected, estimating that at least 60,000 of the 163,000 who applied in 2015 would be rejected and expelled. In 2014 and 2015, Sweden, where 20 percent of the population has foreign origin, took in 245,000 asylum seekers, more than any other EU country per capita.



MOLNDAL, Sweden: A police officer is pictured outside a home for juvenile asylum seekers in Molndal in south western Sweden. — AFP

Dilapidated 'Swedish model'

The influx has dwindled to a trickle since Sweden reinstated border checks in November, but the large number of migrants has pushed the country's famed "Swedish model" - a cradle-to-grave welfare state already a little worse-for-wear - to the edge. Sweden faces acute housing shortages and skyrocketing real estate prices, salaries so low for teachers and nurses that

there are employee shortages, a lack of nursing homes, and, in a country that prides itself as an egalitarian society, the fastest growing inequality gap in the OECD.

Burdened further by the migration crisis, the degradation of the welfare state has left some Swedes with a sense of "paradise lost", fuelling the frustrations of society's weakest members. "The country has changed a lot. It used to be a quiet place but now all you hear

about is violence and attacks," Eva, a pensioner from the town of Borås where Alexandra Mezher lived said. Obsessed by the "image Sweden has of itself as a big moral power" on the international scene, "the left has (over the years) forgotten Sweden's domestic needs and has as a result left the door wide open for the Sweden Democrats", the far-right party represented in parliament, historian Lars Tragardh said. — AFP

EU'S PRESIDENT UNVEILS PLANS TO AVOID 'BREXIT'

A 4-YEAR BRAKE ON BENEFIT PAYMENTS FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

BRUSSELS: EU president Donald Tusk yesterday unveiled key proposals to keep Britain in the bloc, including a four-year brake on benefit payments for migrant workers and protection for countries that do not use the euro currency. Tusk sent the proposals for a "new settlement" to European capitals, firing the starting gun for two weeks of frantic negotiations with the other 27 European Union leaders to secure a deal at a summit on February 18-19. British Prime Minister David Cameron, who wants a deal so he can hold a referendum in June on his country's membership of the EU, said Tusk's proposal "shows real progress" but added that "more work" was needed.

"To be, or not to be together, that is the question... My proposal for a new settlement for #UKinEU," Tusk tweeted, adapting a famous quote from English playwright William Shakespeare's "Hamlet". The proposals will not take effect until Britain avoids a so-called "Brexit" and votes to stay in the EU in the referendum, the draft adds. European Commission spokesman Margaritis Schinas said the proposals took into account all issues that Cameron raised in a letter to Brussels last year, and also took into account the concerns of other EU states.

'Emergency brake'

The proposals include an "emergency brake" to stop EU migrants claiming benefits such as income top-ups for low-paid workers for up to four years after their arrival if a country can prove that its welfare system and public services are being overwhelmed. It says they would have to prove that an "exceptional situation exists on a scale that affects essential aspects of its social security system" to get the limit approved by the European Commission. It would then have to be voted for by a qualified majority of EU states.

But the question of how long Britain could apply this for is left blank in the draft circulated to EU leaders, where the issue will be one of the most contentious points. The plan has angered the so-called Visegrad Four - the central European states of Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia - which have thousands of citizens working in Britain. They say it breaches the EU's principles of free movement and is discriminatory.



CHIPPENHAM: British Prime Minister David Cameron speaks to factory staff at the Siemens manufacturing plant yesterday in Chippenham, west England. — AFP

Cameron will hold talks in Poland on Friday with Polish leaders aiming to win them over to the changes. He is also set to hold talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Hamburg on February 12.

Protection for 'euro-outs'

Despite concerns from France, Tusk's plan also includes a "mechanism" by which the nine countries that are not in the euro can raise concerns and be given "necessary reassurances" about decisions by the euro-zone. But he stressed that the mechanism "cannot constitute a veto nor delay urgent decisions" - adding that the conditions for triggering the mechanism had to be discussed before the summit.

The proposals further include a "red card" system that would allow a group of 55 percent of the EU's national parliaments to stop or change draft EU laws. The current "yellow card" system - using a term taken from football disciplinary infractions - only allows parli-

aments to demand an explanation of laws from Brussels. British eurosceptics were unconvinced, with UKIP head Nigel Farage dismissing it as "frankly ludicrous" and no change on the current situation Britain will be further exempted from the EU's stated goal of "ever closer union" because of its "special status" in the bloc's treaties - including its staying out of the euro and the passport-free Schengen area. Although Cameron has set a deadline of end-2017 to hold the referendum and insists he is in "no hurry" for a deal, sources have said he is keen to push a vote through by June. That would avoid any new flare-up in Europe's migration crisis this summer and before British eurosceptics, particularly in Cameron's own Conservative Party, become even more unruly. Opinion polls are largely split on whether Britons would vote to leave the EU. It will be the British public's first vote on the country's EU membership since 1975, two years after it joined what was then the European Economic Community. — AFP

EU 'BREXIT' PROPOSALS

BRUSSELS: European Council head Donald Tusk yesterday unveiled a package of EU reforms demanded by British Prime Minister David Cameron in return for backing the country's continued membership of the bloc. Here are the main points of the Tusk reform package which will now have to be agreed with Cameron's 27 EU peers at a summit on February 18-19.

Lots of paper

EU leaders will have to wade through a thicket of paperwork: a letter from Tusk, a draft decision of EU leaders that will be legally binding, a declaration on competitiveness, and three European Commission declarations.

Euro 'ins' versus 'outs'

Britain is not part of the 19-nation euro single currency bloc and jealously guards the pound and the City of London, one of the world's largest financial centers, against any encroachment by Brussels. France however has led opposition to anything that would impinge on euro-zone decision-making. Tusk spells out a mutual accommodation - non-euro countries must help, not hinder, euro-zone integration in exchange for their rights as non-euro states being recognized. "The respect for these principles is backed up by a draft decision establishing a mechanism that while giving necessary reassurances on the concerns of non-euro area member states, cannot constitute a veto nor delay urgent decisions," he said in a letter outlining the proposals. In addition, the EU will aim to increase its economic competitiveness - another of Cameron's demands - by cutting red tape and reducing undue burdens on business.

Sovereignty

As with the euro, Britain has chafed at oversight from Brussels and Cameron wants a clear opt-out from the bloc's on-wards march towards "ever closer union". "It is recognized that the United Kingdom, in the light of the specific situation it has under the (EU) treaties, is not

committed to further political integration," the text of the Tusk proposals says. To give that provision more teeth, national parliaments will be able to challenge and reject EU legislation if they can muster a 55 percent majority among the 28 member states under a "red card" system. The EU's current "yellow card" system - using a term taken from football - only allows parliaments to demand an explanation of EU laws. An EU official said this simple majority mechanism meant all member states would be put on an equal footing for example Malta would have as much say as Germany's Bundestag. Economic powerhouse Germany is often criticized for supposedly bullying smaller member states who lose out under the EU's qualified majority system.

Migration/welfare curbs

Cameron's demand to curb welfare benefits to EU citizens working in Britain for four years is the biggest sticking point, with critics seeing it as undercutting the bloc's core principle of freedom of movement. The draft concedes there is a "pull factor" whereby differing social security systems attract workers from less well off member states, distorting the single market where all are meant to be equal. Accordingly, there will be an "alert and safeguard mechanism that responds to situations of inflow of workers... of an exceptional magnitude over an extended period of time".

Crucially, a member state can apply such a mechanism for up to four years but the text notes that such limitations should be gradually reduced over that period. The provision will apply to all member states, who will have to ask for clearance in the European Council and the European Commission, the bloc's executive arm, before going to a qualified majority vote of EU states. However, in practice EU officials say they expect only Britain to qualify and to apply. On this issue, Tusk stressed in his letter the need "to fully respect the current treaties, in particular the principles of freedom of movement and non-discrimination" — AFP

AMERICANS PACKING CLASSES ON HOW TO SURVIVE SHOOTING

WESTERVILLE: Study your surroundings. Find exits. Identify makeshift weapons. Americans are gleaning those tips and others as they pack classes on how to react to and survive a shooting. Such training is already common at schools, colleges and businesses, but sessions for the general public are the next step in confronting fears of mass violence that have been around for years and, for many, came to a head after the 1999 Columbine High School shootings. Police have offered the "awareness training" in Livonia, Michigan, and Douglasville, Georgia, while more than 600 people have attended classes taught by the Potter County Sheriff's Office in Amarillo, Texas, beginning about three years ago.

Public demand increased dramatically after the mass shooting in December that killed 14 in San Bernardino, California, said Lt. Scott Giles, a class instructor in Amarillo. "This is really just something that was born out of necessity," Giles said. "Active shooter events just continue to happen." Potter County is one of several sheriff's departments that provide training based on the CRASE curriculum: Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events. CRASE teaches an approach dubbed ADD: "Avoid" the situation by getting out, "Deny" by barricading inside a room, and as a last resort, "Defend" by fighting back.

A class offered by Westerville, a Columbus suburb, filled up so quickly that a second had to be scheduled for later this month. The city of about 38,000, with a per capita income well above the rest of Ohio, regularly

tops lists of the country's best suburbs. "We just feel the world has changed. There's evil out there," said retiree Tom Madine, 67, who attended the first Westerville class last month with his wife, Sue Madine, along with dozens of others. People today understand that such threats are real and could happen in their own communities, said Police Chief Joe Morbitzer. Officers teach a "Run, Hide, Fight" curriculum similar to ADD. "Part of the issue is that people don't know how to avoid becoming victims," Morbitzer said. "In today's society that's bad, that you've got to practice victim avoidance, but you have to." At the Jan. 28 Westerville class, officers Dan Pignatelli and John Jeffries emphasized "situational awareness."

They mixed practical tips - for instance, the best exit in an emergency is not always the way you came in, and if you're hiding, always turn the lights off - with case studies from the 1999 Columbine shooting, the 2007 Virginia Tech killings and others. As a last resort, a weapon could be as near as the closest chair, pair of scissors or blunt object, they said. "You've got to have a game plan," Jeffries, a 31-year police veteran, told the audience. His comment was part of a bigger point both instructors drove home throughout the two-hour class: that people must overcome inaction when something bad happens. Instructors in Ohio and elsewhere don't take a position on whether people legally allowed to carry a gun should intervene to stop an attacker. But they worry about what happens once police arrive. — AP

GERMAN-RUSSIAN TIES FEEL COLD WAR-STYLE CHILL OVER RAPE CASE

BERLIN: Moscow's intervention in an alleged rape case involving a German-Russian girl has heightened suspicions in Berlin that it is trying to stir up trouble, with a view to weakening Chancellor Angela Merkel. The case of the 13-year-old, named only as Lisa F, became the focus of political intrigue after she told police that she had been kidnapped in east Berlin last month by migrants who raped her while she was held for 30 hours.

Senior German officials believe Russia is trying to erode public trust in Merkel using immigration, an issue which has badly damaged her opinion poll ratings and divided European Union governments over who should accommodate asylum seekers pouring in over the past year. By undermining Merkel, who has taken a tough line on the Ukraine crisis, Moscow hopes to destabilize Europe and create a vacuum into which it can project its own power, they say.

"There is a Russian attempt to strengthen disunity in the EU and to work with anti-European, right-wing populist parties," said one senior official, speaking on condition of anonymity. The Kremlin could not immediately be reached for comment. The teenager's case blew up into a diplomatic row last week when Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov accused the German authorities of "sweeping problems under the rug". Berlin warned Moscow not to exploit the case "for political propaganda". The Berlin public prosecutor's office has since said the girl spent the 30 hours with people she knew, and that a medical examination had shown she had not been raped.

But the waters were muddied long enough to allow Lavrov to intervene in the case of Lisa F, who German media say is a dual national who moved



German Chancellor Angela Merkel

with her family to the country in 2004. "The refugee crisis and the Lisa case have allowed (Moscow) to exploit more strongly groups like Russian Germans, and to play with Germans' angst and insecurities," said Stefan Meister of the German Council on Foreign Relations, a think tank. The case has provoked outrage among Berlin's Russian community and Russian media have reported extensively on it. Russians protested in Bavaria at the weekend, after about 700 people had demonstrated in front of Merkel's office, some holding banners reading "Our children are in danger" and "Today my child, tomorrow yours".

The end of truth

The case has fomented popular anxiety. "The end of the truth," ran a headline in the latest edition of Der Spiegel magazine, above a picture of Merkel and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Spiegel quoted the chief of BfV Germany's domestic security agency, Hans-Georg Maassen, as saying Russia was using KGB-style "old measures" of misinformation and destabilization. At the same time, Putin is trying to charm Germans. Last month, he gave an interview to the mass-selling daily Bild, saying he wanted to work with Europe against terrorism. Meister said this was "to serve the wish among the (German) elite and parts of the population that Russia is showing a readiness to compromise." Russia is pursuing its policy of misinformation, as Germany sees it, at a crucial time for the EU. The refugee crisis is stretching it to new limits and EU leaders believe they have just weeks to get their act together.

At the centre of the turmoil is Merkel, still the EU's most powerful leader. If she falters, the risk is Europe falters. "The aim is to weaken the EU," the senior German official said. "Moscow is targeting the strongest, most stable country - Germany. Of course it is in the interest of this Russian government to weaken Merkel as the leader of this country." Another senior German official added: "The EU cannot allow third parties to split the union." Merkel, who enjoyed record high ratings early last year, has looked increasingly isolated as dissatisfaction has grown with her welcoming attitude towards people fleeing conflict and economic hardship in the Middle East and Africa. A poll last week showed 40 percent of Germans wanted her to resign over her refugee policy. — Reuters

PAKISTAN'S WOMEN AT FOREFRONT OF GIVING RURAL GIRLS EDUCATION

ISLAMABAD: For years, Fatima would wake up in the morning and dream of going to school but her hopes for an education were crushed. Rather than joining her two brothers in school, from the age of five Fatima would set off with her mother to work in the fields of their village in Bahawalpur district of Punjab, in east Pakistan. "I wanted to go to the school and wanted to become a teacher, so that I could help other girls," Fatima, now aged seven, said in a Skype interview from her home.

The daughter of a laborer, Fatima seemed destined to a cycle of illiteracy and poverty and to remain one of more than 13 million girls in Pakistan to never see inside a classroom. Nearly half of Pakistan's 53 million children aged 5-16 are out of school and 55 percent of those are girls. Pakistan has the third largest number of out-of-school girls in the world, a fact that hit headlines globally in 2012 after Taliban militants shot 14-year-old schoolgirl and education advocate Malala Yousafzai, now a Nobel Peace prize laureate.

Now amid this largely patriarchal society, Pakistani women, be they educated campaigners or illiterate mothers, are at the forefront of advocating for girls' right to school. Fatima's luck changed when local community workers visited her family and, after several meetings, backed her mother and convinced her father to send her to the nearby school, breaking the traditional norm of keeping girls at home. "My wish came true and I was able to go to school. I like to play with my friends. Teachers are very kind and they take care of me," Fatima said, her dark brown eyes glistening with joy.

She became one of 73,000 children enrolled in school due to a joint project launched in 2013 by Alif Ailaan - an education reform campaign funded by the UK Department for International Development but run by Pakistanis - and local non-profit organization, Rural Support Programs Network (RSPN). The project has helped raise awareness in rural Pakistan about the importance of learning as well as mobilize communities to demand quality education for their children from their political representatives and education department officials.

Women campaigning for girls

Despite a constitutional article guaranteeing the right of every child in Pakistan to a free education, social researchers blame poverty, a conservative culture and run-down school facilities for the decision by many poor families to keep their children, especially their daughters, from school. RSPN says much of the success of the project is owed to its grass-roots community

and village campaigners who use creative ways to get their message across such as public walks through the villages to raise awareness and coordinating with religious leaders to spread the word. Social workers report that the most frequently reported reason for girls not attending school is their parents' unwillingness to send them due, citing difficult access to schools, poverty, and cultural sensitivities.

A recent Oxfam report said 11 percent of young girls in Pakistan are married before the age of 15, jeopardizing their rights to health, education and protection and fathers needed to be convinced that education was a better path. Uzma Nazir, a campaigner in Bahawalpur, found that in one case she had to appeal to a father's sense of religious duty as well as his guilt over spending excess cash on tobacco. "If you could afford to smoke daily and have enough money for Dish TV, then it meant that you could afford to pay for your children's educational expenses," Nazir said she told him.

She added that every Muslim man and woman had the responsibility for gaining an education. In the end she helped him enrol his three daughters in school. Another effective argument that campaigners use are the economic advantages to an education. It wasn't hard to convince Sukhaan Mai to send all her seven daughters and son to school. Mai, who lives in a village 40 km (25 miles) from Dera Ghazi Khan city in central Pakistan, earns 8,000 Pakistani rupees (\$76) a month, working as a day labourer, picking cotton and harvesting wheat in peak season.

Her biggest wish was for a better life for her children, which included sending them all to school, especially her physically-challenged daughter Memoona, 12. "If my children will get an education there will be so many benefits in their future for better livelihood and they will gain the knowledge about good and bad," said Mai in a Skype interview from her home. According to the United Nation's International Labour Organization (ILO), about 75 percent of Pakistani working women aged 15 and above were in the agricultural sector in 2010-2011 where working conditions were harsh and the wages were low.

Global evidence suggests that one additional year of schooling can increase a woman's earning by 10 to 20 percent. So far, the project has raised the awareness of nearly 250,000 people about the value of education. Rural communities have also lobbied for improvements in 741 schools - many of which were functioning without electricity, had no drinking water, and were missing toilets and boundary walls. But social workers say there is still much work to be done.—Reuters



MUMBAI: Indian gay rights activists celebrate after the country's Supreme Court agreed to review a decision which criminalizes gay sex, in Mumbai yesterday. — AFP

INDIA COURT TO REVIEW LAW CRIMINALIZING GAYS

COLONIAL ERA LAW MAKES HOMOSEXUALITY ILLEGAL

NEW DELHI: India's top court yesterday said it will review a decision over whether to uphold a colonial-era law that criminalizes gay sex in a victory for homosexual rights campaigners at a time when the nation is navigating a path between tradition and modernity. The Supreme Court asked a five-judge bench to examine whether the 1860 law, which imposes a 10-year sentence for gay sex, is constitutional, a lawyer for a gay rights group said. "It is definitely a move forward," said lawyer Anand Grover as activists gathered outside the court cheered.

This was the last legal avenue for campaigners seeking to use the courts to strike down the law. Otherwise, any future decisions to lift the ban will rest with the country's politicians who are largely conservative and oppose any changes. The Supreme Court made a surprise ruling in 2013 that reinstated a ban on gay sex.

That decision ended a four-year period of decriminalization that helped bring homosexuality into the open. After the hearing a group of gay rights activists outside the court sang: "We will be successful." Human rights group Amnesty International India welcomed the court's review, saying the law puts homosexuals under physical, mental and legal threat.

"The Supreme Court has another chance to correct a grave error," Amnesty said. National surveys show about three-quarters of Indians disapprove of homosexuality and are deeply traditional about other issues of sexuality such as sex outside of marriage. India is one of 75 countries around the world that outlaws homosexuality, according to the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association. Although the law banning homosexuality is rarely enforced in India, it is used to intimidate,

harass, blackmail and extort money from homosexuals, activists say. There are no official figures on the number of cases and most go unreported as victims are too scared to report crimes to the police, fearing they will be punished too, activists say.

While the previous Congress-led government had pledged to repeal the law if it came to power again, it was crushed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party in general elections in May 2014. In December, members of Modi's party, which has an overwhelming majority in the lower house of parliament, scuppered a private member's bill to scrap the law. "It is about principles of freedom enshrined in our constitution," Shashi Tharoor, the opposition Congress lawmaker who introduced the bill said. "It's time to take the government out of the bedroom."— Reuters

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INDIAN MINISTER WANTS COMPULSORY SEX TESTS

NEW DELHI: India's children's minister has called for mandatory tests to determine the sex of an unborn child to try to counter high levels of female foeticide, sparking fierce criticism yesterday from women's activists. Prenatal sex tests are officially illegal in India, a policy designed to stop so many unborn girls being aborted by parents desperate for a boy. But in a speech late Monday, Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi said a more effective strategy would be to record the sex of a foetus at the outset of the pregnancy and then monitor its progress.

"How long are we going to keep making criminals out of people? How long are we going to put the onus on sonographers? My view is why not change the present policy. Every pregnant woman should be compulsorily told whether it is a boy or girl," Gandhi

said. "When a woman becomes pregnant it should be registered and that way you will be able to monitor right until the end whether she gave birth or not and what happened," she said in the western city of Jaipur.

Parents and doctors can be jailed for up to five years for asking for or conducting a pre-natal sex test. But the tests are still thought to be widespread, particularly in impoverished rural areas. A 2011 study in the British medical journal *The Lancet* found that up to 12 million girls had been aborted in the last three decades in India. India had 940 females for every 1,000 males, according to the last official census published in 2011, up from 933 in 2001 in a trend that some campaigners say vindicates the current policy of banning sex tests.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has previously spoken out against the killing of

unborn girls, warning that the gender imbalance will have serious consequences for the country's development, although he has not addressed the issue of sex tests. Gandhi, who is the sister-in-law of opposition leader Sonia Gandhi, said she was "just putting out this idea" which was being discussed with her ministerial counterparts. "We have not reached a conclusion, we are still discussing the pros and cons," she said. In a statement yesterday, her office said there was no "formal proposal" being considered by her ministry after some local media quoted her as saying one was being discussed in cabinet.

'Enormous pressure'

Women's rights groups said a change of policy would result in women from rural areas coming under even more pressure

from families to have an abortion. "This is not a very productive idea, in fact it could make things worse," Ranjana Kumari, director of the Delhi-based Centre for Social Research think-tank said. "This might work among educated women, but not for large numbers of women living in rural areas who are still under enormous pressure to live up to the social and cultural traditions to have a boy."

The All India Democratic Women's Association said Gandhi's proposal was "shocking" and appeared aimed at absolving the medical profession of responsibility for foeticide levels. "It will fuel a proliferation of illegal facilities for getting rid of unwanted female foetuses," the organization said in a statement. "What is required is a continued and stringent implementation of the present act, which has clearly acted as a deterrent wherever it has been used effectively."

Since coming to power, Modi has sought to position himself as a champion of women's rights, emphasizing education for girls and an end to female foeticide in a country where boys are seen as more desirable than girls.

A year ago, Modi urged a largely female audience in Haryana—the state with the lowest ratio of female to male births—to resist pressure from family and society to abort girls. And in July he launched a Twitter campaign #SelfieWithDaughter appealing to parents to post snapshots with their daughters to tackle the skewed sex ratio. Maneka Gandhi's was one of the more eye-catching appointments to Modi's cabinet given her family ties to the main opposition Congress party. She is the widow of Sanjay Gandhi, whose mother Indira was assassinated in 1984 while prime minister. — AFP



NAYPYITAW: Myanmar military lawmakers arrive to attend the final session of Myanmar's current parliament as it ends its five-year term in Naypyitaw, Myanmar. — AP

TRAVEL BAN FUELS TALK OF MYANMAR CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE AND RIFT

MYANMAR CONSTITUTION BARS SUU KYI FROM PRESIDENCY

NAYPYITAW: The party of Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi has instructed its lawmakers not to leave the capital, rank-and-file members said, fuelling speculation of a legal bid to sidestep a clause in the constitution barring the democracy champion from the presidency. Eight new lawmakers from the National League for Democracy (NLD) said the party's top governing body, the 15-strong Central Executive Committee (CEC), had told them to stay in Naypyitaw, where the NLD-dominated parliament began its five-year term this week.

"We are not allowed to take any leave until the end of next week," said a new NLD member who did not want to be identified. "One of the NLD CEC members said there may be some important matters or emergency bills coming up next week." The directive has intensified speculation among lawmakers that the party could table legislation to suspend the provision that prevents Nobel Peace Prize laureate Suu Kyi from becoming president despite her thumping win in a historic election in November.

Senior NLD figures either declined to comment or said they were not aware of such a move, which would represent a major shift in their strategy and could pose a direct challenge to the still-powerful military. The NLD, which won about 80 percent of the contested seats in

the November poll, has so far taken a conciliatory approach to dealing with its former enemies in the armed forces, who ruled the former Burma with an iron fist for almost 50 years. Representatives of the outgoing, military-linked government said any attempt to circumvent the provision would be unlawful.

Constitutional bar

At issue is article 59 (f) of the constitution drafted in 2008 by the junta before it handed power to a semi-civilian government led by former generals in 2011. The article bars anyone with a foreign spouse or children from becoming president. The clause was widely seen as aimed specifically at Suu Kyi - whose two children are British citizens - and the NLD has called the document "ridiculous".

Suu Kyi has said she will rule "above the president," but has given few details about her plans, fuelling speculation about figurehead presidential candidates or legal devices to allow her to lead the new government when a lengthy transition is completed at the end of March. One such device would be to temporarily suspend article 59 (f), a move first floated by prominent lawmaker and former general Aung Ko. He is a close friend of Shwe Mann, the former speaker of parliament purged from the junta-linked

Union Solidarity and Development Party last year and now a key Suu Kyi ally.

Such a temporary suspension, the thinking goes, could allow Suu Kyi to become president without formally changing the constitution, which requires the votes of more than three-quarters of parliamentarians - so giving the military, which holds 25 percent of seats, a veto - and a national referendum. While Myanmar's post-independence 1947 constitution allowed for the suspension of articles, the 2008 charter, which has been criticized as vague and open to interpretation, makes no mention of it. "In our constitution, there's no provision saying whether or not 59 (f) can be suspended," Aung Ko told local media in December. "In such a case, the law can be suspended."

Legal grey area

Ko Ni, the NLD's legal expert, as well as Nyan Win, a senior NLD official and Suu Kyi's legal advisor, said they thought the parliament could suspend the article with a simple majority. "There is an informal way (to amend the constitution) in which we have to enact a special law to temporarily suspend the provision in 59 (f). This law can be enacted by 51 percent of votes at the Union Parliament," said Ko Ni. It was unclear whether the top NLD ranks are planning

to table such a proposal. Nyan Win, a CEC member, and Ko Ni said they did not know of such plans.

Win Htein, a former political prisoner and one of the party's most influential leaders, declined to comment, but told Reuters it would announce its presidential candidate next week. Ye Htut, Information Minister and spokesman for the outgoing President Thein Sein, said a constitutional article could only be suspended in a state of emergency, with executive powers transferred to the army chief.

Such a step would also set a bad precedent for the country's burgeoning democracy, he added in an interview with Reuters. "Now the NLD suspends one article, what happens after 2020, another party comes in and they suspend another 10 articles or 12 articles? So what will happen to our country?" said Ye Htut. The military-owned Myawady daily said in an editorial coinciding with the inauguration of parliament on Monday that it opposed any changes to the constitution. "The head of the state should be someone who the entire people can trust without any doubt," said the editorial. "Therefore, the family members of the head of the state should not be ones who are entitled to enjoy the rights and privileges of a subject of a foreign country." — Reuters

NORTH KOREA GETTING BETTER AT HIDING NUKE, ROCKET TESTS

TOKYO: Less than a month after its purported H-bomb test, attention is now focused on whether North Korea is readying a rocket launch. With underground railways, giant tarps and a movable launch pad structure in place, experts say, the North is getting a lot better at concealing its preparations. American and Japanese officials say they are seeing heightened activity at North Korea's main rocket facility, though they stress

it's still unclear if a launch really is in the works or how soon it might come. Intelligence officials in Seoul, stung by their failure to predict the North's Jan 6 nuclear test, are also cautiously warning another provocation could happen abruptly.

What North Korea might launch is a big question mark. There are indications - including the construction of a new and taller gantry, visi-

ble in commercial satellite imagery - that it could be a bigger and better version of the Unha 3 space launch vehicle that lifted off from the Sohae facility in 2012, on the west coast of North Korea. That would be in line with the North's own previous announcements. The Unha 3 successfully delivered North Korea's first satellite into Earth orbit.

Unha 9

A January 2013 report by the Rodong Sinmun, the ruling party newspaper, which has since been deleted from its online edition, quoted a scientist saying there would be a series of launches of observation and communication satellites culminating with Unha 9, which would carry a lunar orbiter. A North Korean space agency official told an AP television crew last year that more satellite launches are planned in the years ahead, but didn't elaborate. Models of the larger and much more formidable-looking Unha 9 rocket have since been displayed at various events in North Korea, including annual flower shows held in honor of national founder Kim Il Sung and his son, Kim Jong Il.

Although there are important differences, the United States and others have strongly criticized such rocket launches because similar technologies can be used in the development of ICBMs, which North Korea is banned from doing under UN restrictions. North Korea says that it has the right to maintain a peaceful space program and announces launches ahead of time to

maritime authorities, in keeping with international standards. Tightening its punitive squeeze on the North, the US Treasury on Jan 17 announced sanctions on 11 individuals and entities involved in Iran's ballistic missile program, including Iranian officials it said had direct links to North Korea and work being done by Pyongyang on "an 80-ton rocket booster."

It said two of the sanctioned Iranians "have been critical to the development of the 80-ton rocket booster, and both traveled to Pyongyang during contract negotiations." Iran has, coincidentally, suggested it might also conduct a rocket launch this month. Whether the booster would be a new first stage for the Unha rockets or something different is not known. Making firm predictions has become more difficult because of the increasingly sophisticated concealing measures the North has been developing over the past several years.

A huge tarp

Though the kind of intelligence available to agencies in the US and its allies is presumably far better than what they are willing to let on publicly, it is clear from unclassified commercial satellite monitoring that a lot has been going on at the North's main launching facility since the 2012 Unha 3 launch. Concealment upgrades include the construction of an underground railway right up to the launch pad that allows rocket stages to be transported stealthily to the site, possibly from Pyongyang. — AP



TOKYO: A soldier carries a package beside PAC-3 missile launcher as it is seen in position on the grounds of the defense ministry in Tokyo. Japan had ordered its military to be ready to destroy any missile fired by North Korea that threatens the country as concerns mount that Pyongyang is preparing a rocket launch. — AFP

News

in brief

British tourist trampled to death by Thailand elephant

BANGKOK: A British tourist has been trampled to death by an elephant on the Thai tourist island of Koh Samui, police said yesterday, the latest deadly attack by animals used to entertain holidaymakers. The man, identified by police as Gareth Crowe, 36, was riding on the animal's back with his daughter on Monday afternoon when it suddenly threw them off, police said. "We suspect that the hot weather made the elephant angry and that he was not accustomed to his mahout," Paiboon Omark, Samui district chief said. A mahout is the person who trains, controls and rides an elephant, usually after years of building up a close bond with the animal. Paiboon said Crowe had a prosthetic leg and was unable to run away from the marauding pachyderm. His daughter and the mahout, a Myanmar national, were both injured but escaped and are out of danger, he added. The elephant, named "Golf," was tranquilized and is now under control, he said. A spokesman at the British embassy in Bangkok said they were aware of the incident and were providing assistance to the victim's family. Thailand has an estimated 4,000 domesticated elephants, many working in the tourism trade, alongside some 2,500 wild elephants.

China's leader slogan gets a rap treatment

BEIJING: China's official news agency yesterday released a cartoon featuring an animated bald man with waistcoat tucked into his trousers disco-dancing and rapping President Xi Jinping's signature "Four Comprehensives" ideological slogan. The catchphrase, premised by Xi in 2014 and since plastered across newspapers, banners and TV programs, is typical of the Chinese Communist Party's predisposition towards numerical but nebulous buzzwords, such as Jiang Zemin's "Three Represents". The Chinese-language Xinhua video, which features tooting MIDI horns, a flying saucer and a giant fruit-filled wheelbarrow, begins with a countdown. The ruddy-nosed portly man, along with a giant-headed cartoon girl, repeatedly chant: "Say it with me, the four comprehensives, the four comprehensives." Interspersed are the lines "Moderate prosperity is the goal", "Reform is the driving force", "The rule of law is guaranteed" and "Building the Party is the key". The video, which lasts for more than three minutes, is packed with hallucinogenic imagery: a baby monkey swings from a crane, a silver Rubik's cube floats in front of an undulating bulls-eye, and the figure 666666666 drifts across the screen without explanation.

Saudi man executed, 57th execution in 2016

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia yesterday executed one of its citizens for the fatal shooting of another Saudi, bringing to 57 the number of convicts put to death this year. Mosaib Al-Shahrani had been tried and found guilty of killing Hamad Al-Shahrani with an automatic weapon after an argument, an interior ministry statement said. It did not give further details of the connection between them but said the accused was put to death in the southwestern city of Abha. Most executions in Saudi Arabia are done by beheading with a sword. The kingdom on January 2 executed 47 people in a single day for "terrorism". According to an AFP tally, Shahrani is among 10 other locals and foreigners put to death this year. In 2015 the kingdom executed 153 people, mostly for drug trafficking or murder, according to an AFP tally. Amnesty International says the number of executions in Saudi Arabia last year was the highest for two decades. However, the tally was far behind that for China and Iran. The kingdom practices a strict Islamic legal code under which murder, drug trafficking, armed robbery, rape and apostasy are all punishable by death.



KARACHI: Pakistani employees of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) shout slogans as police use a water cannon on them during a protest near Karachi International Airport in Karachi yesterday. — AFP

1 dead, several injured in clashes at Karachi airport

KARACHI: A Pakistan International Airlines employee was shot dead yesterday and several more were wounded after clashes broke out between law enforcement agencies and workers protesting the planned privatization of the national carrier, hospital officials said. Police and paramilitary rangers deployed tear gas and water cannon on the protesters after they blocked the main entrance to Karachi's Jinnah International Airport around midday. A spokesman at the Agha Khan hospital said one of the protesters, identified as Inayat Raza, had died of a gunshot wound. "The PIA employee was brought dead at our emergency department and our team attempted to revive him for 20 minutes," the spokesman said. Nadeem Jaffer, a colleague and friend of Raza, confirmed his death at the hospital. Seemi Jamali, head of the emergency department at the city's main Jinnah Post Graduate Medical Centre said the hospital had received four injured people, including two with non-fatal gunshot wounds. Both law enforcement agencies denied they had opened fire on protesters. Kameran Fazal, the police chief of the city's eastern district said: "The situation escalated when a couple of gunshots were fired. My officers told me that they might be fired from the crowd."

SKIING IN GOLAN, ON EDGE OF SYRIA'S WAR

Continued from Page 1

Israel, more known for its southern desert, is not a country famed for its expertise in winter sports. But the country's only resort and its 14 slopes - which range from green to black - are able to accommodate up to 8,000 visitors a day.

Itay, 28, took a day off from Tel Aviv and made the three-hour journey to test the year's first snow and feel "like I am on holiday abroad." "We have not stopped taking the bus because it could be blown up, or stopped surfing because there could be another war, like the French didn't stop going to concerts because there were attacks," he said, reflecting a widespread mindset among Israelis accustomed to violent conflict.

"There is not much snow in Israel. So coming here is an attraction. We just want to have fun," said Amir Cohen, who brought his children sledging. On the slopes a cross sec-

tion of society includes veiled Muslim women, ultra-Orthodox Jews and UN soldiers on leave from monitoring duties nearby. The most dangerous projectiles traded here are usually snowballs. "Anyway the bombings, you hear them far louder in the villages below than here," said Fayad Abu Saleh, who is, like the majority of other employees at the site, from one of the neighboring Druze villages.

Druze Arabs, who belong to an offshoot of Shiite Islam, are divided between Syria, Lebanon and Israel. "Our dream is that one day this region will be safer and at the turn of a piste you can end up in Syria, and then back to the station to get the Lebanon chairlift," sighed Nabir Abu Saleh, the ski patrol chief. "Every day when you go up here, we think of what is happening in Syria - children and refugees who sleep in tents in the cold. We come with our equipment, our suits, and you can still feel the cold. But them? Yet we cannot do much from here. We just want it to end as soon as possible." — AFP

ISRAEL RAZES EU-FUNDED BUILDINGS

Continued from Page 1

Israel has carried out a long campaign to relocate the residents of the area, which was declared a military zone by the Israeli government in the 1970s. Human rights groups have repeatedly challenged Israel's claim to the land, arguing it is illegal to establish a military zone in occupied territory, Sarit Michaeli from the B'Tselem NGO told AFP.

The families argue that their ancestors, who were cave dwellers, have lived on the land since long before Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967. A statement from COGAT, the Israeli defence ministry unit that administers civilian affairs in the West Bank, confirmed "enforcement measures were taken against illegal structures and solar panels built within a military zone." The EU called on Israel to change its policies in the occupied West Bank. "The EU expects its investments in support of the Palestinian people to be protected from

damage and destruction," said a spokesman, who condemned the demolitions. A High Court injunction later in the day ordered a halt to all demolitions until at least Feb 9. The residents of the region had been undergoing a process of arbitration with Israeli authorities after a High Court ruling, Michaeli said.

However talks broke down in recent days. "This basically means we are back to square one. The government wants to remove them. The residents object," Michaeli said. COGAT said the negotiations failed as "the building owners showed no willingness to get the situation in order and illegal construction did not stop." As such, "measures were taken in accordance with the law," it said. In total, more than 1,000 people could be affected, Michaeli explained, as there are around 10 other villages that could face similar action. The villages are represented by a number of different legal teams, so yesterday's demolitions concerned only one of the claims. — AFP

WHITE HOUSE RACE WIDE OPEN

Continued from Page 1

Surging past expectations, Cruz claimed victory with 27.7 percent of the vote, having invested heavily in campaigning in the deeply conservative state to out-manoeuvre his many rivals.

The showman Trump, 69, built his personal brand on the concept of winning and will need to prove he can turn a commanding lead in the New Hampshire polls into votes after failing to do so in Iowa. Trump struggled to hide his disappointment Monday night, saying he was "honored" to finish second after being given no chance to win Iowa at the outset - before he began dominating the air waves, thanks partly to a series of controversial remarks on Muslims and immigration.

A second hiccup in New Hampshire could spell political disaster for the man who has never held elected office and has always maintained that being second was tantamount to being nowhere. David Redlawsk, a professor at Rutgers University who was in Iowa for the caucuses, told AFP Trump was "the big loser" on the night. That was in stark contrast to Cruz, whose campaign rolls into New Hampshire with renewed vigor.

Once reviled by fellow Republicans as a "wacko bird" eager to shut down the US government, Cruz proved with his Iowa win that his arch-conservatism may yet propel him into the White House. Cruz, who has fought hard to maintain a prominent place for faith in American life, sees himself in a battle for the very soul of the United States. "To God be the glory!" exclaimed Cruz, after Iowans flocked to churches, school gymnasiums and libraries to be the first voices officially heard in the boisterous, tortuous nominating process that leads to Election Day on Nov 8. "Tonight is a victory for courageous conservatives across Iowa and all across this great nation."

While Cruz is aiming to capitalize on his sudden momentum, Sanders returns to what can safely be described as his home turf in New Hampshire, with the potential to land a hammer blow against the former first lady Clinton and her dreams to be America's first female commander-in-chief. Democratic party chair Andy McGuire called the results "the closest in Iowa Democratic caucus history" and that was borne out in the final tally, which did not filter through until Tuesday late morning.

With 100 percent of precincts reporting, Clinton took 49.8 percent, against 49.6 for the Vermont senator Sanders, her sole remaining challenger for the Democratic nomination. Brian Fallon, Clinton campaign spokesman, admitted to CNN that Clinton, who lost out to President Barack Obama last time and has rallied against Wall Street and money in politics, faces an emboldened Sanders in New Hampshire. "There's no doubt that we go into this final week before New Hampshire slightly down (in the polls)," he said.

Experts say Clinton may be seeking to merely tread water for this next week, until the race shifts to South Carolina and Nevada, where she has commanding leads in the polls. It was a gratifying night for 74-year-old Sanders, who has built a particular fanbase with young Americans on the left with his calls for "political revolution." Clinton may have inched past him in Iowa, but Sanders, who has called for a more equitable society, was claiming a victory of another sort. "We started our campaign 40, 50 points behind," he told CNN. "I am proud of bringing a whole lot of young people into the political process that would revitalize American democracy. And if we're going to change America, that's what we've got to do."

Iowa has held the first contest in the country since the early 1970s, giving it extra weight in the electoral process that can translate into momentum for winning candidates. Rubio, 44, may benefit from that momentum as much as Cruz. The Florida lawmaker established himself as the mainstream alternative to the two frontrunning rivals. "Rubio has staying power. He weathered \$30 million in negative ads and late deciders broke his way due to his upbeat and optimistic close," said Republican strategist Scott Reed.

Republican establishment candidates more traditional than Rubio did not fare well in Iowa. Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush took 2.8 percent, Ohio Governor John Kasich took 1.9 percent, and New Jersey Governor Chris Christie took 1.8 percent. Surgeon Ben Carson, an outsider, placed fourth among Republicans with 9 percent. As the frontrunning contenders hit the ground running in New Hampshire, they leave behind several candidates - Republican Mick Huckabee and Democrat Martin O'Malley - who announced they were giving up on the White House after being mauled in Iowa. — Agencies

NEW OIL DEAL CAN DRAW LESSONS FROM '98

Continued from Page 1

Iraq expects to raise output further in 2016.

Meanwhile, Iran says the removal of European sanctions in January should allow it to claw back oil production and a deal with OPEC is unacceptable until output reaches four million bpd. "You cannot have a deal with non-OPEC, until you achieve a credible OPEC framework which at the moment is not possible because of Iraq and Iran. Until there can be some framework between Iran, Saudi and Iraq, all this non-OPEC talk is just noise," said Elguindi.

Saudi Arabia's Oil Minister Ali Al-Naimi, who has been in office since 1995, has said the kingdom would join cuts if key OPEC and non-OPEC players cooperated. But insiders say, Saudi Arabia and its Gulf allies Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates are all deeply sceptical that a workable consensus can be reached. "Iran and Iraq remain the main challenges inside OPEC and Russia won't agree to a cut and is not to be trusted," a senior Gulf OPEC delegate told Reuters.

Change in Dynamic

In the past month, however, all parties involved have sent signals suggesting the world oil dynamic may be changing. Iran's main oil export official, Mohsen Qamsari, said in January he did not want a price war and might increase shipments gradually to avoid hurting world prices. And Iraqi Oil Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi also said his country would support an extraordinary OPEC meeting if a joint cut with non-OPEC could be agreed beforehand. "It is useless to go to a meeting without deciding up front. We said 'yes' if others are willing to go but we have to decide before. Otherwise this will backfire on us," he said.

The statements by Iran and Iraq coincided with a change of rhetoric from Russia where the head of its pipeline monopoly and close ally of President Vladimir Putin, Nikolai Tokarev, said joint action was possible to halt slumping prices. For years, Russian officials said oil production cuts were technically difficult after an ill-fated deal with OPEC in 2001, when Moscow agreed to cooperate but raised exports instead. It was this that created the mistrust that exists today.

But back then Putin was only at the start of his first presidential term and had little control of the oil industry, split between various oligarchs following the chaotic privatisation after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Fast forward 15 years, and the oil industry is mostly owned by the Kremlin and Putin has almost absolute power. "You have to take this seriously now. Key will be if Russia can deliver," said OPEC watcher and founder of US-based Pira Group Gary Ross, who was involved in the 2001 Russia-OPEC talks.

Putin and his ally, head of Kremlin oil major Rosneft, Igor Sechin, have yet to speak about the recent talk of a

joint move with OPEC. But Sechin in the past said he would not support cooperation by Russia, where one popular conspiracy theory maintains that the low oil prices of the 1980s were orchestrated by Saudi Arabia and the United States to undermine the Soviet Union. Sechin has also said OPEC had "lost its teeth".

A year ago, Putin said it was possible that the current price crash was orchestrated in the same way as the crash of the 1980s, which effectively led to a collapse of the Soviet Union - a huge tragedy, according to Putin. "There is a lot of talk today about why it is happening. Maybe it is a Saudi-US plot to punish Iran, or put pressure on the Russian economy or Venezuela," Putin said back then. But with the Russian rouble sinking to a record low and a parliamentary election this year and a presidential election in 2018, pressure is rising on the Kremlin to protect state revenues and limit public discontent.

'Grand Bargain'

Russia's latest rhetoric has left OPEC watchers and Kremlinologists guessing if it is just a verbal intervention to lift oil prices or whether it is part of a real deal for Putin, which may also involve a compromise with Saudi Arabia over Syria or indeed any other "Grand Bargain". Putin has dispatched heavyweight veteran foreign minister Sergei Lavrov to the Middle East this week. Lavrov, who has almost never spoken about oil, will travel to Oman and the UAE to discuss the oil market.

Meanwhile, Venezuelan Oil Minister Eulogio Del Pino will visit Russia, Qatar, Iran and Saudi Arabia this week to drum up support for a joint cut in oil production. And just like in 1998, behind-the-scenes talks are gathering pace. When Putin met the Emir of Qatar last month in Moscow, oil was on the agenda, according to a senior source in the Gulf. And just as in 1998 and 1999, when it took two years and many secret meetings in Miami, Madrid, the Hague, Amsterdam and Riyadh to clinch two decisive supply cuts, the process in 2016 could be equally painful.

