

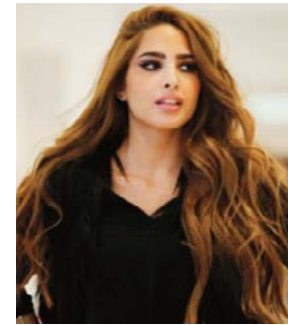
HRW: Limited progress for human rights in Kuwait



China's biggest overseas buy seen in \$43bn Syngenta offer



The Real Fouz: A healthy body and mind come first



Panthers beat Capitals 5-2 in clash of East division leaders



OBAMA SLAMS BIGOTRY IN FIRST VISIT TO US MOSQUE

PRESIDENT THANKS MUSLIM-AMERICANS, DECRIES POLITICAL RHETORIC



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Max 21°
High Tide 09:23 & 19:37
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conspiracy theories

THE ONLY SOLUTION ...



By Badrya Darwish

badrya_d@kuwaittimes.net

As I cannot lately write freely about many things in Kuwait like faux budget deficits, rising prices and inflation, subsidy removals and the effects on the nation, school tuition fees, foreign relations and many other topics, I've decided to focus on our beautiful Kuwait environment.

In a recent report I read about the global environment, Kuwait ranked very poorly in all indicators. I was not surprised to see that the report noted we have poor air quality, pollution and other environmental problems. Actually, I didn't need the report to tell me this. When you live in Kuwait, you know very easily the problems with the environment including the savage heat, dust storms from our neighbors' lands which land on our heads, pollution from the oil industry, etc.

Of course we have bad quality of air due to the above-mentioned reasons, but in my opinion there are solutions that we could consider. Forestation or the greening of Kuwait, which can be easily done by the government and private companies in partnership. It will firstly help reduce the heat and dust and create more oxygen and beautify the country. And I don't think it's beyond our reach financially or scientifically. There are concerns about water resources, but there are plenty of trees and plants that can survive in semi-arid climates and we seem to have plenty of water for the oil industry. We can also use to some extent brackish water like they do at Wafra farms mixed with potable water.

Before the invasion, Kuwait was working on a plan to develop green spaces. Unfortunately, that plan was halted after the liberation and never revived in earnest. If we have serious intentions, we can find solutions. This affects not only our health, but our children's health too, be they nationals or expats - the weather does not differentiate. I think this issue should be taken seriously to change Kuwait's environment for future generations - our future generations won't only need money, but a place to live as well.



WINDSOR MILL, Maryland: US President Barack Obama speaks at the Islamic Society of Baltimore yesterday. — AFP

BALTIMORE: US President Barack Obama yesterday offered an impassioned rebuttal of "inexcusable" Republican election-year rhetoric against Muslims as he made his first trip to an American mosque, seven years into his presidency. Obama, whose grandfather converted to Islam, made the short trip to the Islamic Society of Baltimore mosque, where he met community leaders and called on Americans not to be "bystanders to bigotry".

Invoking Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and hailing the tolerance shown by American political icons from Thomas Jefferson to Dwight Eisenhower, Obama hit out at anti-Islamic sentiment that is "not who we are." "We've heard inexcusable political rhetoric against Muslim-Americans that has no place in our country," he said, lauding Muslim-Americans who were sports heroes, entrepreneurs and the architect behind the skyscrapers of Chicago.

His comments comes as a shrill election debate has sullied America's image abroad, and jihadist attacks in San Bernardino and Philadelphia threatened to shatter post-9/11 religious solidarity at home. Six days after the 2001 attacks in New York and Washington, then Republican president George W Bush visited the Islamic Center of Washington, declaring "Islam is peace". Today, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has wooed conservative voters by demanding a ban on Muslim immigrants, while frontrunner Ted Cruz has advocated Christian-only admissions and championed "Judeo-Christian values".

Continued on Page 13

AMERICANA ACQUIRED BY GULF CONSORTIUM

DUBAI: A Gulf-based consortium will acquire Al Khair National for Stocks and Real Estate Company's stake in Kuwait's Americana food company. Al Khair has notified Americana about its deal, and asked Americana's board to cooperate with the consortium led by UAE-businessman Mohammad Al-Abbar. The deal must still be approved by Kuwait's Capital Markets Authority. The consortium said it is planning to offer a mandatory acquisition of Americana as per the rules and regulations of the Capital Markets Authority and Kuwait Stock Exchange.

In a statement, Abbar said: "Americana is a leading food group with a long and successful history, and we are delighted to have the opportunity to be part of Americana's rich legacy that was built over the past five decades." He added: "We see a bright future for Americana, and we look forward to the development of the group in the future."

The value of the deal has not been disclosed, but the company's estimated value in 2014 was \$6 billion. According to the company's last annual report, also in 2014, it saw annual sales of \$3.2 billion.

Al Khair has been in numerous talks over the past years to sell its almost 69 percent stake in Americana, starting in August of 2014. By Jan 2015, Savola Group Company, along with private equity funds KKR and CVC, were seen as the main bidders for the company. Saudi's Kingdom Holdings Company also made an offer in 2014. According to its website, American is active in 13 countries and employees over 63,000 people. Americana Group's main business includes KFC, Pizza Hut, Costa Coffee, Krispy Kreme outlets throughout the Middle East. It is one of the largest operators of restaurant chains in the MENA region, with 23 in total. It also manufactures food products, including the California Garden and Koki brands.

BLAST ON SOMALIA JET POINTS TO BOMB

MOGADISHU: A blast that ripped a hole in a commercial airliner shortly after takeoff from Somalia's capital was probably caused by a bomb, aviation experts and the pilot who landed it safely said yesterday. The plane, operated by Daallo Airlines and flying from Mogadishu to Djibouti with 74 passengers, safely made

an emergency landing on Tuesday. One man was killed by the blast, officials said. Local authorities north of Mogadishu said the body of a man, believed to have been sucked out through the hole in the fuselage made by the blast, was found in their area.

Continued on Page 13



MOGADISHU: In this photo taken Tuesday, a hole is seen in a plane operated by Daallo Airlines as it sits on the runway of the airport. — AP



LONDON: George Bingham, the only son of the infamous British aristocrat Lord Lucan, and his wife Anne-Sofie Foghsgaard, leave the High Court in central London yesterday. — AFP

EARL DECLARED DEAD 42 YRS AFTER KILLING

LONDON: A British judge declared the infamous Lord Lucan officially dead yesterday, four decades after he disappeared following the murder of the family's nanny in a lurid tale that has gripped Britain. "The court must make the declaration that is sought on this case," Judge Sarah Asplin told a court in London following an application by Lucan's son George Bingham, who officially becomes the 8th Earl of Lucan.

to obtain a death certificate for his father last year, bringing to an end one chapter in a story full of unanswered questions that revolves around London high society of the 1970s and its gambling underworld. "I am very happy with the judgement of the court in this matter. It has been a very long time coming," Bingham told reporters after the hearing, flanked by his new wife Anne-Sofie Foghsgaard, the daughter of a wealthy Danish industrialist.

Continued on Page 13

SAUDIS COMMUTE PALESTINIAN POET'S DEATH SENTENCE

DUBAI: A Saudi court has commuted the death sentence against a Palestinian poet convicted of apostasy, to eight years' jail and 800 lashes, his lawyer said. Ashraf Fayadh was detained by the religious police in 2013. His conviction was based on evidence from a prosecution witness who claimed to have heard him cursing God, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Saudi Arabia. He was also prosecuted for the contents of a poetry book he had written years earlier. Rights campaigners say he was targeted for speaking out on political and social matters.

Fayadh's lawyer, Abdul-Rahman Al-Lahim, said that while the new court ruling had commuted the execution, it had reconfirmed Fayadh's guilt for the crime of abandoning his Islamic faith. "The accused is sentenced to a punishment of eight years in jail and 800 lashes divided into installments, 50 lashes for each installment," the ruling said, according to Lahim on a Twitter posting. A spokesman for Saudi Arabia's justice ministry could not be reached for comment.

Human Rights Watch said the new sentence was still inappropriate. "No one should face arrest for peacefully expressing opinions, much less corporal punishment and prison," said Adam Coogler, a Middle East researcher for the rights group. "Saudi justice officials must urgently intervene to vacate this unjust sentence." Fayadh had initially been sentenced to four years in prison and 800

Continued on Page 13

SYRIA TEXTILE INDUSTRY HANGS ON FOR SURVIVAL

BEIRUT: At a stall in a Beirut exhibition hall, Syrian businesswoman Reem Abu Dahab displays her workshop's lacy pink and white nightgowns, hoping to attract increasingly elusive buyers. Syria's textile industry was once one of the country's economic bright spots, with its products coveted throughout the region and beyond. But the sector, like the economy in general, has been devastated by the war that erupted in March 2011, with factories destroyed, workers displaced and

sanctions hampering trade. The migrant crisis and outflow to Europe have also depleted its workforce. "Buyers used to come from all around the world but the war has scared them and now very few come to Syria," said Abu Dahab, surrounded by products made in a small workshop in Damascus. Abu Dahab's family once owned a factory in Harasta, a Damascus suburb ravaged by fighting between rebels and the regime.

Continued on Page 13



BEIRUT: A woman checks dresses during a presentation of clothes and fashion from the Syrian textile industry at an exhibition center on Jan 20, 2016. — APP



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

AMIR OFFERS CONDOLENCES TO SAUDI KING

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday offered sincere condolences to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz over the death of the wife of Prince Mamdouh bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and mother of Prince Muqrin bin Mamdouh bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. In his cable to the King, His Highness the Amir prayed to God to bestow mercy on the deceased and patience and fortitude on the Saudi Royal family. His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to King Salman. — KUNA

KUWAIT KEEN TO EXCHANGE EXPERTISE WITH GCC

KUWAIT: Kuwait is eager to share experiences with GCC states, especially in the field of municipal work, and to boost mutual cooperation, said Director General of Kuwait Municipality Ahmad Al-Manfouhi yesterday. Manfouhi met with Mohsen bin Mohammad Al Sheikh, chairman of Muscat Municipality and his accompanying delegation, stressing the importance of meetings that contribute to promoting municipal projects, including the development of Kuwait City Markets Project (Mubarakiya), according to a municipality statement. In addition, the delegation took a tour to Mubarakiya fish market and fish markets in the eastern area to oversee efforts of the municipality. —KUNA



LONDON: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives yesterday Chairperson of the Education Above All (EAA) Foundation HH Sheikhha Moza bint Nasser (left) and Lebanese Prime Minister Tammam Salam (right) at his residence in the United Kingdom. — KUNA



National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets regional representative of Office of OHCHR in the Middle East and North Africa, Dr Abdul Salam Sayyed Ahmed.



National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets Head of Lebanese Editors Syndicate Elias Aoun.

PARLIAMENT SPEAKER RECEIVES LA'ALA AL-KUWAIT CO CHAIRMAN

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem met yesterday Fawaz Khaled Al-Marzouq, Chairman of La'ala Al-Kuwait Real Estate company which is tasked with building 'Sabah Al-Ahmad Sea City'. Marzouq touted the city as the largest residential project in the country, and explained to Ghanem that the fourth portion of the project had been completed 15 months ahead of schedule.

Ghanem hailed the project, saying that it is an indicator of how the country's private sector is capable of contributing to

development projects in the country. Moreover, the Parliament Speaker wished the company success in all of their projects, which aim to foster development and growth. Meanwhile, Ghanem met the regional representative of Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the Middle East and North Africa, Dr Abdul Salam Sayyed Ahmed. Ghanem also met with the visiting Head of Lebanese Editors Syndicate Elias Aoun, in presence of MP Mohammad Tana. — KUNA



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem is pictured with Chairman of La'ala Al-Kuwait Real Estate company Fawaz Khaled Al-Marzouq. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT CALLS FOR COMPREHENSIVE, STRATEGY AGAINST IS, TERRORISM

ROME: The State of Kuwait called on Tuesday for an international comprehensive yet realistic strategy, which took into considerations multi-faceted dimensions of the region, to eliminate so-called Islamic State (IS) and terrorism.

Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Shiekh Khaled Jarrah Al-Sabah, addressing a meeting of the international coalition fighting IS, said he regretted the fact the meeting was taking place as "the spate of terrorism is on the rise" in the region. He said UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution 2253 stated the responsibility of every country to prevent and eliminate all forms of terrorism, which posed a genuine threat to the international peace and security.

"The escalation of terrorism and its impacts in the region reaffirms the importance of having a comprehensive strategy to eliminate it," said Sheikh Khaled. This strategy, he added, should take into consideration the political, economic, social, religious and media realities of the region.

The strategy, the Kuwaiti minister went on, should not be excluded to the military and security aspects because of the proliferation of social media. Therefore, he said, it was important to involve youths in decision-making process to benefit from their positive energies.

Sheikh Khaled said Kuwait has amended some legislations to tighten grip on terrorist groups, drying up terrorism financing, stopping foreign fighters from traveling to conflict zones, and confronting cyber-attacks. Sheikh Khaled said it was crucially important not to link terrorism and extremism with a faith, sect or ethnicity.

The coalition meeting, which concluded while ago, was attended by Italy, the US, Kuwait, Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Iraq, Jordan, New Zealand, The Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Saudi



Sheikh Khaled Jarrah Al-Sabah

Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, UAE, EU, and UN. The gathering takes place as talks have begun in Geneva to try to end the five-year Syrian civil war, which has killed at least 250,000 people, driven more than 12 million from their homes. Kuwait will also participate in the 4th international donors' conference for Syria, due in London today. —KUNA

OOREDOO PUMPS UP THE VOLUME OF RETAIL OUTLETS WITH TROLLEY

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, member of international Ooredoo Group, is offering customers 24/7 mobile services, in addition to the latest services and promotions at two locations within Trolley stores located in Qurtoba and Massilah. This follows an agreement that will see pumps outfitted with hi-tech Ooredoo Express Shops which will feature exciting promotions.

The Express Shops will be staffed by experienced Ooredoo Kuwait ensuring the highest quality, morning, noon or midnight.

Mijbil Alayoub, Director of Corporate Communications at Ooredoo Kuwait said: "At Ooredoo, we are been aiming at providing our customers with around the clock high level services, grateful to the management of Trolley stores for their selection of Ooredoo as sole telecom operator within their shops and helping us introduce our Express Shops across the country. We are sure our customers will appreciate being able to try and buy at any time, seven days a week."

Trolley is a chain of convenience stores founded in 2010 catering to the niche markets located at private universities. Currently Trolley is expanding into gas station to offer customers easy and quick shopping experience.



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Crime

Report

DRIVER SURVIVES HORRIFIC ACCIDENT

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A citizen narrowly escaped death and was left with minor injuries following an accident that happened when her car collided with a lamppost and was broken in half. The accident took place on Seventh Ring Road yesterday near Subhan cemetery. Mubarak Al-Kabeer rescue and hazardous material teams responded and dealt with the accident. The woman was taken by paramedics.



A vehicle seen broken in half following an accident at the Seventh Ring Road yesterday.



One half of the car.

Bus driver injured

A transport bus and car collided on Salmi road, and Jahra occupational firemen responded and freed the bus driver before handing him to paramedics.



Policemen pose behind suspects arrested for stealing paint and construction material.

Paint thieves caught

Ahmadi police arrested four Bangladeshi nationals for stealing paint and construction material from houses under construction and were sent to Mina Abdullah police station.



No injuries in fire

Jahra occupational firemen put out a blaze that broke out in a vehicle parked in an open area of Saad Al-Abdullah City. No injuries were reported in the fire.

Workers deported

Ten workers from an agricultural company were deported for violating the environmental law, as they cut irrigated plants and trees near the airport bridge in Farwaniya, and were caught by environment police.

Vehicles removed

The city cleanliness center of Kuwait Municipality carried out a campaign in industrial Sharq, resulting in the removal of 10 abandoned vehicles and a truckload of debris.

Workshop

Jahra governorate prevention department held a workshop at the Salalay resort in Jahra on the safe use of hazardous materials and how to fight them for workers in hospitals and health centers.

LIMITED PROGRESS FOR KUWAIT'S HUMAN RIGHTS: HRW

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Human Rights Watch (HRW) noted some important improvements and setbacks for human rights in Kuwait this past year. Improvements in domestic labor laws were considered among the most important achievements for human rights in Kuwait in 2015. HRW held a press conference Tuesday night to discuss the situation of human rights in Kuwait in 2015, following the World Report 2016 release. Belkis Wille, Researcher Middle East and North Africa, HRW, Joe Stork, Deputy Director for Middle East and North Africa at HRW and Mohammad Al-Humaidhi, Director of Kuwait Human Rights Society attended the press conference.

Protection for domestic workers

Law no. 68 gives domestic workers enforceable labor rights for the first time ever, including a weekly day off, 30 days of annual paid leave, and a 12-hour working day with rest periods. But it lacks key protections in the general labor law. The new law prohibits employers from confiscating workers' passports, a common abuse, but fails to specify penalties and does not include enforcement mechanisms, such as labor inspections.

"In passing the domestic workers law, Kuwaiti legislators took an important step in protecting domestic workers in Kuwait," said Wille. "They should now look at revisions that would meet additional impor-



KUWAIT: (From left) Belkis Wille, Researcher Middle East and North Africa at Human Rights Watch, Mohammad Al-Humaidhi, Director of Kuwait Human Rights Society and Joe Stork, Deputy Director for Middle East and North Africa at Human Rights Watch attend the press conference. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

tant international standards."

Bedoons, press restrictions and DNA

But the 659-page World Report 2016, now in its 26th edition, also noted that there remained many concerns regarding basic human freedoms and rights in Kuwait including a continued failure to provide for the more than 100,000 plus bedoon community (those without passports) here. Kuwait has also cracked down on press

freedoms, passing cybercrime and e-media laws that have far reaching implications for journalists and activists in the oil-rich country. "These include prison sentences and fines for insulting religion and religious figures and for criticizing HH the Amir or the judicial system, harming Kuwait's relations with other countries, or revealing classified information, without exceptions for disclosures in the public interest," she stated. "The government continued to limit free

speech, using provisions in the constitution, the national security law, and other legislation to stifle political dissent. Courts convicted at least five people on speech charges," Wille, added during the press conference. Kuwait has also passed a law requiring the establishment of a DNA database after the June 26 suicide attack on the Imam Al-Sadeq Mosque in Kuwait City where 26 people were killed. Kuwait became the first country to require all Kuwaiti citizens and residents to provide DNA samples under a new counterterrorism law. "DNA collection databases are not inherently illegal, but to meet international privacy standards enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Kuwait has ratified, the law would need to be narrowed," HRW notes.

Over 90 countries

Human Rights Watch reviews human rights practices in more than 90 countries. In its introductory essay, Executive Director Kenneth Roth writes that the spread of terrorist attacks beyond the Middle East and the huge flows of refugees spawned by repression and conflict led many governments to curtail rights in misguided efforts to protect their security. At the same time, authoritarian governments throughout the world, fearful of peaceful dissent that is often magnified by social media, embarked on the most intense crackdown on independent groups in recent times.

SCHOOLS START AFTER EID HOLIDAY NEXT YEAR

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Education Minister Badr Al-Essa confirmed that the coming school year would commence after the Eid Al-Adha holiday.

He added that the ministry has already adjusted the dates to make school start on Sept 18 for all staff, Sept 21 for kindergarten and grade one, Sept 22 for other primary grades and Sept 25 for intermediate and secondary schools.

Speaking to reporters on attending a ceremony at Sharifa Al-Awadhi School that was held jointly with the American Embassy to celebrate the liberation anniversary and honor the winners of a competition for the best short movie on the occasion of the liberation's silver jubilee, Essa thanked all brotherly and friendly countries, including the US, that contributed in liberating Kuwait. US Ambassador Douglas Silliman hailed both countries' strong ties and urged students to always remember their history, the sacrifices made by their ancestors and the efforts by the US and allied forces to liberate Kuwait.

Tire dump

Municipal Council Chairman Muhallhel Al-Khaled announced that in its next meeting, the council would vote to remove the used tire dump from South Saad Al-Abdullah to Sheqaya so that a residential area could be built in its place. "This dump is the largest deterrent of building in South Saad Al-Abdullah residential area," he added, noting that all concerned government bodies were being contacted to end their respective construction activities on the site and hand it over to the Housing Authority as soon as possible. Khaled added that the site would provide space for building 20,000 housing units.

Fishermen assaulted

An Egyptian fisherman was seriously injured and two others sustained minor injuries when they were attacked by Iranian infiltrators while fishing off Ahmadi shores, said security sources. Case papers indicate that the assaulters used knives and sharp objects in attacking the fishermen, who resisted them and managed to capture one of them after breaking his leg, while the others fled before coastguards arrived at the scene.



KUWAIT: The Health Ministry's medical emergencies department, in cooperation with Kuwait University, carried out a mock evacuation of building 32 near the stadium at Shuwaikh campus, with the participation of the National Guard, Interior Ministry tracer department, Civil Defence, helicopters and KIMS. The exercise was about the collapse of a building following an explosion. The evacuation took five minutes and 13 seconds with 21 injured. Assistant Undersecretary for Allied Medical Services Dr Jamal Al-Harby was on hand along with other officials. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

PROSECUTION DENIES HRW'S REQUEST TO MEET BARRACK

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The lawyers of jailed opposition leader Musallam Al-Barrak had informed the public prosecution that a visiting Human Rights Watch delegation wanted to meet Barrak, but the request was denied, said Awwad Al-Nasafi, Acting Secretary General of the Popular Action Bloc (PAB).

Court roundup

The administrative court yesterday ordered paying a group of ministry of Commerce and Industry employees special incentives for working in distant areas retroactively, effective as of April 1, 2012. Meanwhile, the permanent committee formed to prosecute ministers yesterday received a complaint referred from the public prosecutor's office on Jan 14 of a case filed by Khalifa Al-Jerri against the Finance Minister and Acting Oil Minister Anas Al-Saleh for not taking the needed measures towards an Audit Bureau's report on suspected squandering of KD 33 million on a touristic project. Separately, the court of appeal yesterday seconded a verdict by the first instance court indicting former lawmakers and activists for taking part in an unlicensed rally. In the meantime, the criminal court acquitted a citizen who had been accused by the state security department of joining a banned organization called the 'Pride Falcons' to fight in Syria. In another case, the court acquitted a blogger of state security charges of using slanderous phrases against Saudi Arabia on his Twitter account. Also yesterday, a court adjourned until Jan 24 hearing a case filed against a female blogger for slandering Islam and the Prophet (PBUH) on her Twitter account. Meanwhile, another court adjourned until March 2 hearing a case filed by Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed against former MP Faisal Al-Mislem of posting slanderous remarks about the multimillion-dinar bank transfers case on his Twitter account.

Plastic surgery clinic sued

Lawyer Yousif Hussein Al-Taher yesterday filed a case against a plastic surgery clinic accusing it of committing medical errors that cost his client, a female citizen, all her hair and leaving her bald. Taher demanded examination of his client by forensic medicine to prove his allegations. Taher explained that his client had suffered from partial genetic baldness and that she saw the clinic's ad and visited it, where the doctor decided to subject her to a 3-hour hair transplant session on the very same day, costing her over KD 2,550, during which he was supposed to transplant natural hair. He added that despite following all the doctor's instructions, abscesses and pus started appearing in the transplanted hair follicles. "My client then developed acute granulomatous dermatitis followed by daily increasing hair fall," he explained.

Dust returns

Kuwait meteorological centers expect dusty weather in some areas on Sunday with cloudy skies and southeasterly winds that would later shift to northwesterly.

Municipality law

Municipal council member Nayef Al-Sour slammed what he described as sudden amendments to 14 out of 42 articles of the municipality law that were recently approved by the Cabinet. "The points we expected to be amended included municipality financial and administrative independence, which was ignored," he said, pointing out that the current law was 'excellent' and does not need to be 'crushed and blown away'. Sour also blasted the dissolution of some municipal departments and authorizing other governmental bodies without any municipal experience to do their jobs. In other news, Chairman of the state's structural scheme at the municipal council Ali Al-Mousa excluded the possibility of carrying out any economic development plans according to the current structural scheme because many of the concerned service ministries were not fully committed to what is in those plans.



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah opened the Model Residency Affairs building in Jahra Governorate, where he was received by Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lieutenant General Suleiman Al-Fahad and other officials. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT PUTS ON HOLD EUROFIGHTER PURCHASE

KUWAIT: An \$8.7 billion deal for Kuwait to purchase 28 Eurofighters from Italy has been put on hold for "procedural" reasons, an unnamed Italian Defense official told Defense News website. According to the report published this week, the contract which was based on a memorandum of understanding signed in September of last year, was supposed to be signed on Sunday. But the signing didn't happen due to "internal procedural problems" in Kuwait. Kuwait had agreed to buy 22 single-seat and six twin-seat Typhoons in an agreement with the Italian government, with Kuwait pilots trained by Italy.

Kuwait's Finance Ministry has warned of a sizable deficit for the fiscal year starting April 1. The shortfall for the 2016-17 fiscal year is estimated at KD 11.5 billion due to a sharp decline in oil revenues. It's unclear, however, if this deficit will include the transfer of funds to the Future Generations Fund. Kuwait bases its budget on oil revenues and does not include returns on investments held in the country's sovereign wealth fund.

KUWAIT COLLECTS SOME \$132 MLN WORTH OF UTILITY BILLS VIA E-GOVT

KUWAIT: The State collected up to KD 40 million (\$132 million) worth of fees and bills via the E-Government portal (www.e.gov.kw) in 2015, said a senior official of the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) yesterday. Quasai Al-Shatti, CAIT Acting Director General, said during a news conference that number of services provided by the State agency, via the Payit system, reached 1,670, including 781 electronic ones.

Up to 56 institutions were registered on the website in 2015, and number of visitors reached 8.3 million, said Shatti during the news conference, marking the launch of a "cooperation initiative" with the One Global group. The value of e-payments in 2015 amounted to some KD 615.4 (approximately \$215,000), said Shatti, noting that 200 online services were added following a Cabinet decision stressing necessity of using the State interface service. CAIT, since its launch in 2008, has not recorded any electronic piracy, Shatti declared. He noted however that complaints regarding such cases are received via the hot line 164.

On the cooperation with Global One, Shatti said the joint initiative is in line with the approach of increasing number of the online government services, in addition to increasing number of users and proceeds."

Such cooperation is also within framework of the State approach for backing up small and medium enterprises for citizens, namely the youth, as well as creating work opportunities and a proper environment to incubate their enterprises. —KUNA

In Brief

KUWAIT TAKES PART IN SAUDI FESTIVAL

KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah headed to Riyadh yesterday to attend the opening ceremony of the annual 'National Festival for Heritage and Culture.' The festival features an array of cultural events and activities, as a bevy of international writers and philosophers will be on hand. This year's installment of the festival will be dedicated to Germany, as the European nation will be the guest of honor. — KUNA



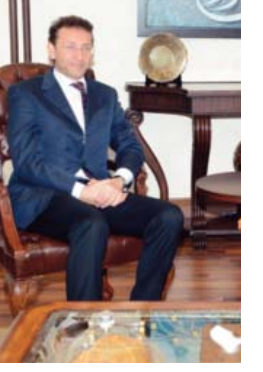
CROWN PRINCE'S EQUESTRIAN CUP

KUWAIT: Farwaniya Equestrian Club will be holding a special contest tomorrow dubbed 'His Highness the Crown Prince Cup,' where a fleet of 51 horses will be participating. The contest will consist of five sessions, with the fifth christened 'His Highness the Crown Prince Session,' which will feature 12 horses vying on 1600 kilometers, Mubarak Al-Daihani, Equestrian Club's Chairman said during a press conference yesterday. The winners of the contests will be the recipients of precious prizes, including monetary awards, Daihani announced. — KUNA



KUNA CHIEF RECEIVES ITALIAN AMBASSADOR

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Board and Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij Al-Ibrahim Al-Sabah received yesterday Italian Ambassador to Kuwait Giuseppe Scognamiglio. During the meeting, KUNA's chief thanked the Ambassador for his continuous cooperation with the agency, stressing that KUNA was eager to play a vital part in enhancing Kuwaiti-Italian media relations. The ambassador, on his part, lauded KUNA's efforts in covering the news, stressing that his country was interested in developing relations with Kuwait on all possible levels. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Shoppers are seen inside the old Mubarakiya Market in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KRCS DELIVERS 5TH BATCH OF RELIEF AID MATERIALS TO YEMEN

KUWAIT: The fifth batch of relief aid materials to the Yemeni city of Abyan was delivered by members of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), an official said yesterday. KRCS Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer said that 4,000 food baskets were distributed to needy families in the Yemeni province of Abyan, in collaboration with local organizations. He added that (KRCS) is exerting huge efforts to ease the suffering of Yemenis living in worsening conditions due to the ongoing war, pointing out that despite dangers and difficulties, KRCS ensured delivery of such aid to the needy. He also

underscored the significant efforts exerted by GCC Secretariat General to organize the humanitarian assistance, besides uniting positions towards the relief supplies, offered especially to Yemen. Sayer noted that Kuwait's relief efforts around the globe have been testimonies to His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah' wish to place humanitarian assistance at the heart of his country's foreign policy in support of those in need. He concluded by saying that the aid distribution comes at the guidelines issued by the Kuwaiti leadership since the start of the Yemeni crisis. — KUNA

In my view

EDUCATION VITAL FOR SYRIAN CHILDREN

By Labeed Abdal



local@kuwaittimes.net

UNICEF's call to raise \$2.8 billion to help 43 million children suffering because of human crises worldwide and allocating the largest portion of this aid for education is a must in the 21st century that has been afflicted by many threats, wars and human disasters, which makes these funds a necessity to protect entire populations in many countries worldwide.

Allocating one quarter of these donations for child education in afflicted areas, and the fact the total number of children of school age who live in those areas went from 4.9 million at the beginning of last year to 8.7 million by the beginning of this year is something of great significance, as five million Syrian children already lack schooling opportunities inside and outside Syria.

This cause is important, especially since the world's attention is now diverted from the Syrians' and other people's true needs, as the world is too busy with wars going on in various locations. Focusing on education is vital to save those children's lives because it gives them the opportunity to receive education, avoid war threats, ensure the continuity of their learning and gives them hope for a better future. What we protect and enhance today in the little minds of those children will surely be tomorrow's harvest!

Today's call is three times what the UNICEF called for three years ago when it decided that one out of each nine children lives in a war-stricken area worldwide, which calls the parties fighting to reconsider and seek other means to settle their conflicts and disputes other than war, destruction and bloodshed.

On the one hand, major countries have to be up to their responsibilities for not asking various countries not to use WMDs or suchlike because by such demands, they, directly or indirectly, play an effective role in keeping such wars going on.

West-West, West-Orient, Orient-West and Orient-Orient competitions in this regard has surely paralyzed the entire world including all countries following any of the major players - countries that no longer know who holds the effective cards in a very vague game and in view of unclear roadmaps. Disagreement, disputes and envy may have also reached major players' administrations and each is striving to qualify for the final match.

We are in dire international need to dedicate all efforts to international peace and security without delaying any of the efforts exerted by international organizations to activate and revive many international treaties and conventions including an international judiciary system that would reduce all sorts of international conflicts to give all people everywhere real chances to live in true peace.

UN OFFICIAL LAUDS KUWAITI LEADING HUMANITARIAN WORK

GENEVA: Kuwait's humanitarian strategy is distinguished and well-known on the global and regional levels, Director for the Middle East and North Africa Bureau and Regional Refugee Coordinator for Syria, at United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Amin Awad said yesterday. He added, in remarks to KUNA before the launch of London Donors' Conference on Syria, that the UN commission highly appreciated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-

Jaber Al-Sabah humanitarian strategies and policies which played a key role in helping the Syrian people. His Highness the Amir launched new humanitarian concept not only in his contributions to the Syria refugees, but also by setting as model example to be followed by regional and international humanitarian organizations, he said. This Kuwaiti approach offered great help to the Syrian refugees and encouraged other nations to follow its steps, he added. He expressed hope that other Syria's donor's coun-

tries would offer the same care Kuwait gives to the Syrian dilemma, he added.

The UNHCR encouraged financing projects which would offer job opportunities to the Syrian refugees, which will lead them to financial self-sufficiency. Continuing this strategic partnership between Kuwait and UNHCR is one of the priorities that would contribute in alleviating the sufferings of the Syrian people. It would also shed light on their crisis international wise, he said. — KUNA



Amin Awad



VIVA SPONSORS OPEN DAY FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced its sponsorship for the open day organized by Al-Nibras Model School for special needs, at the ministry of interior's camp on sixth ring road.

Corporate Communications' team at VIVA distributed gifts and prizes for more than 350 participants. On this occasion, Ayman Al-Mutairi, Senior Corporate Communications Manager at VIVA said: "Our corporate social responsibility toward the different segments in the society is priority.

We strive at VIVA to support all the human activities inspired by the 'Humanitarian Leader' HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-

Jaber Al-Sabah." VIVA is keen to continue its ongoing socially responsible role in the community by spreading the spirit of goodness amongst Kuwaiti society.

We believe at VIVA in taking a holistic approach to our CSR activities, one that engages our employees, and creates goodwill in our communities with a focus on helping to grow and develop the State of Kuwait. VIVA's Corporate Social Responsibility 'CSR' activities can be reviewed on the company's website at <https://www.viva.com.kw/csr>. This offers a description of each CSR initiative that VIVA has supported, or taken on since its inception.



KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) decorated its head office building with lights, Kuwait's flag and pictures chosen from its annual calendar, and that in celebration of Kuwait's National Holidays.

KUWAIT EYES INVESTMENTS IN FRANCE: AMBASSADOR

PARIS: France is an important destination for Kuwaiti investments abroad both on the government and private sector levels, Kuwait Ambassador to France Sammy Al-Suleiman said yesterday. He stressed the importance of boosting bilateral ties between both nations in the economic and commercial fields.

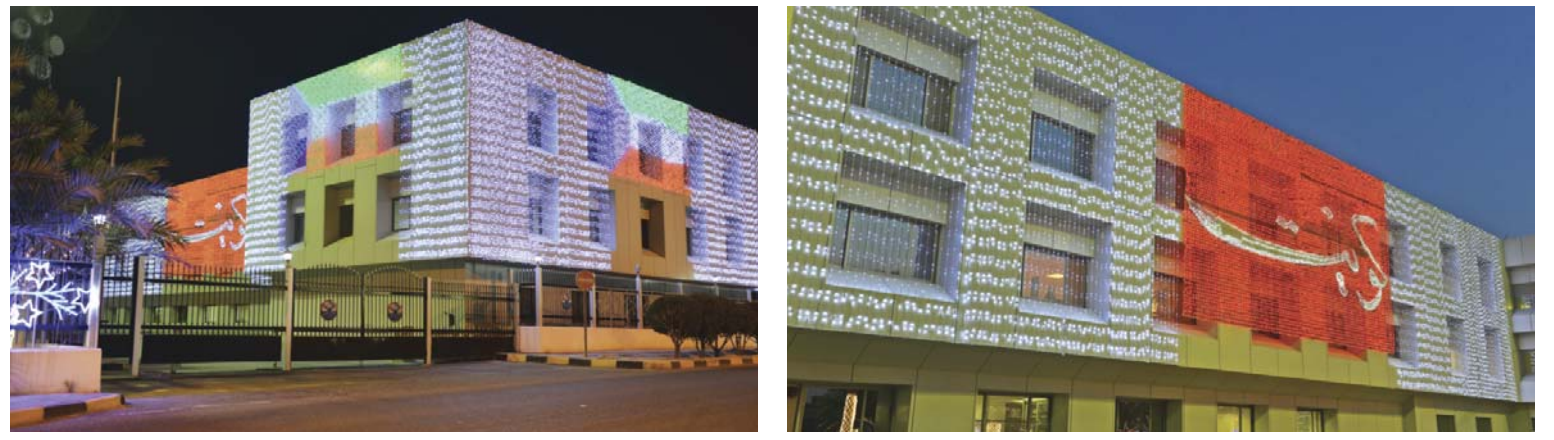
This came in remarks during the Ambassador's meeting with Chairman of the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIP) Jean-Paul Vermes. The Ambassador said that the commercial exchange was at around \$1 billion in 2014, stressing that both nations were eager to boost the number.

Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti side is studying a number of new investment projects in France, the diplomat said.

Suleiman offered an official invitation for French companies to take part in the First Investment Forum to be organized in Kuwait on March 8-9, 2016. — KUNA



PARIS: Kuwait Ambassador to France Sammy Al-Suleiman (right) is pictured with Chairman of Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIP) Jean-Paul Vermes. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Ahmadi Governorate kicks off celebrations of this year's National Holidays with a two-day ceremony that starts today afternoon. Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah lauded the national holidays' celebrations committee at the governorate for their two-month preparations for several activities which are set to take place during the event.

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Crime

Report

CROCODILE FOUND IN STABLE IN KABD FARM

KUWAIT: Weapons detectives were surprised while carrying out raids in Kabd to find a crocodile inside a stable, prompting them to call the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR). The source said specialists tranquilized the reptile and moved it to the zoo. PAAAFR said it is not legal to raise and keep these types of reptiles according to international treaties ratified by Kuwait.

Maid threatens sponsor

An Asian expat was taken to Sabah Al-Salem police station charged with threatening to kill her sponsor. The expat's arrest was made following a call for help from a citizen who said that her maid went hysterical and threatened to kill her. She locked the door with her three children. The maid said she did not make any threat, but attempted to talk with her in regards to housework she was asked to do.

Gun stolen

A Kuwait National Guard officer told police that an unknown person stole his 12mm shotgun from his Salam area house. A case was filed and investigations are ongoing. Meanwhile, a citizen from Qurain area told Reqqa police that while he was in the coop, a person stole his watch and thinks the thief used magic with him, because he did not feel anything, and had looked at the time seconds before he entered the coop.

Drunk women beaten

A citizen told police that four women had a verbal exchange with a 'muscular man', who then beat them. The four women were found to be drunk.

Woman swindled

Ethiopian told Salmiya police that a media personality swindled her, and gave police his details, as they are investigating.

Fireman jailed

The criminal court ordered a fireman jailed for reportedly showing up at a court hearing while being under the influence of drugs. The suspect had arrived to the hearing in uniform and was acting strange. He was reported to utter incomprehensible words as foul odor was coming out of his mouth. He was using his phone while standing in front of the judge. —Al-Rai, Al-Anbaa

NEW ASPHALT MIX TO ADDRESS 'FLYING PEBBLES'

KUWAIT: Ministry of Public Works Undersecretary Awatif Al-Ghunaim said a trial surface was laid on Jassim Al-Kharafi Road (Sixth Ring Road) with a new asphalt mix that was designed by a British laboratory to solve the problem of 'flying pebbles'. She said this mix will be added to all future tenders for road maintenance. She said that the trial road that was paved is located from station 10 to station 9 towards the east on Jassim Al-Kharafi road that extends to Messila, adding that the mix was spread in order to expose it to traffic loads and the atmosphere to check their effects on it. —Al-Anbaa

NO PRESCHOOL LICENSE WITHOUT EDUCATION DEGREE

KUWAIT: Education and Higher Education Minister Dr Bader Al-Essa said from now on a basic requirement for a nursery or preschool license will be teaching qualifications and that anyone applying for a license must be a teacher. He said a committee was formed and chaired by Ministry Undersecretary Dr Haitham Al-Athari to study the issue and present a plan to create a law governing nurseries and preschools in Kuwait.



Education Minister Dr Bader Al-Essa

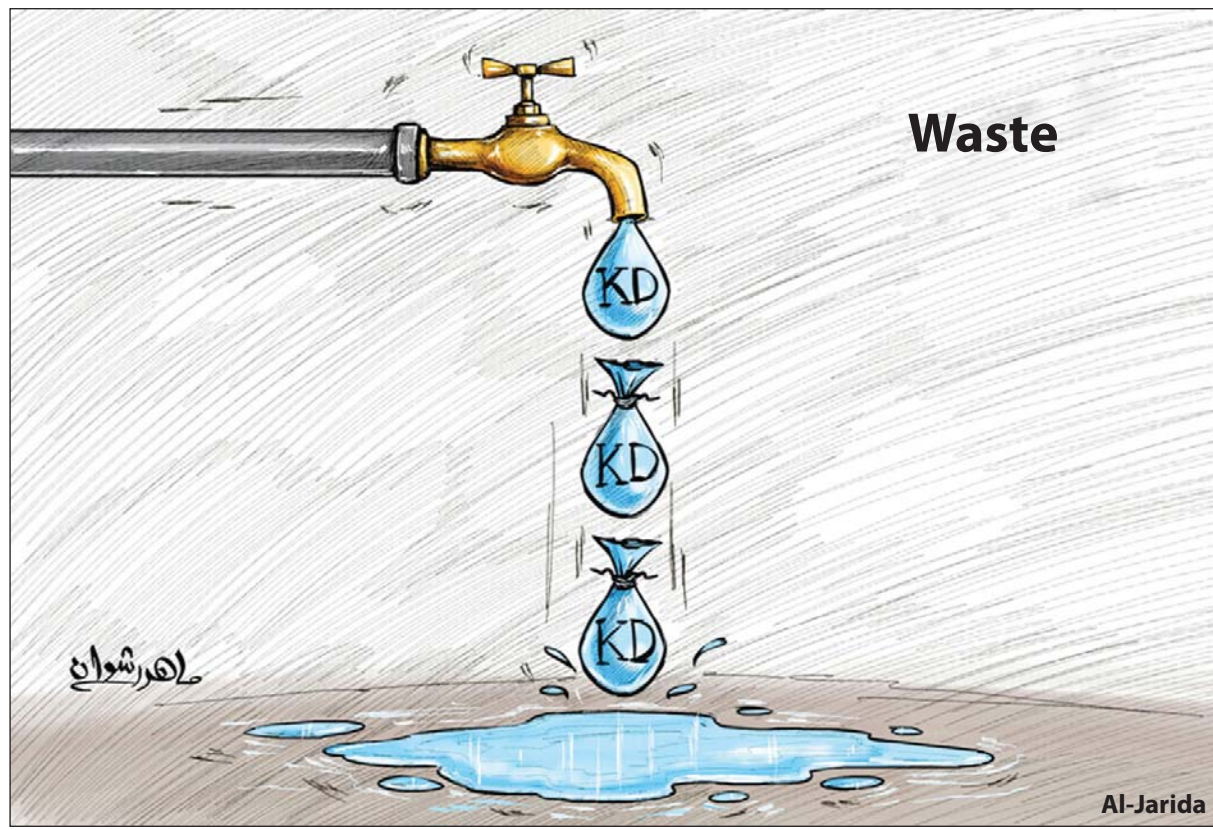
"We will not allow the sale of a private nursery license after the moving of nurseries from Social Affairs to Education," he noted. There has been an explosion of private nurseries, preschools and daycares in Kuwait in the last few years with dozens of new ones opening.

Kuwait's nurseries, which typically take children from around six months to five years old, have previously fallen under the authority of the Social Affairs Ministry but will now be moved to Education Ministry oversight, though some owners are opposed to this plan. In the 2013/2014 school year, a reported 107 nurseries, preschools and daycares accepted nearly 40,000 children and the sector continues to see positive growth.

In another Education Ministry announcement, the timings of workers and students of all stages has been set for the next school year. Workers will report to work on Sept 18, kindergarten and 1st elementary on Sept 21, the rest of the elementary Sept 22, intermediate and secondary on Sept 25. —Al-Anbaa

COMPANIES DRAFT LAW READY

KUWAIT: Finance Ministry's Undersecretary Khalifa Hamada said the ministry has completed the first draft of the proposed companies law and is going through its final review. "We are working with the concerned authorities to complete this step so that we can get an integrated law on company tax that fulfills the sought goals," he said. When asked about the expected time to send the proposal to the National Assembly, which is preoccupied with subsidy rationalization proposals and finding new alternatives to increase nonoil revenues, he said "The proposal will soon be sent to the Cabinet, then the National Assembly." —Al-Anbaa



Waste

Al-Jarida



Al-Anbaa

TO PREVENT THE 5 US GULF STATES' SECESSION

By Sami Al-Nisf

Once drove from the US East Coast to the West Coast through northern states and on the way back to the East Coast, I drove through southern states. By the end of the trip, I realized the huge cultural and economic difference between the rich industrial north of America versus the poor south, which outside major cities, looks more like Third World countries where poverty and reliance on natural resources like oil, cotton and livestock herding prevails. The North has more than once tried dragging the South into the industrial age and wealth by building various arms factories there, which limitedly benefited the South that had greatly benefited from the Arab oil boycott after the 1973 war and the hike in oil prices.

Northern strategic thinking and think-tanks in Washington still fear Southern states' secession (by the way, the word state means a country, not a province). Four days after electing the black president Barack Obama in 2012, representatives of 15 American states, mainly Southern ones, demanded secession and independence from the US to establish their own 'States', but they failed to get enough votes to pass the project. Thus, the American South remains conservative and its inhabitants, politicians and militias have strong animosity to Washington's values and policies, which is unlike the liberal North.

Therefore, the Republican presidential candidate Ted Cruz, who hails from Texas, accused Republican candidate Donald Trump, who comes from New York, that he 'represents New York's values' of liberalism which oppose the Republican Party's conservative tendencies. This made the Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton take Trump's side in defending the culture and values of the people of New York, whom she had represented for years in Congress.

The fear from the South's secession might be one of the hidden reasons behind the current international fall of oil prices, because with the rise of oil and gas prices, the collective budgets of the five Southern 'states' overlooking the Gulf of Mexico - Florida, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and Texas - exceeded \$2.3 trillion, which meant that if separated and formed into a confederation, they would form the seventh largest world economy after the US (that is expected to be re-ranked after secession), China, Japan, Germany, Britain and France. This was the reason behind the sharp fall in oil prices to convince the people in those states, the same way the British convinced the Scots not to carry on with secession plans, that countries and peoples do not live by oil alone. I wish we can learn from this simple lesson!

The best two movies Hollywood produced about the major differences in the North and the South cultures are 'Gone With The Wind' in 1939' and 'Giants' in 1956, that features how a Southern young man, Rock Hudson, gets married to a girl from the North, Elizabeth Taylor, who moves to live with him in the South where a rebellious young man, James Dean, demonstrates how racist the Southern people were towards anyone with Mexican origins before he strikes oil in his land. That film was the last film of Dean before he was killed.

President George Bush Jr was the first American Southern Republican president in the history of a country that is used to electing Southern Democrats like Johnson, Carter and Clinton (the husband because his wife is from the North and was born in Chicago).

—Translated by Kuwait Times

KPC LEADERS HAND OVER CARS TO CUT DOWN EXPENSES

KUWAIT: Three Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) officials recently handed over vehicles that had been allocated for them by KPC, with the aim of cutting down expenses, said informed sources. These include Nizr Al-Adsani, KPC CEO, Hashim Hashim, the managing director of Al-Zour refinery integrated petrochemicals complex, Bader Al-Sharad, the managing director for training and administrative affairs. The sources noted that KPC had made several decisions to cut down expenses including, withdrawing seniors' vehicles and paying those seniors a KD 250 monthly allowance instead.

The sources explained that this measure would be

used in KPC, Kuwait Petroleum International and Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company, while senior officials in other subsidiaries would keep their vehicles due to their jobs' nature and having to move to geographically remote areas.

Further, the sources said that daily travel allowances would be reduced to KD 300 for the minister, KD 220 for senior officials and KD 180 for other employees including managers. In addition, first class travel will be restricted to the minister, CEOs and managing directors, whereas deputy directors, deputy CEOs, managers and heads of teams will travel on business class and other employees on economy class. —Al-Rai



KUWAIT: Kuwait National Guard recently conducted the opening ceremony for the ground forces' basic course, featuring participation of officers from Kuwait's Army and the Kingdom of Bahrain.



Al-Anbaa

THE GOLDEN CHEQUE

By Qais Al-Usta

Kuwait Airways has a special importance for every Kuwaiti citizen, even expatriates living on this good land, as it is the one that sees us off if we decide to travel, and receives us when we return to our homeland. It is a moving Kuwaiti territory that carries the flag of my country, and this alone is enough for it to remain as one of the most important establishments in the country.

Today, I am not going to talk about lands in Ardiya that were sold below the market price, and I will not talk about an aircraft deal that cost us more than KD 3 billion without any feasibility study, because we have become bored and it is clear that the "youth" path is greener. The youth in the National Assembly believe that they reformed the affairs of the people and country and "got everything right", rediscovered gunpowder and conquered Acre and Jaffa, when they created much noise talking about KD 10 million to boost the applied education rewards, forgetting or ignoring the billions that go somewhere else, but it seems that the issue is bigger than them, as usual.

Today we will talk about 490 employees who decided to remain at KAC after others decided to accept the golden cheque, voluntarily retired and left the company, or went to other establishments. Those who remained lost all the advantages and training plans, and did not know their status following the government's plan to privatize the company, and despite this they remained. As for those who went for safety and received the golden cheque, half of them returned, and the question is, how did they return, although they received their dues? Why did the KAC administration accept them back, bearing in mind that the Audit Bureau objected towards this major violation of the law? Who will protect the rights of those 490 employees who remained, in front of the irrelevance of the "Qamshouh" group towards their rights?

We have an administration whose only concern is to remain and stay in charge of the aviation sector, in the first row, in the first circle, and a government that does not know where to start and what to do, and an Assembly that we all know the limits of its ability.

May Allah help the youth of KAC, and I pray to Almighty Allah to hasten your relief, and give you another administration that listens to your demands, because all are preoccupied with "rich" areas that bring abundant returns.

Was the message delivered?! I hope so.

—Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Anbaa

TRUFFLE GROWING CONDITIONS

By Dr Saleh Al-Ojairi

There are specific conditions necessary for truffle to grow in soil, which are:

1. Rainfall during the locally known 'Wassem' season that falls between Oct 16 and Dec 5, though bedouins have always said that "ten days during the Merbeaniya (Forty Days) season would grow as much as the harvest grown during Wassem.
 2. To have continued rainfall, even with intervals.
 3. Truffles do not grow by seeds. They are rather the product of a fungal soil in lands that have not been trodden beneath automobile tires or manipulated by mankind.
 4. To have a relatively warm weather for a while.
 5. A year rich in truffles only comes every other year.
- So, the bottom line here is that if you, people, want to have enough truffles, you better dump gasoline into the soil so that you do not have enough to drive into the desert easily and leave unspoiled lands to rest and avoid your manipulations. Oh, people of Kuwait. You are the descendants of glorious forefathers but you are wearing yourselves out climbing too many ladders. You cannot have both truffles and fruits. So you have to decide which you want more: Fruits out of their normal seasons or truffles in due season?

—Translated by Kuwait Times



UN scrambling to sustain Syria talks

JAPAN ON RED ALERT OVER NORTH KOREAN ROCKET LAUNCH

GEORGIA EXECUTES OLDEST DEATH ROW INMATE

INMATE WAS 72 YEARS OLD; 5TH EXECUTION THIS YEAR IN US

ATLANTA: A 72-year-old man convicted of murdering a convenience store manager in a 1979 robbery in Atlanta's suburbs was executed in Georgia early yesterday, corrections officials said. Brandon Astor Jones, the oldest inmate on the state's death row, died by lethal injection at 12:46 am at Georgia Diagnostic and Classification Prison in Jackson. He accepted a final prayer and recorded a final statement, the Georgia Department of Corrections said in a statement. Jones' death was delayed nearly six hours following a flurry of appeals by his attorneys. The US Supreme Court late on Tuesday denied Jones' request for a stay of execution.

His execution was the fifth this year in the United States, and the first of two scheduled this month in Georgia, according to the Death Penalty Information Center, which monitors capital punishment nationwide. Texas, Alabama and Florida executed inmates last month, the center said. The Georgia Supreme Court and the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles rejected his petition to commute his sentence to life without parole. Jones was the second man executed in the shooting death of Roger Tackett, 35, inside a convenience store in June 1979, according to court testimony.

Jones was arrested in the store, along with co-defendant Van Roosevelt Solomon, by a police officer who heard four gunshots, according to a Georgia Supreme Court case synopsis. Jones later told another officer, "There is a man in the back - hurt bad," court records said. Police found a badly wounded Tackett in a locked storeroom. Solomon, also convicted of murder, was executed in 1985. Jones had spent decades appealing against his death sentence. A federal district court overturned his death sentence in 1989 because a trial judge had allowed a Bible in the jury deliberation room, finding it could

have improperly influenced jurors to base their decision on scripture instead of the law.

Another jury again sentenced Jones to death in 1997. Jones had continued to appeal the verdict, saying his trial lawyers failed to introduce evidence of his history of mental illness and childhood sexual abuse. Jones, who declined to request a last meal, was to be offered instead the standard prison menu of chicken and rice, rutabagas, seasoned turnip greens, dry white beans, cornbread, bread pudding and fruit punch, according to the Georgia Department of Corrections. The execution came about two weeks before the planned execution of convicted murderer Travis Clinton Hittson, set for Feb 17.

Florida calls off execution

In another development, authorities in Florida suspended Tuesday the upcoming execution of a death row inmate, after the US Supreme Court found problems with how the state sentences people to death. The southeastern US state's high court suspended until further notice the lethal injection of Cary Michael Lambrix, scheduled for February 11, it said in an order.

It was the first such move by court officials since the US Supreme Court last month declared Florida's capital punishment system unconstitutional since the state was not guaranteeing the people's right to an impartial trial on whether the death penalty is imposed. Unlike other US states, Florida state law allowed a jury to recommend execution, or not, but it left the deciding authority with the judge. Lambrix, 55, was convicted of the 1984 murders of a man and a woman. He has always maintained his innocence. His lawyers sought the stay of execution as Lambrix marked more than three decades on death row. — Agencies



JACKSON: A small group of protesters against the death penalty gather outside of the Georgia Diagnostic and Classification State Prison in Jackson, Ga. (Inset) Photo shows death row inmate Brandon Astor Jones. The US state of Georgia executed its oldest death row inmate yesterday, just days before his 73rd birthday, in a move critics denounced as emblematic of capital punishment's excesses. — AP

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AL-MOGHRAGA: Palestinian members of the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of the Hamas movement carry the body of fellow militant Ahmed Al-Zahar during his funeral in the village of Al-Moghraga near the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. —AFP

GAZA TUNNEL COLLAPSE KILLS HAMAS MILITANTS

3 PALESTINIANS SHOT DEAD AFTER CARRYING OUT ATTACK

GAZA: The collapse of a tunnel in the Gaza Strip has killed two militants from Hamas's armed wing, officials said yesterday, as concern grows in Israel over the rebuilding of tunnels that can be used for attacks. The collapse on Tuesday night was the second such incident since last week. A tunnel collapse on January 26 killed seven militants from Hamas, the Islamist movement that rules the Gaza Strip.

