

Exclusive interview: Mahathir on Mideast, oil



Hop on down, Miffy the rabbit gets her own museum



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SYRIA WARNS SAUDIS, TURKEY AGAINST MILITARY INCURSION

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SYRIANS BRAVE FREEZE AT TURKEY BORDER

BEIRUT: Thousands of Syrians braved the cold and rain yesterday at the Turkish border after fleeing a Russian-backed regime assault on Aleppo in northern Syria that threatens a fresh humanitarian disaster. Syria's government, meanwhile, warned that any foreign soldiers who enter the country would go home "in a wooden coffin", following reports that Saudi Arabia and Turkey, which support rebel forces, could send in troops.

Tens of thousands of people have fled fierce fighting as government forces advanced this week against rebels, severing the opposition's main supply route into the northern metropolis of Aleppo. Turkey's Oncupinar border crossing, which faces Bab al-Salam inside Syria, remained closed yesterday, an AFP correspondent said. Suleyman Tapsiz, governor of Turkey's Kilis province on the border, said at least 70,000 people were heading for the frontier and that the displaced were being accommodated in eight camps on the Syrian side. Turkey - which is already home to between 2-2.5 million Syrians - is also able to take care of 30-35,000 refugees inside Syria, Tapsiz said.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said his country would keep its "open border policy" for Syrian refugees. "We still keep this open border policy for these people fleeing from the aggression, from the regime as well as air strikes of Russia," he said.

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BAB AL-SALAM, Syria: A Syrian man gestures as Syrians gather at the border gate with Turkey yesterday. — AP

RIYADH: With rebel forces facing the prospect of a crushing defeat by Syria's Russian-backed regime, their allies Saudi Arabia and Turkey may send in limited numbers of ground troops, analysts say. Riyadh has left open the possibility of deploying soldiers, saying it would "contribute positively" if the US-led coalition against the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group in Syria decides on ground action. The fate of Saudi-backed Syrian armed opposition groups fighting to topple President Bashar Al-Assad is also a major concern for Riyadh.

Russia, which along with Saudi Arabia's regional rival Iran is a major Assad ally, has meanwhile accused Turkey of "preparations for an armed invasion" of Syria. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called the claims "laughable".

Yesterday, Damascus issued a grim warning to both Riyadh and Ankara against any military intervention on the ground. "Let no one think they can attack Syria or violate its sovereignty because I assure you any aggressor will return to their country in a wooden coffin, whether they be Saudis or Turks," Foreign Minister Walid Mualllem said.

The commander of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard mockingly said Saudi Arabia wouldn't dare send ground troops, and that any such intervention would be suicidal. "I don't think they would dare do that... If they do, they will inflict a coup de grace on themselves," Major General Ali Jafari said. Aleppo province is among the main strongholds of Syria's armed opposition, which is facing possibly its worst moment since the beginning of the nearly five-year war, at a time when peace efforts have stalled.

Continued on Page 13



TAINAN, Taiwan: A rescue team member searches for missing people in a collapsed building after an early morning earthquake yesterday. — AP

14 KILLED AFTER TAIWAN QUAKE FELS BUILDINGS

150 PEOPLE MISSING

TAINAN: Relatives of residents trapped in a 16-storey apartment complex felled by a powerful earthquake in Taiwan that killed 14 people were praying for miracles yesterday as rescuers sought survivors, with more than 150 missing in the quake zone. The cluster of buildings in the historic southern city of Tainan were full of families who had gathered for Lunar New Year celebrations when it collapsed and the death toll is rising. The national disaster response center said a total of 156 people were still out of contact across Tainan and neighboring counties.

Lee Wei-sen, a spokesman for the centre, said those missing had "lost contact in disaster hit areas in Tainan, Chiayi and Yunlin". Tainan bore the brunt of the 6.4 magnitude quake and the disaster zone centres around a residential complex containing almost 100 homes which were toppled. The four blocks at the Wei-kuan complex were left lying on their sides with twisted metal girders exposed and clouds of dust rising from the jumbled concrete.

Among the 12 people killed when the apartment buildings collapsed were a 10-day-old baby girl and two other children, the National Fire Agency said. The other two victims were killed in different parts of the city by falling debris, the agency said. Around 800 troops have been mobilized to help the rescue effort at Wei-kuan. A senior army official at the scene said around 20 people were still trapped in one of the buildings.