The head of Kremlin-backed Russian Direct Investment Fund, Kirill Dmitriyev, said a deal between Russia and OPEC was possible but at the right time, "maybe within a year", when the markets rebalance and it became easier to reach agreements. Goldman Sachs, which is bearish on oil, said it believes cooperation between OPEC and Russia would be "highly unlikely" and also self-defeating as higher prices would bring shelved output, including in the United States, back onto the market. But sceptics could do well to read a paper by Robert Mabro, founder of the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies who helped to broker the 1998 deal. Mabro wrote at the time: "Changes in policy are always possible, even likely, when significant revenue losses are at stake." — Reuters

TATA RENAMES 'ZICA' CAR AS VIRUS SPREADS

Continued from Page 1

born with microcephaly, or abnormally small heads. Brazil has warned pregnant women to stay away from the Olympics, which open in August in Rio de Janeiro. The Aedes aegypti mosquito, which

carries Zika and the dengue and chikungunya viruses, is also widely prevalent in India. Zika was first detected in a Ugandan forest of the same name in 1947, but it was considered a relatively mild disease until the current outbreak was declared in Latin America last year. — AFP

PACI TO INCREASE CIVIL ID FEES TO KD 5 FROM...

Continued from Page 1

Zalzalah was quoted as saying in Al-Anbaa newspaper yesterday that the government will raise prices of petrol by up to 61 percent. He said that low-grade petrol (90) will be raised from 60 to 85 fils, high grade (95) from 65 to 105 fils while ultra-grade petrol (98) will be raised from 90 to 145 fils. He gave no indications about new electricity charges.

The Assembly bureau is scheduled to meet with the Supreme Planning Council and the government on Sunday to study the issue ahead of the Assembly session. Information Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said yesterday that a national conference for rationalizing expenditures will be held early next month to launch an awareness campaign to stop squandering of public resources and misuse of services.

In another development, MP Abdullah Maayouf asked the finance ministry about alleged financial violations committed by the office of Justice Minister Yaqoub Al-Sane. He asked if financial controllers have made any remarks regarding the finances of the two ministries and authorities under them since Sept 2014. He inquired about the size of any financial violations found by the controllers and if any violations were committed by the minister's office in the two ministries. Maayouf demanded a list of the alleged violations and photocopies of the reports of the financial controllers about the two ministries.

Last week, Maayouf accused the minister of committing violations regarding politically-motivated appointments to boost the minister's electoral position. The lawmaker also threatened to grill the minister unless he stops such appointments.

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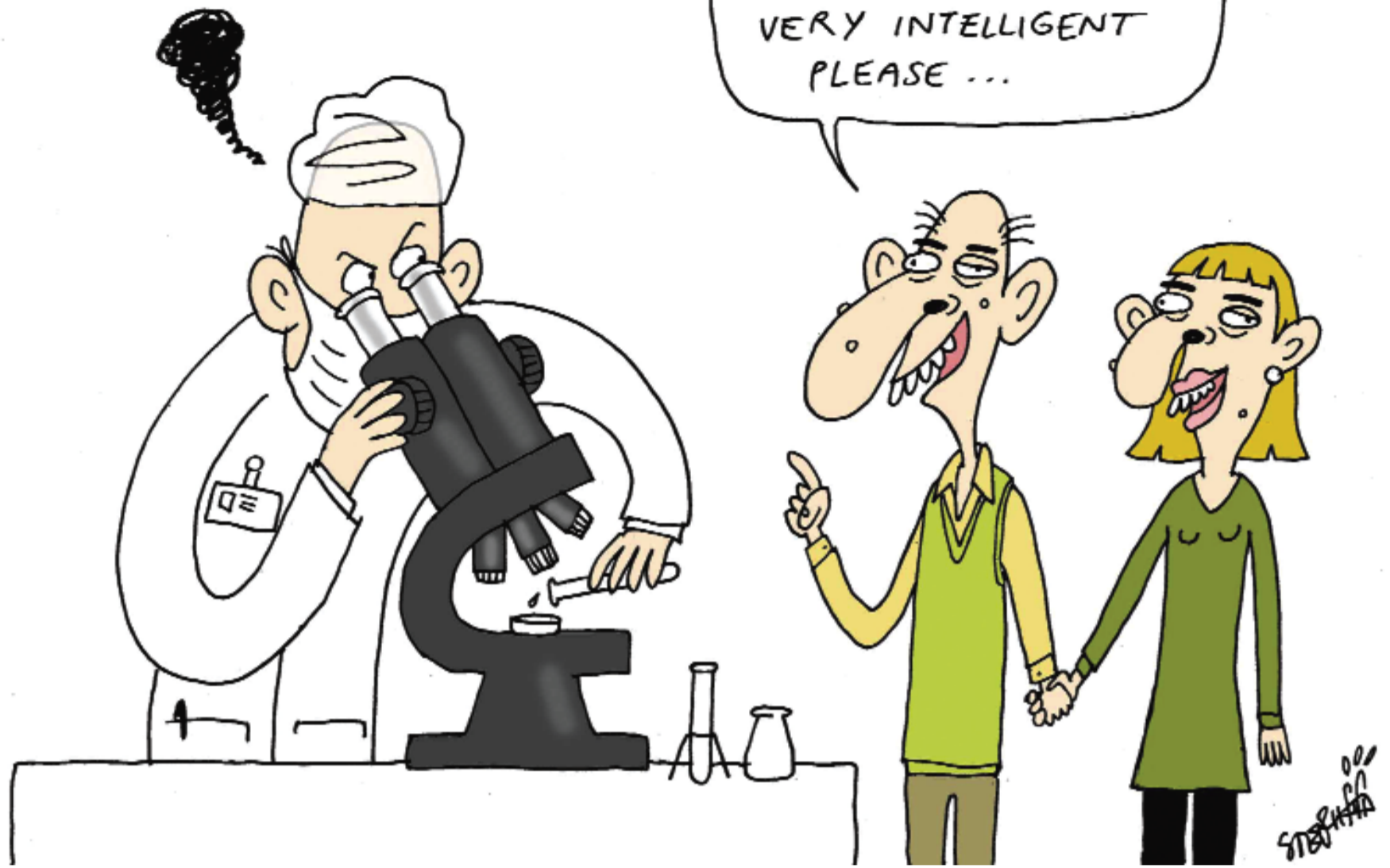
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COALITION AIMS TO RECAPTURE IS 'CALIPHATE'

By Samia Nakhoul

The US-led coalition fighting Islamic State aims this year to recapture Iraq's second city Mosul, working with Iraqi government forces, and drive the jihadis out of Raqqa, their stronghold in northeast Syria, Arab and Western officials say. If it succeeds, the coalition will have struck a crippling blow against Islamic State's self-proclaimed caliphate in Iraq and Syria. The strategy is to regain territory at the heart of IS' cross-border state, take both its "capitals", and destroy the confidence of its fighters that it can expand as a Sunni caliphate and magnet for jihadis, according to these Arab and Western officials, few of whom were willing to speak on the record on a matter of such strategic sensitivity.

"The plan is to hit them in Raqqa in Syria and in Iraq at Mosul, to crush their capitals," said an Iraqi official with knowledge of the strategy. "I think there is some speed and urgency by the coalition, by the US administration and by us to end this year with the regaining of control over all territory." Iraqi officials say 2016 will witness the elimination of Daesh (IS) and the Americans have the same idea - get the job finished, then they can withdraw and (President Barack) Obama will have a legacy," said a diplomat in Baghdad, emphasising the Iraqi part of the operation. "The day Mosul is liberated, Daesh will be defeated." The war against jihadi insurgents in this turbulent region has had its twists and turns but there is a palpable sense in Baghdad that the tide has turned against IS.

Twin-Pronged Anti-IS Strategy

In the year after the jihadis' summer 2014 surge back into Iraq from the bases they managed to build amid the chaos of Syria's civil war, IS momentum as a rapid, flexible and brutal military force seemed unstoppable. But in the past nine months IS has lost swathes of territory and strategic towns. In Iraq it was driven out of Tikrit and Sinjar in the north, the oil refinery town of

Baiji in central Iraq, and Ramadi west of Baghdad in Anbar province, the heart of insurgency after the 2003 US-led invasion that toppled Saddam.

In northern Syria, US-allied Kurdish militia of the People's Protection Units (YPG) have taken vital territory and border crossings below the frontier with Turkey, after breaking a long IS siege at Kobani and later taking Tel Abyad, north of Raqqa and a key supply line for the jihadi capital. "Daesh are losing their ability to hold onto territory in Iraq and to stage the kind of complex attacks that allow them to hold the towns they seized," said a US official, adding that the recapture of Mosul would start in 2016.

Lieutenant-General Sean MacFarland, Baghdad-based head of the US-led coalition, emphasised to a group of reporters last month the twin-pronged approach to operations against IS in Iraq, "in conjunction with something we might have going on over in Syria about the same time (and) see if we can put pressure on the enemy in two places at once and create a dilemma." Hisham Al-Hashemi, an Iraqi expert on IS who advises the Iraqi government on the group, points out that as a result of last year's setbacks "out of seven strategic roads between Iraq and Syria they (IS) now have one; they cannot move with ease and Turkey has tightened the noose on them." IS is under pressure across many other fronts apart from its ability to deploy. The collapse in oil prices has dented its revenue from oil smuggling, now through a less permeable Turkish border, from captured Syrian and Iraqi fields.

Covert Operations

Coalition air strikes recently incinerated a stockpile of cash from looting and kidnapping, taxation and extortion, forcing IS to cut wages. It is losing top cadres. More than 100 mid-level to senior leaders have been killed since May, according to coalition spokesman Colonel Steve Warren, who says that "works out to an average of one every two days." The place where they were holding huge cash reserves was targeted

and destroyed," the diplomat told Reuters. "Daesh will be defeated in Iraq. It is not a question of if but when," added another senior Western diplomat in Iraq. A top Iraqi official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Mosul operation would require delicate collaboration between the US air force, the Iraqi army, local Sunni tribal forces, and Peshmerga fighters from the self-governing Kurdistan Regional Government east of the city. "Most likely, coalition special forces will be embedded with the Iraqi forces and the Peshmerga will close on Mosul from the north and east."

In Syria, he said, the likely combination would involve coalition air strikes with special forces and US-led covert missions operating alongside mainly Kurdish fighters of the YPG and other Syrian rebels. "They have some special forces on the ground in Syria in Hasaka, on the outskirts of Raqqa with the rebels," the Iraqi official said. An airstrip at Hasaka is being prepared by the United States for this purpose.

The official warned, however, of the need for coordination with Russia, which brought its air force to Syria last September to shore up the Iran-backed rule of President Bashar al-Assad, and is using an airstrip in Qamishli further north, but focusing most of its fire on mainstream and other Islamist rebels rather than IS. This "competition between the two superpowers is really very, very dangerous," he said. "There must be coordination (around) the complex operations that will take place."

Libya, New IS Destination

Yet even in the unlikely event that all these plans go like clockwork, that alone would not put an end to IS. The group, IS experts say, has become expert at defensive warfare, and is spreading its tentacles from Europe to North Africa. Inside the recaptured city of Ramadi the Iraqi army found a warren of underground tunnels the jihadi forces used for shelter, mobility and escape. Mosul, a far bigger city with one million people and a river on one side, is heavily

defended and tunnelled, with berms, trenches and hidden bombs.

Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, the IS "caliph" still based near Mosul, has already begun to anticipate tactical reverses. Arab and Western security sources say he has recently sent several hundred of his top lieutenants to Libya, to consolidate the existing IS bridgehead there amid the chaos of a splintering country, and to offset diminishing revenue in Syria and Iraq by creaming off Libyan oil resources. Coalition dependence on Kurdish forces in both northern Syria and Iraq, and the Iraqi army's reliance on Iran-backed Shiite militia up until the reconquest of Ramadi by regular forces, were and are being exploited by IS as a means to rally Sunni Arab grievances. Battlefield success will count for little, officials and diplomats say, without political reconciliation and power-sharing to heal the wounds opened in the ethno-sectarian bloodletting that followed the overthrow of Saddam's minority Sunni Arab rule in 2003.

After Mosul?

Islamic State, whose forerunner first emerged as a Sunni reaction to the US installation of Shiite majority rule in Iraq, twisted the sectarian knife in the country. But after the fall of Mosul, then prime minister Nouri Al-Maliki, leader of the Shiite Islamist Dawa party, who had alienated the Sunnis by tearing up a power-sharing pact with them and the Kurds, was pushed aside. He was replaced by a more conciliatory Dawa leader, Haider Al-Abadi.

Most observers give Abadi credit for trying to be more inclusive by negotiating oil revenue sharing with the Kurdistan Regional Government, proposing a National Guard, under which the different sects and ethnic groups would police their areas, and setting out a vision of a decentralized, federal Iraq. Yet distrust of the Dawa is now so engrained it extends to Abadi. "The problem among the Shi'ites, especially in Dawa, is that there is a deep anti-Sunni feeling," said one Iraqi leader. — Reuters

WANTED: A GRAND
BARGAIN TO RESCUE
EU FROM 'POLYCRISIS'

By Paul Taylor

The European Union needs an ambitious grand bargain at its next summit to rescue itself from an accumulation of crises that threaten to blow apart its model of integration. Like children at a birthday party, each leader has to get a going-home present. And as with many children's parties, there may be a tantrum along the way. German Chancellor Angela Merkel is at risk at home from a backlash against a mass influx of Syrian refugees. British Prime Minister David Cameron is trying to win a referendum on staying in the EU and cannot help her due to public hostility to immigration. Nor can French President Francois Hollande, who is struggling for re-election in a country transfixed by the threat from Islamist militants.

Berlin, the EU's pivotal power, sees controlling migration as the central priority as it tries to cope with one million asylum seekers who have arrived in the last year. Ideally, EU leaders need to forge a deal on Feb. 18-19 that encompasses effective action to strengthen Europe's external borders and share the refugee burden, and a mutually acceptable solution to Britain's demands to change its membership terms.

A comprehensive package would also need to address Italy's political and economic frustrations with the EU, Greece's quest for substantial debt relief, and Poland's wish to see NATO raise its military presence in eastern Europe to deter Russia. "These deals are only possible when countries are in a state of symmetrical despair," said Laszlo Andor, a professor at Brussels' ULB University and former Hungarian EU commissioner. A package deal might yield a more integrated "core Europe", adding an EU border and coast guard and a common asylum policy, and a looser union for countries like Britain that opt to stay outside the 19-nation euro single currency area. A deal seems within reach with London that would formally exempt the UK from the EU goal of "ever closer union", shield its financial sector from being regulated abusively by the euro zone and let it withhold some benefits from new migrant workers if its social welfare system were under great strain. The EU would cease to be a "two-speed Europe", with all 28 members converging at different paces towards the same goal, and become a permanent two-tier or multi-tier construction, possibly with an outer circle of associates such as Turkey and Ukraine.

Tipping Point

While European leaders' despair may not be symmetrical, the refugee crisis is concentrating minds on a threat that could break the union, fan populism and alienate British voters. European Council President Donald Tusk has warned that the EU is close to a tipping point, saying it has only six to eight weeks left to save the Schengen zone of passport-free travel or see national barriers slam shut for the duration. That raises the urgency of a deal with Greece and Italy, the main arrival points for migrants from Turkey and North Africa.

Horse-trading to accommodate multiple national interests is a classic technique for advancing European integration and seems designed to break logjams in what Juncker calls a "polycrisis". Rome is blocking an EU aid package for Turkey to help curb the influx of migrants into Europe; Athens stands accused of failing to guard its borders or to register and retain asylum-seekers on its soil; and Warsaw is under scrutiny in Brussels over laws shackling the judiciary and the media.

Each of those countries has hinted it is willing to do more to help others if its own interests are taken into account. Merkel is keen to help Cameron win his planned referendum on whether Britain should stay in the EU, but she is increasingly fighting for her own political skin in the refugee crisis. Berlin feels it has received little solidarity from its EU partners, while elsewhere there is a sense that reluctance to share the refugee burden is partly payback for perceived German bullying during the euro zone crisis.

Germany and its Dutch, Austrian and Finnish allies are more inclined to use sticks than carrots with Greece. The European Commission this week gave Athens three months to fix "serious deficiencies" in its management of the bloc's external frontiers or face suspension from the Schengen area. That deadline expires just as Greek debt talks are due to start. Domestic headwinds may make it harder for Merkel to use her dwindling political capital to offer concessions to Greece on rescheduling its debt to euro zone countries.

Many in Berlin and Brussels doubt Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras can deliver tighter border controls or keep tens of thousands of migrants penned up in Greece until they can be relocated to reluctant EU countries. Yet the chancellor has voiced understanding for Greece's plight as a frontline state and says she wants a "European solution" to the refugee crisis. No one wants another "Grexit" crisis this year on top of the EU's other woes. If Greek compliance is uncertain, Turkey's cooperation in preventing migrants leaving its shores for Europe in return for 3 billion euros in aid is subject to deep scepticism. — Reuters

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CUBA RACIAL INEQUALITY DEEPENS WITH BOOM

By Chris Arsenaull

As warming relations with the United States bring new money and tourists to Havana, some black Cubans like Miguel Campuzano Perez say racial inequalities are widening and they are being left out of a potential capitalist boom. Cuba's economy grew by 4 percent in 2015 and more than 3.5 million tourists visited the island in the year Washington and Havana restored diplomatic ties, ending more than five decades of Cold War animosity. New hotels and restaurants are opening around the capital famous for its colonial architecture and 1950s American cars, and Cubans with money to invest in businesses have seen living standards improve.

But with no access to capital, and no family living abroad to send back money, 54-year-old Perez said he and other black Cubans are being excluded from the benefits of economic liberalization. "The black people don't have powerful families, and that continues generation to generation," Perez, a musician and former soldier, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "The people benefiting from remittances are white; the landlords are white."

As capitalism creeps into Cuba more than 60 years after a revolution that promised social equality, local residents and analysts are concerned about the gap between the haves and have nots and the ethnic undertones of growing inequality on the island.

'White Flight' - to Miami

Just under 10 percent of Cubans identified themselves as black in the country's 2012 census. But statistics on Cuba's racial makeup are

imprecise as more than a quarter of the population is a mix between various ethnic groups. Following Cuba's 1959 revolution, the government of Fidel Castro, brother of current president Raul, introduced laws on racial inclusion, launched a literacy campaign, and universal public services in an attempt to tackle entrenched inequality.

African slaves, primarily from West Africa, were brought to Cuba by Spanish colonizers from the 1500s to work on the sugar plantations. Slavery was formally abolished on the island in 1886 but blacks were still banned from some high-end establishments and excluded from well-paid, and most Afro-Cubans worked on plantations or as manual laborers. Free education and healthcare programs from the communist government helped made it possible for previously disadvantaged groups to get jobs as teachers, doctors or government workers in the 1960s, residents said.

"Afro-Cubans have been the biggest reservoir of support for the revolution and are those most affected by worsening inequality," Paolo Spadoni, a political scientist at Augusta University in the United States told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Today, outright discrimination isn't the main cause of the growing wealth gap between blacks and whites, Havana residents said. Rather, migration networks, remittances and broader economic changes are the driving factors.

Much of the island's predominately white business elite left following the revolution with many settling in Miami, Florida, just 150 km from the Cuban coast. "The vast majority who left to live abroad happened to be white

Cubans," said Isaac Saney, a Canadian university professor who researches ethnic issues in Cuba. "They are sending remittances home and their relatives can invest in small businesses. This has led to an increase in racial inequality," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Two Economies

In 1991, the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba's main trading partner, ravaged the island's economy, making life particularly difficult for residents who didn't have family members abroad. The average salary for a government worker, about \$25 per month, has lost three quarters of its purchasing power since 1989, Spadoni said. While poorly paid, many state workers continue to receive other perks like subsidized food, and accommodation.

Cuba has two currencies - the Cuban peso which is paid to state employees and is worth about \$0.04 and the Convertible Peso, which is worth one US dollar. In the pursuit of foreign currency, professors left university jobs to work as hotel waiters and doctors took to driving taxis. Some black Cubans say they have trouble getting comparatively lucrative jobs in hotels, because of discrimination. "You need to be white to get good work," said Daniel Alberto Suarez, 42, an informal tour-guide, while drinking rum with two female European clients. "Hotel and bar owners are making good money, but for regular people life is hard. I have no family abroad to send me money."

A raft of economic reforms beginning in 2008 made it easier for Cubans to open private businesses, intensifying the importance of remittances as start-up capital. Miguel Hernandez, who has light skin, manages a

restaurant popular with foreigners in old Havana earning \$100 per day, a large salary by local standards. "There is a lot of inequality between my friends who work for the state, and me who works in tourism," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "People will study to be a doctor, hang the title on the wall, then go work in a restaurant."

'Preserving the Revolution'

While many young people, black and white, said they're positive about Cuba's new direction, some older Cubans are concerned about what they could lose and what it could mean for the island's society. "We need keep the ideas of the revolution: Free education, health-care, taking care of the elderly and racial equality," Maria Luz Fernandez, 52, a primary school administrator, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Earning \$40 per month, Fernandez, who is of mixed race ancestry, is well aware she earns less than young waiters from her neighborhood who walk by the school wearing flashy clothes and knock-off designer watches. Young people want big houses and cars, but "the revolution can't afford to provide that for everyone," she said, her long, gold fingernail extensions tapping the table.

With more foreign money coming into the economy, she hopes the benefits will trickle down, and teachers and other state employees will eventually see higher salaries. "When the Americans come, (there will be less) equality," she said, as children wearing school uniforms and carrying pink Barbie backpacks wait for their parents. "The government needs to share the new wealth with the people." — Reuters

MCNAMARA LEAVES ROLE AS ENGLAND COACH

LONDON: Steve McNamara has left his role as head coach of England, the Rugby Football League (RFL) announced yesterday. "The RFL has concluded that with the 2016 Four Nations and 2017 World Cup on the horizon, now is the time to make any change to the England set-up," RFL chief executive Nigel Wood said in a statement. McNamara, 44, had been in the role since 2010. His contract expired following November's Test series against New Zealand, which England won 2-1, and he has been told he will not be offered a new deal. Veteran Australian Wayne Bennett, current head coach of the Brisbane Broncos, is expected to be appointed as McNamara's successor. "Steve McNamara has been the longest serving national coach in our history and it is undoubtedly the case that the national team and set-up have moved on considerably under Steve's leadership," Wood added. "We would like to place on record our thanks to Steve McNamara for his considerable efforts over the years to both the England senior team and the underlying programme. He leaves with our very best wishes and on a high, after a series win over New Zealand." —AFP



NIGERIA VOWS CLAMPDOWN AFTER 8 TEST POSITIVE

ABUJA: Nigerian Sports Minister Solomon Dalung yesterday vowed to tighten anti-doping measures after eight athletes tested positive during last year's All Africa Games in Congo. "This has brought to the fore the need to conduct more dope tests and strengthen all components of the nation's anti-doping programme in order to detect, deter and prevent our athletes from this unethical behaviour," Dalung told a press conference. Competing in five sports-athletics, para-athletics, weightlifting, para-weightlifting and wrestling — the athletes tested positive for banned substances ranging from anabolic steroids to diuretics. Seven were banned for four years with weightlifter Elizabeth Onuah, a second time offender, getting an eight-year suspension. A patron of the Nigeria Olympic Committee, Ibrahim Galadima, said this scandal could adversely affect the country at the Rio Olympics in August. "It is indeed embarrassing. It is a major setback at the wrong time. Our preparations for the 2016 Rio Olympics are shaky and so this is indeed very unfortunate," he lamented. —AFP

GARDE DOWN BUT NOT OUT AFTER DEADLINE DEBACLE

LONDON: Aston Villa manager Remi Garde says the danger of his club toppling out of the Premier League and a reluctance to spend big meant that he failed to make any signings during the transfer window that could have helped the team stay up. But, he said via the club's website (www.avfc.co.uk), the team will cope. The Frenchman missed out on all his targets, with Roma's Seydou Doumbia opting for Newcastle United, Girondins Bordeaux midfielder Wahbi Khazri heading to Sunderland and Hajduk Split goalkeeper Lovre Kalinic being denied a work permit. Villa is eight points adrift of safety. "I am disappointed. I know the team needs strengthening and improving with new players," the manager said. "Probably the main reasons we haven't been able to are that we are bottom of the league and not very attractive for players—and also because financially speaking the club is not in the situation, probably, where they wanted to spend too much money." —Reuters



OVER 70 PLAYERS PARTICIPATE IN HANDICAP SPORTS TOURNAMENT

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The local handicap sports tournament started on Sunday evening at the Kuwait Handicap Sports Club with the participation of more than 70 players competing in swimming, table tennis, and basketball. The opening ceremony was attended by the honorary president of the club Sheikh Al-Sabah and a delegation from the Public Authority for Sports. Deputy Chairman of the Club Nasser Al-Ajmi said the championship included all age groups and was of good standard on its first day in three games. He said the club seeks to develop and enhance the level of players and prepare them at the best way possible for international competition.

Meanwhile, table tennis player Hamid Wabdan said the tournament is very important to keep players well prepared physically, and not rely on exercises only. He said the first day competition showed good skills in juniors. Meanwhile, Chairman of Kuwait Handicapped Sports Club Shafi Al-Hajiri said the local championship has been a success, especially in discovering skilled players, he said the championship was organized to coincide with Kuwait's celebrations of the National Days and 10 year on HH the Amir ascension to power. Al-Hajiri said that PAS Chairman Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour Al-Sabah follows the club activities, and removes all obstacles both local and foreign in order to enhance the handicapped sports.

He said that preparations are ongoing to participate in an athletic event in Sharqa, UAE, and will be preceded by a training camp. Al-Hajiri said that the aim is to have three players participate in Brazil Olympic 2016. He said the championship that included all age groups sowed a good technical level specially the young players. He said the club seeks to improve the level of players at all levels. On his part, President of the Handicapped Basketball Asian Federations lauded the support of PAS for this and other championships organized by the club. He said Kuwait is the Gulf champion in basketball in addition to west Asia region.



KSSC TO ORGANISE SHEIKH ABDALLAH AL-MUBARAK AL-SABAH CUP TOURNEY

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Shooting Sports Club will organize the late Sheikh Abdallah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah Cup tournament in the air pistol and rifle, as well as Olympic archery from Feb 4 until Feb 7, at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex. Kuwait Shooting Sport Club Obeid Al-Osaimi said KSSC is proud to organize the cup of late Sheikh Abdallah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah each year, and it coincides this year with Kuwait's celebration of its glorious national days. He said this cup has great memories for one of Kuwait's sincere men, who has many achievements, and limitless giving, which contributed to Kuwait's development. Al-Osaimi congratulated the Kuwaiti people on the occasion of the National and Liberation days. Al-Osaimi lauded the late Sheikh as a successful leader, who cared for Kuwait and its people, and was characterized by being keen on Kuwait security and safety of its people. He said the club remembers this generous personality, so youth can take example from it during their life. Al-Osaimi concluded by hoping that Kuwait shooters exert their efforts during the tournament and get distinguished results, as it is one of the beneficial experiences before starting their competitions abroad.



Obeid Al-Osaimi

QATAR'S AL ATTIAH GUNNING FOR SIXTH OLYMPIC APPEARANCE

NEW DELHI: Qatari sportsman Nasser Al Attiyah swapped the steering wheel for the shotgun as the twice Dakar Rally winner targets a sixth Olympic appearance at the Rio de Janeiro Games in August. The 45-year-old, who won bronze in the men's skeet at the London Olympics, is competing at the ongoing Asian shooting Championship on the outskirts of New Delhi, hoping to maintain his record of competing at each Games since 1996. "I have been five times in Olympic Games - Atlanta, Sydney, Athens, Beijing and London," the Qatari told Reuters TV. "(I won) bronze medal in London. And now really it will be dream for me to (also) compete in Rio, like six times in Olympic Games." Rallying and marksmanship are not easy to combine but Al Attiyah said he enjoyed both. "I love both sport - rally and shooting. And this was my dream for a long time, to be champion in rally and champion in shooting and this was really a good thing what I make for myself." He took to shooting hoping it would help him focus better behind the wheel when competing in the gruelling rallies, before Al Attiyah fell to the charm of shooting clay targets flung into the air. His busy rallying schedule does impact his shooting but Al Attiyah claimed bronze - only the fourth medal Qatar have ever won at the Olympics - in London after only 10 days of practice. "It is not easy. When I started rally, I was looking for another sport to help me from (the) concentration side and I find myself one day practicing shooting and I said, 'okay this is a right sport to help me for driving, for rally.' "But I find also myself good in shooting and I said 'why not to be one of the Olympic medal (winner) in shooting.'" —Reuters

CAVENDISH DEFENDS DUBAI CROWN WITH NEW TEAM

DUBAI: Defending Dubai Tour champion Mark Cavendish goes into the 2016 edition, which starts today, looking for his first win since joining South African team Dimension Data. The Briton won the overall title last year while still with Etixx Quick-Step thanks to victories on the first and fourth stages. Cavendish left Quick-Step at the end of last season to join the first African cycling team to take part in the Tour de France, MTN-Qhubeka, who have since been renamed Dimension Data. The 30-year-old, who has won 44 stages on Grand Tours, also took Etixx team-mates Mark Renshaw and Bernhard Eisel with him to his new outfit. Ahead of the race Eisel said the onus was on his new team to deliver a stage win for Cavendish. "The pressure is on us," the Austrian said. This is the third time the Dubai Tour has been held, and it will have by far its most impressive start-list so far. Cavendish will have to battle with the likes of German Marcel Kittel and Italians Elia Viviani, Andrea Guardini and Sacha Modolo if he is to get off the mark for the season. "This is a great opportunity for us to work on getting our lead-out train in good order," said Kittel, who won three stages in Dubai during

the maiden staging in 2014 and has taken Cavendish's place as Quick-Step's main sprinter. It is not only the sprinters who are under the microscope this week though. Swiss veteran Fabian Cancellara, German time-trial specialist Tony Martin, former world road race champion Philippe Gilbert of Belgium and 2012 Tour de France champion Bradley Wiggins will all be taking part. It is a rare road outing for 35-year-old Brit Wiggins as the four-time Olympic gold medalist will focus on the track this year ahead of the Rio de Janeiro Games. But with bonus seconds on offer for stage victories, Manxman Cavendish will still fancy his chances of holding onto the blue jersey that goes to the winner of the General Classification. **The route:** Wednesday (stage 1): Dubai Marine Club to Fujairah, 179 kilometres Thursday (stage 2): Dubai to Palm Jumeirah, 183 km Friday (stage 3): Dubai to Hatta Dam, 172 km Saturday (stage 4): Dubai to Business Bay, 137 km Previous champions: 2014: Taylor Phinney (USA) 2015: Mark Cavendish (GBR). — AFP

MALDONADO HOPING FOR 2017 RETURN TO F1, SAYS MANAGER

LONDON: Venezuelan driver Pastor Maldonado has not given up on Formula One and hopes to be back next year after being dropped by the Renault-owned Lotus team, his manager Nicolas Todt said yesterday.

"I don't see any concrete opportunity for Formula One this year," the Frenchman told Reuters. "We will try to bounce back in 2017."

The Frenchman, son of International Automobile Federation (FIA) president and former Ferrari team principal Jean Todt, said the decision to replace Maldonado had come late in the day but

the split was amicable.

Maldonado announced on Monday, in a statement posted on Twitter, that he would not be on the starting grid when the season starts in Australia on March 20. The only Venezuelan to win a grand prix, with Williams in 2012, the driver did not say what he planned to do or give any reason for his absence.

Media reports indicated, however, that his backers, the Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA that has paid tens of millions of dollars in sponsorship, had missed scheduled payments to the team. PDVSA has been hit by plunging

oil prices and economic crisis in Venezuela, which is in recession and where annual inflation has risen to almost 150 percent.

"I don't want to go into the details of the contract," said Todt. "The agreement was terminated in a friendly manner with Renault so no hard feelings. They behaved very fairly."

Denmark's Kevin Magnussen is set to replace Maldonado, with the team expected to be renamed as Renault following the French carmaker's takeover of the Lotus team in December, alongside British rookie Jolyon Palmer.

The team are due to hold a news conference in Paris on Wednesday to announce their line-up, managerial structure and future plans.

Manor, Formula One's smallest team who competed as Marussia last year and finished last overall with no points, are the only ones yet to contract any drivers for 2016 but Todt ruled out Maldonado going there.

The Frenchman, who was also manager to the late Marussia driver Jules Bianchi and represents Brazilian Felipe Massa at Williams, said Manor were a better fit for a young driver starting out

than a 30-year-old race winner like Maldonado.

Manor, who need their drivers to bring substantial sponsorship to make up the team budget, have been linked to Indonesian rookie Rio Haryanto who is trying to raise \$16 million to secure the seat. Mercedes's German reserve driver Pascal Wehrlein is another leading candidate now that the champions are providing Manor with engines.

"Manor are not really an option," said Todt. "After five years at Williams and Lotus...with all due respect to Manor, it makes no sense for Pastor." — Reuters

MCILROY INSPIRED BY 'UNREAL' DJOKOVIC

DUBAI: Four-time Major winner Rory McIlroy can't beat Novak Djokovic at his own game but he can share Olympic gold medal victory honours with the Serbian ace later this year in Rio de Janeiro.

This would be McIlroy's Brazil dream when golf returns to the Summer Olympics in August. McIlroy was firstly in awe watching TV coverage last week of Djokovic's clinical four sets Australian Open semi-final defeat of Roger Federer and he gleaned further inspiration from the Serbian's three-set demolition of Andy Murray to win an 11th Grand Slam title.

It was the 28-year old Djokovic's sixth Australian Open title and his fifth in the past six years as he closes in on Federer's all-time best of 17 Grand Slam titles.

McIlroy still has some catching-up to do having won four Majors, but he is looking forward to completing his own golfing career Grand Slam in April's Masters at Augusta National.

McIlroy said he had been introduced to Djokovic when dating former fiancée Caroline Wozniacki.

"I know Novak well and living in Monaco, as he does, I got to know him when I found myself also spending a bit of time there," said McIlroy. "But then his performance in the Australian Open was unreal, unreal."

"For the first two sets in the semi against Federer, I've never seen tennis like it and it was just incredible. "Novak is just on another level at the moment and from where he was when he won his first 'Slam' in 2008 to where he is now, is just amazing."

"So I find watching the tennis he played in Australia very inspirational given the dedication he's shown to his game along with his work ethic."

"And it would be nice in going to Rio for the Olympic Games to hopefully come away what he more than likely should earn,

and that's a gold medal."

FOND MEMORIES

McIlroy spent yesterday on the Emirates Club practice range and putting green but without taking to the course ahead of Thursday's defence of his Dubai Desert Classic title.

He spent last week at the nearby Els Club working on his game following a third place finish in the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship before posting a 71 last Sunday to finish T4th in the Abu Dhabi Invitational.

"The time I spent this past week at the Els Club was good but then I also took a few days off to chill a little bit, as the weather wasn't great but overall my game feels good," he said.

"But after contesting the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship I did need to work on certain aspects of my game and I've managed to get them sorted out."

McIlroy will tee-up Thursday with very fond memories of the Emirates Course having first contested the event in 2006 as an amateur and then, after completing his first round, being handed a long-lens camera by one of the accredited photographers to walk inside the ropes following then world number one Tiger Woods, who competed in the afternoon.

McIlroy captured a maiden pro career title winning the 2009 Dubai Desert Classic and sealed success again a year ago.

"I have so many fond memories as I basically commenced my career here, I got my first pro victory here and now I'm back this year as the defending champion, so a lot of good stuff has happened to me here," he said. "The good thing also is I have won out at Jumeirah Resort twice before in the DP World Tour championship and it would be nice this week to win back-to-back out here in Dubai." —AFP



SAN DIEGO: Brandt Snedeker holds the Farmers Insurance Open trophy and a ceremonial surfboard after the final round of the Farmers Insurance Open golf tournament Monday, in San Diego. Snedeker finished his final round Sunday before it was suspended because of inclement weather and did not have to play Monday. — AP

WORTH WAIT AS SNEDEKER LIFTS TORREY PINES TROPHY

LOS ANGELES: American Brandt Snedeker won the weather-hit Farmers Insurance Open without hitting a shot on Monday as his closest pursuers succumbed to brutal conditions in southern California.

Snedeker carded a brilliant three-under-par 69 on Sunday, completing his round shortly before play was halted due to unplayable conditions at Torrey Pines outside San Diego.

He was one stroke behind on-course leader Jimmy Walker at the time and thought it most unlikely his score would hold up for victory. But Snedeker caught a lucky break when the winds that buffeted the field on Sunday continued to whip across the course on Monday, causing havoc among those who had to complete the round.

Walker, who had eight holes left, was among those who struggled when play resumed at 11am local time. The event was completed in a

surreal atmosphere as players picked their way between gum trees felled by the winds, and competed in funeral silence due to the absence of spectators who were barred from the course due to the dangerous conditions.

Nobody could match the score posted by Snedeker who finished at six-under 282 for his eighth career victory on the PGA Tour. He finished one stroke ahead of South Korean KJ Choi who missed a long birdie putt at the last that would have forced a playoff.

Walker tied for fourth, three shots back. After a nervy, sleepless night, Snedeker passed time on the practice putting green in case he was needed for a playoff, watching bits of the action on a television monitor.

"I can't tell you how excited I am to be the champion again and how unbelievable the last 48 hours have been," Snedeker, 35, told the Golf Channel.

"Everything worked out perfectly for me. You cannot make up the extreme events that had to happen for me to have this chance. They all fell in line for me perfectly. I hate watching this stuff because I am in no control."

"I would not have guessed it this morning when I woke up. I would have thought best-case scenario was a playoff."

Snedeker's victory came after he made the cut with nothing to spare on Friday, the first time a player has gone on to win from such a position since 2010.

Half of his PGA Tour victories have come in California, two at Torrey Pines and two at Pebble Beach, and he has now won seven times since the start of the 2011 season, a number bettered only by Rory McIlroy (10) and Tiger Woods (eight). "I wish we could play all year out here on the West Coast because I play fantastic and love being out here," he said. —Reuters

JAPAN TOUR KEEN TO SPREAD WINGS WITHOUT STRUCTURAL CHANGE

SINGAPORE: The Japan Golf Tour Organisation (JGTO) are keen to increase their involvement in co-sanctioned events abroad but remain opposed to any radical changes to Asia's organisational structure, a senior director told Reuters.

The JGTO, along with the well-established China Golf Association, Korean Tour and Australian PGA have seen the golf market in the region muddled by a turf war between the Asian Tour and OneAsia circuits over recent years.

The Asian Tour resumed merger talks with the European Tour last month but JGTO official Kenji Tanaka said China, Australia, Korea, Japan and others were better off running their own circuits rather than signing up to a single overlord.

"It's necessary to have individual country tours because if there is only one tour, only a limited number of players can play that tour," he told Reuters through a translator at last week's Singapore Open.

"Right now, we are a member of the (International Golf) Federation... we are very much satisfied with that situation. Also we have lots of historical tournaments in Japan, some are 40 years old."

The JGTO is the largest circuit in the continent with 25 events for the 2016 season, offering a wealthier prize pool and more tournaments than the Asian or OneAsia Tours.

Tanaka said his body would like to expand to 30 events with the help of the European and Asian Tours as well as the US PGA Tour, who made a big drive in the continent by setting up the 12-tournament

PGA Tour of China in 2014.

FIRST MAJOR

"As you know, the domestic Japan tournaments start in April. During the winter, it's too cold to have a tournament in Japan. It snowed in Tokyo last week, so it would be nice to have co-sanctioned events during that time," he said.

"Then the players can prepare for April start. There is still room since there is a gap after next week." The Singapore Open and the Myanmar Open, which starts on Thursday, are two of four events the JGTO co-organise with the Asian Tour, with the Panasonic Open and Asia Pacific Diamond Cup taking place in Japan later in the year.

After next week's Myanmar event, the JGTO takes a two-month break before the Token Homemate Cup tees off in Nagoya on April 17. Tanaka said increasing tournament numbers overseas would also help Japanese male players improve their chances of winning a first major, saying he wanted more to follow Hideki Matsuyama and Ryo Ishikawa's example of playing around the world.

"This will be an advantage for our players to experience other countries and other golf courses and communicate with other players so they improve technique," he said as he watched South Korean Song Younghan pip world number one Jordan Spieth to the Singapore title on Monday.

"Foreign golf courses are different. It is easy to travel inside Japan but for the young players going outside to learn something different benefits them." — Reuters

NEW BOYS FITZPATRICK, DECHAMBEAU AIMING HIGH

DUBAI: Having acquired a taste for representing Europe in a team tournament, Matthew Fitzpatrick has made qualifying for the Ryder Cup later in the year a big goal of his.

The 21-year-old Englishman was the toast of the European Tour last year when he won the British Masters in his debut season and finished 12th in the Race to Dubai with nine other top-10 finishes.

On the eve of the Dubai Desert Classic this week, Fitzpatrick, who has risen to 44th in the world rankings, said representing the European team in the EurAsia Cup under captain Darren Clarke has made him hungry for more such experiences.

"Yeah, definitely. It's made me definitely want to get there in September. The team atmosphere was great. Everyone was sort of having a good laugh and just enjoying themselves," said Fitzpatrick, who is currently third in the European Points List for the Ryder Cup.

"I think that was the big thing that Darren tried to promote, as well, is that you just want to go out there and enjoy yourself and normally when that happens, you play your best golf."

"I think that's the sort of mentality that I'm trying to take personally into each week. "I don't write anything down (his goals for the season). I think for me personally, they change all the time with the position that I'm in."

"I'm hovering around the top-50 right now, so it's trying to get higher than that. "Obviously, everyone is trying to win every tournament they play. So, that's my goal as well." The Dubai Desert Classic has attracted such star names as world number two and defending champion Rory McIlroy, and world number six and 2007 champion Henrik Stenson.

GOLF SCIENTIST

Also in the mix is American amateur champion Bryson DeChambeau, who stole the limelight on the opening day of Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship by taking the lead with a superb effort of eight-under par 64.

The 22-year-old DeChambeau, who is planning to turn professional after playing the Masters this year, then beat a quality field that included McIlroy in a one-day Pro-Am event in Abu Dhabi, where he shot the best round of the day - a seven-under par 65 - at Yas Links.

DeChambeau, who played the two Desert

Swing European Tour events in Abu Dhabi and Doha, felt he was tiring a bit after spending five weeks on the road, but he was looking forward to another exciting week in his journey.

"The past two weeks, it's been fun. I have learned a lot. Messed up a couple times but that's how it goes as an intern, so it's fun," said DeChambeau, who likes to call himself a golf scientist. "It's great confidence, no doubt, to shoot low numbers like that, and I know I can do it. It's just a matter of staying in the moment and staying in your rhythm and getting your job done."

"Unfortunately I have not been in the best frame of mind, and I am working on that, figuring out how to deal with some different things. It's been a long journey, I can tell you that, and I'm definitely sensing when I'm breaking down."

"If I can get that past me and work on focusing on the next shot in hand, I think I can do pretty well."

The Dubai Desert Classic, which forms the third leg of the European Tour's Desert Swing, was first played in 1989 and is the oldest championship in the Middle East. —AFP



SAN DIEGO: Kevin Strelman hits his tee shot on the 16th hole at Torrey Pines during the completion of the suspended final round of the Farmers Insurance Open golf tournament Monday, in San Diego. —AP



SAN DIEGO: Freddie Jacobson, from Sweden, pitches his third shot to the 15th green at Torrey Pines during the completion of the suspended final round of the Farmers Insurance Open golf tournament Monday, in San Diego. —AP

PETRUCCI FASTEST IN CRASH-FILLED SEPANG TESTING

KUALA LUMPUR: Italian Danilo Petrucci topped the timesheets yesterday in an incident-packed second day of pre-season MotoGP testing at Malaysia's Sepang circuit featuring a dramatic high speed tyre blow-out involving Frenchman Loris Baz.

In track temperatures of almost 50 degrees Celsius (122 F), Petrucci on a Ducati was among the few riders who improved their times by adapting well to

the sizzling weather and new Michelin tyres. The 25-year-old Italian clocked 2min 00.095sec, 0.060 seconds faster than Spaniard Jorge Lorenzo who dominated Monday's practice on his Yamaha.

Lorenzo, the 2015 MotoGP world champion who is chasing a fourth championship title, fell at Turn 5 while Honda's Dani Pedrosa crashed at the same place in the final 30 minutes of testing.

Neither rider was injured. Baz, who

celebrated his 23rd birthday on Monday, earlier escaped serious injury when his rear tyre exploded and hurled him off his Ducati bike in a spectacular high-speed crash.

The Frenchman was travelling at around 290 kilometres per hour (180 mph) along the Sepang circuit's main straightaway at the time. He credited his protective gear for his escape.

Hector Barbera of Spain on a Ducati

finished third, 0.292 seconds behind Petrucci. Honda's double MotoGP world champion Marc Marquez was fourth-fastest, 0.748 seconds off the pace.

British rider Cal Crutchlow on a Honda was fifth, with a time of 2mins 0.899 seconds. Valentino Rossi, the charismatic 36-year-old Italian rider, finished the session in sixth position, 0.926 seconds behind Ducati's Petrucci.

Retired double world champion

Casey Stoner, back on track testing for Ducati, was ninth fastest, 1.008 seconds behind Petrucci. This is the first time since 2012 the Australian is riding alongside the MotoGP race riders.