Hamas's armed wing, the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, said a local commander was among the two members killed in Tuesday's collapse in the area of the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. Ismail Haniya, Hamas's chief in Gaza, has vowed to continue building tunnels that have in the past been used to stage attacks against Israel and store weapons. Israel destroyed a large number of tunnels in the 2014 Gaza war, the third conflict

to hit the Palestinian enclave since 2008. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has warned that "if we are attacked from tunnels from the Gaza Strip, we will take very strong action against Hamas."

Shooting and stabbing

In another development, three Palestinian assailants were shot dead yesterday while carrying out a shooting and stabbing attack that wounded two Israeli paramilitary policewomen at an entrance to Jerusalem's walled Old City, Israeli police said. It was the latest in a spate of stabbings, shootings and car-rammings by Palestinians that has killed 26 Israelis and a US citizen since October. Israeli forces have killed at least 155 Palestinians, 101 of them assailants according to authorities. Most of the others have died in violent protests.

A police spokeswoman said the Palestinians launched the attack at the Damascus Gate, a busy plaza in East Jerusalem, after being stopped by police for an identity check. All of the three attackers were carrying concealed weapons and at least one of them opened fire with an automatic rifle, critically wounding one of the policewomen before they were shot dead by Israeli security forces, the spokeswoman said. The other policewoman was stabbed and wounded, and two pipe bombs were found at the scene, the police spokeswoman said. The surge in attacks has been partly fuelled by Palestinian frustration over the collapse of US-sponsored peace talks in 2014, the growth of Jewish settlements on occupied land they seek for a future state, and Islamist calls for the destruction of Israel. —Agencies

IN SYRIA, SIEGES BY ALL SIDES CAUSE SUFFERING

BEIRUT: In nearly five years of conflict in Syria, sieges have become a key weapon of war employed primarily by the regime, but also rebel forces and the Islamic State group. Here are some key questions and answers about sieges in Syria:

How many under siege?

The United Nations said last month that an estimated 486,700 people in Syria were living under siege, more than half of them in areas besieged by the regime. They are among 4.6 million people in so-called "hard-to-reach" areas and locations, subject to restrictions that severely limit their access to services and humanitarian assistance, the UN said.

What are key areas under siege?

GOVERNMENT SIEGE: The areas under government siege are mostly clustered around the capital Damascus, with regime forces surrounding nearby towns that are controlled by rebels. Some of the worst affected include Douma, Arbin and Zamalka in Eastern Ghouta, and Moadimayat Al-Sham and Daraya in Western Ghouta. Further afield in Damascus province are Zabadani and Madaya, which grabbed international attention recently after reports of starvation there. Activists accuse the government of using the sieges to force rebels to lay down arms, and in some cases the sieges have been lifted or temporarily eased during truces. In Moadimayat al-Sham, for example, a siege that began in 2013 was eased the following year after a truce. But the area was reclassified by the UN as besieged in January 2016 after the government once again tightened restrictions, causing food shortages.

REBEL SIEGE: Rebels have also employed siege tactics, most infamously against the Shiite villages of Nubol and Zahraa in

Aleppo province, as well as Fuaa and Kafraya in Idlib. They have sought to tie the fate of Fuaa and Kafraya to that of Zabadani and Madaya, insisting any aid to the government-held villages be matched with aid to the rebel-held towns. Islamist rebels including Al-Qaeda affiliate Al-Nusra Front have also laid siege since 2014 to the Kurdish town of Afrin in Aleppo province, having been unable to capture it from Kurdish forces.

Islamic State group siege

The jihadist group has laid siege since January 2015 to the eastern city of Deir Ezzor, where more than 200,000 people live. The group controls most of the area in the surrounding province, but the government has clung to parts of the provincial capital.

Unlike in rebel areas under government siege, the regime has been able to deliver some aid to areas it controls like Deir Ezzor and Fuaa and Kafraya by airdropping supplies. Russia has also flown in aid for Deir Ezzor, landing supplies at the adjacent military base still held by the regime.

Where has aid been delivered?

Aid has been delivered sporadically to many of the areas under siege, but humanitarian groups say such piecemeal access is insufficient. Aid groups entered Madaya, Fuaa and Kafraya several times in January, but the Doctors Without Borders charity said last week that 16 more people had died in Madaya despite the additional assistance. And organizing such deliveries is a sensitive and complicated process, with con-

voys often cancelled at the last minute when permissions are withdrawn or fighting flares. According to the UN, almost 75 percent of its requests to the government to deliver aid went unanswered.

What is being said about sieges?

The UN Security Council has called several times for unfettered humanitarian access throughout Syria and the lifting of all sieges, most recently in its December 2015 resolution 2254. Syria's main opposition umbrella group is demanding the resolution be implemented before it engages in peace talks being convened by the UN in Geneva. "We need to see the lifting of sieges," a spokesman for the group said on Tuesday. —AFP



DIYARBAKIR: Smoke rises over the district of Sur in Diyarbakir. Four Turkish soldiers were killed in clashes with Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) militants in Diyarbakir in southeast Turkey, as a controversial curfew order was expanded to new areas in the Kurdish-dominated city. —AFP

KURD LEADER: TIME HAS COME FOR STATEHOOD REFERENDUM

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Kurdish leader Massud Barzani has declared that the "time has come" for the country's Kurds to hold a referendum on statehood, a move likely to raise tensions with Baghdad. But even if the various political challenges to independence are resolved, the major economic problems the region faces due to low oil prices are another bar to Kurdish independence. "The time has come and the conditions are now suitable for the people to make a decision through a referendum on their future," Barzani said in a statement released yesterday.

"This referendum would not necessarily lead to (an) immediate declaration of statehood, but rather to know the will and opinion of the people of Kurdistan about their future," said Barzani, who has remained in power despite the expiration of his term as president. Barzani, who has made similar calls in the past, did not specify when the vote would take place. Iraq's Kurds are a key US partner in the war against the Islamic State group and have been some of the most effective forces fighting the jihadists.

But both the referendum on independence—which Iraq's federal government opposes—and the issue of which areas it covers will raise tensions between the autonomous Kurdish region and Baghdad, potentially complicating anti-IS efforts. The region officially includes three provinces, but Kurdish forces now hold parts of four more over which the federal government wants to maintain control.

Economic challenges

Federal forces fled positions in various northern areas in the summer of 2014 when facing an offensive by IS, allowing Kurdish forces to gain or solidify control over areas claimed by both them and Baghdad. Oil-rich Kirkuk province, which is mostly held by Kurdish peshmerga forces, will be a particular point of contention due to the wealth of natural resources there. Turkey's assent would also be essential for moves toward Kurdish statehood to proceed, as Ankara is a key economic partner of Iraqi Kurdistan, both in terms of oil exports and other trade and investments. Barzani has a close relationship with the Turkish government, but Ankara is also battling the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) rebel group, and having a Kurdish state on its southern border, or even moving toward one, could increase calls for similar action within its territory.

Economic challenges are also a major obstacle to Kurdish independence. Iraq's Kurdistan has been independently exporting oil via Turkey from four northern provinces since a deal between it and Baghdad on oil and revenue sharing collapsed last year. Both Baghdad and Kurdistan are facing a financial crisis due to plunging oil prices, on which they rely for the vast majority of government funds. But the Kurds do not have the same access to the loans and bond markets that Baghdad can turn to in order to stay financially afloat. Salaries for some Kurdish government employees are months in arrears, and some have gone on strike to protest unpaid wages. —AFP



People wait in front of police barricade near the Sur district of Diyarbakir yesterday. Vowing to flush out the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) from Turkey's urban centers, the authorities have in recent weeks enforced curfews in three locations in the southeast to back up military operations that activists say have killed dozens of civilians. —AFP

EGYPT'S COURT OVERTURNS DEATH SENTENCES FOR 149 PRO-ISLAMISTS

CAIRO: An Egyptian Appeals Court overturned yesterday death sentences for 149 pro-Islamists accused of killing policemen in a mob attack on their station, a judicial source said. The court ordered a retrial for the defendants over the attack, which killed 13 policemen near Cairo on August 14, 2013, the day police shot dead hundreds of Islamist demonstrators in the capital. The initial ruling in February 2015 came amid a series of death sentences in mass trials that were criticized internationally, as the government cracked down on supporters of ousted Islamist president Mohamed Morsi. The court had also sentenced 37 people to death in absentia, but they would have to hand themselves in for a retrial.

The grounds for the appeals court ruling were not immediately available, but the court has overturned hundreds of death sentences over the past year, to the relief of rights advocates and frustration of some in the government who have urged fast track executions. Seven people have been executed for political violence since Morsi's ouster, including six who were convicted of belonging to an Islamist militant group.

The military overthrow of Morsi, the country's first freely elected president, ushered in the worst domestic bloodshed in the country's modern history. Morsi ruled for only a year, deeply dividing the country, and his removal was met with escalating protests by Islamists that police dispersed with live ammunition.

On August 14, 2013, less than two months after his overthrow, police broke up two protest camps in Cairo, killing about 700 protesters. Morsi's supporters around the country attacked police stations, killing dozens of officers, and torched the churches of Coptic Christians. Morsi himself is facing several trials and has already been sentenced to death in one case. Several leaders of his Islamist Muslim Brotherhood movement, including its chief Mohamed Badie, have been sentenced to either death or lengthy jail terms. The movement has been blacklisted as a "terrorist organization" and its assets confiscated. The police crackdown that initially targeted Morsi supporters was later widened to include secularist and leftist leaders and activists. —AFP

LEBANON ARMY KILLS 6, ARRESTS 16 MILITANTS

BEIRUT: Lebanon's army killed six gunmen and arrested 16 suspected militants, including a commander from the Islamic State group, in a raid in the town of Aarsal near the border with Syria yesterday, it said. An army statement said soldiers carried out a special operation against what it called a terrorist cell that was planning to attack army posts and kidnap people in Aarsal. Another army unit stormed an IS-run field hospital in the same area and detained 16 militants, it said, including a man named Ahmad Noun who was described as a "dangerous terrorist".

A security source said earlier that the army had arrested Abu Bakr Al-Raqqawi, a local commander of the Islamic State group, and three high profile insurgents. It was not immediately clear if Raqqawi was Noun's nom de guerre. The source said the army had originally detained 27 people but

has released 11 who were not related to the cell. Nusra Front and Islamic State fighters have staged regular incursions into Aarsal from the barren hills just outside the town.

They overran the town briefly in 2014 before withdrawing to the hills after clashes with the army. But security sources say that Nusra Front and Islamic State groups continue to have a strong presence in the town, where thousands of Syrian refugees live in dire conditions. They say sometimes the insurgents descend into the town at night to threaten or kill those who oppose them. Nusra Front freed 16 Lebanese soldiers and policemen in December in exchange for the release of jailed Islamists. It had captured the soldiers during the Aarsal incursion in 2014. Islamic State is believed to still be holding nine soldiers it captured. —Reuters

CLINTON'S WHITE HOUSE DREAM LIVES DESPITE BERNIE SURGE

NEW YORK: It may be the narrowest victory in Iowa history, but Hillary Clinton's win over Bernie Sanders puts her on course to clinch the Democratic nomination even if it's more of an uphill battle than she once hoped. The former secretary of state took 49.8 percent of the vote compared to 49.6 percent for Sanders, allowing her to breathe "a big sigh of relief" in the Midwest heartland that ditched her for Barack Obama eight years ago.

"Make no mistake we are in a fight to the finish," she told voters in New Hampshire as the Republican field edged into a three-horse race between evangelical Ted Cruz, billionaire Donald Trump and telegenic Marco Rubio. Sanders, who just months ago posed no threat as a fringe firebrand, declared a moral victory for his brand of progressive politics, brimming with confidence as polls give him a double-digit lead for next week's primary in New Hampshire. "For Clinton, it was clearly a case of surviving and advancing," said Dante Scala, associate professor of political science at the University of New Hampshire, which hosts the next Democratic debate on Thursday. "That narrow a win-it's tough to take. I'm sure it's a sigh of relief... because I think a loss would have gone a long way to changing the conventional wisdom about Sanders's ability to win the nomination." The 74-year-old senator from Vermont

has inspired a passionate following among young voters with his Scandinavian-inspired anti-Wall Street, poverty busting, democratic socialist agenda.

Clinton loses youth vote

His surge of support may have taken the establishment by surprise, but in Iowa he failed to match what Barack Obama achieved in 2008, when he shocked Clinton by snatching 37.6 percent of the vote to her 29.5 percent. "He's clearly someone to contend with, however I don't think he managed, though he came awfully close, to shock the national political media with the results and it was in a state where Clinton did lose eight years ago," said Scala. Neither would a defeat in New Hampshire ruffle too many Clinton feathers in a predominantly white state neighboring Sanders's home base of Vermont. "They never voted against anybody from next door except when an incumbent president asked them to do something else," Clinton's husband, former president Bill noted drily at the start of the week.

What is more unsettling, say some, is the support Sanders enjoys among moderate, blue collar Democrats in New Hampshire traditionally expected to vote Clinton. Perhaps most disconcerting for Clinton in Iowa, was Sanders's crushing victory among Democratic voters aged 17 to 29, who gave him 84 percent of

their vote. The 68-year-old Clinton by contrast did best among caucusgoers aged 65 and over, a turnout likely to fuel criticism that her message shaped during two decades on the public stage is not geared toward the future.

Elite, minorities back Clinton

But the more decisive test will come in racially diverse states in the west and south, such as Nevada and South Carolina, where Clinton's support among blacks and Latinos is expected to defeat Sanders on February 20 and 27. "If you look at the national polls thus far, she is pretty consistently and noticeably ahead of Bernie, although the gap is narrower," said Robert Shapiro, political science professor at Columbia University. "If Sanders can do better than expected in those places, he is going to be in for the long haul." Others are more cautious about Sanders's performance in Iowa, arguing that he could have expected a clear victory among a liberal Democratic electorate.

"The fact that she managed to eke out even a narrow victory is testament to her campaign's ability to hone its ground game and that will be a huge advantage moving forward," said Costas Panagopoulos, a professor of political science at Fordham University in New York. Sanders's left-leaning politics also alarms the party elite, who see Clinton as



HAMPTON: Democratic presidential candidate former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaks during a "get out the vote" event at Winnacunnet High School in Hampton, New Hampshire. —AFP

the best prospect of keeping the Republicans out of the White House. "They don't want Sanders as their nominee and so they're willing to give Clinton the benefit of the doubt,"

Scala said. "They're not going to talk down Clinton just because she barely won Iowa. For them they're very happy to say a win, a win, let's move on." —AFP



IOWA: Republican presidential candidate Sen Marco Rubio, R-Fla talks with voters at a caucus site in Clive, Iowa. —AP

RUBIO LEADING THE REPUBLICAN MAINSTREAM LANE AFTER IOWA

DES MOINES: Man of the moment Marco Rubio hit the ground running Tuesday, eager to capitalize on his strong Iowa showing and convince US voters he is the singular Republican who can defeat Hillary Clinton in November. The charismatic senator from Florida did not win Monday night's Iowa caucuses but he definitely exceeded expectations. Arch-conservative senator Ted Cruz came in first, while Rubio finished a strong third, just a percentage point behind Donald Trump. Barely after midnight, Rubio was on the ground in New Hampshire, preparing for a manic one-week sprint to the state's primary on February 9 and declaring himself capable of uniting the fractious Republican Party.

"When I'm our nominee I will bring the party and the conservative movement together. I will unify us so we can win," he told about 700 people packed into the Exeter town hall. Rubio begins what he called "the greatest eight days in American politics" as the undisputed leader among the four more traditional candidates. "He outperformed them 10 to one," Cary Covington, a political science professor at the University of Iowa said of his establishment rivals John Kasich, Jeb Bush and Chris Christie. "That is very important to the Republican Party establishment, (because) they're looking for someone to rally behind."

The establishment largely finds Trump and Cruz objectionable, with concerns that the party will lose the general election if one of the two wins the nomination. "They didn't know who was going to put a challenge to the two, and Rubio is providing an answer," Covington said. Rubio raced out onto the campaign trail early Tuesday, pressing the flesh at an airport diner and making other stops in the small state that holds the political spotlight for the next week. Cruz is also in the Granite State, polling in second place after Trump, according to the RealClearPolitics poll average. But Rubio is only a point or so behind, and Cruz may actually face a tougher road there than his rival.

Cruz won Iowa because of his ability to draw conservative evangelicals, his broad and butter voters, to the caucuses. The first and second states on the primary calendar have dramatically different electorates and "history suggests that momentum doesn't

carry over from Iowa to New Hampshire," said Fergus Cullen, a former Republican state chairman in New Hampshire. If Iowa is among the most evangelical of US states, New Hampshire is the opposite, with a more secular streak, Cullen said.

That provides better odds for those in the crowded establishment lane. With billionaire frontrunner Trump, whose entire brand is all about winning, seen as suffering a setback in Iowa, Rubio has emerged with mainstream momentum. But that leaves him with a figurative target on his back and New Jersey Governor Christie, who has spent week after week campaigning in New Hampshire, was already launching political grenades. In Bedford, he slammed Rubio as "the boy in the bubble" whose handlers keep him to his scripted speech and away from reporters and who "ran away from his own immigration bill when it got too hot."

'Turn America around'

Rubio insisted he remains the best opportunity for Republicans to snatch back the White House, and that embracing Trump's divisiveness or Cruz's extremes will lead to four more years of a Democrat at the helm. "This sense of frustration and anger that you feel is justified, because not only has Barack Obama taken us in the wrong direction, but to be frank, leaders in either party have not done enough to stop it," Rubio said. If he is the nominee, "we're going to beat Hillary Clinton and we're going to turn America around."

Clinton, the Democratic frontrunner facing a fierce challenge from anti-billionaire Bernie Sanders, downplayed the prospects of a Hillary-Marco general election showdown. "I'm not thinking that far ahead," she said. "My time frame is next Tuesday," the New Hampshire primary. Cullen, who last week endorsed Kasich, said that despite Rubio's uplifting oratory and rags-to-political-riches personal story, his is not the most optimistic message. "Rubio has gotten angrier as the campaign progressed," warning about an increasingly dangerous world, he said. "Kasich is betting there's a significant number of American voters who think the world isn't going to hell." Next week it will be New Hampshire voters who determine whether Rubio indeed is carrying major momentum deeper into the race. —AFP

IN IOWA, EVANGELICALS AND LATE DECIDERS SIDED AGAINST TRUMP

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump made a late play for evangelical voters in Iowa's Republican presidential caucus, but he ultimately couldn't wrest the group away from winner Ted Cruz, according to entrance polls taken at the start of Monday's caucuses. The polls, conducted for national media including The Associated Press, also suggest that late-deciding Iowans trended toward Cruz and third-place finisher Marco Rubio, who almost nipped Trump for a surprise second.

And perhaps the most perilous indicator for Trump: He got just one out of 20 votes among caucus attendees who said their top priority was a candidate who shares their

values. The Iowa results don't necessarily point to an eventual nominee: Just twice in 40 years has the GOP caucus winner gone on to the claim the nomination in campaigns with no incumbent Republican president. But the details behind Cruz's victory and Rubio's climb raise new questions about Trump's turnout operation and his ability to turn his consistently front-running poll numbers into actual votes; and that increases pressure on Trump to deliver a victory next Tuesday in New Hampshire or risk damaging his strategy of campaigning as the inevitable nominee at the head of a fractured field. —AP

US AIR FORCE, BOEING BEGIN WORK ON NEW AIR FORCE ONE PLANE EQUIPPED WITH LATEST COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

WASHINGTON: Air force officials and Boeing engineers have started the years-long process of replacing Air Force One, the legendary aircraft that whisks the American president and his entourage around the world. The Pentagon last week approved the first of a series of contracts with Boeing, the US aerospace giant chosen to convert a pair of its 747-8 jumbo jets there are actually two Air Force Ones into state-of-the-art, luxury command centers. That first contract, worth a relatively small \$25.7 million, is for Boeing to look for cost savings and get a better sense of the scope of the massive task at hand, the Air Force said.

Air Force One is an instantly recognizable emblem of American power. The majestic, light blue-and-white liveried jets have "United States of America" emblazoned along their fuselage and a large US flag stamped on the tail fin. But the current double-decker 747-200s, first ordered by Ronald Reagan and put into service in 1990, are getting old. Spare parts are increasingly hard to source and the hulking aircraft require ever longer times being serviced. The Air Force in January last year announced it had chosen Boeing to build the new planes, but equipping the wide-bodied double-deckers for the role is a complex undertaking.

The total cost of buying and converting the two planes is unknown, but the Air Force has requested \$3 billion over five years for the program. The work should be done by 2024. "We are focused on ensuring this program is affordable," said Colonel Amy McCain, the manager of the Presidential Aircraft Recapitalization program. "This contract gets us started on determining how to modify a 747-8 to become the next Air Force One, and finding opportunities for

cost reduction through detailed requirements choices."

\$180,000 an hour

The new planes will doubtless be very different from the current Air Force One incarnation, though the Air Force has yet to say much about its specifications. Air Force One costs about \$180,000 an hour to fly and provides the president with a spacious office, a meeting room and a

continue working wherever he is, even if the United States is under attack. The aircraft also boasts an array of defensive technologies, including electronic countermeasures and anti-missile flares. And it can be refueled while still flying, enabling it to stay airborne for days at a time. The new planes will have super-powerful engines that will let the planes nudge the sound barrier at Mach 0.92, faster

to replace the Marine One helicopters that ferry the president proves a cautionary tale. In 2009, Barack Obama stopped the development and purchase of 28 new choppers ordered in 2005, after costs soared to nearly \$11.5 billion. Among the many design specifications Obama balked at were built-in cooking facilities that could withstand a nuclear strike.

"If the United States of America



MARYLAND: Photo shows Air Force One, a Boeing 747-200, during a snowstorm at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland following the return of US President Barack Obama. Air force officials and Boeing engineers have started the years-long process of replacing Air Force One, the legendary aircraft that whisks the American president and his entourage around the world. —AFP

health center that can even be converted into an operating theater. The planes must also carry the Secret Service agents who protect the president, as well as advisers and journalists that follow him wherever he goes. The kitchens can serve up to 100 people simultaneously.

Air Force One is equipped with the latest in communications technology, allowing the president to

than the current 747-200s. There will not, however, be an escape pod like the one depicted in the 1997 hijacker movie "Air Force One" featuring Harrison Ford as president.

Marine One fiasco

The first contract announcement with Boeing illustrates officials' desire to tread carefully and avoid ballooning costs. A project

is under nuclear attack, the last thing on my mind will be whipping up a snack," Obama later quipped. Obama has also said that the perk he will miss the most when his term expires will be Air Force One. "An amazing plane with an amazing crew, they clear out airspace so you don't have to wait. And you land anytime, you leave anytime," he told Q&A magazine in November. —AFP

TORNADOES IN THE SOUTH; SNOW IN PLAINS AND UPPER MIDWEST

JACKSON: Tornadoes touched down in Mississippi and Alabama as thunderstorms swept through the area Tuesday, while a powerful snowstorm buried parts of Colorado and Nebraska in more than a foot of snow before crawling into the Upper Midwest. Greg Flynn, spokesman for the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, said a confirmed tornado was reported just before 3:30 pm in eastern Newton and Lauderdale counties, largely rural areas in the eastern part of the state. Lauderdale County Sheriff Billy Sollie said the storm damaged homes, toppled trees and knocked out power. In Alabama, the National Weather Service in Birmingham reported a "confirmed large and destructive tornado" on the ground near the city of Aliceville, about 45 miles west of Tuscaloosa. Minor injuries were reported. Later, in west Tennessee, high winds damaged several homes and school buildings in Crockett County. Public schools there were to be closed Wednesday as officials surveyed the damage. Law enforcement officials believed a tornado had passed through, but Weather Service meteorologists in Memphis said late Wednesday they couldn't confirm a touchdown, The Jackson Sun reported. The combination of snow in one part of the country and severe thunderstorms in another isn't unusual when a powerful system moves across the country, said Greg Carbin with the National Weather Service's Storm Prediction Center. "February can feature some exciting dynamics in the atmosphere," Carbin said. "This system we've had our eye on since it was in the Pacific."

The weather system that blew in from California steadily dumped snow on the Denver area Monday and continued overnight. Heavy snowfall and powerful winds on Tuesday knocked out power, prompt schools and businesses to close, and triggered flight cancellations across a swath of states from Colorado to northern Michigan. Parts of major interstates were closed in eastern Nebraska, South Dakota, Colorado and Kansas throughout the day. "No one is really on the road," said Dean Habbab, who manages a truck stop in Iowa, where Democrats and Republicans gathered for caucuses



LAUDERDALE: Debris lies on the ground near First Baptist Church of Collinsville in Lauderdale County, Miss after it was severely damaged during a storm. —AP

Monday night. Habbab said he couldn't see more than a half-mile outside his Sioux City location. After some early cancellations at Des Moines International Airport, flights were running as scheduled by late Tuesday morning, airport officials said. All the candidates made it out, beginning the weeklong trek to the New Hampshire primary. Delivering the mail in such bad weather stinks, said letter carrier Mark Rettele from his post office in Ralston, Nebraska, which he reached after a perilous 30-minute drive from his home seven miles away. "There are parts of my route I won't be able to get to until tomorrow or

possibly the day after," Rettele said. In Nebraska, the brunt of the storm dropped more than a foot of snow on areas to the north and west of Omaha. The wind created drifts several feet deep, and thunderclaps could be heard amid the snowfall. Greg Dial with the National Weather Service's Storm Prediction Center said warm air from the Gulf of Mexico kept the snow at bay farther south and was bringing unusually high winter temperatures to many states. The temperature in Evansville, Indiana, for example, was forecast to peak at 69 degrees on Tuesday. —AP

UN SCRAMBLING TO SUSTAIN SYRIA TALKS

RUSSIA VOWS TO CRUSH 'TERRORISTS'

GENEVA: The United Nations strained to keep faltering Syrian peace talks alive yesterday as Damascus tried to press home gains against rebels and its ally Russia said its air strikes would go on until "terrorists" were defeated. UN envoy Staffan de Mistura announced the formal start on Monday of the first attempt in two years to negotiate an end to a war that has killed 250,000 people, caused a refugee

said. The opposition cancelled a meeting with him on Tuesday afternoon, accusing Russia of putting the process at risk with an "unprecedented" bombing campaign on Aleppo and Homs. Rebels described the ongoing assault north of Aleppo as the most intense yet. One commander said opposition-held areas of the divided city were at risk of being encircled entirely by the government and allied militia, and

ing its campaign. "Russian strikes will not cease until we really defeat terrorist organizations like Jabhat Al-Nusra. And I don't see why these air strikes should be stopped," he said at a news conference in Oman's capital Muscat.

'Unrealistic' ceasefires

Diplomats and opposition members said they were also taken by surprise when de Mistura called

talks are successful," he said, urging Russia and the United States to work with other major powers to bring it about. The opposition tentatively said it would resume meetings with de Mistura yesterday. Its chief coordinator Riad Hijab, who diplomats say is a unifying figure for the fragmented opposition, is expected to arrive in Geneva later in the day. De Mistura called on Monday for the International Syria Support Group, which brings together major powers who back and oppose Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, to tackle the issue of ceasefires immediately. The group is scheduled to meet in Munich on Feb. 11.

Opposition delegate Nazir Hakim said a general ceasefire in the current climate was "unrealistic". "Regarding a ceasefire, we have pragmatic ideas and we talked with the Americans who head the Syria support group and we look forward to discussing these ideas at the meeting on February 11," Lavrov said. The attack north of Aleppo that began in recent days is the first major government offensive there since Russian air strikes began on Sept. 30. The area safeguards a rebel supply route from Turkey into opposition-held parts of the city and stands between government-held parts of western Aleppo and the Shi'ite villages of Nubul and al-Zahraa, which are loyal to Damascus.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the violence in the country, said Russian and Syrian war planes carried out dozens of air strikes against the rebel towns of Hayan and Hreitan in northern Aleppo yesterday. A pro-government source in the area said that the army and its allies were around two km from Nubul and Zahraa, which have been under rebel siege for around three years. Senior Syrian opposition negotiator Mohamed Aloush, representing Jaish al-Islam (Islam Army), a major rebel group, said he was not optimistic given the events on the ground. "Our answer will come in two days," he told Reuters without elaborating. —Reuters

"A ceasefire for me is essential. In fact it is the test that shows the



LONDON: Two children whose school was bombed in Aleppo pose for pictures in a mock destroyed classroom outside the Houses of Parliament during a photocall arranged by charity Save the Children, in London yesterday. The charity aims to raise awareness of the destruction of schools in the war in Syria, which it says has left 2.8 million Syrian children out of school. —AP

crisis in the region and Europe and empowered Islamic State militants. But both opposition and government representatives have since said talks have not in fact begun, and fighting on the ground has raged on without constraint.

De Mistura acknowledged on Tuesday that a collapse of the Geneva talks was always possible. "If there is a failure this time after we tried twice at conferences in Geneva, for Syria there will be no more hope. We must absolutely try to ensure that there is no failure," he

appealed to foreign states that back the rebels to send more weapons.

"How can you accept to enter a negotiations when you have unprecedented military pressure? The Russians and regime want to push the opposition out of Geneva so the opposition bears the responsibility for the failure," said a senior Western diplomat. Despite calls from the US and its allies for Moscow to stop the bombing during the peace process, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said his country had no intention of end-

for immediate efforts to begin ceasefire negotiations despite there being no official talks or goodwill measures from the Syrian government. The opposition has said it will not negotiate unless the government stops bombarding civilian areas, lifts blockades on besieged towns and releases detainees. "The level of confidence between both sides is close to zero," de Mistura told the BBC late on Tuesday.

"A ceasefire for me is essential. In fact it is the test that shows the

BULGARIA SEEKS TO BENEFIT FROM RUSSIA-TURKEY SPAT

SOFIA: In a fine balancing act, Bulgaria seeks to benefit from a spat between Turkey and Russia to revive weakened economic ties with Moscow—its main gas supplier—without offending Ankara, an important ally in the migrant crisis. In a sign of thawing relations, Sofia last week hosted a meeting of the Bulgarian-Russian economic cooperation committee—the first since the 2014 failure of the South Stream pipeline project.

The multi-billion-dollar plan had aimed to deliver Russian gas to Europe via the Black Sea and the Balkans while bypassing conflict-ridden Ukraine. But EU and NATO member Bulgaria, under pressure from both Brussels and Washington, ended up suspending the deal. Reacting to the snub, Russia redrew plans to transport its gas via a new undersea pipeline called TurkStream. But these two were shelved after the downing of a Russian warplane by a Turkish fighter jet on the Syrian border in November.

Bulgaria—the only bloc member to get almost all of its natural gas from Russia via Ukraine—has now seized upon the row to propose yet another deal: building a depot that could channel Russia's gas to Europe via Bulgaria. "We presented Moscow our project for building a new gas distribution centre that we are also coordinating with the European Commission," Bulgarian Energy Minister Temenuzhka Petkova said last Thursday at the end of the bilateral talks. Russia cautiously welcomed the proposal. "What keeps us from being too optimistic at this stage is the fact that we are still awaiting the sorting-out of a series of technical questions with the European Commission," Deputy Justice Minister Sergei Gerasimov said after last week's bilateral meeting.

'Incredible pressure'

In the short term, a rapprochement with Moscow could also help fuel Bulgaria's fledgling tourism industry. Last summer, its Black Sea resorts were hit by a steep drop in Russian visitor numbers as the ruble slid along with oil prices. Gerasimov last week touched on the possibility of "diverting Russian tourists from Turkey" to Bulgaria. Sofia, meanwhile, promised to ease its visa regime for Russians. But Bulgaria is walking on thin ice as it seeks to also maintain good relations with Turkey.

Sofia notably counts on its southeastern neighbor to

prevent an influx of migrants through their shared 275-kilometre (170-mile) porous land border. "Regarding the downing of the Russian plane by Turkey (...) we showed that we are a loyal member of the EU and NATO," Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov said in early January. However, he also admitted to being subjected to "incredible pressure" by both sides. "Now that the two titans have clashed, they want us to say whether we are pro-Russian or pro-Turkish. We are neither pro-Russian nor pro-Turkish. We want to be loyal neighbors," he said.

Putin 'loves us'

During its 45 years of communist rule, Sofia was Moscow's staunchest ally and surveys indicate that many

Bulgarians continue to feel strongly pro-Russian. A poll conducted last March showed that 61 percent of participants maintained a positive attitude towards Russia, even at the height of the Crimean annexation crisis. Experts point out that this "Russophile stereotype" was cultivated long before communism, finding its roots in Russia's liberation of Bulgaria from five centuries of Ottoman domination in 1878. Moscow, meanwhile, has also been sending friendly signals in Bulgaria's direction. Russian President Vladimir Putin included in his 2016 calendar a picture with his Bulgarian shepherd dog Buffy, received as a present from Borisov. "Well, he loves us," said Borisov, grinning, as he commented recently on the photo. —AFP



PERNIK: Dancers, known as 'Kukeri' perform during the International Festival of the Masquerade Games in Pernik near the capital Sofia. The three-day festival, which started on January 29, has participants sporting multi-colored masks, covered with beads, ribbons and woolen tassels while the main dancer, laden with bells to drive away sickness and evil spirits, sways like a wheat spikelet heavy with grain. —AFP

ZUMA TO PAY BACK MONEY FOR HOME UPGRADE

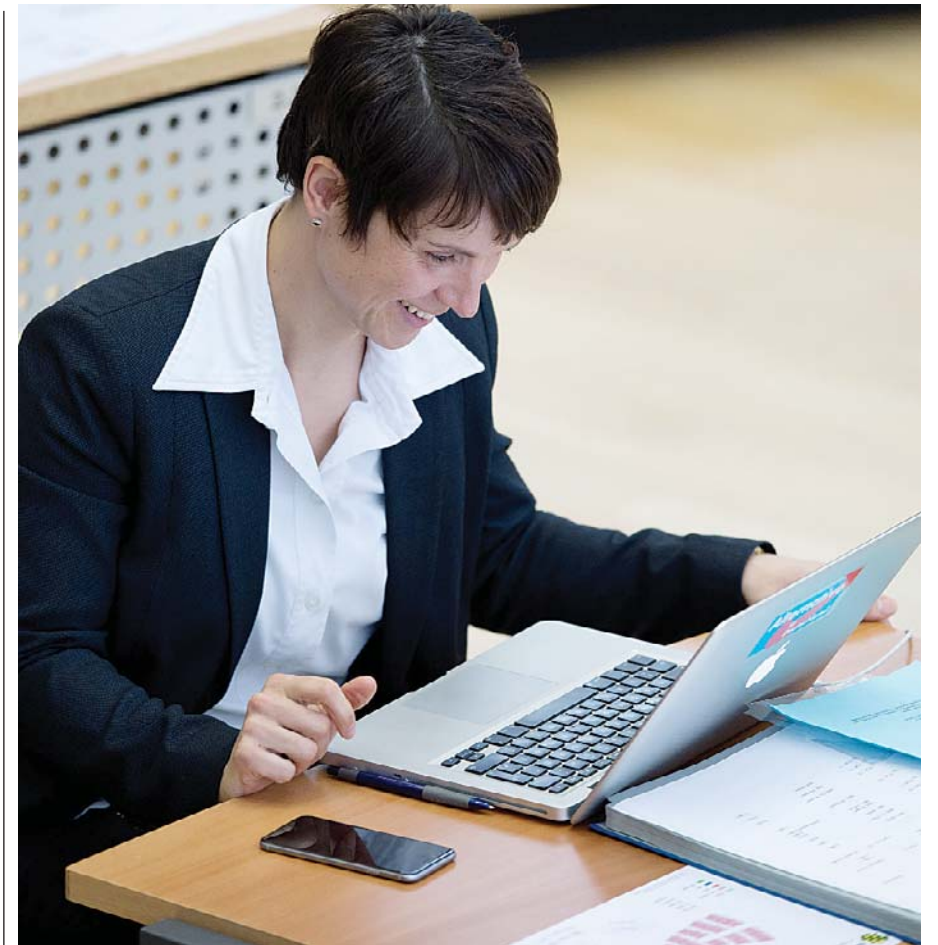
JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's President Jacob Zuma will pay back some of the public funds used to upgrade his private home, his office said yesterday, attempting to end a two-year scandal that has plagued his government. Public Protector Thuli Madonsela, the country's ombudswoman, ruled in 2014 that Zuma and his family had "benefited unduly" from the work on Zuma's rural residence of Nkandla. Among the supposed security upgrades were a swimming pool described as a fire-fighting facility, a chicken run, a cattle enclosure, an amphitheatre and a visitors' cen-

tre. "To achieve an end to the drawn-out dispute... the president proposes that the determination of the amount he is to pay should be independently and impartially determined," said a presidential statement. The exact sum will be determined by the treasury and police ministry, it added. Zuma had previously denied any wrongdoing over the upgrades, with opposition lawmakers often disrupting his parliamentary speeches by chanting "Pay back the money!"

His change of position came ahead of a Constitutional Court hearing next week as

opposition parties the Democratic Alliance (DA) and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) unite in a bid to force him to refund the cash. The upgrades were valued in 2014 at about 216 million rand (then worth \$24 million, 22 million euros). The DA vowed to go ahead with the legal case, despite Zuma's apparent dim-brown. DA leader Mmusi Maimane told journalists that Zuma had "done everything to undermine the work of the public protector and the constitution" over the Nkandla controversy. All parties are jostling for advantage ahead of municipal elections due later this

year that could see a fall in support for Zuma's African National Congress (ANC) party, which has ruled since the end of apartheid. Zuma's statement stressed that he "remains critical of a number of factual aspects and legal conclusions" contained in the damning public ombudsman report. The president, who has often been accused of allowing corruption to flourish since he came to power in 2009, is under pressure over South Africa's sharply slowing economy. He will make his annual state of the nation address in parliament next Thursday. —AFP



DRESDEN: Chairwoman of German Populist Party Alternative for Germany (AfD) Frauke Petry is pictured said at the Saxony state parliament in Dresden. —AFP

GERMANY'S POPULIST PARTY EYES GAINS DESPITE 'SHOOT THE MIGRANTS' UPROAR

BERLIN: Germany's AfD began life as an anti-euro party, but it has morphed into a right-wing populist outfit suggesting that police should be allowed to shoot migrants seeking to enter the country. Despite the uproar over chairwoman Frauke Petry's comments over the weekend, the reality is that the party is enjoying its biggest support since its birth, scoring a record 12 percent on a public opinion poll published Sunday by the tabloid-style Bild newspaper. Riding on a rising wave of mistrust over the 1.1 million asylum seekers who arrived in Germany in 2015, Alternative for Germany (AfD) appears to have struck a chord with some through its anti-migrant calls, posing a real threat to centrist parties.

The AfD is now clearly a "party of the radical right," Hajo Funke, a political scientist at Berlin's Free University, told public broadcaster Deutschlandfunk. Given its Nazi past, Germany has over the decades since the end of the war kept far-right parties to the fringes of politics. The AfD's ability to anchor itself as a radical party is therefore "something new," Werner Patzelt, political science expert at the Technical University of Dresden said. After all, the party's members have repeatedly raised eyebrows over what critics say is inflammatory speech.

Take the comments of member Björn Hoecke in early December, when he said that the "reproductive behaviour of Africans" could be a threat for Germany. Most recently, party leader Petry herself said in comments carried by the Mannheim Morgen regional daily on Saturday: "We need efficient controls to prevent so many unregistered asylum seekers from continuing to enter via Austria." She added: "No policeman wants to fire on a refugee and I don't want that either. But as a last resort there should be recourse to firearms."

Petry's comments earned a swift rebuke from political heavyweights including Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel, who said Germany's domestic security watchdog should keep an eye on the AfD. Even Bernd Luecke, the former leader of the party himself, has said that "the way the question of refugees is being dealt

with by the AfD is inhumane and unbearable." But far from alienating voters, these provocative comments have had the opposite effect, the daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung's Heribert Prantl wrote in an editorial. In turn, that has pushed the AfD to "become even more virulent."

Third political force

In fact, it was the ouster of Luecke at a party congress in July last year that saw the AfD set itself firmly on the right-wing populist path. This "congress marked the end of the internal struggle on the choice of its orientation in the German political landscape," Patzelt said. Given its initial anti-euro platform, the party could have positioned itself as a new liberal party rivaling the pro-business Free Democrats (FDP), said Patzelt, but its agenda had finally been hijacked by its right-leaning members.

Crucially, that shift coincided with the beginning of a record influx of asylum seekers to Germany over the summer. Initially, the AfD's opposition to Chancellor Angela Merkel's open-door stance to war refugees was drowned out as public opinion was firmly on the side of giving new arrivals a warm welcome. But as asylum seekers have continued to arrive in their thousands daily, disgruntlement and doubts have grown over Germany's ability to take in so many. AfD's popularity also began to climb. From four percent in September, backing rose to six percent in October, and 10 percent in December, according to the country's main political survey DeutschlandTrend.

On Sunday, another poll published by Bild am Sonntag said AfD had now a record score of 12 percent. Although that is still far behind Merkel's conservative alliance with 34 percent, and the Social Democratic Party's 24 percent, it means AfD has become the third political force in the country. With its clear positioning to the right of Merkel's conservative alliance, the AfD poses a particular threat to the alliance's Bavarian party the CSU, which once declared that there is "no democratically legitimate party to its right" in Germany. —AFP

CAMERON, JUNCKER DEFEND EU REFORM PLAN IN 'BREXIT' BATTLE

LONDON: The battle over Britain's future in the EU intensified yesterday as Prime Minister David Cameron braced for a barrage of attacks from eurosceptics over proposed reforms the European Commission defended as a "fair" deal for all. Speaking at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Juncker said the proposals due to be put to a key summit this month were "fair" for Britain and its 27 partners. EU president Donald Tusk unveiled proposals to avoid Britain leaving the club on Tuesday, firing the starting gun on two weeks of tense negotiations to reach a deal at the summit of EU leaders.

The plans include a four-year "emergency brake" on welfare payments for EU migrant workers, protection for countries that do not use the euro and a "red card" system giving national parliaments more power. Cameron on Tuesday said Tusk's plans showed "real progress" and made it likely that he would campaign to stay in the European Union in a referendum expected in June. But he will likely face tough questions from British lawmakers in a debate due to start at 1230 GMT. Many have greeted the plans with scorn, with UK Independence Party head Nigel Farage dismissing them as "pathetic," while Conservative lawmaker Steve Baker said the prime minister was just "polishing poo". Former defense secretary Liam Fox warned that up to five members of Cameron's cabinet could campaign to leave the union having seen the proposals. London's flamboyant mayor Boris Johnson has been named in the press as a potential rallying point for eurosceptic ranks. However, the prime minister received a boost by winning the backing of interior minister Theresa May, a known eurosceptic.

Turnoil

Britain's newspapers yesterday poured cold water on the plans, with popular tabloid The Sun splashing "Who do EU think you are kidding Mr Cameron?" across its front page, saying the deal was a "farce". The Daily Mail called it "The Great Delusion" and the eurosceptic Daily Express "A Joke" on their front pages. The proposals are also expected to be a hard sell for some EU states, which fear Cameron is winning too many concessions ahead of a February 18-19 summit.

Negotiations are set to begin at the European Parliament yesterday, while Cameron is set to present the plans to parliament after the weekly Prime Minister's Questions session. He then begins a charm offensive that will take him to Poland and Denmark on Friday then Germany next week. London's bid to transform its EU membership has added to turmoil in the bloc as it struggles with its worst migration crisis since World War II and the fallout from the euro-zone debt saga. The British premier said Tusk's proposal showed he had "secured some very important changes". "If I could get these terms for British membership I sure would opt in for being a member of the EU," Cameron said in a speech in southwest England.

Opinion polls split

But British eurosceptics were unconvinced, with Johnson saying he had "doubts" about their effectiveness. Opinion polls are split on whether Britons would back leaving the EU in their first vote on the subject since 1975. Tusk's most controversial proposal is an "emergency brake" that would allow any EU state to limit the welfare payments migrants from other European countries can claim for up to four years after their arrival. To pull the brake, states would have to prove an "exceptional situation" in which their welfare system and public services are overwhelmed, get approval from the European Commission and then from other bloc leaders in a majority vote.

Despite concerns in France, Tusk's plan also includes a "mechanism" by which the nine countries that are not in the euro can raise concerns about decisions by the euro-zone. But he stressed that the mechanism could not delay or veto urgent decisions by the 19 countries in the euro. The "red card" system would allow a group representing 55 percent of the EU's national parliaments to stop or change draft EU laws. Although Cameron has only set a deadline of the end of 2017 to hold a referendum on whether Britain should stay in the EU, sources have said he is keen to push a vote through by June. That would avoid the fallout from any new flare-up in Europe's migration crisis this summer and British eurosceptics becoming even more unruly. —AFP

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JUSTICE ELUDES INDIA'S MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE VICTIMS

NEW DELHI: Four years after Shishir Chand's brother died when his heart condition was allegedly misdiagnosed as gas, his fight for compensation has barely begun in India's notoriously slow justice system. Chand recalls racing 33-year-old Vishal to a private hospital in eastern Jamshedpur city, as he clutched his chest in agony. After monitoring Vishal's heart function, doctors sent him home with anti-fatulence medicine. He died the next day of a heart attack, according to Chand. "So far, all they have done is issue a mild warning to the doctor, asking him to be more careful in

future," he said.

Malpractice is a major problem not only in India's overburdened public health system but also in the burgeoning private sector, according to health activists. A complex and ineffective compensation system, along with the medical community's reluctance to expose colleagues' wrongdoing, are huge barriers for families seeking justice, they say. "Negligence cases are widespread in public healthcare particularly in rural India, where patients have little understanding of malpractice and erring doctors almost never get pun-

ished," Arun Gadre, a doctor turned activist in India, said. "Similar issues are cropping up in the private sector."

Consumer dispute tribunals initially handle many malpractice cases, but according to activists, its members lack the expertise to deal with complex medical issues. India's main doctors' body acknowledges that the tribunal system appears skewed, with the association's figures showing only one in 1,000 complaints lodged with the tribunals by families win any kind of compensation. "Most of the cases of negligence cannot be established," Narendra Saini, general secretary of the Indian Medical Association said. "We need a fresh look at the system to avoid confusion. Doctors are not gods and inadvertently do commit mistakes," Saini said.

Families can appeal to higher courts but they face the difficult task of having to show substantial evidence of wrongdoing before their cases can proceed, according to Chand. In 2013, the Supreme Court, hearing an appeal from a tribunal, awarded an American man 110 million rupees (\$1.6 million) in compensation over his wife's death from an overdose of steroids given at a private hospital in Kolkata. The figure set a record in India, but it came 15 years after the woman died and only after tireless campaigning by her husband, himself a doctor.

India where they are considered, especially in traditional rural areas, to be above reproach. Chand, who volunteers for advocacy group People for Better Treatment, said he searched for two years to find a doctor willing to give evidence in his brother's case. "Doctors are afraid to testify against their colleagues because they feel vulnerable. There is a general understanding not to testify as it may open floodgates against each other," activist Gadre said. Chand has appealed to a tribunal against the Medical Council of India's decision to only issue a warning to the doctor. A spokesman for the hospital involved said its case has been presented to the tribunal, but declined to comment further as a verdict is pending. Experts say under pressure doctors are bound to make mistakes at some point since public hospitals are often stretched to breaking, with India spending just one percent of GDP on healthcare. India also has one doctor for roughly every 2,000 patients, according to the WHO, which recommends half that number. And India has just 900,000 registered doctors compared to China's estimated 2.4 million, according to watchdog, the Medical Council of India. The council says it investigates doctors whenever complaints are filed with the body, but health advocates argue that its hearings are endlessly delayed and adjourned.

saying "arranging hearing of complaints and doctors often takes time." "We are not the final authority, aggrieved people can always appeal against our decisions in higher courts," Ahmad added. He pointed to the fact that the council suspended 130 doctors (with punishments ranging from one month to seven years) in one month alone, September last year, although he said some of the complaints had been pending since 2010. No doctors at all were penalized between 2008 and 2013, according to council data obtained by medical advocacy groups through right to information laws, although it is unclear how many complaints were filed during that period. Rohit Goyal is waiting for justice after filing a case last year in a tribunal on behalf of his 62-year-old mother who had gone to hospital complaining of dizziness.

Hooked up to a drip, doctors allegedly hiked Suresh Rani's sodium levels five times above safe limits, leaving her in a permanent vegetative state, according to Goyal. A hospital spokesman said its own investigations found no evidence of wrongdoing and the hospital is awaiting the tribunal's ruling. "We found nothing wrong in our internal investigations but the judiciary is supreme," he said. But Goyal said "We can't let them go scot-free. They almost killed my mother. I know it's going to take years before we get justice," Goyal's wife and his sister quit their jobs to care for Rani, spending more than a million rupees on treatment. "Our lives are literally on hold," he said. —AFP



NEW DELHI: 62-year-old Indian woman Suresh Rani, given an overdose of sodium by doctors at a hospital which resulted her in a permanent damage to her brain, being helped by her daughter Mamta (left) and an attendant at her home in Noida, in New Delhi. —AFP

Doctors rarely suspended
Experts say a key problem is that doctors are reluctant to testify against colleagues in

'Our lives on hold'
Muzaffar Ahmad, chairman of the council's ethics committee, defended the delays,

JAPAN ON RED ALERT OVER N KOREAN ROCKET LAUNCH

SOUTH KOREA WARNS 'NORTH WILL PAY SEVERE PRICE'

SEOUL: Japan placed its military on alert yesterday to shoot down a North Korean rocket if it threatens Japan, while South Korea warned the North will pay a "severe price" if it proceeds with a satellite launch that Seoul considers a missile test. North Korea should immediately call off the planned launch, which is a violation of UN Security Council resolutions, the South's presidential Blue House said in a statement. Seoul's warning came after the North notified UN agencies on Tuesday of its plan to launch what it called an "earth observation satellite"

some time between Feb 8 and 25. "North Korea's notice of the plan to launch a long-range missile, coming at a time when there is a discussion for Security Council sanctions on its fourth nuclear test, is a direct challenge to the international community," the Blue House said. "We strongly warn that the North will pay a severe price ... if it goes ahead with the long-range missile launch plan," it said. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said he would work with the United States and others to "strongly demand" that North Korea refrain

from what he described as a planned missile launch.

Japan's Defense Minister Gen Nakatani ordered ballistic missile defense units including Aegis destroyers in the Sea of Japan and Patriot missile batteries onshore to be ready to shoot down any North Korean rocket that threatened Japan. The rocket is likely to fly over Japan's southern island of Okinawa in the Pacific Ocean at an altitude of several hundred kilometers. Reports of the planned launch drew fresh US calls for tougher UN sanctions that

are already under discussion in response to North Korea's recent nuclear test.

State Department spokesman John Kirby said the United Nations needed to "send the North Koreans a swift, firm message". Pyongyang has said it has a sovereign right to pursue a space program by launching rockets, although the United States and other governments worry that such launches are missile tests in disguise.

A spokeswoman for the International Maritime Organization, a UN agency, said the agency had been told by North Korea it planned to launch the 'Kwangmyongsong' satellite. The International Telecommunication Union, another UN agency, also told Reuters that North Korea had informed it on Tuesday of plans to launch a satellite with a functional duration of four years in a non-geostationary orbit. North Korea said the launch would be conducted in the morning one day during the announced period, and notified the coordinates for the locations where the rocket boosters and the cover for the payload would drop.

Those locations are expected to be in the Yellow Sea off the Korean peninsula west coast and in the Pacific Ocean to the east of the Philippines, Pyongyang said. US officials said last week North Korea was believed to be making preparations for a test launch of a long-range rocket, after activity at its test site was observed by satellite. North Korea last launched a long-range rocket in December 2012, sending an object it described as a communications satellite into orbit. North Korea also said last month it had successfully tested a hydrogen bomb but this was met with skepticism by US and South Korean officials and nuclear experts. They said the blast was too small for it to have been a full-fledged hydrogen bomb. —Reuters



SEOUL: A mock Scud-B missile of North Korea (left) and other South Korean missiles are displayed at the Korea War Memorial Museum in Seoul, South Korea yesterday. South Korea warned yesterday of 'searing' consequences if North Korea doesn't abandon plans to launch a long-range rocket that critics call a banned test of ballistic missile technology. —AP

AUSTRALIA COURT DISMISSES CHALLENGE TO THE OFFSHORE REFUGEE DETENTION

SYDNEY: Australia's highest court yesterday opened the way for hundreds of asylum-seekers to be transferred to a remote Pacific outpost, including women allegedly sexually assaulted there, when it dismissed a challenge to a hardline immigration policy. The High Court case was brought by a Bangladeshi woman who arrived on an unauthorized boat and was dispatched to the tiny island republic of Nauru before being brought to Australia for urgent medical treatment during a pregnancy. She sought a declaration that Australia's conduct in sending her to Nauru was unlawful in a challenge seen as a test case for more than 260 asylum-seekers, including 37 babies born in Australia and 54 other children, lawyers said. But the court ruled six to one that the Australian government's arrangements for offshore detention on Nauru did not breach the law. Canberra's tough immigration policy ensures that asylum-seekers arriving in Australia by boat are sent to Nauru and Papua New Guinea.

Even if the detainees are subsequently found to be genuine refugees they are denied resettlement in Australia—a policy designed to stop people-smuggling boats which has drawn international criticism. Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said the court had found the existing process "legally and constitutionally valid". But he told parliament: "The

people smugglers will not prevail over our sovereignty." "Our borders are secure. The line has to be drawn somewhere and it is drawn at our border."

The Human Rights Law Centre, which brought the case for the woman, said the mother and her husband—with a one-year-old baby—were now terrified of being sent back to Nauru where some 537 asylum-seekers are currently housed. A further 922 men are held on PNG's Manus Island. "The legality is one thing, the morality is another," said the centre's Daniel Webb. Webb said that among the group at risk of being transferred to Nauru were women who had allegedly been sexually assaulted on the island as well as 37 babies born in Australia. "Ripping kids out of primary school and sending them to be indefinitely warehoused on a tiny remote island is wrong," he added.

'Risk of rights violations'

Webb would not comment on the case of a five-year-old boy who was reportedly brought to Australia after allegedly being sexually assaulted on Nauru. Immigration Minister Peter Dutton said he was seeking more information on that case, but stressed it would be considered compassionately. "We are not going to send kids into harm's way," the minister told Sky News. "But we are saying very firmly that if you don't have a legitimate claim for

refuge in Australia then we want to help you go back to your country of origin."