Liang Chuan-shun, deputy fire bureau chief for

Tainan, told AFP the search was now "a race against time" and would continue through the night. "Some rooms in the building were rented to students who would not register with the census authorities - we're not sure how many others might still be left within," he said.

Relatives huddled by the ruins late yesterday, hoping for news. "I was woken up by the quake and called my brother's mobile - no-one answered and I feared something was wrong," said Huang Yu-liang who lives near the site and is waiting for news of his brother, sister-in-law and their two children. "I rushed here and saw the collapsed building and I was in shock. Their building is at the bottom (of the wreckage). I am praying for miracles."

Rescue workers told AFP that two of the toppled buildings fell against the other two blocks in the complex, crushing them. Wang Chien-ming came from Yunlin county to the north of Tainan to find his sister and her family. "My sister, her husband and their child live on the third floor and I haven't heard any news since I arrived here. I will keep waiting for as long as it takes."

Officials said there were 256 people registered as living in the complex, which contained 96 apartments. More than 250 have been rescued so far, with more than 40 hospitalized. Interior minister Chen Wei-jean said he feared there may have been more people in the building than usual as family members would have returned to celebrate the Lunar New Year holidays next week.

Continued on Page 13

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LONDON: (From left) Head of Amiri Protocol Sheikh Khaled Al-Abdullah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah, Queen Elizabeth II, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Duke of Edinburgh Prince Philip, and First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah are pictured during HH the Amir's visit to the Queen of the United Kingdom. — Amiri Diwan photo

AMIR SENDS CABLE OF THANKS TO QUEEN ELIZABETH II

LONDON: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable of thanks to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of the friendly United Kingdom and Northern Ireland in which His Highness expressed his deep appreciation and thanks for the luncheon hosted by the Queen in his honor on the occasion of his visit to the Kingdom and his participation in presiding over the fourth conference for donors to help Syria and the region which was hosted by the United Kingdom.

His Highness praised the cordial meeting with the Queen and with His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip, valuing highly the wisdom and prestige of Her Majesty at the international level, which lasted for more than six decades.

His Highness also appreciated this generous gesture which embodied the depth of historical and excellent relations combining the two kind families and those linking the State of Kuwait

with the friendly United Kingdom, wishing Her Majesty and the kind royal family good health and happiness and all progress and prosperity to the United Kingdom and its friendly people.

Effective participation

In other news, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon voiced utmost appreciation for effective participation of His Highness the Amir in London's 'Supporting Syria and the Region' conference. "I would like to personally thank His Highness the Amir and the Kuwaiti people for their generosity in terms of caring for humanitarian causes," Ban said in an exclusive statement to KUNA.

"We all have the right to be proud of what the international community have accomplished last night, as by successfully raising the largest amount of funding for one day and for one cause," Ban said, noting that last night's funds were the largest throughout UN history. He

acknowledged that despite difficult economic challenges faced by some contributing countries; they illustrated an unprecedented image of solidarity and generosity in a bid to ease suffering of the Syrian people.

The conference concluded yesterday and led to pledges of more than \$10 billion, including \$300 million from Kuwait; a co-host state, in aid of the Syrian people. On proposals of sending peacekeeping troops to Syria, Ban said "there has to be peace there first," noting that such proposal is linked to resolutions by the UN Security Council.

A political solution is the only way out, reiterated Ban, pointing out that beefing up airstrikes on Syria was not in favor of supporting a political track. The UN chief saw that the temporary postponing of the Geneva talks was a right call. It is very important to achieve progress on ground for the Syrian people, so that talks can be resumed later this month, he said. — KUNA

BUNDESTAG CHAIRMAN SET TO ARRIVE IN KUWAIT TODAY

BERLIN: Bundestag Chairman Norbert Lammert is due to visit Kuwait today on a mission forecast to substantially boost bilateral relations between Kuwait and Germany, said the State of Kuwait Ambassador here Munther Badr Al-Issa yesterday. Ambassador Issa said the chief legislator would pay the visit in response to an invitation by National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, adding that it would boost mutual cooperation between the two countries at various levels, particularly in the parliamentary field.

The visit is an opportunity to follow up on previous consultations intended to push forward the bilateral parliamentary relations, looked into during Parliament Speaker Ghanem's visit to Germany in April 2014. The Ambassador's declaration coincided with a statement by the Bundestag, affirming the scheduled visit and noting that Lammert would hold talks with the Kuwaiti lawmakers and senior Government officials.