On Monday Lorenzo clocked 2min 0.684sec, just over one second faster than Rossi. The three-day testing at Sepang ends today. The MotoGP world championship begins at the Losail circuit in Qatar on March 17. —AFP

KUWAIT LOSE PREMISE, PRESIDENCY OF ASPU

KUWAIT: President of the Asian Sports Press Union Faisal Al-Qinae said Kuwait lost the premise and presidency of ASPU, which will go to Bahrain with a new president, Bahrain's Mohammad Qasim, who had shown notable activity lately at the Asian continent level.

Al-Qinae said Kuwait failed to keep the union which did not receive one dinar to support its plans and programs as promised by Qinae when he became president.

This took place due to the stubbornness of Finance Ministry undersecretary, Al-Qinae added, and his rejection to allocate a budget for the union which put the union and Kuwait in a peculiar position in front of

the International Sport Press Association and in front of Asian countries, which allowed the Bahraini candidate to take over, and move the premise to Bahrain where the government had allocated a budget to host the premise and presidency.

Al-Qinae said Kuwait Press lost an important media stand that is difficult to replace because of a personal stand by finance ministry undersecretary.

He wished the new ASPU president success and congratulated Bahrain for getting the premise. He also wished Kuwait's candidate for executive committee membership Sattam Al-Sahly all the success during the Feb 12 elections in Manama.



RIO DE JANEIRO: Rio2016 Olympic Games Organizing Committee Medical Director Joao Grangeiro (C) speaks during a press conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil yesterday. Rio Olympics organizers said yesterday they are concerned by the outbreak of the Zika virus in Brazil, but confident the problem will have cleared up by the time of the Games. — AFP

PANTHERS AND BRONCOS MEET REPORTERS AT MEDIA CIRCUS

SAN JOSE: What happens when you put Peyton Manning, Miss Universe, an orange-and-blue leprechaun and 200 TV cameras into the same room?

Answer: Super Bowl Opening Night.

The NFL took a good idea gone surreal - what used to be known as "Media Day" - gave it a new name, added a live cover band and moved the whole thing to prime time Monday to kick off Super Bowl week between the Denver Broncos and Carolina Panthers.

This new and amped-up interview-fest came complete with a guy walking around inside an inflatable football and a newly choreographed players' introduction that involved all 60 players from each team walking out onto a four-story-high catwalk.

"I had no idea that was a bridge we were standing on," said Manning, getting ready for his fourth Super Bowl. And yet, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

"Will you kiss my wife?" one questioner shouted to Panthers QB Cam Newton, who answered his hour's worth of questions with a sports-drink-themed towel wrapped around his head.

"I don't think I can do that," Newton said. Suffice to say, Manning and Newton - one a five-time MVP, the other a strong favorite to win his first later this week - couldn't have seen a lot of this coming, no matter how hard they prepared.

Who would play you in a movie? "Maybe a young Robert Redford," Manning said. Another reporter - or make that, person with a credential - asked Manning to look into the camera and wish a Happy Chinese New Year to all his friends in that part of the world.

At one point, a reporter from a Spanish-language station cranked up some bass-heavy music and pleaded with Newton to dance. He passed. "Got to be feeling it," he explained.

All of this thoughtfully brought to prime time by the NFL for the first time in the 50-year history of the Super Bowl.

For decades, Media Day was a Tuesday-at-noonish affair - scheduled so as not to interrupt the teams' schedules and to give writers the rest of the week to craft the stories. But this year, the NFL moved it to Monday night, where minor details like dress code, off-color banter and 8-year-olds asking football players questions after bedtime barely raise an eyebrow.

NFL spokesman Michael Signora described the scheduling change as one that allows "more fans (to) experience what has grown to become a very unique, popular Super Bowl event."

Conveniently, the NFL-owned NFL Network captured all the action live.

Surprising they didn't do this earlier. It's a nod to the reality that "Media Day" has long been a "journalism-free zone" - one in which fans have willingly, for the last five years, paid money for tickets that allow them to sit in the stands and watch the madness unfold.

Speaking of which ...

Late in the Broncos session, Rocky the Leprechaun - a regular at Broncos games over the years - laid a dollar bill out on the blue carpeting of SAP Center and waited to see if someone would pick it up. Several minutes passed. Nobody did. "Crazy to see that," he said.

WHAT MAKES THIS WEEK SO GREAT?

"There's a lot of happiness," said the gnome-turned-sociologist. "This world needs all the happiness it can get."

Only one team will be happy come Sunday night. The Panthers are favored. Manning is a sentimental favorite; at 39, many people expect he'll retire after this one. That was one of the few actual news angles being worked on during Denver's hour of fun behind the mic.

"I haven't made up my mind and I don't see myself knowing until the season's over," Manning said. Also, the Broncos were involved in a minor bus crash after practice. There were no injuries. "Just adds to the intrigue of what we've had all year," Manning said.

Back to the important stuff. Miss Universe, one of the 5,500 "reporters" with credentials for Super Bowl-week festivities, answered more questions than she asked. Most had to do with Steve Harvey. "Yes, I am the real Miss Universe," she said, referencing Harvey's embarrassing gaffe a few weeks back.

Harvey was a no-show at this one. No one missed him. From the costumes, to the beauty queens, to the guys dressed up like Sesame Street's Swedish Chef, this prime-time special had pretty much everything - except for Donald Trump, who was waiting on caucus results in Iowa.

Manning was asked to recollect a meeting with Trump a few years back. Maybe someday, Newton will meet the Donald, too. "I tell kids, that oval-shaped pigskin can take you a lot of places," said the Panthers quarterback, who won the national college championship with Auburn a few years back. "It's taken me to the White House."

And to this place. Kickoff is less than a week away. —AP

BRAZIL ISSUES OLYMPICS WARNING AS WHO DECLARES ZIKA EMERGENCY

GENEVA: Brazil warned pregnant women Monday to stay away from the Olympics after the World Health Organization declared an international emergency over the Zika virus, blamed for causing a surge in brain-damaged babies. The UN health body said that a surge in cases of microcephaly - a devastating condition in which a baby is born with an abnormally small head and brain - was likely caused by the mosquito-borne virus, and declared the situation a "public health emergency of international concern."

That prompted an unprecedented warning from Brazil, just six months from the Olympics opening ceremony on August 5 in Rio de Janeiro. "The risk, which I would say is serious, is for pregnant women. It is clearly not advisable for you (to travel to the Games) because you don't want to take that risk," said President Dilma Rousseff's chief of staff, Jaques Wagner.

Wagner sought to downplay fears for Olympic athletes and fans who are not expectant mothers. "I understand that no one needs to be afraid if you are not pregnant," he said. However, some health officials also blame the Zika virus for causing Guillain-Barre syndrome, a rare disorder in which the immune system attacks the nervous system, causing weakness and sometimes paralysis.

That syndrome directly affects Zika patients themselves. Most recover, but the syndrome is sometimes deadly. Zika was first detected in Uganda in 1947, but it was considered a relatively mild disease until the current outbreak was declared in Latin America last year.

Brazil was the first country to sound the alarm on the apparent link with birth defects, after health authorities noticed a surge in babies born with microcephaly.

It has since become the worst affected country, with some 4,000 suspected cases of microcephaly, of which 270 have been confirmed, up from 147 in 2014. The WHO said that French Polynesia had also seen a spike in microcephaly cases during a Zika outbreak there two years ago. The outbreak has sown panic in the Americas, where the WHO says it is "spreading explosively" and predicts up to four million Zika cases this year alone.

Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Jamaica and Puerto Rico have warned women not to get pregnant, while the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has advised expectant mothers against traveling to affected countries.

The WHO is under pressure to move swiftly to tackle Zika, after admitting it was slow to respond to the recent Ebola outbreak that ravaged parts of west Africa.

WHO chief Margaret Chan said a meeting of health experts who make up the agency's emergency committee had agreed "a causal relationship between the Zika infection during pregnancy and microcephaly is strongly suspected, though not scientifically proven."

"The clusters of microcephaly and other neurological complications constitute an extraordinary event and a public health threat to other parts of the world," she said.

'EXPLOSION' OF NERVE DISORDER

Colombia, which has reported more than 20,000 Zika infections, including 2,100 in pregnant women, warned it had seen an "explosion" of Guillain-Barre syndrome cases, and was expecting more.

"We are currently talking about a rate of 2.3 cases of Guillain-Barre for every 1,000 patients with Zika. That is quite a lot," Health Minister Alejandro Gaviria said on Colombian radio.

Since Colombia is forecasting about 657,000 cases of Zika during the epidemic, it expects over 1,500 cases of Guillain-Barre, he said. Panama, meanwhile, said it had registered 50 Zika cases.

Jitters over the virus have spread far beyond the affected areas to Europe and North America, where dozens of cases have been identified among returning travelers.

The WHO is looking to take resolute action on Zika after stinging criticism over its response to Ebola, which has killed more than 11,000 people

in West Africa since late 2013.

Ebola was declared a global health emergency in August 2014 and continues to carry that label. The WHO stressed the need up work to improve diagnostics and develop a vaccine for Zika. There is currently no specific treatment for the virus, which causes flu-like symptoms and a rash. The virus is transmitted by the Aedes aegypti mosquito, which also spreads dengue fever, and which is found everywhere in the Americas except Canada and Chile. — AFP

BRONCOS' MANNING SAYS NO DECISION YET ON RETIREMENT

SAN JOSE: Denver Broncos quarterback Peyton Manning said yesterday he has not yet decided whether he will retire following Super Bowl 50 and that he is strictly focused on winning his second NFL championship.

Manning's NFL plans are expected to be a common talking point in the leadup to his fourth Super Bowl appearance on Feb. 7 against the Carolina Panthers, but the 39-year-old future Hall of Famer said he is unsure.

"I haven't made my mind up and I don't see myself knowing that until after the season's over," Manning said during his session at Super Bowl 50 media night.

Manning, one of the best quarterbacks the NFL has ever seen, has been plagued by injury and questionable form this season and has seemed to have lost arm strength.

His younger brother, two-time Super Bowl winner Eli Manning of the New York Giants, said last week that if he retires he hopes Peyton can "go out on top."

Peyton himself was caught on camera after the AFC Championship game telling opposing coach Bill Belichick of the New England

Patriots that "this might be my last rodeo."

But Manning insists he is strictly fixed on the game. "Not looking too far ahead, not looking too far back has really helped me this season," he said. "It's really served me well up to this point. I'm going to stick to that philosophy."

"I am excited about this week and looking forward to playing in this game. And I'm going to focus on that and deal with all of the other stuff after this."

Manning was more forthcoming when asked about his Super Bowl counterpart, 26-year-old Cam Newton, who led all quarterbacks in the regular season with 45 touchdowns, including 10 rushing scores.

"He's just had an incredible year. There's no doubt in my mind that he's going to be the (season's) MVP," said Manning, the only player ever to win the league's top honor five times.

"What he's done in the short time being an NFL quarterback has been awesome, awesome. That's the best word I can think of. He's been a great passer, a great runner and a great leader." —Reuters



SAN JOSE: Miss Universe Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach dances with Carolina Panthers players during Opening Night for the NFL Super Bowl 50 football game Monday, in San Jose, Calif. — AP



ENGLEWOOD: In this March 20, 2012, file photo, Denver Broncos quarterback Peyton Manning and executive vice president of football operations John Elway pose during an NFL football news conference at the team's headquarters in Englewood, Colo. Elway is one of the very few to say he won it all, then simply walked away. Now, Peyton Manning is trying to follow in Elway's footsteps, wearing the same Broncos uniform Elway wore when he walked off into the sunset nearly 20 years ago. — AP

W INDIES USE MANKAD TO BEAT ZIMBABWE

CHITTAGONG: A controversial run out in the last over earned West Indies a place in the quarterfinals of the Under-19 World Cup yesterday as fast bowler Keemo Paul removed the bails at the bowler's end with the batsman a fraction out of his ground.

The practice, known as a Mankad, is rare and widely seen as unsporting. Traditionally, a bowler warns a batsman if he is leaving his crease too early, but Paul gave Zimbabwean batsman Richard Ngarava no warning, even though the batsman did not appear to be seeking an advantage.

Australia coach Darren Lehmann took to Twitter to condemn the West Indies tactic. "Unbelievable. Not Out," he wrote. Former New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming tweeted, "this is not a good look, absolutely disgraceful behaviour!!"

Zimbabwe needed only three runs in the 50th over for a place in the last eight but Paul broke the stumps without entering his delivery stride with last man Richard Ngarava standing a few steps outside his popping crease with his bat on the line. Onfield umpires conferred before asking

West Indies players whether they wanted to uphold the appeal against a decision which was within the rules of the game.

Once West Indies players confirmed they wanted to go ahead with the appeal, the television umpire was consulted and Ngarava's bat was found to be just on the line.

Zimbabwe captain Brandon Mavuta was in tears and said, "we got so close, no comment about it. I don't have anything to say right now." Zimbabwe coach Stephen Mangongo said he was happy with the way his side had fought in the match. "I am disappointed with the way the game ended. I have debriefed the boys in the dressing room and they were all crying," he said.

"We have explained that technically the run-out is legal. We left it to the last man and we should not have done that. It was a hard lesson and they have learnt it the hard way."

The Mankad is named after Indian bowler Vinoo Mankad, who created controversy when he dismissed Australian batsman Bill Brown in a similar manner at the Sydney Cricket Ground in 1947. — AP

KIWIS AND AUSSIES AT LOGGERHEADS OVER WICKET

AUCKLAND: New Zealand and Australia were poles apart on their reading of the Eden Park wicket ahead of today's opening one-day international in Auckland with Australia backing pace and New Zealand spin.

New Zealand rushed leg-spinner Ish Sodhi into their squad yesterday, while Australia's line-up showed a preference for firing an aggressive barrage at Brendon McCullum.

A four-pronged pace armory comprising Josh Hazlewood, John Hastings, Kane Richardson and James Faulkner will be deployed, Australia skipper Steve Smith said.

McCullum is retiring from international cricket at the end of the Australia series and Smith is determined to give him a fiery send off. "Brendon has been a terrific player and leader for a long time. No doubt they'll want to send him off in the best way possible. It's up to us to make that not happen," Smith said.

"For us it's about making sure we're playing the same way we have been good, hard aggressive cricket."

McCullum, however, said Sodhi was added to the New Zealand squad as the match is being played on the same wicket where Kane Williamson was beaten by the spin of Pakistan's Azhar Ali last Sunday.

"The wicket the other day was a little bit slow and we're going to play on the same pitch," McCullum said. "Not many get past Kane so the wicket obviously had a little more turn than we expected."

"There's potential that we will look to include (Sodhi) in the side if we think the

wicket is going to hold up."

The Australians do not have pleasant memories of the last time they faced McCullum at Eden Park when the New Zealand skipper belted a 24-ball half century to lead his side to a one-wicket win in a World Cup pool game. Both sides go into the series on a winning run in one-dayers, with New Zealand having completed series victories over Pakistan (2-0) and Sri Lanka (3-1) while Australia dominated India (4-1).

Australia have opted for Shaun Marsh to open with David Warner ahead of the in-form Usman Khawaja.

"Shaun has been in the squad and played well in Australia and he deserves the first opportunity," Smith said.

"He (Khawaja) will play one of the games and he does need a hit going into what is a big Test series for us, and he's batting extremely well. He's unlucky to miss out."

Promising leg-spinner Adam Zampa has also been left out of the side while Mitchell Marsh and all-rounder Glen Maxwell provide additional bowling options.

Teams

New Zealand (from) - Brendon McCullum, Corey Anderson, Trent Boult, Doug Bracewell, Grant Elliott, Martin Guptill, Matt Henry, Adam Milne, Colin Munro, Henry Nicholls, Luke Ronchi, Mitchell Santner, Ish Sodhi, Kane Williamson Australia - Steve Smith (capt), David Warner, Shaun Marsh, George Bailey, Glen Maxwell, Mitchell Marsh, Matthew Wade, James Faulkner, John Hastings, Kane Richardson, Josh Hazlewood. — AFP



COLOMBO: Sri Lankan cricket coach Graham Ford, right, listens to a question as Sri Lanka Cricket President Thilanga Sumathipala watches during a press conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka, yesterday. Speaking yesterday, a day after taking over as coach for a second stint after an interval of two years, Ford called for patience with an inexperienced team. — AP



COLOMBO: Sri Lankan fast bowler Lasith Malinga gestures during a press conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka, yesterday. Malinga has been appointed captain for the World Twenty20 championship in March and the preceding Asia Cup tournament in Bangladesh. — AP

FORD FACES 'HUGE' SRI LANKA REBUILDING TASK

COLOMBO: New Sri Lanka coach Graham Ford acknowledged yesterday he faced a huge rebuilding task after a string of retirements as he began his second stint in charge of the islanders. The South African said he was honoured to return to Sri Lanka, whom he previously coached from 2012 to 2014, but urged fans to be patient after a recent slump saw the side tumble down the Test rankings. "For a coach, it is really a special group of lads to work with," Ford told reporters, a day after taking up his post.

"At the same time, I am very aware what a huge challenge it is. I think Sri Lanka cricket finds itself in the very early stages of a very important rebuilding stage. A lot of hard work needs to be done. "Everyone, the players, the selectors and the board must have patience," added Ford, who has been handed a 45-month contract. The 55-year-old, who quit last week as coach of English county side Surrey, is taking the reins at one of the most troubled periods for Sri Lankan cricket since it was awarded Test match status in 1981. Batting stars Mahela Jayawardene and Kumar Sangakkara both retired from international cricket last year and other match-winners such as spinner Dilanga Herath and the opener Tillakaratne Dilshan are expected to follow suit later this year.

"I don't want to discuss individual players in public," said Ford when asked who could fill the vacuum. "I certainly learnt when I was here previously that there is an abundance of talent, a lot of wonderfully talented young players within the systems in Sri Lanka."

"But it is about identifying those who have got the mental toughness to go on to become successful players and consistent match winners at international level."

Sri Lanka's formidable home record took a hit last year with series defeats against the visiting Indian and Pakistan sides. The islanders then travelled to New Zealand where they were outplayed in all forms of the game in a tour soured by allegations of drinking parties and squabbling.

Sri Lanka are now down to seventh place in

the Test rankings although they do remain third in the table for the best international Twenty20 teams, partly due to their triumph in the last World T20 trophy in 2014.

WORLD CUP 2019 TARGET

Thilanga Sumathipala, president of the national cricket board, said Sri Lanka should benefit from Ford's spells with Surrey and with Kent a decade ago in the build-up to the 2019 ODI World Cup in England. "Graham knows English conditions very well and he will be able to prepare our team to win the next World Cup in Britain," Sumathipala said. Ford's first assignment will be in India next week when Sri Lanka

play the first of three T20s designed as a warm-up for their defence of the world title. Sumathipala confirmed that wicketkeeper-batsman Dinesh Chandimal would skipper the side in India as regular T20 captain Lasith Malinga recovers from an injury. Malinga is expected to return in time for the Asia Cup starting in Bangladesh at the end of the month, Sumathipala added. Ford, who is also a former coach of South Africa, ended his first spell in Sri Lanka in 2014 when his two-year contract expired.

He replaces Jerome Jayaratne, who had been interim coach since Marvan Atapattu quit last August. — AFP

SPOT-FIXERS BUTT, ASIF COULD PLAY IN CARIBBEAN TWENTY20

KARACHI: Spot-fixing convicts Salman Butt and Mohammad Asif yesterday said they could feature in the fourth edition of the Caribbean Premier league in July.

This would be the first international outing for the two players after they were relieved of their five-year spot fixing ban in September last year. They along with young paceman Mohammad Amir were charged of taking illegal money in return for arranging deliberate no-balls during the Lord's Test against England in 2010. All three were also jailed in UK. However, Butt said he now has permission from Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) to play in the Caribbean League.

"When our bans were lifted in September last year, the PCB had cleared us to play in any league around the world, so I am eligible to play in the Caribbean league which will give me a good opportunity to regain my place in the national

team," Butt told AFP.

Asif was also keen to feature in the league. "The league will give me a better opportunity to improve my rhythm with world class players in the teams," said Asif.

The Caribbean league was initiated in 2013 on the pattern of lucrative Twenty20 league in India. While Amir returned to international cricket in Pakistan's Twenty20 and one-day series in New Zealand last month, Butt and Asif were left to play national one-day cup at domestic level.

Butt scored 536 runs in the seven one-day cup matches which ended last week, with a hundred and four half centuries while Asif managed seven wickets in as many games. However, neither Butt nor Asif were included in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) due to start in Dubai from tomorrow. Amir, whose ban was relaxed in April last year on the request of the PCB, will feature in the PSL. — AFP



SEPANG: Movistar Yamaha MotoGP rider Valentino Rossi (C) of Italy looks at his bike before the second day of 2016 MotoGP pre-season test at the Sepang International circuit yesterday. — AFP

IVORY COAST, MALI RENEW OLD RIVALRY IN CHAN SEMIS

NAIROBI: African champions Ivory Coast will attempt to keep their momentum going when they face arch-rivals Mali in the African Nations Championship semi-final in Rwanda tomorrow.

The Elephants, who have twice failed to go beyond the group stage in the biennial championship, confirmed their place with a stunning 3-0 extra-time win over another West African side Cameroon in the quarter-finals.

The victory, which came hot on the heels of their 4-1 demolition of Gabon in the group phase, proved the Ivorian dominant form under new coach Michel Dussuyer, who has been full of praise for the team's grit and performance.

"The Ivory Coast are gaining momentum," the Frenchman said after the match against Cameroon. "We still need to fight to push back our limits."

Mali also showed they were no pushovers in their 2-1 comeback win over pre-tournament favourites and former title holders, Tunisia, to reach their first-ever CHAN semi-finals.

The Eagles are expected to rely on their forwards Mamadou Sissoko and Aly Malle, who was a member of the youth team that finished runner-up to Nigeria at the FIFA U-17 World Cup Chile 2015 last November.

The match at Kigali's Stade Regional Nyamirambo will mark the 33rd meeting in international football between the two teams.

Cameroon drew 1-1 with Mali in the group phase of the 2015 African Cup of Nations in Equatorial Guinea. Guinea and the Democratic Republic of Congo, who face off in the first semi-final at the Amahoro national stadium today, prevailed on penalties and extra-time respectively, to qualify to the last four.

The Syli Nationale, making their debut in the competition, dominated former African Cup of Nations champions Zambia, before winning 5-4 in the penalty shoot-out after regulation and extra time.

After saving two penalties, Guinea goalkeeper Abdul Aziz Keita scored the decisive spot kick, to send his team into the semi-final.

DR Congo, boasting an array of players from the country's two dominant clubs TP Mazembe and AS Vita Club-will be without their inspirational forward Heritier Luvumbu. The AS Vita club star picked up a serious knee injury in the 2-1 extra-time winner over hosts Rwanda in the quarter-final.

The Florent Ibenge-coached side have been tight from the frontline with Luvumbu, Guy Bolingi and Meshack Elia playing the instrumental roles in their campaign. — AFP

RAINA TO CAPTAIN RAJKOT IPL TEAM, HODGE NAMED AS COACH

NEW DELHI: India limited-overs specialist Suresh Raina is to captain the new Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise in Rajkot, the team announced yesterday, while confirming Australian Brad Hodge as the side's coach.

Pune and Rajkot were unveiled as the new teams in the lucrative Twenty20 competition in December, replacing Chennai and Rajasthan, who were handed two-year suspensions for their involvement in an illegal betting scandal.

"Suresh Raina is a remarkable player with an impeccable record in all formats of the game," franchise owner Keshav Bansal said in a statement, announcing the team would be called the Gujarat Lions.

"His extensive experience combined with his great leadership skills will help us in putting together a winning strategy for the team."

Having played for three IPL teams, Hodge is familiar with the popular tournament. Back home, the 41-year-old captained Adelaide Strikers in this year's Big Bash League (BBL), while also taking on an assistant coaching role.

"We finalised Brad Hodge as the team coach on the basis of his successful contribution to the Australian national team and his excellent stint in the IPL," Bansal said.

"I am confident that our team will benefit immensely from his guidance and mentorship." — Reuters



NEW DELHI: Owner of Indian Premier League's Rajkot team and director of Intex Technologies, Keshav Bansal (R) along with cricketer Suresh Raina unveils the logo of the team at a press conference in New Delhi yesterday. The newly-formed Rajkot IPL team announced its official name as 'Gujarat Lions', making Suresh Raina its captain and Brad Hodge its coach. — AFP

ALLEGRI WANTS MORE AS JUVE TARGET CLUB RECORD

MILAN: Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri believes his impressive crop of young stars can achieve even more as they target a club record of 13 successive league wins with the visit of Genoa today.

The four-time consecutive champions have put their miserable start to the season behind them and closed to within two points of leaders Napoli following a 4-0 rout of Chievo in Verona on Sunday.

After being ruled out of title contention at the start of the season, Allegri was only too happy to announce the Old Lady is back with a bang. "Our 12 consecutive wins are a signal to the rest of the league that we are back in contention for the title," Allegri said on Sunday. But Allegri expects more from

the likes of Paul Pogba, Alvaro Morata and Paulo Dybala—who are integral to the Turin giants' chances of success this season. And the 48-year-old Italian has brushed aside the importance of record-setting feats under his tenure. "I think we can make improvements both collectively and individually," said Allegri, highlighting one of several misses by Pogba before the Frenchman found the net in the 67th minute in Verona.

"Pogba's final effort on goal is a case in point, when he struck the crossbar by hitting the ball too hard. Instead, he might have opted to place his shot to better effect."

Allegri had kinder words for Morata, who hit a brace at Chievo to take his goals tally to the week to four after net-

ting twice in a 3-0 rout of Inter Milan in the first leg of their Italian Cup semi-final. "Morata had been scoring in training already over the past couple of weeks and when that happens, it's always likely that you'll find the net in matches as well."

And despite Dybala being voted the club's MVP for the month of January, when he hit four of his 12 league goals so far, the Argentinian is constantly reminded that he is not the finished article. "He has been doing well, but he still has plenty of room for improvement," said Allegri. Allegri's stance is seen as an effort to spur the trio onto greater things, and recent evidence suggests they have been paying attention. A 13th consecutive win on Wednesday would

allow Allegri to overtake the club record of 12 set by former coach Antonio Conte in the 2013-2014 season. But Allegri added: "To me, records don't matter. What's the point of winning 20 in a row if it doesn't win you the title." Yet Juve's chances of a record-equalling fifth straight scudetto were boosted by results elsewhere at the weekend.

As Napoli and Juve triumphed, Fiorentina's scoreless stalemate at Genoa left them eight points off the pace while Inter's 3-0 derby reverse at AC Milan left Roberto Mancini's title challengers nine points in arrears. Napoli travel to Lazio looking for their seventh win on the trot and with Argentinian striker Gonzalo Higuain in the hunt for a 23rd Serie A goal in as many games this term.

Higuain hit his 22nd league goal in a 5-1 thumping of Empoli on Sunday to equal the 22-goal tally that earned Mauro Icardi (Inter) and Luca Toni (Verona) a share of the top scorer's 'Capocannoniere' trophy. Napoli hammered Lazio 5-0 in only their fourth game under coach Maurizio Sarri, but the tracksuit-wearing, chain-smoking 57-year-old has called for caution.

"We're playing well and we're in good condition, but I'm not certain we can keep this up all the way till the end of the season." Mancini, meanwhile, will watch from the stands when Inter host Chievo looking for their first win in five games after he received a one-game ban and a fine of 5,000 euros for slandering the referee at Sunday's San Siro clash. —AFP

GUARDIOLA SWOOP KEY TO MAN CITY'S GLOBAL DOMINATION BID

MANCHESTER: A dream four years in the making was finally realised when Pep Guardiola was announced as Manchester City's next manager, a development the club's billionaire owners hope will transform world football on and off the field.

On it, the respected 44-year-old, currently seeing out his final season with Bayern Munich, will be handed the simple target of winning the Champions League within the three-year contract he has agreed, and which will pay him a reported 20 million euros (\$21 million) a season.

Off the field, and into the realm of football finance and commercialisation, City believe Guardiola will eventually help elevate them to the level of Manchester United, Real Madrid and Barcelona, not only because of his own profile and standing in the sports world but because of the quality of player he will be able to attract to Eastlands, armed with the bottomless wealth of their Abu Dhabi royal family ownership.

A mooted attempt to sign Barcelona's star striker Lionel Messi has long since been back page gossip for English tabloid newspapers but now, with the world's wealthiest club having signed, arguably, the world's best manager, such a move no longer sounds quite so fanciful.

It is precisely that kind of signing City will be hoping to pull off this year, in an attempt to improve on their displays in Europe which have so far seen them fail to progress beyond the last 16 of the Champions League.

But, of more far-reaching importance, the arrival of a global footballing icon like Messi would help City in their aim to become the most famous and successful football club on the planet, instead of just the wealthiest.

Signings such as David Silva and Sergio Aguero rank among the greatest talent ever seen in the Premier League but those players, and the rest of the current City squad, lack the commercial clout and presence carried by a Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo or Neymar.

A deal late last year saw Chinese consortium CMC invest £265 million for a stake in City, leading to reports the club will tour China later this year, where Guardiola may be unveiled for the first time.

COURTSHIP

In such relatively 'new' football markets, Guardiola will carry far more impact than his predecessor Manuel Pellegrini and the level of high-class superstar City could now attract will lift the club even higher in terms of their global presence.

This was the vision City had in 2012 when they first approached Guardiola before being rebuffed and turning to Pellegrini as a distant second choice a year later.

City's Spanish executives Ferran Soriano and Txiki Begiristain continued to drive the courtship, with Guardiola's move eventually developing into the worst-kept secret in the industry.

"The team is going to play way better football and that is some statement because they already play great some great football at times," said former Barcelona forward, now TV pundit Thierry Henry.

"They will play better under him. He will

come in and some guys are going to have to leave the place, trust me.

"When he came to Barcelona he wanted some players out. He did the same to Bayern Munich.

"He will do the same in Manchester. The one thing you can be sure of - he wants to dominate."

That will be music to the ears of City executives and one thing appears guaranteed about the new regime at the club - there will be plenty of activity in the close-season transfer window.

Guardiola must determine whether injury-prone club captain Vincent Kompany is the man around whom he can build his defence.

It would also appear to be the end of the road for fans' favourite Yaya Toure who fell out of favour in their time at the Nou Camp. Of course, it is the incomings that will make for greater interest and a number of his former stars at Bayern and Barcelona will inevitably be linked with City. — AFP

Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Everton v Newcastle 22:45

beIN SPORTS 11 HD

Watford v Chelsea 22:45

beIN SPORTS 2 HD

SPAIN COPA DEL REY

Barcelona v Valencia 23:00

beIN SPORTS

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE

Frosinone v Bologna 20:30

beIN SPORTS

Fiorentina v Carpi 22:45

beIN SPORTS

Inter v Chievo Verona 22:45

beIN SPORTS

Juventus v Genoa 22:45

beIN SPORTS

Lazio v SSC Napoli 22:45

beIN SPORTS

Hellas Verona v Atalanta 22:45

beIN SPORTS

Empoli v Udinese Calcio 22:45

beIN SPORTS

Sampdoria v Torino 22:45

beIN SPORTS

Citta v AC Milan 22:45

beIN SPORTS

FRENCH LEAGUE

Nantes v GFC Ajaccio 21:00

beIN SPORTS

Lyonnais v Girondins 21:00

beIN SPORTS

Lille OSC v Caen 21:00

beIN SPORTS

Guingamp v ES Troyes 21:00

beIN SPORTS

OGC Nice v Toulouse 21:00

beIN SPORTS

Stade de Reims v Angers 21:00

beIN SPORTS

PSG v Lorient 23:00

beIN SPORTS



LOS ANGELES: International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach kicks a soccer ball during a visit to UCLA, Monday. Bach is visiting Los Angeles to check out proposed venues for the 2024 Olympic Games. Thomas Bach's visit to the University of Southern California and UCLA campuses, as well as the Getty Center. —AP

UNDER-FIRE NEVILLE FACES DAUNTING BARCA CUP SEMI

BARCELONA: European champions Barcelona continue their quest for a second consecutive treble when Gary Neville's off-form Valencia visit the Camp Nou in the first-leg of their Copa del Rey semi-final yesterday.

Valencia's run to the last four of the Cup has been the only positive of a difficult start for the England coach in his first managerial role.

A first defeat at home in La Liga since November 2014, 1-0 against Sporting Gijon on Sunday, stretched Neville's winless streak in La Liga to eight games and left Valencia just five points above the relegation zone.

Neville's men face the most daunting task possible if they are to reach the final for the first time since 2008 against a Barca side that hasn't lost in 26 matches in all competitions.

However, Neville insists he is embracing the challenge of returning to the scene of one of his greatest triumphs where as a player he won the Champions League with Manchester United back in 1999.

"I can't wait for Wednesday night, and I think the players will be the same. These are the

moments you live for as a coach and a player," he said. One of Neville's boldest moves has been to name top scorer Paco Alcacer captain in place of Dani Parejo and he is hopeful the Spanish international will be fit to feature after two weeks out with an ankle injury. "By Tuesday we'll have a full complement of players, Paco is looking good and is back running again."

The visitors could also hand debuts to Denis Cheryshev and Guilherme Siqueira after they sealed loan deals from Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid respectively until the end of the season.

Cheryshev's inclusion in the Real team for their Cup opener at Cadiz saw them thrown out the competition as he was suspended for an accumulation of yellow cards last season.

However, he is free to feature at the Camp Nou. "Barcelona are a great opponent, but Valencia also can do some damage," said the Russian international.

Barcelona boss Luis Enrique has a fully-fit squad to choose from and is likely to rotate after his side showed growing signs of fatigue from their demanding January schedule in edging

past nine-man Atletico Madrid 2-1 on Saturday. "It suits us to have four days rest before hosting Valencia," said defender Javier Mascherano.

"We have managed to keep winning and we're in an ideal situation, but in any moment it can slip away so we have to keep going."

The other semi-final sees Sevilla entertain Celta Vigo in their first-leg on Thursday.

After a difficult start to the campaign, Sevilla have won 11 consecutive games in all competitions at home.

Celta caused the shock of the quarter-finals by knocking out Atletico Madrid and will be boosted by the return of Spanish international Nolito.

The former Barcelona forward played since December due to a hamstring injury and was strongly linked with a return to Barca, but the move was scuppered by the tight financial restrictions on Barca to comply with financial fair play. "We always knew Nolito's intention was to stay here," said Celta captain Hugo Mallo. "We are waiting for him with open arms because he is a player that can decide games." — AFP

CHELSEA DOOR 'NOT SHUT' FOR TERRY, SAYS HIDDINK

COBHAM: Interim Chelsea manager Guus Hiddink believes there is still a chance captain John Terry could remain at the club beyond this season despite announcing his departure, he said yesterday.

Terry, 35, said that he would be moving on at the end of the current campaign after Sunday's FA Cup win at Milton Keynes Dons, while making it clear he would prefer to finish his career at Stamford Bridge. The club responded by saying that Terry, who has made 696 appearances for Chelsea over 21 years, could yet be offered a new deal, which Hiddink echoed. "It was said by John and he's entitled to make up his mind, that's true, given his contract expires at the end of the season," Hiddink said. "But on the other hand, the club still want to have the dialogue and to have an open door still. It was a bit surprising, but he's entitled to do so. "No specific decision was made yet. You have to see what's coming up with the transition of the manager as well. That's all I can say about this." Terry has made it clear he would not seek to join another Premier League club and he is expected to receive offers to play in China, the Middle East and the United States.

And Hiddink believes the centre-back's general fitness suggests he can maintain his

current level for some time yet.

"I like him very much, the way he's playing and that he's committed to the team," the Dutchman told a press conference at Chelsea's Cobham training base southwest of London. "He will be (committed), I can assure you, because we've had some conversations in the last few days about all kinds of things in football."

'DIFFERENT' CHALLENGE FOR GUARDIOLA

He added: "The door is not shut. Dialogue is always possible. But John's statistics-not just that, but also the view we have on him, I have on him-he's very fit.

"He's not what you normally see in a 35-year-old or 36-year-old player, that you feel you are getting a bit slower and cannot accept you're in a danger zone for red cards etc. But none of that for John. "He is fit and performing as he has been while I've been here. And he will do. We've spoken about that, and he will be very professional, but also work hard as well."

Hiddink will make a late decision on whether to include Alexandre Pato in his squad for Wednesday's visit to Watford.

The Brazilian has completed the formalities of his six-month loan move from Corinthians,

but has not played since November. "He is some way off fitness," Hiddink said. "He had to do the bureaucratic stuff yesterday (Monday) and was out of the country to come back into the country to sort the paperwork.

"But he's worked for a few training sessions. He'll be in this afternoon. We'll decide late afternoon if he can be involved, but he's in 'preparation', if not fully fit to act."

Hiddink, meanwhile, believes Pep Guardiola will face a different kind of challenge after agreeing to take charge of Manchester City next season following spells at Barcelona and Bayern Munich. "People expected it when he said he was leaving Bayern and wanted to go to the Premier League, a very attractive league for the younger managers," said the 69-year-old.

"To act in this league is beautiful. And he will face another league than he's used to. You have always this kind of domination at the teams he's worked at before, and no one can achieve what he did.

"But this is a different situation. There is no specific favourite like in Spain with Barcelona and Real (Madrid), or in Germany when the only one in September to be sure to be champions are Bayern. "It's different in England, but it will be good for him." — AFP



VALENCIA: Valencia's new Russian player Denis Cheryshev (C) holds a t-shirt between former Valencia's player (L) Juan Cruz Sol and Valencia general manager Garcia Pitarch during his official presentation at the Sports City in Valencia yesterday. — AFP

Sports

Over 70 players participate in handicap sports tournament



Ford faces 'huge' Sri Lanka rebuilding task



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MCILROY INSPIRED BY 'UNREAL' DJOKOVIC

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INDIANAPOLIS: Kyrie Irving #2 of the Cleveland Cavaliers handles the ball against George Hill #3 of the Indiana Pacers in the second half of the game at Bankers Life Fieldhouse on Monday in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Cavaliers defeated the Pacers 111-106 in overtime. — AFP

CAVALIERS RALLY TO BEAT PACERS IN OT

INDIANAPOLIS: Kyrie Irving scored 25 points and LeBron James had 24 points, 12 rebounds and six assists to lead the Cleveland Cavaliers past the Indiana Pacers 111-106 in overtime on Monday night. James only scored seven points after half-time, but it was enough to give the Cavaliers their fifth straight win under new coach Tyrone Lue - and their first win in Indy in six years. George Hill matched his season-high with 23 points, while Myles Turner had 14 points and 10 rebounds for Indiana. The Pacers controlled most of the second half, but James' layup with 1:16 left in regulation gave Cleveland a 94-93 lead. Then, with the game tied at 96 and the shot clock off, Indiana's Monta Ellis nearly dribbled out the clock before missing a midrange jumper at the buzzer. Irving's 13-footer with 3:01 left gave the Cavs a 103-100 lead and they never trailed again.

THUNDER 114, WIZARDS 98
Russell Westbrook had his seventh triple-double of the season and Oklahoma City beat Washington. Westbrook had 17 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists and got the best of his matchup with Washington point guard John Wall. It was the 26th triple-double of Westbrook's career, and he has two straight and four in his past 10 games. Kevin Durant scored 28 points and Serge Ibaka added 19 points and 10 rebounds for the Thunder, who have won 11 of 12. Bradley Beal came off the bench to score 18 points, Wall had 17 points and eight assists and Marcin Gortat scored 17 points for the Wizards, who have lost four of five. Wizards coach Randy Wittman missed the game following his brother's death last Friday.

GRIZZLIES 110, PELICANS 95
Zach Randolph had 22 points and 12 rebounds and Memphis beat New Orleans for its 10th victory in 12 games. Jeff Green scored 24 points for Memphis, and Vince Carter added 13, including a pair of back-breaking 3s in the last three minutes. Anthony Davis had 23 points and nine rebounds for the Pelicans, who lost for just the third time in 10 games, with two of those losses coming against Memphis. New Orleans led 86-84 after Ryan Anderson's free throw with 7:02 left, but the Grizzlies responded with a pivotal 10-0 run to take the lead for good, closing the game on a 26-9 run.

SPURS 107, MAGIC 92
LaMarcus Aldridge scored a season-high 28 points and San Antonio beat Orlando to remain undefeated at home. Aldridge shot 9 for 13 from the field in leading San Antonio to its 26th straight home victory to open the season. Patty Mills

matched a season-high with 22 points, going 3 for 4 on 3-pointers. San Antonio found its defensive footing late in the third quarter, using a steal by Mills and blocks by Kawhi Leonard to separate from Orlando. The Spurs outscored the Magic 24-8 to overcome a 70-69 deficit with 1 1/2 minutes left in the third quarter. Nikola Vucevic led Orlando with 20 points and 10 rebounds. Victor Oladipo added 19 points and Aaron Gordon had 12 points and 16 rebounds.

NUGGETS 112, RAPTORS 93
Nikola Jokic had 27 points and 14 rebounds, and Denver ended Toronto's 11-game winning streak. Jokic's totals were season highs for the rookie. He had 23 points and 12 rebounds against San Antonio on Nov. 28. Will Barton scored 20 points and Randy Foye had 16 for the Nuggets, who swept the season series. They won in Toronto on Dec. 3 to stop an eight-game losing streak. The Raptors entered with the NBA's longest current winning streak but couldn't duplicate the success they had in January. They led by one midway through the second quarter but trailed by double digits for most of the second half. DeMar DeRozan led Toronto with 24 points. His All-Star backcourt mate, Kyle Lowry, scored just nine and went 1 for 6 from the foul line.

JAZZ 105, BULLS 96, OT
Gordon Hayward had 27 points and 12 rebounds, Rodney Hood added 19 points and Utah beat Chicago. Rudy Gobert had 16 points and 12 rebounds to help Utah win its third straight. Jimmy Butler scored 26 points and Pau Gasol added 19 points and eight rebounds to lead Chicago. Derrick Rose chipped in 14 for the Bulls, who lost for the third time in four games. Chicago and Utah traded baskets throughout the fourth quarter. Rose's 3-pointer with 18.5 seconds left put Chicago ahead 93-90. Hayward made 1 of 2 free throws, but the Jazz grabbed the rebound and Hayward drove for the tying layup with 4.8 seconds left in regulation. In the extra period, Hayward made back-to-back pull-up jumpers and followed with a dunk to give Utah the lead for good at 102-95 with 59.9 seconds remaining.

KINGS 111, BUCKS 104
Rudy Gay had 32 points, nine rebounds and six assists and Sacramento snapped a five-game losing streak by beating Milwaukee. Sacramento won minus All-Star center DeMarcus Cousins, who sprained his left ankle in Saturday's loss at Memphis. The Kings are 2-7 this season without Cousins, with both wins coming against the Bucks. The Kings took the lead for good early in the final period on two free throws by Marco Belinelli, who scored 10 points in the fourth quarter. Gay had nine as Sacramento outscored Milwaukee 37-30. Greg Monroe had 24 points and 12 rebounds for the Bucks, who have dropped three straight and five of six. Michael Carter-Williams had 18 points and a season-high 13 assists.

HAWKS 112, MAVERICKS 97
Jeff Teague scored a season-high 32 points, Kyle Korver added 16 points and Atlanta beat Dallas to snap a three-game skid. Teague went 12 for 15 from the field with a career-high five 3-pointers, and reserve guard Dennis Schroder finished with 14 points. Atlanta entered the game having lost five of six to drop to fifth place in the Eastern Conference. Deron Williams, coming off a 27-point performance in Dallas' home win Sunday over Phoenix, left the game early in the second quarter with a bruised hip. Chandler Parsons had 19 points and 11 rebounds, and Dirk Nowitzki scored 18 points for the Mavericks.

PISTONS 105, NETS 100
Andre Drummond had 21 points and 18 rebounds, Reggie Jackson scored 19 points and Detroit beat Brooklyn. Drummond fell just shy of an NBA-high sixth 20-point, 20-rebound game of the season but delivered the tiebreaking basket on a dunk with 1:30 remaining. Jackson added a couple of clutch baskets as the Pistons avoided a third straight loss. They had fallen to Cleveland and Toronto, the East's top two teams, but were just good enough to get by the Nets, one of the worst. Brook Lopez scored 27 points for the Nets, who have lost four in a row. Andrea Bargnani added 18 points off the bench. — AP

NBA Results/Standings

Atlanta 112, Dallas 97; San Antonio 107, Orlando 92; Brooklyn 100, Detroit 105; Sacramento 111, Milwaukee 104; Denver 112, Toronto 93; Utah 105, Chicago 96 (OT); New Orleans 95, Memphis 110; Oklahoma City 114, Washington 98; Indiana 106, Cleveland 111 (OT).