Australia has long defended its policy saying it has prevented the deaths of asylum-seekers at sea and secured its borders. Under the previous Labor government, at least 1,200 people died trying to reach Australia by boat between 2008 and 2013. But refugee advocates slammed the prospect of asylum-seekers being returned to Nauru, from where allegations of abuses, including rape, have arisen.

Sending vulnerable and abused people back to "where they will suffer indefinitely would be callous and cold," said Paul Power, chief executive of the Refugee Council of Australia.

The UN children's agency UNICEF said returning minors to Nauru not only placed unreasonable pressures on the developing state but also put children at risk. Amnesty International also joined the chorus of disappointment, saying those sent back would be at "real risk of serious human rights violations" in a place where many resorted to self-harm. The Refugee Action Coalition called for protests around the country later this week after the court's decision which it said hid behind a legal technicality. "It avoided the substance of the challenge by finding that the asylum-seekers on Nauru are detained by the Nauruan government," it said. —AFP



KASHMIR: Kashmiri men row their boat in the waters of Nigeen Lake on the outskirts of Srinagar, Indian controlled Kashmir. Set in the Himalayas at 5,600 feet above sea level, Kashmir is a green, saucer-shaped valley full of fruit orchards and surrounded by snowy mountain ranges. —AP

10 SOLDIERS MISSING IN HIMALAYAN AVALANCHE

SRINAGAR: Rescuers searched yesterday for 10 soldiers feared buried in an avalanche in India's remote Himalayas near the de facto border with Pakistan, an army spokesman said. The soldiers were hit while on duty at a post on a glacier at an altitude of 5,800 meters (19,000 feet), Colonel S D Goswami said. "In the early hours of today, 10 soldiers were hit by an avalanche at the northern Siachen Glacier," Goswami said.

An army statement said the post was being manned by one junior officer and nine soldiers when the avalanche struck. "Rescue operations by specialized teams from Army and Air Force are underway to rescue the soldiers. The rescue operations are being closely monitored from Leh and Udhampur," the statement added. Indian troops patrol the Siachen Glacier, dubbed the world's highest battlefield, in the

Kashmir region which is disputed between India and Pakistan. Avalanches and landslides are common in the area during the winter and temperatures there can drop as low as minus 60 degrees Celsius (minus 76 degrees Fahrenheit).

In January four soldiers were killed by an avalanche, while last year another four died when their vehicle was buried under an avalanche near Leh, the main city in the high-altitude region known as Ladakh. An estimated 8,000 troops have died on the glacier since 1984, almost all of them from avalanches, landslides, frostbite, altitude sickness or heart failure rather than combat. Nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan, which each administer part of Kashmir but claim it in full, fought over Siachen in 1987. But guns on the glacier have largely fallen silent since a peace process began in 2004. —AFP

DECLARING DE-RADICALIZATION SUCCESS, CHINA AUTHORITIES REDUCE ELEVEN SENTENCES

BEIJING: Authorities in China's unruly far-western region of Xinjiang have reduced the sentences of 11 people jailed for threatening state security after declaring success of a de-radicalization program, state news agency Xinhua reported. Hundreds of people have been killed in violence in Xinjiang in the past few years.

The government blames the unrest on Islamist militants who want to establish an independent state called East Turkestan for minority Uighurs, a mostly Muslim people from Xinjiang who speak a Turkic language. Seven of the convicts had their life sentences reduced to jail terms ranging from 19.5 years to 20 years, including people convicted of instigating "secessionist activities" or participating in terror attacks, Xinhua said late on Tuesday. The other four had their jail terms cut by six months from initial sentences ranging from 8 to 15 years, it added.

A spokesman for the main Uighur exile group dismissed the report as "political propaganda". Xinjiang's governor, Shohrat Zakir, was quoted by Xinhua as saying that the region's jails had been very successful in recent years at their de-radicalization efforts, with a "majority" of convicts becoming law-abiding citizens. Efforts need to continue in this regard with a focus on those convicted for harming state security, he added. Xinhua said this had been accomplished by inviting religious leaders and scholars to talk to prisoners about "correct religious belief".

One of those whose sentence was reduced was identified as Yushanjiang Jilili, the Chinese spelling for Huseyin Celil, a Uighur-Canadian jailed in 2007 for terrorism. China considers him a Chinese citizen. "My crimes caused serious damage to my country, Xinjiang, my family and children that can never be made up for," Xinhua quoted him as saying. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said he did not know any details about the sentence reductions, but that all the people involved were Chinese. The Canadian Embassy in Beijing did not respond to requests for comment. Reuters was also unable to reach officials in Xinjiang for comment, or any family members of the convicts to verify their stories.

Exiles and many rights groups say the real cause of the unrest is heavy-handed Chinese policies, including curbs on Uighur culture, and a dearth of economic opportunity, rather than any cohesive militant group. Dilxat Raxit, spokesman for the main exile group the World Uyghur Congress, said news of the commutations was a "political propaganda tool" to cover up the government's use of the term extremist to repress the Uighur people. "Be aware that China is using the so-called commutations to mislead the international community and continues to use anti-terrorism to step up its repression," he said in an emailed statement. —Reuters

SAUDIS COMMUTE PALESTINIAN POET'S DEATH...

Continued from Page 1

lashes but an appeal process led to that being increased to death after a judge ruled that defense witnesses' testimony was negligible. Saudi Arabia's justice system is based on sharia, or Islamic law, and its judges are clerics from the ultraconservative Wahhabi school of Sunni Islam. In the Wahhabi interpretation of sharia, religious crimes including blas-

phemy and apostasy incur the death penalty. Liberal writer Raif Badawi was flogged 50 times in January last year as part of a sentence for blasphemy of 10 years in prison and 1,000 lashes, prompting an international outcry. Badawi remains in prison, but diplomats have said he is unlikely to be flogged again. After a case has been heard by lower courts, appeals courts and the supreme court, a convicted defendant can be pardoned by King Salman. — Reuters

SYRIA TEXTILE INDUSTRY HANGS ON FOR SURVIVAL

Continued from Page 1

But it was completely destroyed in the war, and now the business is run out of a small workshop in the capital. "We had 100 employees, today only 30 of them are still working for us," said Abu Dahab, who was one of around 100 Syrian textile manufacturers at a trade fair set up in Beirut.

Before Syria's conflict began, textiles represented some 63 percent of the industrial sector's total production. The sector was worth 12 percent of GDP, employed a fifth of the workforce and exports netted around \$3.3 billion a year, according to the Syrian Economic Forum think-tank. But by 2014, private sector textile exports had fallen by half, with the industry particularly affected by fighting in Aleppo city, the country's former commercial hub and home to many textile factories.

"Seventy percent of (textile) factories were closed or destroyed by the war," said Feras Taki Eddine, president of the Syrian Textile Exporters Association, next to a mannequin in black underwear and stockings. In addition, many businesses lost machines and employees. "Some of the machines were destroyed and some were stolen. Thieves took them to Turkey. I had 220 machines before, now I only have 10," said Alaa Aldeen Maki, owner of Dream Girl Lingerie, an Aleppo-based business. "Most of my employees emigrated because of the situation and some because they were forced to join the army for military service," he said.

When the war arrived in Aleppo in mid-2012, eventually dividing the city between government control in the west and rebel control in the east, some businesses relocated to small workshops in the city's safer areas. Others, based in the relative safety of Damascus, have done whatever they can to survive. Muhamad Daadush owns the country's biggest lingerie and pyjama factory, located in the capital. He still employs 450 people, many of who sleep in the factory during upticks in violence. "I had

72 workers sleeping at the factory" at one point, he told AFP at his stall, surrounded by bras of all hues and comfortable cotton sleepwear. "They started at six in the morning, worked until 11, then slept. They would only go home to their families from Thursday night to Saturday morning."

For all its challenges, Syria's textile industry continues to enjoy a reputation of quality in the region, and the Beirut fair attracted some 500 buyers, mostly from the Middle East. Fadi Baha was in town from Egypt, where he owns a chain of stores. "I buy Syrian textiles because of their quality. It's better than Turkish or Chinese merchandise and almost competitive price-wise," he told AFP. "I like how Syrian manufacturers create a unique mix between Eastern and European styles."

But while regional buyers continue to purchase Syrian textiles, clients from further afield were nowhere to be seen. Daadush Lingerie once exported 70 percent of its products to Europe, but its owner said only 10 percent now goes there. And the rising costs of production, difficult trading environment and shrinking workforce, all mean competitors from Turkey and China are increasingly able to pinch clients from Syria's textile industry.

Manufacturers blame shrinking exports in part on sanctions slapped on Syria after the government began its crackdown on dissent following anti-government protests five years ago. The conflict that followed has killed over 260,000 people and displaced more than half of Syria's population, with many joining a wave of refugees seeking safety in Europe since last year.

Taki Eddine said Europe should be bolstering trade with Syria to keep citizens at work in their home country. "It should be in Europe's interest to facilitate trade, because Syrian workers without jobs now want to leave to Europe," he said. Several vendors said they were committed to staying open, ensuring jobs for Syrians and the industry's survival. "It's important for us to show that Syrian industry is still alive," said Taki Eddine. — AFP



WINDSOR MILL, Maryland: US President Barack Obama greets attendees in an overflow room after speaking at the Islamic Society of Baltimore yesterday. — AFP

OBAMA SLAMS BIGOTRY IN FIRST VISIT TO US...

Continued from Page 1

Yesterday, Obama said: "An attack on one faith is an attack on all our faiths." He also criticized the media and Hollywood, which he said portray Muslims in a narrow way. "Our television shows should have Muslim characters that are unrelated to national security," he said. Obama had visited mosques in Malaysia, Indonesia and Egypt as president, but this was his first visit to one of America's 2,000-plus places of Islamic worship. In 2009, a freshly elected Obama traveled to Cairo to call for a "new beginning" with the Muslim world.

Much of Obama's foreign policy agenda has focused on improving ties with Muslim nations, from making a nuclear deal with Iran to ending wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. But the effort has been stymied by continued confrontation with jihadist groups and military strikes in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, Syria and Yemen. Obama restated his case that organizations like the Islamic State group pervert Islam and do not represent the vast majority of Muslims.

The president offered "two words that Muslim-Americans don't hear often enough, and that is thank you," saying they help unite the country in "one American family." But he also called on Muslims to help tackle radicalization. "How do we defend ourselves against organizations that are bent on killing innocents?" he asked. "It can't be the work of any one faith alone. It can't be just a burden on the Muslim community, although the Muslim community has to play a role."

That message is a vexed one for members of the community, including those who oppose violence. "I know national security will come up in the speech just

because of the climate of today," said Riham Osman of the Muslim Public Affairs Council, an advocacy group, ahead of the speech. "It does upset me a little bit that it is his first time coming to visit a mosque, and there will be kids there who have grown up in this post 9/11 era and their faith is constantly linked to national security and extremism." The United States is home to around 3.3 million Muslims. Around 81 Muslim-Americans were involved in violent extremist plots in 2015, according to the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security.

Earlier, Obama sat down around a large table with Muslim university chaplains, community activists and public health professionals for a discussion about religious tolerance and freedom. One of the participants meeting with Obama, Ibtihaj Muhammad, has qualified for a spot on the United States Olympic Team for the Rio de Janeiro 2016 Olympic Games. The White House said she'll make history as the first United States Olympian to compete in a hijab. "They all have their own story to tell about the way that they contribute to and enrich the communities in which they live," said White House spokesman Josh Earnest.

Last week, Obama became the first sitting president to speak at the Israeli Embassy. In remarks at the embassy, he warned of growing anti-Semitism in the world. Attendees at the Baltimore mosque are predominantly of Turkish heritage, although immigrants of other nationalities also participate, said Akbar Ahmed, an Islamic studies specialist at American University who has researched mosques around the US. Obama left it to the last minute to visit a US mosque, Ahmed noted, "but better late than never." — Agencies

BLAST ON SOMALIA JET POINTS TO BOMB

Continued from Page 1

Police said two people onboard were injured, while the government has said the blast was believed to be caused by an issue of air pressure. The Serbian pilot has said he thought the blast, which ripped the fuselage from inside to out, had been an explosive device, according to reports in the Serbian newspaper Blic. Pilot Vladimir Vodopivec, 64, told a friend he thought it was "a bomb", without giving more details. Photographs show a large hole - about a metre in diameter - just above the engines on the right wing, with streaks of soot on the plane.

Vodopivec added that the blast did not damage the navigation systems, and while cabin pressure was lost, he was able to guide the plane back safely to land at Mogadishu airport. "Passengers were terrified," said Abdiwahab Hassan, an airport official. Aviation safety expert Xavier Tytelman said he compared images of the blast with photographs of previous explosions, and it had all the appearances of a bomb blast. It was not caused by any issue of pressurization, he said, for the blast ripped the metal outwards.

"The explosion occurred at the passenger level...it clearly comes from inside," he told AFP, adding that at that part of the plane, there was no major engine or electrical device to spark such a blast. "In addition, the metal is bent forward against the flow of air - it is not an issue of depressurization," he said. Video footage taken after the blast showed people having moved to the back of the plane with emergency oxygen masks dangling down as wind rushed around the main cabin, although most people appeared fairly calm.

However, Somalia's deputy information minister Abdullahi Olad Roble, said it was not believed to be a

bomb. "Initial investigation results suggest that there was a lot of air inside the airplane after takeoff, and that air may have caused the explosion, fire erupted and several people were slightly injured," he said. "We have seen the plane... the aircraft doesn't have any big problem." The plane "experienced an incident shortly after take-off," operator Daallo Airlines said in a statement. "The aircraft landed safely and all of our passengers were evacuated safely," it added. "A thorough investigation is being conducted by Somalia Civil Aviation Authority."

Local authorities said the body of a passenger was found in the Balcad area, about 30 km north of Mogadishu. A police officer at Mogadishu airport said the body of the 55-year-old man was being brought to the capital. "He dropped when the explosion occurred in the plane," the officer said. But Abdiwahid Omar, the director of Somalia's civil aviation authority, told state-run Radio Mogadishu that authorities were not sure if the body found in Balcad was the missing passenger.

Mogadishu airport is heavily fortified and adjoins the capital's main base of the African Union mission to Somalia, the 22,000-strong force backing the government in the battle against Al-Qaeda-affiliated Shebab insurgents. The insurgents have lost ground since being routed from Mogadishu in 2011 but continue to stage regular shooting and suicide attacks. They have launched mortar attacks on the airport compound in the past. Last month they stormed a Kenyan army base at El-Adde in southwest Somalia, in the latest incident of an African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) base being overrun. The Shabab have also staged attacks in Kenya, killing at least 67 people at Nairobi's Westgate Mall in 2013 and massacring 148 people at a university in Garissa in April 2015. They have made no claim of carrying out a bomb attack on the plane. — Agencies

EARL DECLARED DEAD 42 YRS AFTER KILLING

Continued from Page 1

"I got married this year. I've started a new branch in my career. It was a nice moment to say farewell to a very distant past and to move on at a very personal level," he said. "Our family has no idea how our own father met his own end. Whether he did so at his own hand or at the hand of others. It's a mystery and it may well remain that way forever."

Intrigue has shrouded the whereabouts of Richard John Bingham, the 7th Earl of Lucan, since he vanished at the age of 39 after his children's nanny, Sandra Rivett, was bludgeoned to death in 1974 at the London home of Lucan's estranged wife. An inquest into the murder raised the theory that Lucan may have mistaken the nanny for Lady Lucan, who said she fought with the attacker in the dark after she heard noises in the basement.

The case sparked worldwide interest after his blood-soaked car was found abandoned near the coast, and since then there have been dozens of supposed sightings of him from southern Africa to New Zealand. Bizarre conspiracy theories abound, with one of Lucan's old gambling friends claiming last week that he committed suicide and was then fed to a tiger in a zoo to avoid leaving proof of death and handing his estate over to estranged wife Veronica. Police issued a warrant for his arrest a few days

after the murder. Bingham began the legal process last October by posting a public notice in a local newspaper. He has said the death certificate would "bring closure".

Neil Berriman, the murdered nanny's biological son, withdrew an earlier objection to the application, but told court yesterday that he had seen an internal police document suggesting Lucan "was possibly alive from 2002 onwards". He rejected the commonly-held explanation that Lucan drowned at sea, and accused the Metropolitan Police of corruption, calling the force "a firm within a firm". "Maybe the police know more than they let on," he said in a statement outside court, in front of a press scrum.

The 49-year-old builder said Lucan "was guilty of something" but that he wasn't "100 percent sure" that he actually killed his mother. "I think he escaped," he said, adding that it was possible he fled to Africa, although was now probably dead. Berriman earlier told AFP that Bingham was "selfish" to say he wanted closure. "Closure for us is when we can actually get closure for Sandra," he added. Berriman, who was put up for adoption at birth, only found out he was Rivett's son when his adoptive mother died and left him a brown envelope, which he opened eight years ago. "It was full of all sorts of things, birthday cards and cuttings of the Lucan case, which was very bizarre," he told AFP. "I sat there and it gradually registered. It was horrendous, things haven't been the same since." — AFP

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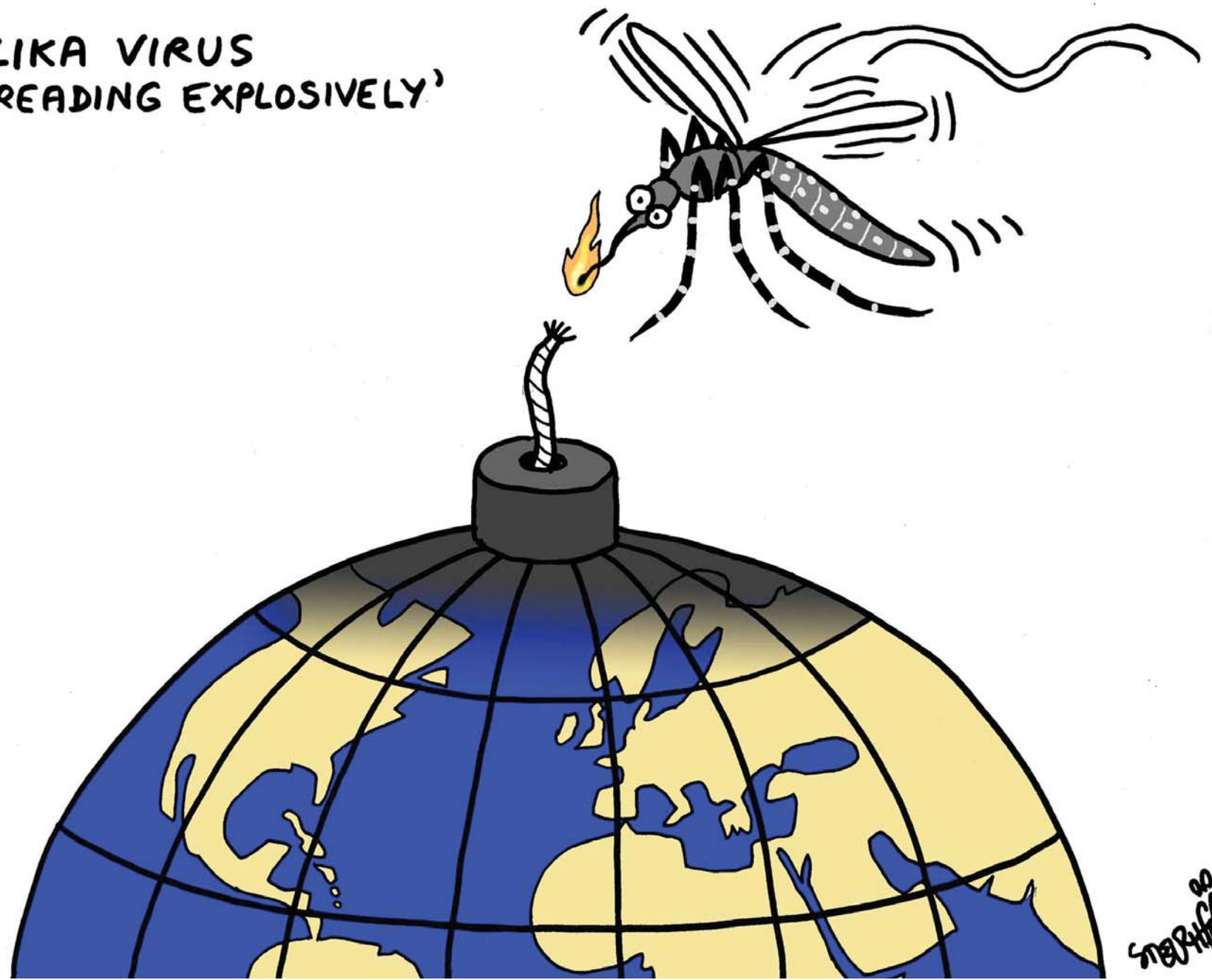
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P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

ZIKA VIRUS 'SPREADING EXPLOSIVELY'



ZIKA MOSQUITOES' HABITS MAY FOIL US EFFORTS

By Julie Steenhuysen

Health experts are bracing for Zika virus to spread to the United States by April or May, borne by a mosquito that craves human blood, feeds during the day and lives under beds and inside closets. Until now, the best weapon against disease-carrying mosquitoes in the United States has been outdoor pesticide fog sprayed by truck and airplane. But health experts fear the typical approach will do little to eradicate the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito that carries Zika.

Controlling that mosquito requires pesticide sprayed under beds, on the walls and in closets, said Gonzalo Vazquez-Prokopec, who studies disease transmission patterns of mosquitoes at Emory's School of Public Health's Department of Environmental Sciences. "We know fogging is not effective," Vazquez-Prokopec said. Though there could be localized US outbreaks, most likely along the Gulf Coast, federal officials said they hope the wide use of air conditioning, window screens and regular garbage collection will mitigate the risk.

The World Health Organization declared the Zika outbreak an international health emergency this week after evidence linking the virus to microcephaly, a devastating birth defect that can cause unusually small heads and permanent brain damage. Brazil has reported 3,700 suspected cases of microcephaly. The outbreak is now affecting at least 25 countries and territories, most of them in Latin American and the Caribbean, and could infect up to 4 million people in the Americas, according to the WHO.

More than 30 people in the United States have been confirmed to have Zika after traveling to an affected country. There has been one report of transmission within the United States, but experts believe that will increase as the weather warms up, the local mosquito population multiplies and many more travelers return to the country. "All it takes is one of those individuals who arrives back in the United States at the stage where they have virus in their blood," said Scott Weaver, an expert in mosquito-borne viral diseases at the University of Texas Medical Branch's Galveston National Laboratory. At that point, he said, a single mosquito biting the affected person could spread the disease to others.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest said Monday the risk of transmission now is "quite low," but as temperatures rise, "we want to make sure that we have got a strategy to try to limit the spread of this disease when that happens." The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is working on a control program for Zika, which will likely involve public education about eliminating breeding sites and spraying to kill mosquito larvae and adult mosquitoes, especially in areas experiencing outbreaks, said spokesman Tom Skinner.

Until then, the CDC is circulating guidelines developed for

combating chikungunya, a close cousin to Zika carried by the same types of mosquitoes. Local health departments are also sorting out their approach to fight Zika. "If it's going to happen, I think it will happen in the warmer months, likely in April and May," said Dr. Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

Zika symptoms and disease

Severe illness requiring hospitalization is uncommon in adults, but there have been reports in Brazil of serious birth defects linked to Zika.

MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS

- About 1 in 5 people infected with Zika virus become ill, that is develop Zika.
- The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week.
- Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon.

DOES ZIKA VIRUS CAUSE BIRTH DEFECTS?

There have been reports of a serious birth defects including microcephaly, linked to Zika. Until more is known, health experts recommend pregnant women consider postponing travel to areas where Zika is being actively transmitted.

Microcephaly is a condition where a baby's head is much smaller than expected. It can occur because a baby's brain has not developed properly.

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention AP

Zika thrives in impoverished areas, spreading widely in garbage-filled neighborhoods and in homes and apartments with no screens on the windows, conditions that are present in many Gulf Coast communities in the United States, Hotez said.

The Vectors

The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito that carries Zika also transmits dengue fever and chikungunya. *Aedes aegypti* is mostly found in southern parts of the United States, such as the coastal regions of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. Experts believe it arrived on slave trade ships from Africa, spreading yellow fever in port cities, including a 1793 outbreak in Philadelphia that wiped out 10 percent of the

city's population of 50,000. Unlike *Aedes aegypti*, most mosquitoes common to North America feed at night and live in wooded areas.

Recent research suggests the pest may be adapting to colder temperatures. David Severson at the University of Notre Dame discovered a population of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes that has spent the past four winters underground in Washington, DC's Capitol Hill neighborhood. Aggressive abatement involving indoor and outdoor fogging and breeding ground eradication between 1947 and 1970 nearly wiped out *Aedes aegypti*. At the time, the mosquitoes were the source of yellow fever in across the Americas. But budget cuts and the development of an effective yellow fever vaccine ended eradication efforts, and *Aedes aegypti* populations rebounded.

Scientists believe *Aedes albopictus*, or the Asian tiger mosquito, also is capable of spreading Zika. This aggressive biter arrived in the United States in 1985 and has replaced *Aedes aegypti* in some places. Its range includes at least 32 US states as far north as Illinois and Pennsylvania and in pockets as far west as California. *Aedes albopictus* breeds in small containers of water, bites during the daytime and lives near population centers. A less picky eater, it also feasts on pets and wild animals. Researchers in Brazil are studying whether the *Culex* species, a carrier of the West Nile virus commonly found in many southeastern US states, might carry Zika, which could explain the rapid spread in Brazil. These mosquitoes rest in the daytime and bite at dusk or after dark.

Public Health Problem

All of this poses a challenge for US health departments, which have faced pressure to reduce mosquito abatement activities amid budget cuts and increasing concerns over exposure to pesticides. "The current methods we have have some shortcomings," said the CDC's Dr Anne Schuchat. "We're going to need to work in future on identifying better options." Brazil's government has mounted a door-to-door campaign and has authorized public health officials to enter properties by force if necessary. Health workers search for potential breeding spots and in some areas use indoor foggers, applying pesticides that stick to walls.

"That is not going to fly in the United States," said Joseph Conlon, technical advisor for the American Mosquito Control Association, which represents researchers, public health officials and pesticide makers. There are no pesticides registered by the Environmental Protection Agency for indoor application, Conlon said. Instead, abatement will likely focus on typical breeding sites, from birdbaths to potted plants, dog bowls, tin cans, tyres and other places likely to become inundated with water. "Our best bet is to remove the breeding habitats," he said. "It's a lot harder to do than you would think. People don't want to change their habits," he said. —Reuters

Focus

PONTIFF UNDER FIRE OVER CHINA 'REALPOLITIK'

By Angus Mackinnon

Pope Francis came under fire yesterday after lavishing praise on China in a move widely seen as oiling the wheels of Vatican moves to improve relations with Beijing. Close watchers of the Holy See were taken by surprise by the content of an interview with the Asia Times in which the Argentinian pontiff said the world need not fear China's growing power and avoided any mention of human rights or the restrictions on Catholics and other Christians' freedom of worship in the world's most populous nation.

"A superb example of realpolitik pushed to the extreme," was the verdict of Sandro Magister, one of Italy's leading Vatican experts. Writing on his blog for Italian weekly L'Espresso, Magister lamented Francis' "total silence" on questions of religion and freedom and what he interpreted as an "unrestrained absolutism" of the Chinese communist regime's historical record. In the interview, Francis said China had always been, for him, a "reference point of greatness" and "a great culture, with an inexhaustible wisdom".

The Argentinian pope made only the lightest of allusions to China's troubled recent history, saying a people sometimes "makes a mistake and goes backwards a little, or takes the wrong path and has to retrace its steps to follow the right way". Magister contrasted Francis' optimistic portrayal of China's potential future with the gloomy outlook of Gianni Criveller, a Catholic missionary and China expert based in Hong Kong.

Criveller recently published an article voicing fear for Hong Kong's basic freedoms and highlighting the case of Wei Heping, a priest serving an underground Catholic community found dead in a river in Shanxi province in November in what the authorities have deemed to have been a suicide. "Many believe he met a violent death because of his influence with young people and online," Criveller wrote. "For many Catholics he is a martyr."

Imprisoned, Intimidated Bishops

The plight of Catholics in China, including a recent campaign to remove crosses from church buildings and imprisonment and intimidation of clerics, was also highlighted by American Vatican commentator John Allen in his column on Francis' opening to Beijing. "Those paying a price for their faith in China today may be disappointed that the pontiff did not address their fate more directly," Allen commented, while recalling that dilemmas related to how engage China were not restricted to the Church. "Time will tell ... whether the goodwill a pope buys by skipping over such matters will produce results down the line," Allen wrote.

Francis was given an easier ride in the Italian Catholic daily *Avvenire* by Stefania Falasca, who praised the pontiff for applying "the geopolitics of mercy" to the challenges raised by China's growing weight in the world. The pope's interview follows a discreet visit to the Vatican by a delegation of Chinese officials in January which raised hopes of a breakthrough on the contentious issue of the pope's right to appoint Catholic bishops in China.

Beijing recognizes the country's estimated 12 million Catholics' right to exercise their faith but insists they do so under the auspices of a state-controlled "Catholic Patriotic Association". Within the Vatican there has been a long-running debate between those who argue that the Church should seek to improve relations with China first and hope that yields greater freedom for its followers, and those who maintain that abuses must not go unchallenged. Francis' latest interview suggests the former camp have the upper hand for now.

The Vatican has not had diplomatic relations with China since 1951, with the rupture having come only two years after the founding of the People's Republic. All attempts to restore them have since floundered with Beijing insisting that the Vatican must first give up its recognition of Taiwan as a sovereign state and promise not to interfere in religious issues in China. —AFP

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EU DESIGNS OUTER CIRCLE TO KEEP BRITAIN IN

By Paul Taylor

The European Union formally abandoned on Tuesday the founding principle that all of its members are heading towards ever closer integration, only at different speeds. But whether that will be enough to enable Prime Minister David Cameron to win a referendum perhaps as early as June on maintaining British membership of the EU remains to be seen, given hostility in his Conservative party and the depth of public anxiety about immigration.

A draft deal negotiated by EU authorities with the aim of keeping Britain in the 28-nation bloc recognises for the first time that some countries do not share the objective, enshrined in the 1957 Treaty of Rome, of "ever closer union" and may never go further in political integration. A legally binding decision up for approval by EU leaders says references in the bloc's founding treaties to an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe "do not compel all member states to aim for a common destination".

In other words, member states will no longer be obliged to order the full set menu at European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker's restaurant, but have a recognized right to pick and choose their courses. The text makes explicit a long-term shift in Europe's architecture towards a two-tier or multi-tier system, with the 19-nation euro zone destined to move to deeper political and economic integration even as others stand aside.

Until now, the Brussels orthodoxy had been that all members of a "two-speed Europe" would eventually participate in all European policies, but at their own pace. Britain is already the most semi-detached of EU members. It has opted out of the Schengen zone of passport-free travel and only participates in judicial and police cooperation on an "a la carte" basis. EU officials are keen to avoid the terms offered to Britain triggering a "me too" wave of efforts by others, such as Poland, to row back on existing commitments. Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Romania and Bulgaria all bound themselves in their EU accession treaties to join the single currency once they meet the economic criteria. Since the euro zone's debt crisis, most have stalled preparations. At Britain's behest, the text recognises that "not all member states have the euro as their currency" but it avoids undermining the others' obligation to join. Warsaw's new Eurosceptic government has said it does not intend to adopt the euro during its four-year term.

Insubstantial?

Cameron secured concessions on a range of demands from more say for national parliaments, to denying welfare benefits to new EU migrants arriving in Britain, and a procedure to make it harder for euro zone countries to outvote non-euro members. But hardline Eurosceptics dismissed the package in advance as insubstantial

and too weak to restore national control over immigration, while even some supporters of EU membership said the deal created no new rights or constraints.

"There is nothing in the text that substantially alters the EU rules and laws as far as they apply to Britain or any other country," former Europe Minister Denis MacShane of the opposition Labour party said. "There is no veto for the House of Commons which would have to find 13 other parliaments and governments to object to a EU proposal. Some benefits to EU citizens working in the UK face some changes but that is happening in other member states. There is no interference with the principle of free movement," said the strongly pro-EU MacShane.

Cameron has secured an immediate right to deny newcomers in-work benefits by using a new provision that, if approved, would recognize a state of emergency in Britain's social services due to immigration. However, experts including the head of Britain's independent fiscal watchdog doubt whether the measure will have much impact on migration from poorer EU countries, given that a buoyant labour market is sucking in workers into low-skilled jobs.

Britain neither sought nor received a veto over further euro zone integration, which its finance minister George Osborne has said is in the remorseless logic of sharing a single currency. The EU has fudged the issue of assuaging UK fears of being outvoted by euro members on reg-

ulation affecting the City of London's global financial centre without giving Britain a veto right over such rule-making. The deal includes a procedure allowing a country or group of countries to force a special deliberation and additional efforts to find a solution when it feels disadvantaged.

But how high the issue can be escalated remains to be agreed, and the final decision would rest with finance ministers by majority vote. So Britain could still be outvoted. Similarly, the text gives national parliaments a slightly greater power than before to stop legislative proposals by the European Commission that a majority deem to infringe national prerogatives. Previously, a smaller group of legislatures could send a proposal back to the EU executive for redrafting.

However, the short deadline and large number of parliaments needed to stop a European bill make it unlikely that the so-called "red card" will be waved more frequently than the current "yellow card", which has been used only three times since 2009. For its part, London gave a commitment "not to create obstacles to but facilitate such further deepening" of the economic and monetary union. That would appear to preclude any repeat of a 2011 incident when Cameron tried to veto a fiscal compact treaty designed to strengthen enforcement of EU budget rules in the euro area, only for other member states to adopt the measure as an inter-governmental treaty, bypassing Britain. —Reuters

MAGNUSSEN RETURNS IN NEW-LOOK RENAULT F1 TEAM



PARIS: Renault announced the Formula One comeback of Danish driver Kevin Magnussen at the launch yesterday of a new-look team that will put the French carmaker back on the starting grid as a constructor this season. Magnussen, whose F1 career appeared to have stalled after he spent last year on the sidelines and then got cast aside by McLaren, has replaced Pastor Maldonado after the Venezuelan's funding dried up. He will partner British rookie Jolyon Palmer, whose signing was announced last year by the team when they were racing as Lotus F1. Frenchman Frederic Vasseur will run day-to-day operations as racing director. Renault bought back the team, which they had sold at the end of 2009 after winning championships with Spaniard Fernando Alonso in 2005 and 2006, last December. They will now compete under the Renault Sport Formula One name. — Reuters

BAYERN'S NEW SIGNING CONCUSED IN TRAINING

BERLIN: Bayern Munich's bad luck continued yesterday as new signing Serdar Tasci suffered concussion in his very first training session and had to sit out his introductory press conference. "He went into a collision with his head and was shaken, it means he has a slight concussion. It's a bit unfortunate," admitted Bayern's director of sport Matthias Sammer. The Bundesliga leaders expect the defender to be out for the next two or three days and it is unclear whether he will be fit for the runaway Bundesliga leaders' next league match at fourth-placed Bayer Leverkusen on Saturday. Germany international Tasci, 28, only signed on a six month loan deal from Spartak Moscow on Monday as emergency cover after the Bavarian giants were plagued by a run of injuries in defence. With Javi Martinez, Jerome Boateng and Medhi Benatia all out, Bayern coach Pep Guardiola has just one fully-fit centre-back in Holger Badstuber. Martinez underwent knee surgery in Barcelona on Tuesday, and the club has said the Spanish international will be out for four weeks, while Boateng is expected to be out for three months. —AFP

PELLEGRINI DESERVES SILVER SEND-OFF: HART

LONDON: Manchester City goalkeeper Joe Hart says that he and his team-mates "love" outgoing manager Manuel Pellegrini and are determined to give him a trophy-laden send-off before Pep Guardiola arrives. City announced yesterday that Bayern Munich coach Guardiola will take over from Pellegrini at the end of the season, bringing an end to the Chilean's three-year stay at the Etihad Stadium. City are in contention for glory in the Premier League, Champions League, FA Cup and League Cup and Hart says it would be fitting for Pellegrini, 62, to bow out with some silverware in his hands. "It was never going to be a distraction. We're here to win titles, Manuel's here to win titles," Hart said after Tuesday's 1-0 win at Sunderland, which kept City three points below league leaders Leicester City. "We back him. We love him as our manager," Hart added, on CityTV: "He has been a top manager for us." —AFP



WESSELS LAUDS RETURN OF ABU DHABI WILSON TENNIS CUP

ABU DHABI: More than 300 tennis players are expected to participate in the region's largest tennis participation event, the Abu Dhabi Wilson Tennis Cup, which will take place from 4 - 25 March at Zayed Sports City.

The fourth edition includes twenty divisions in the Open and Cup categories which ensure play is evenly matched across the 500 expected entries. It is the only tournament that allows athletes to enter into multiple divisions, separating men, women, boys and girls by both age and skill. It is lauded by the community for its inclusive atmosphere and development opportunities.

Among those committed to participate is Peter Wessels, defending champion in the prestigious Men's Open category and former ATP 47. Commenting on the tournament, he explained its significance for the local tennis scene: "Having so many players, parents and supporters around at the beautiful location of Zayed Sports City really makes you feel part of a club, some-

thing that is quite unique in the UAE.

"I believe it's very important for the development of tennis players to have these tournaments, so players can match up and lift each other up to a higher level. It is also a great opportunity for people that are usually not involved in tennis to see and experience how much fun it can be."

Wessels' counterpart, three-time undefeated Women's Open Champion, Magali De Latre, commented: "I encourage my friends and even my students to join the tournament because there is a good mix of strong and not-so-strong matches for everyone, so it is a fun way to enjoy the sport with friends."

The tournament is supported by Wilson, Sport 360, Abu Dhabi Sports Council and PSS Emirates. It has seen a significant year-on-year rise in attendance, growing from 83 players in 2013 to 339 last year. The organisers, Zayed Sports City, expect the competition to be at capacity this year.

Barry Bremner, General Manager of Zayed

Sports City, said: "The Abu Dhabi Wilson Tennis Cup has been a complete hit with the players and really encompasses the spirit of the sport. It's about inclusiveness, sportsmanship and personal growth. The response from tennis players around the country has been incredible and anyone who wants to participate should register early so as not to miss out."

Kamyar Minachi, Managing Director for Wilson Middle East said: "Wilson is a worldwide racket sports leader brand for its high quality tennis equipment and it so follows that we would associate with high quality tennis programmes like the Abu Dhabi Wilson Tennis Cup. It's clear to me there is no better amateur tennis tournament in the region and that is why we wholeheartedly support it year on year."

Entries for the fourth Abu Dhabi Wilson Tennis Cup are now open. Registrations are accepted at the International Tennis Centre or by contacting Laith Al Ani at laith@pss-emirates.com



FORMER JAPAN STAR KIYOHARA ARRESTED ON DRUGS CHARGE

TOKYO: Former Japanese baseball star Kazuhiro Kiyohara has been arrested on suspicion of possessing stimulant drugs, Tokyo police said yesterday, in a humiliating fall from grace for the one-time sporting idol.

The 48-year-old former Yomiuri Giants slugger, once one of the biggest names in Japanese baseball, was taken into custody and accused of possession of approximately 0.1 gram of an undisclosed substance after police raided his home in the plush Azabu district of Tokyo on Tuesday night.

Kiyohara admitted the drugs belonged to him and did not resist arrest, the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department told AFP.

He is set to undergo medical examinations to determine whether he was using the stimulants himself, it added. Japanese television yesterday showed Kiyohara with head bowed being taken away for questioning in the back of an unmarked police car, reporting that a pipe, syringe and four mobile phones were among items seized.

"I'm lost for words," Japan's baseball commissioner Katsuhiko Kumazaki told local media. "Baseball is a beacon for young children and ex-players too must continue to be role models."

"We must double our efforts to reject and stamp out this kind of harmful behaviour and (the use of) illegal substances," added the Nippon Professional Baseball boss.

A top draft pick out of high school, the Osaka-born Kiyohara smashed 31 home runs in his rookie year in Japanese baseball with the Seibu Lions in 1986 and went on to win six Japan Series titles with the team.

After joining former Major League star Hideki Matsui at the Giants in 1997, Kiyohara won two more Japan Series crowns, although he was often criticised for spending long periods on the bench with a variety of injuries throughout his 22-year career.

Drug rumours

He retired in 2008 ranked fifth on the list of career home runs with 525. However, Kiyohara has been no stranger to controversy and a weekly magazine reported in 2014 that the former player



Kazuhiro Kiyohara

had been hospitalised because of a drug problem, but his management denied the rumour, insisting he had been undergoing treatment for diabetes.

Due to his power, Kiyohara was among a handful of Japanese players subjected to whispers of suspected steroid use after the Barry Bonds scandal rocked Major League Baseball in the United States, although doping is less part of Japan's sporting culture than in many other countries.

During his heyday, Kiyohara was often spotted out at Tokyo's nightspots with tabloids salaciously reporting on alleged visits to hostess clubs and even claiming he had ties with gangsters.

Celebrity drug cases in Japan are relatively few and far between and tend to be splashed front and centre across the news when they do happen.

Actress-singer Noriko Sakai received a suspended jail sentence for using illegal stimulants in 2009, while pop star Aska also escaped with a suspended term two years ago after being found guilty of using stimulants and MDMA, commonly known as ecstasy.

In arguably Japan's most infamous drug bust, Beatle Paul McCartney spent nine days in a Tokyo jail in 1980 after being caught at the airport with a bag of marijuana in his suitcase. — AFP

TOM JAMES TO MAKE WALES RETURN IN 6-NATIONS OPENER

CARDIFF: Cardiff Blues wing Tom James will end his five-year Wales exile in Sunday's Six Nations game against Ireland in Dublin after being named in the team announced yesterday.

James, 28, last played for Wales in November 2010, but will win his 10th cap on the wing after impressing head coach Warren Gatland with his club form this season. Blues full-back Gareth Anscombe, Scarlets prop Rob Evans and Ospreys flanker Justin Tipuric also start, while captain Sam Warburton moves to blindside flanker and centre Jonathan Davies returns after a knee injury. "We are excited by the make-up of the squad. It's very experienced, along with one eye looking to the future," said Gatland in a press release. "Rob (Evans) gets a start at loosehead. He's played well for us before and deserves a chance looking ahead to the next few years."

"We have been impressed with Tom James's form for Cardiff Blues and we are excited by the mix of the back-row, which has played well together before."

"It's great to see Jonathan (Davies) back and alongside Jamie (Roberts), which makes a pretty experienced midfield. Gareth (Anscombe) at full-back also gives us the option of having two first receivers." Clermont centre Davies missed the World Cup with a knee ligament injury, but returns to resume his midfield partnership alongside Harlequins' Roberts.

A powerful bench, meanwhile, features British and Irish Lions trio Alex Cuthbert, Gethin Jenkins and Dan Lydiate, who has been out for over a month with a neck problem.

But there is no place in the match-day 23 for full-back Liam Williams, despite him playing 60 minutes for the Scarlets last Saturday as he returns to fitness following a foot injury.

Wasps lock Bradley Davies, named among the replacements, will win his 50th cap if he comes on. In total Gatland has made four changes from Wales's last game, a World Cup quarter-final defeat by South Africa, with James, Davies, Evans and Tipuric replacing Cuthbert, Tyler Morgan, Jenkins and Lydiate.

Wales finished third behind champions Ireland and England in last year's Six Nations.

They beat Ireland 23-16 at the Millennium Stadium last year, but Gatland has not forgotten their 26-3 defeat at Irish hands on their last trip to Dublin in February 2014.

"It's going to be a physical game," said the New Zealander. "Two years ago, they strangled us out of the match and played well, and we have to rise to that challenge on Sunday."



Tom James

Wales team (15-1) announced on Wednesday for Sunday's Six Nations game against Ireland at Dublin's Aviva Stadium (1500 GMT):

Gareth Anscombe; George North, Jonathan Davies, Jamie Roberts, Tom James; Dan Biggar, Gareth Davies; Taulupe Faletau,

Justin Tipuric, Sam Warburton (capt); Alun Wyn Jones, Luke Charteris; Samson Lee, Scott Baldwin, Rob Evans Replacements: Ken Owens, Gethin Jenkins, Tomas Francis, Bradley Davies, Dan Lydiate, Lloyd Williams, Rhys Priestland, Alex Cuthbert. — AFP

FEDERER OUT FOR MONTH AFTER KNEE SURGERY

BASEL: Seventeen-time Grand Slam winner Roger Federer underwent "successful" surgery on his knee yesterday and will be ruled out of action for one month, his agent said.

Federer underwent the surgery to repair a torn meniscus sustained the day after his semi-final match at the Australian Open, according to Tony Godsick.

As a result of the surgery, Federer will now miss the ATP tournaments in Rotterdam and Dubai this month. "I am so disappointed to have to miss Rotterdam and Dubai as they are two of my favourite tournaments on the ATP World Tour," Federer said.

"While this is an unfortunate setback, I feel grateful that up until now I have remained mostly healthy throughout my career. My doctors have assured me that the surgery was a success and with proper rehabilitation, I will be able to return to the Tour soon."

The 34-year-old Swiss great suffered a four-

set defeat by eventual winner Novak Djokovic in the Australian Open semi-finals, going down 6-1, 6-2, 3-6, 6-3, in his eighth loss to the Serb in their last 10 Grand Slam meetings.

Federer hasn't beaten the runaway world number one at a major since the Wimbledon semi-finals in 2012, when he last won a Grand Slam title. Unlike great rival Rafael Nadal, Federer has enjoyed a relatively injury-free career, the exception being bouts of recurring back pain. The last time that happened was at the 2014 ATP World Tour Finals in London when he withdrew after the last minute from the final against Djokovic.

The following week, however, he returned to action and helped Switzerland win the Davis Cup for the first time, defeating France in the final. Federer will now aim at being fit in time for the first two Masters Series tournaments of the year at Indian Wells and Miami in March. — AFP



KUWAIT DISABLED SPORT CLUB CONCLUDES TOURNAMENT

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Disabled Sport Club concluded its first local tournament for the disabled this season on Tuesday.

Swimmers Abdelrahman Al-Shalqani, Abdelrahman Al-Kandari and Yousuf Khalaf were winners in the com-

petitions of 25 meter, free style, and back strokes. Meanwhile female players Alaa Ibrahim, Daleel Al-Adwani and Jana Ibrahim were winners in the girls' category.

Results of the swimming competition for mental disabilities showed Jassim Al-Mashmoum, Fahad Al-Hasawi

and Khalid Al-Ajmi won the 25m free style. The individual Table Tennis event was won by Abdallah Ashour for the beginner's category (seated), while Nizar Ramadhan won the general competition (seated) and Ali Al-Sane won the standing event.

Ali Al-Sane and Abdallah Al-Saif won

first place in the standing doubles, while Hamid Wabdon and Nizar Ramadhan won the seated event.

KDSC Secretary General Abdallah Al-Azmi lauded the tournament's success, which resulted in the discovery of several skilled players in basketball, swimming and table tennis.

Al-Azmi said the club organized the tournament for all age groups at this time to coincide with Kuwait's celebrations of national days in order to bring happiness to the players.

He said the club will organize several tournaments in the future to develop and enhance players' performance.



CLARKE REPEATS PROLOGUE WIN, FROOME HAPPY TO 'STAY UPRIGHT'

MELBOURNE: William Clarke won the prologue to the Herald Sun Tour in Melbourne yesterday with Briton Chris Froome satisfied with his down the pack finish.

Drapac Pro Cycling rider Clarke was repeating his prologue victory from last year in the five-stage race which Froome has targeted as a springboard to a busy year. The Double Tour de France champion is eyeing a third triumph in cycling's blue riband ahead of the Rio Olympics in August. Froome completed the 2.1km dash in two minutes 42.1 seconds to place him 26th, eight seconds behind Clarke who wears yellow for Thursday's first stage at Healesville.

The 29-year-old prologue specialist from Tasmania clocked 2:34.27 to beat Caleb Evans by one second while Neil Van Der Ploeg took third place.

He bettered his winning time of 12 months ago by a second. "I'm just a little bit

faster than last year," he said. Evans said: "Will was super-strong today, as he was last year and he does really well in these short time trials. It was always going to be hard to beat him." As for Froome, he described the dash as "a bit of a lung opener". "Just under three minutes - it's a short, intense little sprint," he added.

"It was a good ride by Will there to repeat that and win by one second, it was impressive. The main objective today was just to stay upright. I think the racing is still going to be decided over these next few days and undoubtedly on Arthurs Seat at the end, that's going to be the big day."

Clarke is alive to the danger presented by Froome and Team Sky. "On paper they've got a lot of guys that have ridden the Tour de France and Froome's won the Tour de France," he said. "They know how to control a race so they can definitely take control if they want to." — AFP

MCILROY HAS MASTERS ON HIS MIND

DUBAI: Rory McIlroy loves being part of the conversation, especially when it comes to the Masters. The world number two, who is defending his Dubai Desert Classic title this week, will head to Augusta National in early April trying to win the one major championship that has eluded him and complete a career Grand Slam.

Golf legend Lee Trevino, in a recent interview, said he was sure McIlroy would achieve more than one Grand Slam in his career, but the 26-year-old said such talk does not alleviate any pressure on him.

"Of course, you always want to be part of the discussion, even if sometimes it gets to you or fills your head with thoughts that you don't maybe want in your head at certain points," said McIlroy.

"But it's always better to be a part of the conversation than not. It's just words. It's just someone giving their opinion. But the difference between someone saying that and me actually going out and doing it are two entirely different things.

"Yeah, I'd like to think by the end of my career, I'll hopefully have won each major more than once, but I don't know if I'm going to do it. I hope I do." Trevino seems to think that I will, so maybe I need to go talk to him!

"I don't think it takes any pressure off going into Augusta. Of course I want to win there one day, but I've got hopefully 20-plus years of giving it a go and hopefully by that 20th year, I'm not going for my first green jacket." Hopefully, I will be going for my third or fourth.

McIlroy was delighted to be back on a golf course where he hasn't finished outside the top-10 in his last six starts.

He is also a two-time champion of the



DUBAI: Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland talks during a press conference a day ahead of Omega Dubai Desert Classic golf tournament in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, yesterday.— AP

Dubai Desert Classic, and completed a Dubai double last year, winning the DP World Tour Championship in November.

"It's always nice to be back in Dubai, and I guess the last couple of times I've played here, I've done pretty well, so I'm sort of going for three in a row in Dubai with winning here last year, and then with the DP World," added McIlroy.

"It seems to bring out my best golf. And I've

got great memories here at Emirates Golf Club, winning my first tournament, making my first cut as a pro. So it's always great to be back.

"Yeah, if I was leaving here on Sunday night and didn't win, I'd be disappointed." The \$2.5 million tournament starts Thursday with McIlroy the highest ranked player in the field. Also in the fray are world number six Henrik Stenson of Sweden, and the 18th ranked Louis Oosthuizen of South Africa. — AFG

LORENZO TOPS SEPANG TESTING AHEAD OF ROSSI, MARQUEZ

KUALA LUMPUR: Reigning world champion Jorge Lorenzo on a Yamaha yesterday topped a rain affected final day of the 2016 official MotoGP test at Sepang circuit in Malaysia ahead of his teammate Valentino Rossi and rival Marc Marquez.

Spanish Lorenzo logged 1min 59.580sec — 0.976 seconds ahead of Rossi who significantly improved his lap time and pace during the three-day testing. Marquez, also from Spain and Honda's double MotoGP world champion, who has been struggling with the machine over the past two days, was third — 1.303 seconds behind his fellow countryman Lorenzo.

A rain shower momentarily stopped testing in the afternoon. British rider Cal Crutchlow on a Honda was fourth, with a time of 2mins 00.992 seconds while retired Australian double world champion Casey Stoner, back on track testing for Ducati, was fifth fastest, 1.490 seconds behind the pacesetter.

Spaniard Dani Pedrosa, who had complained about problems with his Honda machine, managed to secure sixth with a

time of 2min 01.161sec while Italian Danilo Petrucci on a Ducati was seventh, 1.637 seconds down on Lorenzo. On Monday Lorenzo was the fastest, clocking 2min 0.684sec, just over one second faster than Rossi who has made clear his intentions to win his 10th World Championship title.

Petrucci topped the timesheets on day two while Frenchman Loris Baz's dramatic accident Tuesday saw manufacturer Michelin withdrawing its soft tyre for the duration of the Sepang test.

Baz 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. From Malaysia, MotoGP riders will head to Australia for three days at Phillip Island from February 17 to 19.

After the first two tests, the premier class will head to Qatar from the second to fourth of March for their final official test. The MotoGP world championship begins in Losail, Qatar, on March 17. — AFP



SEPANG: Movistar Yamaha MotoGP Italian rider Valentino Rossi (R) sits inside his team garage during the last day of 2016 MotoGP pre-season test at the Sepang International circuit yesterday.—AFP

DECHAMBEAU'S UNIQUE IRONS EARN MIXED BAG OF RESULTS

DUBAI: From outscoring Jordan Spieth and Rory McIlroy in Abu Dhabi to barely making the cut in Qatar, amateur Bryson DeChambeau has discovered that his unique "scientific" approach cannot always prevent the vexing dips in form that dog every golfer.

Last year, the Californian became only the fifth player to win the top two amateur titles in the United States in the same season, his victories especially remarkable because he uses a set of irons fitted with shafts of identical length. Those clubs, which McIlroy admitted to sneakily trying out in Abu Dhabi, are heathen to traditionalists and doubts remains as to whether DeChambeau can join the game's professional elite with such a bag selection.

The physics student's mixed performance on the European Tour's so-called "Desert Swing", the final leg of which starts in Dubai on Thursday, may have bolstered the argument for his detractors. Two weeks ago in Abu Dhabi, the 22-year-old shot a first-round eight-under 64, two clear of four-time major winner Rory McIlroy and four better than world number one Spieth in just his seventh appearance at a professional tournament and first on the regular European Tour.

DeChambeau's second-round 72 earned him a spot in the leading trio that included McIlroy.

Such exalted company proved too much and a third-round 78 created a puzzle for his scientific mind, although equipment choice did not seem to be part of his post-tournament analysis. "It's great to look back and go 'why did something change?'"