Moreover, he will meet representatives of the Kuwaiti civil society, elite cultural personalities for addressing



Bundestag Chairman Norbert Lammert

issues pertaining to means of upgrading level of the grass-root ties between Germany and Kuwait. Lammert's visit to Kuwait is part of a regional tour, including visits to German troops based in Turkey and Jordan as well as Syrian refugee camps. — KUNA

KUWAIT PRESENTS 'BOOM' SHIP TO CHINESE MUSEUM IN GUANGDONG

GUANGZHOU: Kuwait's General Consul in Guangzhou Malik Al-Wazzan presented a sailing 'Boom' ship to the Diplomatic Affairs Museum in the Guangdong district. The Boom gift, one type of Kuwaiti sailing ships, reflects the strong ties between the two countries marking the 45th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic ties. The event was hosted by the Chinese Foreign ministry in the city

of Guangzhou in an official ceremony.

During the ceremony, Wazzan mentioned that the ship represents an important symbol of Kuwait's history and is used mainly to showcase historic travel, as well as for commercial and transportation activities in the past, in addition to diving, adding that it is also considered one of the main symbol used in Kuwait's official logo. — KUNA



GUANGZHOU: Kuwait's General Consul in Guangzhou Malik Al-Wazzan presents a sailing Boom to the Diplomatic Affairs Museum in the Guangdong district. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Horses are paraded during the 5th International Arabian Horse Festival, held at the Bait Al-Arab Arabian Horse Center. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

INT'L ARABIAN HORSE FESTIVAL HELD UNDER AMIR'S AUSPICES

KUWAIT: Under the auspices of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwait's 5th International Arabian Horse Festival

kicked off Friday night at the Arabian Horse Center in Bait Al-Arab.

His Highness the Amir deputized Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs

Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah to attend the festival. Upon arrival, Sheikh Ali was received by Assistant Undersecretary for Arabian Horse Affairs Sheikha Sarah

Fahad Al-Sabah and members of the committee.

The festival kicked off with the national anthem, followed by a demonstration

of the participating horses in the festival. Awards were presented at the end of the festival for the winners by representative of His Highness the Amir. — KUNA



MINISTRY REGULATES WORK PERMIT ISSUANCE TO CUT EXPAT NUMBERS

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL) has been instructed to regulate the issuance of work permits because the cabinet has noticed an increase in the numbers of expat workers in Kuwait, informed sources said. The ministry has been notified to monitor various companies more closely to check the maximum number of workers they are allowed to recruit, the sources said, adding that the reason behind this survey is to limit the numbers of marginal labor which is growing in contrast with the state plans. "MSAL had

been notified to cut the numbers of expats by being very strict in renewing and transferring work permits," stressed the sources.

Students warned

Minister of Education Dr Bader Al-Essa is expected to give instructions soon to send warning letters to parents of students who have been dispatched on scholarships and did not finish their studies to return the money they received from the government, according to sources. Those citizens would be sued unless they met the ultimatums they had

been given, the sources added. In another educational concern, Minister Essa said that as part of austerity measures, the Ministry of Education will shut down the Educational TV channel because it does not attract much viewership although it had been established to fight private tuitions.

Senior citizens

The parliament's health committee is due to meet today to discuss the elderly social care law, said informed sources, noting that the committee will also discuss some lawmakers' proposals to provide senior citizens with better services.

Local spotlight

DON'T CUT TREES!



By Muna Al-Fuzai

muna@kuwaittimes.net

I am a staunch supporter of any law that protects the environment in Kuwait. So I was happy to see the formation of the so-called environmental police and I believe that their role is important, because we desperately need to preserve the environment, especially as we are in the middle of a desert. Therefore, the cutting down of a single tree without justification should not be allowed.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Interior said the environmental police arrested some expatriates for cutting trees and plants near the airport bridge in Farwaniya. What they were doing is illegal. The police found that the workers were in violation, particularly their method of cutting trees, and the vehicles of the company in charge of the work were parked illegally. Ten workers were arrested and are now in police custody, subject to administrative deportation. So, they earned nothing here and are due to go back home empty-handed.

Moreover, further administrative actions are being taken against the company in line with article 42 /2013 of the environment protection law, as it was found to have harmed the plants, which negatively affected the horticultural landscaping.