Eastern Conference				Western Conference				
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division				
W	L	PCT	GB	Oklahoma City	37	13	.740	—
Toronto	32	16	.667	Portland	23	26	.469	13.5
Boston	27	22	.551	Utah	22	25	.468	13.5
New York	23	27	.460	Denver	19	30	.388	17.5
Brooklyn	12	37	.245	Minnesota	14	35	.286	22.5
Philadelphia	7	41	.146	25	Pacific Division			
Central Division				Golden State	44	4	.917	—
Cleveland	35	12	.745	LA Clippers	32	16	.667	12
Chicago	26	21	.553	Sacramento	21	27	.438	23
Detroit	26	23	.531	Phoenix	14	35	.286	30.5
Indiana	25	23	.521	LA Lakers	9	41	.180	36
Milwaukee	20	30	.400	16.5	Southwest Division			
Southwest Division				Miami	27	21	.563	—
San Antonio	40	8	.833	Atlanta	28	22	.560	1
Memphis	29	20	.592	Charlotte	23	25	.479	4
Dallas	28	23	.549	Washington	21	25	.457	5
Houston	25	25	.500	Orlando	21	26	.447	5.5
New Orleans	18	29	.383	21.5				

NEYMAR APPEARS IN COURT OVER BARCELONA TRANSFER

MADRID: Brazil striker Neymar appeared before a judge yesterday to testify in an investigation into alleged irregularities regarding his transfer to Barcelona.

Neymar's father, who acts as his agent, was also going to be questioned by judge Jose de la Mata at the National Court in Madrid. Current Barcelona president Josep Bartomeu and predecessor Sandro Rosell denied any wrongdoing when they testified on Monday.

The court is looking into a complaint made by a Brazilian investment group which claims it was financially harmed when Barcelona and Neymar allegedly withheld the real amount of the player's transfer fee from Brazilian club Santos in 2013.

Investment group DIS was entitled to 40 percent of Neymar's transfer from Santos, but claims it received a smaller compensation than it should have because part of the transfer fee was concealed.

Neymar, wearing jeans and a jacket, arrived with his father and other members of his staff. They made it to the court in central Madrid just before the 5 p.m. scheduled time (1600 GMT) for their testimonies.

Santos' representatives also were in court on Monday and said the club was deceived by Barcelona and Neymar. Representatives from Barcelona told the judge that all legal protocols and regulations were met in Neymar's transfer. Rosell resigned in 2014 because of the allegations

involving the Brazilian player's transfer.

Barcelona maintains that the deal cost the club 57.1 million euros (then \$74 million). Santos officially received a payment of 17.1 million euros (\$18.5 million), with the remaining 40 million euros (\$55.5 million) going to a company owned by Neymar's father, Neymar Santos. But investigations in Spain later showed that Barcelona spent nearly 83.3 million euros (\$90 million) to acquire the Brazilian.

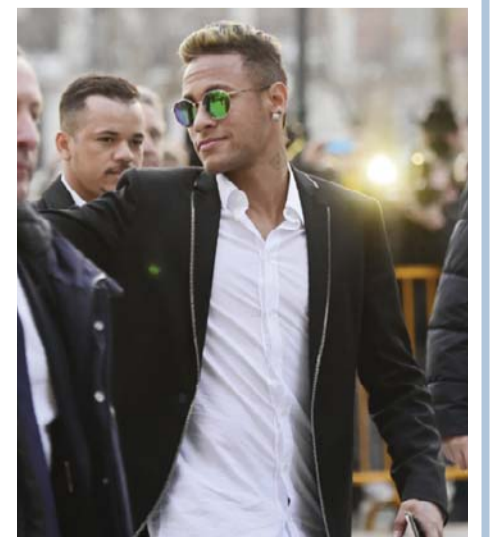
Neymar has also been facing problems with Brazil's tax office, which last year froze assets related to the player valued at about 189 million Brazilian reais (\$47 million) because of allegations of tax evasion. He has vehemently denied any wrongdoing in Brazil and Spain. In an interview with Brazilian media on Sunday, he defended his father and contested the evidence being presented against them.

The 23-year-old striker helped Barcelona win a rare treble of Champions League, Spanish league and Copa del Rey titles last season. He was also one of three finalists for the Ballon d'Or award won by teammate Lionel Messi. It was the first time he made it to the final shortlist.

Messi is another Barcelona player set to appear in court in the next few months. The Argentine forward and his father will go on trial May 31-June 3 for allegedly defrauding Spain's tax office of 4.1 million euros (\$4.4 million) in unpaid taxes from 2007-09. They have been charged with

three counts of tax fraud and could be sentenced to nearly two years in prison if found guilty.

Barcelona defender Javier Mascherano recently avoided jail time after making a deal with prosecutors and the attorney's office after not properly paying taxes in Spain. — AP



MADRID: Barcelona's Brazilian forward Neymar (R) flashes the Victory sign as he leaves Spain's national court in Madrid yesterday. — AFP

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Kuwait Times BUSINESS

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Russia leaves door open to OPEC deal as output hits high

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Oil fall, China's slowdown steered stock market rout

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OIL SLIPS TOWARDS \$33 AS HOPES FOR OUTPUT CUT FADE

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Infiniti Q60, QX30 set to make European debut

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TEHRAN: Iranian stockbrokers monitor share prices at the Tehran Stock Exchange in Tehran yesterday. The Tehran Stock Exchange has rallied to a one year high in the wake of Iran's landmark nuclear deal with world powers last summer. — AP

SAUDI FISCAL RESERVES SLIDE TO 4-YEAR LOW OMANI RIAL PLUMMETS, CB SAYS COMMITTED TO PEG

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's fiscal reserves dropped to a four-year low last year as the government sought to finance a budget deficit caused by plunging oil revenues, a report said yesterday.

The reserves of the world's largest crude exporter dropped to \$611.9 billion at the end of 2015, the lowest level since 2011, down from \$732 billion a year before, the Saudi Jadwa Investment said in an economic report. Jadwa said it expected reserves to fall to around \$500 billion by the end of 2016, after oil prices fell by three quarters since mid-2014.

The kingdom, the second largest crude producer after Russia, posted a record budget deficit of \$98 billion last year after oil income dived by 60 percent to just \$118 billion. Riyadh also projected an \$87 billion deficit for this year but Jadwa forecast the shortfall to be more than \$107 billion. To help finance the budget deficit, the kingdom in December introduced a series of austerity measures raising fuel prices by up to 80 percent and

increasing the prices of electricity, water, natural gas and others. Jadwa said it expected inflation to soar this year to 3.9 percent, from 2.2 percent last year, as a result of the price hikes. The kingdom also issued bonds in the domestic market worth \$30 billion.

The International Monetary Fund last month revised downward Saudi gross domestic product growth to just 1.2 percent this year, the lowest since 2009. Its GDP grew 3.4 percent in 2015. Saudi Arabia is currently pumping 10.2 million barrels of crude per day.

Omani rial plunges

Oman remains committed to the peg of its rial currency against the US dollar, the head of the central bank said yesterday, after the rial dropped to its lowest level in the forwards market for a decade. Low oil prices are hurting Oman's state finances and depleting its foreign reserves, fuelling speculation among some foreign bankers that it may eventually have to abandon the peg of 0.3849 rial to the

dollar, set in 1986. One-year dollar/rial forwards - deals that will be settled in 12 months' time - jumped on Monday as high as 1,500 points, their highest since 2006. That implied the rial would depreciate about 4 percent from its peg. Forwards came down slightly to 1,400 points by Tuesday afternoon, but currency dealers said the market's move this week showed some bankers were identifying the Omani rial as the most vulnerable currency in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council of wealthy oil exporters. "The currency pegs in Oman and Bahrain are not robust to severe terms-of-trade shocks, and sustainability issues may become increasingly more pressing over the next 12-24 months if oil prices stay at below \$60-\$70 per barrel," Goldman Sachs said in a research note in late January.

A dealer with a foreign bank in the Gulf, speaking on condition of anonymity because the matter is sensitive, said: "Oman is the weakest link in the GCC and its peg may come under pressure as early as end-2016." Bahrain

and Oman lack the deep financial resources of their neighbors and while Bahrain is widely believed to be able to count on financial support from Saudi Arabia, to which it is closely allied politically, the markets believe Oman may not have such automatic backing.

That has left traders focusing on the damage which cheap oil is doing to Oman's state finances. The government posted an \$11.7 billion deficit last year and has forecast another big deficit this year despite spending cuts. The plunge of the Brent oil price to near \$30 a barrel, from around \$100 18 months ago, has created some unease about all the GCC currencies. But the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Kuwait have hundreds of billions of dollars of overseas assets and small populations, so the markets think they are safe for now.

Saudi Arabia's riyal has come under pressure in the forwards market but that pressure has eased since Riyadh warned banks not to speculate against its currency and threatened to mobilize its huge reserves against specula-

tors. Central bank executive president Hamood Sangour Al-Zadjali told Reuters on Tuesday that Oman had no intention of altering its currency peg.

"Nothing changed. We are committed to the peg with the USD. The interest rate hasn't changed," he said, adding that the rial's weakness in the forwards market might be partly due to the strength of the US dollar globally.

Nevertheless, speculation against the rial may continue unless there is a substantial rebound of oil prices. The Goldman Sachs report estimated the probability of a devaluation in Oman could reach over 80 percent within three years. Keen to boost economic growth, the Omani central bank has so far resisted pressure to raise its official interest rates in line with the U.S. Federal Reserve, which hiked rates by 0.25 percentage point in December. Within hours of the US hike, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait and Bahrain raised their rates in what was seen by markets as a signal that they would defend their currency pegs. — Agencies

UPS Q4 PROFIT OF \$1.33BN BEATS STREET FORECASTS

DALLAS: UPS nearly tripled its fourth-quarter profit and seemed to avoid many of the holiday package-delivery breakdowns that it suffered a year earlier. The company said that through greater use of automation and working with retailers, it was able to smooth out some of the spikes that overwhelmed its network in late 2014.

UPS expects 2016 earnings of between \$5.70 and \$5.90 per share, which would be an increase of between 5 percent and 9 percent over 2015 and stronger than Wall Street expected. Analysts were forecasting \$5.72 per share in 2016, according to a FactSet survey.

Still, company executives said they face mixed economic indicators and slowing growth in some emerging economies. United Parcel Service Inc. earned \$1.33 billion, up from \$453 million a year earlier, when results were hurt by a \$692 million charge for pension and health care costs.

Company executives said the peak holiday season was a success. UPS used pricing to encourage retailers to shift some shipments to slower days such as weekends and reduce the volume on the busiest days. They said that avoided the surges that overwhelmed the UPS network during the 2014 holidays. UPS said it delivered 1.3 billion packages in the fourth quarter, an

increase of 2 percent over late 2014.

Myron Gray, president of UPS' US operations, said to handle the load the company hired 90,000 to 95,000 seasonal workers, just as it expected. But because of automation, UPS was able to delay some of the hiring until the workers were needed, and hours worked fell 8 percent from a year earlier, he said. "We don't see a need to add head count" or more employees, he added during a conference call with analysts.

The Atlanta company said yesterday that profit worked out to \$1.48 per share. Excluding one-time costs including a charge for pension returns that were lower than expected, earnings would have been \$1.57 per share, which is 16 cents better than industry analysts had projected, according to a poll by Zacks Investment Research. However, the company's fourth-quarter revenue of \$16.05 billion was short of \$16.27 billion that Wall Street had expected. UPS cited the strong dollar and falling energy prices, which means that the company did not log the same fuel surcharges it had last year.

In morning trading, UPS shares rose \$1.53 to \$95.61. They began the day down 2 percent since the beginning of the year, compared with a 5 percent drop in the Standard & Poor's 500 index. — AP



TEHRAN: Two passenger planes of Iran's national air carrier, Iran Air, are parked at the Mehrabad Airport in Tehran. — AP

IRAN SIGNS DEAL TO BUY 20 MORE AIRPLANES

TEHRAN: Iran's national carrier has signed an agreement to buy 20 new passenger airplanes with an option for 20 more from French-Italian aircraft manufacturer ATR, Iranian media reported yesterday.

The purchase comes a week after Iran Air signed a deal to buy 118 planes from the European consortium Airbus, signaling a major effort to develop the civilian aviation sector now that international sanctions have been lifted under a landmark nuclear deal. ATR said the deal signed with Iran Air includes a firm order for 20 ATR 72-600 planes. Iran's private Donya-e Eghtesad daily says the deal is worth \$1.089 billion.

Iranian Transport Minister Abbas Akhoundi said Tuesday that the planes will be delivered over 3 years, beginning in 2016, according to the official IRNA news agency. He said that under a separate agreement, a French company will build a new terminal in Tehran International Airport within a year, without elaborating.

He said the government hopes to expand the airport's capacity from 8 million passengers to 40 million over the next four years by adding two other new terminals as well as renovating an existing one. He added that Iran hopes to become a hub for long-haul flights. — AP

OIL PULLS DOWN MOST OF GULF, QNB BUOYS QATAR

DUBAI: A pullback in oil prices caused weakness in most major Gulf stock markets yesterday but Qatar was boosted by its biggest bank, while real estate firms lifted Egypt's bourse. Brent crude retreated more than 3 percent to below \$33 a barrel yesterday as hopes for a deal between OPEC and Russia on oil output cuts faded. That was enough to make many Gulf investors become more wary of buying stocks.

The Saudi stock index, which has been highly correlated to the oil price this year, dropped 1.9 percent, led by petrochemicals. The sector's biggest stock, Saudi Basic Industries, tumbled 3.6 percent.

Construction company Jabal Omar Development Co slid 3.6 percent, bringing its losses to 7.5 percent in the three days since it said it was in talks with creditors after failing to make the first repayment of 650 million riyals (\$173 million) on a 3 billion riyal loan from the government. Only 22 stocks gained against 141 decliners. Among the gainers, Al Bilad Bank added 4.2 percent after its board recommended a share capital increase through a one for five bonus issue, paid for with financial reserves and

retained earnings. Dubai's stock index edged down 0.3 percent to 2,970 points but came well off the day's low of 2,943 points. Emaar Properties dropped 0.8 percent but there was buying in some smaller real estate stocks such as Union Properties, which rose 0.6 percent.

Air Arabia rose 3.3 percent after saying it would hold a board meeting to discuss its 2015 earnings on Sunday. Abu Dhabi fell 0.4 percent as First Gulf Bank, which had surged in the previous two days on strong fourth-quarter earnings, pulled back 1.7 percent. National Bank of Abu Dhabi sank 2.8 percent. But the Qatari index rose 0.9 percent as Qatar National bank climbed 1.0 percent after a two-day suspension during which it made a 20 percent bonus share issue, which began trading yesterday.

Egypt's index gained 1.7 percent, more than erasing its loss on Monday. Among real estate stocks, Palm Hills Development surged 4.8 percent and Emaar Misr climbed 6.7 percent to 2.24 Egyptian pounds after Prime Holding started coverage of the stock with a "buy" rating and a fair value estimate of 3.94 pounds. — Reuters

PFIZER EARNINGS FALL BUT TOP STREET 4Q FORECASTS

NEW YORK: Pfizer Inc reported that its fourth-quarter profit fell by half due to higher costs for production, administration and restructuring, yet the world's second-biggest drugmaker topped Wall Street expectations.

The New York-based company's revenue rose by 7 percent, ending a long stretch of declining sales due to generic competition to one-time blockbuster. Pfizer benefited from growing sales of its newest products, as well as the additional of injectable medicines made by Hospira, which it acquired last September. The maker of Viagra and pain treatment Lyrica said yesterday that net income was \$613 million, or 10 cents, per share. A year earlier, its net income was \$1.23 billion, or 19 cents per share.

Adjusted for non-recurring costs, including a charge for currency devaluation in Venezuela, income in the latest quarter was 53 cents per share. The average estimate of 10 analysts surveyed by Zacks Investment Research was 52 cents per share.

Like many rival drugmakers, Pfizer lost patent protection over that last several years on many of its biggest drugs, which had raked in billions annually. Those are led by cholesterol fighter Lipitor, which lost patent protection in November 2011 after nearly a decade as the world's top-selling drug.

But in the fourth quarter, the drugmaker posted revenue of \$14.05 billion in the period, up from \$13.12 billion a year earlier. Analysts surveyed by Zacks expected \$13.61 billion. The total included \$1.51 billion is sales of injectable medicines. In addition, sales of Lyrica rose 6 percent to \$955 million, and sales of the Prevnar vaccine against pneumonia and other bacterial infections surged 43 percent to \$1.86 billion. Pfizer is in the process of buying Irish drugmaker Allergan for \$160 billion in a deal that would move Pfizer's official headquarters for tax purposes from New York to Allergan's base in Ireland. The strategy, called a tax inversion, would sharply decrease Pfizer's income tax bill compared to current US

tax rates, though the drugmaker's operations would still be run from New York.

"I believe that we are well positioned to deliver another strong year in 2016," Pfizer CEO Ian Read said in a statement. "The integration of Hospira is well under way and we now look forward to completing the combination with Allergan, which we still expect to occur during the second half of this year. We see this transaction as a very effective driver of accelerating the growth potential of our innovative business, strengthening our established business and more efficiently allocating our capital globally." Pfizer expects full-year earnings in the range of \$2.20 to \$2.30 per share, with revenue in the range of \$49 billion to \$51 billion. Pfizer shares slipped 52 cents, or 1.7 percent, to \$29.65 in premarket trading ahead of the market open. They have declined 6.5 percent since the beginning of the year, while the Standard & Poor's 500 index has declined 5 percent. The stock has declined 3.5 percent in the last 12 months. — AP



The Pfizer logo is displayed at world headquarters, in New York. Pfizer reports financial results yesterday. — AP

OIL SLIPS TOWARDS \$33 AS HOPES FOR OUTPUT CUT FADE

'HIGHLY UNLIKELY' OPEC, RUSSIA WILL COOPERATE: GOLDMAN

LONDON: Oil prices fell around 3 percent yesterday, dented by worries about the demand outlook and rising supply, while hopes for a deal between OPEC and Russia on output cuts faded.

Brent for April delivery was down \$1.01 at \$33.23 a barrel by 1120 GMT, after settling down \$1.75, or 4.9 percent, in the previous session. The front-month contract for West Texas Intermediate (WTI) was down 89 cents at \$30.73 after falling \$2.00, or 5.9 percent, the session before.

Russia's energy minister and Venezuela's oil minister discussed the possibility of holding joint consultations between OPEC

and non-OPEC countries in the near future, the Russian Energy Ministry said on Monday. But Goldman Sachs said it was "highly unlikely" the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries would cooperate with Russia to cut output, saying such a move would also be self-defeating as stronger prices would bring previously shelved production back to the market.

"It's hard to see a successful agreement between OPEC and Russia to cut production and people are starting to see that," said Andy Sommer, senior energy analyst at Axpo Trading in Dietikon, Switzerland. He said there was a good chance that oil

could fall back below \$30 per barrel this month.

Underlining the well-supplied nature of the market, Russia's oil output rose to 10.88 million barrels per day (bpd) in January, from 10.83 million bpd in December, Energy Ministry data showed yesterday.

Stockpiles are still on the rise, leading many to speculate that global storage may be close to capacity, Sommer said. US commercial crude oil inventories likely rose by 4.7 million barrels last week to a new record of 499.6 million barrels, a Reuters survey taken ahead of industry and official data showed.

The American Petroleum Institute, an industry group, releases its weekly inventory report later on Tuesday, while data from the US government's Energy Information Administration is due today.

Investors await economic data later in the week, including US nonfarm payroll and unemployment figures and producer prices from the eurozone.

The tumbling crude price has hit oil majors, with BP slumping to its worst annual loss in more than 20 years last year, its results showed yesterday, pushing its shares down more than 6 percent. Other oil companies also fell sharply. — Reuters

SLOWDOWN LEADS TO EXODUS OF LAW FIRMS FROM ABU DHABI

DUBAI: Simmons & Simmons is the latest in a wave of Western law firms to shut their offices in Abu Dhabi in the last year as low oil prices put a damper on business.

London-based Simmons & Simmons plans to close its office in the United Arab Emirates capital by the end of April, a spokeswoman said.

It follows US-based law firms Latham & Watkins and Baker Botts, as well as London and Sydney co-headquartered Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF) in announcing plans to close offices in Abu Dhabi over the past 12 months. Many international law firms had piled into the capital in the past five years, hoping to bag lucrative contracts linked to the government, in particular the energy sector and the launch of a new financial free zone.

"That hasn't happened as planned and adding to that is the uncertain times we are in now with oil prices around \$30," said a source familiar with the matter.

The retreat underscores growing pressure on international law firms for billable hours, prompt-

ing a review of their need to have a presence in the capital.

Simmons & Simmons, which decided to close its Abu Dhabi office after a review, said in an emailed statement it would serve its clients through its office in Dubai, moving its Abu Dhabi-based partners to Dubai or London. Abu Dhabi has cut back or slowed spending on non-essential projects and has lifted subsidies on petrol to ease finances as state revenues decline due to cheap oil.

The International Monetary Fund has cut its growth forecast for the UAE to 2.6 percent in 2016. Abu Dhabi is more reliant on the energy sector and government contracts, whereas Dubai has a more diversified economy propelled by a larger private sector. HSF said it closed its Abu Dhabi office in the middle of last year and transferred its five resident lawyers to its offices in Dubai or Doha.

Latham & Watkins said in March 2015 it was closing its Abu Dhabi and Doha offices, consolidating the Abu Dhabi office with its office in Dubai. Baker Botts said it closed its Abu Dhabi office in January 2015. — Reuters

MERGED AL-NOOR/MEDICLINIC TO LIST ON FEB 15, EYES EXPANSION

ABU DHABI: Mediclinic International Plc, which is being created by the merger of Al-Noor Hospitals Group and Mediclinic International Ltd, will be listed in London on Feb. 15, the chief executive of Al-Noor said yesterday.

The combination, announced in October, will create the third-largest international healthcare group outside the United States, according to Al Noor CEO Ronald Lavater, after South Africa's Mediclinic agreed to buy United Arab Emirates-based Al Noor for 1.4 billion pounds (\$2.2 billion).

The deal was structured as a so-called reverse takeover with Mediclinic set to take on Al Noor's London listing as its primary listing. Current Al Noor shareholders have until Feb. 12 to decide whether to swap their shares under a tender offer which will see Mediclinic ultimately own between 84 and 93 percent of the combined company.

"All approvals are done, all paper work signed and the listing and final change of control is on Feb. 15," Lavater told Reuters. The integration process will start soon after listing and will be done in phases, with the first wave focused on achieving synergies in purchases and service contracts, he said.

The next phase would look at synergies in clinical practice and medical services, locations for hospitals and deployment of capital. "From the growth perspective, each

of us were looking at growth in each other's markets," said Lavater. He declined to outline the new growth strategy but said that in the Middle East, the combined company would focus on expansion in the UAE.

Mediclinic has been on an acquisition spree - it bought almost a third Britain's Spire Healthcare in June - as it seeks to diversify outside its home market where a government probe into private hospitals and a mooted national health insurance plan is limiting growth opportunities.

Like much of the Gulf region, the UAE healthcare market is booming due to an increasingly-wealthy population being burdened by high levels of lifestyle diseases, such as diabetes.

Both Al Noor and Mediclinic had been expanding in the UAE, building new hospitals and clinics, and this will continue under the combined entity, according to Lavater.

"There are lots of opportunities for high-quality healthcare in the UAE and unmet needs in Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar that could be expanded by the enlarged group in the future," he said.

In the UAE, both the Al Noor and Mediclinic brands will be retained on their existing centres. The merged company will have 73 hospitals, 35 clinics, over 10,000 beds and around 35,000 employees across South Africa, UAE and Switzerland. — Reuters

News

in brief

OPEC basket price up to \$29.69 pb

VIENNA: The OPEC daily basket price rose by 58 cents to \$29.69 a barrel on Monday, compared with \$29.11 pb on Friday, the OPEC said yesterday. The annual average of the OPEC basket price hit \$49.64 pb, it added. The new OPEC Reference Basket of Crudes (ORB) is made up of the following: Saharan Blend (Algeria), Girassol (Angola), Oriente (Ecuador), Iran Heavy (Islamic Republic of Iran), Basra Light (Iraq), Kuwait Export (Kuwait), Es Sider (Libya), Bonny Light (Nigeria), Qatar Marine (Qatar), Arab Light (Saudi Arabia), Murban (UAE) and Merey (Venezuela). During their recent meeting in Vienna in late 2015, OPEC member countries had decided to maintain their production at 30 million barrels per day (bpd) despite a surplus in the market estimated at over a million barrels.

Dubai's Nakheel awards \$381m deal to China State

DUBAI: Dubai's Nakheel has awarded a 1.4 billion dirham (\$381.19 million) contract to China State Construction Engineering Corp and Korea's Ssangyong Engineering and Construction to build a three-tower complex. The Palm Gateway will include 1,265 residential units as well as shopping and leisure facilities. Work is scheduled to start in the first quarter of 2016 and will take about two years to complete, Nakheel said in an emailed statement yesterday. Ssangyong is part-owned by state-run Investment Corporation of Dubai (ICD).

Egyptian pound 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 \$39.4 million at a cut-off price of 7.7301 pounds to the dollar yesterday, unchanged from the previous auction.

Union Properties says talks with banks to borrow \$202m

DUBAI: Dubai's Union Properties is in talks with banks to borrow about 740 million dirhams (\$202 million) to help fund some of its projects, the developer said in a bourse statement yesterday. The company hopes to borrow 300 million dirhams for a residential building, 70 million dirhams for staff accommodation, 50 million dirhams to expand a shopping mall and 320 million dirhams for a mixed-use retail and hospitality project, it said without providing further details.

Jordan Housing Bank reports net profit of 124.7m dinars

AMMAN: Jordan's Housing Bank for Trade and Finance reported a 2015 net profit of 124.7 million dinars (\$175 million), up slightly from 123.9 million a year earlier. The country's second-largest lender said total assets stood at 7.9 billion dinars at the end of 2015, up 4.3 percent from a year earlier.

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.519
Indian Rupees	4.468
Pakistani Rupees	2.889
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.110
Nepali Rupees	2.801
Singapore Dollar	213.590
Hongkong Dollar	39.997
Bangladesh Taka	3.864
Philippine Peso	6.352
Thai Baht	8.518

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	80.923
Qatari Riyal	83.359
Omani Riyal	788.202
Bahraini Dinar	805.900
UAE Dirham	82.621

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	31.400
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	38.801
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.416
Tunisian Dinar	149.260
Jordanian Dinar	427.330
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.022
Syrian Lira	2.163
Morocco Dirham	31.108

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	303.300
Euro	332.420
Sterling Pound	437.970
Canadian dollar	217.260
Turkish lira	102.810
Swiss Franc	298.820
Australian Dollar	216.100
US Dollar Buying	302.100

GOLD	
20 Gram	229.820
10 Gram	117.580
5 Gram	59.640

UAE EXCHANGE CENTRE WLL

CURRENCIES	TELEX TRANSFER PER 1000
Australian Dollar	202.46
Canadian Dollar	220.16
Swiss Franc	302.09
Euro	334.12
US Dollar	303.50
Sterling Pound	439.85
Japanese Yen	2.55
Bangladesh Taka	3.869
Indian Rupee	4.473
Sri Lankan Rupee	2.109
Nepali Rupee	2.794
Pakistani Rupee	2.889
UAE Dirhams	0.08259
Bahraini Dinar	0.8066
Egyptian Pound	0.03866
Jordanian Dinar	0.4317
Omani Riyal	0.7881
Qatari Riyal	0.08368
Saudi Riyal	0.08090

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.550
Canadian Dollar	218.730
Sterling Pound	438.130
Euro	332.540
Swiss Franc	310.155
Bahrain Dinar	803.055
UAE Dirhams	82.885
Qatari Riyals	84.100

Saudi Riyals	81.625
Jordanian Dinar	427.615
Egyptian Pound	38.655
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.111
Indian Rupees	4.467
Pakistani Rupees	2.890
Bangladesh Taka	3.861
Philippines Peso	6.354
Cyprus pound	578.165
Kenyan Shilling	3.510
Syrian Pound	2.375
Nepalese Rupees	3.785
Malaysian Ringgit	72.865
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.480
Thai Bhat	9.495
Turkish Lira	103.060

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.429986	0.438986
Czech Korune	0.004214	0.016214
Danish Krone	0.040248	0.045248
Euro	0.325288	0.333288
Norwegian Krone	0.030777	0.035977
Romanian Leu	0.073058	0.073058
Slovakia	0.009048	0.019048
Swedish Krona	0.031472	0.036472
Swiss Franc	0.291074	0.301274
Turkish Lira	0.097125	0.107425

Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.206029	0.217529
New Zealand Dollar	0.191416	0.200916

America		
Canadian Dollar	0.211174	0.219674
US Dollars	0.299200	0.303700

US Dollars Mint	0.299700	0.303700
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Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003509	0.004109
Chinese Yuan	0.044558	0.048058
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036897	0.039647
Indian Rupee	0.004194	0.004584
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002428	0.002608
Kenyan Shilling	0.002959	0.002959
Korean Won	0.000241	0.000256
Malaysian Ringgit	0.069092	0.075092
Nepalese Rupee	0.002875	0.003045
Pakistan Rupee	0.002584	0.002864
Philippine Peso	0.006268	0.006548
Sierra Leone	0.000070	0.000076
Singapore Dollar	209.440	215.440
South African Rand	0.012942	0.021442
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001758	0.002338
Taiwan	0.008941	0.009121
Thai Baht	0.008179	0.008729

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.797621	0.805621
Egyptian Pound	0.034876	0.039212
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000200	0.000260
Jordanian Dinar	0.423784	0.431284
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021436	0.045436
Nigerian Naira	0.001252	0.001887
Omani Riyal	0.781372	0.787052
Qatar Riyal	0.082598	0.083811
Saudi Riyal	0.079993	0.080943
Syrian Pound	0.001285	0.001505
Tunisian Dinar	0.146300	0.154300
Turkish Lira	0.097125	0.107425
UAE Dirhams	0.081596	0.082745
Yemeni Riyal	0.001371	0.001451

INDIA'S CB HOLDS INTEREST RATES AT 6.75%

MUMBAI: India's central bank kept interest rates on hold yesterday, citing the importance of controlling inflation and noting a slowing growth momentum in Asia's third-largest economy.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said the benchmark repo rate, the level at which it lends to commercial banks, would remain at 6.75 percent as analysts had expected.

Out of 40 economists surveyed by Bloomberg News, all but two had predicted that the bank would leave the key rate unchanged. "The Indian economy is currently being viewed as a beacon of stability because of the steady disinflation, a modest current account deficit and commitment to fiscal rectitude," RBI governor Raghuram Rajan said in a statement. "This needs to be maintained so that the foundations of stable and sustainable growth are strengthened," the RBI chief added, following the

bank's monetary policy review meeting in Mumbai.

India's consumer price inflation accelerated to 5.6 percent in December, the fifth month in a row it had gained pace, but remained within the central bank's target.

But Rajan, who has made controlling inflation a priority of his tenure, said the bank expected to achieve its target of keeping inflation below six percent in January, although the figures have not been released yet. The central bank governor said it had opted not to move on rates until it could digest economic reforms expected in the government's budget, due on February 29.

"Structural reforms in the forthcoming union budget that boost growth while controlling spending will create more space for monetary policy to support growth," he said.

Analyst Arun Singh told AFP it would

be "difficult" for the RBI to cut rates ahead of the budget. "Announcements in the union budget will certainly decide the roadmap for the reserve bank and how much easing it can talk about," the senior economist at Dun & Bradstreet said. RBI chief Rajan lopped 125 basis points off borrowing rates in 2015 in four separate cuts to take the repo rate to its lowest level in four years. The bank last cut rates on September 29 with a surprise 50-basis-point reduction. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has focused on economic growth since sweeping to power almost two years ago and India has now posted three straight quarters of growth above seven percent. But investors have raised concerns about the pace of promised economic reforms and the government last month cut its forecast for 2015-16 growth to 7-7.5 percent, down from 8.1-8.5 percent previously stated. — AFP



MUMBAI: Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Raghuram Rajan speaks during a news conference at the RBI headquarters in Mumbai yesterday. — AFP

RUSSIA LEAVES DOOR OPEN TO OPEC DEAL AS OUTPUT HITS HIGH

OPEC JAN PRODUCTION HIGHEST IN ITS RECENT HISTORY

NIZHNEVARTOVSK/MOSCOW: Two senior Russian officials talked up potential cooperation with OPEC to prop up prices, but data showed oil production in Russia hit a post-Soviet high in January, suggesting the world's top producer was locked in a fierce struggle for market share.

Russia has in the last week sent mixed signals about possible cooperation with OPEC to support prices. It first suggested it should start talking to OPEC before saying there was no decision to do so.

Yesterday, the pendulum swung the other way again. Top oil producer Rosneft, after its head Igor Sechin met Venezuelan oil minister Eulogio Del Pino, said the two men had discussed possible joint efforts to stabilize global oil markets.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov also said Moscow was open to further cooperation in the oil market with OPEC and non-OPEC countries. Despite the rhetoric, preliminary data from the Energy Ministry on Tuesday showed Russia was actively ramping up production adding to a global glut.

Production hit another post-Soviet high last month of 10.88 million barrels per day (bpd), up from 10.80 million bpd in December, the data showed.

OPEC production also jumped to its highest in recent history in January as Iran increased sales after the lifting of sanctions and rivals Saudi Arabia and Iraq

also boosted supply, a Reuters survey showed last week. That suggests an intensifying battle for market share, a trend that runs counter to growing speculation about some kind of coordinated output cut.

"I very much doubt there will be any success in coordination there is no consensus inside OPEC itself," said Alexander Kornilov, a senior oil and gas analyst with Aton in Moscow.

According to Tuesday's data, Russia extracted 46 million tons of oil and gas condensate last month, up 0.7 percent from 45.69 million tons in December. The increase was fuelled by Gazprom Neft, Bashneft, Novatek and projects under production sharing agreements. Gas production was at 61.94 billion cubic metres (bcm) last month, or at 2 bcm a day.

"The growth was expected from Novatek, Bashneft and Gazprom Neft and I believe this trend will continue in the near future. Lukoil was the only one who actively cut drilling, while the picture was the opposite for others," said Kornilov.

On Monday, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak met Venezuela's Del Pino, who is visiting OPEC and non-OPEC countries to try to drum up support for joint action to prop up low crude prices.

Both discussed the possibility of holding joint consultations between OPEC and non-OPEC countries in the near future, the Russian Energy Ministry said.

SOURCE OF GROWTH

Novatek, co-owned by its CEO Leonid Mikhelson, President Vladimir Putin's ally Gennady Timchenko and France's Total, started to pump oil at the Yarudeyskoye field last month at its full capacity of 3.5 million tons a year.

Gazprom Neft, the oil arm of state gas producer Gazprom, plans to start two new major oil projects, Novoport and Messoyakha later this year. That should help cover declines at other Russian brown-fields countrywide. Meanwhile, at the Samotlor field in Western Siberia, still one of the world's largest and which produced over 3 million bpd alone at its peak in the 1980s, drilling is under way to maintain production, a senior official told Reuters.

One of Rosneft's largest fields, Samotlor, produced 21 million tons of oil last year.

"The key task for 2016 is to stabilize production. All the programs have already been approved," Valentin Mamayev, chief executive of Samotlorneftegaz, told Reuters.

He added that Samotlor plans to drill 227 new wells this year, twice as many as in 2014. "If we produce 20 million tons a year, this (Samotlor) could last for the next 50 years minimum," Mamayev said. — Reuters

MORE CB INTEREST RATE CUTS COMING BEFORE ANY HIKE

FRANKFURT: Global interest rates are likely to go even lower before they rise as financial market volatility and the spectre of deflation raise fresh doubts about central banks' ability to fulfil their mandates, policy-makers and economists said.

With markets in turmoil and talk of further Chinese currency devaluation intensifying, expectations for US rate hikes this year have all but evaporated and central banks from Europe to Canada and Australia are preparing the ground for more easing. Faltering emerging market growth is exacerbating concerns, raising the risk that policy easing in too many places at once will cancel itself out and force national banks into a vicious cycle of competitive currency devaluation.

"The biggest risk for the world economy at this point is an aggressive policy of devaluation in China," said the head of a major central bank in Europe, who asked not to be named.

"With uncertainty and volatility already high, it would have a big consequence for all economies." The People's Bank of China has been fighting to keep the yuan stable since Jan. 6, when its second sharp depreciation in six months sparked fears of more devaluation as growth in the world's second biggest economy, already at a 25-year low, slows. Chinese stocks have lost over a fifth of their value since the start of the year, while a renewed slide in oil prices, a major indicator of economic activity, took Brent crude to its lowest since 2003. The CBOE Volatility Index, the US equity market's "fear gauge" has risen sharply.

The European Central Bank responded by raising the prospect of another rate cut in March while the Bank of England has rowed back from suggestions it could start hiking rates soon.

Last week, the Bank of Japan unexpectedly lowered its key rate into negative territory, abandoning its policy of holding rates at zero to avoid potential damage to the financial system. "The BOJ provides the strongest signal to date that the previously assumed zero lower bound on rates is no longer valid," Deutsche Bank strategist George Saravelos said.

"Markets should now be pricing that global rates across global fixed income can sustainably and substantially trade below zero in the current and future easing cycles." Money markets now see the ECB's deposit rate sinking to -0.5 percent this year from -0.3 percent while the BOJ said its policies provided room for more easing if needed.

The Reserve Bank of Australia, the Bank

of Canada and Sweden's Riksbank have also highlighted risks, keeping the possibility of policy easing on the agenda.

FED

The US Federal Reserve has been the big exception, lifting interest rates in December for the first time since 2006, but has already acknowledged headwinds that may delay further hikes.

"It is difficult to judge the likely implications of this volatility," Vice Chairman Stanley Fischer said on Monday. "If these developments lead to a persistent tightening of financial conditions, they could signal a slowing in the global economy that could affect growth and inflation in the United States."

San Francisco Fed President John Williams meanwhile said the next rate rise may need to be delayed somewhat. Traders now see only one increase if any this year, probably in November, not the three or four discussed in December. Odds have shifted quickly, so any more market volatility could erase rate hike expectations for 2016.

LIMITS

The problem for central banks is that their tools in a zero-rate environment are relatively untested, only moderately effective and, because they do not coordinate policy, prone to cancelling each other out. Returns from quantitative easing diminish with each round while deeply negative rates raise financial stability risks as banking profitability falters and asset bubbles form.

Currency depreciation, a key policy transmission channel for most central banks, also has limits as too many countries trying to devalue leads to a currency war. "The economic bang for the depreciating buck, or yen or euro is relatively small," Citi economists Steve Englander and Josh O'Byrne said in a note to clients.

"A consequence is that if the exchange rate is the tool of monetary policy, it doesn't work nearly as well as advertised, you have to go much further than you think, for much longer than you think and you are probably in much deeper trouble than you are willing to admit."

Neither does policy easing solve the underlying problem of high debt, which is holding back growth and inflation. One source with knowledge of the ECB's thinking acknowledged that its room for manoeuvre is limited: "We have a lot of tools still but all are problematic one way or another so they are not the most effective." — Reuters

GERMAN UNEMPLOYMENT HITS NEW LOW, DESPITE REFUGEE INFLUX

FRANKFURT: German unemployment fell to a new historic low in January, despite a massive influx of refugees, as the recovery in Europe's biggest economy remains on track, data showed yesterday.

The unemployment rate—which measures the jobless total against the working population as a whole—eased to 6.2 percent in January from 6.3 percent in December. In numerical terms, the number of people registered as unemployed in Germany declined by a seasonally-adjusted 20,000 to 2.732 million, the Federal Labour Office said in a statement. That was more than expected, as analysts had been pencilling in a decline of around 6,500.

With the new drop, unemployment now stands at the lowest level since West and East Germany reunited in 1990 after the fall of the Berlin Wall the previous year. By contrast, in raw, or unadjusted, terms, the jobless total increased by 239,000 to 2.92 million and the unemployment rate jumped to 6.7 percent in January from 6.1 percent in December, the office noted.

But that increase was solely due to seasonal factors, it explained. Unemployment tends to rise during

the cold winter months and after the Christmas holidays. "The German economy expanded by 1.7 percent all in all in 2015. That was primarily due to dynamic domestic consumption," the labor office said.

"The trend is set to continue in 2016. The labor market is developing positively," it added.

'Excellent shape'

Analysts were cheered by the data, especially as some observers had predicted that the arrival of nearly 1.1 million asylum seekers in Germany in 2015 would push the jobless numbers higher. "The numbers show what excellent shape the German labour market is in," said BayernLB economist Johannes Mayr. "The slowdown in the decline in unemployment we had been expecting has not materialised," the expert said.

"Neither the minimum wage, nor the upward pressure on the numbers via increased migration have materialised," Mayr said. IHS Global Insight analyst Timo Klein agreed.

"Overall, labour market conditions remain healthi-

er in Germany than in most other countries in Europe," he said. Separate statistics for the entire euro area showed unemployment at its lowest level in more than four years in December, the highest jobless rates seen in Greece and Spain (24.5 percent and 20.8 percent respectively). And in France, the area's second-biggest economy, unemployment stood at 10.2 percent.

Klein suggested that the influx of refugees would take until the middle of the year before starting to be reflected in the German unemployment numbers in view of "the administrative lags involved as authorities are currently being overwhelmed by the numbers."

This year, German economic growth is expected to exceed the current rate of potential growth of just below 1.5 percent, the analyst said.

"Taking the ramifications of refugee developments into account, we now expect unemployment in annual average terms to decline from 6.7 percent in 2014 and 6.4 percent in 2015 to 6.2 percent in 2016 before rebounding modestly to around 6.5 percent in 2017-18," Klein concluded. — AFP



BUTLER, PA: A row of new Ford Fusions are for sale on the lot at Butler County Ford in Butler. Major US automakers reported sales figures for January yesterday. — AP

US AUTO SALES EXPECTED TO FALL AFTER SNOWSTORM

DETROIT: US auto sales were expected to fall in January because of the East Coast snowstorm, but analysts say demand remains strong and buyers will likely head back into dealerships this month. J D Power and Associates forecast a 4.5 percent sales drop from a year ago to just under 1.1 million cars and trucks. John Humphrey, J.D. Power's senior vice president of automotive, estimated that the storm - which buried New York and Washington D.C. under more than 2 feet of snow the weekend of Jan. 22 - cost automakers around 15,000 vehicle sales. Sales last January hit their highest point in nine years, kicking off a year of record sales. US buyers bought 17.5 million cars and trucks in 2015. Analysts expect sales to continue to grow this year, though at a slower pace. LMC Automotive, a consulting firm, predicts sales will hit a record of 17.8 million this year. Low gas prices, low interest rates and an improv-

ing economy are all continuing to fuel sales. General Motors' US sales were flat in January at 203,745. Sales were up for its GMC and Buick brands but fell for Chevrolet and Cadillac. Ford's sales fell 3 percent to 173,723 vehicles. Ford's SUV sales were up but it saw double-digit declines in car sales.

Fiat Chrysler's sales jumped 7 percent to just over 155,000 cars and trucks. Fiat Chrysler wasn't led by its usual big sellers. The Jeep Grand Cherokee and the Ram Pickup all posted modest increases, but sales got the biggest boost from some unlikely vehicles - including an 83 percent increase for the heavily discounted Dodge Caravan minivan. Fiat Chrysler is introducing a new minivan this spring, so buyers looking for discounts may be snapping up the older minivans. Nissan's sales rose 1.6 percent to 105,734. Sales of its new Maxima sedan more than doubled from last January. — AP

EUROZONE UNEMPLOYMENT FALLS TO 4-YEAR LOW: EUROSTAT

BRUSSELS: Eurozone unemployment fell to its lowest level in more than four years in December, official data showed yesterday, beating forecasts from analysts worried about the global economic outlook.

The Eurostat statistics agency said unemployment in the 19-nation eurozone dropped to 10.4 percent in December from 10.5 percent in November, its lowest rate since September 2011.

Analysts had expected the December figure to be unchanged at 10.5 percent, taking into account the sharp slowdown in China and the huge turmoil in global financial markets.

They said the report was encouraging but still not enough to suggest the economy was back on track and the European Central Bank will have to continue its massive stimulus program. By headcount, there were some 16.75 million jobless in the eurozone in December, down 49,000 from November and 1.5 million less compared with December 2014. Greece and Spain continued to have the highest jobless rates, at 24.5 percent and 20.8 percent, while economic powerhouse Germany was on 4.5 percent, compared with 10.2 percent in France where the economy continues to struggle.

A calculation method used by the German authorities resulted in an unemployment rate for Germany in December of 6.3 percent, data showed yesterday.

Eurozone unemployment hit a record 12.2 percent in September 2013 as the damaging eurozone debt crisis peaked out. The improvement since then has been painfully slow despite the ECB's stimulus, with the economy still well short of the 7.5 percent jobless rate seen before the 2007-08 financial crash.

In the full 28-member European Union, the

unemployment rate was unchanged at 9.0 percent in December. Capital Economics analyst Jennifer McKeown said the report suggested continued subdued improvement but with the caveat that a slowing global economy could reverse that trend.

"We still think that the ECB has a lot more work to do," McKeown said in a note. Howard Archer at IHS Global Insight said he expected

continued modest progress, with unemployment falling to below 10 percent by the end of the year on current trends.

Archer noted however that eurozone business confidence dipped in January "amid heightened global economic uncertainties and financial market volatility" and that could make companies more cautious about taking on new workers. — AFP



SALON-DE-PROVENCE: French farmers and rice farmers block the access of a distribution center yesterday in Salon-de-Provence, after the Departmental Federation of Farmers Unions (FDSEA) called for a demonstration against the falling prices of their agricultural products. — AFP

STOCKS SNAP WINNING STREAK AS OIL SLIDES

LONDON: World stocks dipped after a three-day run of gains and emerging markets were back under pressure yesterday, as a sharp drop in oil prices following lacklustre economic data sparked renewed nerves. Oil struggled to steady, having fallen as much as 7 percent on Monday, and the glum macro mood sweeping back through markets saw European shares follow Asia deep into the red.