DeChambeau said. "It was too much adrenaline, too much going for me. I was 10 under through 20 holes. I know I can do it. The issue is how do you control the different situations that amount when the pressure is on, when you're playing with the best players."

Dressed on that third day in beige slacks, matching flat-cap and suede shoes, and shorn of the usual sponsor logos that adorn professional golfers' attire, DeChambeau's upright, aristocratic walk added to the impression of a player from a bygone age, even if his approach is cutting-edge. "I'm an analyst, I like analyzing things, I love understanding numbers and figuring things out," DeChambeau said in a video that garnered more than 290,000 views within hours of being posted on Facebook.

He has been labeled the most interesting man in golf. "I just like being different and if people say that I'm that, then I guess it's cool," DeChambeau added.

GOLFING SCIENTIST

As well as their length, his irons have identical shaft and lie angles, and were developed after studying Homer Kelley's cult 1969 manual "The Golfing Machine". The only variation is in the loft, enabling him to hit different distances. "It helps me keep my same posture, same setup, same everything," DeChambeau admitted.

Equipment makers remain dubious. "If manufacturers thought this would be beneficial it's highly likely they would have done it by now because production would be easier," golf club

fitter Mark Woodward said. DeChambeau, who likened his pioneering traits to those of George Washington and Albert Einstein, seems content to deepen his golfing education.

"Every day it's a learning process. I'm a golfing scientist, so I don't take it with any emotion," said DeChambeau, whose struggles continued in Qatar, where he made the cut by one stroke and limped home 17 adrift of winner Branden Grace. "Regarding the past two weeks, it's been fun. Learned a lot. Messed up a couple times but that's how it goes as an intern," he said.

His iconoclastic approach includes dunking golf balls in salted water to check for imperfections and also something called "vector green reading".

"I'm able to read greens at a faster, better level than most," he said. "From a strategic standpoint I can't give you all my secrets, but it's based on shot dispersion." DeChambeau, who halted his studies at Southern Methodist University after his golf team was suspended due to rules violations involving a former coach, has temporarily forsaken the game's riches to remain an amateur. He cannot receive money from tournaments, equipment manufacturers or agents and was coy as to whether his club maker would try to market his irons.

"I can't say too much about that yet," he said. "There is some work we're doing to try and figure out a fitting system." There will be no shortage of sponsors seeking his endorsement when he does join the paid ranks after his US Masters debut in April.— Reuters

SUPER BOWL ROSTERS FILLED WITH CASTOFFS FROM OTHER TEAMS

SAN JOSE: Evan Mathis got released by the Eagles because Chip Kelly didn't want to give the two-time Pro Bowl guard a raise. Kurt Coleman got dumped by Kelly a year earlier.

Things turned out super for both guys. Mathis is blocking for Peyton Manning and the Denver Broncos. Coleman led Carolina with seven interceptions and picked two more passes in the NFC championship game. As for Kelly, he landed in San Francisco too - after the Eagles fired him and he became the 49ers new coach. "This is the ultimate dream for a football player to be able to play in the Super Bowl," Mathis said. "It's much more valuable (than money)." Coleman was a seventh-round pick who started 27 games for the Eagles before Kelly arrived in 2013 and made him a backup. The safety played for Kansas City in 2014 and rejuvenated his career with the Panthers.

"I was a guy that was not as fast or may not have been as tall or strong or whatever it may be," Coleman said. "If you believe it in your heart, you can achieve it."

Both Super Bowl teams have rejects from other clubs playing prominent roles for them. Finding players on the waiver wire has helped the Panthers overcome injuries. "We watch film and we work at it," Carolina general manager Dave Gettleman said. "Mark Koncz, our pro scouting director, does a terrific job. He's very thorough and a big part of it is finding guys that fit what we do."

Here are more castoffs who will be play-

ing in the Super Bowl:

TED GINN JR.: A top-10 pick by Miami in 2007, Ginn never lived up to his potential. The wide receiver also played three seasons for San Francisco, spent 2013 with Carolina and was released by Arizona after one year. Ginn returned to the Panthers and led the team with 10 touchdown receptions.

ROBERT MCCLAIN: The Patriots cut the cornerback in training camp and he didn't play all season until Carolina signed him in December. He's now a starter because of injuries to other players.

SHILOH KEO: He was unemployed when he tweeted Broncos defensive coordinator Wade Phillips asking for a chance. Denver signed him after a rash of injuries to their safeties and he intercepted the pass that led to the game-winning drive in Week 17. The Broncos would've been a sixth seed if they lost that game.

MICHAEL OHER: He was cut by Tennessee one year into a \$20-million, four-year contract. Cam Newton reached out to him so he signed with the Panthers and the left tackle had a solid season protecting the quarterback's blind side.

JARED ALLEN: The Bears traded the four-time All-Pro defensive end to Carolina in October and he ended up starting 12 games.

CORTLAND FINNEGAN: Carolina signed the defensive back off the retired list in late November and he played the final five games. Finnegan intercepted a pass in a 31-24 playoff win over Seattle. — AP



LOS ANGELES: Los Angeles Lakers forward Kobe Bryant, center, comes down with a rebound while under pressure from Minnesota Timberwolves center Karl-Anthony Towns, left, and forward Julius Randle watches during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, in Los Angeles. The Lakers won 119-115. — AP

KOBE SCORES 38, LAKERS BEAT WOLVES TO END 10-GAME SKID

LOS ANGELES: Kobe Bryant hit seven 3-pointers while scoring a season-high 38 points, and the Los Angeles Lakers snapped their 10-game losing streak with a 119-115 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Tuesday night. Lou Williams scored 20 points for the Lakers, who avoided the longest losing streak in the 16-time champion franchise's history despite blowing a 16-point lead in the second half. Los Angeles had lost 10 straight for the first time since 1994. Bryant took charge with a vintage performance in his farewell season, repeatedly scoring from the perimeter in the Lakers' first win since Jan. 12. After Minnesota took the lead in the waning minutes, Bryant put the Lakers back ahead with dramatic back-to-back 3-pointers. He scored 14 of the Lakers' 18 points in the final 5:02. Andrew Wiggins scored 30 points for the Timberwolves, who have lost five straight and 16 of 18.



PHOENIX: Alex Len #21 of the Phoenix Suns attempts a shot over Bismack Biyombo #8 of the Toronto Raptors during the first half of the NBA game at Talking Stick Resort Arena on Tuesday in Phoenix, Arizona. — AFP

HENRY, GUPTILL SUPERB AS NZ THRASH AUSTRALIA BY 159 RUNS

AUCKLAND: Matt Henry shrugged off the disappointment of missing out on selection for next month's World Twenty20 with a hostile spell of pace bowling that helped New Zealand ease to a 159-run win over Australia in the first one-day international yesterday.

The 24-year-old Henry, who has been regularly overlooked this summer and then brought in as injury cover, took 3-20 in his first four overs at Eden Park as he and Trent Boult reduced the visitors to 41 for six in their pursuit of 308 to win.

They were helped by an lbw decision against David Warner, who was told not to review by partner George Bailey despite the opener's concerns about the height. Ball tracking suggested the ball would have gone well over the stumps, causing Warner to slam his bat into his pads as he watched the replay on the big screen.

Wicketkeeper Matthew Wade (37) and all-rounder James Faulkner (36), however, then put on 79 runs to partially resurrect Australia's innings as they chased New Zealand's 307-8.

Once Wade holed out at deep midwicket in the 21st over and Faulkner was

bowled by Adam Milne in the 22nd, the match was all but over and they were bowled out for 148 in just 24.2 overs.

Henry finished with 3-41, while Boult had 3-38. Mitchell Santner bowled just two balls and took the last two wickets.

Martin Guptill top scored for New Zealand with 90, his highest total against Australia and his 29th one-day international half century.

The 29-year-old opener, who hit one of his five sixes onto the roof of the stand at the Auckland venue, shared in partnerships of 79 runs with captain Brendon McCullum (44) and 100 with Henry Nicholls (61).

New Zealand, who were asked to bat by Australia captain Steve Smith, had initially looked on course to set a total well in excess of 320 but lost wickets at critical times when batsmen looked set to push on. John Hastings was the most economical of the visiting bowlers with 1-39 from 10 overs, while fifth seamer Mitchell Marsh had figures of 2-35 from seven.

The three-match one-day international series moves on to Wellington on Saturday with the sides also scheduled to play two tests. — Reuters



AUCKLAND: Corey Anderson of New Zealand bowls during the first one-day international cricket match between New Zealand and Australia at Eden Park in Auckland yesterday. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

AUCKLAND: Complete scoreboard the first ODI between New Zealand and Australia in Auckland yesterday:

New Zealand		Australia	
M. Guptill run out (Maxwell)	90	S. Marsh c Guptill b Henry	5
B. McCullum b Faulkner	44	D. Warner lbw Boult	12
K. Williamson c Marsh b Hazlewood	0	S. Smith b Henry	18
H. Nicholls c Wade b Marsh	61	G. Bailey c Anderson b Henry	2
G. Elliott c Hastings b Marsh	21	G. Maxwell c Williamson b Boult	0
C. Anderson c Richardson b Hastings	10	M. Marsh c McCullum b Boult	0
L. Ronchi b Hazlewood	16	M. Wade c Nicholls b Anderson	37
M. Santner not out	35	J. Faulkner b Milne	36
A. Milne c & b Faulkner	14	J. Hastings c Guptill b Santner	8
M. Henry not out	5	K. Richardson c Williamson b Santner	19
Extras (b1, lb3, w7)	11	J. Hazlewood not out	0
Total (8 wickets; 50 overs)	307	Extras (lb2, w9)	11
Fall of wickets: 1-79 (McCullum), 2-81 (Williamson), 3-181 (Guptill), 4-205 (Elliott), 5-231 (Nicholls), 6-234 (Anderson), 7-263 (Ronchi), 8-290 (Milne)		Total (10 wickets; 24.2 overs)	148
Did not bat: T. Boult		Fall of wickets: 1-10 (S. Marsh), 2-33 (Smith), 3-39 (Warner), 4-40 (Bailey), 5-40 (Maxwell), 6-41 (M. Marsh), 7-120 (Wade), 8-121 (Faulkner), 9-148 (Richardson), 10-148 (Hastings)	
Bowling: Hazlewood 10-1-68-2 (w1), Richardson 10-1-64-0, Hastings 10-0-39-1, Faulkner 10-0-67-2, Maxwell 3-0-30-0 (w2), Marsh 7-0-35-2.		Bowling: Boult 7-0-38-3, Henry 6-0-41-3 (w3), Milne 6-0-46-1 (w3), Anderson 4-1-14-1 (w3), Elliott 1-0-7-0, Santner 0.2-0-0-2.	
		Result: New Zealand won by 159 runs.	

ROCKETS 115, HEAT 102

James Harden scored 26 points and tied a career-high with 14 assists as Houston snapped a three-game skid. The Rockets had a double-digit lead for most of the second half and were up by 10 when Josh Smith scored all of the team's points in a 7-2 run that pushed the advantage to 104-89 with about five minutes remaining. Houston started Smith, a 6-foot-9 forward, at center with Dwight Howard serving a one-game suspension for making contact with an official this weekend and Clint Capela out with a thigh injury. Smith scored a season-high 19 points in his second start this season and first since returning to Houston in a trade from the Clippers on Jan. 22. Luol Deng had 17 points for the Heat whose season-high four game winning streak ended.

RAPTORS 102, SUNS 97

Kyle Lowry scored 26 points, including five 3-pointers, DeMar DeRozan added 22 points and Toronto spoiled the debut of Phoenix interim coach Earl Watson. The Raptors, whose franchise-record 11-game losing streak ended Monday night in Denver, led the entire second half but had to hold on at the finish. Markieff Morris had 30 points and 11 rebounds, both season highs, for the Suns, who fired coach Jeff Hornacek on Monday and promoted the 36-year-old Watson to the interim job. Phoenix rookie Devin Booker added 27 points, matching his career best with six 3s. Archie Goodwin had 18 points and a career-best 12 assists for the Suns, who have lost five in a row and 20 of their last 22.

CELTICS 97, KNICKS 89

Isaiah Thomas had 20 points and eight assists, and Boston wore down New York. Jae Crowder and Tyler Zeller each added 16 points, while reserves Evan Turner and Kelly Olynyk were also in double figures as the Celtics were fresher and sharper in dominating the final 15 minutes. Turner had 14 points and 10 rebounds, and Olynyk scored 13 points in the Celtics' fifth victory in six games. Carmelo Anthony had 16 points and 14 rebounds but shot just 4 for 16 in the Knicks' sixth loss in seven games. Robin Lopez added 17 points and 13 rebounds, while Arron Afflalo ended a shooting slump with 18 points but had some careless turnovers.

TRAIL BLAZERS 107, BUCKS 95

CJ McCollum had 30 points and Portland got its season-high fifth straight win. Damian Lillard had 14 points and 12 assists for his 11th double-double of the season. Al-Farouq Aminu added 16 points for the Blazers, who have won nine of their last 11. Khris Middleton had 21 points and eight rebounds for the Bucks, who have lost four straight and six of their last seven. Milwaukee was coming off a 111-104 loss at Sacramento the night before. Giannis Antetokounmpo added 19 points and Greg Monroe had 17 for the Bucks, both also with eight rebounds apiece. — AP

NBA results/standings

Boston 97, NY Knicks 89; Houston 115, Miami 102; Toronto 104, Phoenix 97; Portland 107, Milwaukee 95; LA Lakers 119, Minnesota 115.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference				
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB				
Toronto	33	16	.673	-	Oklahoma City	37	13	.740
Boston	28	22	.560	5.5	Portland	24	26	.480
NY Knicks	23	28	.451	11	Utah	22	25	.468
Brooklyn	12	37	.245	21	Denver	19	30	.388
Philadelphia	7	41	.146	25.5	Minnesota	14	36	.280
Central Division				Pacific Division				
Cleveland	35	12	.745	-	Golden State	44	4	.917
Chicago	26	21	.553	9	LA Clippers	32	16	.667
Detroit	26	23	.531	10	Sacramento	21	27	.438
Indiana	25	23	.521	10.5	Phoenix	14	36	.280
Milwaukee	20	31	.392	17	LA Lakers	10	41	.196
Southeast Division				Southwest Division				
Atlanta	28	22	.560	-	San Antonio	40	8	.833
Miami	27	22	.551	0.5	Memphis	29	20	.592
Charlotte	23	25	.479	4	Dallas	28	23	.549
Washington	21	25	.457	5	Houston	26	25	.510
Orlando	21	26	.447	5.5	New Orleans	18	29	.383

SPALLETTI HAILS SALAH AS 'PHARAOHS' RULE ROMA

MILAN: Roma coach Luciano Spalletti hailed the enthusiasm and clinical finishing of Mohamed Salah after a precious 2-0 league win over Sassuolo yesterday that had a particularly Egyptian flavour. Egyptian international Salah put the visitors ahead with a "cracking" left-footed strike from the edge of the area after just 11 minutes at the Mapei Stadium.

When Domenico Berardi missed an 88th-minute penalty for the hosts after Roma midfielder Radja Nainggolan was booked for a second time for a foul in the area-Roma twisted the knife.

Four minutes later on-loan AC Milan striker Stephan El Shaarawy, an Italy international whose father is Egyptian, escaped his marker to meet Diego Perotti's cutback in the area to fire past Andrea Consigli. It secured Roma's second consecutive win under Spalletti and the former Zenit St Petersburg handler had special praise for Salah: "He's a great kid who feeds on enthusiasm and through these results he will get even more. "He scored a cracking goal and deserves all the credit." "I'm happy with the goal, but mostly because it helped us

to the win," said Salah, who has now hit six league goals this season. Roma remain in fifth place and sit nine points behind leaders Napoli ahead of their trip to Lazio later, when the remaining league fixtures will be played.

But Spalletti believes Tuesday's performance has injected fresh life into his embattled side's campaign only three weeks after the sacking of French coach Rudi Garcia.

"If we show the same spirit as we did tonight (Tuesday) we can recreate that buzz which, if transferred to the dressing

room and around the club, could make for a great dynamic," added Spalletti, who steered Roma to successive Cup triumphs in his previous spell in charge of the club (2005-2009). Salah may already be an integral part of Roma, who decided to buy the 23-year-old outright from Chelsea earlier this season, but El Shaarawy's arrival at the club has helped revive Roma's faint 'scudetto' hopes. 'Il Faraone' (The Pharaoh), as El Shaarawy is known in football circles, hit his maiden Roma goal in a 3-1 league win at home to Frosinone last weekend and the strik-

er's second has boosted his bid to be recalled to Antonio Conte's national side ahead of this summer's Euro 2016 finals. "I made no secret of the fact when I signed for Roma. It's one of my aims," said El Shaarawy, who joined the capital club on loan after playing at Ligue 1 side Monaco in the opening half of the season.

"The coach has backed me ever since I joined Roma and I really must thank him for that. I'm pleased I've made a positive start but I have to keep working hard." — AFP

KANE'S DOUBLE DESTROYS NORWICH

the hosts' fragile rearguard.

IMPRESSIVE SEASON

The goal came after Christian Eriksen's corner was only half cleared to Toby Alderweireld on the edge of the penalty area.

Alderweireld's shot was blocked, but Eriksen pounced on the rebound and drilled a low strike that Norwich goalkeeper Declan Rudd could only parry towards Alli, who gleefully tapped in from close-range.

The 19-year-old's seventh club goal of his impressive breakthrough season might have been a more mundane affair than his last-a sublime contender among the best of the season to date against Crystal Palace in January.

Regardless of the quality, the significance was clear to see as Tottenham, confidence soaring, threatened to blow Norwich away before half-time.

South Korea forward Son Heung-min forced Rudd into a good save when he produced a deft flicked effort from Kane's cross.

Pochettino's men were in complete control and they doubled their lead in the 30th minute when referee Kevin Friend awarded a penalty after Alli was brought down by Norwich defender Sebastien Bassong.

Kane had scored a penalty in Tottenham's 3-0 win over the Canaries on Boxing Day and the England forward was nerveless from the spot again as he stroked home his 17th club goal of the season.

It took a decent stop from Rudd to deny Kane his second goal and moments later Alli headed wide when he should really have scored from Danny Rose's cross.

Alli came off at half-time, reportedly with an illness, and his absence robbed Tottenham of their driving force, with Norwich looking reinvigorated as a result.

Steven Naismith headed narrowly wide for the hosts before Bassong saw his close-range finish ruled out for offside.

But Norwich's pressure soon fizzled out and Kane capped the Spurs stroll when he slotted home in the 90th minute. — AFP



OLD TRAFFORD: Manchester United's English striker Wayne Rooney (C) celebrates scoring their third goal during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Stoke City at Old Trafford in Manchester, north west England, on Tuesday. — AFP

MAN UTD REKINDLE GLORY DAYS WITH WIN OVER STOKE



MANCHESTER: Manchester United produced one of their best performances under beleaguereed boss Louis van Gaal as they lifted the gloom around Old Trafford with a 3-0 win over Stoke on Tuesday.

Van Gaal's side equalled their biggest Premier League win of the season thanks to goals from Jesse Lingard, Anthony Martial and Wayne Rooney. And the timing couldn't have been better as United delivered a strong performance 24 hours after the high-profile appointment of Pep Guardiola as manager of their bitter rivals Manchester City.

Guardiola's impending arrival in the close-season as the replacement for Manuel Pellegrini is designed to make City the dominant force not only in Manchester but also in Europe.

United look to be in danger of falling behind their neighbours as they struggle to even qualify for next season's Champions League, while question marks persist over their managerial position. Van Gaal was booed by United's supporters after their last home game - a 1-0 defeat to

Southampton.

But the Dutchman has clung onto his job and this result - allied to a superb attacking performance - keeps them within five points of the top four places and should buy van Gaal a little breathing space.

United had won just two of their previous 10 league games and scored only 11 home goals. Their total of 27 goals in total at this stage of the season was their lowest since 1989-90 when they finished 13th in the top flight and Mark Hughes finished as top scorer with 15 goals.

Hughes was back on his old stamping ground as Stoke manager, but it was not a happy homecoming as his 100th Premier League match in charge of the Potters ended in a chastening defeat and prolonged Stoke's winless record at Old Trafford, which stretches back 40 years.

A victory over United on Boxing Day, which threatened to push Van Gaal close to the exit door, gave Stoke the chance to complete the double over United for the first time since 1952-53.

But that never looked likely as United raced into a 2-0 lead inside the first 23 minutes.

MEMORIES

United showed their intent from the start as they created more chances than they had in most of their home games put together.

And they went ahead in the 13-minute when teenage full-back Cameron Borthwick-Jackson crossed for Lingard to stoop and head in his

third goal of the season.

Martial then fired into the side netting and forced Jack Butland into a save before he scored a superb goal to take his total for the season to nine.

United launched a lightning break, bringing back memories of some of their finest football under Alex Ferguson, which ended with Rooney teeing up Martial to curl a superb right-footed shot into the top corner.

Stoke, unable to use record signing Giannelli Imbula after his late arrival on Monday, couldn't handle Juan Mata, who excelled in a central position and could have had a hat-trick as he saw efforts blocked and headed wide from a Matteo Darmian cross.

Jon Walters did go close for the visitors, whose season is falling apart around them after two cup exits in a week and a third league game without a win, as he volleyed over before the break. But they had no answer to a classy United performance which included a goal from Rooney after the break.

The United and England captain had an effort disallowed as he barged over Phil Bardsley in the build-up. But Rooney wouldn't be denied a seventh goal in as many games as he tapped in a Martial cross following another flowing move with 53 minutes gone.

And as United made a long overdue statement of intent they almost added a fourth when substitute Memphis Depay hit the bar with an angled shot late on. — AFP

WENGER ON THE ATTACK AFTER GUNNERS MISFIRE



at the moment. It's very down for us now. "We have a difficult programme, especially away from home, but we need to respond."

MAGIC

Southampton manager Ronald Koeman paid tribute to Forster, who kept his fourth successive clean sheet since returning from a knee injury last month. "Our goalkeeper is magic and he was magic tonight," Koeman said. "It's always difficult when you are out for more than nine months. Knowing you need rhythm and games.

"But since coming back he was the same. Credit to the medical staff and credit to Fraser.

"He is one of the best goalkeepers in the Premier League and maybe one of the best in Europe."

Koeman was quick to admit that his team had enjoyed their fair share of luck given the sheer amount of chances created by Arsenal. But he emphasised how well Southampton have played away to the supposedly prominent Premier League clubs.

"Not one team in my one-and-a-half years managing Southampton created what Arsenal created against us," he said. "So you need to be lucky first and you need to have a goalkeeper who is saving everything and that's maybe what explained what happened. "Normally it's more difficult for opponents to create that many chances against us.

"We didn't play well but we had unbelievable spirit. In the counter-attacking, we didn't have the quality. "But to get one point away to Arsenal, three points at Manchester United, to beat Chelsea away, one point against Liverpool at Anfield is amazing, a dream for a club like Southampton."

Koeman revealed that his new striker Charlie Austin suffered a "knock" on the eve of the match. But the recent signing from QPR should be available for the home match with West Ham on Saturday.

"It was risky in my opinion to put him on the pitch. It's not a serious injury," he said. "Normally he'll be available. If you know his past, he had been out for five or six weeks.

"So I'd prefer to wait one week to ensure the player is back." — AFP

LONDON: Arsene Wenger shrugged off criticism that he should have signed a world-class goalscorer in the January transfer window despite acknowledging that Arsenal's finishing has been rather poor in recent weeks.

The Arsenal manager cut a frustrated figure at the Emirates Stadium on Tuesday as the Gunners created plenty of chances in a 0-0 draw with Southampton, but ultimately were denied on numerous occasions by the sheer brilliance of Saints goalkeeper Fraser Forster.

It has often been said that, in pursuit of winning a first Premier League title since 2004, the north London club should have invested heavily in a proven striker.

Wenger, though, batted away such claims after his side fell to fourth place, five points behind leaders Leicester.

"If you had found a world-class striker, who could have strengthened the team, then you should have told me," he said. "Believe me, they do not walk in (off) the street and say: 'I am a world-class striker'."

"They are already at a big club and under contract and not available. We have Walcott, Giroud, Ozil, Sanchez and Welbeck, who is coming back. "Tonight, I don't think that a miracle man would have come in and scored for us. As a team, we can score goals.

"I don't like to say it was one of those nights. We are all disappointed because we had enough chances to win the game. "The most disappointing thing is that some players missed chances that they usually take.

"Our finishing is very poor at the moment. We have played three Premier League games now without scoring a goal. "Forster had a brilliant game. But you'd expect that. The rate and quality of chances created was high for a Premier League game but the quality of finishing was poor.

"Finishing is a bit cyclical, up and down

PARDEW RUES LUCK AS POOR PALACE RUN CONTINUES



LONDON: Crystal Palace's run of seven Premier League games without a win is down to injuries, a lack of composure and bad luck, manager Alan Pardew said on Tuesday. Palace went down 2-1 at home to Bournemouth, chalking up a fifth successive league loss.

Palace took the lead in the 27th minute when Lee Chung-yong's neat backheel was crossed low into the middle by Wilfried Zaha and defender Scott Dann blasted it home. Bournemouth equalised seven minutes later when Marc Pugh tumbled Dann twice on the edge of the Palace box before hitting a low shot inside the bottom corner before Benik Afobe headed a 57th minute winner.

"No one gets sent off against us, no one, you've got to really commit murder to get sent off against Crystal Palace," Pardew said.

"We had a one on one tonight, Jordan Mutch goes through, for me it's another tough decision," he added. The referee decided the Bournemouth defender who fouled Mutch was not the last man.

"We lacked a bit of composure at times, we

certainly missed Yohann (Cabaye) to put his foot on the ball and slow the game down a bit, it was a frantic match.

"We were unlucky to lose two chances, if they go in, and that's the run we were on at the moment." Debutant Emmanuel Adebayor, who had scored on his debuts with previous English clubs Arsenal, Manchester City and Tottenham Hotspur, came close to equalising when his

stoppage-time shot hit the side netting. "Adehad a chance. If we can get the quality in the box he will deliver for us because it is becoming a problem a striker not scoring," he said. Palace's list of injuries includes dynamic winger Yannick Bolassie and creative midfielder Cabaye. "We have won twice in the (FA) Cup, we got really good results, but we need a win in the league," Pardew said. —Reuters



SELHURST PARK: Bournemouth's English defender Simon Francis (R) vies with Crystal Palace's Australian midfielder Mile Jedinak during the English Premier League football match between Crystal Palace and Bournemouth at Selhurst Park in south London on Tuesday. Bournemouth won the game 2-1. —AFP

KHEDIRA BLOW FOR JUVE AHEAD OF NAPOLI, BAYERN

MILAN: A troublesome thigh injury is set to rule Juventus midfielder Sami Khedira out of a top-of-the-table clash with Napoli and possibly a key Champions League last 16 fixture with Bayern Munich.

Khedira was forced off at half-time on Sunday when Juventus routed Chievo 4-0 in Verona to stay two points behind Serie A leaders Napoli. But despite trying to

reassure fans afterwards with a positive message on his Facebook page, the Germany midfielder is facing two to three weeks on the sidelines, according to Juventus. A statement from Juventus said Khedira "was subjected to scans which revealed damage to the long adductor (in his right thigh) after the pain from the match in Verona failed to dissipate.

"He will be sidelined from competition for two to three weeks." The absence will see Khedira miss upcoming league games against Genoa, Frosinone and Napoli, the latter scheduled for February 13 in Turin. But Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri could miss Khedira most if he is forced out of their Champions League last 16 opener with Bayern on February 23. Juventus

overcame Real Madrid over two legs in the Champions League semi-final on their way to meeting Barcelona in the final, only to be outclassed 3-1 in Berlin last May.

Ahead of welcoming Bayern to Turin on February 23, Juventus will be hoping Khedira recovers in time-although it is not the German's first injury knock this season

and he is known not to recover quickly. Allegri led Juve to their first league and Cup double last season and is hoping for a repeat this campaign. The champions are away to Inter Milan for the second leg of their Cup semi-final on March 2 or 3, having won the opening leg 3-0. AC Milan beat Alessandria in the other Cup semi first leg. — AFP

WEST HAM SINK 10-MAN VILLA 2-0



LONDON: Aston Villa paid the price for Jordan Ayew's early dismissal as West Ham United enhanced their European prospects with a 2-0 home win in the Premier League on Tuesday.

Bottom club Villa started brightly at Upton Park, but never recovered from the 17th-minute dismissal of Ghana forward Ayew, who was shown a straight red card for a senseless elbow on Aaron Cresswell.

Michail Antonio broke the deadlock with a header in the 58th minute and Cheikhou Kouyate netted late on as Slaven Bilic's side extended their unbeaten run at home in the league to 10 games.

West Ham remain sixth, a point behind fifth-place Manchester United and six points off the top four, while Villa continue to look doomed, 10 points from safety with only 14 games to play.

Villa manager Remi Garde has expressed grievances over his side's failure to strengthen in the January transfer window, but with West Ham loan signing Emmanuel Emenike still awaiting international clearance, there were no new players on show

for either team.

Villa were crushed 4-0 by Manchester City in the FA Cup on Saturday, but their start was more in keeping with a team pursuing a fourth league game without defeat.

Showing five changes, the visitors forced West Ham onto the back foot and had a penalty appeal waved away in the 10th minute when Gabriel Agbonlahor's left-wing cross struck Antonio on the arm.

But shortly after Ayew, 24, undermined all his side's early promise by blatantly swinging his left elbow into the face of Cresswell, leaving referee Jonathan Moss no choice but to brandish a red card.

Predictably, the momentum tilted immediately in West Ham's favour. Kouyate saw a curling shot easily saved by Mark Bunn, James Tomkins lashed over with his left foot and Enner Valencia sent a free-kick dipping just the wrong side of the left-hand upright.

West Ham continued to turn the screw in the second half-Villa goalkeeper Mark Bunn parrying a stinging Mark Noble volley and touching a free-kick from Dimitri Payet onto the post-and in the 58th minute, the hosts' pressure told.

Noble's raking 40-yard pass from just inside the Villa half picked out Antonio, who deftly steered a header past Bunn.

Cresswell and Noble both went close to scoring before Kouyate sealed victory in the 85th minute by capping a rapid counter-attack with an assured finish from Valencia's pass. — AFP



LEICESTER: Leicester City's Japanese striker Shinji Okazaki (R) vies with Liverpool's French defender Mamadou Sakho and Liverpool's Spanish defender Alberto Moreno during the English Premier League football match between Leicester City and Liverpool at King Power Stadium in Leicester, central England on Tuesday. Jamie Vardy scored both goal in Leicester's 2-0 win. — AFP

VARDY DOUBLE KEEPS LEICESTER OUT IN FRONT



LEICESTER: Claudio Ranieri believes Jamie Vardy and his Leicester team-mates have been revitalised just in time for their crunch Premier League clashes with Manchester City and Arsenal.

Ranieri's shock table-toppers travel to City on Saturday before facing Arsenal with their confidence sky-high after underlining their title credentials with an impressive 2-0 win over Liverpool at the King Power Stadium on Tuesday.

Vardy added to his growing reputation with two goals, including a 30-yard wonder-strike, that took his tally for the season to 18 and emphasised his own return to form following groin surgery at the start of January.

"It was an unbelievable pass from Riyad Mahrez and unbelievable what Vardy did," Leicester boss Ranieri said of the opening goal. "He watched the ball arriving, watched the

opponent and watched the keeper.

"He looked at the keeper out of the goal and hit it. It was unbelievable, amazing, fantastic.

"Now it is one month more or less since he restarted training. Before that he didn't train. He played matches without training and that's not easy.

"He continued to score but slowly he slowed down. Now he is refreshed, he is a new Vardy, he presses a lot and he scores goals."

Leicester rested at the weekend following their exit from the FA Cup and produced an energetic display to beat Liverpool and move three points clear of second placed Manchester City ahead of their summit meeting.

After a slump over Christmas, Leicester once again look capable of maintaining their incredible bid to win the English title and Ranieri sees no reason why they can't keep it up.

REFRESHED

"In training sessions I saw my players refreshed," said Ranieri.

"After Christmas we were a little tired but now they're getting better. 'Now I'm curious because on Saturday we have to run, run, run a lot. Against City it will be another tough match but it was important to start this month well. 'For me it's important to see my players fight

and try to win. 'Sooner or later we'll lose a match but that's not important. 'What's important is how we lose. If there is a great goal from (an) opponent, well done - but we have to fight. If Man City fight more than us, well done to them."

Liverpool were well beaten, with boss Jurgen Klopp blaming a congested fixture schedule for a lack of intensity from his players. "It's nice to be in the stadium when Jamie Vardy makes the Goal of the Month - but in an ideal world you are not the manager of the other team!" he said.

"We saw that this goal made the difference. 'I don't feel too good in this moment. I know we lost and we have to accept it, absolutely no problem.

"But with a few things done differently we could have won this game. And if you can win a game you should do it in my opinion. But we didn't.

"I need a few minutes to cool down! 'Our problem today was not (the need) to run more - or to run more intensively. 'Our problem was when we had the ball in the right position we did not make the right decisions. That is all.

"They (Leicester) had 10 days off and we had three games.

"If we could have played with the same intensity as them, they would have done something wrong." — AFP



SUNDERLAND: Sunderland's Patrick Van Aanholt, left, vies with Manchester City's Sergio Aguero, right, during the English Premier League soccer match between Sunderland and Manchester City at the Stadium of Light, Sunderland, England, Tuesday. — AP

GUARDIOLA WON'T DISTRACT MAN CITY, SAYS PELLEGRINI



SUNDERLAND: Manchester City manager Manuel Pellegrini does not believe that the impending arrival of Pep Guardiola to succeed him will overshadow the club's four-pronged quest for silverware this season.

Tuesday's 1-0 win at Sunderland gave Pellegrini a 65th Premier League victory in 100 games, a ratio bettered only by former Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho, who won 73 of his first 100 English top-flight matches. The Chilean's record eclipses that of Alex Ferguson over his first 100 games in the English top tier and is better than both predecessor Roberto Mancini and Liverpool's Rafael Benitez.

But it will not prevent him being replaced at the end of the season by Guardiola, and that announcement made Monday dominated his post-match press conference after a win that kept City three points behind Premier League leaders Leicester City, who they host on Saturday. Pellegrini's defence under pressure from the press was as impressive as England goalkeeper Joe Hart's had been in preserving City's lead at the Stadium of Light.

Refuting the suggestion that Guardiola's appointment might be a distraction for City, who remain in contention for league, Champions League, League Cup and FA Cup honours, he said: "The announcement was not on my mind-only having a good season ahead of the next game against Leicester. 'I want to do well in all competitions and all I was focused on was getting the three points. We are all thinking about this season rather than the next. 'I think that we are living in a very good season and if we can finish it very strongly, then it will be special.

"It will be difficult with each game as it

goes along, but that is what I am focused on. I am not thinking about myself right now. I want to talk about the team and the club, not me."

A 16th-minute goal from Sergio Aguero and a superb display in City's goal by Hart proved to be the difference between the two sides. But Pellegrini, whose name was sung by the travelling fans, was at pains to point out that it had been a collective effort and that City's players had shown they have steel to their game, as well as silk.

ALLARDYCE 'GUTTED'

"This game against Sunderland was a very difficult game and I'm very happy about the result," he said.

"The most important thing for the team was to come here and win this game and show we can defend very well if we need to. 'We are known as an attacking team, but we showed we can defend, too. Sergio Aguero and Joe Hart had good games for us, but the whole team worked hard.

"I thought against Sunderland we showed we can play in a different way and in a way that is needed to win such difficult games." City's performance answered the question of how they would react to the Guardiola announcement, and the battling nature of their win bodes well for the run-in.

When Guardiola was announced as Bayern Munich manager in January 2013, Jupp Heynckes's side went on to win the treble. Pellegrini may yet leave this summer as City's most successful ever manager.

For Sunderland manager Sam Allardyce, survival itself is the only benchmark of success and it was no consolation to him that his side had outplayed a team who could end up as Premier League champions. "I think it's the most disappointed I've been since I've been at the club because we deserved so much more," said Allardyce, whose side remain second-bottom, four points from safety.

"Some of the games we've lost we haven't really deserved anything, so this makes it so much more disappointing to us. 'To play as well as we did against City and get nothing, I'm gutted." — AFP

RONDON RESCUES POINT FOR WEST BROMWICH



WEST BROMWICH: Salomon Rondon netted his first Premier League goal since October in injury time to earn West Brom a 1-1 draw against Swansea at The Hawthorns on Tuesday. Swansea were set fair to grab the points after Gylfi Sigurdsson put the visitors into a 64th-minute lead. But as West Brom fans began to head for the exits Rondon saved the day to leave West Brom in 13th, eight points above the relegation zone. Swansea are 16th, five points clear

of danger. Sigurdsson was on the mark in last weekend's 2-1 win at Everton in new coach Francesco Guidolin's first match in charge. And the Italian named an unchanged side with Alberto Paloschi, who joined from Chievo on Friday for £8 million (10.5 million euros), on the bench. West Brom boss Tony Pulis gave a debut to Sandro, the midfielder from QPR one of five changes from the side that drew with Peterborough United in the FA Cup.

Midfielder Darren Fletcher returned after knee injury and the game was only minutes old when he connected with a cross from Craig Dawson, but Swansea keeper Lukasz Fabianski tipped his header over the bar. On 20 minutes Swansea's Ki Sung-yeung produced a massive clearance only for Angel Rangel to shoot wide.

Shortly after, on the counter attack Andre Ayew had a shot deflected wide. Sigurdsson then had a dipping volley edged over by West

Brom keeper Ben Foster.

Down at the other end Dawson was guilty of missing a gilt-edged header. A clash of heads just before the interval left Sung-yeung awake but stretched off to applause from the crowd. Swansea later tweeted the South Korean was "ok, just a little concussed".

On came Paloschi and the Italian almost made a dream start when he ran onto Wayne Routledge's through ball only for the on-rushing Foster to block the shot. Swansea broke the deadlock with a well worked move just after the hour involving Leon Britton and Paloschi, with Sigurdsson slyly shooting into the bottom far corner from 12 yards out.

Good late work from Fabianski kept West Brom at bay until the second minute of stoppage time, when after a scrappy corner Rondon popped up to level for the Venezuelan's fifth goal of the season. — AFP



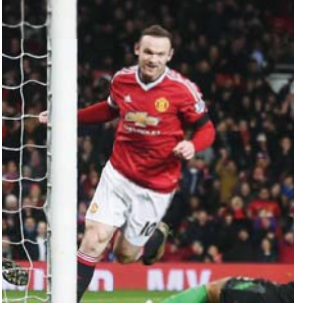
WEST BROMWICH: West Bromwich Albion's Salomon Rondon, center, scores their first goal of the game during their English Premier League soccer match against Swansea City at The Hawthorns, West Bromwich, England, Tuesday. — AP

Sports

Former Japan star Kiyohara arrested on drugs charge



Man Utd rekindle glory days with win over Stoke



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2016

HENRY, GUPTILL SUPERB AS NZ THRASH AUSTRALIA

Page 17



WASHINGTON: Jonathan Huberdeau #11 of the Florida Panthers celebrates after scoring a first period goal against the Washington Capitals at Verizon Center on Tuesday in Washington, DC. —AFP

HUBERDEAU LEADS PANTHERS PAST CAPS

WASHINGTON: Florida winger Jonathan Huberdeau scored twice and back up goaltender Al Montoya registered 36 saves as the Panthers opened up the second half of the season with an impressive 5-2 victory over the Washington Capitals. Huberdeau's second goal of the night, a ringing shot off the near post, was his 10th of the season and it sent some in the Verizon Center crowd heading for the exits with the Capitals down 4-0. The 22-year-old, who added a first-period assist, has 16 points in his past 15 games.

FLYERS 4, CANADIENS 2

Wayne Simmonds scored a pair of goals and the Philadelphia Flyers got back to winning ways on home ice with a 4-2 victory over the Montreal Canadiens at Wells Fargo Center.

Simmonds netted his second goal with 8:04 remaining in regulation to break a 2-2 tie and help the Flyers (22-18-8) snap a three-game home losing skid. Philadelphia are 10-1-1 when Simmonds scores.

DEVILS 3, RANGERS 2

Defenseman David Schlemko scored a power-play goal with 8:46 remaining in the third period to give the New Jersey Devils a come-from-behind 3-2 victory against the New York Rangers at Prudential Center.

Schlemko's goal came less than two minutes after a turnover that led to a shorthanded breakaway for Rangers defenseman Ryan McDonagh, who missed the net on the golden opportunity.

ISLANDERS 5, WILD 3

Brock Nelson scored the tie-breaking goal in the

final minute of the second period and Frans Nielsen and John Tavares scored a little more than two minutes apart early in the third as the New York Islanders beat the Minnesota Wild 5-3. Mikhail Grabovski and Anders Lee also scored for the Islanders (26-16-6), who won for the fourth time in six games.

PENGUINS 6, SENATORS 5

Sidney Crosby scored three consecutive goals to extend his recent scoring surge and rally the Pittsburgh Penguins to their fourth consecutive victory, 6-5 over the slumping Senators. Crosby's natural hat-trick was the ninth three-goal game of his career, gave him at least one goal in eight consecutive games at Consol Energy Center and assured him of his ninth 20-goal season in his 11 NHL seasons.

MAPLE LEAFS 4, BRUINS 3 (OT)

The Toronto Maple Leafs, down by two goals in the third period, forced overtime and got a power play goal from Pierre-Alexandre Parenteau to shock the Boston Bruins 4-3. Boston center David Krejci, who set up one goal and scored another 26 seconds apart early in the third period, was off for holding when Parenteau beat Tuukka Rask with a rebound backhand to end Toronto's four-game losing streak.

BLUES 1, PREDATORS 0

Troy Brouwer's deflection gave the St. Louis Blues their first 1-0 win of the season. Scoring his 10th goal, Brouwer got his stick on a one-timer from defenseman Alex Pietrangolo, beating

Predators goalie Pekka Rinne at 18:55 of the third period and giving St. Louis its fourth win of the season over Nashville. The Blues (29-16-8) outshot the Predators 12-5 in the final period.

BLACKHAWKS 2, AVALANCHE 1

Artemi Panarin and Richard Panik scored first-period goals as the shorthanded Chicago Blackhawks beat the Colorado Avalanche 2-1.

Goaltender Corey Crawford had 23 saves for Chicago, who played without center Jonathan Toews. The Blackhawks captain had to sit out Tuesday's game because he skipped Sunday's All-Star Game in Nashville due to illness.

OILERS 5, BLUE JACKETS 1

In his return from a three-month absence because of injury, rookie Connor McDavid delivered a goal-of-the-year candidate and added two assists in leading the Edmonton Oilers to a 5-1 victory over the Columbus Blue Jackets. Leon Draisaitl, Eric Gryba, Benoit Pouliot and Jordan Eberle added goals as the Oilers prevailed in a battle between the last-place teams in the Eastern and Western Conferences.

KINGS 6, COYOTES 2

It's hard to imagine Dustin Brown's popularity in Arizona falling any lower. The Los Angeles Kings captain is already the most reviled hockey player in the Valley due to a colorful history with the Arizona Coyotes.

Brown somehow added to the venom when he scored a pair of goals in the Kings' 6-2 win over the Coyotes on Tuesday at Gila River Arena. Neither goal was impressive but both helped L.A. erase a

NHL Results/Standings

Toronto 4, Boston 3 (OT); New Jersey 3, NY Rangers 2; NY Islanders 5, Minnesota 3; Philadelphia 4, Montreal 2; Pittsburgh 6, Ottawa 5; Florida 5, Washington 2; St. Louis 1, Nashville 0; Dallas 5, Winnipeg 3; Chicago 2, Colorado 1; Edmonton 5, Columbus 1; Los Angeles 6, Arizona 2.

Western Conference						Tampa Bay			
Central Division						Detroit			
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	PTS	
Chicago	34	16	4	149	123	72	25	16	8
Dallas	32	14	5	167	136	69	26	18	6
St. Louis	29	16	8	130	128	66	24	23	4
Colorado	27	23	3	144	144	57	23	22	6
Nashville	24	19	8	129	132	56	18	22	9
Minnesota	23	18	9	124	120	55	20	26	4
Winnipeg	22	25	3	129	145	47	20	26	4
Pacific Division						Metropolitan Division			
Los Angeles	31	16	3	135	115	65	Washington	35	9
San Jose	26	19	4	144	132	56	NY Rangers	27	18
Anaheim	23	18	7	104	113	53	NY Islanders	26	16
Arizona	24	21	5	133	152	53	Pittsburgh	25	17
Vancouver	20	19	11	122	139	51	New Jersey	26	20
Calgary	21	24	3	126	146	45	Carolina	23	20
Edmonton	20	26	5	127	150	45	Philadelphia	22	18
Eastern Conference						Columbus			
Atlantic Division						19	28	5	
Florida	30	15	5	140	110	65	Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L).		

second-period deficit and post its first regulation win over the Coyotes this season.

DUCKS 3, SHARKS 2

Rickard Rakell, Hampus Lindholm and Ryan Garbutt scored to give the Anaheim Ducks a 3-2

win over the San Jose Sharks at the Honda Center.

Goalie Frederik Andersen stopped 30 shots for the Ducks (23-18-7), who earned their fourth successive victory and moved into a tie with the Arizona Coyotes for third place, the Pacific Division's final automatic playoff spot. — Reuters



MADRID: In this Aug 22, 2015, file photo, Atletico Madrid's Jackson Martinez, top, goes for a header with Las Palmas' Aythami Artiles during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Atletico Madrid and Las Palmas at the Vicente Calderon stadium in Madrid, Spain. Guangzhou Evergrande of the Chinese Super League said yesterday, that it has signed Martinez for what is believed to be a new record sum in the Asian transfer market. — AP

MARTINEZ JOINS EVERGRANDE IN RECORD CHINA DEAL

BEIJING: Asian champions Guangzhou Evergrande smashed China's transfer fee record yesterday when they announced a deal to secure Atletico Madrid's unsettled Colombian striker Jackson Martinez for 42 million euros (\$46 million).

Martinez, 29, is the latest Europe-based player to move to the cashed-up Chinese Super League and was described as a "goal poacher" and "fox in the box" in a Chinese-language statement on the club's website. "The moment has arrived to start a new stage in my career," Martinez told Atletico's website.

"The club and I have spoken in the last few days and we are agreed this is the best thing for everyone." The purchase broke the week-old Chinese record fee of 28 million euros, paid by Jiangsu Suning to acquire Brazilian midfielder Ramires from Chelsea. It lifted

the Chinese Super League's total spending during the current transfer window to 203.9 million euros, according to website transfermarkt which tracks commercial dealings in the sport-second only to the English Premier League.

Atletico bought Martinez last year for 35 million euros from FC Porto where he had scored an impressive 92 goals in 133 games. But he struggled to establish himself in Spain, scoring just two goals in 15 La Liga appearances. Chinese businesses have invested huge sums in football since President Xi Jinping, an avowed fan of the sport, declared that hosting, qualifying, and winning a World Cup were national goals.

'CHESS GAME'

In the past the highest-profile international signings by Chinese clubs tended to be ageing stars in their 30s

nearing the end of their playing days. But many of those bought in the current transfer window have been in their late 20s.

Questions have been asked about whether some are past their prime. But David Hornby, sports business director of the Mailman brand management group in Shanghai, said: "These are not guys at the end of their career just looking for a payout."

In 2015 a powerful political committee headed by Xi released a 50-point plan to achieve his goal, including establishing tens of thousands of soccer schools and making the game compulsory for some elementary and middle-school students.

Investors have since ploughed more money into football in "an attempt to be looked favourably on by the government", said Tom Eidsen, sports strategy manager at Mailman. — AFP

Kuwait Times BUSINESS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2016

European banks hesitate
on Iran, wary of US fines

Page 22

Oil producers struggle
to hold budget

Page 22

RENAULT HAS A MOUNTAIN TO CLIMB IN CHINA

Page 23



SUVs rev up at Delhi auto show despite crackdown

Pages 23



SWITZERLAND: This file photo taken on May 10, 2015 shows a sign of Swiss farm chemicals powerhouse Syngenta at the company's test site of Les Barges near Vouvy, western Switzerland. (Inset) Chairman of Swiss farm chemicals giant Syngenta, Michel Demare shakes hand with Chairman of ChemChina Ren Jianxin during a press conference to present Syngenta's annual results at the company's headquarters in Basel. — AFP

CHINA FIRM OFFERS \$43BN FOR AGRI-GIANT SYNGENTA BIGGEST-EVER OVERSEAS ACQUISITION BY A CHINESE FIRM

BEIJING: State-owned China National Chemical Corp yesterday offered \$43 billion in an agreed takeover for Swiss pesticide and seed giant Syngenta, in what would be by far the biggest-ever overseas acquisition by a Chinese firm.

The deal is the latest in a string of overseas investments for China's biggest chemical company, also known as ChemChina, as Beijing prods its companies to "go out" to expand. Syngenta's board recommended the offer of \$465 a share, plus a special dividend, to its shareholders, saying in a statement that "the proposed transaction respects the interests of all stakeholders".

The statement said the deal "will enable further expansion of Syngenta's presence in emerging markets and notably in China". But it could face challenges before going through.

The Swiss company reportedly rejected a higher \$47 billion bid from rival

Monsanto in August last year, and in November Bloomberg News said the US firm was mulling a higher offer. The transaction is also likely to face regulatory hurdles-much of Syngenta's business is in the United States, where a \$18.5 billion offer by Chinese state-owned energy company CNOOC for US oil firm Unocal failed in 2005 in the face of political pressure. Ahead of the announcement an analyst at Germany's Baader Bank said that an all-cash deal would be welcomed by investors but "it could pose political problems". The offer far outstrips China's biggest overseas acquisition to date, CNOOC's purchase of Canadian oil firm Nexen for \$15.1 billion in 2013.

The Chinese government has encouraged its companies to invest abroad to secure raw

materials and markets, while growth is slowing at home. "They're (government officials) still thinking in terms of it's good for companies to gain access to these technologies and these distribution channels," Arthur Kroeber, managing director at research firm Gavekal Dragonomics, told Bloomberg News.

Global multinationals

The deal is the latest in a string of acquisitions by ChemChina, which last month bought a 12 percent stake in Swiss energy and commodities trader Mercuria to expand its portfolio. Also in January, the Chinese company said it planned to buy Germany's KraussMaffei Group, which makes machinery for producing plastics and rubber, for 925 million Euros (\$1.01 billion). Last year it announced the takeover of Italian tyre maker Pirelli, renowned for its

Formula One equipment and racy calendars, in a deal valued at 7.4 billion Euros.

"Their acquisition strategy is not 'catching up' anymore," said Tyler Rooker, an assistant professor at the University of Nottingham. "They're acquiring assets that add to their competitiveness as global multinationals." Syngenta said its existing management will continue to run the company, which will remain headquartered in Switzerland, "reflecting this country's attractiveness as a corporate location".

After the deal ChemChina Chairman Ren Jianxin will take over as chairman of a new 10-member Syngenta board, four of whom will be existing directors, the statement added. "Our vision is not confined to our mutual interests, but will also respond to and maximize the interests of farmers and consumers around the

world," Ren said. China is trying to make its farming sector more efficient, supporting massive agricultural conglomerates to replace what were once small family-owned plots. The country is a major importer of wheat and soybeans, and Beijing hopes to ensure food security for its nearly 1.4 billion people.

The government supports what it calls "hybrid" crops, such as rice but has moved cautiously on genetically modified food, saying it will prevent "unauthorized" varieties. ChemChina has a unit specializing in agricultural chemicals, including fertilizers and pesticides, according to its website, but is not present in the seeds business. Syngenta chairman Michel Demare said the deal was "focused on growth globally, specifically in China and other emerging markets, and enables long-term investment in innovation". — AFP

PRIVATE BUSINESSES START 2016 ON A WEAK FOOTING

LONDON: The private sector began 2016 on a slightly weak note around the world, and with scant signs of inflation picking up, pressure will remain on central banks to keep or even ease their already ultra-loose monetary policies, surveys showed yesterday.

While euro zone businesses started the year in slightly better shape than first thought, this was partly due to firms cutting prices at the steepest rate since March.

In China, where Beijing is trying to rebalance the world's second-largest economy, activity in the services sector expanded at its fastest pace in six months, partially offsetting weakness in the vast manufacturing industry. Worries about China's impact on the global economy have hammered stocks and commodities this year, although Britain's huge services sector appeared to have escaped largely unscathed.

"If external concerns grow and some of those downside risks with respect to China crystallise, then the situation for this year looks pretty bad," said Ben May at Oxford Economics. "But equally, if in a couple of month's time people are less concerned about China, there are tentative signs of export growth picking up, then it may well be the outlook is much brighter."

Markit said its latest Purchasing Managers Indexes suggested a quarterly 0.4 percent growth pace for the euro zone, a rate it has struggled to beat for a long time. The final Composite PMI, an indicator of overall growth in the private

sector, at 53.6 just pipped a flash estimate of 53.5 but was below December's 54.3.

Deflationary pressures

The pace of expansion matched only the weakest rate clocked over the past year and comes as the European Central Bank battles to push inflation, at a feeble 0.4 percent, back towards its 2 percent target. "It is worth highlighting that despite this correction, new orders remained at elevated levels, close to multi-year highs, and thus suggesting that the moderate growth momentum is likely to be sustained in Q1," said economist Apolline Menut at Barclays Capital.

"Deflationary pressures intensified, as lower oil prices impacted both input and output costs, consistent with our view that the moderate euro area recovery will continue to take place in a 'missinginflation environment'."

Growth in Germany, Europe's largest economy, slowed but remained relatively solid, while in euro zone No. 2 economy France which has been struggling to produce much growth of late, services businesses perked up a bit.

In one bright spot, retail sales across the 19 countries using the euro increased in December thanks as sales of food, drinks and tobacco rose over the Christmas period, according to official data released yesterday. The Caixin/Markit Purchasing Managers' Index rose to 52.4 in January from a 17-month low of

50.2 in December, but overall prices charged hovered in deflationary territory for a fifth consecutive month.

China's leaders have flagged a "new normal" of slower growth as they look to shift the economy to a more sustainable, consumption-led model. He Fan, chief economist at Caixin Insight Group, said the fast expansion of the services sector indicated a better economic structure.

"The government should continue to deepen reform, relax administrative controls and reduce restrictions on market entry for service providers," He said. "This will release the potential of the services sector." Services growth likely slowed in the United States, the world's largest economy, after the Federal Reserve raised interest rates for the first time in nearly a decade at the end of last year.