Britain's FTSE 100, Germany's DAX and France's CAC 40 were down 1.4-1.7 percent as BP's biggest loss in 20 years and plans to cut thousands more jobs dovetailed with rating cuts by S&P for Shell and BHP Billiton to underscore commodity woes.

Banks were hit too, with Swiss bank UBS slumping as much as 8 percent after signs its wealthy customers were pulling money out.

In the currency markets, waning risk appetite nudged Japan's yen and the euro up against the dollar. But the greenback was squeezing the main emerging markets, up as much as 1 percent against the rouble, the rand, Mexico's peso and Malaysia's ringgit.

The Australian dollar also slipped after the country's central bank held rates but left the door open to further easing after last week's surprise move by Japan into negative interest rates.

"I don't think the market has much of a clue on what to focus on," said John Hardy head of FX

strategy. "It doesn't seem too convinced with the narrative of hooray for central bank liquidity again, and the oil price going down and whole reserve destruction theme is bad for risk appetite."

The lure of relative safety saw gains for benchmark US and European government bonds as Mario Draghi's reconfirmation on Monday that the ECB will 'review' its monetary policy next month gave yields an extra kick lower.

Concern over oil still dominated. Brent and US crude oil had tentatively steadied at \$33.70 and \$31.05 a barrel, having lost as much as 7 percent overnight.

The pressure remains after weak economic data from China, Europe and the United States, a US forecast for mild weather and doubts that big oil producing countries would agree to cut the global supply glut.

Oil production in Russia hit a post-Soviet high in January, reaching an average of 10.88 million barrels per day (bpd), data from its energy ministry showed. "(Prices) have just come back to reality a bit, although they are holding water above \$30 a barrel," said Ben Le Brun, market analyst at Sydney's OptionsXpress, pointing to concern over rising oil supplies and weaker economic data.

calm heading into the Lunar New Year holidays. The Shanghai Composite Index gained 2.3 percent, while the CSI300 index of the largest listed companies in Shanghai and Shenzhen rose 2.1 percent, but trading volumes were low again, as a turbulent January frightened off many investors.

The gains recouped Monday's losses, incurred after official surveys of China's manufacturing and services sectors sent ripples of selling through global markets, but barely made a dent in the indexes' losses so far this year, which now stand at 21-22 percent. "The data suggests continued uncertainties and headwinds to the outlook," wrote Shengzu Wang, an analyst at Barclays. "We have seen no sign of stabilisation since the start of 2016."

Wang was surprised China's central bank had not cut interest rates or banks' reserve requirements in January, and has instead relied on huge injections of funds to tide the banking system over the holiday period. The People's Bank of China (PBOC) may have been concerned that such cuts would only prompt capital flight and encourage more speculators to bet on yuan devaluation.

It has been fighting to keep the currency stable through a series of higher daily yuan fixes and a range of measures that essentially make it very expensive to short the currency.

On Tuesday, it set the yuan at 6.5510 per dollar, the highest fix since Jan. 6, when a sudden drop in the currency sparked worldwide concerns Beijing was seeking a competitive depreciation.

Still, many analysts suspect the currency will be allowed to drift lower over time both to help underpin exports and fight deflation risks at home. Some investors with deep pockets are laying money on it. Hedge funds have ramped up bets on a devaluation since the Bank of Japan cut interest rates below zero last week. Reuters data showed riskier bets that only pay out if the yuan weakens to levels well above 7 per dollar passed peaks hit around Beijing's one-off mini-devaluation last August.

"Since the Bank of Japan was so dovish last week, all of these countries are under a lot more pressure to devalue," said a dealer with one Asian bank in London. Such talk will only heighten the focus on the PBOC's reserves position, due to be reported sometime this week, for details on just how much intervention has been needed to shelter — Reuters

AUSSIE BASHING

Overnight, MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan lost 1.2 percent. Falls almost everywhere except China, which saw a 2 percent bounce, drove the index lower.

Japan's Nikkei ended down 0.6 percent as investors locked in profits after two straight days of big gains following the Bank of Japan's decision to introduce negative interest rates late last week.

"In a bear market, investors would use any rebound to cut equity holdings, and that has been the trading pattern recently," said Zeng Yan, an analyst at Zhongtai Securities, referring mainly to Chinese markets. "There are no changes in fundamentals: yuan depreciation concerns are still there, the economy remains in bad shape, and market liquidity tends to be tight."

The Australian dollar was still down about 0.8 percent at \$0.7052 in European trading, though it held above its recent seven-year trough of \$0.6827. As expected, the Reserve Bank of Australia held interest rates steady at a record low of 2.0 percent. Although the bank was hopeful on growth prospects, it reiterated that there is scope for a further cut if needed.

Markets appeared little fazed by Iowa's primary elections for the US presidential nomination. Among Republicans, US Senator Ted Cruz beat billionaire Donald Trump and for the Democrats, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was in a virtual tie with rival Bernie Sanders. S&P 500 e-mini futures pointed to a 0.8 percent drop for Wall Street later, though that was mostly tracking oil prices and the falls in Europe and Asia.

Chinese shares ended higher yesterday, and the country's central bank guided the yuan to its highest daily fix in almost a month as Beijing sought to keep markets

GOLD STEADIES NEAR THREE-MONTH HIGH

LONDON: Gold steadied after touching a new three-month high yesterday, still supported as global growth concerns and a further drop in the oil price pushed investors towards safe-haven assets.

Weak Chinese manufacturing data on Monday underscored the challenges for the world economy and volatility in oil and other assets is supporting gold, typically a haven from market turmoil.

"In the near term gold is finding some support in the dovish tone from central banks last week, notably the Fed and the Bank of Japan," said Jens Pedersen, senior analyst at Danske Bank.

The Bank of Japan's decision last week to introduce negative interest rates helped lift the precious metal and it could see more gains as some central banks may be forced into easing monetary policy further this year to spur growth.

Spot gold touched \$1,130.11 an ounce, its strongest since Nov. 3, and then pulled back slightly to trade down 0.4 percent at \$1,124.31 by 1221 GMT. A break above \$1,136 could lift gold towards \$1,157, a level reached in late October, ScotiaMocatta technical analysts said.

US gold for April delivery was off 0.2 percent at \$1,126 an ounce. Gold is typically the asset of choice in times of uncertainty. It posted its best monthly jump in a year in January, and has gained 6 percent so far in 2016, after falling 10.4 percent last year. The

Federal Reserve's statement after its policy meeting last week that it will closely monitor the global economy and financial markets lifted gold, as it underlined expectations that US policymakers may take it slow in raising interest rates this year. But the upside for gold has been limited however as the Fed still kept the door open for a rate hike in March. The opportunity cost of holding gold rises in a higher interest rate environment.

Federal Reserve Vice Chairman Stanley Fischer said on Monday the US economy could suffer if recent volatility in financial markets persists and signals a slowdown in the global economy.

"If the Fed had somehow closed the door on March due to the turmoil we could have seen gold shoot higher," Pedersen said. Reflecting growing confidence in gold, holdings of SPDR Gold Trust, the world's largest gold-backed exchange-traded fund, rose to 21.9 million ounces on Monday, the most since Nov 3. With interest rates close to zero, the "only option is to move either towards zero or negative rates as the Japanese and selected European countries are already doing in a desperate attempt to force banks to lend", INTL FCStone analyst Edward Meir wrote to clients.

"Whatever the case, this should be constructive for gold." Spot platinum fell 1 percent to \$861.09 an ounce, palladium also slipped 0.5 percent to \$497.95 and silver dropped 0.3 percent to \$14.27. — Reuters

NIGERIA SEEKS BIG LOANS FROM WB, OTHER LENDERS

ABUJA: Nigeria is seeking loans from the World Bank, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and other lenders to help cover this year's massive budget deficit, the government and bank officials said.

The deficit is projected at 2.2 trillion naira (\$11 billion, 10 billion euros) out of a total budget of 6.08 trillion naira, they said late Monday, confirming projections first given in President Muhammadu Buhari's December budget announcement.

The budget plan, which includes sharply increased spending to stimulate the economy, calls for 1.8 trillion naira to be covered by borrowing from multilateral organisations which the government believes is the cheapest funding option.

The Financial Times said Nigeria was seeking \$3.5 billion in total to fund the deficit, but the figure could not be officially verified. The fall in global oil prices since mid-2014 has slashed revenue for the

oil-dependent nation, which derives more than 90 percent of its foreign exchange earnings from crude sales. "We are in continuing dialogue with the federal government of Nigeria on the preparation of a Development Policy Operation (DPO)," David Theis, World Bank spokesman, said in a statement. "The proposal... will be submitted to the

World Bank's Board of Executive Directors for consideration later in the year," he said.

This said the World Bank was "strongly committed to supporting Nigeria" in achieving its development objectives and optimising opportunities for its more than 170 million people. The AfDB said in a separate statement Nigeria had approached it for a budget support loan of \$1 billion. It said a high-level AfDB delegation held talks with Nigerian officials last week in Abuja.

The "request for support is being considered by the bank and it is envisaged that an appraisal mission will be in Abuja soon to work with the authorities and major stakeholders on this operation." Nigeria's Finance Minister Kemi Adeosun said negotiations with both international lenders were ongoing, adding that the overall objective of the loan was to provide the lowest possible cost of funds to finance capital projects.

"As far as possible, our foreign borrowing will be tied to specific capital projects. A number of these projects are revenue-generating which will be used to fund the loan repayments," she said.

She said the export credit agencies like China Exim Bank were also being approached for funding, and Nigeria was also considering tapping into the eurobond market. — AFP

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report											
Tuesday 02 February 2016											
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low						
Price Index	▲ 25.71	5,132.86	5,107.15	5,135.40	5,086.47						
Weighted Index	▲ 1.99	353.69	351.70	353.69	349.85						
KSX 15	▲ 5.11	832.71	827.60	832.94	822.87						
Trades											
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change				
MARIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	114	▲ 0.0				
IKARUS	75	73	127,000	9,299	4	75	▼ -1.0				
IPG	320	320	24,576	7,864	1	320	▲ 0.0				
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	600	▲ 0.0				
ENERGYH	36.0	32.5	2,050	67	4	32.5	▼ -1.0				
GPI	41.0	40.0	1,261,100	51,105	37	40.5	▼ -0.5				
ABAR	116	116	77	9	1	116	▲ 6.0				
Oil & Gas			1,414,803	68,344	47	755.11	▲ 1.85				
KFOUC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	210	▲ 0.0				
BPCC	450	445	353,000	158,185	11	450	▲ 5.0				
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	610	▲ 0.0				
ALQURAIN	164	160	127,779	20,549	20	164	▲ 4.0				
Basic Materials			480,779	178,834	31	872.27	▲ 10.96				
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	380	▲ 0.0				
REFRI	310	310	11,916	3,694	3	310	▲ 0.0				
CABLE	345	325	159,833	54,002	21	340	▲ 10.0				
SHIP	142	138	40,020	5,601	13	142	▲ 0.0				
PCEM	1,020	980	5,050	4,951	4	1,020	▲ 0.0				
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	380	▲ 0.0				
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	57	▲ 0.0				
ACICO	270	270	16,000	4,320	4	270	▲ 5.0				
GMCM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	450	▲ 0.0				
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	132	▲ 0.0				
KPAK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	340	▲ 0.0				
KBMM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	▲ 0.0				
NICBM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	218	▲ 0.0				
EQUIPMENT	53	52	398,000	20,894	16	53	▲ 0.0				
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	99	▲ 0.0				
GYPNUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	102	▲ 0.0				
SALBOOKH	71	69	125,650	8,780	13	69	▼ -1.0				
AGLTY	440	425	897,380	388,224	51	440	▲ 10.0				
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	206	▲ 0.0				
CLEANING	37.5	36.0	761,387	27,523	18	36.0	▼ -0.5				
CITYGROUP	410	400	1,240	498	2	400	▲ 15.0				
KGL	38.0	37.0	126,000	4,725	8	37.0	▼ -1.5				
KCPC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	210	▲ 0.0				
HUMANISOFT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	880	▲ 0.0				
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	130	▲ 0.0				
SAFWAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	310	▲ 0.0				
GFC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	28.5	▲ 0.0				
MAYADEEN	19.5	18.0	2,244,807	42,186	46	19.5	▲ 0.0				
CGC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	790	▲ 0.0				
MTCO	73	68	2,068,500	147,163	61	72	▲ 4.0				
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	600	▲ 0.0				
ALAFCO	184	182	182,427	33,413	10	182	▼ -4.0				
MUBARRAD	67	64	1,061,082	69,880	43	67	▲ 2.0				
LOGISTICS	52	51	1,120,449	57,154	52	51	▼ -2.0				
SCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	83	▲ 0.0				
GCEM	75	75	9,500	713	3	75	▲ 5.0				
QCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	70	▲ 0.0				
FCEM	72	70	40,010	2,801	2	72	▲ 2.0				
RKWC	95	95	500	48	1	95	▼ -5.0				
SPEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	88	▲ 0.0				
Industrials			9,269,751	876,566	371	965.76	▲ 3.64				
KSH	210	208	5,317	1,107	2	208	▼ -2.0				
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	62	▲ 0.0				
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	102	▲ 0.0				
CATTL	128	128	1,000	128	1	128	▲ 2.0				
DANAH	72	69	165,500	11,807	13	72	▲ 2.0				
POULT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	196	▲ 0.0				
FOOD	1,920	1,860	44,560	84,606	6	1,920	▲ 60.0				
Consumer Goods			216,377	97,447	22	1030.92	▲ 3.38				
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	200	▲ 0.0				
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	▲ 0.0				
YIACO	148	148	143	21	1	148	▲ 4				
Health Care			143	21	1	952.05	▲ 2.87				
KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	980	▲ 0.0				
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	220	▲ 0.0				
SULTAN	59	59	1,000	59	2	59	▲ 0.0				
CABLETV	29.5	27.5	67,964	2,004	8	29.5	▲ 3				
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	335	▲ 0.0				
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	194	▲ 0.0				
OULAFUEL	110	106	95,578	10,394	22	110	▲ 4				
MUNTAAHAT	89	85	21,022	1,820	4	89	▲ 0.0				
JAZEERA	790	770	29,253	23,025	4	790	▲ 0.0				
SOOR	112	106	26,349	2,880	15	110	▲ 2				
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	110	▲ 0.0				
ALNAWADI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	84	▲ 0.0				
ALRAI	134	134	1,996	267	1	134	▲ 2				
ZIMAH	91	88	35,020	3,102	5	91	▼ -1				
UFIG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	96	▲ 0.0				
KOUTFOOD	580	560	77,579	43,768	5	580	▲ 20				
Mezzan	1,040	1,020	34,377	35,493	8	1,020	▼ -4.0				
Consumer Services			390,138	122,811	74	938.16	▲ 7.02				
ZAIN</											

OIL FALL AND CHINA'S SLOWDOWN STEERED THE STOCK MARKET ROUT

Year 2015 witnessed a market downturn due to a sharp and prolonged decline in oil prices along with rising geopolitical tensions in the region. The mounting fear of a prolonged China slowdown further added fuel to the fire. Also, the world developed nations saw a marginal growth in their respective economies fueled partly by the quantitative easing program (Eurozone) and lastly, the Fed rate hike, just before the year end, forced investors to balance their strategy from markets to markets or other safe investment avenues. In general, the stated factors had a negative impact on the KSE market performance as well as on its GCC peers.

On the KSE market, all the indices ended the year in red as the KSE Price Index lost 14.1 percent from its previous year closing and stood at 5,615.12; well below the psychological 6,000 mark, while the KSE Weighted Index fell by 13.0 percent to close at 381.70. Meanwhile, the Islamic Universe of Kuwait Index; relatively performed better as it restricted its loss up to 7.64 percent during the year. In terms of market capitalization, the overall market lost around KD 3.77 billion from the previous year closing; as total market cap fell by 12.59 percent and stood at KD 26.15 billion in the end of 2015. On the trading activity, the market floor remained muted due to weak investment sentiments as total volumes were down by 22.02 percent reaching to 41.56 billion shares during the year.

GCC Region

Based upon market capitalization, on an average the GCC market category reported a drop of 9.2 percent compared to a small surge of around 3.0 percent a year ago. None of the GCC indices closed in green. Doha, the best performer of 2014; turned out to be the worst performing market for 2015; down by 16.9 percent; or to say; losing our \$26.03 billion in the year. Bahrain remained the close competitor by losing 16.2 percent of the last year market cap (-\$ 3.61 billion). The heavyweight, Saudi Arabia, lost its sheen by 6.8 percent despite the fall of 17.1 percent in its index, which is the highest in the GCC Matrix. Courtesy to 3 new listings, which restricted a severe fall in its market cap.

The GCC markets performed in complete doldrums; and with a bitter fate if compared to other markets. Globally, the risks of greater market volatility, Fed's move towards the monetary tightening, slowing down trend of China's economy, persisting weakness in Japan and other emerging markets steered the global markets in a difficult volatile phase. In addition, the plunge in oil prices due to "oversupply-constraint" and slowdown in major oil importing economies acted as a dual-edge sword for the GCC countries. The markets did not show any respite to the US Fed hike by the year end, as poor "number-show" by China, and the post action of devaluing Yuan, cost markets too dearly. Also; the repetition of OPEC's determined decision of not to cut the production for the price-sake took a toll on regional markets as well.

KSE performance

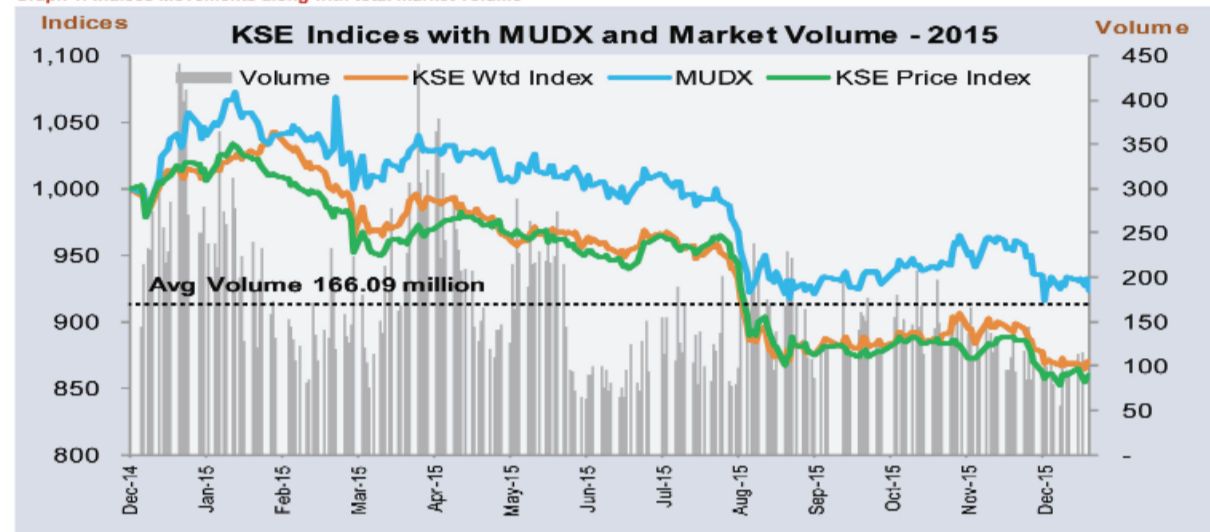
Q1-2015: Better than expected earnings; shareholder windfalls in terms of cash Dividends and/or Bonus Shares resulted in buoyant sentiments for the KSE at the inception of 2015. Riding high on these announcements, the KSE Price Index witnessed two months cumulative gain of 65.71 points to close at 6,601.43 on February 24, 2015. However; arising geo-political developments in the region resulted in a sharp correction as the KSE Price Index shed 318.67 points in the month of March itself. Nonetheless, the KSE Price Index closed at 6,282.46; down by 3.88 percent which we believe has been the case for majority of the regional markets with a few exceptions like Saudi - TASI which was up by 5.35 percent riding high on its previous stupendous gains. On the trading parameters, total volumes were up by 3.11 percent with 12.66 billion shares exchanging hands in the market which is an YTD daily average volume of 211 million shares.

Q2-2015: Throughout the second quarter of 2015, the market remained buoyant; in particularly starting from April till the end of the first week of May where the KSE Price Index touched its peak at the level of 6,416.18. Thereafter, the market lost its momentum and the Index declined by 213.23 points from its peak. By the end of second quarter, the market lost 79.51 points on q-o-q basis. Market's failure to sustain the upward trend might be a result of the uncertainty in global financial markets including the Greek debt crisis and volatility of the Chinese market. Also, the market was apparently affected by the oil price direction as the Brent oil price jumped by 20.25 percent during April to \$ 64.42 pbl at the month end but couldn't extend its rebound till the quarter end and closed the quarter at \$ 63.59 per barrel; thus registering an increase of 18.70 percent during the quarter. On the trading parameters, total volumes were almost stable; merely down by 0.04 percent

with 12.66 billion shares exchanging hands in the market which is a daily average volume of 194.74 million shares.

Q3-2015: During the quarter, all KSE indices closed in the red zone as the Price Index lost 7.69 percent from its previous level to close below the 6,000 mark shedding 476.99 points and the Islamic barometer "MUDX" declined by 6.8 percent to close at 559.50 down 40.82 points. Market heavyweights were no exclusion from these extended bearish sentiments, as the Weighted Index went down by 7.51 percent

Graph 1: Indices Movements along with total market volume



Source: KFH Capital Research

whereas KSX15 declined by 8.06 percent. Total market cap stood at KWD 26.55 billion, marking a deflation of 7.45 percent during 3Q15. Trading activity remained muted, as the quarter's volumes stood at 8.09 billion shares, down sharply by 36.12 percent compared to previous quarter. Investors maintained a "Wait & Watch" mode for the listed companies' due to their awaited 3Q results.

Q4-2015: The last quarter of the year was no exception and could not recover from losing streak. All of the KSE indices closed lower with the KSX15 being the worst performer as it reached to a level of 900.43 (down by 3.7 percent) followed by the Price index which lost 110.84 (-1.9 percent) to close at 5,615.12. Also, the KSE Weighted index lost 6.7 points (-1.7 percent) and closed the quarter and year at 381.70. On the market activity parameter, total volume were almost at the same level of the previous quarter; merely up by 0.62 percent with 8.12 billion shares and the daily average volume stood at 128.93 million shares.

Indices Peak & Lows: Towards the end of Year 2015, all market indices witnessed a major downtrend due to the weak market sentiments resulted from the persistency of low oil prices and the unstable geopolitical situation in the region. Market gauges couldn't get over their losses as all the indices reached their lowest level of the year in the month of December. Market volatility is still evident and observed through the wide range between the indices' year peaks and lows.

Demand Outlook: 2016

As for 2016; global oil demand is estimated to be at 94.13mb/d with an addition of 1.25mb/d or 1.34 percent increase over 2015. OPEC believes an unwarranted macroeconomic environment is to restrain 2016 demand compared to 2015 additions of 1.53mb/d. As shown in the table below undoubtedly it is the emerging economies which include China & India; the Middle East and North America as the key demand drivers for crude. North America with 24.84mb/d is expected to report a growth of 1.22 percent (0.3mb/d) for 2016. Other Asia region which includes India is forecasted to record a 2.47 percent (12.05mb/d) growth of which India's demand forecast is 4.12mb/d an increase of 3.65 percent. For China the growth is forecasted to be 2.77 percent (11.14mb/d). The Middle East is estimated to record 2.52 percent jump in demand to 8.55mb/d; which we believe is due to the demand from the power sector Middle East region exploits crude to generate power.

Oil Supply Current Scenario: 2015

The total Non-OPEC supply for 2015 is expected to be 57.51mb/d an increase of 1.75 percent over 2014. As anticipated the supply surge among Non-OPEC is to be led by the OECD region of which specifically the US. The estimated supply from the OECD for 2015 is to be 24.9mb/d which is an additional 0.71mb/d of supply in the market which translates to a supply increase of 2.89 percent over 2014. Of which the US supply stood at 13.77mb/d a whopping 6.25 percent increase over previous year.

As of 2014 the supply from the US stood at 12.96mb/d meaning that 2015 saw an additional 0.81mb/d of supply from the US which was primarily due to shale oil producers. However with the price decline and high operating costs for shale oil producers has elevated concerns of sustainability resulting in a production decline which is evident from the decline in oil rig counts across

KFH CAPITAL INVESTMENT RESEARCH

the US. Thus we are looking at a rapid deceleration in supply beginning Q4 of 2015 which is likely to be seen in coming quarter of 2016 as well. The supportive fact include the Q32015 supply numbers for US which stood at 13.87mb/d while the preliminary forecast for Q42015 is 13.57mb/d.

The other Non-OPEC regions are likely to provide an incremental increase in supply like the "Developing Countries (DC)" to add an additional

the crude prices have already breached the \$ 30 per barrel mark as the NYMEX recorded trading at \$ 29.4 per barrel while the Brent Crude at \$ 28.84 per barrel. Given the recent sharp correction in oil prices we believe prices for crude will continue to remain subdued and volatile during the 1H2016. However; our analysis supports the argument of a gradually uptick in prices during the second half of 2016 and in line with the BMI forecast of

0.14mb/d to the overall supply which is to reach 12.33mb/d an increase of 1.1 percent while the "Other Regions" which includes Russia is to add 0.12mb/d to touch 18.09mb/d figure a marginal increase of 0.66 percent over 2014.

Supply Outlook: 2016

We are likely to witness a balance in the supply side which we believe is triggered by the prolonged low crude oil prices. The supply slowdown will be apparent foremost in the OECD region predominantly the US; the OECD supply for 2016 is estimated to be 24.56mb/d a 1 percent decline compared to 2015. Of which the US supply is likely to be at 13.6mb/d a drop of

Brent Crude range of \$ 48-51 per barrel for 2016.

Continued supply glut; weak demand; currency fluctuations are the basis of potential downside risk on crude oil prices during the 1H. Thus the High supply and Low Demand situation will prevail during 1H2016 resulting in the prices to remain subdued as shown in the Demand-Supply matrix.

However; continued recovery of developed economies supported by expansive monetary policies in Eurozone; Japan and key structural reforms on the back of lower commodity prices in key emerging economies will drive demand growth. Thus renewed demand coupled with supply rebalancing will result in a relatively

Table 3: Indices and its Sectors Performance - 2015

Sectors	KSE Price Index			MUDX Index		
	Dec-15	Dec-14	Chg %	Dec-15	Dec-14	Chg %
Oil and Gas	818.74	1,062.97	-22.98%	435.24	799.01	-45.53%
Basic Materials	986.38	1,131.32	-12.81%	NA	NA	NA
Industrial	1,043.03	1,070.37	-2.55%	1,133.16	940.38	20.50%
Consumer Goods	1,094.91	1,225.89	-10.68%	905.26	873.68	3.61%
Health Care	925.34	940.27	-1.59%	1,234.29	1,205.71	2.37%
Consumer Services	1,008.68	1,081.55	-6.74%	678.92	582.65	16.52%
Telecommunication	598.63	570.43	4.94%	259.90	234.40	10.88%
Banks	907.08	1,005.09	-9.75%	975.50	1,067.24	-8.60%
Insurance	1,126.99	1,177.41	-4.28%	475.53	941.02	-49.47%
Real Estate	940.76	1,129.97	-16.74%	997.59	1,223.85	-18.49%
Financial Services	595.38	832.14	-28.45%	608.25	714.86	-14.91%
Technology	820.16	916.29	-10.49%	723.57	776.32	-6.79%
Total Market	5,615.12	6,535.72	-14.09%	554.91	600.79	-7.64%

1.23 percent over 2015 wherein it is to average at 13.77mb/d.

The total Non-OPEC supply is projected at 57.14mb/d decrease of 0.37mb/d compared to 2015 as shown in the table above. On regional basis the "Developing Countries (DC)" is likely to be the only region with supply addition for 2016; the total DC supply is estimated to be at 12.38mb/d a minimal increase of 0.47 percent over 2015. While the "Other Regions" which includes Russia is to be muted with supply decrease by 0.93 percent to 17.91mb/d with Russian supply to be at 10.7mb/d a marginal 0.65 percent decline.

On the Supply & Demand balancing scale, as shown in the table below; our opinion of a price prompted demand supply balance holds strong. As shown in the table below world demand is going to increase by around 1.25mb/d while the Non-OPEC supply is to come

High Demand and Low supply situation during 2H2016 resulting in price recovery.

* Strong Demand: As per BMI the world GDP for 2016 is estimated to be at 3 percent compared to 2015 wherein the preliminary numbers suggest world GDP to be at 2.7 percent. While IMF estimates are far aggressive as it estimates GDP growth of 3.1 percent for 2015 and a strong 3.6 percent recovery in 2016. As per our understanding the considerable uptick in economic activity is on the back of lower commodity prices and accommodative monetary policies. While the latter will be the key driver for advance economies the former will provide the stimulus required in emerging economies for structural economic reforms.

* Supply Rebalancing: The recent decline US shale oil supply will be more prominent as the year progresses; the

Graph 2: Market Cap and its Growth



Source: KFH Capital Research

down by 0.37mb/d to 57.14mb/d while the NGLs and Non-conventional are to supply 0.17mb/d, meaning a supply decline of 0.2mb/d from these two categories. Thus the OPEC will witness an increase of 1.44mb/d which is a whopping 4.91 percent increase in supply from the OPEC members in order to balance the Supply/Demand equation.

Oil Outlook - 2016

As we compile the annual report;

Under the falling trend of oil prices, there is an eminent threat for the end of the massive budget surpluses seen over the past few years, even if oil prices recover to a level of around \$55-60/bbl over the coming five years. The worst case, if dependency on the energy sector is not reduced and substituted by non-oil industries, threats could emerge to long-term economic sustainability. Despite efforts by the government to diversify, oil exports remain the backbone of Kuwait's economy, and it is not expected to change any time soon. Earlier the Business Monitor Index (the economic source of this report) forecast a real GDP growth of 2.7 percent and 2.5 percent for 2015 and 2016 respectively; but the same is revised further to a lower level of 2.5 percent and 1.9 percent respectively in the coming two years.

Main concerns and key challenges on the road ahead:

* The sustained decline in oil prices over the coming years will weigh only modestly on private consumption and government spending.

* Non-oil economic activity will remain relatively strong and provide a fillip to headline GDP.

* Kuwait will remain a laggard in the GCC.

* Fixed investment will be buoyed by the approval of the five-year development plan, and become an increasingly important growth driver in the coming years.

* Export growth will pick up slowly as low-cost producers such as Kuwait are able to increase output with oil around \$50-60 a barrel.

Outlook

On a regional level, Kuwait will continue to lag the rest of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) over the coming years: the dominant hydrocarbons sector will weigh on headline growth while efforts to diversify the economy away from oil remain on a small scale.

e/f = BMI estimate/forecast. Source: BMI, Ministry of Finance

While a general study warns for "cautious outlook" about the country's medium-term investment, it also sug-

introduction of a value-added tax on a range of consumer items as well as a sharp reduction in subsidies on fuel. We believe, in line to the BMI, that these measures will not be enacted, given the huge fiscal buffers at the hands of the government and thus private consumption growth will be supported by fiscal spending.

Government Consumption Outlook: Kuwait's five-year development programme bodes very well for fixed investment in the country; an area which has traditionally been a weight on headline growth. The government has a plan to spend KWD 11.8 billion a year over the next five years, and there appears to be greater political will to ensure implementation rates are higher than the historical average of around 75 percent. If we put aside the issue of lower revenues, and think otherwise, then indeed, the collapse in oil prices has only served to increase the importance of the investment plans, especially given its focus on diversifying away from hydrocarbons. The BMI team forecast the government spending to increase by 3.0 percent and 2.5 percent in 2015 and 2016, respectively, a slight slowdown compared with the past two years.

Fixed Investment Outlook: Following the approval of the five-year development plan, the traditionally lackluster performance of fixed capital investment will lessen slightly over the coming years and will bolster fixed investment. The plan envisages spending of over \$100 billion on infrastructure projects, hospitals, power stations and more than 100,000 residential housing units. This includes the first phase of the Lower Fars heavy-oil project costing \$ 4.2 billion. The average implementation rate of the CAPEX budget has been approximately 75 percent over the last five years, weighed down by several negative factors across political and legislative areas.

Net Exports Outlook: Recent developments within the OPEC group have led to a new equation, where a pressure to maintain market share could now be felt. Oil production growth in Iraq and the return of more Iranian crude to international markets from 2016 has added impetus to investment in Kuwait's oil sector. And it can, potentially lead to stricter regulation on production. However, as yet this has failed to translate into greater efficiency for in the approval of new projects.

The oil and gas sector is all set to exhibit modest growth over the coming quarters and contribute only modestly to overall economic growth. Kuwait's crude output has flat lined, registering a growth of just 0.5 percent y-o-y over the first eight months of 2015. Output averaged 2.79m barrels per day (b/d) in 2014, and the BMI's research team expects only modest gains over the medium term, with production including condensate and natural gas liquids expected to average around 3.05m b/d in 2015. Due to increased domestic consumption of oil, it is expected that oil exports to grow by only 1.1 percent in 2015.

Fiscal Deficit: Kuwait will record its first fiscal deficit since 1999 in 2016 as oil prices remain weak and spending plans pick up, by the country's standards. As per the BMI Team, the deficit of 2016 will amount to 0.5 percent of GDP, before small surpluses are recorded from 2017 onwards. On contrary, the government of Kuwait forecasts a deficit of 8.5 percent of GDP in 2016, with sustained deficits after. The forecast of government is based on the oil price averaging \$45-50/bbl, far lower than BMI's forecasts. Indeed, the Kuwaiti government tend to underestimate revenues while also predicting far higher spending, despite historically low capital execution rates. This means that while Kuwait will see a drastic fall in the size of its fiscal surpluses over the coming years, it will not have to rein-in spending significantly, nor significantly touch its foreign reserves to plug deficits.

In a nutshell

Oil prices are not set for a rapid recovery. The US oil production constraint, supply dynamics in other major oil producers including Russia and Saudi Arabia, future demand weakness from China, and the likelihood of a breakthrough in Iranian sanctions negotiations are key parameters which will keep the price in low-range for coming few years. Under the low-price factor, Kuwait's near total reliance on oil for budget revenues (92.1 percent in 2014) will cause a degree of restraint on the spending front with subsidies set to be one area targeted, but beyond this the broadly loose fiscal policy will remain unchanged. Non-oil revenues will rise slightly given earnings from overseas investments and growth in the transport sector; however, this will do little to counteract the impact of substantially lower oil prices. It is also likely that Kuwait will seek to cut subsidies for expats in a similar vein to actions by Bahrain and some emirates in the United Arab Emirates. Indeed, we remain cautious about the country's medium-term investment outlook given lower oil prices.

In Q315, the IMF recommended the

AUSTRALIA CB SITS TIGHT, GIVES NOD TO GLOBAL RISK

SYDNEY: Australia's central bank held interest rates steady yesterday even as wild swings in global markets, deepening unease over China's economy and a fresh outbreak of easing abroad suggests risks are for a further cut going forward. The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) did leave the door open to a move after its first policy meeting of the year, saying that a background of subdued inflation meant there was scope for a reduction if needed to support the economy.

The Board specifically noted that coming data would allow it to better judge if turmoil in financial markets truly augured tougher times for the global economy, and whether recent strength in employ-

ment at home would prove long lasting. Yet, it also saw reasons for optimism. "The Board judged that there were reasonable prospects for continued growth in the economy, with inflation close to target," RBA Governor Glenn Stevens said in a brief statement.

"The available information suggests that the expansion in the non-mining parts of the economy strengthened during 2015 even as the contraction in mining investment continued."

The steady outcome was no surprise given the RBA has repeatedly questioned whether lower rates would do much good, and might cause harm by inflating a bubble in home prices.

In a Reuters poll of 32 analysts, all had expected no change in the 2 percent cash rate this week which limited the reaction in markets to a slight dip in the local dollar.

The central bank last eased in May and has since shown a preference for further stimulus to come through a weaker currency. The Australian dollar pared early gains to be down slightly at \$0.7080, but is hovering not far from 7-year lows.

MORE EASING, MAYBE

Investors still assume the global outlook argues for at least one more cut in rates, albeit not for a while. Interbank futures imply around an even chance of a

move by May and are fully priced for 1.75 percent by October. "Financial markets in early 2016 provide a strong reminder that Australia is a small and open economy, leveraged to the global commodity and growth cycle," says Su-Lin Ong, a senior economist at RBC Capital Markets.

"Accordingly, we remain with two further cuts in our profile for this year." The Bank of Japan stunned markets last week by cutting rates to less than zero, and the head of the European Central Bank has all but promised further stimulus steps by March.

The resulting drop in the yen and euro, combined with feverish talk of a possible devaluation of the Chinese

yuan, are pressuring other countries to keep policy loose so as to avoid a damaging appreciation in their own currencies. Worries about the health of Chinese demand have also contributed to steep price falls for many of Australia's major commodity exports, hitting profits, wages and tax receipts.

The RBA's own index of commodity prices sank by a quarter in the year to January, when measured in US dollar terms. Domestic inflation would be no bar to action given it is running at the very bottom of the central bank's long-term target band of 2 to 3 percent. — Reuters

INFINITI Q60 SPORTS COUPE AND QX30 PREMIUM ACTIVE CROSSOVER SET TO MAKE EUROPEAN DEBUT

GENEVA MOTOR SHOW

DUBAI: Infiniti will present two all-new expressive models at the Geneva International Motor Show on 1 March, 2016. Joining them will be the thoroughly revised Q50. All three share Infiniti's iconic design language, innovative technologies and precise driving characteristics.

All-new are the Q60 sports coupe, promising a powerful drive from a highly-advanced new V6 twin-turbo engine boasting 405 PS, and the QX30 premium active crossover, with its highly-sculpted concept-like exterior, elevated stance and asymmetric cabin design. They will be joined by the refreshed Q50 sports sedan, which features significant performance and dynamic upgrades that deliver a more empowering and rewarding drive experience.

Francois Goupil de Bouille, Infiniti Vice President, Europe, Middle East and Africa commented: "This is an exciting time for Infiniti, as we have transformed our product line-up and established sales records in Europe as we did across the globe. The new models set for their European debuts in Geneva highlight our commitment to expanding our product portfolio in new and thrilling directions, based on daring concept cars. This is the Infiniti way, and one that will help us achieve further success in 2016 and beyond."

The bold exterior of the Q60 exemplifies Infiniti's 'Powerful Elegance' design language, with distinctive proportions and taut, muscular lines. Innovative drivetrain technologies and power channeled through the rear wheels deliver an exhilarating drive.

The high performance 3.0-liter V6 twin-



turbo engine from the new and exclusive 'VR' powertrain family continues the brand's longstanding heritage of advanced six-cylinder powertrains production. The Q60 to be shown in Geneva features the higher-powered 405 PS V6 engine, providing one of the best power-to-efficiency ratings in the sports coupe class.

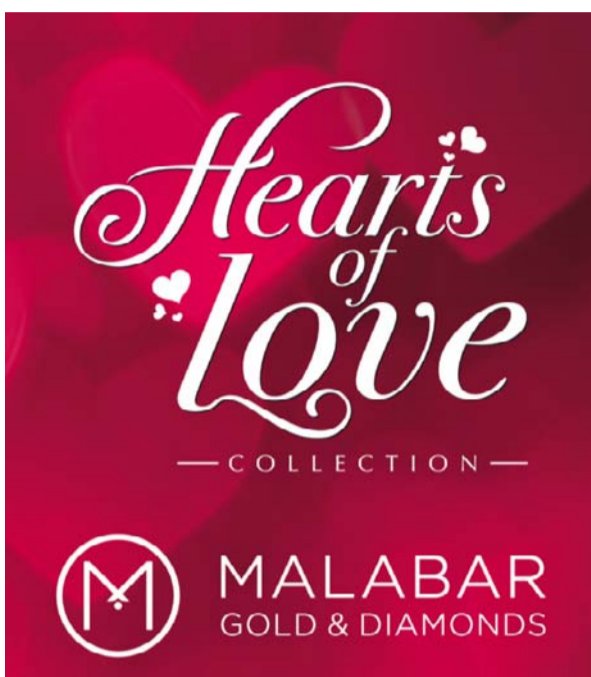
Created for a new generation of premium buyers, the all-new QX30 boasts a purposeful, elevated appearance that makes a bold visual statement, joining the Q30 as part of Infiniti's new premium compact model line-up. Remaining true to the

'Powerful Elegance' design approach that guided the original QX30 concept, the car demonstrates Infiniti's design-led approach to product development.

Alongside the Q60 and QX30, Infiniti will also reveal an upgraded version of the Q50 sports sedan, which has played a key role in the brand's sustained global growth in recent years. As well as the powerful all-new V6 engine found in the Q60 sports coupe, making its debut in the Q50 is the company's second-generation Direct Adaptive Steering - comprehensively updated from the ground-breaking first-

generation system, and Infiniti's new Dynamic Digital Suspension, which gives the new sports sedan an optimal blend of ride comfort and class-leading response and agility.

The launch of these new and upgraded models in Europe comes at a time of rapid growth for Infiniti, and in the midst of an intense global product launch period. Infiniti globally sold a record 215,250 new vehicles in 2015, representing a year-on-year rise of 16 percent. In Western Europe, 7,000 customers bought a new Infiniti last year, an increase of 45 percent over 2014.



MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS UNVEILS 'HEARTS OF LOVE' JEWELLERY COLLECTION TO CELEBRATE THE SEASON OF LOVE

Malabar Gold & Diamonds launched a special edition of diamond studded jewellery collection named 'Hearts of Love' to celebrate the season of love. Diamonds are a symbol of eternity and a timeless interpretation of love. As the demand for heart shaped jewellery boosts during this season of love, the jewellery chain launched an exclusive collection of heart shaped jewellery to cater to the customer demand.

This stunningly romantic collection of diamond jewellery is a unique way to express your feelings, affection and togetherness. Each piece in this collection is specially designed with an aura of love and is easily affordable.

Their spectacular piece of heart shaped 3 in 1 diamond pendant is a perfect gift to express true emotions to your loved ones. This pendant available in different colors like white gold, yellow gold and rose gold at a special promotional price of KD 145.

They have also unveiled limited edition of twin-heart and triple-heart pendants sparkling with diamonds ranging from KD 50 to KD 210. They also offering multiple number of amazing diamond jewellery sets to celebrate this season and each set comprises of beautifully crafted pendant, pair of earrings and finger ring. These sets are available from the affordable price of KD 155.

To add more delight to this occasion, the customers can also avail a branded Esprit or Westar watch absolutely free with this limited edition jewellery.

Apart from these, Malabar Gold & Diamonds also showcase an incredible collection of unique designs in gold and diamond jewellery from Italy, Turkey, Bahrain and India to suit the tastes and budget of its different customers. Customers can also choose gifts to their loved ones from their branded jewellery segment that includes Era - Uncut Diamond Jewellery, Ethnix - Handcrafted Designer Jewellery, Mine - Diamonds Unlimited, Precia - Precious Gem Jewellery and Divine - Indian Heritage Jewellery.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds gives you the chance to give that special someone a token of your love that she will cherish for the rest of her life. These promotional sets will be available at their outlets in UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Singapore & Malaysia until 14 February 2015.



VIVA ANNOUNCES CR7 LIVE SERVICE WINNERS

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announces the winners in CR7 Live service draws. The winners of Samsung Note 5 are as following: Adel Shaaban Ali, Abdelaziz J M Al-Dehani, Musaed Saleh A-Dehani and Furqan Zubair Ahmed.

This exclusive and special service allow Ronaldo's fans to get updates about latest news and information concerning Cristiano Ronaldo, and view statistics that make him the best player in the world, in addition to download and watch official videos and photos for him.

To subscribe to CR7 Live, send R to 51507 for 100 Fils per day or just visit the URL <http://kw.cr7liveat.com> and click on the subscribe button and insert the PIN code that you receive through your inbox. You can also answer questions about Cristiano Ronaldo for KD 1/SMS to collect even more points with each answer and enjoy more chances to enter the draw.

To find out more about VIVA's new prepaid packages, or any of its other competitive promotions, products and packages, visit one of the 70 VIVA branches, or the VIVA website at www.viva.com.kw, or call VIVA's 24 hour call center on 102.



EXXON'S 4Q ANNUAL PROFIT PLUNGE WITH OIL PRICES

DALLAS: The big plunge in oil prices is taking Big Oil's profits down. Exxon Mobil Corp said yesterday that fourth-quarter profit fell 58 percent to \$2.78 billion. It was the oil giant's smallest profit since the third quarter of 2002. Exxon's core exploration and production business lost money in the US and international earnings plummeted by nearly two-thirds. One of the few bright spots, Exxon's refining operations, was more profitable than a year ago. That helped Exxon avoid the fate of rival Chevron Corp, which lost money in the fourth quarter.

Britain's BP said yesterday that its profit tumbled more than 90 percent. Exxon shares fell 2 percent to \$74.70 in trading before the opening bell. The amount of oil on the market remains is at extraordinarily high levels and producers, with prices so low, continue to drill just to earn what they can. Exxon's production rose nearly 5 percent. In 2015, the company

pumped oil and natural gas equal to 4.1 million barrels a day.

CEO Rex Tillerson called it a "challenging environment," but said the company is generating enough cash to continue investing in the business. Exxon's profit fell from \$6.57 billion a year earlier, when oil prices were already beginning to tumble. The Irving, Texas, company was still able to put up per-share earnings of 67 cents, which was 3 cents better than beat Wall Street had expected, according to a survey by Zacks Investment Research.

Revenue fell to \$59.81 billion, beating the \$50.85 billion according to a poll by the data firm FactSet. For all of 2015, Exxon earned \$16.15 billion, or about half what it earned in 2014. Exxon shares have fallen 2 percent since the beginning of the year, while the Standard & Poor's 500 index has lost 5 percent. Exxon's shares have fallen 13 percent in the last 12 months. — AP

UBS BANK SHARES SINK AS RICH INVESTORS WITHDRAW MONEY

FRANKFURT: Swiss bank UBS saw its shares slide yesterday on news that investors were pulling money out of its division serving wealthy clients - a token of the market turbulence that has shaken the world in the past few months.

The Zurich-based bank, which nevertheless booked higher fourth quarter profits, cited "very low levels of client activity and pronounced risk aversion" as it reported 3.4 billion Swiss francs (\$3.3 billion) had flowed out of its wealth management arm, which handles money from rich people outside the US. Outflows in emerging markets and Europe outweighed inflows in the Asia Pacific region and Switzerland. Shares in UBS Group AG were down 7.8 percent at 15.37 Swiss francs in midday trading in Europe.

The share drop came despite a 10 percent rise in net profit in the October-December quarter, to 949 million francs from 858 million francs in the same period a year earlier. The result beat estimates for 867 million francs compiled by financial information provider

FactSet. Markets for everything from stocks to oil have been marked by turmoil over fears that China will not be able to support global growth as before, that emerging markets face troubles with debt and capital outflows and that low oil prices mean weakening demand in the economy.

The company's US-only wealth management division, however, saw strong inflows, with \$16.8 billion in net new money. Net profit was boosted by 715 million francs from the company's annual revaluation of deferred tax assets. It was reduced by 257 million francs from buying back some of the company's debt, and by 441 million francs in restructuring charges.

The bank recorded what CEO Sergio Ermotti called "an excellent year" for all of 2015, as net profit rose 79 percent to 6.2 billion francs, boosted by the performance of the wealth management division. The bank said management would propose a dividend of 0.85 francs for the year, up from 0.75 francs from 2014. — AP



ZURICH: Sergio Ermotti (center), CEO of Swiss banking giant UBS, Kirt Gardner (right), Group Chief Financial Officer and Hubertus Kuelps (left), Group Head of Communications attend the presentation of UBS's fourth quarter 2015 results in Zurich yesterday. — AFP

FIAT CHRYSLER SALES RISE 7% DESPITE MAJOR SNOWSTORM

DETROIT: Fiat Chrysler's January US sales rose a healthy 7 percent, a sign that the auto industry shoveled past a snowstorm that buried East Coast population centers late in the month.

The Italian-American automaker said yesterday that it sold just over 155,000 cars and trucks last month compared with 145,000 a year ago. But Fiat Chrysler wasn't led by its usual big sellers. The Jeep Cherokee and Grand Cherokee and the Ram Pickup all posted modest increases. Instead, the sales were boosted by some unlikely vehicles - including an 83 percent

increase for the heavily discounted Dodge Caravan minivan. FCA also reported a 70 percent rise in Dodge Durango SUV sales, and a 39 percent increase for the Chrysler Town & Country minivan.

Analysts are predicting a sales drop from a year ago due to the snowstorm after all automakers finish reporting numbers yesterday. Big East Coast metro areas such as New York and Washington, DC, were buried under more than 2 feet of snow the weekend of Jan. 22.

JD Power and Associates forecast a 4.5 percent sales drop from a year ago at just

under 1.1 million cars and trucks, while the TrueCar.com auto pricing site expected sales to fall 0.3 percent to 1.15 million.

"The snowstorm on the East Coast disrupted an estimated 15,000 sales," John Humphrey, JD Power's senior vice president of automotive, said in a statement. But Humphrey said those sales were merely postponed, not lost. He expected some catch-up last weekend and into February.

Last month also had two fewer selling days than a year ago when January sales hit their highest point in nine years. TrueCar predicted small sales increases for General

Motors, Volkswagen and Nissan, and a small decline for Ford. Honda and Toyota were expected to see sales fall by 5 percent or more.

Honda and Toyota rely more heavily on fuel-efficient car sales than trucks and SUVs as cheaper gas helps push buyers toward larger vehicles.

The LMC Automotive consulting firm is sticking with its prediction of a record sales year at 17.8 million sales, although the growth rate will be far slower than past years and could touch off more intense competition for buyers. — AP

PARIS ENTREPRENEUR'S 2CV TOURS TO GO ELECTRIC

PARIS: The humble "Deux Chevaux", once ubiquitous in the French countryside, chugging down tree-lined roads - cue accordion music - is now more of a curiosity than a cheap and cheerful runabout. For entrepreneur Florent Dargnies, the Citroen 2CV - as the car is known for short - is the heart and soul of his Paris tour company, ferrying some 20,000 visitors around the French capital each year. But the car comes with a built-in problem: its petrol-fuelled thermal engine does not meet ever-stricter emissions standards.

At the instigation of Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, all cars registered before 1997 will be barred from Paris streets during the day beginning in July. Dargnies, anticipating the problem, began working on going electric five years ago, delving into not only the research and development required but also the administrative hurdles he would face. Late last year, he obtained a patent for the electric 2CV and a green light from Citroen. His prototype has a 16-kilowatt powertrain manufac-

tured by Mia Electric, a now defunct company that produced "made in France" electric cars. The battery allows the car to cover 80 km before recharging, enough for any of his tours, which include "Secret Paris", "Romantic Paris" and "Paris Impressionism". Its top speed is a nippy 110 km an hour. "Our hope is to really work with City Hall not only so that this vehicle is accepted but so that it contributes to the image, to the French art of living," Dargnies told AFP. Citroen's answer to the Volkswagen Beetle was first produced in 1948, and kept rolling off the production line until 1990, more than five million of them. That was when the French auto giant had to stop producing them because of emissions standards.

No Broken Eggs

The name of Dargnies' company, Four Wheels Under an Umbrella, was the title of Citroen's rather whimsical original specs for the 2CV. These included instructions suggesting that a farmer's wife should

have no trouble driving it on "the worst roads" and that the suspension should ensure that a basketful of eggs riding on the backseat would survive intact. The cars are ideal for Dargnies' tours, which are heavy on nostalgia for the France of yesteryear. Also, since they are convertibles, they "offer great views of the monuments", he says.

Set up in 2003, the company now boasts a fleet of 40 2CVs driven by around 100 chauffeurs. But if Dargnies converts them all to electric power, would their silent operation make them unauthentic? Dargnies concedes that the distinctive thrum of the original air-cooled motor was as familiar to generations of his countrymen as the car's rounded shape and its ultra-soft suspension system. "The noise is part of the car's charm," he said, adding that his electric version could one day, like some electric BMWs and Renaults, come with recorded audio of the sound that gets louder with speed. "It doesn't seem too complicated," he said. — AFP



PARIS: This photo taken on Jan 21, 2016 shows an employee of the French tourist agency '4 roues sous un parapluie' (4 wheels under an umbrella) looking at the engine of a Citroen 2CV electric car close to the Eiffel Tower. — AFP



NEW YORK: Electronic screens post the price of Alphabet stock on Monday at the Nasdaq MarketSite. — AP

ALPHABET/GOOGLE OVERTAKES APPLE AS BIGGEST COMPANY

NEW YORK: Alphabet, the parent firm for Google, became the world's most valuable company yesterday as a jump in its share price helped it vault past tech rival Apple. In opening trade following a robust earnings report, Alphabet shares rose 2.9 percent to lift its market capitalization to \$543 billion while Apple's value declined to \$530 billion with a modest dip in trading. Alphabet's reported quarterly profit rose five percent to \$4.92 billion on the back of strong online advertising revenue, particularly from searches done by holiday season shoppers using smartphones or tablets.

"This holiday season, we found that shopping moments replaced shopping marathons," Google chief executive Sundar Pichai said during an earnings call. People made purchases online when time allowed, with Google powering many of their searches and serving up related ads.

Mobile and YouTube Shine

Google ad revenue climbed globally, gaining on both mobile devices and desktop computers, according to Alphabet chief financial officer Ruth Porat. The California-based Internet colossus said its revenue topped \$21.3 billion in the final three months of last year. Prime revenue drivers in Q4 were mobile search ads and ads on YouTube, where people watch "hundreds of millions" of hours of video daily. Porat said the

strong revenue growth was a return on years of investment in mobile search, YouTube and so-called programmatic advertising, which involves ads being sold automatically using software.

The earnings report was the first in which recently formed parent corporation Alphabet separated money made by Google from what it calls "Other Bets" such as its work on self-driving cars or delivering Internet using high-altitude balloons. The new structure under Alphabet is expected to offer more transparency for investors worried about Google investing in money-losing projects. "Essentially, what they have now is a big advertising business and a venture capital business," Forrester analyst Frank Gillett said of the new earnings presentation.

Lost Money on 'Bets'

Alphabet's earnings listed a loss of about \$3.6 billion last year in a consolidated "Other Bets" category that brought in \$448 million in revenue. Overall revenue for last year stood at \$74.5 billion, up from \$65.7 billion in 2014. While Google is best known as the dominant player in Internet search, it has launched a variety of trail-blazing projects in recent years that are marginally related at best to its core operation. Alphabet subsidiaries include Google, Nest Labs, and Google X labs devoted to big-vision new technologies such as self-driving cars, along with such projects as smart "Google Glass" spec-

acles, drones, health care and Google TV - none of which has become a major source of income.

Porat referred to expenses related to "milestones" hit by some Alphabet "big bets" but declined to provide details or specifics on the earnings call. Alphabet is notably expected to ramp investments in Google projects such as virtual reality as well as big bets including the Fiber ultra-high speed internet service it has launched in some US cities.

Investing in the Cloud

Meanwhile, Pichai said Google is seeing "incredible progress" with enhancing services with artificial intelligence. He also noted that the Internet giant's priorities this year include beefing up cloud services for businesses, a market dominated by Amazon Web Services and Microsoft Azure. "It is a strongly growing business for us and we plan to make it a major investment area in 2016." Google has refined the online search ad business to become hugely profitable, but analysts say the company needs to diversify as technology moves away from the personal computer to mobile apps, wearables and other "Internet of Things" connected devices. Industry tracker eMarketer expected Google remain the dominant player in worldwide search advertising, raking in \$45.58 billion in revenue this year to claim a share just shy of 57 percent of the overall spend. — AFP

DUTCH POLICE TRAIN EAGLES TO SNATCH ENEMY DRONES

AMSTERDAM: Dutch police puzzling over how to remove drones that pose a public safety threat are testing a way to get the job done in one fell swoop - with trained eagles. "It's a low-tech solution to a high-tech problem," spokesman Dennis Janus of the country's national police said. The idea arose because amateur use of drones has boomed and police have begun to worry about unlicensed drones flying into off-limit spaces around airports or above public events such as politician's appearances.

Possible solutions the Dutch police have studied include shooting nets at the offending drones, remotely hacking them to seize their controls - or taking them out with birds of prey. "People sometimes think it's a hoax, but it's proving very effective so far," Janus said. Showing off the technique in a video released by police, a four-propeller drone hovers in the middle of a warehouse, colored lights flashing. Released by her keeper, a white-tailed eagle glides straight toward the

drone, clutches it easily in her talons - clack! - and drags it to the ground.

Sjoerd Hoogendoorn of "Guard from Above", the company working with police to develop the concept, said the birds must be trained to recognize the drones as prey. They are rewarded with a piece of meat after each successful foray. Their scaly talons are strong and tough enough to seize most consumer-grade drones without injury from the blades, he said. "These birds are used to meeting resistance from animals they hunt in the wild, and they don't seem to have much trouble with the drones," he said.

The potential impact on the animals' welfare is subject of testing by an external scientific research institute. "The real problem we have is that they destroy a lot of drones," Hoogendoorn said. "It's a major cost of testing." Another unknown is how the birds will fare in a crowd situation, he said. A decision by police on whether to move ahead with using the eagles is expected by the end of the year. — Reuters

EMC REPORTS Q4 AND FULL-YEAR 2015 RESULTS

DUBAI: EMC Corporation yesterday reported fourth-quarter and full-year 2015 financial results. Fourth-quarter consolidated revenue was \$7 billion and full-year 2015 revenue was \$24.7, up 1 percent year over year. EMC generated \$1.9 billion in operating cash flow and \$1.5 billion in free cash flow in the fourth quarter, and ended the quarter with \$14.8 billion in cash and investments. EMC returned approximately \$229 million to shareholders via a quarterly dividend.

Joe Tucci, EMC Chairman and CEO, said, "The fourth quarter of 2015 follows 24 consecutive quarters of reported year-over-year top-line growth; an accomplishment very few of our peers have matched. 2015 brought geopolitical and other market-wide uncertainties, while secular technology trends continued to accelerate. EMC anticipated and focused on capturing the massive growth opportunity these trends will avail, and we are well equipped in 2016 with some of the most exciting technology advancements in our history."

Tucci added, "Together, EMC and Dell will be better positioned in the market. We believe that the coming together of the companies is the best strategic option for all stakeholders. I'm pleased to report that progress on closing the transaction remains on track under the

original terms and timeline."

Zane Rowe, EMC CFO, said, "As we work toward closing the transaction with Dell to build one of the world's premier IT powerhouses, we continue to focus on synergies and operating efficiencies across our business. Our previously announced \$850 million cost reduction and business transformation plan is on track and the initial \$50 million cost reduction target was met in Q4. We are confident that we will exceed our goal, thanks to our unified team's effort and focus."

David Goulden, CEO of EMC Information Infrastructure, said, "Customers are buying 'just enough' and 'just in time' for their traditional environments. They are also transforming existing IT systems toward a Hybrid Cloud or building and deploying new digital applications. In some cases they are doing it all simultaneously. Against this market backdrop, our storage business revenue grew 3% in constant currency for the full year. Looking forward, I am excited about our position in 2016 as we further expand our industry-leading Storage and Converged Infrastructure portfolio, which is built upon the architectural pillars of the modern data center - Flash, Scale-Out, Software Defined, Cloud Enabled and Trusted technologies."

SPIN-OFF OR SALE? YAHOO TURNAROUND PLAN IN FOCUS

SAN FRANCISCO: Yahoo Inc's plans to turn around its struggling core business were set to dominate its earnings report yesterday, with investors keen to see if CEO Marissa Mayer will push ahead with a proposed spin-off or entertain calls for a complete sale. The spin-off of its main business which includes its search engine and digital advertising units was flagged by Mayer in December after Yahoo abandoned efforts to sell its stake in Alibaba Group Holding Ltd, but the company has provided few details.

On Monday the Wall Street Journal reported Yahoo planned layoffs of about 15 percent of its 11,000-strong workforce and would close unspecified units. A Yahoo spokeswoman declined to comment on the report, citing the quiet period ahead of earnings. Investors are also expected to zero in on any comments from Mayer on her plans to increase the company's advertising sales and improve its efforts on mobile platforms, where more users are spending their online time.

Some activist investors are pushing Yahoo to ditch the spin-off and instead sell the core business. Verizon Communications Inc has expressed interest in the core, and analysts say other potential buyers include media and pri-

ivate equity firms. A note published by SunTrust Robinson Humphrey last week valued the core business at between \$6 billion and \$8 billion. A Reuters story earlier this year reported that investors are prepared to take a tax hit on a quick sale of the core business instead of waiting for a spin-off that could take more than a year.

For the fourth quarter, analysts expect Yahoo to report revenue of \$1.18 billion and earnings per share of 12.5 cents, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S. Last quarter's revenues and EPS both missed analysts' estimates. Yahoo has struggled to expand its Internet business, which includes selling search and display ads on its news and sports sites and email service, in the face of competition from Alphabet Inc's Google unit and Facebook Inc. Yahoo's revenue has fallen slightly since Mayer took the helm in mid-2012, and its share of US web searches is essentially flat with three years ago, gaining no ground on market leader Google.

Activist hedge fund Starboard Value last month said investors appear to "have lost all confidence in management and the board" after the company, led by Silicon Valley star

Mayer, has failed to turn around Yahoo's core Internet business. In a letter to the board, Starboard said Yahoo needs to sell off the core business to other investors, but that so far the company has ignored expressions of interest from buyers. Starboard argued that "significant changes are desperately needed." In December, SpringOwl, another sizeable Yahoo investor, demanded the company cut more than 80 percent of its workforce and replace chief executive Mayer.

Investors such as Starboard point out that current market valuations of the company put the value of the core business at zero, and that selling it to investors would reap far more for investors than keeping the business. "Despite over three years of effort and billions spent on acquisitions, the management team that was hired to turn around the core business has failed to produce acceptable results, in turn, causing massive declines in profitability and cash flow," Starboard said. Word of looming job cuts came on the same day that a fired Yahoo employee filed a lawsuit in federal court in Silicon Valley arguing that the company's job performance evaluation system is discriminatory and violates the law. — Agencies



LAS VEGAS: In this Jan 7, 2014 file photo, Yahoo president and CEO Marissa Mayer speaks during the International Consumer Electronics Show. — AP



HONG KONG: This handout photo taken and released by AFP by Hong Kong Cleanup shows people clearing rubbish away from a beach. — AFP photos



HONG KONG: Volunteers posing with all the rubbish collected and bagged for removal at a beach in Hong Kong.

PLASTIC PARADISE: HONG KONG'S PACKAGING PROBLEM

'REDUCE, RE-USE, RECYCLE'

HONG KONG: A little girl shrieks with excitement as she strolls along the beach: "Oh look mummy. Hong Kong snow." Despite the cold snap what she's pointing to is not a meteorological anomaly—but in fact swathes of polystyrene thrown out as rubbish. The city is suffocating under a film of plastic: "Each day the equivalent weight of two A380 Airbus planes is discarded" in domestic waste, says Lisa Christensen, co-founder of HK Clean Up initiative.

Add to this trashed industrial and commercial plastic, and more than 2,000 tons of the material is thrown out daily in Hong Kong—saturating landfill sites but also clogging up country parks, coastal areas and waterways. "For our supermarket generation the focus is on convenience, issues of pollution seem very far away," says local environmental campaigner Jo Wilson, whose daughter highlighted the "Hong Kong snow" problem. "People produce double digit pieces of trash—especially plastic—just by having lunch. Hong Kong has an army of cleaners and helpers so perhaps some people are not used to taking care," she explains, adding a long hours culture, excessive packaging by the food industry, and lack of public education are exacerbating the problem.

Globally plastics production has surged from 15 million tons in 1964 to 311 million tons in 2014 — the weight of 900 Empire State Buildings — and is expected to double in 20 years as demand grows, according to "The New Plastics Economy" report presented by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation at the World Economic Forum in January. The situation in Hong Kong is pronounced because it is "an extremely consumption-based society," Christensen says. "On average we generate 1.36kg (3lbs) of domestic waste per person, per day. Tokyo, on the other hand, only generates 0.77kg."

Cheaper to buy new

While there has been some success encouraging people to recycle paper and some metals, the situation is deteriorating for plastics: Just five percent of plastic was sent for recycling in 2014 — compared with 25 percent in 2005, according to government figures. Recycling is not mandatory in Hong Kong, but efforts by authorities to push the practice have been undermined by media reports revealing items separated after use by consumers have ended up being mixed up or dumped. There

is also little incentive for plastics recycling contractors in the city, — their profits are dented by costs of transport and sorting, and with low global oil prices new plastic is cheaper for manufacturers to buy than reworked material. Due to limited facilities, most items are processed in mainland China.

People should adopt the "reduce, re-use, recycle" philosophy argues Louisa Ho, executive director of The Nature Conservancy, Hong Kong, calling for a wholesale change in the public's consumption patterns, and warning the city is at "saturation point" with landfill due to reach capacity in 2018. In 2014, an estimated 1.4 million bottles, and 1,000 tons of plastic bags were thrown out each day. Plastic bag use has dropped since the government introduced a levy on them last year, but in a city where supermarkets routinely wrap individual fruit and vegetables, campaigners want legislation restricting packaging.

"Plastic wrapping leaks harmful chemicals into our food and bodies, and into the environment," argues Megan Tanner, who is petitioning authorities and food retailers to take action. A spokesman for the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) said it had to

consider "food hygiene" when setting rules. Critics say there is a lack of joined-up thinking on the issue of waste—for example visitors to the popular "Out to Sea? The Plastic Garbage Project" at Hong Kong's Science Museum are given plastic single-use covers for their wet umbrellas, and can only buy water in bottles. Christensen insists consumer attitudes are changing. The 2015 Hong Kong Clean Up initiative saw tens of thousands of volunteers collect a record 5.6 million pieces of trash in just a few weeks.

'More plastic than fish'

Eight million tons of plastic ends up in the world's oceans annually, the "New Plastics Economy" report said. "This is the equivalent to dumping the contents of one garbage truck into the ocean every minute. If no action is taken, this is expected to increase to two per minute by 2030 and four per minute by 2050," it stated. It also warned that within 35 years there would be more plastic than fish in the ocean, measuring by weight.

International marine charity Plastic Oceans describes Hong Kong as "a hot spot for marine plastic debris". As well as fish and birds, recent-

ly green turtles, a protected species, have washed up on its beaches after dying from ingesting rubbish.

"They found a 50cm long string of trash in a turtle's stomach which included nylon threads and plastic bags. Turtles often confuse floating plastic bags for one of their favorite food sources, jellyfish," says Christensen, adding that humans too are at risk. "It's not just plastic bottles and pieces of Styrofoam that are threatening our marine wildlife, tiny micro plastics contained in our toiletries, cosmetics and washing detergents are having hugely detrimental effects and making their way into our food chain."

Canada and the US have moved to ban microbeads in personal care items due to environmental concerns. A spokeswoman for the EPD said its marine data for Hong Kong showed "levels of toxic substances did not exceed" international standards, but local campaign group Plastic Free Seas warns action is needed now to avoid toxins building up. Overall, Wilson remains hopeful attitudes are shifting: "I believe there will be a time when overusing plastics and packaging will be seen in the same way smoking inside is now." — AFP



TOKYO, Japan : Zookeepers capture a zookeeper dressed as zebra (bottom) during a drill to practice what to do in the event of an animal escape at the Ueno Zoo yesterday. — AFP

TOKYO ZOO STAGES 'ZEBRA ESCAPE'

TOKYO: A zebra escaped from its enclosure in a Japanese zoo yesterday, giving one keeper a heart attack and injuring another at least that was the scenario of a drill aimed at dealing with runaway animals. The zebra—actually a zoo staff member dressed up in a furry suit—supposedly bolted from a cage at Tokyo's Ueno Zoo after an earthquake destroyed its enclosure. It then wandered around the zoo before ramming into a wall and sending a keeper to hospital with a heart attack. After injuring another keeper, the zebra was subdued with a fake stun gun and bundled onto a nearby pick-up truck, as

curious zoo visitors looked on, laughing and taking photos.

"The zebra is an animal that easily panics," said 27-year-old Yumi Tamura, who dressed as the zebra but usually cares for gorillas and monkeys. "I myself felt panicky when acting it out," she told reporters. Past simulations at Tokyo's city-run zoos have featured faux gorillas, rhinos, lions and orangutans making a break for freedom. "Every year, a keeper plays the role of an escaping animal," said an Ueno zoo spokesman. "They know how the animals would act in the event of disaster and their escape." — AFP

DUTCH NGO OFFERS PREGNANT WOMEN WITH ZIKA FREE ONLINE ABORTION AID

THE HAGUE: A Dutch NGO said yesterday it has launched an international effort offering pregnant women infected with the Zika virus free pills to trigger an abortion, aiming to halt any rush towards unsafe terminations. "The Zika virus is now spreading to most of the countries where abortion is very restricted," Rebecca Gomperts, founder and director of Women on Web told AFP. "We are extremely worried that this might cause increasing unsafe abortions. We really care about women's health and lives and we want to make sure that women have access to a good medical abortion."

The World Health Organization on Monday said a surge in serious birth defects in South America was "strongly suspected" of being caused by the mosquito-borne Zika virus and constituted an international health emergency. It comes amid a regional surge in cases of microcephaly—a devastating condition in which a baby is born with an abnormally small head and brain. Gomperts said women who feared their unborn child might be affected could contact the service on www.womenonweb.org for a free online consultation. If there are no contraindications, then a package of pills to abort the foetus with instruc-

tions for use would be mailed to their home address. A "medical abortion" is a combination of two different pills to trigger a non-surgical termination and can be used up to the 12th week of pregnancy, Gomperts said. Women on Web was set up in 2005 to support access to safe abortions around the world, and currently answer about 10,000 emails a month from women seeking advice on a variety of issues.

Early action

Gomperts did not want to reveal how many medical abortion packages are sent each month, but she brushed aside any criticism saying: "Our goal is to save women's lives." Women on Web is asking women to state if they are infected with Zika for research purposes, but say the organization will "accept any reason that women have" for wanting an abortion. WHO warned last week that Zika virus was "spreading explosively" in the Americas, and said the region could see up to four million Zika cases this year alone. Brazil, which has become the worst affected country with some 4,000 suspected cases of microcephaly is also the world's largest Catholic country by population and places tight restrictions on abortion. — AFP

AMERICANS SAY THEY ARE TRYING TO CUT SUGAR INTAKE

NEW YORK: Americans say they are on a sugar detox. A Reuters/Ipsos poll of 1,883 adults living in the United States, conducted Jan 15-21, finds that 58 percent say they tried to limit sugar in their diets in the previous 30 days. That is higher than the percentage of those who were targeting reductions in their intake of calories, sodium, fats, cholesterol or carbohydrates. Only 39 percent said they had not tried to cut sugar intake. Last month, the US government said that Americans should seek to keep their intake of added sugars, which is sugar added during processing or preparation of foods, to less than 10 percent of daily calories, the first time it had recommended a specific limit.

That would translate to a cut of about one-third for the average American, but a significantly higher reduction for teenagers, who eat about 17 percent of their calories in added sugars. Of the people surveyed, 50 percent said they have tried to cut down on calories, 48 percent sodium, 46 percent for both saturated fats and trans fat/trans fatty acid, 43 percent cholesterol and 40 percent carbohydrates. And while the number of people who weren't planning cuts in calories, sodium and fats roughly matched those hoping to reduce intake, just 39 percent of respondents said they had no intention of cutting down on sugar.

To be sure, the survey asked people about their attempts to limit sugar, not about their success rate in doing so, and notoriously short-lived New Year's resolutions may account for some of the responses. There is also no directly comparable poll for previous years. But the poll results may reflect the impact of the increasing concerns expressed by health advocates about links between high-sugar diets and levels of obesity. This "war on sugar" has grown in scope over the last few years beyond just sodas and candy to packaged foods like cereal and pasta sauce.

Google Trends data show that online search interest in the term "added sugar" is on the rise. It reached the height of its popularity in the United States last month, data going back to 2004 show. Searches for cholesterol, sodium or saturated fat exceeded those for sugar, but their popularity was trending lower or stable. Searches for "is sugar bad" were significantly more popular than the same searches for cholesterol, sodium, and saturated fat.

A spokeswoman for the Sugar Association, which represents U.S. sugar companies and grower-cooperatives, said that limits on sugar are "the low hanging fruit in the fight against obesity," adding that the real culprit behind obesity has been a rise in calories from things other than sugar since 1970.

Surprised by sugar

Austin Dennis, a student from Chilton County, Alabama, who responded to the Reuters/Ipsos poll, turned to the Internet for answers to his struggle with weight about a year ago. "One day, I put on my pants, the button broke, and I thought, 'OK, it's time to do something different,'" he said. The 20-year old watched a YouTube video about eating healthily and bought "Fat Chance," a book by anti-sugar advocate Robert Lustig. He gave up sweet tea and stopped eating Kellogg Co's Froot Loops and the other sugary cereals.

"I didn't realize how much sugar was in stuff, that really surprised me," Dennis said. Companies

have started to offer more low-sugar products to customers with Kellogg promising to cut sugar to 10 grams or less for every 30-gram serving in 90 percent of its cereals by 2020. The Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA) says companies have cut sugar and carbohydrates in more than 5,500 products between 2002 and 2013. "We're committed to giving consumers more of what they want and need, and less of what they are trying to reduce," Kris Charles, a Kellogg spokeswoman said in an emailed statement.

Unit sales of sugar in stores fell nearly 4 percent last year from 2014, the oldest data provided to the press by Nielsen show, continuing a downward trend since 2011. Dollar sales declined 17 percent in value between 2011-2014, though in 2015 they recovered by 2 percent due to price rises. Major US sugar company ASR Group — the maker of Domino Sugar and C&H Sugar—declined to comment. Louis Dreyfus Commodities, the global commodities trader that owns cane refiner Imperial Sugar Co, did not respond to requests for comment.

Food companies would be required to include the amount of added sugar as a percentage of recommended daily calorie intake on their "Nutrition Facts" labels, according to a proposal from the US Food and Drug Administration. While candy maker Mars has said it supports the new dietary guidelines and the move to include "added sugars" on the labels, the GMA has questioned the scientific review behind the FDA's proposed labeling changes. Nearly two-thirds of poll respondents said they use those labels at least sometimes when deciding to buy a product.

Miryah Velazco, 39, who builds websites in Raleigh, North Carolina said she started to think about cutting sugar after summer visit to the dentist turned up eight cavities. She set out to seriously slash her intake on Jan 1 "I started looking and realizing I had been totally fooled," she said. "It's not always the stuff you'd think. Some of the all-natural granola bars have more sugar than just eating a Pop-Tart. You have to read every single label." — Reuters



HOLLYWOOD, United States : File photo shows an employee of the Hollywood Oyster company sorts and counts fresh oysters at the company farm in the waters of Chesapeake bay.— AFP

TINY BITS OF PLASTIC THREATEN OYSTER SURVIVAL

MIAMI: Tiny bits of plastic that pollute the world's waters may also interfere with oysters' ability to reproduce and thrive, according to a study Monday by researchers in France and Belgium. The damage happens quickly, according to the findings of a study using Pacific oysters that were kept in tanks. Those exposed to microplastics made smaller eggs and sperm that was less mobile compared to a control group of oysters whose tank did not contain added microplastics.

After just two months of exposure to plastic pollution, oysters produced "41 percent fewer offspring, which also grew at lower rates," said the study in the Proceedings of the National

Academy of Sciences, a peer-reviewed US journal. Since microplastics are similar in size to the phytoplankton that oysters typically consume, the bivalves "readily ingested" the particles, said the study. The ocean is polluted each year with between four and 12 million tons of plastic from cosmetics, clothing, industry and improper waste management, according to background information in the article. Since plastic cannot decompose like organic waste, it breaks down into tiny particles the size of a millimeter or less. "Given their ubiquitous nature and small dimensions, the ingestion and impact of microplastics on marine life are a cause for concern," said the study. — AFP

SPONSORED BY HADI CLINIC: DR JOHN GRAY LIVE IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Dr John Gray is back in Kuwait with 2 highly engaging sessions sponsored by Hadi Clinic and that will revolutionize one's understanding of men and women and massively improve their relationships both professionally and personally on 7th February 2016, Dr John Gray will conduct a morning seminar from 9:00 am and until 1:30 pm titled "How to Get What You Want at Work". The seminar is based on the book by the same title in which Dr. Gray analyzes the ways men and women misunderstand and misinterpret each other in the workplace, and he offers concrete advice on reducing unnecessary conflict and frustra-

tion. Applying his trademark practical advice to everyday office issues, he will teach attendees how to achieve their goals and make their workplace a source of fulfillment.

This enlightening seminar has been developed for all successful business professionals who want to ascertain what exactly it is that they want from their workplace, and will assist them in removing any obstacles - whether external or internal - with their opposite gender coworkers.

On the same evening, Dr. Gray will be presenting an evening session based on his New York Times #1 best-selling book

of the last decade - "MEN ARE FROM MARS, WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS". This LIVE Session from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm will give attendees the strategies, tips and tools needed to create truly amazing relationships. Considered one of the most trusted voices in relationships today, Gray's illuminating session will help both genders increase their self-esteem and confidence, understand their differences and improve communication to create lasting relationships.

A must attend session for both genders, John explains what it takes to have a successful relationship. He provides different scenarios from both the woman's

and the man's point of view and offers advice on how to counteract differences in communication styles, emotional needs, and behavior patterns.

For more than 35 years, John Gray has conducted public and private seminars for thousands of participants. He is a popular speaker on the national and international lecture circuit and often appears on television and radio programs to discuss his work. He has made guest appearances on Oprah, The Dr Oz Show, Good Morning America, The Today Show, The CBS Morning Show, Live with Regis, Fox & Friends Weekend, Larry King Live and many others.

John has inspired numerous Fortune 500 companies, national trade associations, non-profits, and educational institutions with his entertaining and engaging talks that deliver "aha!" moments to every audience. His presentations are fun, dynamic, and full of real-life examples, including the very latest brain research on the gender differences in the workplace and at home. John Gray's seminars are organized by Vigor Events and Cube Training and Consultancy Center, co-organized by ALGAS Events Company and in supported by the International Advertising Association (Kuwait Chapter).



PHILIPS SHEDS LIGHT ON THE FUTURE OF PERSONALIZED CANCER CARE

KUWAIT: Royal Philips (NYSE: PHG, AXE: PHIA) recently held a roundtable discussion as part of its wide range of activities during Arab Health 2016, to address the challenges of cancer care in the region as well as raise awareness around the need to have an earlier cancer diagnosis. The activity is in line with Philips continued efforts to delivering connected oncology care solutions across the health continuum - from healthy living to disease prevention, diagnosis, treatment and homecare.

The meeting included a number of prominent thought leaders from the region who discussed issues facing both healthcare providers and patients with the purpose to improve cancer care delivery. Cancer accounts for more than 10% of all deaths in most Middle Eastern countries, and currently 1 in 3 women and 1 in 2 men are diagnosed globally with the disease in their lifetime. The region's ageing and growing population will result in an increasing incidence of cancer by 2030.

Philips is connecting care across the health continuum, and believes data integration as well as real time analytics is core to deliver a value added approach to personalizing cancer care. The company's solutions help make diagnosis quicker, exact and safer for the patient. The aim is to integrate clinical and patient data in one place, to potentially help clinicians improve multidisciplinary collaboration, decision making and treatment outcomes while supporting patients during chemotherapy to improve the overall quality of life.

Minimal invasive

Arjen Radder, Philips CEO Middle East and Turkey said, "Philips is addressing the growing need for a new approach to cancer care. We strive to deliver better, more personalized care to patients while reduc-

ing healthcare costs. This is done by constantly looking at better ways to locate cancers earlier, diagnosing them more precisely, making therapies more accurate with minimal invasive and taking a personalized approach in giving the patient the best possible care."

"Not only are we providing integrated ways to collect and analyze information but our clinical and biological expertise enables clinicians to interpret this data and choose the optimal treatment for the individual patient," added Radder.

While the vast majority of cancer diagnoses are made or confirmed by a pathologist, the increased demand for pathology services continues to grow. Philips IntelliSite Pathology Solution and advanced visualization helps care providers reach informed decisions through enhanced productivity with high resolution digital images, collaboration features and case management tools.

The roundtable included the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Philips and the King Hussein Cancer Centre to collaborate more closely on fighting cancer in the Middle East. The MoU will see the two partners working together to implement cancer awareness campaigns, setting up continual medical education programs relating to the practice oncology, and helping to improve quality assurances throughout the field.

Philips forms long term partnerships with those connected to the patient care journey to develop integrated solutions supporting them in making care informed, efficient and sustainable. The company helps make this possible with solutions for accurate decision-making to enable patient specific therapy with a primary objective of redefining the future of personalized oncology.

HOTELS EXPAND OPTIONS TO KEEP GUESTS HEALTHY ON THE ROAD

'IT'S WHAT THE MARKETPLACE IS DEMANDING'

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida: Running concierges, a hotel mini bar stocked with produce from the local farmers market and a training wall that comes standard in every room. The hotel industry is moving beyond basement gyms and basic spa menus to accommodate guests' growing requests to stay healthy while on the road. The trend has been a mainstay at spas and wellness resorts for years, but now hotels frequented by business travelers and families are showing that life on the go doesn't have to mean sacrificing spin class or a quinoa superfood bowl. Boutique and luxury hotels along with big name brands including Westin and Wyndham have vastly expanded fitness programs and dining options in recent years. The luxury gym Equinox is even opening its own hotel in New York. The number of hotels with fitness facilities jumped from 63 percent in 2004 to 84 percent in 2014, according to a study by the American Hotel & Lodging Association. And hotels offering in-room exercise equipment has nearly doubled in the past 10 years, from seven to 13 percent, according to the study. "It's what the marketplace is demanding," said Dena Roche, wellness travel expert and editor of The Travel Diet website. "People are trying to lead a healthier lifestyle in their daily life so when they go on the road they want to keep doing those things."

Rooftop yoga classes

At the Even Hotels, every room has a training zone with a yoga mat, exercise ball, foam roller and a mounted fitness wall with resistance bands plus 19 videos and training guides to help you get your sweat on. Wyndham guests can request a room stocked with an exercise machine (like a stationary bike, elliptical machine or treadmill) and free workout wear, and the W hotel chain partnered with popular yogi Tara Stiles for free in-room yoga videos and a set of tip cards placed around the room to suggest poses to help you relax, wake up or get in the mood.

"It's pushing from a trend to a tipping point where there's mass adoption around wellness into every aspect of people's lives," Jason Moskal, a vice president at Intercontinental Hotels Group, which owns the Even brand. Even Hotels have three locations, including one in New York City, and are planning to open eight more including one in Miami. "Everyone has a different aspect of what they're looking for ... the hotel was designed with this idea of wanting wellness on my own terms," he said.

Rooftop yoga classes are all the rage at hotels across the country including The James Hotel in New York and the Mondrian South Beach. Guests at The Standard in Miami Beach can also enjoy waterfront yoga or stand-up paddle board classes and grab a green drink from the hotel's juice bar. Their spa, which offers a variety of fitness classes for guests (some are for members only) is also a hub for sessions taught by some of the world's top yogis. Spinning junkies only have to walk downstairs at the 1 Hotel South Beach for a Soul Cycle class. Forgot to pack your workout clothes? No problem. Trump Hotels and Fairmont have partnered with Under Armour and Reebok respectively to style your workout. Westin's lending program with New Balance had a 16 percent increase in requests in 2015. At the hotel's Grand Central location in New York, more than 2,000 guests paid \$5 to use a new pair of



MIAMI BEACH, Florida: In this photo, Paula Walker, center foreground, an instructor with Green Monkey Yoga, leads a yoga class at the Mondrian South Beach Hotel in Miami Beach. — AP Photos

sneakers and clothes delivered to their room. Kimpton's running kit includes a map of the Hudson River running path and pre-loaded iPod shuffle. Fairmont and several other hotels have running programs including "run concierges" at roughly 200 Westin locations and other options for runners.

Room-service

The beefed-up offerings come as guests, particularly younger ones, say it's one of the deciding factors on where they will stay. Forty-five percent of millennials and 38 percent of Gen-Xers said spa and fitness centers were influential in where they booked a room, according to a 2015 survey from travel and hospitality marketing firm MMGY Global. Several hotel chains are also

targeting the tech-minded fitness buffs. Trump SoHo has a new program that gives guests a free Fitbit Charge to help track whether they meet their daily step goal. Westin is also partnering with Fitbit to deliver personalized video-based exercises that guests can download on their phones or on the Internet along with real-time feedback. And there's no need to wonder whether there are gluten-free options at hotel restaurants. Most have even revamped the notoriously calorie-laden room service menus. The Epiphany Hotel in Palo Alto, California, offers guests a fridge stocked with produce from a local farmers market, green juices and homemade power bars for \$95. Kimpton hotels overhauled room-service menus, substituting quinoa and oats for white flour. —AP



MIAMI BEACH, Florida: Paula Walker, standing right, an instructor with Green Monkey Yoga, leads a yoga class.

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ASSE KUWAIT HOLDS TECHNICAL MEET ON 'KUWAIT EPA LAW 42'

American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE), Kuwait Chapter is a premier voluntary, non-profit making Health, Safety and Environmental organization, which strives to provide professional guidance, training, consultancy and resources to the industrial and social sectors in the region. As a part of continuous efforts in its professional journey, ASSE-Kuwait Chapter organized its 205th Technical Meet (7th in the term 2015-16) on "Overview of Kuwait Environmental Law 42/2014" in Kohinoor Banquet hall, Fahaheel Kuwait on 19th January 2016.

The Technical Meet began with the welcome address by Jignesh Shah, Secretary of ASSE Kuwait. Dinesh Dutta Vice president ASSE Kuwait in his address emphasized the importance of attending such technical meets by ASSE Members and the importance of Kuwait Environment Law 42. Prior to the technical meet, Sunil N Sadanandan, Director of GCC HSE Excellence Award 2016 presented the brief of the GCC HSE Excellence Award 2016

overview and highlights.

Sunil N Sadanandan, who is also Head of the Technical Event Committee introduced the speaker Brian Freeman who is currently the Business Development Manager for Integrated Environmental Solutions Company based in Kuwait. Brian speaker explained about Organization of the new law and brief description of articles, relationship with previous Kuwait laws and regulations, key features and new elements, current implementation status, compliance and enforcement impacts.

The session was followed by a Question and Answer session. The Speaker Brian Freeman was appreciated for his excellent presentation and a memento was presented by The ASSE Global Region Vice President Ashok Garlapati along with the ASSE-Kuwait Chapter Vice president Dinesh Dutta. Technical Meeting was concluded with close out speech from Santhosh Kumar Shenoy Deputy Director for the GCC ASSE Excellence Award 2016.



Happy Birthday



Happy birthday to you our treasured Chetachi Iwenjora. May God guide and protect you as you continue to be a blessing to your family. Greetings from husband, children, LAIF, friends and well-wishers.

FOKE TO CELEBRATE 'KANNUR MAHOTSAVAM'

Friends of Kannur Kuwait Expats Association (FOKE) will celebrate its 10th anniversary titled 'Kannur Mahotsavam' on Friday (February 5, 2016) from 10 am to 9pm at the Indian Central School stadium, Abbassiya. Indian Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Subhasis Goldar will be chief guest of the event. On the occasion, FOKE will confer the 8th Golden Foke Award on K S Jayamohan of Hope Charitable Trust, Kannur, for his exemplary contribution in the field of medical charity. The award is given every year to individuals from Kannur district of Kerala recognizing their comprehensive services to various fields such as art, culture, literature, society and sports. A three-member jury consisting of historical researcher KK Marar, journalist Dineshan Kombilath and well-known artist K R Vengara adjudge the awardee.

As part of the cultural programs during the celebration, popular South Indian playback singer Unni Menon will lead an orchestra accompanied by popular singers Kannur Abid, Sumi Aravind, Preethi Warriar and Sushand. A magnificent cultural pageant by FOKE's artists, depicting the rich cultural heritage of Kannur district will be the highlight of the anniversary. Addressing a press conference on Monday evening, FOKE office-bearers informed that the association is actively involved in various charity programs in Kuwait and back in India ever since it was formed 10 years ago. Jithesh MP, Biju Antony, Sabu TV, Vijesh KV and Anup Kumar attended the press conference.



PALPAK HOLDS AGM, GETS ITS NEW OFFICE-BEARERS

Palakkad Pravasi Association of Kuwait conducted its 8th General Body Meeting on 22nd January, 2016 at Hi-Di Restaurant Hall, Abbassiya. In his presidential address, Shainu G Kutty highlighted the achievements of the association in the past year. The general body unanimously passed both General Activity Report and Audited Financial Report presented by General Secretary Sunil Kumar and TM Mohan respectively. Chief Presiding Officers led by Narayanan presented the panel of the Central Committee members for the year 2016 from which the following office bearers were elected:

Office Bearers: President:

Aravindakshan A, Vice President: Suresh Madhavan, General Secretary: Sivasdas Vazhayil, Treasurer: Sreehari, Joint Treasurer: Sunil Kumar MK, Joint Secretary: Venukumar, Arts Secretary: Anupkumar Manghat, Joint Arts Secretary: Rajeev P, Charity Secretary: Sakeer Hussain, Joint Charity Secretary: Jiju Mathew, Sports Secretary: Sudheer, Joint Sports Secretary: Narayanankutty, Media & Legal Secretary: Adv Suresh Pulikkal, PR Secretary: Jayakrishnan PG, Joint PR Secretary: Murali Peevees, Employment Secretary: Rajendran C, Area Secretaries: Udayavarman (Abbassiya), Jayaprakash (Fahaheel), Sureshkumar (Farwaniya), Premraj (Salmiya) Joint Area Secretaries: Manoj PV (Abbassiya), Haridas Mangara

(Fahaheel), Amarjith (Farwaniya), Rajeev Ambat (Salmiya), Auditors: TM Mohan and Manoj Pariyani.