Policy roundabout

Britain's huge services sector appeared to have performed better despite a tough January on financial markets, although firms were concerned about risks ahead, including a referendum on European Union membership. The Markit/CIPS services PMI for Britain, which doesn't use the euro, edged up to 55.6, a level it has surpassed only once since last July. The sign Britain's economy started 2016 strongly will be certainly be noted by the Bank of England.

According to the latest Reuters poll, its Bank Rate, which has sat at a record low of 0.5 percent

since early 2009, probably won't rise until October at the earliest - and even then by only 25 basis points. Sterling markets don't expect a rate rise until 2018. "There are some reasons to be cautious. In particular, there is clearly some scope for the economy to be hit by uncertainty ahead of the EU referendum," said Vicky Redwood at Capital Economics.

Prime Minister David Cameron has promised a vote on whether Britain stays or leaves the EU under a "Brexit" scenario. Reuters polls have consistently shown that uncertainty over the outcome is seen as the biggest threat to the econo-

my. As the ECB fights its own threats, it is widely expected to ease policy again next month, pushing its deposit rate even deeper into negative territory. There is also an even chance it will increase the 60 billion Euros a month it currently spends buying bonds, a Reuters poll found.

Markit's euro zone output prices index fell further below the breakeven 50 mark to a 10-month low, underscoring the ECB's inflation dilemma. However, the prospect of yet more stimulus from the ECB meant firms were at their most optimistic about the upcoming year since mid-2011. — Reuters

BARCLAYS CUTS NEARLY 150 JOBS IN MIDEAST

DUBAI: Barclays is cutting nearly 150 people from its corporate banking unit in Dubai as part of a restructuring of the business in the Gulf emirate, a source familiar with the matter said yesterday. The bank will close its office in the Emaar Square area of the emirate and move some staff to its branch in Dubai International Financial Centre, the source said. Barclays has been reviewing its business globally after the appointment of Jes Staley as chief executive in December 2015.

A spokesman for the bank said it was aligning its Middle East corporate banking business to international locations, such as the United States, as well as to the bank's regional investment bank and wealth and investment management business. "We are adopting an operating model that better leverages our global capabilities and centers of excellence," the spokesman added. The job cuts were reported earlier on Wednesday by Bloomberg. — Reuters

MARKAZ: TOUGH START TO 2016 WITH S&P GCC INDEX DECLINING

KUWAIT PRICE AND WEIGHTED INDICES DECLINE

KUWAIT: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" recently released its Monthly Market Research report. In this report, Markaz examines and analyzes the performance of equity markets in the MENA region as well as the global equity markets for the month of January.

The report pointed out that MENA markets ended in red during the month of January 2016, with Egypt (13.3%) and Saudi Arabia (13.2%) declining the most, followed by Qatar (9.8%) and Kuwait price (8.7%) and weighted (7.4%) indices. Brent crude fell to USD 27.88 per barrel during the month, a fall of over 25%, before recovering and closing the month at USD 34.74 per barrel (6.8%). S&P GCC declined by 10.7% in January, to close at 85 points.



The fortunes of MENA markets followed the oil price, with most indices recording a marginal recovery in the last two weeks of the month. Saudi's TASI index slipped 21% in January, before rebounding by close to 10% by the end, to close Jan at 5,997 points. Egypt stock market continued to be plagued by the foreign currency crisis, and the country is under increasing pressure to devalue the pound. Egypt's foreign currency reserves have declined from USD 36bn in 2011 to USD 16.4bn, and the country has been keeping the pound artificially strong by rationing dollars through the weekly dollar auctions to banks.

MENA markets liquidity had a mixed month, with volumes increasing by 10% and value traded decreasing by 4.5%. Kuwait, Dubai and Jordan witnessed increases in both volume and value traded, while Morocco, Oman and Bahrain markets recorded large

declines in both. Kuwait's volume and value traded improved by 50% and 40%, respectively, despite fluctuations of oil price and persistent selling pressures.

Most Blue Chips ended the month of January in red, barring Ooredoo (Qatar, 5.7%), Emirates NBD (UAE, 3.9%) and Emirates Telecom (UAE, 0.3%). Ooredoo's Oman division secured three new streams of financing from domestic and international banks worth USD 177mn, and expects the funds to help it to continue improving its services and reach in the country. The company also lowered data rates in Myanmar in a bid to increase its presence. Emirates NBD, reported a net profit of USD 1.9bn for the full year 2015, up 39% compared to 2014, due to income growth, modest rise in costs and lower impairment charge. Kingdom Holding (Saudi Arabia, 28%) had a bad start to the year after the company declared an 86% slump in Q4 profit due to lower income and higher provisioning. Net profit fell from USD 71mn in Q4 2014 to USD 10mn in Q4 2015.

Saudi Basic Industries Corp (SABIC) reported a 29.4% drop in Q4 net profit, due to lower prices for its products, particularly in its metals division, and decline in crude prices. Saudi Arabia's National Commercial Bank (NCB) reported a 16.6% rise in fourth-quarter net profit despite fall in deposits, as higher income from fees and lending helped boost profits.

Falling oil continues to hold center stage
Saudi Arabia's government is contemplating selling shares of the state oil giant Saudi Aramco to raise money in an era of cheap oil.

MENA Market Trends – January 2016

Index	M. Cap (USD Bn)	Last close	2015 %	Jan-16 %	YTD %	S&P correlation**	ADVT* (USD mn)	P/E TTM	P/B TTM	Div. Yield
S&P Pan Arab										
LargeMid Cap	97.0	122	-17.0	-9.8	-9.8	0.157	N.A	8.70	1.11	6.40
Saudi Arabia	363.7	5997	-17.1	-13.2	-13.2	0.170	1425.13	11.52	1.42	5.08
Qatar	117.4	9481	-15.1	-9.1	-9.1	0.116	66.04	9.72	1.41	5.31
Abu Dhabi	106.6	4054	-4.9	-5.9	-5.9	0.123	42.77	10.26	1.34	5.27
Kuwait Price	80.2	5115	-14.1	-8.9	-8.9	0.094	47.73	12.93	1.04	4.75
Kuwait Wt.ed	80.2	353	-13.0	-7.4	-7.4	0.053	47.73	12.93	1.04	4.75
Dubai	71.7	2998	-16.5	-4.9	-4.9	0.124	119.47	8.48	1.06	5.28
Egypt	49.0	547	-24.4	-13.3	-13.3	0.070	57.26	8.37	1.24	2.99
Morocco	45.3	8899	-7.2	-0.3	-0.3	-0.019	5.10	15.98	2.09	4.75
Jordan	22.1	4133	-0.2	-2.3	-2.3	0.017	12.18	14.24	1.28	4.74
Bahrain	17.9	1187	-14.8	-2.4	-2.4	0.023	0.50	8.48	0.83	5.48
Oman	15.1	5179	-14.8	-4.2	-4.2	0.114	9.18	8.71	1.09	5.94

Source: Reuters, Zawya, * - Average Daily Value Traded for the month, ** - 3-year daily return correlation

Saudi Aramco is the world's largest oil firm with crude reserves close to 265bn barrels, over 15 percent of all global oil deposits. Analysts have estimated that it could become the first listed company valued at USD 1tn or more, if it goes public. Kuwait has called for better management of spending and for budget cuts to cope with declining revenues due to lower oil prices. The country's Finance Minister has said that he expects the price of oil for the 2016/17 budget to be set at around USD 25 per barrel.

The government of Oman plans to cut sub-

sidy spending by almost two-thirds to help tackle a budget deficit caused by low oil prices, and its cabinet approved fuel subsidy reforms, as well as spending cuts and tax rises to bring the deficit under control. Bahrain cabinet set new price for super fuel at 160 Bahraini fils (USD 0.424) per liter from 100 fils, while the price for regular fuel would be raised to 125 fils per liter from 90 fils.

Weak sentiment continued in 2016, plummeting oil to fresh lows, as Brent crude hit USD 27 per barrel on 20 Jan, its lowest level since November 2003. Uncertainties around

China's economy, OPEC's continued strategy to defend its market share, coupled with lifting of Iran's sanctions weighed heavily, as the latter released excess bottled up supply into the market. Prices rebounded after 20 Jan, as heavy blizzards in the US and a possible deal between OPEC and other producers to cut production by as much as 500,000bpd buoyed investor sentiments. January closed with positive news from Saudi Arabia, the premium OPEC producer, hinted at possible cooperation with other oil producers to support the oil market.

EUROPEAN BANKS HESITATE ON IRAN, WARY OF US FINES

PARIS: Western companies have been rushing into Iran for a part of post-sanctions business action but European banks, still reeling from punitive US fines over links to the country, are waiting on the sidelines until they feel it is safe to do business with Tehran. "Sanctions have been lifted but really things are still not very clear," a source at a major French bank told AFP on condition of anonymity.

US and French interpretations on the current state of play are "not aligned," the source said. "We shall not be taking any new initiative in this domain." The sealing of a nuclear deal with world powers has ushered Iran in from the diplomatic deep freeze, opening the door to a raft of lucrative new partnerships.

France has already hailed a new era after welcoming Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, who sealed a host of post-sanctions deals last week on a visit to Paris, the headline purchase of 118 Airbus aircraft. But when it comes to what oils the wheels, high finance, there is hesitation, at least on the part of European banks.

"The hefty fines levied on these financial institutions during the sanctions has made them particularly wary," Farhad Alavi, a lawyer specializing in trade issues including sanctions, said from Washington. "European banks are not only confronted with potential sanctions risks, but also other exposure points under international banking regulations and practices," Alavi added.

Prudence is the watchword for bankers who have had their fingers burned before in the shape of swinging fines handed down by US regulators. The Elysee Palace says France has agreed deals worth upwards of \$15 billion with the Islamic Republic. Yet the nitty gritty of how the investments will be drawn up and financed requires hands-on banking.

In the past, some banks were too proactive towards Tehran and saw Washington extract a heavy price for violating the old sanctions regime. The most spectacular example, which is still on every banker's mind, was a record \$8.9 billion fine imposed on BNP Paribas in 2014. The issue is also taxing banking minds elsewhere in Europe, including Germany.

"Deutsche Bank has noted the easing of American and European sanctions against Iran," said a spokesman for the German giant which last November took a \$258 million fine for doing business with US-sanctioned entities including Iran and Syria. "Until further notice the group will stick to its decision and not undertake Iran-linked business," the Deutsche spokesman insisted.

'Uncertainty' persists

"There is uncertainty," says Yves-Thibaut de Silguy, vice-chairman of Medef International, which offers private sector liaison for the likes of the World Bank and other development banks and international organizations.

De Silguy told France Info radio last week that while Washington had lifted nuclear sanctions other US measures notably to stem terror funding-remain in place. French minister of state for foreign trade, Matthias Fekl, said Thursday he had requested "clarification" from Washington on sanctions lifting parameters and timetabling.

It will fall to the US Treasury Department offshoot the Office of Foreign Assets Control, which oversees sanctions enforcement, to provide that information. Thierry Coville, of the French Research Centre for International and Strategic Studies (Iris), believes Washington is happy to let uncertainty persist. —AFP

OIL PRODUCERS STRUGGLE TO HOLD BUDGET TORN BY PRICE COLLAPSE

PARIS: Oil producing countries are scrambling to fill gaping holes in their budgets torn by crashing petroleum prices, with some turning to international lenders for help and others slashing spending. Austerity measures, loan negotiations and state asset sales are all on the menu of moves deployed to counter the brutal nosedive in the oil price, with West Texas Intermediate currently below \$30 a barrel and Brent just above a drop of about 70 percent since June 2014. "These are bad times for oil producers and their creditors," Gabriel Sterne, head of global macro research at Oxford Economics, said in a note. National budgets need to adjust further, financial buffers are inadequate and proper adjustment to the new situation may be delayed by weak governance, he warned, calling the assessment "bleak".

In Russia, which depends on oil and gas sales for half of government revenues, Economy Minister Alexei Ulyukayev on Tuesday warned that his country's budgetary situation was "critical" and that it was now urgent to implement a privatization program that is expected to feature sales of stakes in state-owned companies such as oil giant Rosneft. "It is no longer possible to wait," he said, just as Russia—a top global producer—was pumping oil at record levels to offset falling prices with increased volumes. The government in Moscow has already admitted that tumbling oil prices will push it to slash spending as it struggles to keep the deficit to under three percent of gross domestic product.

'A source of risk'

"Government deficits are growing strongly. And to maintain social peace and military spending, producer countries are in no position to cut public spending," said Olivier Garnier, chief economist at Societe Generale. Trying to reduce spending regardless would be "a source of risk", he said. Last month, the International Monetary Fund warned that the sharp collapse in the price of oil is proving more of a drag on the global economy than a stimulus, pointing to the dire budgetary situation that oil exporting countries now find themselves in. There are big differences between the various oil-exporting countries, many of whom had accumulated vast dollar reserves while the going was good in the commodities markets. But

even the world's biggest exporter, Saudi Arabia, is feeling the pain. The kingdom reported this week that its fiscal reserves dropped to a four-year low of \$611.9 billion last year, from \$732 billion in 2014, as the government sought to finance a budget deficit caused by plunging oil revenues. In December, Saudi Arabia had reported a record deficit and announced austerity measures, including cuts to fuel subsidies.

African producer Nigeria, meanwhile, boasting no

means that situation is perhaps not yet dramatic, according to Ludovic Subran, chief economist at Euler Hermes. "Today, exporters in Africa have enough foreign reserves for at least another year. The others are being helped by international institutions," he said.

Limited room for maneuver

Maybe so. But while some countries may obtain "soft loans" to tide them over, other credit lines come



NEW YORK: Specialist Anthony Matesic, center, reaches out to traders on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. —AP

such reserves, is seeking loans from the World Bank, the African Development Bank and other lenders to help cover this year's massive budget deficit, the government and bank officials said on Tuesday. The budget plan, which includes sharply increased spending to stimulate the economy, calls for 1.8 trillion naira (\$9 billion) to be covered by borrowing from multilateral organizations—which the government believes is the cheapest funding option.

The possibility for cash-strapped nations like Nigeria to get a friendly hearing from global lenders

with strings attached, notably austerity measures or forced asset sales—and therefore the danger of social trouble from already impoverished populations.

"The room for maneuver is very limited. Growth is slowing and adjustment is very costly because of austerity and the recession," Christine Riffart, an economist with French think tank OFCE said in a recent report. Venezuela, which is sitting on the biggest known oil reserves from which it derives 96 percent of its foreign revenues, has been devastated by the drop in prices. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
ASIAN COUNTRIES		
Japanese Yen	2.536	
Indian Rupees	4.448	
Pakistani Rupees	2.887	
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.108	
Nepali Rupees	2.784	
Singapore Dollar	212.400	
Hongkong Dollar	38.879	
Bangladesh Taka	3.861	
Philippine Peso	6.327	
Thai Baht	8.472	
GCC COUNTRIES		
Saudi Riyal	80.870	
Qatari Riyal	83.304	
Omani Riyal	787.682	
Bahraini Dinar	805.370	
UAE Dirham	82.566	
ARAB COUNTRIES		
Egyptian Pound - Cash	37.400	
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	38.776	
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.415	
Tunisian Dinar	149.530	
Jordanian Dinar	427.050	
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.020	
Syrian Lira	2.161	
Morocco Dirham	31.087	
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES		
US Dollar Transfer	303.100	
Euro	332.650	
Sterling Pound	437.980	
Canadian dollar	215.880	
Turkish lira	102.470	
Swiss Franc	298.920	
Australian Dollar	215.960	
US Dollar Buying	301.900	

	GOLD
20 Gram	229.570
10 Gram	117.700
5 Gram	59.700

UAE EXCHANGE CENTRE WLL

CURRENCIES	TELEX TRANSFER PER 1000
Australian Dollar	201.21
Canadian Dollar	219.93
Swiss Franc	301.04
Euro	333.90
US Dollar	303.30
Sterling Pound	439.41
Japanese Yen	2.55
Bangladesh Taka	3.866
Indian Rupee	4.463
Sri Lankan Rupee	2.108
Nepali Rupee	2.782
Pakistani Rupee	2.887
UAE Dirhams	0.08253
Bahraini Dinar	0.8060
Egyptian Pound	0.03863
Jordanian Dinar	0.4314
Omani Riyal	0.7876
Qatari Riyal	0.08362
Saudi Riyal	0.08084

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.350
Canadian Dollar	217.070
Sterling Pound	438.140
Euro	332.320
Swiss Franc	309.775
Bahrain Dinar	802.525
UAE Dirhams	82.830
Qatari Riyals	84.045

Saudi Riyals	81.570
Jordanian Dinar	427.325
Egyptian Pound	38.629
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.110
Indian Rupees	4.447
Pakistani Rupees	2.889
Bangladesh Taka	3.859
Philippines Peso	6.337
Cyprus pound	577.785
Japanese Yen	3.530
Syrian Pound	2.375
Nepalese Rupees	3.770
Malaysian Ringgit	72.310
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.450
Thai Bhat	9.425
Turkish Lira	102.645

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.429668	0.438668
Czech Korune	0.004251	0.016251
Danish Krone	0.040319	0.045319
Euro	0.325100	0.333100
Norwegian Krone	0.030772	0.035972
Romanian Leu	0.086947	0.086947
Slovakia	0.009039	0.019039
Swedish Krona	0.031394	0.036394
Swiss Franc	0.290936	0.301136
Turkish Lira	0.097057	0.107357
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.204406	0.215906
New Zealand Dollar	0.191800	0.201300
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.209651	0.218151

US Dollars	0.299200	0.303500
US Dollars Mint	0.299500	0.303500
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003507	0.004107
Chinese Yuan	0.044457	0.047957
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037007	0.039757
Indian Rupee	0.004191	0.004581
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002453	0.002633
Kenyan Shilling	0.003150	0.003150
Korean Won	0.000239	0.000254
Malaysian Ringgit	0.068345	0.074345
Nepalese Rupee	0.002873	0.003043
Pakistan Rupee	0.002582	0.002862
Philippine Peso	0.006256	0.006536
Sierra Leone	0.000067	0.000073
Singapore Dollar	0.208780	0.214780
South African Rand	0.012699	0.021199
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001757	0.002337
Taiwan	0.008927	0.009107
Thai Baht	0.008158	0.008708
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.797090	0.805090
Egyptian Pound	0.034852	0.039188
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000199	0.000259
Jordanian Dinar	0.423501	0.431001
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000152	0.000252
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021414	0.045414
Nigerian Naira	0.001251	0.001886
Omani Riyal	0.780853	0.786533
Qatar Riyal	0.082543	0.083756
Saudi Riyal	0.079940	0.080890
Syrian Pound	0.001285	0.001505
Tunisian Dinar	0.146389	0.154389
Turkish Lira	0.097057	0.107357
UAE Dirhams	0.081542	0.082691
Yemeni Riyal	0.001370	0.001450

UKRAINE ECONOMY MINISTER RESIGNS OVER STATE GRAFT

KIEV: Ukraine's economy minister abruptly tendered his resignation yesterday saying overwhelming corruption had stifled his efforts to push through measures essential to getting growth back on track in the cash-strapped country.

Aivaras Abromavicius's shock departure laid bare divisions within the pro-Western government of President Petro Poroshenko and highlighted the uphill battle the former Soviet nation faces in enacting the necessary changes to join the European Union. "Today, I made the decision to submit my resignation from the post of minister of Ukraine's economic development and trade," the Lithuanian-born minister told reporters

in Kiev. "The reason is the sharp escalation in efforts to block systemic and important reforms."

Abromavicius and Finance Minister Natalie Jaresko were both appointed in December 2014 as part of Poroshenko's efforts to bring new blood into the war-shattered country's attempts to return to growth. Reacting to his resignation Kiev's US Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt tweeted that Abromavicius was "one of the Ukrainian government's great champions of reform... and a believer in the future Ukraine's people deserve."

"Abromavicius's announcement is a worrying signal for foreign investors," Concorde Capital economist Oleksandr Parashchii said. The resignation comes

in the midst of growing parliamentary displeasure with Poroshenko's cabinet and fighting between political interests tied to powerful business tycoons.

'Can't work in this system'

Abromavicius alleged that unnamed powerful figures were "trying to establish control over financial resources—first and foremost those of the Naftogaz (state oil and energy company) and the defence industry."

"I refuse to work in such a system," the 40-year-old former banker said. "I and my team are not ready to provide cover for the restoration of old-and the creation of new-schemes (built) in the interests of particular political and business players."

The graft-riven country of about 40 million has been one of Europe's worst economic performers since winning independence in 1991.

A January report by Transparency International showed Ukraine ranking 130 out of 168 countries and territories surveyed for its 2015 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI).

Initial government estimates show Ukraine's economy shrinking by 10.4 percent of gross domestic product last year. Abromavicius's resignation must still be approved by parliament at a meeting today. Poroshenko himself failed to mention his minister's decision during brief remarks devoted to the appointment of a new regional governor.

Bitter rivalries

Some of Kiev's more acrimonious battles have been waged between billionaires linked to Poroshenko and those of Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk — a hawkish leader who delivered passionate speeches atop barricades during Ukraine's 2014 pro-Western revolt. Yatsenyuk and Poroshenko were seen as allies in the heady days that followed Ukraine's break from Russia's historic embrace. But bitter rivalries have since surfaced and Yatsenyuk's own place in the government no longer suits some of the more outspoken members of the president's team. Mikheil Saakashvili—a former Georgian president who fought a brief 2008 war with Russia and currently serves as governor of Ukraine's historic Odessa region—said he spoke to Abromavicius on Tuesday and knew that something was wrong. —AFP



WUHAN: This picture taken on February 1, 2016 shows Chinese employees working on the Kadjar car assembly line of France's Renault and China's Dongfeng Group factory. —AFP

LATE ARRIVAL: RENAULT HAS A MOUNTAIN TO CLIMB IN CHINA

WUHAN: With China's growth slowing, ruthless competition and virtually no brand recognition, French carmaker Renault is banking on SUVs and a Transformers actress as it confronts an uphill struggle to break into the world's biggest car market. Europe's third largest carmaker acknowledged it was coming late to the party when it opened its first factory in China this week-years after Japanese behemoth Toyota and US giant General Motors.

"It's a tricky situation for Renault," Jia Xinguang, chief analyst at China Automotive Industry Consulting, said. "About five or six years ago the Chinese market was very lively but conditions are worse and the competition is cut-throat. Another thing is that the Renault brand isn't well-known." Having shifted only 15,000 vehicles in China last year—a tiny fraction of the 24 million that hit the roads—the company knows it has its work cut to become a household name.

"There might be a lack of awareness. The Chinese may have heard people talking about it (Renault), but they don't know anything about it, there aren't that many of them on the road and they don't know anyone in their circle who drives one," said Jacques Daniel, CEO of its \$1.2 billion joint venture with Chinese manufacturer Dongfeng.

Renault's involvement with Formula 1 races in Shanghai has helped increase brand recognition in China, although pronunciation of the company name in Mandarin is "Lei nuo". With so many roadblocks ahead of it Renault is pinning its hopes on two things: the Chinese thirst for SUVs, one of the fastest growing sectors in the auto market, and the pulling power of a Chinese megastar.

'Copied and pasted'

The SUV sector has experienced explosive growth in China, expanding by around 53 percent last year to account for almost a third of the auto market. "We're arriving late but with the right product," says Daniel. The right product, according to Renault, is a SUV called the Kadjar that goes on sale in the country next month—which will initially be the factory's sole product.

Renault officials say their existing partnership with Japan's Nissan will help with production speed and costs as the factory has been "copied and pasted" from Nissan plants, using similar equipment and machinery, and the Kadjar itself is based on Nissan's Qashqai, enabling the two firms to share the same suppliers.

"It's easier to build your brand by showcasing one product to begin with, then two. Imported vehicles are not that competitive and your influence is very limited," says Renault CEO Carlos Ghosn—who also heads Nissan. The French firm has also beefed its showroom network, and intends to offer a broader range once Chinese sales increase. But China's auto market, although vast, is suffering. Total sales rose 4.7 percent in 2015 — seven percent for passenger cars—but the growth was markedly lower than for previous years.

Model ambassador

Most of all the automaker wants to rev up its China sales with the help of a Chinese megastar actress and fashion symbol. Fan Bingbing has only had minor roles in Hollywood films, such as X-Men: Days of Future Past, Transformers: Age of Extinction, and the mainland-only version of Iron Man 3, but she is a huge star in China.

As such she has become go-to Chinese celebrity ambassador for foreign firms seeking a stronger foothold in the world's second-largest economy, and has represented Louis Vuitton, Cartier and rival car firm Mercedes-Benz. Fan earned \$21 million in 2015, according to Forbes magazine, putting her ahead of US actresses Jennifer Aniston and Angelina Jolie.

In November she became a spokeswoman for the Kadjar, unveiling a red-and-black SUV to the Chinese public at the Guangzhou motor show. But winning hearts and minds—and wallets—will take time. Renault has an ambitious goal to corner 3.5 percent of the Chinese market, but says little about when that might happen. "Building a factory in China isn't that complicated," says Renault-Dongfeng vice-president Hu Xindong. "But it's harder gaining the trust of consumers and making them fall in love with your brand." —AFP

SUVS REV UP AT DELHI AUTO SHOW DESPITE POLLUTION CRACKDOWN

DIESEL-GUZZLING SUVs ON PROUD DISPLAY

NEW DELHI: India's flagship auto show opened its doors in New Delhi yesterday with a new batch of diesel-guzzling SUVs on proud display, despite industry uncertainty about a pollution crackdown targeting motorists in the capital. More than 80 vehicle launches were expected at the Auto Expo 2016, the biggest edition in the show's 30-year history, with the Fiat Chrysler-owned Jeep making its India debut and hoping to capitalize on the popularity of sports utility vehicles. SUVs pouring onto the roads have been partly blamed for the Indian capital's toxic air which the World Health Organization has ranked the worst on the planet.

The Delhi government and the courts have announced a string of measures to tackle the crisis, including a ban until March 31 on registration of new diesel cars with an engine capacity of two liters or more—typical of large SUVs or luxury cars. Although the moves have rattled the industry, carmakers yesterday showed off their new SUVs—including many smaller, cheaper versions of the cars that can more easily navigate chaotic city streets, aimed at young urban buyers.

Small car market

Among those unveiling these "compact SUVs" was Maruti Suzuki, the Indian subsidiary of the Japanese carmaker better known for its dominance in the small car market, which was holding the global premiere of its Vitara Brezza.

Jeep acknowledged it faced the task of reclaiming its 75-year-old brand name in the Indian market, where SUVs are often called simply "jeeps". There are plans to target affluent consumers with its luxury 4x4s. "The SUV segment is poised to take a quantum leap in the coming years in light of the emerging market trends," said Kevin Flynn, president and managing director of Fiat-Chrysler Automobiles India.

"Jeep is our name and we

intend to capture it for ourselves." Jeep's Wrangler Unlimited and Grand Cherokee models will be on sale from mid-2016, while it plans to invest \$280 million in its plant in Ranjangaon that will produce an "all-new Jeep", the carmaker said. India's biggest carmaker Tata Motors showed off a range of new models as it tries to broaden its flagging market share, including two forthcoming SUVs and the Zica hatchback—which it plans to rename following the spread of the Zika virus.

"We recognize the need to

Hybrid cars on show

Industry insiders say there are fears that the ban on large diesel cars could be extended to other cities also trying to combat air pollution, or extended for a longer term. Carmakers are rushing to offer petrol-powered versions of their vehicles as well as diesel, for fear motorists may shun the dirtier fuel.

"Right now the impact is not too much, but more and more in India, customers are becoming aware of it," Abdul Majeed, a partner at consultancy firm Price

hybrid sports car.

Toyota, whose Prius and Camry hybrids are among those most sought-after by environmentally conscious consumers, said inquiries about the Camry doubled in January. India, the world's fifth biggest auto market, has an extremely low number of cars for its 1.2 billion people, with industry figures suggesting there are as few as 16 per 1,000 people.

But despite its huge potential, the domestic passenger car market has performed poorly in



NEW DELHI: An Indian model stands next to Hyundai 2025 vision Grati Turismo at the Auto Expo in Greater Noida. —AP

improve air quality, but when we look at the targets being set, they should be set based on emissions-limits on emissions" rather than restrictions on engine size, Timothy Levertson, Tata's head of research and development, told AFP.

Waterhouse and auto industry expert, said. With polluting cars in the frame, electric and hybrid vehicles—still a niche market in India—also made a strong showing at the Expo, including the BMW i8, a rare example of a

recent years with sales growth flat or in single digits, the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers says. After two days of press previews, the show will open to the public on Friday and run until next Tuesday. —AFP

ADELE, BOND HELP REVAMPED SONY AVOID SPECTRE OF LOSSES

TOKYO: British pop diva Adele and suave spy James Bond may be unlikely stars in Sony's turnaround, but the firm is betting they are key to a corporate makeover that analysts say still has a long way to go. The company is leaning on movies, music, and soaring sales of the PlayStation videogame console in its bid to scrap years of eye-watering losses — and it appears to be paying off. Last week, Sony booked a nine-month net profit of almost \$2.0 billion, reversing a year-earlier loss, with PS4 sales topping a record 30 million units in the autumn. Sony partly credited its Hollywood studio's release of "Spectre", the latest installment in the Bond series, and its music label's top-selling Adele album "25"—along with boy band One Direction's "Made in the AM".

The company is on target for only its second annual profit since the 2008 global financial crisis, which gave

way to massive losses including a \$5.7 billion bloodletting several years ago. Under one-time US games boss Kazuo Hirai, the iconic firm launched a desperate restructuring that included layoffs and asset sales, including hiving off its laptop division and unloading its Manhattan headquarters. But Hirai staunchly refused to abandon a struggling TV unit, after losing billions of dollars in the consumer electronics that catapulted Sony into a global brand. Battered by stiff competition from lower-cost rivals from Taiwan and South Korea, Sony was also outmaneuvered in smartphones by iPhone maker Apple and Samsung.

'Good old days'

Now, nearly four years after Hirai got the top job, analysts say the company must still decide what it wants to be—an innovative, hit-making electronics mak-

er or mature industry specialist. "It's nonsense for Sony to go back to the good old days. Sony is no longer a young, small company," Kazuhiko Toyama, head of Tokyo-based management consultant Industrial Growth Platform, told AFP. "It should be aiming to become a more mature electronics and technology company," added Toyama, who has been involved in several corporate turnarounds, including that of once-bankrupt Japan Airlines.

"Rather than searching for some dream-like innovations, the company must focus on its real strengths and competitive advantage. Sony should favor specialist components—such as developing technology focused on self-driving vehicles—rather than trying to save its battered consumer electronics business, Toyama said.

The company scooped up Toshiba's image sensor business as it looks to bolster its position as a global leader in the components which are found in smartphones and other mobile devices. "By focusing on its functional strengths, Sony isn't really straying far from its original DNA," Toyama added. Others say Sony still has much work to do on differentiating itself, and its bosses need to inject a new spirit of innovation into the bloated firm.

Nearly seven decades after its founding, Sony has ballooned into a global giant with about 130,000 employees and operations spanning music, electronics, movies, videogames, memory chips, batteries and even insurance. "Sony's founders... obviously knew how to differentiate the company from its competitors," said Hironobu Yokota, a former Sony employee who wrote a book several years ago about the firm's struggles.

But he warned that it would be an uphill battle to roll out anything approaching the success of Sony's iconic Walkman, which debuted in the late 70s. "Sony has been changing dramatically over the past couple of years, but its restructuring isn't over," said Yasuo Nakane, senior analyst at Mizuho Securities. "There is room for more change in mobile communications, the movie sector, at headquarters, and in its battery businesses." —AFP



TOKYO: This file photo taken on May 22, 2014 shows Sony Corporation president and CEO Kazuo Hirai speaking during a press conference. —AFP

PAKISTAN'S AIRPORTS IN CHAOS OVER PIA STRIKE

KARACHI: Pakistan's airports were plunged into chaos yesterday as employees of the national flag carrier protested the deaths of two colleagues killed while demonstrating against plans to privatize the airline. All of Pakistan International Airline's foreign and domestic flights were suspended, and employees held strikes at airports in major cities across the country.

At Karachi's international airport, demonstrators waved placards and chanted slogans against Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, calling on the leader to reverse a bill that converted the carrier into a public limited company. A day earlier, two protesting employees were shot dead and several more wounded at the airport when clashes broke out between security forces the staff, though authorities denied opening fire.

The strike came despite Sharif's warning the demonstration was illegal and

those taking part could face up to a year in prison under a law that restricts union activity in state-administered sectors. PIA's chairman Nasir Jaffer meanwhile offered his resignation, though it has not been accepted by Sharif, according to airline spokesman Danial Gilani.

"Everything is shut now and flight operations have come to a complete halt," he said. The carrier could lose around \$4 million in revenue per day, Gilani added. Protest leader Sohail Baloch told AFP: "We will continue our peaceful protests until our demand is met."

The employees also said they would donate a day's salary to the families of the two employees who were killed. In December, Islamabad announced it would complete the partial sale of the carrier by July, following years of crushing losses and mismanagement that have battered the airline's reputation. —AFP

GLOBAL STOCKS REMAIN LACKLUSTER ON ECONOMY FEARS

LONDON: Global stock markets were having another lackluster day Wednesday amid ongoing worries over the state of the world economy, which has piled the pressure on oil prices in particular. In Europe, France's CAC 40 was down 0.5 percent to 4,261 while Germany's DAX fell 1.2 percent to 9,470. The FTSE 100 index of leading British shares was 0.6 percent lower at 5,867. U.S. stocks were poised for modest gains at the open, with Dow futures and the broader S&P 500 futures up 0.2 percent.

Economy worries
As well as fretting over the scale of the economic slowdown in China following further downbeat economic data earlier this week, investors are beginning to wonder whether the US recovery is as strong as thought. Weak data this week has elevated those concerns, prompting big falls in the price of oil. On Wednesday, oil prices recovered some ground, but not much. A barrel of benchmark New York crude was up 43 cents at \$30.31 a barrel while Brent, the international standard traded in London, rose 53 cents to \$33.25 a barrel.

Europe waning
Added to the mix yesterday were renewed fears over the slowdown in Europe. A closely watched survey from financial information company Markit found the economic recovery in the 19-country euro-zone losing steam in January, a sign that the turmoil in global financial markets is beginning to weigh on business activity.

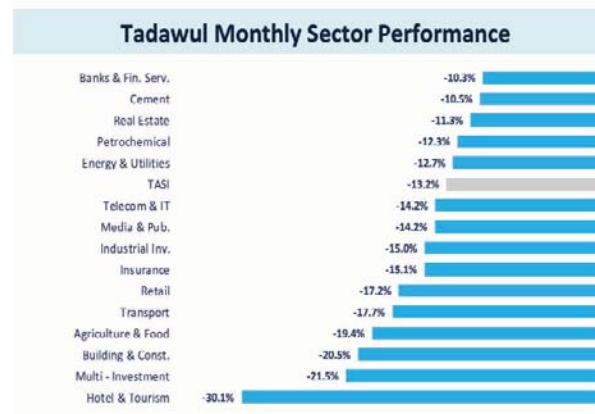
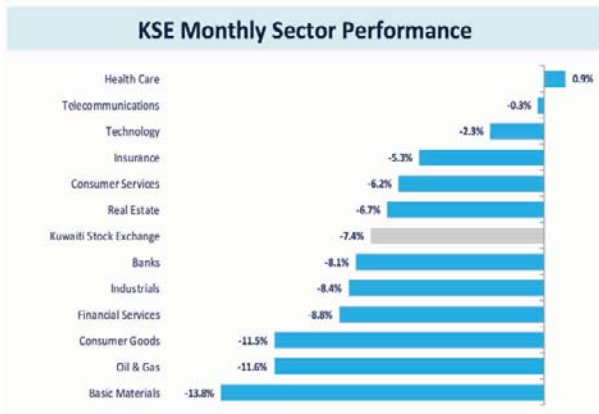
US data run
Further figures later yesterday, including monthly jobs data from private payrolls firm

ADP will be closely monitored in the context of whether the Federal Reserve will follow up its rate hike in December with another one next month. The busy US calendar culminates Friday with the monthly nonfarm payrolls data for January, which often set the market tone for a week or two after their release. "We may start to see markets quieten down over the course of the session as we gear up to Friday's jobs report," said James Hughes, chief market analyst at GKFX.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 lost 3.2 percent to finish at 17,191.25. South Korea's Kospi slipped 0.8 percent to 1,890.67. Hong Kong's Hang Seng was down 2.3 percent at 18,991.59 and China's Shanghai Composite fell 0.4 percent to 2,739.25. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 dropped 2.3 percent to 4,876.80. It was a pretty flat day in currency markets with the euro up 0.1 percent at \$1.0933 and the dollar 0.3 percent lower at 119.41 yen. —AP

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report									
Wednesday 03 February 2016									
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low				
Price index	▼ -14.02	5,118.84	5,132.86	5,132.53	5,095.29				
Weighted Index	▼ -4.08	349.61	353.69	352.95	349.61				
KSX 15	▼ -15.19	817.52	832.71	829.89	817.52				
Trades									
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change		
MARIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	114	—	0.0	
IKARUS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	75	—	0.0	
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	320	—	0.0	
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	600	—	0.0	
ENERGYH	35.0	31.5	550	18	2	31.5	▼	-1.0	
API	41.0	39.5	3,729,177	150,535	83	41.0	▲	0.5	
ARAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	116	—	0.0	
Oil & Gas			3,729,177	150,535	85	755.15	▲	0.04	
KFOUC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	210	—	0.0	
DFCC	450	445	352,259	158,513	12	450	—	0.0	
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	610	—	0.0	
ALQURAIN	100	102	177,090	29,033	24	104	—	0.0	
Basic Materials			529,349	187,546	36	872.27	—	0.00	
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	380	—	0.0	
REFRI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	310	—	0.0	
CABLE	335	325	72,100	23,704	8	335	▼	-5.0	
SHIP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	142	—	0.0	
PCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	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	61,000	16,470	5	270	—	0.0	
GGMC	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	54	52	645,010	33,676	21	53	—	0.0	
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	99	—	0.0	
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	102	—	0.0	
SALDOOKH	70	66	735,500	49,278	13	70	▲	1.0	
AGLTY	430	425	1,807,010	776,667	72	425	▼	-15.0	
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	206	—	0.0	
CLEANING	37.0	34.0	431,837	15,042	19	37.0	▲	1.0	
CITYGROUP	410	410	1,265	519	1	410	▲	10.0	
KGL	36.5	36.5	34,855	1,272	3	36.5	▼	-0.5	
KCPK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	210	—	0.0	
HUMANSOFT	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	28.5	27.0	1,691	47	3	28.5	—	0.0	
MAYADEEN	19.0	18.5	1,001,932	18,992	26	19.0	▼	-0.5	
CGC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	790	—	0.0	
MITCC	71	70	498,761	32,186	23	71	▼	-1.0	
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	600	—	0.0	
ALAFCCO	184	180	346,123	62,989	22	184	▲	2.0	
MUBARRAD	72	67	10,520,239	741,270	231	71	▲	1.0	
LOGISTICS	50	48.0	1,238,298	60,783	63	50	▲	4.0	
SCEM	84	84	4,000	336	1	84	▲	1.0	
GCEM	80	80	22,000	1,760	2	80	▲	5.0	
QCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	70	—	0.0	
FCEM	72	70	50,001	3,500	2	72	—	0.0	
RKWC	96	96	500	48	1	96	▲	1.0	
SPEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	88	—	0.0	
Industrials			17,432,122	1,838,518	506	968.82	▲	3.06	
KGH	206	206	2,000	412	2	206	▼	-2.0	
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	—	0.0	
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	102	—	0.0	
CATTL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	128	—	0.0	
DANAH	72	70	8,000	564	4	72	—	0.0	
POULT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	196	—	0.0	
FOOD	1,900	1,900	3,500	6,650	1	1,900	▼	-20.0	
Consumer Goods			13,600	7,626	7	1027.68	▼	-3.24	
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	200	—	0.0	
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	—	0.0	
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	148	—	0.0	
Health Care			0	0	0	952.05	—	0.00	
KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	980	—	0.0	
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	220	—	0.0	
SULTAN	60	60	3,000	180	1	60	▲	1.0	
CABLETV	31.5	30.0	5,450	166	4	31.0	▲	2.0	
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	335	—	0.0	
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	194	—	0.0	
QULAFJEL	112	108	9,971	1,097	8	108	▼	-2.0	
MUNTAZAHAT	90	88	38,208	3,404	4	90	▲	1.0	
JAZERA	810	780	186,044	147,001	5	810	▲	20.0	
SOOR	112	106	28,284	3,062	16	108	▼	-2.0	
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	110	—	0.0	
ALNAWADI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	84	—	0.0	
ALRAI	128	128	100	13	1	128	▼	-6.0	
ZIMAH	96	88	1,077,730	99,863	78	96	▲	5.0	
UFIO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	96	—	0.0	
KOUJIFOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	580	—	0.0	
Mezzan	1,020	1,020	218,337	222,704	11	1,020	—	0.0	
Consumer Services			1,567,124	477,290	128	943.33	▲	5.17	
ZAIN	365	350	4,301,046	1,543,661	157	350	▼	-20.0	
ODREDOO	1,100	1,060	1,726	1,838	3	1,100	▲	4.0	
HITSTELEG	20.5	25.5	1,072,392	27,907	35	26.5	▲	1.0	
VIVA	920	900	139,218	126,658	165	910	▼	-10.0	
Telecommunications			5,514,362	1,700,063	360	567.34	▼	-4.31	
NBK	700	690	1,262,939	883,471	55	690	▼	-20.0	
GDK	210	206	379,089	78,857	24	210	—	0.0	
CBK	510	510	5,550	2,831	1	510	▼	-10.0	
ABK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	—	0.0	
ALMUTAHED	450	445	8,142	3,624	4	445	▼	-10.0	
KIB	200	198	199,396	39,480	14	200	—	0.0	
BURG	345	340	186,807	63,745	13	345	▲	5.0	
KFIN	495	490	1,179,688	579,451	68	490	▼	-5.0	
DOUBYAN	395	390	217,199	84,800	33	390	▼	-5.0	
AUB	206	204	89,296	18,361	3	204	▼	-2.0	
ITHMR	32.5	31.5	5,275,341	168,151	95	32.5	—	0.0	
WARBANK	190	178	7,968,216	1,481,074	272	182	—	0.0	
Banks			16,771,753	3,403,844	582	811.91	▼	-5.89	
KINS	320	320	250	80	1	320	▲	10.0	
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	750	—	0.0	
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	435	—	0.0	
WINS	106	106	250	27	2	106	▲	2.0	
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	200	—	0.0	
FTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	52	—	0.0	
WETHAQ	31.0	30.0	94,752	2,854	11	30.5	—	0.0	
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	—	0.0	
Insurance			95,252	2,961	14	1053.82	▲	7.52	
SOKOUK	35.0	33.5	520,893	176,703	139	33.5	▼	-2.5	
KRE	46.0	45.0	679,500	30,950	20	45.5	—	0.0	
URC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	94	—	0.0	
NRE	80	88	609,151	61,989	19	89	▼	-1.0	
SRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	—	0.0	
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	630	—	0.0	
AREEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	136	—	0.0	
MASGALJI	0.0								

KAMCO RESEARCH: GCC MARKET MONTHLY REPORT



KUWAIT: The year started with a steep selloff in almost all major global equity markets and asset classes dashing investor hopes of an improvement over declines in 2015. The MSCI World index plummeted 6.1% during the month as the decline in emerging market indices outpaced the decline in developed market indices.

The MSCI GCC index recorded the steepest monthly decline of 10.1% followed by MSCI Arabian Markets Index at -9.9%. On the other hand, the positive returns for gold (+5.2%), global developed sovereign bonds (+1.2%) and USD (1%) indicated a flight towards safer assets.

The key factors affecting investor sentiment was largely the same as seen during 2015, i.e. a slowdown in China coupled with the oil price rout. The overall market sentiment remained extremely bearish in China as the index hit lower circuit twice during the first seven days of the year after economic indicators failed to show a pickup in manufacturing activity resulting in trading suspension.

Meanwhile, oil, which continues to be the second key factor driving the sell-off due to the fear of stoking deflationary pressure, tumbled to the lowest level in 12-years after sanctions over Iran were lifted and the country announced plans to increase production by as early as mid-2016. However, oil price saw a recovery of almost 30% during the latter half of the month spurred by speculation that OPEC and Russia may come to table to discuss oil production.

GCC equity markets closed the month with a market cap loss of almost USD 83 Bn or 9.3% led by steep declines in all the markets. Saudi benchmark index fell the most during the month with losses reaching almost 21% by mid-month only to partially recover in a late month relief rally. UAE markets also tumbled but saw a strong recovery by the end of the month.

Kuwait Stock Exchange

All of the KSE indices saw steep monthly declines during January-16 with the KSE Price Index witnessing a decline of 8.9%, the steepest monthly decline since January-09, followed by a 7.4% decline recorded in the KSE Weighted Index. The decline was broadbased as seen in the 7.8% monthly decline in the large-cap KSE-15 index.

The KSE Weighted index briefly touched a seven year low level of 330.24 points on 21-January-16 but witnessed partial recovery during the remainder of the month. In terms of sector performance, except for the Health Care sector, all the remaining sectors recorded declines. The positive performance of the Health Care index was solely on the back of 16.7% return recorded in shares of Al-Mowasat Healthcare which posted a 66.7% increase in net profit for FY-15. Among the decliners, the Basic Materials and the Oil & Gas indices plunged by 13.8% and 11.6%, respectively, primarily as a result of the oil price rout. The Consumer Goods index also recorded a steep decline of 11.5% primarily due to the 12% fall in shares of Americana that declined amidst a broader market sell-off. The heavyweight Bank index also declined by 8.1% during the month, with the exception of CBK, as shares in all the other banks declined despite NBK (-10%) and KFH (-7.4%) posting net profit growth of 7.8% and 15.3%, respectively.

The monthly gainers chart was topped by Gulf Finance House with a monthly return of 22.4% followed by Al Mowasat Healthcare (+16.7%) and REAM (+12.1%). Meanwhile, the monthly decliners chart was topped by Taiba Kuwaiti Holding with a fall of 76.7% although trades in the stock were marginal. Other noticeable decliners included National Investment Co. which declined by 19.3% followed by Gulf Bank and Bouyain Petrochemicals with monthly declines of 16.9% and 16.0%, respectively. Market breadth continued to favor losers which included 142 companies as compared to 23 decliners. The overall trading activity saw some improvement during the month as compared to December-15. Total shares traded increased by 15.3% to 2.7 Bn shares, whereas value traded during the month increased by 16.7% to KWD 282 Mn. Al Dar National Real Estate was the most widely traded stock on the exchange with a monthly volume of 311 Mn shares followed by Ithmar Bank and GFH with 279 Mn shares and 231 Mn shares, respectively. In terms of value traded, KFH topped the chart with KWD 54.5 Mn worth of shares traded during the month followed by NBK and Viva Kuwait with KWD 32.6 Mn and KWD 16.5 Mn worth of shares traded on the exchange.

On the economic front, the draft budget for financial year 2016-17 has forecasted a budget deficit of KWD 12.2 Bn (USD 40.2 Bn) with expected revenues reaching KWD 7.4 Bn, whereas expenditures are expected to decline by 1.6% to KWD 18.9 Bn. In a related announcement, the country's Finance Minister had said that an oil price of USD 25/b has been used for the 2016/17 budget which implies a realistic goal in terms of state finances as well as ample flexibility for the government to adjust expenses in case oil prices edge up in the near term.

Saudi Arabia (Tadawul)

The Tadawul All Share Index lost more than 20% during the first twenty days of trading during the new year as the market followed trends seen in the oil market as well as global stock market volatility. The benchmark fell to the lowest close in almost five year on 20-January-16 trailing oil prices that declined to their lowest level in more than a decade after sanctions over Iran were lifted. However, the remaining part of the month saw some strong relief rallies as oil prices strengthened temporarily. In addition, speculations that Russia and OPEC would come to table talk about oil production also provided some relief to the market.

The sector performance chart also reflected the prevailing negative investor sentiment with all the indices closing the month with a steep decline. Among the major sectors, the Multi-Investment index plunged more than 20% during the month, as

Kingdom Holding fell almost 30% after reporting a 18.6% drop in net profits. The monthly gainers chart included merely two stocks namely Sadafco and Bupa Arabia with monthly returns of 7.0% and 1.3%, respectively. Shares in Bupa Arabia surged after the company reported profits that more than doubled during 2015. On the other hand, the top three decliners for the month were from the insurance sector namely, Wafa Insurance (-52.8%), Al Alamiya (-47.3%) and Trade Union Coop. Insurance (-46.2%).

Trading activity on the exchange in terms of value traded declined during January-16 as compared to the previous month although volumes and number of trades surged, indicating the fact that falling prices had a significant impact on share prices. Lesser number of trading days during January-16 (21 days as compared to 23 days in December-15) also affected monthly market activity. Total value traded during the month declined by SAR 11.2 Bn or 8.9% to SAR 115.1 Bn whereas monthly volume traded surged 6.9% to 6.4 Bn shares. Alinma Bank (-8.8%) topped both the monthly volume and value chart with 1.5 Bn shares traded valued at SAR 19.8 Bn. The monthly value traded chart also included SABIC and BAHRI with SAR 13.8 Bn and SAR 10.8 Bn worth of shares traded during the month. Preliminary earnings announcements for FY15 indicated a decline of almost 14% in net profits as compared to 2014. Except for the Banking sector, which recorded a 5.4% increase in net profits, none of the other major sectors recorded earnings improvement for FY-15. Profits for the Banking sector was largely positive with only three banks, namely Riyad Bank, The Saudi Investment Bank and Bank Al Bilad, reporting drop in full year net profits. Profits for the Petrochemical sector plunged 38% to SAR 21.3 Bn whereas companies in the Energy & Utilities sector reported a 56% drop in net profit.

On the economic front, IMF, in its latest update, lowered growth expectations for Saudi Arabia's economic growth in 2016 and 2017 by 100 bps to 1.2 and 1.9%, respectively. The decline in oil prices has put excessive strain on state budgets with the Kingdom now exploring options to best utilize state assets. In a related announcement, the government is said to be exploring the options for an IPO of downstream operations of state oil company Aramco, although no concrete announcement was

made by the end of the month to this effect. Meanwhile, there was also speculation that the country may issue local currency bonds worth SAR 20 Bn in the coming weeks.

Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange

ADX Monthly Sector Performance Monthly Value Traded (AED Mn) ADX General Index started 2016 with heightened volatility, similar to its other GCC peers, and closed in the red for the month of January-16, falling by 5.9% m-o-m. The market closed at 4,054.37 points in January-16, and recovered from its lows of 13.2% MTD declines caused by the rout in oil prices that shook GCC markets. Sectors, which dragged the index down, were led by the Energy Index, which plunged by 14.3% m-o-m, due to the concerns over the outlook of the sector, as both index constituents Dana Gas (-15.7%) and Abu Dhabi National Energy (-8.5%) witnessed significant declines. Sectors that followed were both financials indexes - Banking and Investment & Financial Services which dropped by over 9% and 8% respectively. Telecom was the only index to close in the green for the first month of the year, albeit marginally, increasing by 0.3%. Banking Index witnessed declines in all of its scrips, barring two stocks, as large cap names such as ADCB and FGB declined by 8.9% and 10.3% respectively.

In corporate developments, earnings releases for full year 2015 were announced for large cap banks such as FGB, ADCB and NBAD during the month. FGB reported a net profit of AED 6.01 Bn, up 6% y-o-y from the AED 5.66 Bn posted in 2014. EPS for 2015 came in at AED 1.32, which represented an increase of 8% y-o-y. Group revenues grew by 5% from AED 8.97 Bn in 2014 to AED 9.43 Bn in 2015. ADCB reported net profit of AED 4.927 Bn for 2015, representing a 17% increase over the AED 4.2 Bn recorded in the previous year. The bank stated that the net profit in Q4-15 stood at AED 1.19 Bn, up 16.4% over the same period in 2014. NBAD, the UAE's largest lender by assets, reported a 6% decline in net profit for 2015, as they recorded a net profit of AED 5.232 Bn, reportedly due to weak Q4-15 results. Q4-15 net profit declined 25% y-o-y and 22% q-o-q to AED 1.036 Bn, reportedly due to challenging market and liquidity conditions prevalent in the market.

Ratings agency Standard & Poor affirmed its 'A-

'long-term corporate credit rating on Ooredoo and reaffirmed its stable outlook. The agency believes that Ooredoo now has significant cash balances and a comfortable debt maturity profile, leading them to revise their liquidity assessment to strong, from adequate.