Supreme Council: PN Kumar, Dili V, Narayanan C, Krishnakumar C, TM Mohan. Central Committee Executive List: Appukkuttan, Abdul Salam, Noushad, Madhu Warriar (Abbassiya) Vijay Pillai, Ajay Raju, Ratheesh Rajan, Rishad Latheef (Farwaniya) Ramesh K, Dileep Kummankode, Shaju Theethunni (Fahaheel) Rajesh TS, Ali Akbar (Mangaf), Lakh Jose, Ajay Mohan (Salmiya)

Ladies Wing: General Convener - Sreelekha Sasidharan, Joint Gen Convener - Ambika Sivaprasad, Joint Convener - Smitha Manoj, Rini Jithu (Abbassiya) - Ambili Dil, Beena Sivadas (Fahaheel) - Swathi Rajeev, Suchithra Anilkumar (Salmiya) - Swedha Suresh, Suma Ratheesh (Farwaniya). Executive members: Aswathi Ajith, Supriya Prasant, Vineetha Sajeesh, Farsana Moideen, Deepthi Nimod, Manju Anil (Abbassiya) Saritha Sunil, Veena Sathesh (Farwaniya) Suchithra Saji, Kavitha Anup, Nalini Achutha Prasad, Smitha Narayanan, Reshmi Vineeth (Mangaf) Soumya Ramesh, Suma Jayan (Fahaheel), Shobha Prem, Sreepriya Gireesh (Salmiya). Earlier the session was welcomed by Adv Suresh Pulikkal and Krishnakumar conducted the overall proceedings. Newly elected President Aravindakshan cast vote of thanks.

22ND QURAIN CULTURAL FESTIVAL



On the occasion of the 22nd Qurain Cultural Festival, a happy Chinese New Year and 45th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between China and Kuwait, the visiting renowned Chinese folklore group won the heart of Kuwaitis, expatriates and diplomats with their skilful performance, rhythmic foot work, body movements, music and choreography. The group entertained the guests at Abdulredha Theater over the weekend. The highlight of the event was 'butterfly' acrobatics and Kuwait songs.



AOU PRESIDENT CONGRATULATES AMIR ON NATIONAL DAYS

Prof Moudi Al-Humoud, President of Arab Open University (AOU) has extended her heartfelt congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the 10th anniversary of his ascension to power, the first anniversary of naming him "Humanitarian Leader", the 55th anniversary of Independence Day, and the 25th anniversary of Liberation Day.

This came in a speech delivered by Al-Humoud in a ceremony held by the University for honoring all organizing committees of "the Small and Micro Enterprises in the Arab Countries: Reality and Aspirations" conference, which was organized by the University in cooperation with various local and regional bodies under the patronage of HH the Amir of Kuwait during 28-29 October 2015.

Al-Humoud said that on these national days, we recall the high positions of HH the Amir and HH the Crown Prince and what has been achieved from developmental plans and strategies in our country, recalling also all late Kuwaiti rulers and their contributions in building Kuwait, praying to Almighty Allah to protect it and prevail development and prosperity under the wise leadership of HH the Amir

and HH the Crown Prince and also to prevail security and peace over the Arab world.

Al-Humoud said this ceremony came as a recognition of the role of the organizing committees in the success of the conference. She also extended her gratitude to all bodies that participated in organizing the conference. In particular, she thanked Arab Urban Development Institute, Arab Gulf Program for Development (AGFUND), Kuwait Banking Association and Arab Fund of Economic and Social Development.

She also thanked all sponsors and media institutions, which always shed light on the University's achievements, activities and programs that serve the common interest of Kuwait and all the Arab World. At the end of the ceremony, shields and certificates were presented to the members of the committees by Al-Humoud in addition to Dr Mohammed Ali Mirgani, Vice President for Administrative and Financial Affairs, and Prof Mustapha Achoui, Vice President for Affairs of Planning, Research and Development.



AUK SIGNS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH LOYAC

The American University of Kuwait (AUK) and Lothan Youth Achievement Center (LOYAC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to enhance and benefit student participation in personal and profes-

sional development programs. The MOU will enable students to pursue internships, attend workshops and seminars, volunteer, and support various community outreach programs. In addition, participating students will be able

to receive certification from LOYAC. Based on the agreement, AUK students can start exploring opportunities with LOYAC. Placement will be done based on students' interview skills, majors and overall fit for vari-

ous jobs and companies. By establishing this MOU, students will be exposed to a wide spectrum of experiences and training that will prepare them for their chosen professional careers and personal development. This is not

the first time AUK partners with LOYAC; the two parties signed their first MOU in summer 2007, whereby AUK granted internship credits to AUK students employed by the LOYAC Summer Program.

BHAVAN HOSTS AN EXUBERANT AND EXCITING SCHOOL CARNIVAL

A carnival is perhaps the most colorful and the most fun filled event of the school calendar. It is an occasion of togetherness, glee, and jollity. Bhavan's Winter Carnival was indeed a perfect instance of this universal truth. The IES (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan) Winter Carnival was celebrated in the most joyful fashion. The students, the parents, and the visitors thronged the carnival venue braving the chilly weather. The nip in the air, paved way for music, dance, games, mouthwatering delicacies, and many an exciting competitions.

The carnival was declared open by the chairman, Bhavans Middle East NK Ramachandran Menon amid cheers and clapping at 10 o'clock in the morning on Friday, the 29th of January. Since then, the mercury of excitement and merriment rose steadily and eventually exploded with the raffle coupon draw at night. The non-run of the mill stalls attracted many a visitor. Float the ball, Nut Tree, Blindfold box, Laser Point, Lucky Locks, Drive the Car, Photo Booth and Fishing the Beads were some of the very many stalls that attracted droves of onlookers.

Green Corner was a unique stall that introduced and sold many varieties of flowering, and non-flowering plants and garden accessories. Bingo was another zone of public interest. The young and the young at heart partook in the Bingo game. The basement of the building hosted the most wanted as well as the most visited stalls of the carnival. The Magic Show by Prof Vindrake was immensely popular among the children. The Deal or No Deal stall was also flooded by the gamers. The Entertainment cum Gaming zone of the carnival, the 'Star Wars' was visited by the young movie buffs.

Quizzes based on Bollywood and Hollywood movie clips witnessed huge participation. The Xbox and the Sony PlayStation game stalls in the basement were also crowded with virtual gamers. One of the major attractions of the carnival was indeed the 'White Elephant Stall'. The generous contributions of Bhavanites helped the White Elephant stall retain the No 1 position this year as well. The white elephant stalls offered brand new cutlery, crockery, kitchen gear, pre-owned pianos, dvd players, hi-fi music systems, clock radios, computer accessories, toys, dolls, CDs, gaming consoles, books of fiction, and many more.

The Bouncy Rides were agog with laughter and mirth. The young children jostled to slide down in the rides. The tattoo

corner, face painting corner, hair coloring stall, cake and pastry zone, instant portrait corner and the Juke Box were some of the most popular zones of interest at the Bhavan's Winter Carnival. The wintry breeze was driven away by the piping hot sizzlers at the food kiosks. Marshmallows, Indian and Arab Veg and Non-Veg food stalls were indeed a gourmand's delight. The mouth-watering traditional Indian dishes and the delights of the desert were relished by the food connoisseurs.

The Bhavanites performed flash mobs within the carnival premises. The performance of the lithe and lissome dancers of IES was indeed a visual treat for the visitors. Some of the visitors and parents also danced to the electrifying tunes. The auditorium was packed with cheerful throngs since morning. Baby Shows and Cultural Programs won plaudits. The Talent Show and Fashion Show also garnered great admiration from the onlookers. The winners were given away prizes and medals. The DJ Show was the most sought after attraction of the Winter Carnival. Hundreds of music aficionados danced merrily to the tunes causing the auditorium to reverberate with the loud and exhilarating music.

The excitement reached a crescendo with the raffle coupon draw at night. T Premkumar, the principal of IES announced the names of the raffle draw winners. The Bumper Prize was a round trip ticket to Singapore. A 24 Ct Gold Coin weighing 10gm, a 32" LED TV, a Canon DSLR, Android Smartphones, tablets, Apple products, a Samsung Digital Camera, a WD External Hard Disc, Kenwood, Daewoo, Panasonic and Sharp white goods, and an Italian Dinner Set were bagged by the fortunate of the lot. The names of the winners have been published in the school web portal.

T Premkumar, the principal of IES thanked the major sponsors viz. Al Ahli Bank Kuwait, Abbott Nutrition, Journeys World Travel agents and a host of IES parents for their gifts and generous gesture. He also thanked the staff and students for their sincere efforts and contributions without which the carnival would not have been a grand success. An awesome and a thrilling carnival of the academic year 2015-2016 came to an end. The continuous massive exodus from the carnival venues after the raffle draw stood testimony to the popularity of the IES Bhavan Winter Carnival - the only school carnival that offers a cent percent pure carnival experience in the country.



Pakistan Embassy

Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Kuwait in collaboration with Management of Zahra Consumer Co-operative Society (Jamaiyya) is organizing a 10-Day "Made in Pakistan Festival" starting from 7th February till 17th of February, 2016 in the premises of Zahra Co-op. The event is sponsored by Pakistan Business Centre. The Pakistani community is cordially invited along with their families to attend this 10-day event.



- 00:50 River Monsters
- 01:45 Call Of The Wildman
- 02:40 Bugging Out
- 03:10 Bugging Out
- 03:35 Tanked
- 04:25 Gangland Killers
- 05:15 Gator Boys
- 06:02 Treehouse Masters
- 06:49 Bugging Out
- 07:13 Bugging Out
- 07:36 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:25 Too Cute!
- 09:15 Bugging Out
- 10:10 Treehouse Masters
- 11:05 Tanked
- 12:00 Too Cute!
- 12:55 Bondi Vet
- 13:50 Bugging Out
- 14:45 Gator Boys
- 15:40 Treehouse Masters
- 16:35 Tanked
- 17:30 Gangland Killers
- 18:25 River Monsters
- 19:20 Dog Rescuers
- 20:15 Tanked
- 21:10 Gangland Killers
- 22:05 Treehouse Masters
- 23:00 Dog Rescuers
- 23:55 Gator Boys



- 00:20 Misfit Garage
- 01:10 The Island With Bear Grylls
- 02:00 Sean Conway - Running Britain
- 02:50 River Monsters
- 03:40 Storage Hunters
- 04:05 The Liquidator
- 04:30 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop Edition
- 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 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop Edition
- 09:45 What Happened Next?
- 10:10 How Stuff Works
- 10:35 The Island With Bear Grylls
- 11:25 Sean Conway - Running Britain
- 12:15 River Monsters
- 13:05 Storage Hunters
- 13:30 The Liquidator
- 13:55 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop Edition
- 14:20 Siberian Cut
- 15:10 Cuban Chrome
- 16:00 Misfit Garage
- 16:50 What Happened Next?
- 17:15 How Stuff Works
- 17:40 Mythbusters
- 18:30 You Have Been Warned
- 19:20 Troy
- 20:10 The Liquidator
- 20:35 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop Edition
- 21:00 Mythbusters
- 21:50 You Have Been Warned
- 22:40 You Have Been Warned
- 23:30 Cuban Chrome



- 00:35 Weird Or What?
- 01:20 How It's Made
- 02:08 Food Factory
- 02:55 How The Universe Works
- 03:42 Mythbusters
- 04:29 Weird Or What?
- 05:16 Food Factory
- 06:03 How The Universe Works
- 06:50 Prototype This
- 07:37 How Do They Do It?
- 08:23 Weird Or What?
- 09:08 Mythbusters
- 09:53 Prototype This
- 10:38 How It's Made
- 11:23 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 12:08 How The Universe Works
- 12:53 Prototype This
- 13:38 Weird Or What?
- 14:23 How It's Made
- 15:10 Mythbusters
- 15:57 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 16:44 How The Universe Works
- 17:31 Prototype This
- 18:18 Mythbusters
- 19:05 Weird Or What?
- 19:50 Invent It Rich
- 20:40 How The Universe Works
- 21:25 How It's Made
- 21:50 How It's Made
- 22:15 Mythbusters
- 23:00 Invent It Rich
- 23:45 How The Universe Works



- 00:40 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 01:30 The Haunted
- 02:20 Ghost Lab
- 03:10 Deadly Sins
- 04:00 Deadly Women
- 04:45 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 05:30 The Haunted
- 06:20 Deadly Affairs
- 07:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
- 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
- 15:30 Dr G: Medical Examiner
- 16:20 Fatal Encounters
- 17:10 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 18:00 Murder Shift
- 18:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 19:40 The Will
- 20:30 Deadly Affairs
- 21:20 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
- 22:10 California Investigator
- 23:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 23:50 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 24:40 Scorned: Crimes Of Passion
- 25:30 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall



- 00:00 Violetta
- 00:45 The Hive
- 00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 01:40 Hank Zipzer
- 02:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 02:30 Violetta
- 03:15 The Hive
- 03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 03:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 04:10 Hank Zipzer
- 04:35 Binny And The Ghost

- 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
- 09:45 Austin & Ally
- 10:35 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



- 00:00 Stewarts And Hamiltons
- 00:55 The Grace Helbig Show
- 01:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 02:20 Giuliana & Bill
- 03:15 Christina Milian Turned Up
- 04:10 E! Entertainment Special
- 06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 07:50 Style Star
- 08:20 New Money
- 08:45 New Money
- 09:15 Giuliana & Bill
- 11:10 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
- 12:05 The Grace Helbig Show
- 13:05 Fashion Bloggers
- 14:05 Dash Dolls
- 15:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 16:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 17:00 Christina Milian Turned Up
- 18:00 E! News
- 19:00 Fashion Police
- 19:30 Fashion Bloggers
- 20:00 WAGs
- 21:00 Bolched
- 22:00 E! News
- 23:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians



- 00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 02:00 Man v Food
- 03:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 06:00 Chopped
- 07:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 08:00 Chopped
- 09:00 Grandma's Secret Cookbook Special
- 09:30 Grandma's Secret Cookbook
- 10:00 The Kitchen
- 11:00 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
- 15:00 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 Chopped
- 22:00 All Star Academy
- 23:00 Iron Chef America

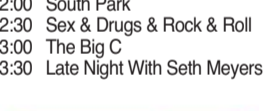
- 04:20 Chasing Shadows
- 05:15 Pick Me!
- 06:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 07:05 Coach Trip
- 07:30 Shetland
- 08:25 Chasing Shadows
- 09:20 Murdoch Mysteries
- 10:15 The Chase
- 11:10 Coach Trip
- 11:35 Pick Me!
- 12:30 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 13:25 Emmerdale
- 13:50 Coach Trip
- 14:20 Coronation Street
- 14:45 Murdoch Mysteries
- 15:35 Hank Zipzer
- 16:30 Code Of A Killer
- 17:25 Blue Go Mad In Ibiza
- 18:20 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 19:10 Coronation Street
- 19:35 Pick Me!
- 20:30 Code Of A Killer
- 21:25 Blue Go Mad In Ibiza
- 22:20 Coronation Street
- 22:50 Emmerdale
- 23:15 Who's Doing The Dishes?



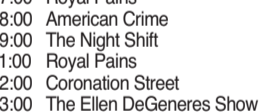
- 00:10 The Border
- 01:00 Air Crash Investigation
- 02:00 Big Fish, Texas
- 02:55 Cosmos: A Space-time Odyssey
- 03:50 The Border
- 04:45 Last War Heroes
- 05:40 Science Of Stupid
- 06:35 Innovation Nation
- 07:30 Brave New World
- 08:25 Swamp Men
- 09:20 Geologic Journey
- 10:15 Megastructures
- 11:10 Science Of Stupid
- 11:35 Hacking The System
- 12:05 Car SOS
- 13:00 Swamp Men
- 14:00 Brave New World
- 15:00 Innovation Nation
- 16:00 Explorer
- 17:00 How To Win At Everything
- 17:30 How To Win At Everything
- 18:00 Car SOS
- 19:00 Air Crash Investigation
- 20:00 Explorer
- 20:50 How To Win At Everything
- 21:40 Car SOS
- 22:30 Air Crash Investigation
- 23:20 Science Of Stupid



- 00:30 Mr. Robinson
- 01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
- 01:30 South Park
- 02:00 You're The Worst
- 02:30 The Big C
- 03:00 Merry Me
- 03:30 The Goldbergs
- 04:00 Men At Work
- 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 06:00 T!l Death
- 06:30 Community
- 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 08:00 Men At Work
- 08:30 Cristela
- 09:00 Last Man Standing
- 09:30 Modern Family
- 10:30 Community
- 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 12:00 T!l Death
- 12:30 Men At Work
- 13:00 Cristela
- 13:30 Community
- 14:00 The Goldbergs
- 14:30 Modern Family
- 15:30 Mr. Robinson
- 16:30 T!l Death
- 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 18:00 New Girl
- 18:30 Playing House
- 19:00 The Last Man On Earth
- 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 21:00 Mr. Robinson
- 21:30 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
- 22:00 South Park
- 22:30 Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll
- 23:00 The Big C
- 23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers



- 01:00 Annabelle-PG15
- 03:00 High Moon-PG15
- 05:00 Get On Up-PG15
- 07:15 Brick Mansions-PG15
- 09:00 Before I Go To Sleep-PG15
- 11:00 Make Your Move-PG15
- 13:00 Bad Parents-PG15
- 15:00 HairBrained-PG15
- 16:45 To The Wonder-PG15
- 18:45 Blackhat-PG15
- 21:00 The Lovers-PG15
- 23:00 Fifty Shades Of Grey-R



- 00:00 Chicago Fire
- 01:00 Complications
- 02:00 Supergirl
- 03:00 The X-Files
- 04:00 Good Morning America
- 06:00 Complications
- 07:00 Royal Pains
- 08:00 American Crime
- 09:00 The Night Shift
- 11:00 Royal Pains
- 12:00 Coronation Street
- 13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 14:00 Supergirl

- 15:00 Live Good Morning America
- 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 18:00 American Crime
- 19:00 The Fosters
- 20:00 Once Upon A Time
- 21:00 Marvel's Agent Carter
- 22:00 The Flash
- 23:00 American Horror Story: Hotel



- 00:00 Dragonwolf
- 02:15 Enemies Closer
- 03:45 Days Of Thunder
- 05:45 The Hulk
- 08:15 The Marine 4: The Moving Target
- 10:00 The Scorpion King 4: Quest For Power
- 12:00 Abandoned Mine
- 13:45 Destruction: Las Vegas
- 15:15 The Hunger Games: Catching Fire
- 17:45 The Scorpion King 4: Quest For Power
- 19:45 The Perfect Storm
- 22:00 Max Payne



- 00:15 Enemies Closer-PG15
- 01:45 Days Of Thunder-PG15
- 03:45 The Hulk-PG15
- 06:15 The Marine 4: The Moving Target-PG15
- 08:00 The Scorpion King 4: Quest For Power-PG15
- 10:00 Abandoned Mine-PG15
- 11:45 Destruction: Las Vegas-PG15
- 13:15 The Hunger Games: Catching Fire-PG15
- 15:45 The Scorpion King 4: Quest For Power-PG15
- 17:45 The Perfect Storm-PG15
- 20:00 Max Payne-PG15
- 22:00 Safe House-PG15



- 00:00 American Reunion
- 02:00 The Love Punch
- 04:00 Planet 51
- 06:00 Streetdance: All Stars
- 08:00 Man Of The House
- 10:00 Planet 51
- 12:00 The Love Punch
- 14:00 Beethoven's Treasure Tail
- 16:00 Man Of The House
- 18:00 You Again
- 20:00 Date Night
- 22:00 Let's Be Cops



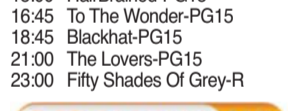
- 01:00 Foreverland-PG15
- 03:00 Kill The Messenger-PG15
- 05:00 The Railway Man-PG15
- 07:00 Stone Markers-PG15
- 09:00 Wrath-PG15
- 11:00 The Railway Man-PG15
- 13:00 The French Minister-PG15
- 15:00 Paranoia-PG15
- 17:00 Wrath-PG15
- 19:00 Two Night Stand-PG15
- 21:00 Very Good Girls-PG15
- 22:45 Clouds Of Sils Maria-18



- 01:30 A Beautiful Mind
- 03:45 Jersey Boys
- 06:00 Se Puder... Dirijal
- 07:30 Manny
- 09:00 Little Man Tate
- 11:00 Se Puder... Dirijal
- 12:45 Evita
- 15:00 Sunshine On Leith
- 17:00 Little Man Tate
- 19:00 A Passage To India
- 22:00 The Immigrant



- 00:15 Ex Machina-18
- 02:00 Non-Stop-PG15
- 03:45 In My Dreams-PG15
- 05:30 The Amazing Spider-Man 2
- 08:00 Veronica Mars-PG15
- 09:45 Drumline: A New Beat-PG15
- 11:45 The Imitation Game-PG15
- 13:45 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part I-PG15
- 16:00 Veronica Mars-PG15
- 18:00 Louder Than Words-PG15
- 20:00 Foxcatcher-PG15
- 22:15 Gone Girl-18



- 00:45 The Day I Almost Died
- 01:35 Long Island Medium
- 02:00 Body Bizarre
- 02:50 My Five Wives
- 03:40 Secret Eaters
- 04:30 Jon & Kate Plus 8



THE MARINE 4- THE MOVING TARGET ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

- 04:30 Blackie And Kanuto
- 06:00 The Heart Of The Oak
- 08:00 Minuscule: Valley Of The Lost Ants
- 11:00 Bolts And Blip
- 11:30 The Adventures Of Don Quixote
- 13:00 Daddy I'm A Zombie
- 14:30 Memory Loss
- 16:00 Miffy The Movie
- 18:00 Bolts And Blip
- 20:00 Kikoriki: Team Invincible
- 22:00 Memory Loss
- 23:30 Miffy The Movie



- 00:15 Ex Machina-18
- 02:00 Non-Stop-PG15
- 03:45 In My Dreams-PG15
- 05:30 The Amazing Spider-Man 2
- 08:00 Veronica Mars-PG15
- 09:45 Drumline: A New Beat-PG15
- 11:45 The Imitation Game-PG15
- 13:45 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part I-PG15
- 16:00 Veronica Mars-PG15
- 18:00 Louder Than Words-PG15
- 20:00 Foxcatcher-PG15
- 22:15 Gone Girl-18



- 00:15 Annie Hall
- 01:50 FX
- 03:40 LA Bamba
- 05:30 The Secret Invasion
- 07:05 Puckoon
- 08:30 Impromptu

- 10:15 Music Of The Heart
- 12:20 The Beautiful Country
- 14:25 A Star For Two
- 16:00 Earthbound
- 17:40 Groundhog Day
- 19:25 Punks
- 21:00 Annie Hall
- 22:35 LA Bamba



- 00:00 Jungle Cubs
- 00:25 Aladdin
- 00:50 Gummy Bears
- 01:20 Lilo And Stitch
- 01:45 Cars Toons
- 01:50 Zou
- 02:05 Henry Hugglemonster
- 02:20 Calimero
- 02:35 Zou
- 02:50 Loopedido
- 03:05 Art Attack
- 03:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:45 Calimero
- 04:00 Zou
- 04:15 Loopedido
- 04:30 Art Attack
- 04:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:05 Calimero
- 05:20 Zou
- 05:30 Loopedido
- 05:45 Art Attack
- 06:10 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:20 Calimero
- 06:35 Zou
- 06:45 Loopedido
- 07:00 Art Attack
- 07:25 Henry Hugglemonster
- 07:35 Calimero
- 07:50 Zou
- 08:00 Loopedido
- 08:15 Art Attack
- 08:35 Henry Hugglemonster
- 08:50 Calimero
- 09:00 Zou
- 09:20 Loopedido
- 09:35 Art Attack
- 10:00 Calimero
- 10:10 Zou
- 10:25 Loopedido
- 10:40 Miles From Tomorrow
- 11:05 Sofia The First The Curse Of Princess Ivy
- 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
- 14:50 Handy Manny
- 15:15 Jungle Junction
- 15:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 16:00 Sofia The First
- 16:25 Jake & The Never Land Pirates
- 16:50 Doc McStuffins
- 17:15 Zou
- 17:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 17:55 Loopedido
- 18:10 Miles From Tomorrow
- 18:35 Jake & The Never Land Pirates
- 19:00 Sofia The First
- 19:25 Jungle Cubs



- 00:00 Programmes Start At 7:00am KSA
- 07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 07:25 K. C. Undercover
- 07:50 Supa Strikas
- 08:15 Annedroids
- 08:40 Lab Rats
- 09:10 Kirby Buckets
- 09:35 Wander Over Yonder
- 10:00 Flocket Monkeys
- 10:25 Ultimate Spider-Man
- 10:50 Boyster
- 11:20 Boy Of Kings
- 11:45 Pair Of Kings
- 12:35 Lab Rats
- 13:00 Lab Rats
- 13:30 Phineas And Ferb
- 14:20 Kickin' It
- 15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 15:15 Rocket Monkeys
- 15:40 Wander Over Yonder
- 16:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 16:30 Kirby Buckets



THE SCORPION KING 4: QUEST FOR POWER ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

CLASSIFIEDS



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (28/01/2016 TO 03/02/2016)

Program	Time
SHARQIA-1	
AMERICAN HERO	12:15 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	2:00 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	4:00 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	6:00 PM
AMERICAN HERO	8:00 PM
AMERICAN HERO	9:45 PM
AMERICAN HERO	11:30 PM
AMERICAN HERO	1:15 AM
SHARQIA-2	
CONCUSSION	12:00 PM
CONCUSSION	2:30 PM
CONCUSSION	5:00 PM
CONCUSSION	7:30 PM
CONCUSSION	10:00 PM
CONCUSSION	12:30 AM
SHARQIA-3	
STANDOFF	11:45 AM
STANDOFF	1:30 PM
STANDOFF	3:30 PM
STANDOFF	5:15 PM
THE BOY	7:00 PM
STANDOFF	9:00 PM
THE BOY	10:45 PM
STANDOFF	12:45 AM
MUHALAB-1	
EXPOSED	11:45 AM
EXPOSED	1:45 PM
NO FRI+SAT	
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	1:45 PM
FRI+SAT	
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	3:45 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	5:45 PM
EXPOSED	7:45 PM
EXPOSED	9:45 PM
EXPOSED	11:45 PM
MUHALAB-2	
AMERICAN HERO	1:00 PM
AMERICAN HERO	2:45 PM
SAALA KHADOOS - Hindi	4:30 PM
AMERICAN HERO	6:45 PM
RIIDE ALONG 2	8:30 PM
AMERICAN HERO	10:30 PM
AMERICAN HERO	12:15 AM
MUHALAB-3	
CONCUSSION	11:30 AM
CONCUSSION	2:00 PM
CONCUSSION	4:30 PM
CONCUSSION	7:00 PM
CONCUSSION	9:30 PM
CONCUSSION	12:05 AM
FANAR-1	
AMERICAN HERO	12:00 PM
AMERICAN HERO	2:15 PM
AMERICAN HERO	4:15 PM
AMERICAN HERO	6:15 PM
THE REVENANT	8:00 PM
AMERICAN HERO	11:00 PM
AMERICAN HERO	12:45 AM

FANAR-2	
STANDOFF	12:45 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	2:45 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	4:45 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	6:45 PM
STANDOFF	8:45 PM
STANDOFF	10:30 PM
STANDOFF	12:15 AM
FANAR-3	
RIIDE ALONG 2	12:30 PM
MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	2:15 PM
RIIDE ALONG 2	5:15 PM
MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	7:00 PM
MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	10:00 PM
RIIDE ALONG 2	1:00 AM
FANAR-4	
CONCUSSION	12:15 PM
CONCUSSION	2:45 PM
CONCUSSION	5:15 PM
CONCUSSION	7:45 PM
CONCUSSION	10:15 PM
CONCUSSION	12:45 AM
FANAR-5	
THE BOY	1:00 PM
THE BOY	3:00 PM
THE 5TH WAVE	5:00 PM
THE BOY	7:30 PM
THE 5TH WAVE	9:30 PM
THE BOY	12:05 AM
MARINA-1	
AMERICAN HERO	12:45 PM
THE 5TH WAVE	2:30 PM
AMERICAN HERO	4:45 PM
AMERICAN HERO	6:30 PM
THE 5TH WAVE	8:15 PM
AMERICAN HERO	10:45 PM
AMERICAN HERO	12:30 AM
MARINA-2	
CONCUSSION	11:45 AM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	2:15 PM
CONCUSSION	4:15 PM
CONCUSSION	6:45 PM
CONCUSSION	9:15 PM
CONCUSSION	11:45 PM
MARINA-3	
EXPOSED	11:30 AM
EXPOSED	1:45 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	3:45 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	5:45 PM
RIIDE ALONG 2	8:00 PM
EXPOSED	10:00 PM
EXPOSED	12:05 AM
AVENUES-1	
RIIDE ALONG 2	12:45 PM
RIIDE ALONG 2	2:45 PM
RIIDE ALONG 2	4:45 PM
RIIDE ALONG 2	6:45 PM
LOST IN THE SUN	8:45 PM
RIIDE ALONG 2	10:45 PM
RIIDE ALONG 2	12:45 AM

AVENUES-2	
MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	12:15 PM
MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	3:15 PM
MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	6:15 PM
MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	9:15 PM
MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	12:15 AM
AVENUES-3	
AMERICAN HERO	11:45 AM
AMERICAN HERO	1:45 PM
AMERICAN HERO	3:45 PM
AMERICAN HERO	5:45 PM
AMERICAN HERO	7:45 PM
AMERICAN HERO	9:45 PM
AMERICAN HERO	11:45 PM
AVENUES-4	
CONCUSSION	12:00 PM
CONCUSSION	2:45 PM
CONCUSSION	5:30 PM
CONCUSSION	8:15 PM
CONCUSSION	11:00 PM
360°-1	
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	1:00 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	3:15 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	5:30 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	7:45 PM
DARKNESS DESCENDS	10:00 PM
DARKNESS DESCENDS	12:15 AM
360°-2	
EXPOSED	12:30 PM
EXPOSED	2:45 PM
DARKNESS DESCENDS	5:00 PM
EXPOSED	7:15 PM
EXPOSED	9:30 PM
EXPOSED	11:45 PM
360°-3	
STANDOFF	12:00 PM
STANDOFF	2:00 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	4:00 PM
STANDOFF	6:00 PM
STANDOFF	8:00 PM
STANDOFF	10:00 PM
STANDOFF	12:05 AM
AL-KOUT.1	
CONCUSSION	12:00 PM
CONCUSSION	2:30 PM
CONCUSSION	5:00 PM
CONCUSSION	7:30 PM
CONCUSSION	10:00 PM
CONCUSSION	12:30 AM
AL-KOUT.2	
RIIDE ALONG 2	12:15 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	4:00 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	6:00 PM
MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	8:00 PM

FOR SALE

Toyota Yaris 2013 Saloon, dark grey color, excellent condition. KD 1950. Mob: 50994848. (C 5123) 2-2-2016

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Abdulla Khan Munirudeen, S/o Abdulla Khan, holder of Indian Passport No: J5547890, D.O.B. 02.12.1965, residing at No. 204B, 5th block, 7th street, Bharathwaj Nagar, Mudichur, Chennai 600048, shall henceforth be known as Abdulla Khan Kaleem Ullah Khan. (C 5124) 2-2-2016

I, Ameya Makarand Dhongade, holder of Indian Passport No: M11041651, 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

REQUIRED

Experienced **Water Jet Cutting Machine Operator.**

Call: **99933523**

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



Prayer timings

Fajr: 05:15
Shorook 06:36
Duhr: 12:02
Asr: 15:056
Maghrib: 17:28
Isha: 18:46

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

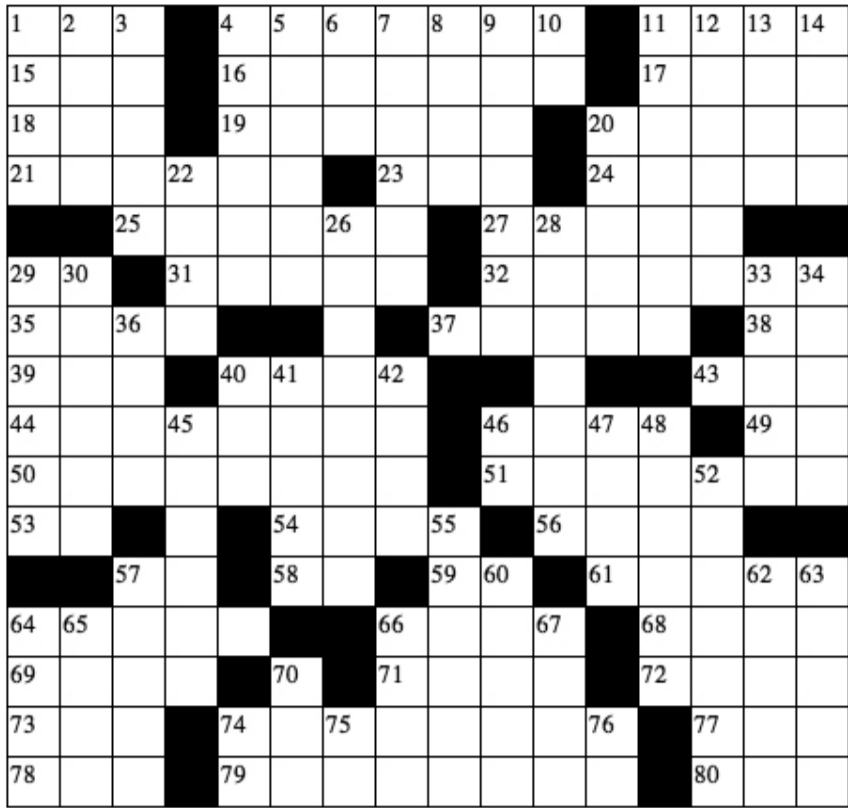


Flight Schedule

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	415	Sohag	00:05
SYR	343	Damascus/KAC	00:10
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55
THY	772	Istanbul	01:05
DLH	635	Doha	01:35
CLX	784	Luxembourg	01:45
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30
KKK	6507	Istanbul	02:50
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55
FDB	067	Dubai	03:05
RJA	644	Amman	03:05
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10
QTR	1076	Doha	03:15
CEB	7694	Manila	03:15
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:25
CLX	852	Luxembourg	04:20
AGY	680	Alexandria	04:30
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55
FDB	5061	Dubai	06:30
BAW	157	London	06:40
KAC	412	Manila/Bangkok	07:20
QTR	1086	Doha	07:40
KAC	204	Lahore	07:40
FDB	053	Dubai	07:45
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50
OMA	641	Muscat	07:55
KAC	206	Islamabad	08:25
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	08:30
KAC	352	Kochi	08:30
KAC	344	Chennai	08:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:50
KAC	362	Colombo	08:50
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00
KAC	284	Dhaka	09:10
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:20
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
IRA	665	Shiraz	10:40
IAW	157	Al Najaf	10:50
UAE	873	Dubai	11:05
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:15
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30
AGY	684	Sohag	11:35
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55
SAW	701	Damascus	12:20
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25
IRM	1188	Mashhad	12:25
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50
IRC	6511	ABD	13:00
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
CLX	792	Luxembourg	13:15
KNE	460	Riyadh	13:50
KAC	382	Delhi	13:50
IRC	526	Mashhad	13:55
MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	13:55
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10
FDB	057	Dubai	14:10
IRM	1186	Tehran	14:15
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:30

KAC	672	Dubai	14:45
KAC	788	Jeddah	14:50
KAC	546	Alexandria	14:50
KAC	512	Mashhad	14:50
KNE	462	Madinah	14:55
GFA	221	Bahrain	15:00
KNE	472	Jeddah	15:05
MRJ	4815	Mashhad	15:15
OMA	645	Muscat	15:30
KAC	562	Amman	15:40
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:45
JZR	535	Cairo	16:10
QTR	1072	Doha	16:10
JZR	787	Riyadh	16:25
JZR	357	Mashhad	16:30
FDB	051	Dubai	16:30
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	16:40
KAC	542	Cairo	16:55
RJA	640	Amman	16:55
SYR	341	Damascus	17:00
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
IRC	6521	Lamerd	17:20
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
MSR	614	Cairo	17:50
JZR	777	Jeddah	17:55
KAC	502	Beirut	18:00
UAE	875	Dubai	18:00
FDB	063	Dubai	18:05
JZR	177	Dubai	18:20
KAC	786	Jeddah	18:30
JZR	483	Istanbul	18:40
ABY	123	Sharjah	18:45
QTR	1080	Doha	18:55
KAC	774	Riyadh	19:25
KAC	166	Paris/Rome	19:30
GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30
KAC	618	Doha	19:35
KAC	154	Istanbul	19:45
KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
KAC	102	New York/London	19:55
KAC	792	Madinah	19:55
ETD	919	Abu Dhabi	19:55
KNE	480	Taif	20:10
FDB	061	Dubai	20:20
OMA	647	Muscat	20:20
MSR	606	Luxor	20:45
FDB	5053	Dubai	20:50
JAI	572	Mumbai	20:55
DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:55
QTR	1088	Doha	21:00
MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
ALK	229	Colombo	21:25
UAE	859	Dubai	21:40
GFA	219	Bahrain</	

CROSSWORD 1157



ACROSS

1. (informal) Roused to anger.
4. A spot that is open late at night and that provides entertainment (as singers or dancers) as well as dancing and food and drink.
11. Highly excited.
15. American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
16. Any of various large edible marine gastropods of the genus *Haliotis* having an ear-shaped shell with pearly interior.
17. Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
18. (Irish) The sea personified.
19. Expel from a community or group.
21. The upper house of the parliament of the Republic of Ireland.
23. Time for Earth to make a complete rotation on its axis.
24. With rapid movements.
25. A historical region of southwestern India on the west coast.
27. The brightest star in Cygnus.
29. A bachelor's degree in science.
31. (of an arrow) Equipped with feathers.
32. Steal goods.
35. A domed or vaulted recess or projection on a building especially the east end of a church.
37. A unit of weight for precious stones = 200 mg.
38. A bivalent and trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
39. United States liquid unit equal to 4 quarts or 3.785 liters.
43. God of the underworld.
44. Often cultivated for the decorative foliage.
49. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
50. Fastened together.
51. The trait of lacking restraint or control.
53. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
54. Again but in a new or different way.
56. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
58. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
59. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
61. Open to or abounding in fresh air.
64. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
68. A journey in a vehicle driven by someone else.
69. South American armadillo with three bands of bony plates.
71. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
72. Type genus of the Aceraceae.
73. (prefix) Bad or erroneous or lack of.
77. The executive agency that advises the President on the federal budget.
78. (informal) Of the highest quality.
79. (of racket strokes) Made with palm facing direction of stroke.
80. A negative.

DOWN

1. A master's degree in library science.
2. On or toward the lee.
3. English theoretical physicist who applied

- relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
4. A small tent used as a dressing room beside the sea or a swimming pool.
5. A port city in southwestern Iran.
6. A decree that prohibits something.
7. Surveying instrument consisting of the upper movable part of a theodolite including the telescope and its attachments.
8. Large genus of erect or climbing prickly shrubs including roses.
9. Sea otters.
10. A brittle silver-white metalloid element that is related to selenium and sulfur.
11. A metrical unit with unstressed-unstressed-stressed syllables.
12. A member of an agricultural people in southeastern India.
13. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
14. A door-like movable barrier in a fence or wall.
20. Any plant of the genus *Canna* having large sheathing leaves and clusters of large showy flowers.
22. The central area of a church.
26. Either of two yellow to red retinal pigments formed from Rhodopsin by the action of light.
28. The fleshy pendulous part of the external human ear.
30. An ancient Greek city famous for military prowess.
33. Small South American spiny tree with dark crimson and scarlet flowers solitary or clustered.
34. A member of the North American Indian people of Oregon.
36. A thin strip (wood or metal).
40. An enclosed space.
41. Hungarian composer of light operas (1870-1948).
42. Produced by a manufacturing process.
45. Conqueror of Gaul and master of Italy (100-44 BC).
46. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
47. An informal term for a father.
48. Small genus of evergreen trees of tropical America and western Africa.
52. An anticholinergic drug (trade name Daricon) used in treating peptic ulcers.
55. (India) Usually in combination.
57. Lower in esteem.
60. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
62. Swelling from excessive accumulation of serous fluid in tissue.
63. A hat that is round and black and hard with a narrow brim.
65. Surpassing the ordinary especially in size or scale.
66. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
67. Water falling in drops from vapor condensed in the atmosphere.
70. A unit of conductance equal to the reciprocal of an ohm.
74. A radioactive transuranic element.
75. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
76. A doctor's degree in religion.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

This is not a good time to make any concrete decisions about a relationship or business deal. However, your creativity is exalted at this time and may bring personal or career gains in other ways. There may be a collision of powerful energies in your life. You may express yourself in unpredictable but positive ways. The actions of today will have interesting results. You face tremendous responsibilities in relationships with loved ones and you will have an opportunity to express your creativity in your relationships. Your suggestions or a helpful hint can make a most positive difference in other people's lives. You enjoy your companions. There is an opportunity to join a group and have fun with people that have similar likes as you this evening.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You should experience all the benefits of this most powerful planet. Your enthusiasm is high and your creative mind is original and ready to be applied to your work. If you give your best effort now, considerable success will follow; you may unconsciously help a close friend through your efforts. Your communicative abilities are good. This is an excellent time to sway others to your thinking-perhaps through speeches or clever persuasions. Do not turn down party invitations today. If none arrive, send out a few invites for your own party-it could be a blast! Charisma rides high! Loved ones rouse amorous feelings. Watch the budget-your expansiveness could be disastrous if you are shopping. Companionship with others is most rewarding this evening.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your enthusiasm is high and your creative mind is strong-ready to be applied to the work of the day. This is a good day for making decisions, carrying out plans and communicating to others just where you stand. Others have good ideas too. If you stick to the main subjects and do not become distracted by trivialities, you should do quite well with anything that involves selling or trading. You are realistic about your abilities and expectations for success-others learn from your actions. The practical use of your time will most certainly pay off in big ways-bringing good times. You effectively communicate with both friends and colleagues this evening-perhaps a dinner or some social gathering is in the plans for this evening.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

It seems that on some days everyone you know can be difficult. Stick to routine tasks. Better yet, do those things that will require deep concentration. You take a serious attitude toward just about all aspects of your life. You might as well be involved in matters that require your close attention. Goal setting is important and can create a good focus on where you want your future to move. This is an excellent time to get many things accomplished. You could be prone to confusion by another person later today-careful! On the positive side, it is a good day to work on projects.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your confidence is high. Others are encouraged and will follow your lead. Your eagerness is strong-perfect for getting some exercise or chopping that cord of wood. Just make sure that any new projects are short-term. Practical concerns take precedence over relationships just now. This is a time of a large amount of enthusiasm, perfect for starting something or taking care of business-very physical too. You may have an urge to push for changes in the workplace-perhaps new equipment or some new advertisement ideas. You enjoy exercising with a friend this afternoon. You also may enjoy some form of art project or art show. Animals need attention this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You should enjoy great success and attention through your profession this Wednesday. Being in the spotlight is common to you now. This is a good time to see where your talents can best be utilized. You are very seldom fooled and may find yourself useful in many mysterious or puzzling scenarios, especially when it comes to finding the truth in a matter. Spending time with a close friend or relative and confiding in him or her could prove beneficial later today. Everything around home looks good to you this afternoon; conquering the world can be left for another time. In your present mood, entertaining friends in your home would be especially enjoyable. If you are unattached, socializing for a short while is very important.



Libra (September 23-October 23)

This is a time when many projects are visible that come to your attention. Business or if you are in business for yourself... You will have plenty to do. This is a good time to evaluate your situation. Independence seems more attractive than discipline. If you are alone for the rest of this week, you should do so-called original thinking. Perhaps some real wheeling and dealing toward friends and family. Relations with members of your family well. Enjoy and appreciate your ties to others.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This should be one of those desirable days for everyone else. You feel nothing but warmth, generosity and you and they in turn, reflect it back to you. You are as well; everyone you attract will be in a good mood to work or play at this time. Mental stimulation from other people's work should have positive results. Take your time. Your sensitivity to others is strong. The desire for intimacy is strong. The expression of affection is most satisfying. This evening is a good time to bring your camera.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Today you may think you are positively excited, but you are running through your head a mile a minute. You could come in handy. Leave any serious planning or heavy work until tomorrow you may have to go back and recheck what you yourself agreeable to changes in the workplace or at work. Ships may give you reason to find some time away from the noon meal with a family member or friends would be a good idea. Just keeps ticking! You relate well to others and progress in some sort of group meeting this evening.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Some fancy footwork happens this month. You may be in high demand for a particular job. Your focus is in high focus. It is easy to find a successful end to some progress. In your personal dealings with financial matters, know the presenter's history. Create a plan in your mind to call for you to have a bit of patience. Some years you may take more planning and preparing time to develop your ideas.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You are apt to be more reflective and not as outgoing as usual-it is your birthday. Your determination to achieve your goals is strong. You could become a bit frustrated because you have scheduled-never fear-you are right where you want to be. You gain positive attention and may find that you have been interrupted. There could be interruptions, so keep a notepad handy to remind you of where you were before the interruption. You are determined to perfect your talent. You could be performing for your friends.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Your heightened sensitivity may find some interesting facts rather than feelings just now, particularly when an opportunity comes. You know just what to say and you find the right words. Your mental faculties are enlivened, making you easily receptive to new ideas. You are very serene this afternoon and there could be indulgence in escapism, especially in art or cinema. If chance comes, be constructive. You might enjoy a class in creative writing. Opportunities to have your game-playing friends over to play on the big television screen.