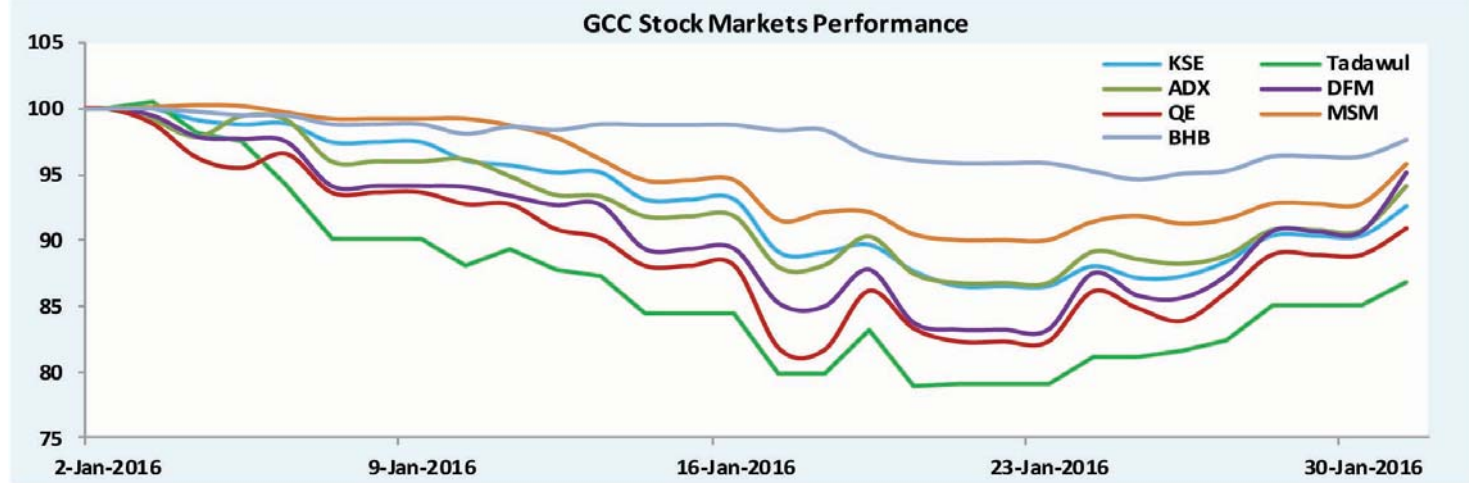
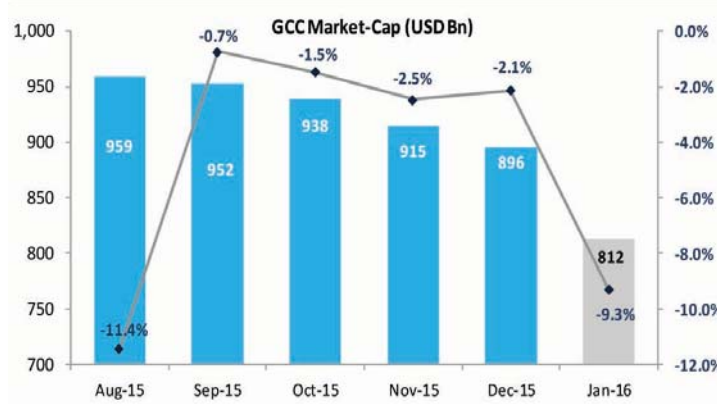
Trading activity during the month also fell from December-15, both in terms of value and volumes traded. Value traded declined by 35.4% from the previous month to close January-16 at AED 3.3 Bn. Volumes traded dropped by 14.6%, from close to 1.8 Mn shares in December-15 to 1.5 Mn shares in January -16. Etisalat remained the largest traded stock in the ADX index as AED 831 Mn worth of the stock was traded during the month. Aldar and FGB followed with value traded of AED 614 Mn and AED 611 Mn.

Despite banks being one of the key sectors which lost ground in January-16, the monthly top gainers featured banking names. Commercial Bank International led the gainers list and achieved a monthly return of 29.2%, followed by National Bank of Fujairah and Emirates Driving Co, which went up by 14.9% each during the month. Prominent decliners included Union National Bank with a monthly share price decline of 25.6%, followed by International Fish Farming Co. and Invest Bank, as they saw their stock prices erode by 25.2% and 20% respectively.

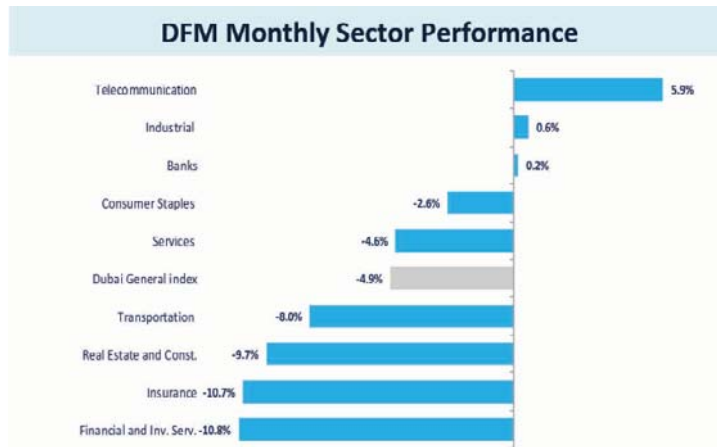
Dubai Financial Market

DFM Index also witnessed similar trends to ADX as the index closed lower by 4.9% in January -16, as compared to the previous month. The index closed at 2,997.77 points and recovered more towards the end of the month than the ADX General Index, as it rallied from its lows of 16.8% MTD declines seen during the month. Sectoral advances and declines for the month had similarities to trends witnessed in the ADX General Index. Indices, which drove the bourse down, were led by Investment & Financials services, which closed the month lower by over 10.2%, followed by the Insurance Index and Real Estate Index, which dropped by 9.9% and 9.7% respectively. Telecoms bucked the overall negative trend in the market and improved by 6.1% during the first month of 2016.

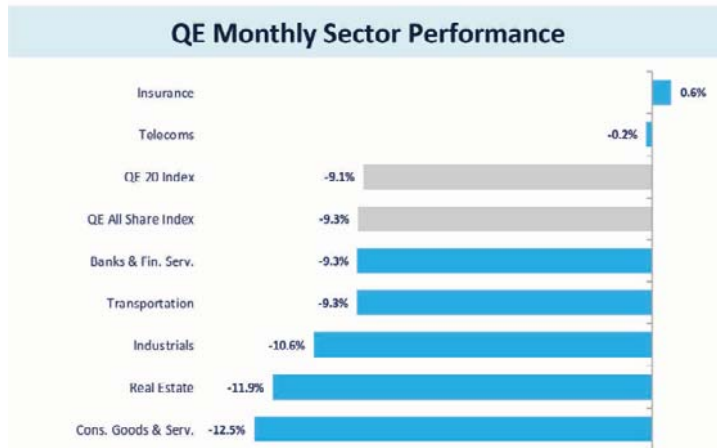
Sectoral Performance was broadly negative



Source: GCC Stock Exchanges, KAMCO Research



Source: Dubai Financial Market, KAMCO Research



Source: Qatar Exchange, KAMCO Research



barring Telecoms, and Banks and Industrials indices, which were flat for the month that passed. Most scrips in the Investment & Financial, Insurance and Real Estate indices witnessed double-digit declines for the month, as they could not recover from the market turmoil, which gripped markets during the month. Heavyweight Real Estate names such as Emaar and Emaar Malls witnessed significant declines in January -16, declining by over 10% and 13% respectively. Both companies recovered from their lows posted on 21 January-16, but ended the month at multi-year low prices. DU was able to post a 5.9% increase in price for the month and was able to lift the index higher.

Major corporate developments included Emaar Properties signing a partnership agreement with the Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq) and Eagle Hills, an Abu Dhabi-based property developer, to establish a new real estate company in Sharjah called Omran Properties. The aim of the partnership is reportedly to boost economic investments in Sharjah. In earnings releases during the month, large cap banking names such as Emirates NBD and Dubai Islamic Bank released their full year 2015 results. Emirates NBD saw its net profit go up by 39% y-o-y to AED 7.1 Bn, while total income for the year grew by 5% y-o-y to AED 15.2 Bn. Key drivers for the results were reportedly income growth, a modest increase in costs and a lower impairment charge. Dubai Islamic Bank posted a net profit growth of 37% y-o-y, as net profit increased to AED 3.8 Bn, as compared with AED 2.8 Bn for 2014. Total income also increased by 21% y-o-y to AED 7.5 Bn, up 21% compared with AED 6.2 Bn for prior year. Shares of Drake and Scull International (DSI) led the monthly losers chart as it declined by 19.5% and closed the month at AED 0.335 per share. The share plunged during the month, and even registered its 10% daily limit as concerns in the construction sector over revenue visibility, competition and high costs loom. Al Madina for Finance & Investment and Gulf General Investment followed DSI with declines of 19.3% and 19.2% for the month. On the other hand, Gulf Navigation Holding topped the gainers list with a gain of 33.7% followed by Al Salam Bank - Sudan and Gulf Finance House with monthly returns of 16.5% and 13.6%, respectively. Trends in trading activity were however divergent to the ADX General Index, as trading activity improved from the previous month. Volumes traded increased 34% m-o-m from 5.9 Bn shares to 7.9 Bn shares in January-16, while value traded went up by 38% m-o-m to AED 9.2 Bn for the month. Moreover, value traded and number of traded witnessed during the month were the largest since Aug-15.

Qatar Exchange

After ending 2015 as one of the laggards in the GCC markets, Qatar Exchange continued its downward spiral in January-16, declining by 9.1% as compared to the previous month to close at 9481.30 points. The panic set by declines in oil prices during the month also saw the index touch its lowest levels over the last two years. The QE All share index declined by a higher 9.3% during the month to close at 2519.72 points. In terms of sectoral indices, Consumer Goods & Services Index lost the most ground during the month, declining by over 12.5%, followed by Real Estate index, which receded by 11.9% m-o-m. In terms of trading activity, trading value during January-16 decreased by 13.8% m-o-m to reach QAR 5.0 Bn, compared to QAR 5.8 Bn during December-15. Traded volumes increased by 3.8% m-o-m for the first month of 2016 to reach almost 150 Mn shares, as against 144 Mn shares recorded during the month prior.

All sectoral indices closed in the red for the month of January-16, except for the Insurance index, which closed almost flat (+0.6%). Consumer Goods Services lost maximum ground amongst indices during the month, as bigger names in the sector such as Medicare (-26.4%), Al Meera (-12.5%) & Qatar Fuel (-7.0%) dragged down index. The Real Estate index saw heavyweight names such as Barwa Real Estate loose significant ground, declining by 18%, along with Ezdan Holding which sunk by 9.4% during the month. In the Banking and Financial Services pack, all stocks barring Ahli Bank and Qatar International Islamic Bank witnessed significant declines, and the aforementioned banks moved up by 4.3% and 1.6% respectively. In terms of company announcements, QNB reported net profit of QAR 11.2 Bn for full year 2015, as compared to QAR 10.4 Bn for the previous year. This translated into an EPS of QAR 16.1 for 2015, as compared to QAR 14.9 for 2014. Qatar Islamic Bank released its full year 2015 results as well reporting a net profit is QAR 1.95 Bn, as against QAR 1.6 Bn for the same period of the previous year. EPS came in at QAR 8.27 for the period compared to an EPS of QAR 6.78 for 2014.

Market breadth was weak as only five stocks closed the month in the green, while 37 lost ground from their December-15 prices. Monthly gainers for the month January-16 was topped by Ooredoo, which ended up the month up by 5.7%. Al Ahli Bank of Qatar and Qatar General Insurance followed with gains of 4.2% and 1.8% respectively. The laggards during the month was led by Dala Brokerage which saw its price plunge by 30.5%, while Islamic Holding Group and Medicare followed closely witnessing declines of 29% and 26.4%. GISS was the most actively traded stock in the index for the month, as QAR 659 Mn was traded on the exchange. Qatar National Bank followed with trades worth QAR 657 Mn, followed by Masraf Al Rayan which witnessed trades amounting to QAR 389 Mn.

HIT BY STRONG FRANCO, SWATCH PROFITS LOWER

ZURICH: Swatch yesterday posted a 21-percent-drop in its annual net profit, as the world's biggest watch group was slammed by a strong Swiss franc and a struggling timepiece sector. Last year, the Swiss watchmaker saw its net profit plummet to 1.1 billion Swiss francs (\$1.08 billion, 990 million Euros), dropping by more than a fifth from 2014, when it reported its weakest annual result in five years.

The company meanwhile said its operating profit slipped three percent to 8.4 billion Swiss francs last year, blaming especially "the ongoing unfavorable cur-

rency situation versus the still massively overvalued Swiss franc." The value of the Swiss franc ballooned after the Swiss central bank in January 2015 suddenly stopped artificially trying to hold down its value against the euro, hitting exporters in the country hard.

Stripping out exchange rate factors, by contrast, Swatch said its operating profit dipped only 0.9 percent. The results were largely in line with expectations of analysts polled by the AWP financial news agency, who had anticipated a net profit of 1.1 billion francs on an oper-

ating profit of 8.5 billion.

Following the announcement, Swatch saw its share price fall 1.24 percent to 334.70 Swiss francs in morning trading as the Swiss stock exchange's main SMI index inched up 0.46 percent. Swatch, best known for its brightly coloured plastic-cased watches, meanwhile stressed that its all-important Watches and Jewelry unit had contracted just 0.8 percent in constant exchange rates-less than the overall sector. In 2015, Swiss watch exports shrank 3.3 percent to 21.5 billion francs, falling for the first time since 2009.

The 2015 slump was closely linked to a steep 9.1-percent fall in demand in Asia, the main market for Swiss watches, which absorbed exactly half of all the exports last year. Exports to China have yo-yoed wildly in recent years, first raking in several years of double-digit growth before taking a hard hit following efforts to crack down on corruption in that country by banning extravagant gifts like expensive watches to public officials.

The pro-democracy Umbrella protests that brought much of key watch market Hong Kong to a standstill in 2014 also hit

Swiss watchmakers hard. Swatch, which owns 20 brands including Breguet, Omega and Blancpain, however said it expected improvements ahead. "Despite the ongoing challenging environment in various regions," Swatch said it expected to see "a sustainable development in sales in local currency in 2016, based on worldwide ongoing very good consumption demand for Swiss watches." The company hailed especially signs of a pick-up in China, where it said it "expects growth of well over 5% in 2016 in local currency" this year. — AFP

'PAY & WIN': AN UNPARALLELED CAMPAIGN OFFERED BY WARBA BANK

KUWAIT: In its continued efforts to align with technological advancements and their application in all its transactions that make its clients lives easier, and in order to enrich their banking experience through the use of electronic channels, Warba Bank, which is considered a leading bank in the state of Kuwait and offers diverse, integrated and complete banking and investment services that are compliant with Islamic Sharia on an international level, now presents a unique service to its customers: "Pay & Win", a service that enables them to enter a monthly draw when they pay their mobile phone bills or recharge to win the equivalent of 100% of their bill value or recharge amount.

The campaign is only one of many other innovative services that meet the needs of customers and, as such, the bank is keen on strengthening and enriching their experiences in view of the technological advancements in the banking industry, especially as the bank is well-aware that such practices have become a necessity for its customers in line with international and quality standards.

Therefore, the draw is open to all the bank's customers who pay their mobile phone bills or recharge during the reward period through mobile payment, as they will have a chance to enter the monthly draw one time against each bill payment or recharge instance undertaken. The campaign which was launched last January included three draws, the first of which was on 6th January, while the second and third draws will be on 3rd February and 2nd March 2016.

On a related matter, the bank has noticeable fingerprints when adopting technological applications in its banking services, which manifested earlier in a band of services offered online through smart phones that are Android and IOS based, in addition to "online banking service" which provides a wide spectrum of online services. This is an indication of the bank's commitment to enhance its customers' experiences since these facilities will enable customers to carry out various transactions that previously

WIN UP TO %100 OF YOUR PHONE BILL



had to be conducted in person at a branch, and whereas such operations are accomplished free of charge and with quality service and security standards.

Warba Bank aims through the introduction of these electronic services and applications - and through developing others - to establish its leading role in the market of online banking in order to make them user-friendly, easy and valuable while ensuring outstanding service and security. In order to benefit from these new and current

online services, a customer can download the smart phone application from Google Play and Apple Store, and then register with Warba Online as a user. Windows based smart phone users and Blackberry users should visit the bank's website www.warbabank.com.

Customers who wish to learn more about these internet services may visit any of the bank's branches or call customer service on 1825555 or visit our social media pages on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.



GULF INSURANCE AND REINSURANCE PARTICIPATES IN KUWAIT YACHTS SHOW 2016

KUWAIT CITY: Gulf Insurance and Reinsurance, the subsidiary of Gulf Insurance Group (GIG) and the leading insurance service provider in Kuwait, announced today its participation in the fourth Kuwait Yacht Show 2016, which is scheduled to be held from 31st Jan till the 4th Feb 2016 at Marina Crescent. A wide range of boats and super yachts are being displayed during the event that also includes international brands and dealers from all over the world.

Corporate Communication and Investor Relations Manager of Gulf Insurance Group,

Mr Khalid Al Sanousi said, "The Kuwait Yacht Show will provide an excellent opportunity for visitors to explore a variety of insurance schemes for their boats and yachts. The participation of Gulf Insurance and Reinsurance reflects the company's efforts to provide customers with the best possible insurance solutions that accommodates their varied needs." The exhibition provides visitors the chance to explore the latest and the most modern maritime craft, exhibiting new developments in the industry while also enjoying fine and exclusive services.

Buy any PlayStation console to win these Cars

Enter the draw with every purchase of PS4, PS3 and PS Vita consoles FROM JANUARY 1ST TILL 31ST

SILVERADO

CAMARO

1st Prize: Camaro

2nd Prize: Silverado

3rd Prize: KD 1500

4th-7th Prizes: KD 500

X-CITE

X-CITE ANNOUNCES THE WINNERS OF THE SONY PLAYSTATION DRAW

KUWAIT: Confirming its position as primary gaming destination in Kuwait, X-cite by Alghanim Electronics is happy to announce the winners of its spectacular Sony PlayStation Raffle Draw.

Anyone who purchased a gaming console from the PlayStation family (ie PlayStation 4, PlayStation 3 or PlayStation Vita) had the chance to enter the draw and win valuable prizes. These prizes included a brand new Camaro and Silverado as first and second prizes respectively, in addition to KD 1500 as a 3rd prize and KD 500 presented to the next four winners (4th until 7th) each.

The promotion began on January 1st, 2016 and ended on January 31st, 2016, where the final draw was held on February 2nd, 2016 in the presence of officials from the Ministry of Commerce. The first prizewinner of the new Camaro is Mohammad Abdulmenem while the second prizewinner of the new Silverado is Saleh Al-Khamis and the third prizewinner of KD 1,500 cash is Salma Al-Saqq. The fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh prizewinners are Mohammad Hasbo, Ashraf Hanafi, Rita Awad and Omar Kteish went home with KD 500 cash each.

AL-DAWLI SPONSORS THE 'PINK STEPS' WALKATHON FOR LADIES

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank announced its sponsorship of the "Pink Steps" Walkathon for Ladies that is organized on Saturday Feb 6th 2016 at Mishref pedestrian walkway by Cancer Awareness Nation (CAN), as part of its leading CSR program that aims at supporting the various initiatives that serve the community and its individuals.

On this occasion, the Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najia, said "This sponsorship translates Al-Dawli's commitment to raise awareness of cancer diseases and ways for prevention through embracing a healthy lifestyle, exercising and participating in different kinds of sports that play a crucial role in the prevention of obesity-related cancer diseases, especially breast cancer and, colon and rectum cancer."

He stated, "The walkathon coincides with the first Gulf Week for Cancer Awareness that will run for a whole week,



Nawaf Najia

available at Mishref pedestrian walkway on January 16th, 23rd and 30th, 2016. Participants can also register at the starting point on the same day of the walkathon and receive their T-shirts and caps.

"Driven by its humanitarian and national commitment that aims at spreading awareness among the members of the community, Al-Dawli strives to adopt a comprehensive strategy that takes in various social initiatives such as cultural, educational, sports, health, youth and others", Najia concluded.

US CUSTOMS PROVIDES FURTHER CONVENIENCE FOR ETIHAD AIRWAYS' PASSENGERS

DUBAI: Travelers flying to Etihad Airways' destinations in the USA will now enjoy the added convenience of being pre-cleared before boarding their flights through Abu Dhabi International Airport's United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Facility located at Terminal 3.

This covers passengers bound for Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco and Washington DC. As a result, when Etihad Airways' guests arrive in the US, they will be treated like domestic arrivals, with shorter connection times possible for onward flights within the mainland, as well as luggage arriving at the final destination.

Additionally, with Automated Passport Control (APC) kiosks also available at the Abu Dhabi International Airport, Etihad Airways' passengers travelling from the US, and other eligible Visa Waiver Program international passengers can also experience even shorter wait times and faster processing when passing through the airport of the capital city of the UAE.

As the first purpose-built facility of its kind in the region, Abu Dhabi International Airport is one of only a handful of airports outside North America that offer the CBP facility. Such facility will enable guests flying to all Etihad Airways' destinations in the USA to worry less about long

U.S. IMMIGRATION PRECLEARANCE AT ABU DHABI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This service is now available to all our U.S. destinations - Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco and Washington D.C.

الإتجاه

ETIHAD AIRWAYS

ABU DHABI

queues and focus more on experiencing the airline's award-winning hospitality.

Etihad Airways offers five daily flights from Kuwait to Abu Dhabi, providing convenient con-

nection to daily flights to Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Washington DC, besides its double daily flights to New York and three flights a week to Dallas.

ANGOLA ECONOMY IN CRISIS AS OIL PRICE SINKS CURRENCY

LUANDA: Sitting under an umbrella in the heat of Angola's capital Luanda, a vendor holds a makeshift currency exchange board on which is scribbled "335 kwanzas: \$1" - more than double the official rate of 155 kwanzas. The drop in the price of crude oil to its lowest level in more than a decade has not only pushed Angola's currency to record lows, it has plunged the economy of Africa's second largest crude producer into a crisis.

Despite the country's oil and diamond resources, Angola suffers endemic poverty, with more than a third of the population of around 24 million living below the poverty line, according to the United Nations. Fallout from the oil price crunch is inflicting even more pain on the already struggling poor, and risks threatening the stability of the country.

The kwanza currency lost 35 percent of its value against the dollar last year and Angolans are rushing to turn their local savings into more stable units, yet banks are low on foreign exchange. The black market is their only hope for now.

"There is a strong demand for the dollar," said a young black marketer on condition of anonymity. The rate "can't continue to go up like this, otherwise it becomes dangerous, people are fed up", he said. In December, central bank governor Jose Pedro de Moraes tried to calm nerves, saying there was "no dollar crisis in the country".

"There is a balance of payment deficit and there are fewer foreign resources, but the 2016 national

budget will try to address this temporary difficulty," he said. Shortly after his remarks, the bank devalued the currency by 15 percent against the dollar. The devaluation did not come as a surprise "given the price of oil, the pressure on the foreign exchange reserves and government revenue below government's budget," said an internal note from a

regional bank. "A weaker currency is needed to slow imports demand and help exports."

Tino Mario Salomao is a businessman who imports mobile phone handsets and other telecommunication products for retail sale in his shop in Luanda. "We have reached a stage where we cannot travel anymore. —AFP



LUANDA: This file photo taken on January 26, 2010 shows a woman carrying a basket of fruits on her head in downtown Luanda. — AFP

GUILTY PLEA IN ATTEMPTED CYBER-ATTACK ON US GOVT COMPUTERS

WASHINGTON: A former Nuclear Regulatory Commission scientist pleaded guilty Tuesday to a federal computer crime, admitting that he attempted to launch a cyber-attack on government computers by sending employees emails that he thought contained a virus.

Charles Harvey Eccleston, who was detained in the Philippines last year and deported to the United States to face charges, is scheduled to be sentenced in April. Federal sentencing guidelines call for him to spend at least two years behind bars.

Prosecutors say Eccleston, 62, last year attempted "spear-phishing" emails

to dozens of Energy Department email accounts - a technique in which hackers send targeted, legitimate-looking emails that when opened can launch malicious software onto a recipient's computer network. The email link in this case - an invitation to a scientific conference - was actually benign and supplied by an undercover FBI agent who was posing as a foreign intelligence officer.

The Justice Department says Eccleston, who is quoted in an FBI affidavit as saying he was once a "patriot" but became angry after he lost his job, had hoped to expose the Energy Department computer system to a

virus and extract sensitive information that could then be collected by a foreign country.

The scheme began in 2013 when Eccleston walked into a foreign embassy in the Philippines where he moved after being fired from the NRC in 2010 - and offered to sell a list of more than 5,000 email addresses of Energy Department employees in exchange for \$18,800. Eccleston said that if the embassy refused, he could turn around and offer the "top secret" information to Iran, Venezuela or China. The identity of the embassy Eccleston approached was not revealed in court documents and remains classified, prosecutors said.

Instead, the embassy contacted the FBI, and undercover agents then reached out to Eccleston to coordinate on the planned cyber-attack.

A 50-page FBI affidavit filed in the case reveals extensive back-and-forth planning between Eccleston and the undercover agents, with Eccleston at one point explaining that he was once a "patriot" who "believed in the flag" but became disgruntled after he left the government. He also understood that he would be in serious legal trouble if caught.

"If we make a mistake, I'm going to be locked up for the rest of my life," Eccleston is quoted as saying.

In January 2015, prosecutors said, Eccleston sent the email that he thought was infected to roughly 80 Energy Department employees at laboratories and other locations around the country. He was then taken into custody after he showed up for a meeting with the undercover agent at which he thought he would be paid roughly \$80,000 for sending the emails.

Eccleston spoke briefly at the plea hearing Tuesday and defended himself by saying that the email addresses in question were not classified.

"I never set out to do anything that this developed into," Eccleston told U.S. District Judge Randolph Moss. —AP



NEW YORK: Photo, shows the Comcast building sign at Rockefeller Center, in New York. —AP

COMCAST LOSES FEWEST TV CUSTOMERS IN EIGHT YEARS

NEW YORK: Comcast is trumpeting its best year for traditional TV services in nearly a decade, even though it continues to lose TV subscribers.

As the number of traditional TV customers declines across the industry, Comcast is stemming its losses by luring them with new TV-Internet packages, while keeping TV customers around for longer with the help of a fancier cable box. The company also says recent investments in customer service, long a blemish on its reputation, have helped.

Comcast said yesterday that it added 89,000 TV customers in the last three months of 2015, the best fourth quarter in eight years. For the full year, Comcast lost 36,000 TV customers, the smallest drop since 2007. The last year it added video customers was in 2006. Other cable companies are improving, too, even as cable bills rise overall, and people spend more time watching video online. Time Warner Cable posted a small gain of 32,000 TV customers for 2015, the first year it's added TV subscribers since 2006.

Craig Moffett of MoffettNathanson Research wrote that even as cord-cutting has "dramatically accelerated," with TV customers dropping nearly 1 percent a year, cable companies like Comcast, Time Warner Cable, Charter and Cox are losing fewer customers overall than they have in years. That's come as satellite-TV providers and phone companies like Verizon and AT&T do worse. (AT&T bought satellite provider DirecTV in July.)

This year could be the year that cable companies starts adding back TV customers, even as traditional TV customers overall drop, says Morgan Stanley analyst Ben Swinburne. The cable companies are getting a boost from their relatively fast Internet offerings and from skinny bundles - cheaper packages with fewer TV channels.

Comcast credits skinny bundles including Internet Plus - local TV stations, the Internet and HBO - and a service called Stream, which delivers channels over the Internet without needing a cable box.

SPEEDY INTERNET ACCESS

Comcast is also still rolling out its updated X1 cable box, which the company says has helped it hold on to customers longer. X1 users also tend to spend more on extra DVRs, meaning more money for Comcast. At the end of the third quarter, only about 25 percent of its TV customers had it. Comcast says 61 percent of its new video customers in the fourth quarter got X1.

And like other cable companies, Comcast has seen its Internet-access business grow. It added 1.4 million Internet customers in 2015, including 460,000 in the October-December quarter.

That's largely due to a lack of choice for speedy Internet access at home. Two-thirds of the country's homes have just one option or none at all at the speed the Federal Communications Commission has deemed broadband: 25 megabits per second.

Comcast typically promotes Internet speeds ranging from 25 to 150 megabits per second. The company announced Tuesday that it will offer gigabit Internet service - or about 1,000 megabits - in five cities this year through a modem upgrade, although it didn't say what the price would be. Rolling a faster service out nationwide should help Comcast continue to grow Internet customers, says Nomura's Anthony DiClemente.

As for Comcast's NBCUniversal business, TV ad revenue fell 2 percent to \$9.18 billion for the year. For the quarter, ad revenue was largely unchanged at \$854 million at cable channels like Bravo, CNBC and USA and rose 7 percent to \$1.78 billion for NBC and Telemundo. The movie business got a boost from DVD and on-demand sales of hit Universal movies such as "Jurassic World," released theatrically earlier in the year.

Company-wide profit rose more than 2 percent to \$1.97 billion, or 79 cents per share, in the fourth quarter. Adjusted for one-time costs, per-share earnings came to 81 cents. Revenue rose 8.5 percent to \$19.2 billion. —AP

APPLE TO UNVEIL NEW IPHONE, IPAD AT MARCH 15 EVENT

LOS ANGELES: Apple is looking to introduce new iPhone and iPad models at an event on March 15, according to a report from 9to5Mac. The company may also introduce new band options for the Apple Watch at the event. An Apple spokesperson didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Apple last updated the iPhone, and introduced the iPad Pro, at an event last September. This time around, the update will likely not be as big-especially if one considers screen sizes: The company is reportedly looking to introduce a new, smaller budget-priced iPhone dubbed the iPhone 5se at the event.

With a 4-inch screen, the device could sell for as little as \$450. Effectively, the iPhone 5se would replace the iPhone 5s, which was

introduced in 2013, but continues to be sold by Apple. The new device would mirror the look of the 5s, but come with more powerful chips and likely a better camera. Apple may also use the event to introduce an update to the iPad Air dubbed the iPad Air 3, which may include some of the iPad Pro's features. The iPad has been a bit of a sore spot for Apple's business, with sales of the tablet falling below 2012 levels last fall.

The company's most recent earnings report also showed that even the introduction of the iPad Pro couldn't stop falling iPad sales. Then again, Apple isn't alone with a decline in tablet sales: New numbers from IDC show that tablet shipments declined by about 10 percent last year, with companies like Samsung and Lenovo also taking big hits. —Reuters

YAHOO OPENS DOOR TO DEAL, UNVEILS BIG JOB CUTS

SAN FRANCISCO: Yahoo on Tuesday said it is cutting 15 percent of its workforce and narrowing its focus as it explores "strategic alternatives" for the future of the faded Internet star. The announcement, coming with the release of a big quarterly loss, offered the first sign that Yahoo may be open to a sale or merger after years of struggling to regain its former glory.

The California company reported a loss of \$4.43 billion in the final three months of last year, due mostly to lowering the value of its US, Canada, Europe, Latin America and Tumblr units. Revenue was up marginally from a year ago at \$1.27 billion.

Yahoo said in a statement it was launching "an aggressive strategic plan to simplify the company, narrowing its focus on areas of strength to better fuel growth."

At the same time, it said it was looking at "additional strategic alternatives," suggesting it could seek a deal to sell or merge the company.

'BOLD SHIFTS'

Yahoo chief executive Marissa Mayer said she is launching "a strong plan calling for bold shifts in products and in resources" to help revive the company's fortunes.

She maintained that the plan would "dramatically brighten our future." The plan is intended to drive growth in Yahoo's mobile, video, social and "native" ad offerings, a group of products which Mayer refers to as "Mavens." Tuning offerings for mobile Internet users will be at the forefront as Yahoo focuses on its search, email, and online magazines, according to Mayer. Online discovery, communication, and differentiated digital content are "what make Yahoo Yahoo," Mayer said.

Streamlining the company and putting it on a trajectory for improved earnings would also make it a more attractive acquisition.

JOB CUTS THIS QUARTER

Yahoo said it will reduce operating expenses by more than \$400 million by the end of the year. The company will cut its workforce by about 15 percent, or approximately 1,500 people, and closing offices in Dubai, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Madrid and Milan.

Yahoo expects that by the end of this year it will have approximately 9,000 employees and fewer than 1,000 contractors. "Yahoo does not take this decision lightly and will

make every effort to handle the process with thoughtfulness, transparency, and compassion," it said in a release.

Yahoo shares were down slightly more than one percent to \$28.62 in some media reports. She passionately rejected accounts that Yahoo had

MAYER ON THE DEFENSE

Mayer took time during a webcast earnings presentation to attack what she branded "blatant falsehoods" in some media reports. She passionately rejected accounts that Yahoo had

well-run and all employee perks are standard for our industry in light of our companies area and generally run less expensively here than elsewhere," Mayer insisted. She also defended giving workers smart-phones, saying the handsets remain Yahoo property and that they were warranted tools given that a company priority is tuning into mobile lifestyles.

"There are many more examples of untruths," Mayer said. "Please know we are very thoughtful about how we spend company resources."



LAS VEGAS: This file photo taken on January 07, 2014 shows Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer speaking during her keynote address at the 2014 International CES in Las Vegas, Nevada. Yahoo on Tuesday said it is cutting 15 percent of its workforce and narrowing its focus as it explores "strategic alternatives" for what to do with the faded Internet star. The announcements came as the California company reported a loss of \$4.43 billion in the final three months of last year, due mostly to lowering the value of its US, Canada, Europe, Latin America and Tumblr units. —AFP

squandered \$7 million dollars on a holiday party and over the past few years has spent \$450 million on food for workers.

"I have found these untruths to be upsetting," Mayer said.

"Both numbers are exaggerated by more than a factor of three." She said that globally, holiday parties hosted by the Silicon Valley-based company cost about \$150 per attendee.

"Our food program is extremely

PARALLEL OPTIONS

Maynard Webb, Yahoo chairman, said that the board is "committed to the turnaround efforts of the management team" but must also look at other options. "The board also believes that exploring additional strategic alternatives, in parallel to the execution of the management plan, is in the best interest of our shareholders," Webb said.

The restructuring plan will allow Yahoo to focus on mail, search and

gathered enough momentum to turn around Yahoo's advertising business, and we expect to see the company's market share decline in the near future," said eMarketer analyst Martin Utreras.

The company plans to proceed with its plan to separate the core business from its stake in Chinese online giant Alibaba. Last year, Yahoo revised the plan for tax reasons, deciding to spin off the core operations. —AFP

BIG FREIGHT RAILROADS WON'T MEET SAFETY TECH DEADLINE

WASHINGTON: Three of the biggest freight railroads operating in the US have told the government they won't meet a 2018 deadline to start using safety technology intended to prevent accidents like the deadly derailment of an Amtrak train in Philadelphia last May.

Canadian National Railway, CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern say they won't be ready until 2020, according to a list provided to The Associated Press by the Federal Railroad Administration. Four commuter railroads - SunRail in Florida, Metra in Illinois, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and Trinity Railway Express in Texas - also say they'll miss the deadline.

The technology, called positive train control or PTC, relies on GPS, wireless radio and computers to monitor train positions and automatically slow or stop trains that are in danger of colliding, derailling due to excessive speed or about to enter track where crews are working or that is otherwise off limits.

The other four other Class I freight railroads that operate in the US - Union Pacific, BNSF, Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern - and more than a dozen commuter railroads have told the agency they will meet the 2018 deadline. Railroads were required to inform the government of their plans by last week. Amtrak, the nation's only long-distance passenger carrier, began operating a version of the technology on all tracks that it owns in its Northeast Corridor between Washington and

Boston and in some other parts of the country in December. But most of Amtrak's operations outside the Northeast take place on tracks belonging to freight railroads, making it dependent on them to install the technology. Many commuter railroads are in the same position.

After a 2008 collision between a commuter train and a freight train in

Chatsworth, California, killed 25 people, Congress passed a law requiring railroads to start using the expensive technology on all tracks that carry passenger trains or that are used to haul liquids that emit toxic gas if spilled.

MISSING DEADLINE

The deadline for the change was Dec. 31, 2015. But after it became clear



NORFOLK: In this June 4, 2014 file photo, a Norfolk Southern locomotive moves along the tracks in Norfolk, Va. Three of the biggest freight railroads operating in the US have told the government they won't make a 2018 deadline to start using safety technology intended to prevent accidents like the deadly derailment of an Amtrak train in Philadelphia last May. Norfolk Southern, Canadian National Railway and CSX Transportation and say they won't be ready until 2020, according to a list provided to The Associated Press by the Federal Railroad Administration. —AP

nearly all railroads would miss the deadline, Congress passed another law in October extending it to Dec. 31, 2018. That law also permits the government to grant waivers through Dec. 31, 2020, to railroads that meet certain criteria.

FRA Administrator Sarah Feinberg warned railroads after the law passed that she wanted them to start using the technology by 2018 at the latest, and that she would be very reluctant to grant waivers. The industry's allies responded by quietly slipping a provision into a transportation bill in November that limits her ability to deny waivers.

"We are encouraged that many railroads have submitted plans to meet, some even to beat, 2018," Feinberg told the AP. "But we remain concerned that several other freight and passenger railroads are aiming for 2020." The agency plans to publish quarterly reports beginning later this year that detail each railroad's progress in implementing the technology.

Freight railroads have spent about \$6 billion on the technology so far and estimate they will ultimately spend close to \$10 billion, according to the Association of American Railroads.

"The PTC technology being installed is revolutionary and is a full-time focus of the nation's freight railroads, their employees, manufacturers, software designers and safety experts," said Ed Greenberg, a spokesman for the association. —AP

VULNERABLE ASIA FEARS ZIKA OUTBREAK

MUMBAI: Densely packed slums, rampant mosquitoes and a history of rapidly spreading infections make Asia particularly vulnerable to the devastating Zika virus, posing a massive challenge for the region, health experts warn. Thailand confirmed Tuesday that a man contracted the mosquito-borne infection, blamed for a surge in the number of brain-damaged babies in South America, while Indonesia has also reported a domestic case.

The cases in Asia come as top US health authorities confirmed this week a patient in Texas contracted the Zika virus through sexual transmission, fuelling fears the disease may spread rapidly. Officials in India worry it could be next, noting that the Zika and dengue fever-carrying *Aedes aegypti* mosquito thrives in the high-density communities of its teeming cities, where sanitation is often poor.

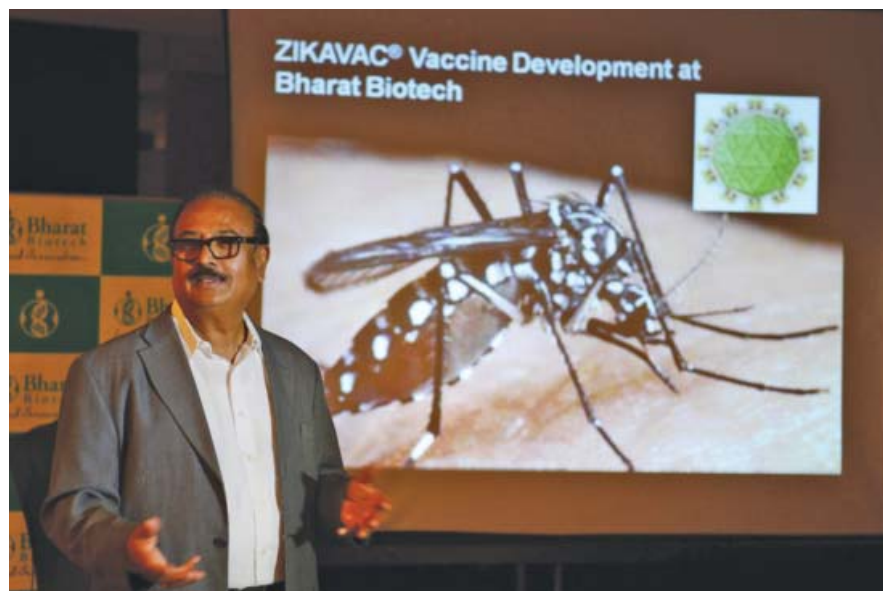
"In India particularly there is a great threat of the Zika virus spreading quickly given the presence of the *Aedes* mosquito and favorable environment," said Om Shrivastav, an infectious diseases specialist. "It would definitely be a big challenge for Asian countries to control the spread of the virus... considering high population in the region," added Shrivastav, who is based in Mumbai, home to Dharavi, Asia's biggest slum.

Slums a breeding ground

More than half of Mumbai's 20 million inhabitants live in slums-at least one million reside in Dharavi alone-enduring

cramped conditions, poor ventilation and a lack of toilets. Every summer monsoon, heavy rains lash Mumbai for four months, flooding parts of the city, including the slums' maze of alleyways, which become fertile breeding grounds for mosquitoes and lead to a massive spike in tropical diseases. Soumya Swaminathan, director general of the Indian Council for Medical Research, warned against panicking but said a surge of dengue cases worldwide recently, was a cause for concern. "(Because of) the way dengue has spread over the last several years across continents and across countries, (and with) Zika being a mosquito borne illness, there is a potential for spread," she told Indian news channel NDTV.

Zika, which was first identified in Uganda in 1947, causes relatively mild flu-like symptoms and a rash. But the World Health Organization (WHO) said it "strongly suspected" the Zika virus of being responsible for a rapid rise in cases of microcephaly, a condition in which a baby is born with an abnormally small head and brain. Latin American countries, particularly Brazil, have reported a leap in cases of microcephaly since the Zika outbreak was declared in the region last year. The UN-body has declared the situation a "public health emergency of international concern" and has created a global Zika response unit to contain the virus. WHO expert Anthony Costello has stressed there is no reason to believe the crisis would remain limited to Latin America,



HYDERABAD: Chairman of Bharat Biotech Krishna Ella announces the Bharat Biotech Program on the Zika virus at a press conference yesterday. Vaccines and bio-therapeutic manufacturer Bharat Biotech said it was developing two candidates for vaccines for Zika infection. — AFP

where 25 countries so far have reported Zika cases.

'Preventative measures'

"We know that the mosquitoes that carry Zika virus... are present through most of Africa, parts of southern Europe and many parts of Asia, particularly south Asia," he said. Eloi Yao, a WHO spokesman in Manila, said there was a "likelihood" that

Zika would spread to Asia but described the present risk as "low". "Right now, we don't want to raise the level of anxiety," he told AFP, noting that Zika had been found in Asian countries before. The Zika infection was reported in Cambodia in 2010 and the Philippines in 2012, according to WHO.

Asian governments are no strangers to dealing with deadly outbreaks of viruses

and could be forgiven if they felt jittery over Zika. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) killed hundreds of people, mostly in China and Hong Kong, when it spread fear across Asia in 2003.

Hong Kong-based virologist Malik Peiris said "there is a danger" that Zika could be confused with dengue fever and other mosquito-borne illnesses, adding governments should carefully track new cases. "Zika might come in unrecognized, until it's spreading in an alarming rate," Peiris, from Hong Kong University said.

Last year South Korea declared the official end to a deadly outbreak of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) that killed 36 people. When Thailand confirmed its case this week, an official said the Southeast Asian giant had recorded an average of "not more than five cases yearly" since the disease was first confirmed there in 2012. But he played down fears of a future outbreak in the region, describing all the cases as "one-offs" and insisting there was "no need to panic".

Most Asian governments appear to be taking a similar stance. Pakistan for example described the risk of a Zika outbreak there as "non-significant", but added it was carefully monitoring the situation. Yao said the WHO was working with countries, including making sure "their environment is clean" while Shrivastav warned against any complacency. "We need to be very cautious and have to take preventative measures to keep the virus at bay," said the Mumbai-based expert. — AFP

SCIENTISTS TO INJECT FUEL IN AN EXPERIMENTAL FUSION DEVICE

GREIFSWALD: Scientists in northeast Germany were poised to flip the switch yesterday on an experiment they hope will advance the quest for nuclear fusion, considered a clean and safe form of nuclear power. Researchers at the Max Planck Institute in Greifswald planned to inject a tiny amount of hydrogen and heat it until it becomes a super-hot gas known as plasma, mimicking conditions inside the sun.

It's part of a world-wide effort to harness nuclear fusion, a process in which atoms join at extremely high temperatures and release large amounts of energy. Advocates acknowledge that the technology is probably many decades away, but argue that - once achieved - it could replace fossil fuels and conventional nuclear fission reactors.

Construction has already begun in southern France on ITER, a huge international research reactor that uses a strong electric current to trap plasma inside a doughnut-shaped device long enough for fusion to take place. The device, known as a tokamak, was conceived by Soviet physicists in the 1950s and is considered fairly easy to build, but extremely difficult to operate. The team in Greifswald, a port city on Germany's Baltic coast, is focused on a rival technology invented by the American physicist Lyman Spitzer in 1950. Called a stellarator, the device has the same doughnut shape as a tokamak but uses a complicated system of magnetic coils instead of a current to achieve the same result. The Greifswald device should be able to keep plasma in place for much longer than a tokamak, said Thomas Klinger, who heads the project.

Impressive results

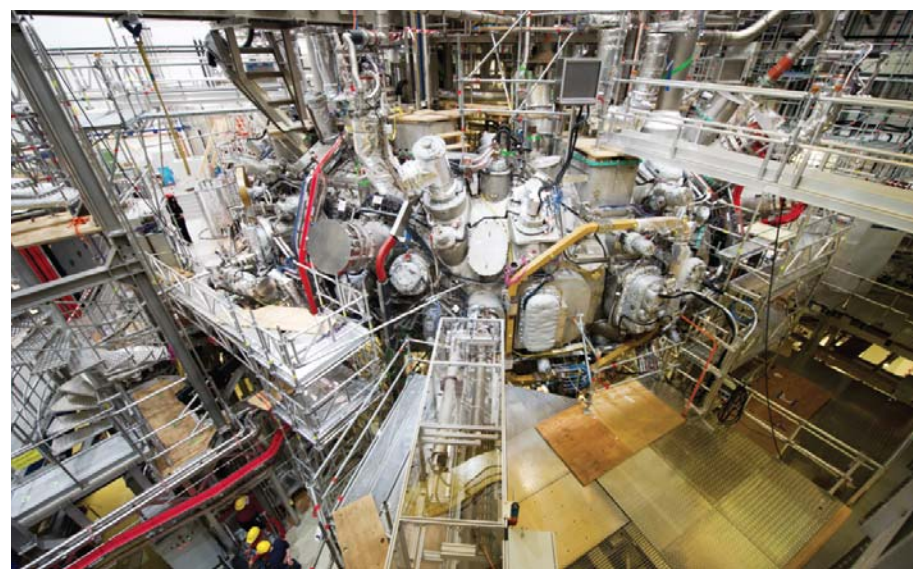
"The stellarator is much calmer," he said in a telephone interview. "It's far harder to build, but easier to operate." Known as the Wendelstein 7-X stellarator, or W7-X, the 400-million-euro device was

first fired up in December using helium, which is easier to heat. Helium also has the advantage of "cleaning" any minute dirt particles left behind during the construction of the device.

David Anderson, a professor of physics at the University of Wisconsin who isn't involved in the project, said the project in Greifswald looks promising so far. "The impressive results obtained in the startup of the machine were remarkable," he said in an email. "This is usually a difficult and arduous process. The speed with which W7-X became operational is a testament to the care and quality of the fabrication of the device and makes a very positive statement about the stellarator concept itself. W7-X is a truly remarkable achievement and the worldwide fusion community looks forward to many exciting results."

While critics have said the pursuit of nuclear fusion is an expensive waste of money that could be better spent on other projects, Germany has forged ahead in funding the Greifswald project, costs for which have reached 1.06 billion Euros in the past 20 years if staff salaries are included. Over the coming years W7-X, which isn't designed to produce any energy itself, will test many of the extreme conditions such devices will be subjected to if they are ever to generate power, said John Jelonnek, a physicist at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Germany. Jelonnek's team is responsible for a key component of the device, the massive microwave ovens that will turn hydrogen into plasma, eventually reaching 100 million degrees Celsius.

Compared to nuclear fission, which produces huge amounts of radioactive material that will be around for thousands of years, the waste from nuclear fusion would be negligible, he said. "It's a very clean source of power, the cleanest you could possibly wish for. We're not doing this for us, but for our children and grandchildren." — AP



GREIFSWALD: This Dec 10, 2015 file photo shows the nuclear fusion research center at the Max Planck Institute for Plasma Physics where the first plasma has been produced at the "Wendelstein 7-X". — AP

SMOKERS IN ITALY HIT WITH NEW FINES TO PROTECT THE YOUNG

ROME: Smokers in Italy are now facing fines of up to 500 Euros (\$600) if they light up in a car with a child or pregnant woman - or if they toss a cigarette butt on the street - after new health and environmental laws went into effect Tuesday.

The smoking prohibitions extend bans on smoking in offices, restaurants, cinemas and other public places to the more private sphere of a car. They also specifically target pediatric hospitals and other medical facilities catering to pregnant women and newborns in a bid to cut the estimated 70,000-83,000 deaths a year the government attributes to tobacco smoke. The measures are contained in a new law conforming to EU regulations aimed at dissuading young people from taking up the habit. They impose hefty fines on shopkeepers who sell to minors and cigarette producers who market to them, and include new require-

ments for warnings on cigarette packages. The separate law against tossing cigarette butts is part of an anti-litter regulation that also punishes spitting out gum or tossing shopping receipts on the street. Piergiorgio Benvenuti, president of Ecolitalia Solidale, said about 11 million cigarettes are smoked every day in Rome, half of them squished on the street, where they often get trapped between cobblestones. "This has an enormous environmental impact," he said, noting that it takes between five to 12 years for a cigarette to break down. "Aside from how it looks is how much it costs Rome to clean this up."

Roberta Pacifici, director of the smoking, drug and alcohol department of the Superior Institute of Health, said she expected the new measures would lead to a new drop in smoking rates across Italy, as occurred when the first bans were introduced. —AP



RECIFE, Brazil: Cassiana Severino holds her daughter Melisa Vitoria, born with microcephaly at the IMIP hospital, yesterday. The Zika virus is spread by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which is well-adapted to humans, thrives in people's homes and can breed in even a bottle cap's-worth of stagnant water. The Zika virus is suspected to cause microcephaly in newborn children. — AP

HIGHER TEMPERATURES MAKE ZIKA MOSQUITO SPREAD DISEASE MORE OPERATING LIKE A HEAT-DRIVEN MISSILE

WASHINGTON: The mosquito behind the Zika virus seems to operate like a heat-driven missile of disease. The hotter it gets, the better the mosquito that carries Zika virus is at transmitting its buffet of dangerous illnesses, scientists say.

Although it is too early to say for this outbreak, past outbreaks of similar diseases involved more than just biology. In the past, weather has played a key role, as have economics, human travel, air conditioning and mosquito control. Even El Nino sneaks into the game. Scientists say you can't just blame one thing for an outbreak and caution it is too early to link this one to climate change or any single weather event. As the temperature rises, nearly everything about the biology of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito the one that carries Zika, dengue fever and other diseases - speeds up when it comes to spreading disease, said entomologist Bill Reisen of the University of California Davis.

"With higher temperatures you have more mosquitoes feeding more frequently and having a greater chance of acquiring infection. And then the virus replicates faster because it's hotter, therefore the mosquitoes can transmit earlier in their life," Reisen said. The thermodynamics of mosquitoes are "driven by temperature."

Drought hotspots

The hotspots for this Zika outbreak also have been temperature and drought hotspots recently. Recife, Brazil, the largest city in the Zika-struck region, saw its hottest September-October-November on record, about 1.2 degrees Celsius (2.2 degrees Fahrenheit) above normal, according to NASA data. The state of Pernambuco had its hottest and driest year since 1998, according to the state weather agency. And globally, last year was the hottest on record.

Scientists have studied Zika far less than other mosquito-borne diseases, so for guidance they often look at dengue fever or chikungunya, which are transmitted by the same species of mosquito. Dengue infects as many as 400 million people a year, with a quarter of them sick enough to be hospitalized. Zika was just declared a global public health emergency after being linked to brain deformities in babies in South America. Several thousand cases of microcephaly have been reported in Brazil since October, although researchers have so far not proven a definitive link to the virus. No vaccine exists for Zika.

In general, mosquitoes don't live long, maybe 10 to 12 days on average, said Tom Scott, a University of California Davis professor of both entomology and epidemiology. That's also about how long it takes a virus to grow in the mosquito gut, making the bug infectious and able to spread the disease. Often the insect will die before it can get a chance to spread the disease.

Warmer air incubates the virus faster in the cold-blooded mosquito. So the insect has more time to be infectious and alive to spread the disease, Scott said. Warmer temperatures also make the mosquito hungrier, so it takes more "blood meals" and can spread the disease to more people, Scott, Reisen and others said. And warmer temperatures generally increase the mosquito population.

'Temperature-driven eruption'

Kristie Ebi, a professor of global health at the University of Washington, calls it "a temperature-driven eruption." That's not the only role of weather. El Nino, a natural warming of parts of

the central Pacific Ocean that changes weather worldwide, usually puts northeastern Brazil into a drought, as it did last year. *Aedes aegypti* does well in less-developed regions in droughts, because it lives in areas where poorer people store water in outdoor containers, said Jonathan Patz, director of the global health institute at the University of Wisconsin. "As with all mosquito-borne viruses, climate is one of many factors that influence Zika transmission," said Andy Monaghan, a scientist who works on public health impacts of climate change at the National Center for Atmospheric Research. "I think it is too early to say anything about the role of climate change in the ongoing Zika outbreak."

However, Monaghan earlier this year presented a paper to the American Meteorological Society's annual convention that predicts that eventually *Aedes aegypti* "will move northward in the US due to future warming, which would expose people to the mosquito on a regular seasonal basis in states like Missouri, Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina, Virginia and DC." — AP

INDIAN COMPANY SAYS WORKING ON TWO POSSIBLE ZIKA VACCINES

MUMBAI: Indian biotechnology company Bharat Biotech said yesterday it was working on two possible vaccines to fight the Zika virus, which has been linked to birth defects in thousands of babies in Brazil. The virus is spreading rapidly in the Americas, and WHO officials on Tuesday expressed concern that it could hit Africa and Asia as well. No vaccine has been developed so far.

One of the possible vaccines is "recombinant", which means it is created by genetic engineering, while the other was "inactivated", and will enter pre-clinical trials in animals in two weeks, Bharat Biotech managing director Krishna Ella told Reuters. An inactivated vaccine is created by killing a pathogen in a way that its ability to replicate is destroyed, but the immune system can still recognize it.

Bharat Biotech's announcement came a day after France's Sanofi said it had launched a project to develop a Zika vaccine.

On Wednesday, Japanese drug maker Takeda Pharmaceutical also said it was investigating the possibilities of developing a vaccine for the dis-

ease. Privately held Bharat Biotech, based in the southern town of Hyderabad, said it started work on the Zika virus a year ago, while developing vaccines for chikungunya and dengue. Zika is closely related to dengue and is spread by the same species of mosquito.

Bharat Biotech sells its vaccines for polio, hepatitis B, H1N1 and rabies, among others, to more than 65 countries, according to its website. "They've got a lead, essentially ... it's certainly not a vaccine yet," said Soumya Swaminathan, the Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the apex body for biomedical research in India, funded by the health ministry.

Swaminathan said it was premature to comment on the two vaccine candidates, but the ICMR had put together a group of experts to examine their validity.

No cases of the virus have been detected in India yet, but the health ministry on Tuesday issued guidelines on the disease, including an advisory that travel to affected countries be postponed or cancelled. — Reuters

WATER OFFICIALS VOTE TO EXTEND CALIFORNIA DROUGHT EMERGENCY

FRESNO: State water regulators voted Tuesday to extend emergency conservation measures because of a drought, even though an increase in rain and snow this winter has improved California's snowpack. But with the drought still severe, conservation efforts fell off in December. Officials said residents used 18 percent less water than in December 2013, but that was the worst showing in seven months of tracking and fell well short of Gov. Jerry Brown's goal of 25 percent.

It's also the third straight month that the state missed its target. California, however, will likely beat its long-term conservation goal, saving a combined 25.5 percent since Brown issued the mandate in June calling for savings from

2013 use rates, the State Water Resources Control Board reported.

State water managers are looking ahead to April 1 - when the Sierra Nevada snowpack is historically at its deepest before melting and feeding rivers and streams and replenishing depleted reservoirs. The snowpack's depth then will signal whether drought conditions are easing after the state's driest four-year period on record.

"We're at halftime," water board chair Felicia Marcus said in an interview. "We're not doing too badly, but we certainly haven't won the game yet." The water content of the snowpack on Tuesday measured 130 percent of its historical average for this time of year. Under a light snowfall, snowpack survey chief

Frank Gehrke plunged a measuring pole into 76 inches of snow near Echo Summit in the Central Sierra region that includes Lake Tahoe.

'Encouraging start'

"It's certainly a very encouraging start to the winter," said Gehrke, chief of the California Cooperative Snow Surveys Program for the Department of Water Resources. Still, he said, the state needs to see storms each week to ease the drought. The snowpack provides nearly one-third of California's water supply. An electronic measurement collected by more than 100 sensors throughout the Sierra has shown the snowpack at 114 percent. Officials say that despite the El Nino rain storms, California's major reser-

voirs remain critically low, requiring continued conservation.

Under the extended drought regulation, cities that are especially hot, dry or crowded or that have managed to come up with new sources of water would get a slight break. The statewide conservation is expected to net a savings of at least 20 percent instead of last year's goal of 25 percent, officials said. But water districts say the breaks don't go far enough and leaders lined up at a Sacramento meeting Tuesday to tell the water board that the breaks don't go far enough. They wanted more credit for investing millions in drought resilient projects and those built before 2013, a cutoff date set by the state for local districts to qualify for cuts up to 8 percent

from their individual targets. They urged state officials to replace the emergency regulations with long-term water policy.

The Sacramento Suburban Water District invested \$120 million in groundwater storage a decade ago, making it drought proof, said the district's general manager Robert Roscoe. Yet, he said the district is held to high conservation standards. "We did precisely what we were supposed to do," Roscoe said before the water board voted. "We anticipated a drought, were proactive and we made a huge investment." The new regulation would extend through October. But water officials said they would review it again in the spring. By then, they say it will be clearer whether California is still in drought. — AP



WASHINGTON: In this March 30, 2011, file photo, a bedbug is displayed at the Smithsonian Museum. — AP

SCIENTISTS TRACKS BEDBUG GENOME, FOLLOWS PEST THROUGH NYC SUBWAY

NEW YORK: Scientists have mapped the genome of bedbugs in New York City, then traced fragments of the nefarious pests' DNA through the subway system. In the grubby recesses of hundreds of stations, they discovered surprising genetic diversity among the bloodsucking creatures. The next step is to figure out how the information can be put to good use, such as to develop better insecticides or blood thinners. But these goals will take further medical research.

For now, the focus is on two main players in New York life: the subway and bedbugs. Scientists already have found that genetic traces of bedbugs in northern Manhattan are more closely related to those in the island's southern part, while there are bigger variations between the Upper East Side and Upper West Side. Geneticist Christopher Mason, who worked on the project, says the reason for that can be found simply by looking at a subway map: In Manhattan, for instance, subway lines run the length of the island north to south, while there's no subway link through Central Park between the East Side and the West Side. Not that bedbugs are riding the subway, noted George Amato, an evolutionary biologist at the American Museum of Natural History who also worked on bedbug project. He says New York's bedbugs "move around with people, dogs, and people's items - and they probably move most easily the way people move most easily."

Amato collaborated with Mason, who works at Weill Cornell Medicine's Institute for Computational Biomedicine. A bedbug colony at the famed museum was used for the genome map. A similar map was assembled by an international research team at 36 institutions, including the University of Cincinnati. The New York team's resulting scientific paper on the subject was published Tuesday in Nature Communications. A second paper on bedbug genetics, from the University of Cincinnati, also appeared Tuesday in the same publication. To learn how the bedbug has evolved and spread, the New York team took DNA sample swabs from 1,400 city locations including subway cars, turnstiles, ticket vending kiosks, and above ground places like parks. Amato said there are many ways small fragments of the insects' DNA, or DNA of a related species, could get into the subway - clinging to the clothes of some of the 6 million daily riders and their belongings, or washed down into the stations.

Amato said the first rough bedbug genetic sequence emerged about a year ago, but it took months to refine the model into an accurate genome. "Before this, people were just feeling their way through in the dark; this genome turns the light on for various areas of other research," said Amato. "Our team is now moving on to the genetics of cockroaches and other living fossils." — AP

PHILAE COMET PROBE: WORLD PREPARES FOR FINAL FAREWELL

KILLING A CHARACTER THE MASSES LOVE

PARIS: In November 2014, a brave explorer on a daring mission strapped on a pair of studded boots and a hard hat, stuffed a cheese sandwich and a compass into a backpack, and leapt from a spacecraft. After a seven-hour freefall, our protagonist touched down on a comet and became a hero back home, where Earthlings followed his every tweet, collected soft toys in his likeness, and fretted when he fell silent.

For all the warm human emotion he evokes, our daredevil adventurer, Philae, is a cold metal box the size of a washing machine. Twitter and Youtube turned the robot lab into a cartoon hero with human qualities-an intrepid little boy who dozed off after an historic mission to probe a comet zipping through space. But the success of the campaign to humanize a scientific instrument has left the European Space Agency (ESA) with a dilemma: how to communicate Philae's demise?

"When finally we 'kill' Philae, it will be like 'who killed Bambi,'" ESA senior science adviser Mark McCaughrean told AFP in November last year, when ground controllers started considering when, and how, to draw a line under the lander mission.

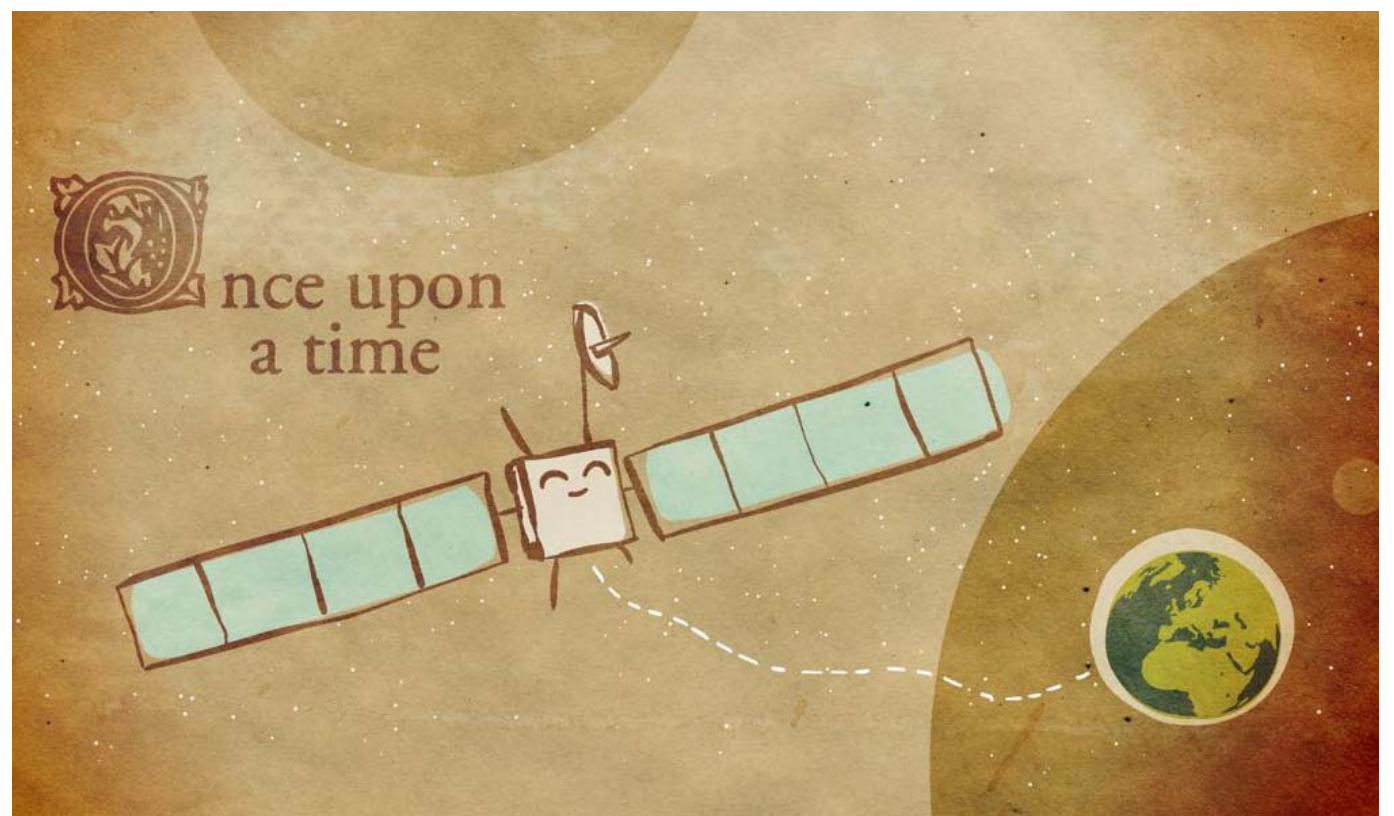
Philae is perched on comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko, now some 340 million kilometers from the Sun and speeding further away. "We're going to get accused... of abandoning the poor little boy," said McCaughrean.

Scientists have said that by January 2016, 67P will be too far out for rejuvenating rays to reach Philae's solar panels ever again. January has come and gone without any announcement. "That's a really difficult question, how to kill this character that people have taken to love," said Sebastian Marcu, founder of Design & Data, the agency that drew the ESA cartoon.

Little brother

In a first for space exploration, Philae was dropped onto 67P's surface on November 12, 2014 after a 10-year, 6.5-billion-kilometre (four-billion-mile) journey through space, piggybacking on mother-ship Rosetta. The feat was followed by adults and children around the world, many enthralled by the media campaign of animated cartoons and Twitter chitchat between the duo.

In the videos, Rosetta and Philae are hand-drawn as a small box and a bigger one, with dots for eyes and pen-stripe



PARIS: This image received from Design & Data GmbH on February 1, 2016 shows illustrations by cartoonist Carlo Palazzari of preliminary the European Space Agency's (ESA) "Philae" cartoon character, conceived by the ESA as a way to generate public interest in its programs. — AFP

mouths with which they express joy, affection, surprise, fright and trepidation. Imbuing objects with human qualities is called anthropomorphism-a tried-and-trusted marketing technique. In the case of Philae and Rosetta, it seems to have worked wonders to build public backing for a costly, taxpayer-funded endeavor.

"Time and time again when a space mission didn't go as planned, the media was very quick at saying... 'We could have built so many schools for it, and so many hospitals for it,'" recalled Marcu. "In this mission... we have managed to create this empathy amongst the general public for the well-being of a metal box... They really didn't question the money aspect of it." The videos portray Philae as Rosetta's smaller "brother", riding on her back through space, his thin little legs dangling across her forehead.

At some point on the long journey, Philae jumps up and down like a bored child on a road trip, exclaiming: "Are we

there yet? Are we there yet?" There are even childhood "photographs" of the pair, Rosetta sucking a pacifier, and Philae riding a tricycle, long before their careers as space explorers. Then, on arrival at 67P, the pair separate after 10 years together. Philae puts on his boots, tests his flashlight and loads his backpack, which has an "I love Earth" patch sewn onto it.

'I'm tired'

There is a sad glance, a hug, then Philae jumps. The cartoons depict Philae's bumpy landing, bouncing off the comet's craggy surface several times before ending up at an angle in a shaded crevice. It spent 60 hours sniffing and prodding the comet, and sent home invaluable data before its batteries ran flat.

Just before it went into standby mode, Philae tweeted "I'm feeling a bit tired", followed by "zzzzz". In the video, the robot is asleep on a mat, under a green blanket. "We're kind of guilty because we created

this kind of sentimental opinion: Philae is a little boy and he's shivering on the surface," McCaughrean said of the public concern for the lander's welfare. Then on June 13 last year, as the comet and its precious charge drew closer to the Sun, Philae's power pack was recharged and it woke up, tweeting: "Hello Earth! Can you hear me?"

After eight broken calls to Earth, Philae fell silent again on July 9, and hasn't been heard from since. There are discussions on how to "close the story", said Marcu-also for Rosetta's scheduled crash landing on the comet in September, joining Philae at the mission's end.

"Anthropomorphism does carry the risk that although it can conjure euphoric emotions like joy and excitement, it can also cause stress or dysphoric emotions like grief," a Indiana-based philosophy professor Grant Ramsey told AFP of the campaign. "If something is alive, then it will eventually die, and it is difficult to avoid the distress of death." — AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
فهد علي المخيزيم

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

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



The 2nd Balanced Life Conference titled 'Journey to Equilibrium' concluded recently in a ceremony held at the Society Development Center in Zahra under the patronage of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's Undersecretary. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



ITHC GROUP ASSIGNED DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS FOR ITS HOTELS IN KUWAIT

The International Trade Holding company is pleased to announce the appointment of Ali Haddad as the new Director of operations for its owned hotels in Kuwait city (convention center and Royal Suites, Swiss Belhotel Plaza Kuwait, Movenpick Hotel Kuwait)

Haddad, formerly was the general manager for Swiss Belhotel Plaza Kuwait for 5 years, brings with him over 15 years of experience, in Sales and Marketing, Strategic Planning and Operations and Financial Management, acquired in the Middle East.

Ahmad Al-Injebar, Vice President of Hospitality at ITHC, commented on Haddad's appointment: "It is a pleasure to have Haddad promoted to be the director of operations for all our hotels in Kuwait his extensive experience in the Middle East will be essential to the success of ITHC group"

ITHC owns besides the mentioned hotels above a group of exclusive restaurants in Kuwait cuts Brazilian restaurant, al dente Italian restaurant and Mais Al-Fakhar Lebanese restaurant, additional to the famous brand of natural ice-cream Gelatissimo and the island and resort of Huma in Philippines.

INDIAN NAVAL VETERANS IN KUWAIT HOLD 5TH REUNION



The 5th reunion of ex-Indian naval personnel in Kuwait was held on Friday, 29th January at Kohinoor Auditorium Fahaheel to celebrate the 67th Republic Day of India and the New Year. Cdr Vijay Kumar who inaugurated the meeting congratulated all the veterans in their

post retirement reemployment in Kuwait and stressed the importance of keeping good health in their retired life. Sreeraj Cheerath, the founder of the reunion was the chief coordinator. The senior most veteran Joseph A Fernandez was honored at the function with a 'Ponnada'. In the pro-

gram which was anchored by Shiju Augustine, Pradeep Joseph welcomed the gathering and Johnson proposed a vote of thanks. Sajeev Koshy, Ragbir Singh and Rameshan gave felicitation speeches. Various cultural programs and competitions were held to entertain the audience.



KDMCA ANNUAL CELEBRATIONS 2015

Kuravilangad Deva Matha College Alumni Association (KDMCA) conducted its 11th Anniversary Celebrations at Hotel Rajadhani, Khaitan. The Celebrations were inaugurated by Mohan George, the founder president of PASTCOS during the public meeting, which was presided over by K J John, the president of KDMCA. Jaison Joseph-Chairman-Advisory Board, Raju Zacharias-member-Advisory Board, Siby Thomas-President PASTCOS, former presidents-Johnson Sebastian, Maxy Mani and Bobby Patani also spoke on the occasion. Jose Mathew- General Secretary welcomed the audience and Silvy Jose

delivered vote of thanks. K J John presented memento to Shaji Jose and Family who is leaving Kuwait to USA. George Chelakkamakkil, Jayesh John and Shahu Bharathan presented the memento to Liya Jose, Milen Maxi and Alitta Tom who are leaving Kuwait for higher studies. Also presented gift to Joyal Jayesh who is the Kuwait Topper of Spell B Contest as an encouragement to go further levels. Colorful cultural activities were organized by the children under the leadership of Dono Jojo and Albin Jose.

UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSION INFORMATION SESSION



study in CANADA.

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Monday, February 8
7:00pm-9:00pm
Sheraton Kuwait
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Space is limited and registration is required. Please scan QR Code or go to: <http://tinyurl.com/gocanada016>

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CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES TO VISIT KUWAIT

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WARMLY WELCOMED ON CANADIAN UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

Ten of Canada's leading universities are coming to Kuwait, on Monday, 8 February, to hold an information session on Canada as a destination for undergraduate studies. The group's visit to Kuwait is part of a larger initiative which will take them to Jordan, Qatar, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates. The tour focuses on senior secondary students who exhibit strong academic standing, as well as to their parents. The schedule includes high school visits, information sessions, and opportunities to interact with school guidance counselors. The tour is supported by the Council of International Schools (CIS) - Canadian Higher Education Committee and is being led Jennifer Peterman of McGill University. It is the Council's thirteenth consecutive Canadian tour to visit Kuwait.

Why Canada?

Canadian universities are engaged internationally as leaders in education through teaching, research and partnerships. Undergraduate education in Canada is a hybrid of US and UK styles offering breadth of program

options, flexibility in choice and a degree that is recognized world-wide.

Students choose Canada because a strong education and a positive international experience is the foundation for their exciting and successful futures. The quality, affordability, and research opportunities are key factors in this decision. University campuses across Canada offer multicultural environments, beautiful spaces and friendly people. As a leader in business, political diplomacy, arts and culture and technology - Canada's education system is at the core of its success and its graduates are players on the world stage.

Canadian universities participating in the session and a university fair to be held on its sidelines include Brock University, University of Calgary, Carleton University, Concordia University, Dalhousie University, University of Guelph, McGill University, Memorial University, Ryerson University, York University. The session takes place at Sheraton Hotel and Towers.

- BROCK UNIVERSITY**
St. Catharines, Ontario
- UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY**
Calgary, Alberta
- CARLETON UNIVERSITY**
Ottawa, Ontario
- CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY**
Montreal, Quebec
- DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY**
Halifax, Nova Scotia
- UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH**
Guelph, Ontario
- MCGILL UNIVERSITY**
Montreal, Quebec
- MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY**
St. John's, Newfoundland & Labrador
- RYERSON UNIVERSITY**
Toronto, Ontario
- YORK UNIVERSITY**
Toronto, Ontario

CANADIAN BUSINESS COUNCIL HOLDS CANADIAN TAX SEMINAR

The Canadian Business Council of Kuwait (CBC) hosted a successful seminar on Taxation of Canadian Expatriates in Kuwait delivered by Wayne Bewick from Trowbridge Professional Corporation, Canada. Ishtiaq Malik, CBC President welcomed Wayne Bewick and mentioned that CBC is honored to host the Tax Seminar for Canadians in Kuwait in cooperation with Trowbridge.

The Seminar was very informative and professionally conducted by Wayne Bewick which led to the discussion and Q&A session about Canadian residency for tax purposes, Tax planning for Canadian expats, either departing Canada or arriving in Canada, Tax implications for the ownership of investments in Canada and abroad for Canadian non-residents and Ownership of property in Canada and the tax implications for Canadian non-resident.

At the end of the seminar Christian Awaraji, CBC Vice President presented a plaque of appreciation to Wayne Bewick. Ishtiaq Malik thanked CBC Executive Committee members



Wayne Bewick, Trowbridge Professional Corporation



Ishtiaq Malik, CBC President

Dr Christian Awaraji, Dr David McHardy, Dr Andy Gillam, Dr Jacinthe Lemay, Basil Toutoungi and Nadia Hammouda for their

support in organizing this seminar. Special thanks to Donald Teale and his team from KPMG for facilitating and hosting the seminar.



Participants seen among the audience.



Participants at the CBC reception.



Christian Awaraji, CBC Vice President (right) and Wayne Bewick



KPMG members.



A view of the audience.



A view of the audience.

AUK LIBRARY OPEN HOUSE 2016

- FOOD • MUSIC • GAMES
- PRIZES • LIVE DEMOS
- POSTER EXHIBIT

TUESDAY, 9TH FEBRUARY, 2016
10:00 AM TO 2:30 PM

SCHEDULE:

Time	Activity
10:00 am	Opening (Host's Hospitality Treats, Music, Intro)
10:00 am - 2:00 pm	Registration for Raffle Draw
10:00 am - 2:00 pm	The "Wall of Shelves" Photo Booth
10:00 am - 2:00 pm	Poster Exhibit
10:00 am - 1:00 pm	The "Thinkers Show" Game
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	The "Spinning Wheel" Game
11:00 am - 11:30 am	Literature Online
12:00 pm - 12:30 pm	E-books
1:00 pm - 1:30 pm	Credo
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	The "Spinning Wheel" Game
2:00 pm	Closing & Announcing Winners
2:30 pm	Lunch - Live Music by Music Department

All-day photo booth
The E-books, Credo, and Literature Online activities will take place in the American Corner.

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:50 River Monsters
- 01:45 Call Of The Wildman
- 02:15 Call Of The Wildman
- 02:40 Dog Rescuers
- 03:35 Tanked
- 04:25 Gangland Killers
- 05:15 Gator Boys
- 06:02 Treehouse Masters
- 06:49 Dog Rescuers
- 07:36 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:00 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:25 Too Cute!
- 09:15 Dog Rescuers
- 10:10 Treehouse Masters
- 11:05 Tanked
- 12:00 Too Cute!
- 12:55 Bondi Vet
- 13:50 Dog Rescuers
- 14:45 Gator Boys
- 15:40 Treehouse Masters
- 16:35 Tanked
- 17:30 Gangland Killers
- 18:25 River Monsters
- 19:20 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 20:15 Tanked
- 21:10 Gangland Killers
- 22:05 Treehouse Masters
- 23:00 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 23:55 Gator Boys

DISCOVERY CHANNEL HD

- 00:20 Misfit Garage
- 01:10 Mythbusters
- 02:00 You Have Been Warned
- 02:50 You Have Been Warned
- 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 Mythbusters
- 11:25 You Have Been Warned
- 12:15 You Have Been Warned
- 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 What On Earth?
- 18:30 Unearthed
- 19:20 Troy
- 20:10 The Liquidator
- 20:35 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop Edition
- 21:00 What On Earth?
- 21:50 Unearthed
- 22:40 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
- 23:30 Cuban Chrome

DISCOVERY SCIENCE

- 00:35 Weird Or What?
- 01:20 How It's Made
- 02:08 Invent It Rich
- 02:55 How The Universe Works
- 03:42 Mythbusters
- 04:29 Weird Or What?
- 05:16 Invent It Rich
- 06:03 How The Universe Works
- 06:50 Prototype This
- 07:37 How Do They Do It?
- 08:00 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 Food Factory
- 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 Food Factory
- 16:44 How The Universe Works
- 17:31 Prototype This
- 18:18 Mythbusters
- 19:05 Weird Or What?
- 19:50 Stephen Hawking's Universe
- 20:40 How The Universe Works
- 21:25 How It's Made
- 22:15 Mythbusters
- 23:00 Stephen Hawking's Universe
- 23:45 How The Universe Works

ID. INVESTIGATION DISCOVERY

- 00:40 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 01:05 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 01:30 The Haunted
- 02:20 Ghost Lab
- 03:10 Scorned: Crimes Of Passion
- 04:00 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
- 04:45 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 05:10 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
- 15:05 Dr. G. Medical Examiner
- 15:55 Fatal Encounters
- 16:45 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 17:35 Murder Shift
- 18:25 I Almost Got Away With It
- 19:15 The Will
- 20:05 Deadly Affairs
- 20:55 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
- 21:45 California Investigator
- 22:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 23:00 Deadly Affairs

Disney CHANNEL

- 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 Mook
- 06:00 Lolirock
- 06:25 Sofia The First
- 06:50 That's So Raven
- 07:15 Gravity Falls
- 07:40 Jessie
- 08:05 Shake It Up
- 08:30 Shake It Up
- 08:55 That's So Raven
- 09:20 That's So Raven
- 09:45 Austin & Ally
- 10:10 Austin & Ally
- 10:35 A.N.T. Farm
- 11:00 A.N.T. Farm
- 11:25 Jessie
- 11:50 Jessie
- 12:20 Hank Zipzer
- 12:45 Fish Hooks
- 13:10 Good Luck Charlie
- 13:35 I Didn't Do It
- 14:00 Dog With A Blog
- 14:30 H2O: Just Add Water
- 14:55 Girl Meets World
- 15:20 Liv And Maddie
- 15:45 Jessie
- 16:10 Violetta
- 17:00 The Next Step
- 17:25 Liv And Maddie
- 17:50 Jessie
- 18:15 Austin & Ally
- 18:40 I Didn't Do It
- 19:05 H2O: Just Add Water
- 19:30 Violetta
- 20:20 The Next Step
- 20:45 Good Luck Charlie
- 21:35 H2O: Just Add Water
- 22:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

EHD

- 00:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 00:55 The Grace Helbig Show
- 01:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 02:20 E! News
- 03:15 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
- 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 E! News
- 09:15 Giuliana & Bill
- 11:10 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
- 12:05 E! News
- 13:05 WAGs
- 14:05 Botched
- 15:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 16:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 17:00 Fashion Bloggers
- 18:00 E! News
- 19:00 House Of DVF
- 20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 21:00 Dash Dolls
- 22:00 E! News
- 23:00 WAGs

food network

- 00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 01:00 Chopped
- 02:00 All Star Academy
- 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
- 10:00 The Kitchen
- 11:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 12:00 Chopped
- 13:00 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
- 19:00 Grandma's Secret Cookbook
- 20:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 21:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 22:00 Dinner At Tiffani's
- 23:00 Siba's Table
- 23:30 Siba's Table

itv CHOICE

- 00:10 The Chase
- 01:05 Emmerdale
- 01:30 Coach Trip
- 02:00 Coronation Street
- 02:30 Murdoch Mysteries
- 03:25 Code Of A Killer
- 04:20 Blue Go Mad In Ibiza

- 05:15 Pick Me!
- 06:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 07:05 Coach Trip
- 07:30 Code Of A Killer
- 08:25 Blue Go Mad In Ibiza
- 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 Pick Me!
- 16:30 Midsomer Murders
- 18:20 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 19:10 Coronation Street
- 19:35 Pick Me!
- 20:30 Midsomer Murders
- 22:20 Coronation Street
- 22:50 Emmerdale
- 23:15 Who's Doing The Dishes?

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD

- 00:10 Explorer
- 01:00 How To Win At Everything
- 01:30 How To Win At Everything
- 02:00 Car SOS
- 02:55 Air Crash Investigation
- 03:50 Explorer
- 04:45 24 Hours In A&E
- 05:40 Invasion Earth
- 06:35 Mega Factories: Supercars
- 07:30 Megastructures
- 08:25 Time Scanners
- 09:20 24 Hours In A&E
- 10:15 Planes That Changed The World
- 11:10 Innovation Nation
- 11:35 Innovation Nation
- 12:05 Brave New World
- 13:00 Time Scanners
- 14:00 Megastructures
- 15:00 Mega Factories: Supercars
- 16:00 Planes That Changed The World
- 17:00 100%: Planes
- 18:00 Man vs Ride
- 19:00 Time Scanners
- 20:00 Planes That Changed The World
- 20:50 100%: Planes
- 21:40 Man vs Ride
- 22:30 Mega Factories: Supercars
- 23:20 Invasion Earth

OSN FIRST HD COMEDY

- 00:30 Mr. Robinson
- 01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
- 01:30 South Park
- 02:00 Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll
- 02:30 The Big C
- 03:00 Playing House
- 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
- 09:30 The Last Man On Earth
- 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 Playing House
- 14:30 The Last Man On Earth
- 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 Kevin From Work
- 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 21:30 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
- 22:00 Web Therapy
- 22:30 Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll
- 23:00 The Big C
- 23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers

OSN FIRST HD

- 00:00 Salem
- 01:00 Marvel's Agent Carter
- 02:00 The Flash
- 03:00 American Horror Story: Hotel
- 04:00 Good Morning America
- 06:00 The Fosters
- 07:00 Royal Pains
- 08:00 American Crime
- 09:00 The Fosters
- 10:00 Marvel's Agent Carter
- 11:00 Royal Pains
- 12:00 Coronation Street
- 13:00 Coronation Street
- 13:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 14:00 Live Upon A Time
- 15:00 Once Upon A Killer
- 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show

- 18:00 American Crime
- 19:00 American Idol
- 20:00 The Flash
- 21:00 Blindspot
- 22:00 Wicked City
- 23:00 Scream Queens

OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 00:00 Safe House
- 02:00 The Mark: Redemption
- 04:00 Abandoned Mine
- 06:00 The Scorpion King 4: Quest For Power
- 08:00 Destruction: Las Vegas
- 09:45 Snow White And The Huntsman
- 12:00 Big Ass Spider!
- 13:30 The Perfect Storm
- 15:45 The River Wild
- 17:45 Snow White And The Huntsman
- 20:00 Android Cop
- 21:45 Lone Survivor

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 00:00 The Mark: Redemption
- 02:00 Abandoned Mine-PG15
- 04:00 The Scorpion King 4: Quest For Power-PG15
- 06:00 Destruction: Las Vegas
- 07:45 Snow White And The Huntsman-PG15
- 10:00 Big Ass Spider!-PG15
- 11:30 The Perfect Storm-PG15
- 13:45 The River Wild-PG15
- 15:45 Snow White And The Huntsman-PG15
- 18:00 Android Cop-PG15
- 19:45 Lone Survivor-PG15
- 22:00 Hitman-18

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 00:00 Deliver Us From Eva
- 02:00 You Again
- 04:00 Beethoven's Treasure Tail
- 06:00 Man Of The House
- 08:00 Cas & Dylan
- 10:00 Beethoven's Treasure Tail
- 12:00 You Again
- 14:00 Roommates
- 16:00 Cas & Dylan
- 18:00 Chef
- 20:00 The World's End
- 22:00 Mad Dog And Glory

OSN MOVIES HD DRAMA

- 01:00 Wrath-PG15
- 03:00 Two Night Stand-PG15
- 05:00 Paranoia-PG15
- 07:00 The French Minister-PG15
- 09:00 Reclaim-PG15
- 11:00 Paranoia-PG15
- 13:00 Romeo & Juliet-PG15
- 15:00 Hours-PG15
- 17:00 Reclaim-PG15
- 19:00 A Walk Among The Tombstones-PG15
- 21:00 Blood-PG15
- 23:00 Enemy-18

OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

- 00:00 Venus In Fur
- 01:45 Little Man Tate
- 03:30 A Passage To India
- 06:30 Evita
- 09:00 Beaches
- 11:15 Sunshine On Leith
- 13:00 What Dreams May Come
- 15:00 The Alamo
- 17:15 Beaches
- 19:30 Thank You For Smoking
- 21:15 To Write Love On Her Arms
- 23:00 Enemy

OSN MOVIES HD

- 01:15 Stonehearst Asylum-PG15
- 03:15 To The Wonder-PG15
- 05:15 Bad Parents-PG15
- 07:00 HairBrained-PG15
- 09:00 To The Wonder-PG15
- 11:00 Stonehearst Asylum-PG15
- 13:00 Le Weekend-PG15
- 15:00 Applesed: Alpha-PG15
- 16:45 Into The Storm-PG15
- 18:30 Divergent-PG15
- 21:00 Last Knights-PG15
- 23:00 Film-R

OSN MOVIES HD KIDS

- 01:00 Minuscule: Valley Of The Lost Arts
- 02:45 Kikoriki: Team Invincible
- 04:30 Memory Loss
- 06:00 Bolts And Blip



HITMAN ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

- 07:45 Bamse And The City Of Thieves
- 09:30 Jungle Shuffle
- 11:00 Miffy The Movie
- 12:30 Kikoriki: Team Invincible
- 14:15 Jingle All The Way 2
- 16:00 Mamma Moo And Crow
- 18:00 Jungle Shuffle
- 20:00 Ghatotkach - Master Of Magic
- 21:45 Jingle All The Way 2
- 23:30 Mamma Moo And Crow

- 04:30 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 05:00 Little People, Big World
- 05:30 Cake Boss
- 06:00 Say Yes To The Dress
- 06:25 Randy To The Rescue
- 07:15 Hoarding: Buried Alive
- 08:05 Dare To Wear
- 08:55 The Autistic Gardener
- 09:45 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 10:10 Little People, Big World
- 10:35 My Five Wives
- 11:25 Cake Boss
- 11:50 Belief
- 12:40 Randy To The Rescue
- 13:30 Born Without Limbs
- 14:20 Curvy Brides
- 14:45 Curvy Brides
- 15:10 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 15:35 Little People, Big World
- 16:00 Hoarding: Buried Alive
- 16:50 My Five Wives
- 17:40 Cake Boss
- 18:05 Say Yes To The Dress
- 18:30 Secret Eaters
- 19:20 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 20:10 Randy To The Rescue
- 21:00 90 Days To Wed
- 21:50 Randy's Wedding Rescue
- 22:40 Long Island Medium
- 23:05 Body Bizarre
- 23:55 Belief

- 12:00 The Beast Of Hollow Mountain
- 13:20 Island Of The Lost
- 14:50 Grayeagle
- 16:35 Duplex
- 18:05 Still Life: A Three Pines Mystery
- 19:35 The Bridge In The Jungle
- 21:00 Breaking Bad
- 22:00 Walking Tall
- 23:25

Disney Junior

- 00:00 Jungle Cubs
- 00:25 Aladdin
- 00:50 Gummi 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 Loopdidoo
- 03:05 Art Attack
- 03:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:45 Calimero
- 04:00 Zou
- 04:15 Loopdidoo
- 04:30 Art Attack
- 04:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:05 Calimero
- 05:20 Zou
- 05:30 Loopdidoo
- 05:45 Art Attack
- 06:10 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:20 Calimero
- 06:35 Zou
- 06:45 Loopdidoo
- 07:00 Art Attack
- 07:25 Henry Hugglemonster
- 07:35 Calimero
- 07:50 Zou
- 08:00 Loopdidoo
- 08:15 Art Attack
- 08:35 Henry Hugglemonster
- 08:50 Calimero
- 09:00 Zou
- 09:20 Loopdidoo
- 09:35 Art Attack
- 10:00 Calimero
- 10:10 Zou
- 10:25 Loopdidoo
- 10:40 Miles From Tomorrow
- 11:05 Sofia The First
- 11:30 Doc McStuffins
- 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 Loopdidoo
- 18:10 Miles From Tomorrow
- 18:35 Jake & The Never Land Pirates
- 19:00 Sofia The First
- 19:25 Jungle Cubs

ci

- 00:00 The Haunting Of...
- 01:00 The Ghost Inside My Child
- 02:00 I Escaped My Killer
- 03:00 Crime Stories
- 04:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 05:00 The Ghost Inside My Child
- 06:00 The Haunting Of...
- 07:00 The FBI Files
- 08:00 Private Crimes
- 09:30 Fraternities
- 10:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 11:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 12:00 Beyond Scared Straight
- 13:00 I Didn't Do It
- 14:00 Crime Stories
- 15:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 16:00 Private Crimes
- 16:30 Fraternities
- 17:00 The FBI Files
- 18:00 Beyond Scared Straight
- 19:00 Crime Stories
- 20:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 21:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 22:00 Private Crimes
- 22:30 Fraternities
- 23:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover

OSN MOVIES HD PREMIERE

- 00:45 The Drop-PG15
- 02:30 Veronica Mars-PG15
- 04:15 Drumline: A New Beat-PG15
- 06:00 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part I-PG15
- 08:00 So Undercover-PG15
- 10:00 Tinker Bell And The Legend Of The NeverBeast-FAM
- 12:00 Louder Than Words-PG15
- 14:00 Beifriend And Betray-PG15
- 15:45 So Undercover-PG15
- 17:30 The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies-PG
- 20:00 The Theory Of Everything-22:15
- 22:15 Alice-PG15

TLC HD

- 00:45 My Strange Addiction
- 01:10 My Strange Addiction
- 01:35 Long Island Medium
- 02:00 Body Bizarre
- 02:50 My Five Wives
- 03:40 Secret Eaters

amc

- 00:25 Mississippi Burning
- 02:30 Stand By Me
- 04:00 Run
- 05:30 Punks
- 07:05 A Star For Two
- 08:40 Groundhog Day
- 10:25 Earthbound



LONE SURVIVOR ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

Disney XD

- 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 Flockin' Monkeys
- 10:25 Ultimate Spider-Man
- 10:50 Boyster
- 11:20 Boyster
- 11:45 Pair Of Kings
- 12:10 Pair Of Kings
- 12:35 Lab Rats
- 13:00 Lab Rats
- 13:30 Phineas And Ferb
- 13:55 Phineas And Ferb
- 14:20 Kickin' It
- 14:45 Kickin' It
- 15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 15:15 Rocket Monkeys

CLASSIFIEDS



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (04/02/2016 TO 10/02/2016)

Channel	Time	Programme
SHARQIA-1	11:45 AM	FLIPPED
	2:00 PM	FLIPPED
	2:00 PM	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP
	FRI-SAT	FLIPPED
	4:00 PM	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP
	6:00 PM	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP
	8:00 PM	AMERICAN HERO
	10:15 PM	FLIPPED
	12:15 AM	FLIPPED
	12:15 AM	FLIPPED
SHARQIA-2	12:00 PM	THE FINEST HOURS
	2:30 PM	THE FINEST HOURS
	5:00 PM	THE FINEST HOURS
	7:30 PM	THE FINEST HOURS
	10:00 PM	THE FINEST HOURS
	12:30 AM	THE FINEST HOURS
	12:45 PM	JANE GOT A GUN
	2:45 PM	JANE GOT A GUN
	4:45 PM	CAPTURE THE FLAG
	6:45 PM	JANE GOT A GUN
SHARQIA-3	12:45 PM	JANE GOT A GUN
	2:45 PM	JANE GOT A GUN
	4:45 PM	CAPTURE THE FLAG
	6:45 PM	JANE GOT A GUN
	8:45 PM	JANE GOT A GUN
	10:45 PM	JANE GOT A GUN
	12:45 AM	JANE GOT A GUN
	12:45 AM	JANE GOT A GUN
	12:45 AM	JANE GOT A GUN
	12:45 AM	JANE GOT A GUN
MUHALAB-1	11:45 AM	JANE GOT A GUN
	1:45 PM	JANE GOT A GUN
	1:45 PM	NO FRI-SAT
	1:45 PM	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP
	FRI-SAT	FLIPPED
	3:45 PM	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP
	5:45 PM	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP
	7:45 PM	JANE GOT A GUN
	9:45 PM	JANE GOT A GUN
	11:45 PM	JANE GOT A GUN
MUHALAB-2	1:00 PM	FLIPPED
	3:00 PM	CAPTURE THE FLAG
	5:00 PM	CAPTURE THE FLAG
	7:00 PM	FLIPPED
	9:00 PM	FLIPPED
	11:00 PM	FLIPPED
	1:00 AM	FLIPPED
	1:00 AM	FLIPPED
	1:00 AM	FLIPPED
	1:00 AM	FLIPPED
MUHALAB-3	11:30 AM	THE FINEST HOURS
	2:00 PM	THE FINEST HOURS
	4:30 PM	THE FINEST HOURS
	7:00 PM	THE FINEST HOURS
	9:30 PM	THE FINEST HOURS
	12:05 AM	THE FINEST HOURS
	1:00 PM	AMERICAN HERO
	2:45 PM	CAPTURE THE FLAG
	4:45 PM	CAPTURE THE FLAG
	6:45 PM	CAPTURE THE FLAG
FANAR-1	1:00 PM	AMERICAN HERO
	2:45 PM	CAPTURE THE FLAG
	4:45 PM	CAPTURE THE FLAG
	6:45 PM	CAPTURE THE FLAG
	8:45 PM	AMERICAN HERO
	10:30 PM	AMERICAN HERO
	12:15 AM	AMERICAN HERO
	12:15 AM	AMERICAN HERO
	12:15 AM	AMERICAN HERO
	12:15 AM	AMERICAN HERO
FANAR-2	11:30 AM	FLIPPED
	1:30 PM	FLIPPED
	1:30 PM	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP
	3:30 PM	FLIPPED
	5:30 PM	FLIPPED
	9:45 PM	FLIPPED
	11:45 PM	FLIPPED
	11:45 PM	FLIPPED
	11:45 PM	FLIPPED
	11:45 PM	FLIPPED
FANAR-3	1:00 PM	STANDOFF
	3:00 PM	STANDOFF
	5:00 PM	STANDOFF
	7:00 PM	EVERYTHING ABOUT HER - Filipino
	9:30 PM	MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic
	12:30 AM	MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic
	1:00 PM	FLIPPED
	3:00 PM	FLIPPED
	3:00 PM	NO FRI-SAT
	3:00 PM	CAPTURE THE FLAG
MARINA-1	1:00 PM	FLIPPED
	3:00 PM	FLIPPED
	3:00 PM	NO FRI-SAT
	3:00 PM	CAPTURE THE FLAG
	5:00 PM	FRI-SAT
	7:00 PM	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP
	9:00 PM	CAPTURE THE FLAG
	11:00 PM	FLIPPED
	1:00 AM	FLIPPED
	1:00 AM	FLIPPED
MARINA-2	11:45 AM	THE FINEST HOURS
	2:15 PM	THE FINEST HOURS
	4:45 PM	THE FINEST HOURS
	7:15 PM	THE FINEST HOURS
	9:45 PM	THE FINEST HOURS
	12:15 AM	THE FINEST HOURS
	12:00 PM	JANE GOT A GUN
	2:00 PM	JANE GOT A GUN
	2:00 PM	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP
	4:00 PM	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP
MARINA-3	12:00 PM	JANE GOT A GUN
	2:00 PM	JANE GOT A GUN
	2:00 PM	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP
	4:00 PM	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP
	6:00 PM	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP
	8:00 PM	JANE GOT A GUN
	10:00 PM	JANE GOT A GUN
	12:05 AM	JANE GOT A GUN
	12:05 AM	JANE GOT A GUN
	12:05 AM	JANE GOT A GUN
AVENUES-1	1:00 PM	CAPTURE THE FLAG
	3:15 PM	CAPTURE THE FLAG
	5:30 PM	CAPTURE THE FLAG
	7:45 PM	CAPTURE THE FLAG
	10:00 PM	MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic
	1:00 AM	STANDOFF
	12:15 PM	AMERICAN HERO
	2:15 PM	STANDOFF
	4:15 PM	AMERICAN HERO
	6:15 PM	AMERICAN HERO
AVENUES-2	12:15 PM	AMERICAN HERO
	2:15 PM	STANDOFF
	4:15 PM	AMERICAN HERO
	6:15 PM	AMERICAN HERO
	8:15 PM	STANDOFF
	10:15 PM	AMERICAN HERO
	12:15 AM	AMERICAN HERO
	12:15 AM	AMERICAN HERO
	12:15 AM	AMERICAN HERO
	12:15 AM	AMERICAN HERO

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Kerodawala Rajani holder of Indian Passport No. M6422448, resident at D.No. 7-79 (B) Kadali village, Razole Mandal, hereby changed my name to Kerodawala Zainab. (C 5125)

Farida Shabuddin Mukaddam, holder of Indian Passport No. Z3082289, D.O.B. 25/08/1963, residing at A/103 Twin Star apartments Rupa Nagar compound near Kapadia Nagar, C.S.T. Road Kurla west Mumbai 400070, India, change my name as Farida Shahabuddin Mukaddam. (C 5126)

Abdul Gafoor Mukadam Shabuddin, holder of Indian Passport No. G7279549, D.O.B. 12/10/1956, residing at A103 Twin Star apartment Rupanagar compound near Kapadia Nagar, C.S.T. Road Kurla west. Mumbai, 400070, India. Change my name as Shahabuddin Abdul Gafoor Mukaddam. (C 5127) 3-2-2015

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: M1041651, R/o S, Runanubandh Society, Park Avenue, D.P.

Required

Leading Food Stuff Co. Secretary

- 2 - 3 years' Experience
- Transferable Visa (18)
- Good ability to work at MS Office
- Good abilities to use email & correspondence
- Fluent English

Please send CV
 Fax: 2247 9555, e-mail: sales@barakarealestate.com

EIG
 BUSINESS IN OMAN
 We Are Providing
 Visas, Registration,
 Local Sponsor,
 Business Partner,
 Document Clearing.
 Contact Us: 00968-98457638
 Email: Info@Eiglcoman.Com

Road, Aundh, Pune 411007, Maharashtra, changed my name as Amey Makarand Dhongade. (C 5121) 1-2-2016

SITUATION VACANT
 Part-time housekeeper needed for Western family. Please call 98877192. (C 5128) 4-2-2016

For Rent in Jabriya

A full floor in house in Jabriya
 300m2, first floor, 4 rooms, 4bathrooms, reception, big hall, fully equipped kitchen, large balcony, maid's room, central satellite, parking lot, built-in closets in every room. Rent 1000 KD
 Call: 99074424

FOR SALE

Toyota Yaris 2013 Saloon, dark grey color, excellent condition. KD 1950. Mob: 50994848. (C 5123) 2-2-2016

ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation available for decent execu-

tive bachelors/ family at Abbasiya. Separate bathroom/balcony. Near United Indian School. Contact: 50903076. (C 5122) 1-2-2016

EMERGENCY
 112

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



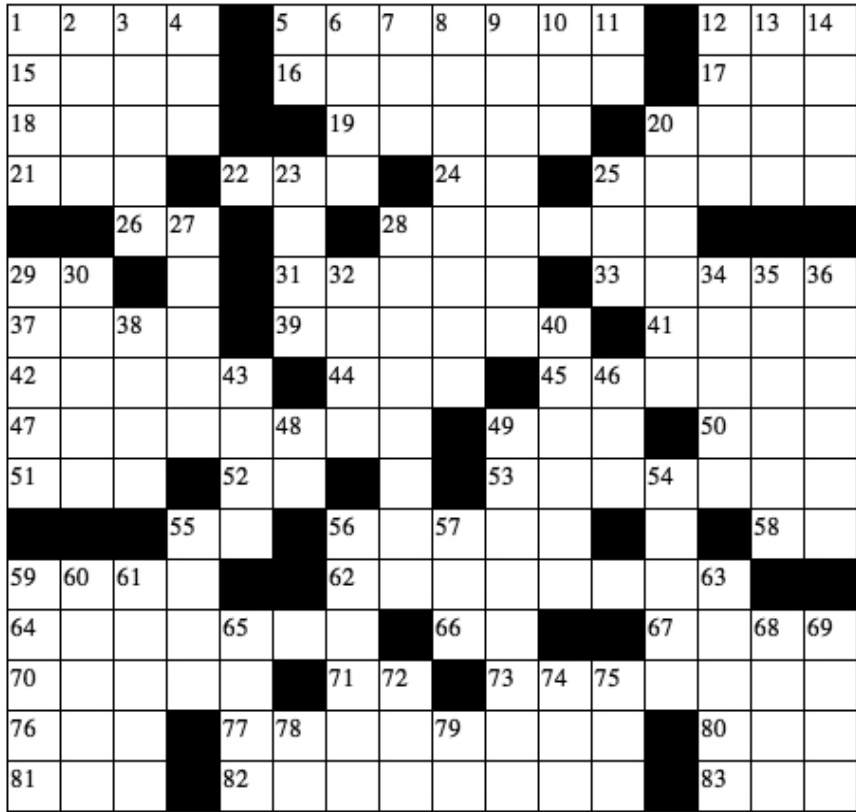
Flight Schedule

Arrival Flights on Thursday 4/2/2016			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	415	Sohag	00:05
KLM	411	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:20
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55
RJA	642	Amman	01:05
THY	772	Istanbul	01:05
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30
DLH	635	Doha	01:35
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:45
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55
FDB	067	Dubai	03:05
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10
QTR1	076	Doha	03:15
KKK	6507	Istanbul	03:20
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:25
LMU	510	Cairo	04:05
JZR	503	Luxor	04:25
QTR	8511	Doha	04:40
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55
FDB	5061	Dubai	06:30
BAW	157	London	06:40
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	06:55
KAC	412	Manila/Bangkok	07:20
QTR	1086	Doha	07:40
KAC	204	Lahore	07:40
FDB	053	Dubai	07:45
SVA	512	Riyadh	07:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50
KAC	206	Islamabad	08:25
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	08:30
KAC	344	Chennai	08:30
KAC	352	Kochi	08:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:50
KAC	362	Colombo	08:50
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00
KAC	284D	Dhaka	09:10
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:20
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
OMA	641	Muscat	10:05
IRM	1180	Mashhad	10:10
IRA	673	Ahwaz	10:10
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
UAE	873	Dubai	11:05
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:15
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30
AGY	682	Asyut	11:40
NIA	151	Cairo	11:55
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50
JZR	241	Amman	12:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
KNE	460	Riyadh	13:50
KAC	382	Delhi	13:50
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10
FDB	057	Dubai	14:10
AXB	393	Kozhikode	14:20

Departure Flights on Thursday 4/2/2016			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
JZR	528	Asyut	00:05
BBC	044	Dhaka	00:10
FDB	072	Dubai	00:40
MSC	404	Asyut	00:55
JAI	573	Mumbai	00:55
MSC	416	Sohag	01:00
KLM	411	Amsterdam	01:35
THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
SAI	442	Lahore	02:30
DLH	635	Doha	02:35
ETH	621	Addis Ababa	02:45
KAC	381	Delhi	03:30
UAE	854	Dubai	03:45
PGT	859	Istanbul	03:55
OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
FDB	068	Dubai	04:00
MSR	613	Cairo	04:10
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:15
KKK	6508	Istanbul	04:20
QTR	1077	Doha	05:00
LMU	511	Cairo	05:05
THY	765	Istanbul	05:15
JZR	560	Sohag	06:10
QTR	8512	Doha	06:10
FDB	070	Dubai	06:30
JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
RJA	643	Amman	07:05
THY	771	Istanbul	07:05
FDB	5062	Dubai	07:10
JZR	240	Amman	07:15
GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
KAC	537	Sohag	08:20
FDB	054	Dubai	08:30
QTR	1087	Doha	08:40
BAW	156	London	08:45
SVA	513	Riyadh	08:50
JZR	534	Cairo	09:15
KAC	787	Jeddah	09:25
ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
KAC	101	London/New York	09:55
KAC	541	Cairo	09:55
UAE	856	Dubai	09:55
KAC	561	Amman	10:00
IRA	668	Mashhad	10:00
KAC	671	Dubai	10:05
ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:25
KAC	501	Beirut	10:30
FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
KAC	153	Istanbul	10:40
KAC	677	Abu Dhabi/Muscat	10:50
KAC	165	Rome/Paris	11:00
QTR	1071	Doha	11:00
OMA	642	Muscat	11:05
IRA	672	Ahwaz	11:10
IRM	1181	Mashhad	11:25
GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
RBG	554	Alexandria	12:00
JZR	776	Jeddah	12:20
UAE	874	Dubai	12:30
AGY	683	Alexandria	12:40
MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
NIA	152	Cairo	12:55
KAC	785	Jeddah	13:00
FDB	076	Dubai	13:10
MSC	402	Alexandria	13:30
JZR	176	Dubai	13:45
JZR	786	Riyadh	13:45

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

CROSSWORD 1158



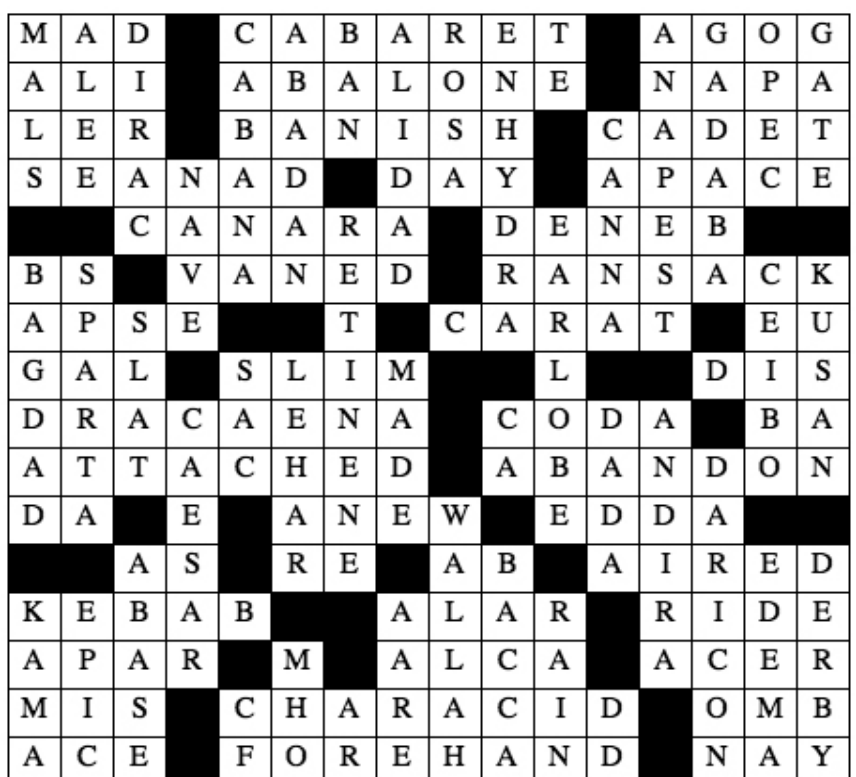
ACROSS

1. An informal term for a father.
5. A resident of Nevada.
12. (Norse mythology) Wife of Thor and guardian of the home.
15. An elaborate song for solo voice.
16. A deciduous tree of the family Ulmaceae that grows in the southeastern United States.
17. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
18. The basic unit of money in Ethiopia.
19. An ordered reference standard.
21. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
22. An inflammatory disease of connective tissue with variable features including fever and weakness and fatigability and joint pains and skin lesions on the face or neck or arms.
24. Of or relating to the stomach and intestines.
26. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
29. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali metal group.
31. Low-lying wet land with grassy vegetation.
33. Walk clumsily.
37. Wild sheep of northern Africa.
39. Type genus of the Blattellidae.
41. Rounded like an egg.
42. Low-growing tropical perennials grown for their stinging foliage.
44. An accountant certified by the state.
45. Wife or mistress of Zeus and mother of Apollo and Artemis in ancient mythology.
47. (Judaism) An eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem.
50. A broad flat muscle on either side of the back.
51. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
52. (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
53. Small genus of herbs of warm regions of southern North America to northern South America.
58. An associate degree in nursing.
59. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
62. A woman sahib.
64. Small bitter fruit of the marasca cherry tree from whose juice maraschino liqueur is made.
66. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
67. A short labored intake of breath with the mouth open.
70. A member of the Nahuatl people who established an empire in Mexico that was overthrown by Cortes in 1519.
71. (Sumerian) Evil storm god represented as a black bird.
73. Stem of the rattan palm used for making canes and umbrella handles.
76. A female person who has the same parents as another person.
77. An ester of carbamic acid.
80. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
81. Surface layer of ground containing a mat of grass and grass roots.
82. A person who rides a pedal-driven vehicle (as a bicycle).
83. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

2. Fleishy and usually brightly colored cover of some seeds that develops from the ovule stalk and partially or entirely envelopes the seed.
3. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
4. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
5. A radioactive transuranic metallic element.
6. Other than what is under consideration or implied.
7. British informal term.
8. Moth whose larvae are flour moths.
9. A feeling of extreme pleasure or satisfaction.
10. A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
11. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
12. Of or relating to the Sikhs or Sikhism.
13. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
14. King of Saudi Arabia since 1982 (born in 1922).
20. Nocturnal wildcat of Central and South America having a dark-spotted buff-brown coat.
23. One of the jointed appendages of an animal used for locomotion or grasping.
25. Considerate and solicitous care.
27. A farewell remark.
28. A written symbol that is used to represent speech.
30. Eurasian rose with prickly stems and fragrant leaves and bright pink flowers followed by scarlet hips.
32. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
34. A convex molding having a cross section in the form of a quarter of a circle or of an ellipse.
35. The capital of Bahrain.
36. Any of several trees of the genus Platanus having thin pale bark that scales off in small plates and lobed leaves and ball-shaped heads of fruits.
38. The inner and longer of the two bones of the human forearm.
40. Type genus of the Alaudidae.
43. A Loloish language.
46. Thickening of tissue in the motor tracts of the lateral columns and anterior horns of the spinal cord.
48. Unknown god.
49. Of an organism's environment.
54. Type genus of the Triglidae.
55. (Scotland) A slope or hillside.
56. Filled with the emotional impact of overwhelming surprise or shock.
57. A benevolent aspect of Devi.
60. An ancient region of west central Italy (southeast of Rome) on the Tyrrhenian Sea.
61. An honorary arts degree.
63. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
65. Flesh of fish found in colder waters of northern Atlantic coast of the United States.
68. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
69. A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
72. A reptile genus of Iguanidae.
74. Used of a single unit or thing.
75. (Irish) The sea personified.
78. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
79. A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 100 liters.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

A collision of powerful and unpredictable energy spills into your life. As you encourage others, you are also encouraged. Set aside any doubts you may have about some new challenge . . . You will be successful as you take your time and ask whatever questions might be needed. If you are involved in a leadership role, you may find that this anticipation is perhaps the way your mind and body prepares itself for performance. You are able to handle any situation that may occur. Your creativity is exalted and you can expect personal or career gains. Your consciousness has an inner peace. You are cheerful and friendly to all, making you very popular. Tonight you may decide to make a list of a few personal goals-you need some time to yourself.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This is a good time to lead the way on a project-your originality is good. This is an excellent time to sway others to your cause. This may be through speeches or clever arguments-your thinking is most logical. You have a little extra time today to see if you can be helpful to a new person in your workplace. Try listening to this person's needs before deciding for yourself how best to be helpful. You have an excellent opportunity to gain new insights into an unresolved problem. You may not appreciate the secretive and overly private approach of someone you encounter. You may give some thought as to what is not being said. Companionship with others, however, can be most rewarding. You might relax this evening with a hot drink.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Cleaning out your desk you may find the name of a lead you have been searching to find. If you give your best effort now, considerable success is yours! Excitement! New discoveries, encounters and ideas should make this a day to remember. You will not have to look for them; they will find you-projects that is. Any problem you might find can be easily resolved. The practical use of your time and effort will most certainly be successful. This is a great time to be with others in work or sports. You may be sought after as just the person for a particular job. Check the routine and leave part of your day open for surprises and new adventures. Expand your insights with some fascinating nonfiction this evening.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Any need for negotiation or persuasion has found its day. Your mind is clear and alert and anyone should be able to grasp your point of view. Your abilities and expectations for success may be slowed. You may feel that further education or experience is just what you need. You may face criticism from co-workers or your boss, particularly about a project or idea of yours; keep trying, you have great ideas. You have a great amount of inner strength in light of obstacles that may suddenly appear. Do not hide beneath a shell but open up to others. You may enjoy making plans or involving yourself in some writing or expanding your intellectual horizons-sign up for a class-start that book.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Today you may want to focus on the higher aspects of life-the big picture-those little details are a waste of time. You are drawn to the study of religion, philosophy or psychology. Just remember not to pontificate to others, or give the impression that you know all the answers; you may not realize you could be doing this. This behavior is a quick way to lose converts. You may however, find that someone wants to join you in your search for the meaning of life, so to speak. You may also find this a day of optimism. Today marks a time when you enjoy better relations with family members, and your financial position may also improve because of your association with a relative.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may have noticed that the lines in your palm seem different from just a few months ago. It does not matter what everybody else is doing, you have the basic ideas for a plan for your future. The job you hold now could be the means to financially get you through to the other side of some education or apprenticeship. With education, apprenticeship or even internship behind you, you will experience the rewards you are looking for, so keep moving forward with your plans; you will soon see excellent results. Enjoy an enthusiastic attitude. A certified clinical nutritionist could help you create a balance in your diet with a few nutritional supplements. More than one visitor will be visiting with you this evening. You are good at making guests feel welcomed.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Checking out the competition and surveying the possibilities when it comes to changing jobs or upgrading your job may have you in a grateful mood this morning. You really feel that you are on the right path and work progress is coming along fairly well. Your inner resources and emotions are accentuated. Expect a sense of support and goodwill from those around you. Perhaps you feel this is really you-how you feel and are. Today you will be able to tackle tasks that require real discipline or organization. You find yourself in a very practical mood-working with, instead of against, yourself. Relations with members of the opposite sex are strengthened at this time. Take the time to show your appreciation of a friend or loved one tonight.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Mental stimulation from others is key for you right now-it's a good idea to make every effort to cooperate and compromise with others. The workflow today is productive. You may spend a considerable amount of time thinking about how to improve finances . . . Principally through physical or manual activity. The desire for material success is great and you could be reckless, perhaps through gambling or in handling newfound finances-careful. You have an increased zeal for work or play. The power of your ego is strong at this time-romance should be exciting. This is also an excellent time for taking part in social activities with friends. Perhaps you will soon be interested in trying out for a play or music group. Bravo!