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

Clothing

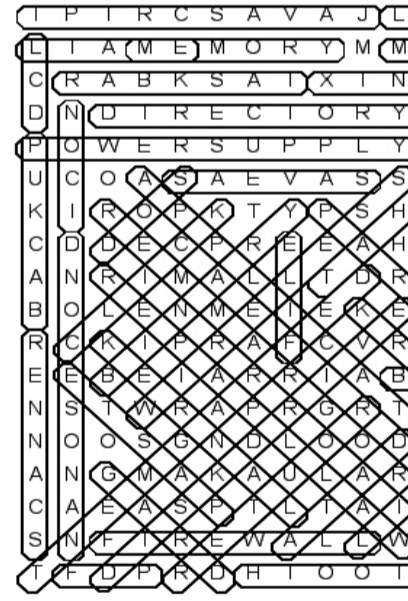
Find and circle all of the clothing items that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional piece of clothing.



- | | | | |
|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| BELT | JACKET | SCARF | SWEATER |
| BLOUSE | JEANS | SHIRT | TANK TOP |
| BOOTS | MITTENS | SHOES | TIE |
| CARDIGAN | OVERALLS | SHORTS | UNDERWEAR |
| CORDUROYS | PANTS | SKIRT | VEST |
| DRESS | PARKA | SLIPPERS | |
| GLOVES | ROBE | SOCKS | |
| HAT | SANDALS | SUIT | |

Yesterday's Solution

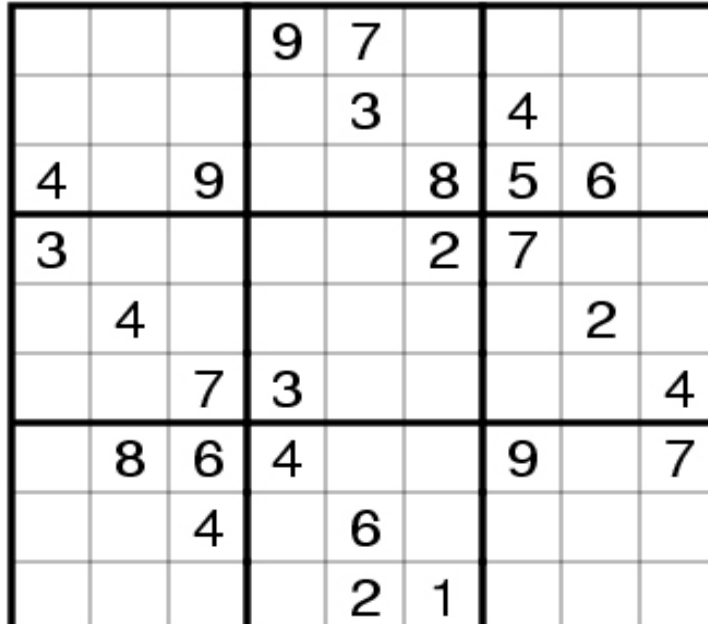
Computer Jargon



- | | | |
|-------------|------------|------------|
| APPLICATION | DEFRAGMENT | GOOGLE |
| BACKUP | DIRECTORY | HTML |
| BINARY | DISK DRIVE | ICON |
| BLUETOOTH | DOS | INTERNET |
| BOOT | DRAW | JAVASCRIPT |
| BYTE | EMAIL | KERNAL |
| CHAT | ENCRYPTION | LCD |
| CLICK | FILE | LOGIN |
| COOKIE | FIREWALL | MEMORY |
| CURSOR | FOLDER | MONITOR |
| DATA | GIF | MOUSE |

The hidden word is: MOT

Daily SuDoku



medium

Yesterday's Solution



A look inside Broadway's most exciting musical numbers



This image released by Disney Theatrical Productions shows the cast during the "Prince Ali," number in the musical, "Aladdin," in New York. — AP photos

Even in a show with plenty of magic, a special sort of it happens right after intermission at "Aladdin" on Broadway. No sooner have you settled back into your seat than a revolving door of what seems like hundreds of dancers performs the song "Prince Ali" at a hyper-caffeinated pace. They. Never. Stop. Coming. The dancers wear brilliant sequined costumes, brandishing everything from swords and banners to feather fans and parasols. They spin like dervishes and bang drums and leap on

wooden boxes. It's perhaps the most exciting 31/2 minutes on Broadway. It's also one of the most complicated musical numbers to create - some 71 looks created by only 24 actors in 47 quick changes, some lasting as little as 10 seconds. "It's really organized chaos," said stage manager Holly Coombs. What looks like a flowing, never-ending parade is actually a tightly controlled precision dance. It's so elaborate that it required the creation of a flowchart. "I have to say, it



This image released by Disney Theatricals shows Brandt Martinez from the musical, "Aladdin."

probably is the most complicated number I have ever dealt with," said costume designer Gregg Barnes, a Tony winner in 2012 for "Follies" and for "The Drowsy Chaperone" in 2006. "It's epic in a very short amount of time."

Rip their pants

Barnes and director and choreographer Casey Nicholaw sat down and worked out how they could give the illusion of dozens of performers announcing the arrival of Ali, a parade led by Tony Award winner James Monroe Iglehart, the genie who makes his own onstage quick change. Once Barnes and his team got an idea of what was being asked, they had to

match the clothes with the function of the dance. It wasn't easy, especially during one proposed move where four male dancers sit down on the floor and scoot backward. "I thought, 'Oh my god. They're going to rip their pants off right there in front of everybody. Believe me, this has happened,'" said Barnes, laughing. "So part of it then is figuring out, 'What can I make that can rip off instantly unseen by the audience but will be strong enough to be able to sit on the floor and scoot backwards?'"

One way Barnes created the feeling that the parade is never-ending was by constantly changing the color of the costumes, hoping to evoke the Silk Road energy of cultures colliding.

So "Prince Ali" begins with a gentle, Cotton Club-feel. Iglehart wears a zoot suit and the look has a turquoise-and-pink palate. Then come oranges and yellows, then deep reds, and finally white and purple. (At one point the flowing costumes even line up with the lyrics, which note "Purple peacocks, he's got 53.") As dancers continuously melt offstage, a team of 15 dressers and a hair person are backstage to help them with their next outfits. Many dancers are wearing several costumes under their top one to help in the process, like Russian nesting dolls.

Wardrobe malfunction

"We had to figure out what could the actor, while they're running, actually begin to take off and which part did they need assistance with. That came into the planning as well," said Barnes. A peek at the backstage choreography reveals dancers rushing in coordinated patterns to makeshift stations, where they wriggle out of one costume, slip into the next and are handed their next prop. Some continue to sing. It's like a NASCAR pit crew when a car comes into pit lane.

The creative team has even prepared for any potential wardrobe malfunction. In case too much gets accidentally yanked off backstage, the female dancers wear sequined bodices, while the men wear special gold underwear. The overall effect of the song is stunning, part of the reason "Aladdin" finished 2015 as the third highest-grossing show of the year. But Barnes said all the work behind "Prince Ali" may actually be too good. "Casey at one point said, 'It kills me that I don't think anybody knows what we're doing. I just think they think we have 100 people every night,'" he said. — AP



This 2013 photo provided by Disney Theatrical Productions shows Adam Jacobs as Aladdin in the new musical, "Aladdin," with music by Alan Menken, lyrics by Howard Ashman and Tim Rice, book and additional lyrics by Chad Beguelin at the Ed Mirvish Theatre in Toronto.

Review: Fox shows it can do musicals with ambitious 'Grease'

The chills were indeed multiplyin' during the "Grease: Live!" telecast on Sunday, a show that survived early rain, some tricky costume changes, a mortifying loss of audio and a cast member's heartbreak. With this hectic, ambitious and hormonal "Grease," Fox proved it could up the ante in the new mini-industry of musicals on TV, an industry so far controlled by NBC, with its "The Sound of Music Live!" "Peter Pan Live!" and "The Wiz Live." Fox intriguingly



This image released by Fox, Sam Clark and Vanessa Hudgens appear during a performance of "Grease: Live." — AP photos

didn't hide what it was doing. Jessie J opened the show singing "Grease" while cameras followed her touring the extensive backstage. There were clusters of real people in the audience in some scenes. And Mario Lopez played a sort of running anchor, showing the cast breaking character as they rushed about after their scenes ended and leapt into golf carts to go to the next. We could see the sausage being made, whereas NBC had always tried to hide it.

The risks became clear when a moment - less than a minute - of the audio during "Born to Hand Jive" dropped out. But that was the only big glitch during a three-hour show partially



This image released by Fox shows, from left, Carly Rae Jepsen, Julianne Hough, Vanessa Hudgens, Kether Donohue and Keke Palmer during a rehearsal for, 'Grease: Live.'



This image released by Fox, Juliane Hough and Aaron Tveit appear during a performance of "Grease: Live."

performed outdoors that even shrugged off rain showers. Like its recent predecessors, Fox leaned on a lot of Broadway DNA during its visit to Rydell High. "Grease: Live" was assuredly directed by Thomas Kail ("Hamilton"), with music supervision by Tom Kitt ("Next to Normal"), sets by David Korins ("Hamilton") and costume design by William Ivey Long ("Cabaret"), who must have maxed out his budget on leather jackets.

Resume booster

The show was based on the original 1971 musical "Grease," by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey, with some songs absorbed by the 1978 film version starring John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John. Broadway writers Robert Cary and Jonathan Tolins adapted it for live TV, salting in sly jokes about the era and the actors. "Grease: Live!" a Paramount Television production, was captured by 44 cameras and performed on two massive Warner Bros. soundstages over 20 acres in Burbank, California. It took advantage of its size, with lots of big sets, full-sized cars and more complex camera angles than its predecessors. And unlike "The Wiz," it represented a turn

away from high-tech tricks and back to basic stage fundamentals.

"Dancing With the Stars" veteran Julianne Hough was a nifty Sandy, holding her own in the singing and acting department while clearly nailing the cheerleading demands and even doing well with the tricky "Hopelessly Devoted to You." A charming and generously coiffed Aaron Tveit as Danny Zuko made a great case to America to be listed among its top leading men, though he was sometimes prone to making Travolta faces. The broadcast also will be a resume booster for Jordan Fisher, a suave and beautifully voiced Doody.

Graduate school

Carly Rae Jepsen was an assured Frenchy, even if the new song she was given, "All I Need Is an Angel," seemed out of place and bland. Keke Palmer was sultry as the diva Marty. But real credit goes to Vanessa Hudgens, who was an electric, complex Rizzo. The actress lost her father to cancer on the eve of the broadcast and dedicated it to his memory. Great touches included Palmer, in a dream sequence, going from a bedroom to a full-scale USO concert while signing "Freddie, My Love" in a slinky red gown, Boys II Men stepping in for Frankie Avalon to deliver a soulful "Beauty School Dropout" and a high-energy, correctly testosterone-heavy "Greased Lightnin'." A racially integrated cast made 1959 look that much better, even if the original material didn't do much for women's liberation. Some missed opportunities included too much of the choreography and character mannerisms cribbed from the film. The drag race at the end was underwhelming, as neither car really moved. And most of the extras looked too old even for graduate school, much less high school. Fox made a nice nod to the "Grease" legacy by asking Didi Conn, who played Frenchy in the film, and Barry Pearl, who was Doody, to appear in small roles. (Travolta made his own cameo in an ad for the upcoming O.J. Simpson series.) But Fox spoiled some of that goodwill with the heavy product placement of Coke - a sponsor. Maybe a better sponsor would have been whoever made the golf carts, usually not the hip, cool transportation option. Here they were positively greased lightnin'. — AP



Nubian Culture Center in Luxor reflects deep-rooted history

The Nubian cultural center in the ancient city of Luxor conceived to preserve the cultural identity of Nubians including artifacts and drawings inspired by their environment. The center, also called "House Nubian" includes handicrafts using materials from the environment, such as reed weaving, decorative bead accessories, kilim carpets, fabric weaving, and other women's craft items of silver beads in addition to henna.

The Nubian House is considered one of the UN development projects prepared to preserve the Nubian heritage, and to turn Luxor to an open global exhibition and a cultural center. — KUNA



Egyptian actress Yousra aims to raise Mideast AIDS awareness

Egyptian film star Yousra has taken up a role with the United Nations to help combat HIV and AIDS in the Middle East, where prevalence is low but growing rapidly. In an interview Monday in the Egyptian capital, Cairo, where she was named a UN Goodwill Ambassador for the cause, she said that stigmas and taboos associated with the virus must be combated and societies taught to be more sympathetic to those infected. "For us to defeat it we have to admit it exists," she told the Associated Press. "Because people have a right to medication so they can live with dignity, and so pregnant woman can prevent passing it on to their children. We have to break the silence and overcome the fear."

Some 240,000 people live with HIV in the Middle East and North Africa region, which is facing a worsening refugee crisis, rising inequality, humanitarian emergencies and discriminatory laws. New cases of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, rose by 26 percent in the region between 2000 and 2014, the United Nations says, making the Middle East and North Africa one of the areas where it's growing the fastest. Europe and the United States have also seen recent setbacks in fighting new infections.

Policy in the Middle East, however, greatly contributes to the stigmatization of those infected, with many countries imposing harsh rules surrounding activities that can lead to the virus's transmission. Consensual same-sex sexual conduct, for example, is punishable by death in Iran,

Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen, and parts of Somalia, and criminalized in most of the other states in the region. Drug use is also punishable by death in several countries. HIV epidemics are concentrated among high-risk groups - people who inject drugs, migrants, sex workers and men who have sex with men.

Antiretroviral therapy

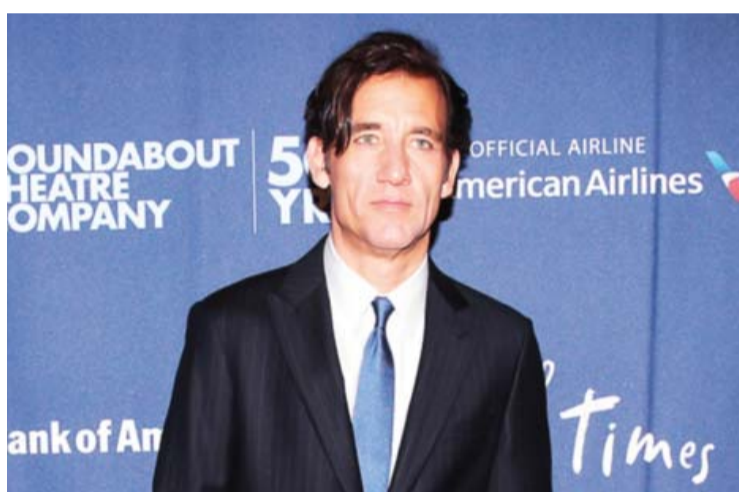
Yousra, whose career spans four decades and who has worked with celebrated filmmaker Youssef Chahine and actor Adel Emam, says she took up the cause after meeting people who had been abandoned by their families after being infected by the virus. "I felt that society and human beings were crueler than even the virus itself," she said, adding that she has known people suffering from HIV and AIDS since the epidemic emerged in the 1980s. "The virus can be handled but the people affected cannot handle the harmful regard of society against them, society ejecting them."

Globally, around 36 million people are living with HIV, with some 2 million newly infected in 2014. The virus is steadily being beaten back, in part due to increasing access to antiretroviral therapy, leaving new infections nearly 40 percent lower than they were in 2001. AIDS-related deaths - which stood at 1.5 million in 2013 - have fallen 35 percent since peaking in 2005. UN efforts to fight HIV aim to reduce the number of new infections to 500,000 by 2020 and 200,000 in 2030. —AP

In this Sunday, Jan 31, 2016 photo, Egyptian film star Yousra speaks after being appointed as UN Goodwill Ambassador in Middle East and North Africa during a ceremony in Cairo. Yousra has taken up a role with the United Nations to help combat HIV and AIDS in the Middle East, where prevalence is low but growing at a rapid pace. Deputy Executive Director of UNAIDS Jan Beagle stands at left. — AP



Clive Owen to join Meryl Streep on Berlin film fest jury



Clive Owen



Dieter Kosslick, director of the international film festival Berlinale speaks at a press conference prior to the 66th edition of the festival in Berlin yesterday. — AFP

British actor Clive Owen and French-born fashion photographer Brigitte Lacombe will serve on the seven-member prize jury of this month's Berlin film festival chaired by Meryl Streep, organizers said yesterday. The 66th annual Berlinale, as the event is known, will kick off on February 11 with a screening of Joel and Ethan Coen's "Hail, Caesar!", a send-up of Hollywood's Golden Age starring George Clooney.

The competition among 18 international productions will start the following day and the panel led by three-time Oscar winner Streep, whose appointment was previously announced, will select the winners of the Golden and Silver Bear top prizes on February 20. Owen, the star of movies including "Children of Men" and "Inside Man", is currently appearing in Steven Soderbergh's television series "The Knick". He will be joined on the jury by Lacombe, a New York-

based photo portraitist whose iconic work appears regularly in Vanity Fair, Vogue and the Financial Times.

The panel will be rounded out by British film critic Nick James, Italian actress Alba Rohrwacher, German film and stage actor Lars Eidinger and Polish director Malgorzata Szumowska, who won the festival's Teddy Award for gay and lesbian-themed cinema in 2013 for "In the Name Of" about a closeted priest. Berlinale director Dieter Kosslick announced a special Berlin Camera prize for US actor and director Tim Robbins, who will be honored with a screening of his 1995 death row drama "Dead Man Walking". The festival will also pay tribute to three luminaries who died last month: British actor Alan Rickman, who will be commemorated with a presentation of Ang Lee's 1995 drama "Sense and Sensibility"; Italian director Ettore Scola, whose 1983 film "Le Bal" will be shown; and rock legend David Bowie, who lived

in West Berlin in the late 1970s. "Bowie was a tremendous musician, an avant-garde artist who expressed his creativity in many disciplines," Kosslick said. The festival will screen Bowie's 1976 movie "The Man Who Fell to Earth".

Among the most keenly awaited premieres in competition this year are "Alone in Berlin", an adaptation of the Nazi-era international best-seller starring Emma Thompson and Brendan Gleeson, and "Genius", a British-US biopic starring Colin Firth as legendary literary editor Max Perkins. The cast includes Jude Law, Nicole Kidman, Dominic West and Guy Pearce. Other titles drawing buzz are an audacious eight-hour-long Filipino film, Lav Diaz's "A Lullaby for the Sorrowful Mystery", which will be shown in a single screening, and the feature debut by Tunisian director Mohamed Ben Attia, "Hedi", a love story set against the aftermath of the Arab Spring. —AFP

George Miller's long ride from 'Mad Max' to Cannes

Director George Miller, the next president of the jury at the Cannes Film Festival, is known for his violent, high-speed "Mad Max" road movies but the ex-doctor is also celebrated as part of the renaissance of Australian cinema. Post-apocalyptic visions aside, the 70-year-old can also boast a softer oeuvre, bringing to the screen titles such as "Happy Feet", "Babe" and "Lorenzo's Oil". Miller, the first Australian to chair Cannes, unleashed the first "Mad Max" starring a young Mel Gibson in 1979 and has said the cult feature was influenced by his childhood in car-obsessed rural Queensland.

"It wasn't until I really ended up being a doctor in emergency and seeing the kind of carnage as a result of car accidents or bike accidents that it kind of got into me," he told Australia Screen Online in 2006. "It kind of disturbed me quite a bit. And I think all those things were part of the mix of the 'Mad Max' films. Particularly the first one." Miller gave up a career as a doctor to concentrate on film and



This file photo taken on May 14, 2015 shows South African-US actress Charlize Theron (left) and Australian director George Miller leaving the festival palace after the screening of the film "MadMax: Fury Road" during the 68th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes. — AFP

went on to direct "Witches of Eastwick" (1987) starring Jack Nicholson, Cher and Susan Sarandon.

"Babe: Pig in the City" (1998) and the penguin movie "Happy Feet" (2006), for which he won an Oscar for best animated feature,

followed. His latest instalment, "Mad Max: Fury Road", starring Charlize Theron and Tom Hardy as Max, has picked up 10 nominations for the upcoming Academy Awards including best director. Miller has said he has aimed for the audience to be able to pick out the story as the film rushes headlong past, likening it to watching a silent movie. "The task was to see how much story or experience or felt life you could create for an audience during a very fast action piece," he told The Sydney Morning Herald in October 2015.

"I'm always interested as to how film language is evolving. It's an acquired language. It basically laid down its syntax in the silent era. In many ways, 'Mad Max' is a silent movie with sound." Besides film, Miller has also been involved in making acclaimed television in Australia, including mini-series such as "The Dismissal", "Bangkok Hilton" and "Bodyline". Miller, whose father came to Australia from Greece, is married to film editor Margaret Sixel. — AFP

Adele: No permission given to political campaigns to use her music

British singer Adele made clear on Monday that she has not given permission for anyone to use her music for political campaigns. Adele's spokesman issued a statement after Republican US presidential contender Donald Trump played Adele's 2011 hit song "Rolling in the Deep" at rallies in Iowa, and Mike Huckabee released a YouTube parody last week of her 2015 single "Hello." "Adele has not given permission for her music to be used for any political campaigning," the singer's spokesman said in an email. The spokesman did not say whether Adele, whose new album "25" was the



biggest seller in the United States last year, was contemplating legal steps to prevent the unauthorized use of her music. Adele is far from the only pop or rock star to have seen politicians co-opt their music for political purposes.

Rock band R.E.M. lashed out in September at Trump for using its hit song, "It's the End of the World" at a rally, and Frankie Sullivan complained about the use of the band's 1982 hit "Eye of the Tiger," at a news conference in September featuring Kim Davis, a county clerk in Kentucky briefly jailed for refusing to issue gay marriage licenses. — Reuters

COLD CHILLING



Music Review: 'Cold Chilling: Compton' just sort of tepid

California knows how to party. So goes the refrain on 2Pac's enduring rap favorite "California Love." That love is on display in the form of an homage on "Cold Chilling: Compton," an album of reimagined takes on West Coast rap classics. Musically, the release is polished. The vocals are carefully crafted and the lyrics are true to their origins. But songs like Snoop Dogg's "Gin and Juice," reworked by The Rooks, seem conflicted. The lyrics don't seem a solid fit for the mature, lush vocals. Moreover, the saxophone work is too lazy, even for the medium-paced song.

Also lackluster: "Hail Mary" by Mackaveli

(aka 2Pac). Pop song cover rendition specialist Dan Henig rattles off the appropriate verses, but it comes off dry and without the emotional punch that the staccato rap style of 2Pac might have injected. The best track is "The Crossroads" delivered by Los Angeles singer-songwriter Dannelle Sandoval. The inventive minimalist arrangement of the Bone Thugs-n-Harmony hit with her sweet vocals feels just right, and she quickens the vocals in all the right places. Sandoval keeps just enough of the old-school flavor intact while adding her distinct approach. Her track is a gem, while most of the others sound like dull wedding band fodder. — AP

Cosby's lawyers to urge dismissal of sexual assault criminal case

Lawyers for disgraced comedian Bill Cosby yesterday will urge a Pennsylvania judge to throw out criminal charges of sexual assault against him, arguing that the case violates a prosecutor's decade old agreement not to charge Cosby. Cosby, 78, is set to appear in a criminal court in Norristown, Pennsylvania, where he was charged in December with the 2004 assault of Andrea Constand, a former women's basketball team manager at Temple University in Philadelphia, Cosby's alma mater.

Dozens of women have accused Cosby of assaults stretching back decades, but the prosecution brought by the Montgomery County district attorney's office is the only criminal case he has faced. Constand, now 44, said Cosby pled her with drugs and alcohol before sexually

assaulting her. Cosby's lawyers have asked Common Pleas Court Judge Steven O'Neill to dismiss the case, citing a supposed agreement reached in 2005 with then-District Attorney Bruce Castor.

Under that deal, Cosby's lawyers say, Castor promised not to prosecute Cosby over Constand's allegations if he agreed to testify under oath in a civil lawsuit she filed against him. A judge last year unsealed that testimony, in which Cosby acknowledged giving her Benadryl, an anti-allergy medication, but portrayed the encounter as consensual. Prosecutors are generally free to use civil depositions as evidence in criminal cases. Castor is prepared to testify that he told Cosby's lawyers he would not bring charges in exchange for the testimony,

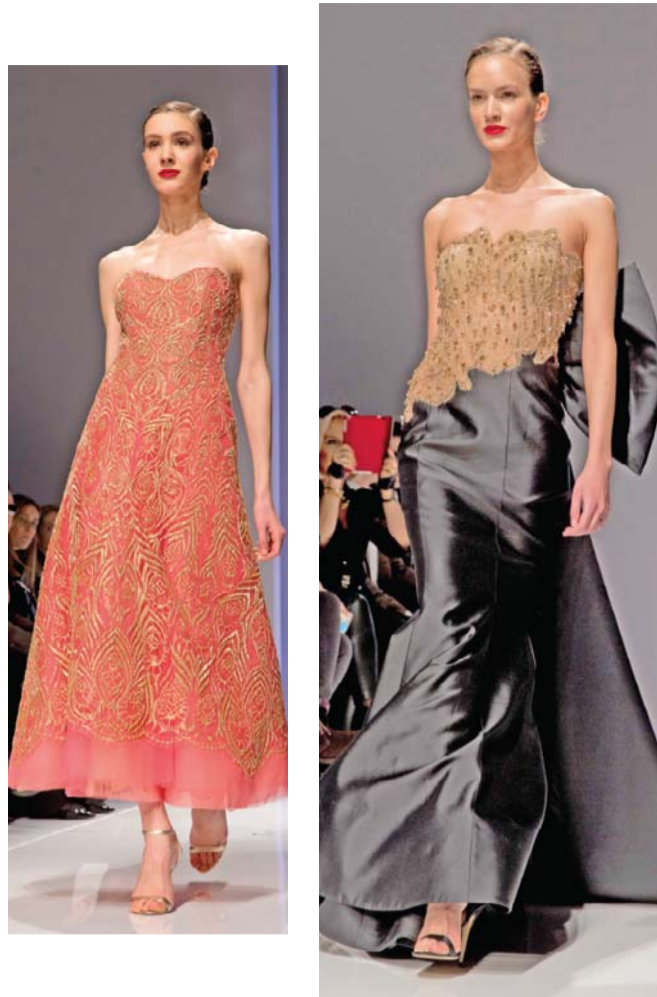
according to court papers.

But prosecutors have said in court filings that no documentation exists to corroborate any such agreement. Moreover, they argue, Castor did not have the authority to bar his office forever from pursuing criminal charges against Cosby. The Constand allegations played a crucial role in last year's campaign for district attorney, which pitted Castor against Kevin Steele. Steele, who attacked Castor during the race for failing to prosecute Cosby, won election in November and then charged Cosby just before the statute of limitations expired. The accusations by more than 50 women have destroyed the reputation of the once-beloved Cosby, whose father-figure persona made him a popular entertainer for years. — Reuters

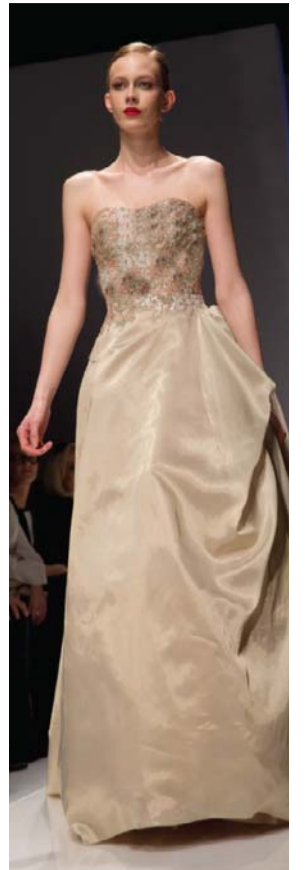


Actor and comedian Bill Cosby, center, arrives for a court appearance yesterday, in Norristown, Pa. — AP

Italy Fashion week



Models wear creations part of Lebanese fashion designer Rani Zakhem's spring-summer 2016 high fashion collection, unveiled in Rome.



Zeta-Jones has 'not been under the knife' yet

Catherine Zeta-Jones has "not been under the knife" to improve her looks. The 46-year-old screen beauty - who is married to 71-year-old actor Michael Douglas - is one of the most beautiful actresses in Hollywood but is adamant she has never had any form of plastic surgery to make her look more youthful. However, Catherine would not be opposed to seeking medical help to improve her body or face if she felt it was something she wanted to do to give herself more confidence.

Asked whether female actresses feel pressure to stay beautiful, she told Good Housekeeping magazine: "You don't have to be a beauty queen to be an actress, the roles that are coming my way are different and more interesting. But I'm not anti-plastic surgery at all. Contrary to public opinion, I have not been under the knife ... yet, is what I say!

If I feel like it, I'm going to go ahead and do it! If (surgery) makes you feel better, who am I to tell someone that it's wrong?"

The 'Dad's Army' star - who was a British tap-dancing champion in her formative years - also revealed she exercises every day because she believes that a healthy body means she'll have a healthy mind. Catherine - who has two children, son Dylan, 15 and daughter Carys, 12, with Michael - said: "I have my dancing. I'm lucky that I have a bit of a muscle memory, so once my body gets back in motion it seems to remember. Being active and on my feet is much healthier for my psyche. I really feel it's healthy for a body to sweat every day. I run on my treadmill or power walk outside. Then I do some bodywork and arm work and a bit of tap dancing every now and then." —Bang Showbiz



New York Fashion Week



Models display creations of Loris Diran at New York Menswear Day. An event which kicks the second season of NY Fashion Week.

The 080 Barcelona Fashion Show



Models display creations for David Hart at New York Menswear Day. An event which kicks the second season of NY Fashion Week.



Richie's passion for fashion

Nicole Richie discovered her passion for fashion when she was a figure skater. The 'Candidly Nicole' star - who has her own label House of Harlow - discovered her love of clothes when she would take to the ice in glamorous outfits as a young child. Nicole - who is the adopted daughter of legendary pop singer Lionel Richie - shared: "I was a figure skater my whole life. My dad's costume designer, Edna, would make my figure skating outfits when I would compete, and she urged me one

day to go to her studio downtown, and she showed me how everything worked."

She continued: "It was when Nancy Kerrigan won an Olympic medal wearing Vera Wang that I was introduced to the designer world. Edna said to me, 'You have all these ideas, why don't you come in and design everything yourself?' I was nine or 10. I went to stores and bought charms with strips of velvet to make chokers." Nicole married Good Charlotte frontman Joel Madden in 2010 and says she finally found time

to develop her interest in design when she travelled with him and his band on tour.

The 34-year-old star - who has children Harlow, eight, and Sparrow, six, with Joel, 36 - told new Hong Kong-based magazine #Legend: "When I was on tour with Joel, I'd go to little kiosks where I was inspired by something - a color or a lampshade - that could be something else. And when I was 25, I decided to turn it into an actual business, and it's been something I've loved." — Bang Showbiz

Models wear creations by designer TCN during the 080 Barcelona fashion show in Barcelona, Spain, Monday.



Pet owners hold their dogs which they dressed up in carnival costumes for a pet parade. — AP photos

Brazilian pets parade in their own 4-footed Carnival

Brazilian canines allowed their people to dress them in masks and costumes for a four-legged Carnival just days before the humans will hold their own party. A white-haired lap dog was dressed as a court jester for the gathering of dozens of pets in Rio de Janeiro. A medium-sized pooch was the superhero Flash with yellow wings on the side of its head. A tiny black dog wore insect-like antennas. Two beauties with long white hair sported the Olympic rings on their heads.

The celebration started with the Banda Vira-lata, which means "Street Dog Band" in Portuguese, announcing the beginning of the festivities. People gathered with their dressed-up dogs at the edge of Copacabana beach for the annual "blocao," or block party, for pets. While the band played a samba, the four-legged carnival celebrants paraded under Rio's blazing sun. "Always by their owner's side, always a loyal friend ... arf, arf, arf," a band member sang. "The 'blocao' is animal!" the singer added in the song describing how great the party was. People strutted with dogs costumed as heroes such as Zorro as well as wizards and bees. During the two-hour pet parade, the pooches had the chance to play with their canine friends while the samba band members sang: "It's carnival and the party is animal!" — AP



A dog wearing a jester costume attends a carnival pet parade in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



A dog named Caique attends a carnival pet parade, wearing a feathered hat.



Dogs wearing Olympics ring headbands ride in a stroller.



A dog wears "The Flash" costume for a carnival pet parade.



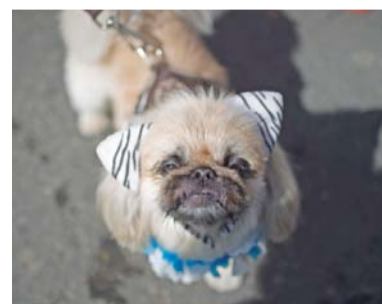
A dog in costume attends the carnival.



A dog in costume attends the carnival.



Dogs in costume interact during a carnival pet parade.



A dog in costume attends the carnival.



A dog in costume attends the carnival pet parade.

New Bosch painting unveiled on eve of 500th celebrations

Art historians on Monday revealed that a painting stored for decades at an American museum was in fact a work by Dutch master Hieronymus Bosch. The surprise discovery comes as 's-Hertogenbosch, the hometown of the artist whose nightmarish visions on canvas earned him the moniker of "the devil's painter", marks the 500th anniversary of his death. The newly-uncovered painting has been lying forgotten for years in storage at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri, which acquired it in the 1930s.

Entitled "The Temptation of Saint Anthony", it shows the saint gathering water in a jug as he leans on a staff in what was probably part of a larger panel, possibly a triptych. Initially it had been believed to be the work of one of the many students who flocked to Bosch's workshop in 's-Hertogenbosch. But a team of international researchers who carried out a five-year research project using sophisticated infra-red technology determined that the painting was in fact by the master himself. The canvas, which was likely painted between 1500 to 1510, "is a significant addition to the small body of existent work produced by Hieronymus Bosch," the researchers said in a statement. "Although the image was heavily retouched and over painted during a 20th century restoration, Bosch's hand is still clearly recognizable in the original brushwork," they said.

The painting was unveiled on Monday at the Noordbrabants Museum in Bosch's hometown which has succeeded in bringing together over 20 of his 25 or so surviving works for an unpre-



This undated image provided by the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri, shows "The Temptation of St Anthony." — AP

cedented retrospective which opens on February 13. "The little monsters in the panel are typically 'Boschian', the researchers said, highlighting a monster with a fox's head, and a toad clambering out of the water. Even a floating sausage can be found in other artworks by Bosch.

'Visions of Genius'

It is the second work that the Bosch Research and Conservation Project (BRCP) has recently determined was by the Dutch master. Late last year, the team also revealed that a drawing called "The Infernal Landscape" was drawn by him. The exhibition marks the culmination of a nine-year quest by museum director Charles de Mooij to reunite Bosch's unique artistic legacy in the place where he worked, lived and died.

It kicks off a year of events in the medieval town in southern Holland to honor its most famous son who was born Hieronymus van Aken in around 1450. The newly-discovered work will join 20 paintings and 18 other drawings among about 100 works on display in the exhibit "Hieronymus Bosch-Visions of Genius" which runs until May 8. But Bosch's most famous work, a triptych called "The Garden of Earthly Delights" which journeys from Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to a terrifying vision of hell, will not be on display.

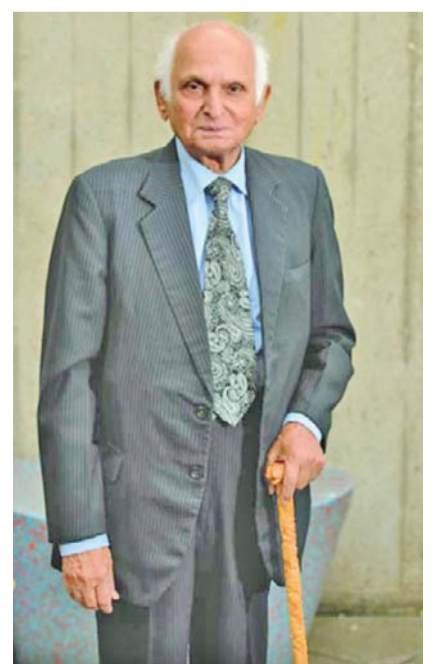
It hangs in the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid, and has never travelled abroad. But in a remarkable coup, the Prado has agreed to allow Bosch's "The Haywain" to leave Spain for the first time in 450 years. — AFP

Pakistan's 'greatest fiction writer' dies at 92

Pakistani author Intizar Hussain, widely recognized as one of the greatest Urdu writers in history, died yesterday aged 92 in the eastern city of Lahore, according to his doctor, following a period of illness. The prolific author was known for his novels, short stories, columns and poetry and belatedly saw worldwide recognition when he was shortlisted for the Man Booker International Prize in 2013 and was awarded France's "Ordre des Arts et des Lettres" a year later.

Born on December 7, 1923 in Dibrui, India, he migrated to the newly formed Pakistan in 1947 — an experience he wrote about 50 years later in "The First Morning". The short story captured the horror and optimism that accompanied the Partition of India where an estimated 14 million people were displaced, the largest mass migration in human history. The history of Pakistan and the subcontinent was also the setting for his acclaimed novel "Basti", published in 1979 and later translated into English.

He was also a regular literary columnist for Pakistan's leading English-language daily Dawn, and in later years became known as a voice of moderation and advocate of what he saw as the subcontinent's ancient traditions of



Intizar Hussain

pluralism and tolerance. Fellow Urdu writer Munnu Bhai told AFP: "Intizar Hussain was a man of letters. His death has left a huge gap in the literary circle of the subcontinent that would be felt of the centuries to come." Hussain's wife, Aliya Begum, died in 2004 and the couple had no children. — AFP

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2016

Brazilian pets
parade in
their own 4-footed
Carnival

39



Masked people pose in St Mark's Square on the occasion of the Venice Carnival, in Venice, Italy. — AP

New book captures pop culture moments that scream love

Fashion and style have forever been in bed with film, television and music, especially the moments that scream love. We all have our top pop memories of romance, lust, marriage, heartbreak from those worlds and more, including the beauty industry and the world of advertising. In a new book, "The Looks of Love: 50 Moments in Fashion That Inspired Romance," insider and designer Hal Rubenstein has rounded up some of his. We asked him to illuminate his favorites from the book, which was released by Harper Design in plenty of time for Valentine's Day:

Love story

Rubenstein calls 1970's "Love Story" a "cheaply produced, poorly shot and badly edited" film of Erich Segal's runaway best-selling book. Both had fans weeping by the millions. Among the reasons the film did well were the genetically blessed stars, Ali MacGraw and Ryan O'Neal, but coming as it did in the ascendancy of Woodstock, with its bell-bottoms and beaded necklaces, "Love Story" ironically led the way for preppy style. Forever.

In his Harris Tweed blazers over Shetland sweaters and blue Oxford cloth shirts with collars out, O'Neal's Ollie might well have been raised by the sales staff of Brooks Brothers, Rubenstein said. MacGraw's Jenny, meanwhile, walked a protest-free campus in a peacoat, black turtleneck and plaid skirt with matching scarf once the book (thanks to a plug of gold from fan Barbara Walters) hit the



In this Sept 14, 1984 file photo, Madonna poses at the MTV Video Music Awards where she was nominated "Best New Artist" in video, at Radio City Music Hall, in New York. — AP photos

big screen the year after the seismic Woodstock.

The film's score had legs. Mick and Bianca, as in the Jagers, were married twice in 1971 in St. Tropez, first in a civil ceremony, then in a Roman Catholic wedding where the Nicaraguan beauty and future rock wife walked down the aisle to a selection of sappy songs from "Love Story." She requested the music.

SONNY AND CHER

Her Bob Mackie gowns and long straight raven hair are legendary, as are his furry vests and Prince Valiant 'dos. But there's something else, Rubenstein said, besides their break out dueting that hit the Top 40 in 1965. They followed up with "The Sonny & Cher Comedy



In this Jan 19, 1998 file photo, a model wears an embroidered evening gown during a presentation for the Christian Dior 1998 Spring Summer high fashion collection designed by John Galliano in Paris.

Hour" that premiered on CBS in 1971, ending in 1974. The two fell out of love and divorced in 1975. Both had short-lived solo TV shows before CBS persuaded them in 1976 to reunite as a divorced couple in the same time slot, Sunday nights. "They were the first high-profile couple ever to appear in public divorced and getting along," Rubenstein said. "When I was a kid (he's 65) you said the word divorce the same way everybody said the word cancer. And they basically said, 'Here we are and we're having a good time,' and it changed people's attitudes toward divorce."

Then Cher got pregnant with Gregg Allman's child. The larger she got, the more



This 1969 file photo, concert-goers sit on the roof of a Volkswagen bus at the Woodstock Music and Arts Fair at Bethel, NY.

uneasy it was for Sonny and Cher to be onstage together. "An uncomfortable audience felt the same way," Rubenstein writes. "The reunion show barely lasted two years."

Flashdance

You can thank director Adrian Lyne and costume designer Michael Kaplan for moving along the casualization of America's dress code through this movie in 1983. It was high gloss and paper thin, Rubenstein writes, but it incorporated big shifts in youth culture, from sex to style. With their curly manes, olive skin and dark brooding eyes, stars Jennifer Beals and Michael Nouri - who played her boss and her love interest, Nick - not only looked like they could be fraternal twins but wore interchangeable outfits in identical colors. That, Rubenstein said, helped neutralize clothing as a source of gender power as their courtship unfolds. Alex was gutsy in love and style, stomping around in her welder's boots by day and sliding up her short black leather skirt as she sat to slip off her lace bra under her torn sweatshirt after their first date. The scene had Nick bug-eyed in astonishment.

"This film is a time capsule, watershed moment of everything that was basically happening in pop culture, in fashion, in sexuality. It hits every single button," Rubenstein said.

Chanel No. 5

Coco Chanel wasn't fond of flowery scents.

She considered perfumes that were too perfumey overly girly and oppressive, triggering memories of her years as a seamstress for wealthy women who reeked of musk and lavender to mask body odor, Rubenstein said. What she did recollect fondly, from her teen years at Aubazine Abbey's convent, was how everyone smelled clean.

In 1921, Chanel commissioned perfumer Ernest Beaux to create an unusual fragrance that "reflected the scent of a woman," Rubenstein writes. Beaux presented her with 10 options. Option No. 5 had floral notes, but Beaux included an experimental chemical called aldehyde, which extended the aroma of a perfume. On its own, aldehyde smells like soap. The No. 5 formulation was Chanel's choice and an iconic perfume was born.

Oscar dresses of all time. It had delicate pleating along a low neckline and graceful folds, including a train that oozed sensuality with every step. But it was the standout color that killed, Rubenstein said. Wang called it "Bahamian yellow" and it was perfection against her pale skin, platinum swept-back hair and bright red lips.

"There's something so beautiful and wonderful and tragic about that dress," Rubenstein said. "They were the perfect new Hollywood couple!" The two separated in late 2007 and Ledger died in January 2008 of an accidental drug overdose.

James Dean

With Taylor Swiftian efficiency, Dean's rise to teen idol started with his debut as the troubled Cal Trask in "East of Eden." The film served as 1953 counterpart to the more macho stars of the previous generation - Humphrey Bogart, Gary Cooper, Gregory Peck and even Marlon Brando, just seven years Dean's senior, Rubenstein writes. Trask was followed in 1955 by Dean's portrayal of the vulnerable, unsure Jim Stark, who wears his teen heart on the sleeve of a red nylon windbreaker in "Rebel Without a Cause." It's not easy looking that cool in a red zip windbreaker, but Dean pulls it off. Offscreen, he was more closely associated with Schott NYC Perfecto black leather motorcycle jackets. He never wore one in a movie but Brando did and the Perfecto line of leather jackets lives on. "There is not a leather jacket out there that is not stolen from that Schott jacket," Rubenstein said. — AP



In this March 5, 2006 file photo, Australian actor Heath Ledger, left, and actress Michelle Williams arrive for the 78th Academy Awards in Los Angeles.

When filmmaker Baz Luhrmann created a short film aimed in 2004 at re-establishing No. 5 amid a crowded field of designer fragrances, he cast his "Moulin Rouge" star Nicole Kidman as a cross between Marilyn Monroe and Grace Kelly. Monroe once said all she wore to bed was "five drops of Chanel No. 5."

Michelle Williams

At the 2006 Academy Awards, Sandra Bullock wore navy, Jennifer Lopez picked olive green, Amy Adams was in mocha brown and Meryl Streep donned taupe. And then there was Michelle Williams, on the arm of love Heath Ledger, in a Vera Wang chiffon and tulle gown of many folds declared one of the best



In this Oct 3, 1981 file photo, 1960's pop singers Sonny and Cher appear during a taping of ABC's "Good Morning America" in New York.