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You really concentrate now to get things done quickly, whether you are alone or with others, particularly if you lead. State your agenda logically and even those who may disagree with you will respect you. Strong-minded persons are attracted to you and you to them. This is a most favorable time to engage in intellectually stimulating leisure activities. Perhaps you will be able to entertain others this afternoon and evening. This may involve business associates or family visiting from afar. You will find this a period of optimism and emotional stability and a perfect time to enjoy your existing relationships and to perhaps start new ones. This is an extremely creative period in your life and you should take full advantage of it.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You will tend to experience abrupt changes in matters of fortune, good or bad, in a relatively short time. Avoid extravagance and take time to reexamine your habits in this regard. Listen to the suggestions of a more experienced investor-perhaps a friend. Make your plans today and execute tomorrow. At work, first concentrate on the small, irritating things that you have placed to one side for later . . . Now is later. Your mind is clear and fertile and with quick wit. You will enjoy communicating, writing letters, mental games, puzzle solving-anything to give your active mind some creative vent.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

The universe is full of favorable energies for financial dealings. This doesn't mean magic will happen but it does mean you seem to have a magic touch. It is a good time to think seriously about your business future. If you make that extra push to assert yourself in business, doors will open that allow you a good opportunity to move up the corporate ladder. A superior at work needs your input. Do a little free-flow thinking and you will come up with something new. Almost as though you were a performer, the secret to your success is in your ability to creatively solve problems! There is some special music for you to enjoy this evening. There is an emphasis on close relationships tonight, as well as enjoying a life celebration.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Eagerness, excitement and the opportunity for new discoveries rule the day. There are plenty of other days for routine and discipline. Take advantage of the way you can glance over complicated material and gain insight with a plan. Your mental faculties are enlivened, making you readily receptive to all thoughts that encroach upon you. It is best to rely on facts rather than feelings. An expensive mistake could be in the works if you make up your mind too quickly. There is an interest in the motivations and desires of friends and family. This is an excellent time to get to know someone better. Talk with a loved one is quite helpful this evening. Your emotions are in balance, making sexual relations particularly meaningful.

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

Golf

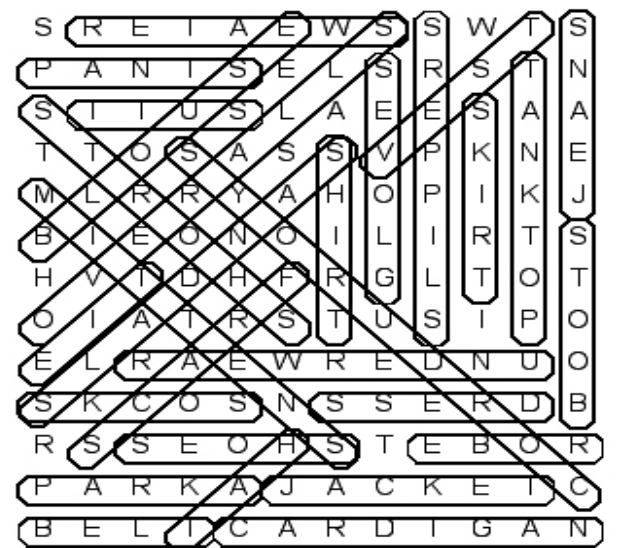
Find and circle all of the golf words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a Mark Twain quotation.



- | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| ALBATROSS | CLUBHOUSE | GREEN | ROUGH |
| APPROACH | CLUBS | GRIP | RULES |
| BACK NINE | CONDOR | GROSS SCORE | SHOT |
| BACKSPIN | COURSE | HANDICAP | SLICE |
| BALL | DIVOT | HOLE IN ONE | STROKE |
| BIRDIE | DRIVER | HOLES | SWING |
| BOGEY | DRIVING RANGE | HOOKE | TEE OFF |
| BUNKER | EAGLE | IRON | TREES |
| CADDIE | FAIRWAY | NET SCORE | WATER HAZARD |
| CART | FLAGSTICK | PAR | WEDGE |
| CHIP | FORE | PUTTER | WOOD |

Yesterday's Solution

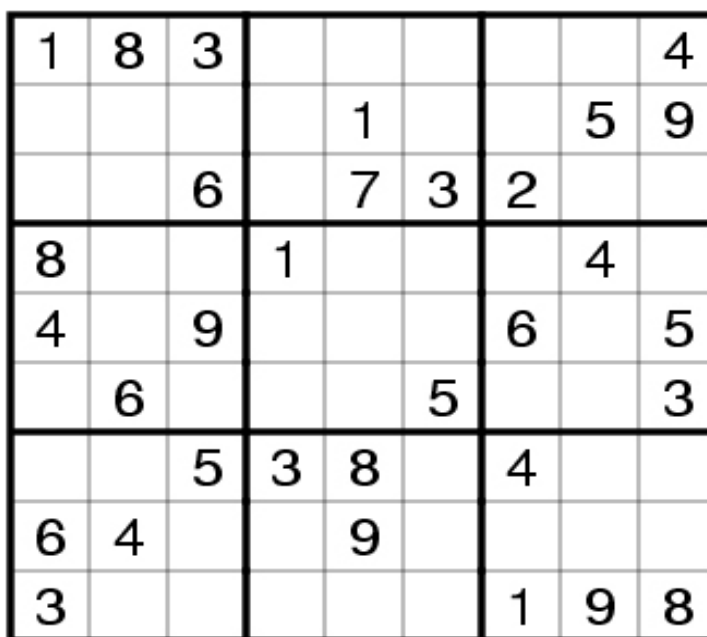
Clothing



- | | | | |
|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 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 | |

The hidden clothing item is: SWEATSHIRT

Daily SuDoku



easy

Yesterday's Solution



medium

For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadisiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaee Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Luxembourg	00352
Albania	00355	Macau	00853
Algeria	00213	Macedonia	00389
Andorra	00376	Madagascar	00261
Angola	00244	Majorca	0034
Anguilla	001264	Malawi	00265
Antigua	001268	Malaysia	00660
Argentina	0054	Maldives	00960
Armenia	00374	Mali	00223
Australia	0061	Malta	00356
Austria	0043	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Toga	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lithuania	00370		

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



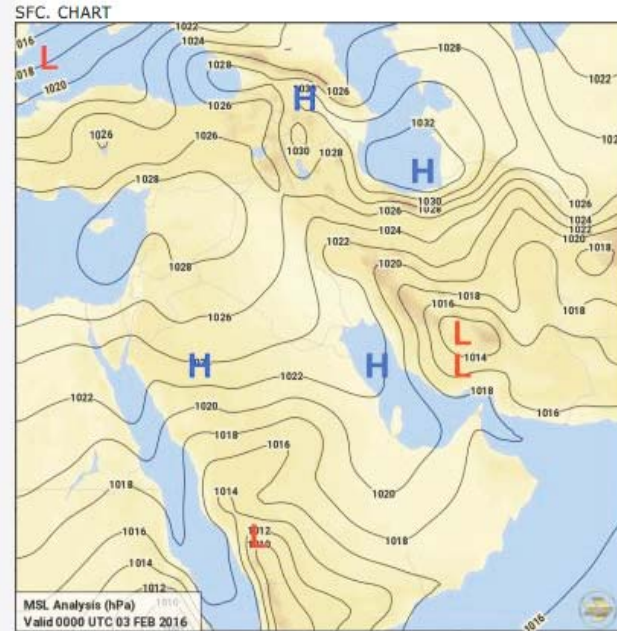
Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 03/02/2016-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 20 °C

By Day : Partly cloudy with light to moderate variable wind changing to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h
By Night : Cold with light to moderate freshening gradually at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h



Four-Day Forecast

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Expected Weather				
Min Temp °C	07	07	06	13
Max Temp °C	21	22	23	24
Wind Direction	north westerly	north westerly to light variable	variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly	south easterly changing to north westerly later on
Wind Speed km/h	10 - 32	06 - 26	10 - 32	20 - 45

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C	REC	Max °C	EXP
KUWAIT CITY	14		21	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	08		20	
ABDALY	11		23	
BUBYAN	12		19	
JAHRA	12		22	
FAILAKA ISLAND	12		19	
SALMIYAH	14		17	
AHMADI	14		18	
JAL ALIYAH	12		21	
QAROH ISLAND	15		18	
UMM AL-MARADEM	15		18	
NUWAISIB	11		21	
WAFRA	09		22	
MANAGISH	10		21	
SALMY	09		21	
MUTRIBA	11		21	

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	21
Min Temp (°C)	02
Max Rel Hum (%)	79
Min Rel Hum (%)	27
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	21 W
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

	Sunrise	06:36
	Sunset	17:28

Prayer Times

Fajr	05:15
Sunrise	06:36
Zuhr	12:02
Asr	15:06
Sunset	17:28
Isha	18:46



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaizeem	22636920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s.Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarroof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammes Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123

THE MAKERS CONFERENCE



Halle Berry, left, and Kevin Huvane speak at the 2nd Annual MAKERS Conference at Terranea Resort in Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif. — AP

Halle Berry: Hollywood not truthful about people of color

Halle Berry said Hollywood's lack of diversity stems from a lack of honesty. Filmmakers and actors should tell the truth, she said, "and the films, I think, that are coming out of Hollywood aren't truthful." "The reason they're not truthful these days is they aren't really depicting the importance and the involvement and the participation of people of color in our American culture," Berry said, addressing the film academy's diversity controversy publicly for the first time.

She made the remarks Tuesday during an onstage conversation with her agent, Kevin Huvane, at the Makers Conference, an AOL

women's leadership program. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has been facing a diversity crisis since the nominations announced last month revealed a second consecutive year of all-white acting nominees.

Berry is the only black woman to win an Oscar for lead actress, and she said she's heartbroken her victory for 2001's "Monster's Ball" didn't lead to more women of color being cast in leading roles. But she puts the blame on filmmakers with tunnel vision. "Our cities are filled with black and brown people. And many times, unfortunately we see films that are set in Chicago, New York, Atlanta - big metropolitan

cities - and they're devoid of people of color," she said. "So I feel like when we really live up to our responsibility and challenge ourselves to be truthful, and tell the truth in our storytelling, then people of color will be there in a real competitive way, and it won't be about inclusion or diversity. Because if we're telling the truth, inclusion and diversity will be a byproduct of the truth." She then looked at Huvane and said: "You hit me with a zinger!" The Makers Conference, held at the seaside Terranea Resort in Rancho Palos Verdes, California, continues till today with such speakers as Gloria Steinem, Sheryl Sandberg and Caitlyn Jenner. — AP



A visitor examines paintings at the Frida Kahlo exhibition.

Frida Kahlo exhibition opens in Russian museum



Russia's first major exhibition dedicated to Mexican surrealist painter Frida Kahlo has opened in a St Petersburg museum. The exhibition that opened Tuesday in the Faberge Museum features three dozen works by Kahlo, famous for her poignant self-portraits. The paintings come from various collections in Mexico, and officials said it took four separate planes to transport them to Russia because of safety precautions. The organizers said the exhibition spans the entire Kahlo's career and includes some of her most iconic paintings. — AP

A visitor examines paintings at the Frida Kahlo exhibition.



Ben-Hur Rangel, of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, examines the 1928 Frida Kahlo painting "Dos Mujeres (Salvadora y Herminia)."



A visitor styled as Frida Kahlo poses for photo next to a Frida's Kahlo self-portrait at the Frida Kahlo exhibition in St Petersburg, Russia. — AP photos

20 years later, metal band Sevendust relishes Grammy nod

If Grammys were handed out for sheer persistence, the metal band Sevendust would have a bunch by now. The quintet from Atlanta is celebrating two decades together this year with its first Grammy nomination. The nomination is for a song that is, appropriately, named "Thank You." "This is a big deal. I feel like it's going to push us to work even harder," said Lajon Witherspoon, the band's lead singer and co-songwriter. "I think we're on the right avenue right now."

Sevendust, known for its melodic approach to metal, has put many miles on the road, supporting everyone from Metallica to Creed. The band finally got the attention of the Recording Academy for last year's "Kill the Flaw," its 11th studio album. The music has elements of classic metal, thrash, southern rock and even some soul, led by the fearsome instrument of Witherspoon's voice, one of the most flexible and exciting in music today.

"Music is music. I never put a label on it. I just feel I'm a rocker," said Witherspoon, who also recently sang with the Moscow Studio Symphony Orchestra for a side project and who has embraced Sevendust's acoustic side. "I'm sure there are people out there that would say Sevendust isn't heavy enough, but I don't believe everything has to be always breaking walls down," he said. "I've been onstage and felt like Britney Spears compared to some of the bands that we've played with. But we still get out there and rock it."

Sevendust hits the road as a headliner this spring starting April 26 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and wrapping up May 28 at the Rocklahoma festival in Pryor, Oklahoma. Sevendust's lineup - which also includes Clint Lowery on lead guitar, John Connolly on rhythm guitar, Vince Hornsby on bass and Morgan Rose on drums - has been remarkably stable over the years, with the exception of Lowery stepping away for a few years.

Rocking my gown

"We don't really ever fight. There's no reason to. We're grown men," said Witherspoon, who welcomed his third child in December and just celebrated his 12th wedding anniversary. He is well versed on car seats and diapers, yet onstage can deliver the lyric "All the things we loathe,



Lajon Witherspoon, lead singer of Sevendust, poses for a portrait in New York. — AP

we become it" with full-throated power. At the Grammys, Sevendust faces off against Slipknot, Lamb of God, August Burns Red and Ghost. Though the winner won't be televised, Witherspoon and his family will proudly be on the red carpet. For a guy who watched the ceremonies as a boy, he wouldn't miss it, especially as a way to thank his wife for all her sacrifices while he and his band crisscrossed the country. "This is for the wives," he said.

Witherspoon was born and raised in Nashville, Tennessee, and sang in his church choir. Even his grandmother sensed there was a showman in the youngster. "I wanted to perform," he said, laughing. "I was rocking my gown." Though he sang in R&B bands, by high school he was hanging out with the long-haired kids listening to Guns N' Roses and Black Sabbath. Able to wail and growl, he gravitated toward metal, an often rare genre for an African-American. Witherspoon says he doesn't see racism at Sevendust gigs these days, but years ago on tour with Slipknot he saw "a couple of knuckleheads" in the mosh pit give the Hitler salute, oblivious to what it meant. In melancholy moments, he suspects his race might have slowed the band's rise. "I've always wondered if I had not been a black man in Sevendust, would it have even gotten bigger?" he asks. "At the end of the day, I'm glad that it took this long because we're still here." — AP



This file photo shows Hilary Duff speaks during the "Younger" panel at the TV Land 2016 Winter TCA in Pasadena, Calif. — AP

Judge finalizes Duff's divorce from ex-NHL player

Los Angeles judge has finalized Hilary Duff's divorce from former NHL player Mike Comrie. The judgment, which was first reported Tuesday by celebrity website TMZ, was finalized today. The 28-year-old singer and actress starred in the "Lizzie McGuire" television series and film and stars on the TV Land series "Younger." Comrie played professional

hockey between 2000 and 2011, ending his career with the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Duff and Comrie were married in August 2010 and separated in January 2014. They have a three-year-old son together and will share joint custody. The judgment states the pair had a prenuptial agreement and Comrie is giving up rights to their home in exchange for a \$2.4 million payment from Duff. — AP

'Manolos' for the people? Luxury shoe designer opens up

Could "Manolos" come to the high street? The legendary shoe designer Manolo Blahnik told AFP he could work with retailers such as H&M and Topshop-but only if they give him the creative freedom he needs. "I like my shoes to be outside there. Not copied, like in China, but the real thing!" said the flamboyant Blahnik, a close friend of the late Princess Diana who lives in Bath in southern England. Blahnik, whose designs were popularized by the US television series "Sex and the City," has resisted the overtures of global fashion giants to stay independent-and now has eight solo stores in Dubai, Hong Kong, London, Madrid, Moscow and New York. He said he would only stop being independent "after I drop dead," adding: "I love freedom, I adore freedom of any kind." "People say I need to do that, I need to do that, I really can do that. I can't work that way."

celebrities had the best ones, he named actresses Raquel Welch and Brigitte Bardot but said he was disillusioned by modern-day stars. "They are not those great old stars that used to wear flat shoes and be so sexy," said Blahnik, whose shoes can sell for more than \$1,000 (916 euros) a pair. Blahnik decried the modern trend of women wearing trainers, saying they "could destroy" their feet. "But they say that about shoes all the time, that they destroy women's feet. Nonsense!"



This file photo shows Spanish fashion designer Manolo Blahnik as he poses for a picture. — AFP

European tour
Born on November 7, 1942 in the Canary Islands, Blahnik is the son of a Czech father and a Spanish mother and grew up on her banana plantation. His parents wanted him to become a diplomat but US Vogue's legendary editor Diana Vreeland steered him towards fashion design. Blahnik's new store, which opened at a glitzy launch on Tuesday, is in the Burlington Arcade-a gallery built in 1819 near Piccadilly Circus close to some of the British capital's most expensive shops. He faces some busy months with a new documentary on his life and an exhibition with 500 of his designs to be launched at the Venice Film Festival in September. "It's going to be in the places of Europe that I love best." — AFP



Chinese opera artists on stage during a performance held in a village in Nakhon Pathom province, west of Bangkok. — AFP photos

Despite ancestral links, Chinese opera struggles in Thailand



Locals watching a stage performance by Chinese opera artists in a village in Nakhon Pathom province.



Locals watching a stage performance by Chinese opera artists.

Thai performers caked in make-up belt out the piercing notes of Chinese opera — an art form under threat by changing cultural habits and demographics in a kingdom reshaped by centuries of immigration from the north. With Chinese New Year kicking off this week, the nomadic “Lau San Chia Soon” troupe, who pitch their stage wherever they are invited, are expecting a particularly busy few days. But this eye-catching form of musical theatre is struggling as younger generations of Thais look for entertainment elsewhere, something performers desperately want to change.



A Chinese opera artist applying make-up backstage.

“The history of Chinese opera is getting forgotten and is vanishing as new generations don’t really know much about it,” 25-year-old Naticha Saeung, who began performing with this troupe at the age of 13, tells AFP from a recent performance in Nakhon Pathom, a province to the west of Bangkok. Her colleague Chukiatt Thippan, 23, agrees. “There are not many people watching Chinese operas now,” he tells AFP behind a hastily erected temporary stage. “Some of the older Thai-Chinese people passed away and the new generations don’t really continue the tradition.” About 14 percent of the Thai popula-

tion is ethnic Chinese following centuries of immigration and assimilation. Many more have Chinese roots among their forebears. But the number of Thais of Chinese descent who understand the Teochew dialect used by this group of singers is dwindling. There was a time when nomadic Chinese opera troupes like this were a common feature of the Thai landscape, travelling from village to village bringing the entertaining sights and sounds of a tradition that dates back centuries.

Mangkorn Supongpan, 62, whose parents founded Lau San Chia Soon, says there are now fewer than 20 mobile groups like his travelling across Thailand. He admits it’s hard to attract people to the lifestyle. Performers raise their children, eat and sleep beneath the stage, packing it up and all their belongings every few days to move to a new venue. “It’s a hard life because we barely go back home, we perform all year long, non-stop,” he says. Few will see riches either. The average monthly wage for a performer is between 10-20,000 baht (\$280-\$560) depending on their role.

Most communities that invite operas to perform do it more as a way to honor ancestors than to entertain the masses. But some among the largely elderly crowd watching the troupe’s performance that night hope younger generations might be inspired to give Chinese opera a try. “People now stay home and watch TV,” says Prasit Puthiprapa, a sprightly 81-year-old. “But watching Chinese opera is like watching movies and soap operas, it’s good fun especially when you pay attention to it,” he adds, somewhat admonishingly. At the start of the show shortly after dusk, dozens sit on plastic chairs watching the drama unfold. But by the time it wraps up around midnight, just a solitary audience member and a street dog remain. The troupe aren’t bothered though. By morning, the stage will be gone and they’ll be off to the next village. — AFP



Chinese opera artists getting ready backstage ahead of a performance.



Chinese opera artists getting ready backstage.

This April 2012 photo provided by the Austin Parks & Recreation Department shows the Elisabet Ney Museum in Austin, Texas. — AP



Austin’s Elisabet Ney Museum evokes a past era

Four miles from the bustling state capitol, a castle-like structure sits in a corner of Austin’s Hyde Park neighborhood. It’s built from white stones, complete with columns and a square tower. Out front, a field of native greenery teeming with tall purple and yellow wildflowers seems to have been lifted from the Texas plains and left to grow as nature intended. This is the Elisabet Ney Museum, a historic site housing works by Ney, a celebrated German sculptor. Ney and her physician-

philosopher husband, Edmund Montgomery, left Europe amid political turmoil in 1871 and decided to come to Texas. She established her studio and home here in 1892, naming the site Formosa, Portuguese for beautiful. Over time it became a gathering place for intellectuals, politicians and artists of the area.

Walking on wood-planked floors, visitors can approach the statues of her subjects, ranging from European royalty to Texas heroes of a century ago. Ney’s tools are left scattered

about, as if she had just walked away for a moment. One almost expects her to appear and engage in a conversation.

A narrow spiral stairway leads to the tower Ney had built for her husband to carry on his work; it’s easy to imagine his footsteps on the stairs. Outside, a metal geodesic dome — one in a series of contemporary works featured on the 2 1/2 acre site — brings visitors back to the 21st century. But the sensibility of that earlier era lingers. — AP



Chinese opera artists on stage during a performance.

A healthy body and mind comes first

With all this travelling, I'm always amazed by how drastically my skin and hair dries out, especially on this trip that I went on to Philadelphia. The freezing cold temperatures sucked the moisture right out of my hair and skin! This doesn't necessarily only happen when you're in the cold but also in the

extremely hot weather that we deal with back home, and generally in the Middle East.

I never travel light, when it comes to my skin and hair routine. I actually care about these products being packed more than my own clothes, only because it frustrates me to be dealing with breakouts and dried out skin while being dehydrated on Roaccutane or have my hair getting tangled every time I wash it. I always make sure I pack a good hair mask, hair oil replacement, my detangle spray, a good comb, and a leave-in conditioner. If I was going to be tanning or under the sun for a long time I will also throw in a hair UV protectant because nothing is worse than how your hair feels like after you've been in the pool or swimming at the beach.

Not a lot of people know this but a few hairstylists have told me that one of the biggest mistakes that girls do with long hair is that they apply shampoo from the roots to the tips

of their hair, what they should do is only apply and wash the roots of your hair (scalp area) and not rub in the shampoo through all of your hair to have minimal damage/dryness after your dry your hair, because no matter how much you love your shampoo or love how it leaves your hair feeling smooth and shiny, it contains chemicals and all shampoos do, meaning it'll leave in those chemicals in your hair, unless you use homemade shampoo and conditioner which is amazing too.

UV protection

Leaving in olive oil or mixing a few drops with your shampoo will also help a lot with locking in the moisture in your hair, usually I plan to have a day out of the week or every other week to leave in olive oil for a couple of hours to help my hair with the dryness and split ends. Doing so for a while will definitely benefit your hair and also keep it smooth and shiny!

The UV protection is either a mousse or cream you put in your hair when you're out tanning or going out in the sun. It not only protects my hair from the UV rays it also keeps my hair color as it is, because sometimes the salt from the sea or chlorine from the pool changes your hair color to lighter, and this works just like when you protect your skin by applying sunscreen.

Some hair masks come with the shampoo and conditioner you purchase, or you can also come up with your own hair mask and make it at home (view older articles to find the Homemade Masks). Masks are more like "quick-fixes" to help repair your hair for a short period of time but actually treating it is what keeps it healthy in the long run. I usually use masks instead of conditioners, even when I'm getting my hair done at the salon I ask for a mask. It's heavier and more intense than a regular conditioner.

Always keep in mind that our hair is made out of a protein called keratin, and using shampoos that contain that is very healthy for your hair, and another thing that is extremely important to consider if you have unhealthy and thinning hair is your diet. Many women go on poor diets which cause them to have thin hair, weak nails and bad skin. Eating foods such as seafood, more precisely salmon, yoghurt; Greek yoghurt contains vitaminB5 which prevents hair thinning, spinach, poultry, sweet potatoes, cinnamon, and eggs. Try to add those to your diet to help grow your hair faster, and not only your hair but skin and nails too. Always know that to have anything be healthy it starts from within, a healthy body and a healthy mind comes first, and everything else follows. Good luck ladies.



In this undated photo provided by Young Huh, on cold, gray winter days, upholstered headboards like the ones shown in this bedroom designed by Huh offer cheerful color and softness, while also absorbing sound. — AP photos

Decorators' tips for a cozy winter bedroom



This undated photo shows a calming and cozy bedroom designed by Young Huh that features walls upholstered with panels of wool saateen.

Decorating a bedroom is about creating a peaceful retreat, and in winter that means making it as cozy and welcoming as possible. For some people, "cozy" requires the physical warmth of thick flannel sheets and soft quilts, says California-based designer Kathryn Bechen. For others, filling a bedroom with sentimental items can make the space feel warmer and more welcoming. Still others find that the golden glow of soft light bulbs and the flicker of candles (real or fake) can elevate a bedroom from merely comfortable to truly cozy on winter nights.

Here, Bechen and two other interior designers - Maxwell Ryan, founder of the Apartment Therapy website (apartmenttherapy.com), and New York-based Young Huh - suggest ways to create the warmest, coziest bedroom possible.

Sounds and scents

A cozy bedroom is quiet, says Ryan. So consider adding an extra throw rug on the floor or heavier draperies on the windows to absorb sound. And if you don't already have one, he says, get a padded, upholstered headboard. Ryan treated himself to one several years ago and was surprised at the impact. "Lying in bed, my head was near this big upholstered piece," he says, and the room was noticeably quieter.

Taking that strategy a step further, Huh suggests upholstering one or several walls in your master bedroom. Like a headboard, this will absorb sound and also create a sense of warmth when you see and feel the plush, padded fabric. Along with sounds, consider scents. Cinnamon-scented candles, for instance, can "make you feel cozy instead of gloomy" in winter, Huh says. Don't like cinnamon? A wide range of scents will work, says Bechen, even some you wouldn't expect: If the smell of coconut and pineapple brings back memories of a mellow, sun-drenched vacation in the tropics, that fragrance may bring you a sense of calm and warmth.

Colors and light

Along with scenting the air, candles give a room a "warm, soft, inviting glow," Huh says. She recommends lighting them every evening in winter. If you're worried about lighting a flame in your bedroom, consider pairing flameless LED candles with a diffuser containing scented oil. Or swap out your light bulbs for ones that offer warm, yellow or pink-tinted light. The newest energy-efficient bulbs give warmer light than the original compact fluores-

cents, and dimmers can also help create appealing, soothing light.

Colors also convey strong messages; for a cozy space, Ryan suggests avoiding over-stimulating colors like bright reds or yellows in favor of calming greens, grays, eggplant, lavender and even some blues. But Bechen points out that bedroom colors are a very personal choice. Some folks prefer a room decorated in low-key, calming colors, but others will draw warmth and coziness from deep, powerful shades. If a color delights you, she says, then it may work as a calming, joyful influence.

Winter fabrics and rugs

Huh says winter is the season for layering on extra soft blankets and adding throw rugs on top of your usual floor covering. Consider a faux-sheepskin or faux-fur throw rug, or a fluffy flokati rug. Look for winter sheets that are flannel or heavy cotton, and make sure they're soft. No one feels cozy on scratchy sheets, says Bechen. Ryan suggests choosing sheets in dark, cool colors like deep brown, charcoal gray, even rich eggplant. Just make sure they don't contain too much red.

He also recommends adding a thick bed pad, feather bed or extra-thick mattress cover under your fitted sheet for added warmth and softness. If you have a four-poster bed, he says, consider draping fabric over the top and down the sides to create a warm, enclosed space. If you don't have a four-poster but love the idea of fabric draped around your bed, he suggests getting "one of the big white, gauzy canopies that hang from the ceiling." Even if it's as light as mosquito netting, he says, it gives a sense of being wrapped in something cozy. It's "romantic and lovely," he says, "and not just for kids."

Finishing touches

Being cozy includes feeling a bit pampered, says Bechen. If you have space, consider setting up a little coffee or tea station in your bedroom, like you'd find in a hotel room. On a Saturday morning, drink your coffee cuddled up under soft blankets rather than at the kitchen table. Huh suggests splurging on a soft chair for reading in your bedroom.

For Ryan, a powerful but silent air purifier is a great finishing touch to make your air healthier and help you drift off to sleep feeling secure. One detail he doesn't recommend? Decorative pillows. "True coziness has to be something you touch and feel and use," he says, not something on your bed that you'll never use. — AP

Korean woman raises 200 dogs saved from streets, restaurants



Jung Myoung Sook, 61, who rescued and sheltered dogs for 26 years, feeds soy milk to her dogs at a shelter in Asan, South Korea. — AP photos



Puppies sit at a shelter owned by Jung Myoung Sook.

Puppies bark and wag their tails as they follow a gray-haired woman through a hillside compound that shelters more than 200 dogs. "Hey, my babies. Give your mom a kiss," says Jung Myoung Sook, 61. She lowers her face and one puppy near a snow-covered kennel licks her lips; another gently paws her cheek. In South Korea, where dogs are considered a traditional delicacy and have only recently become popular as pets, Jung's love for her canine friends is viewed by some as odd. But others see her as a champion of animal rights.

Rescuing and caring for dogs for 26 years, Jung has moved seven times because of neighbors' complaints about noise. She often stops to pick up dogs roaming the streets, and has bought others in danger of being sold to dog meat farms or restaurants. Some question whether someone as poor as Jung, who ekes out a living cleaning a store and collecting recyclable boxes, can feed and care for so many dogs. While Jung's dogs looked healthy and well-fed during a recent visit by The Associated



Jung Myoung Sook takes care of dogs at a shelter.

Press, their condition couldn't be independently confirmed. Authorities in the central city of Asan know about Jung's current shelter, which she opened in 2014, but have no legal responsibility to inspect it, according to an official who refused to give his name because he wasn't authorized to speak to media on the matter. Pets are growing in

popularity here, where one in five households has a cat or dog, but activists say public attitudes toward pets lag those in the West. Supporters of Jung see her as a heroine, saving stray or lost dogs from being killed for food or euthanized at public shelters if not adopted or found by their owners. About 81,000 stray or abandoned

animals, mostly dogs and cats, were sent to public shelters in 2014, down from 100,000 in 2010, the government said.

"My babies aren't hungry. They can play and live freely here," said Jung, whose clothes are worn and hair is disheveled. "Some people talk about me, saying, 'Why is that beggar-like middle-aged woman smiling all the time? But I just focus on feeding my babies. I'm happy and healthy.' Dozens of other South Koreans are believed to be raising large numbers of dogs, sometimes in unsanitary conditions where diseases spread easily. Jung says her dogs are mostly healthy, although some die in fights with each other.

Most of the dogs live with her for good. She said she spends about \$1,600 a month on food and medicine, and otherwise relies on donations of soybean milk, dog food and canned meat. Family, friends and sometimes strangers send her money. Park Hye-soon, a local restaurant owner, has given Jung leftover pork for four years. "She lives only for her dogs," he said, "without doing much for herself." — AP

Landmark Group announces winners of 'Art Olympiad IX'

Landmark Group announced the awarded talented students at the ninth Art Olympiad held this year. The event witnessed the participation of 180 students from 18 well reputed schools across Kuwait. Famous Kuwaiti artists Asad Bunashi, Maha Al-Mansoor and Mariam Al-Mulla judged all participating paintings and have selected a total of eight winners at the end of the event. All winning paintings were selected on the basis of creativity, workmanship and overall impression.

The 9th Art Olympiad event is part of Landmark Group's Corporate Social Responsibility strategy to elevate the capabilities and skills of youth in Kuwait. The event is seen as a training platform for these students by helping them improvise their flair and encourage their innovative ability through Art. This year's competition had two key age categories 9-11 and 12-14 years. Each of these categories had a total of three winners First, Second and Third place. In addition to the 6 awards there were three special prizes awarded as recognition for the Most Creative, Most Colorful and best Design & Imagination paintings.

Commenting on the event, Saibal Basu, Chief Operating Officer of Landmark Group Kuwait said: "I would like to extend my sincerest wishes to the winners; and would also like to acknowledge the efforts of all the talented students who participated in this competition. Their creativity is a reflection of their hard work and artist vision which illustrates their views towards their surroundings. Once again we are proud and excited to host the Art Olympiad year after year as it proves to be a great success." Basu further added: "We are really pleased with the winning paintings as they are very Expressive and meets all the judging criteria. I would like to thank our valued judges Asad Bunashi, Maha Al-



Group photo shows Saibel Basu with the winners.

Mansoor and Mariam Al-Mulla who have helped make this event Bigger and Better."

Creating awareness

"We would like to extend our appreciation and gratitude to the teachers for their efforts and support in nurturing these talents and guiding them to develop their creativity". Basu concluded. The participating schools for this year's Olympiad were: Al-Ghanim Bilingual School, American International School, Ajial Bilingual School, British School of Kuwait, Carmel School, Canadian Bilingual School, Fahaheel Al-Watanieh Indian Private School Ahmadi, Indian Central School, Indian Educational School, Indian English Academy School- Don Bosco, Indian Learners Own Academy, International British School, Kuwait American School, Kuwait English School, Kuwait National English School, Salmiya Indian Model School, The English School Fahaheel and The English School-Salmiya.

Landmark Group is always keen on maintaining an excellent rapport and creating awareness about relevant issues among the youth with constant activities and events. Children were provided with a craft pack that included a drawing sheet and a variety of art materials such as paints, pencils and crayons. The winners received a prize, certificates and trophies, while all participating schools were given a plaque of appreciation.





Ryan Ballard, founder of the Krewe of Chewbacchus Mardi Gras parade, works inside their headquarters at the Castillo Blanco Art Studios in New Orleans.



Members of the Mowhawk Hunters, a Mardi Gras Indian tribe, and the only tribe on the city's west bank of the Mississippi River, practice inside Sheila's Fantasy Lounge.

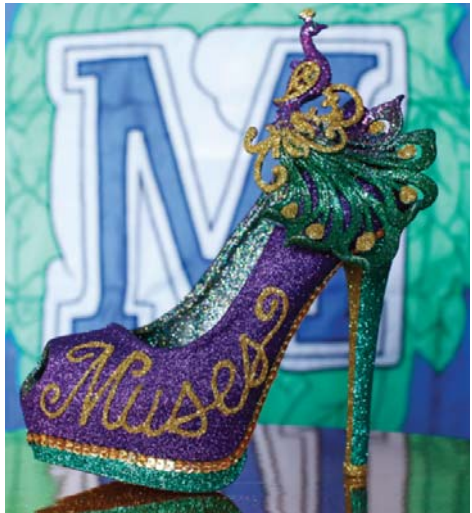
Glitter, feathers, paint

New Orleans preps for Mardi Gras

It's glitter season in New Orleans. A time for feathers, paper mache, sequins, paint, bailing wire, bones, and just about any other item that can be used for decoration. Across garages, kitchen tables and warehouses, residents are feverishly sewing elaborate costumes, painting floats and decorating custom throws. Outside of New Orleans, Mardi Gras has often been perceived as a raucous time of having fun and throwing beads.

Magic happen

But to those who live here and essentially put on the show for the world, it's a wildly creative time of personal expression, rich history and family fun. Behind the parades and pageantry are regular citizens who spend all year and often a lot of their own money to transform the city and themselves for a few



An all-female Mardi Gras parade group known as the Krewe of Muses creates hand decorated shoes from a garage in Kenner, La.

days. The Associated Press talked to some of the men and women who make the magic happen. Cari Rhoton uses glitter as a verb. In the garage of her Kenner, Louisiana, home she and her friends gather Sunday evenings to glitter shoes and decorate boots, ballet flats and stiletos. Rhoton is a member of the all-female Krewe of Muses whose 1,030 members will parade on Feb 4. The women throw beads and other "throws" to the crowd, but the real prizes are the roughly 30 custom-designed shoes that each woman is encouraged to make and hand out to lucky parade watchers.

Rhoton gathers shoes all year round. Friends drop them off at her house or she finds them at garage sales or thrift stores. Sunday evenings she sits in her "Glitterage" - a two-car garage where she has organized boxes of different colors of glitter, sequins and beads, a glue gun and boxes of embellishments that she'll put on the shoes. "They're little pieces of folk art I believe," she said. "You hand them off to people who come to the parade and it is a treasure. Once you give a shoe to someone you want to keep making shoes every year."

Fiction and fantasy

Like all good New Orleans creative projects, the Intergalactic Krewe of Chewbacchus was conceived in a bar, said Ryan Ballard, who is the group's "Overlord." Ballard and a friend were talking about how there was no crossover between the science fiction and fantasy fans

who dressed up for events like Comic-Con and Mardi Gras. The name is a mash-up of Chewbacca, the furry Wookiee from "Star Wars" who was longtime friend to Han Solo, and Bacchus.

Started six years ago, as a small group of sci-



Cari Rhoton, a lieutenant in an all-female Mardi Gras parade group known as the Krewe of Muses, creates the group's signature shoes from her garage in Kenner, La.



A costume worn by Chief of the Mowhawk Hunters Mardi Gras Tribe Tyrone Casby in 2009 greets visitors to his home in New Orleans.

fi fans, Chewbacchus has grown into a parade of roughly 2,500 people and includes such diverse sub-krewes as the Rolling Elliotts, who dress up as Elliott from the film "ET the Extra-Terrestrial" and ride bikes, and Krewe du Who, which celebrates the TV show Dr Who. "For a lot of people who have never experienced Mardi Gras they think it's like girls gone wild. There's the cheap plastic beads. Mardi Gras is about, it's an art form ... We're making the universe one lit-



Members of the Mowhawk Hunters, a Mardi Gras Indian tribe, and the only tribe on the city's west bank of the Mississippi River, practice inside Sheila's Fantasy Lounge in New Orleans.

tle drop better by doing this crazy, silly, whimsical thing we do."

For Tyrone Casby it was the sound of the drums that lured him in. Casby is the big chief of the Mowhawk Hunters, a Mardi Gras Indian tribe in New Orleans. As a young boy, he remembers sneaking off to watch and listen to his brother practice the drums with his tribe. In 1967 he made his first suit and in 1980 he became the chief of the Mowhawk Hunters, the only tribe on the Mississippi River city's west bank.

'Indian Red'

Casby said the Indian outfits are, in part, a tribute to the Native Americans who would hide runaway slaves. But the drumbeats, singing and chanting are also an expression of the African culture from which they came. At the beginning, the outfits were made out of whatever people could find, and were burned after Mardi Gras, said Casby. But over time, they have evolved into elaborate works of art that take months to complete and are often preserved for posterity.

Come Fat Tuesday morning, the tribe will congregate at one spot in their outfits, and

commence the day by singing "Indian Red," a prayer asking God to guide them. Then they travel through the community, chanting and singing, and stopping at various bars, restaurants or houses for food and drink. "For me it's the drumbeats. And it still is. When I hear a certain drumbeat of music I'm ready to start sewing," Casby said.

It started innocently enough. Chanel Lafargue's husband, a member of the Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club, asked her to decorate his coconuts, the signature throw that the group gives away during their parade. Fast forward many years later and Lafargue is now surrounded in the small workshop above her family's produce shop with hundreds of bags of coconuts and glitter - lots of glitter.

Lafargue has decorated tens of thousands of coconuts for her husband and his friends over the years. The coconut - called the "Golden Nugget" - has been given out by the historically black organization since about 1910. The original coconuts had the milk and coconut still inside. The modern version is just the shell with the hair removed, the coconut and the milk taken out and then resealed. Lafargue has painted



Ryan Ballard, left, founder of the Krewe of Chewbacchus Mardi Gras parade, works on a float with Keith Greene, King of Chewbacchus 2016.



Bruce "Sunpie" Barnes, head of the Mardi Gras North Side Skull & Bone Gang, poses with his accoutrements for upcoming Mardi Gras day, in New Orleans. — AP photos

Increasingly intense

When the parade of the Rex Organization rolls down St Charles Ave. on Mardi Gras morning, the last float parade of the Carnival season, Raymond Joseph Bowie Sr will likely not be among the throngs of onlookers throwing beads and cheering on the float. After months of increasingly intense work painting floats, the master artist at Kern Studios is generally too exhausted to do much besides watch the elaborate procession he helped create on television.

Bowie started painting floats back in 1977. Bowie doesn't have formal art training but has progressed over the years to work on floats in some of the most well-known parades of Mardi Gras including Rex, Orpheus, Endymion and Zulu.

Listening to music through his paint-splattered headphones - his clothing resembles a Jackson Pollock painting - Bowie takes the design the krewe comes up with for their floats and duplicates it on a much larger scale. That has become more challenging as the floats have become bigger and bigger over the years. "It means more than just a paycheck to me. That's why I work the way I work. I'm not going to leave a float till it's done, Period. The way I want it done," he said.

Celebrations

For Bruce "Sunpie" Barnes, Mardi Gras comes early. Around 5 am on Fat Tuesday, he gathers with his "North Side Skull & Bone Gang" at the Backstreet Cultural Museum dressed in skeleton-like costumes. He and others in the gang wear paper mache heads with horns attached, aprons made from canvas or leather and black underwear or sweats painted to resemble a skeleton. Their costumes are intended to represent the dead, and Barnes said they bring a serious message, reminding people of their mortality and the need to live a productive and good life.

Before the sun rises, they gather to sing, dance, and go door-to-door to wake up the neighborhood.

The gang sticks to the back streets of the city, a reminder of the days when black residents could not take part in the official Mardi Gras celebrations, Barnes said. "We sing and we knock on people's doors and wake them up. Might not be the most pleasant thing for some folks but hey, it's Mardi Gras," he said. "On Mardi Gras day if you don't want to hear any music, or pageantry or noise, you're in the wrong town." — AP



Mardi Gras master float painter Raymond J Bowie paints a float at Kern Studios in New Orleans.



Chief of the Mowhawk Hunters Mardi Gras Tribe Tyrone Casby talks to his grandson Aiden, age 4, as he sews beads onto the costume he will be wearing for Mardi Gras.

hers with maps of Africa, scenes of stars and suns and likenesses of President Barack Obama. "For the past few Mardi Gras I have been delivering coconuts up till Mardi Gras morning. Literally carrying coconuts to the floats for people who didn't have time to come and pick their coconuts up," she said.

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2016

Glitter, feathers, paint: New Orleans preps for Mardi Gras

39



A masked couple poses in St Mark's Square on the occasion of the Venice Carnival, in Venice, Italy. — AP

Adult coloring book craze booms in US

Coloring to combat stress? You're not alone. Intricate adult coloring books are the latest lifestyle craze to grip the United States, generating millions of fans, booming sales and libraries falling over themselves to host workshops. Walk into any New York bookstore, and you'll find them artfully laid out on tables or filling entire shelves. Buyers can choose from Sanskrit patterns, urban landscapes, butterflies and flowers all offering "stress relieving patterns." The latest fashion? The swear word version.

Amazon sells hundreds of them, including nine on the top 20 bestseller list. Fans post their finished designs and swap tips on Facebook or Pinterest. Dover Publications, which prints dozens of coloring books, decreed August 2 as National Coloring Book Day, sponsoring parties and hosting an online group discussion board for tips on how to throw a successful bash at home. "It calms us down to be coloring," Linda Turner, a licensed creative arts psychotherapist in Manhattan, explained of the trend born in Europe. "If you are really with it, if you are really in the presence of coloring the colors and just being with the art, it is a wonderful way to support calming and presence and relaxation," she told AFP.

Turner said that while children are willing to explore and experiment, adults are not necessarily so comfortable with their creativity. "These coloring books, they look adult, they look sophisticated... and they are going to create, and they are going to be present in the moment and have fun... In ways that are safe for them," she added. Since October, 19 branches of the New York Public Library in Manhattan, the Bronx and Staten Island have run coloring workshops, some on a weekly basis. "We are providing the space and the material and that allows the patrons to socialize with their friends, or meet people that they would never have met before, or do an art work as a group," said Kelly Yim-Foulke, adult programming specialist at the New York Public Library. She says coloring is easy to do, requires no particular talent and brings back "very fond memories" of being a child.

Therapeutic value

Most of those who take part are senior citizens and women, but coloring lends itself to inter-generational projects that bring together adults, teenagers and children, she said. Yim-Foulke is thinking about extending the program and including music, or perhaps putting



This file photo taken on January 15, 2016 shows man checking out coloring pencils next to adult coloring books at a Barnes and Nobel store in New York. — AFP

on an exhibition. "For patrons, it's low key, you don't need a high level of skills to participate. It is also a great opportunity for intergenerational programs... and it doesn't cost a lot of money for the library to host, which is excellent." Turner is thinking about getting together

with colleagues to create "pop-up bars"—temporary spaces where people can color for free and meet art therapists.

"There is a healing and therapeutic value, because when you are in the process of doing this creation, you are relaxing and de-stressing," she said. "It makes you feel more open and more alive, so the stress reduction aspect of it is therapeutic, but it is not therapy." The trend has extended beyond America's entertainment capital. In Petoskey, a small town in Michigan, the library has just launched a weekly coloring session on Tuesday evenings. "We thought it could be fun to attract people to the library doing different things," director Val Meyerson told AFP.

It is not the first time the United States has fallen in love with adult coloring books. The first of these, "The Executive Coloring Book," came out in 1961. It was followed by "The John Birch Society Coloring Book" and other satirical titles, mocking the world of work, or president John Kennedy. Back then, fighting stress was not the point. Even so, The New York Times predicted the profits to be made from these books of black and white line drawings, often printed on cheap paper but with the power to fire the imagination. — AFP

Lady Gaga to sing at Super Bowl, Grammys

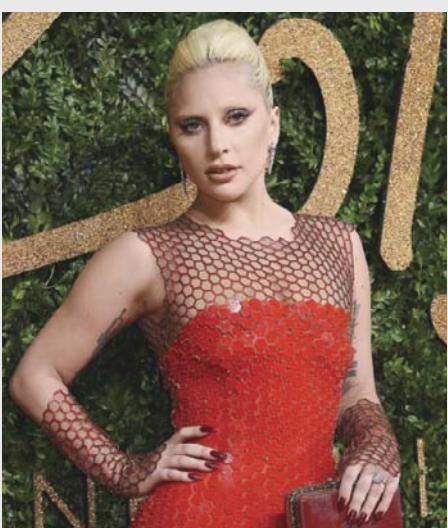
Lady Gaga will perform at two of February's most-watched events as she sings the national anthem at the Super Bowl and leads a tribute to David Bowie at the Grammys. The National Football League announced that Lady Gaga would sing "The Star-Spangled Banner" at Super Bowl 50 on Sunday in San Francisco, where British rockers Coldplay will be the halftime entertainment. The Super Bowl is often the most-watched tel-

evision event each year in the United States, and the league generally seeks out non-controversial performers.

Lady Gaga has increasingly traded her ostentatious stage persona to focus on singing pop classics, performing duets with 89-year-old Tony Bennett. Lady Gaga turns 30 next month and plans to release an album in 2016. While the National Football League rarely picks artists known for controversy, their performances can draw intense scrutiny as when Christina Aguilera botched lyrics in the national anthem in 2011.

Lady Gaga was separately announced yesterday as a performer at the Grammy Awards on February 15 where she will lead a tribute to Bowie. Gaga will perform "a multisensory testament to the icon's incredible artistry and a reflection of his limitless creativity," the Recording Academy said in a statement. The tribute will be directed by Nile Rodgers of Chic fame, a longtime friend of Bowie who produced his disco-infused 1983 album "Let's Dance." Bowie, one of the most influential figures in pop music history who invented glam rock before experimenting in soul, electronica and jazz, died on January 10 after a previously undisclosed battle with cancer.

Lady Gaga with her array of glittery costumes and sexual openness is one of many contemporary stars who claims artistic descent from Bowie. Despite the wide respect for Bowie in the music world, the British artist won only one Grammy during his half-century career, which was for a video. — AFP



In this Nov 23, 2015 file photo, Lady Gaga poses for photographers upon arrival at the British Fashion Awards 2015 in London. — AFP



Monkey decorations are on display for sale at a store in Hong Kong, yesterday. Chinese will celebrate the Lunar New Year on Feb 8 this year which marks the Year of Monkey on the Chinese zodiac. — AP