The environmental protection law is new in Kuwait and must be respected. Some of its articles include penalties up to death, life imprisonment and fines of about one million dinars for those who commit "serious irregularities" such as importing nuclear waste or storing it in Kuwait. It also includes a ban on smoking in enclosed and semi-enclosed public places and punishing offenders with a KD 100 fine, as well as penalizing those who pluck flowers with a KD 250 fine, and those who dump garbage with a KD 500 fine.

The law was approved by the National Assembly to create a sector in the interior ministry to include environmental police who are legally authorized and entrusted with the task of monitoring and following up all manifestations of abuse of the environment. The law also prohibits hunting, killing or damaging marine flora and fauna and their lands. Violators will be imprisoned for a year or made to pay a fine of not less than KD 500. The law prohibits the use of machines that cause noise, with heavy fines. The law also sets very large fines against giant ships that cause pollution of marine waters.

The law aims to develop projects for the rehabilitation of state sites and encourage Kuwait's transition into a green and sustainably developed country. Although this law criminalizes damage to the environment, some still believe that they can do anything without fear or punishment by the police. They are wrong. The sad thing is the need by some expatriates for quick cash or work that leads them to commit illegal and immoral things, which only lead them to jail and deportation.

So to anyone cutting down trees and destroying the environment - this will not be tolerated anymore.

80 PERCENT OF FRESH GRADUATES IN MENA LEAVING UNIVERSITY UNPREPARED FOR WORKFORCE: SURVEY LESS THAN ONE-THIRD SELECT DEGREES BASED ON CAREERS AVAILABLE

DUBAI: High rates of youth unemployment across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region have been well-documented (23 percent in the Middle East and 24 percent in North Africa, compared with the global average of 13 percent). The issue was once again highlighted in research conducted amongst youth across the region, where just under one-third (29 percent) of young people surveyed were unemployed graduates. This figure was even more accentuated among young women (43 percent of those surveyed were unemployed graduates) and fresh graduates (59 percent of 18-24 year olds were unemployed).

The study was conducted in collaboration with Injaz Al-Arab, Bayt.com - the Middle East's leading job site, and YouGov - a global market research leader - as a part of the Injaz Al-Arab 'Expand Your Horizon' initiative which attempts to combat the high levels of youth unemployment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Uncovering Arab youth's perception of job opportunities and their readiness for employment, the results indicate that young people across the region are leaving higher education unprepared to enter the workforce, with 80 percent of fresh graduates claiming college did not help them identify or apply for suitable job opportunities.

Surveying employed and unemployed graduates and current students across 19 MENA countries, the research revealed that certain sectors in the region are also often overlooked by Arab youth. Indeed, most respondents claimed to be unsure about the availability of jobs particularly in hospitality, aviation and media.

Insufficient knowledge

Overall, two-thirds of respondents claimed to have insufficient knowledge to consider a career in the hospitality, aviation and media sectors and less than half believed they provided good opportunities for career enhancement. The results suggest youth across the region is not aware of the breadth of opportunities available to them in those sectors, with just 12 percent expecting job growth within aviation, 24 percent expecting growth within media and 25 percent expecting growth within hospitality. Needless to say those sectors were also particularly unpopular in which to forge a career, with just 3 percent of fresh

graduates citing their willingness to work in each sector respectively.

In contrast, the majority of respondents still believed that traditional, more well-established sectors such as construction (expected growth - 42 percent) and gas/energy and petrochemicals (expected growth - 35 percent) provide the best employment prospects. This 'old-fashioned' focus is giving them a very limited and limiting view of their opportunities.

The research suggested young people's education choices as well as the region's

women (54 percent).

Ultimately, the results highlight the need for an awareness campaign targeted at youth to better align their perceptions and expectations with the 'reality' on the ground. When speaking with graduates and job seekers about the new growth sectors, the 'competitive salaries' and 'strong long term career prospects' in these industries should be emphasized since these emerged as the main drivers of job choice.

Given youth aged 15-24 years old make up almost 40 percent of the working age

ensure that they are making sound decisions when it comes to their future career paths. While the majority of Arab youth still continue to look to the public sector or the traditional trilogy of medicine, engineering and law for employment, we want to show them the breadth of career options available to them in other industries as well."

Alternative sectors

"The study demonstrated that many young people across the region had never considered alternative sectors such as hospitality, aviation and media as viable career options. Through this survey, we aimed to gain a better understanding of the decision-making process among youth when selecting a degree or a career. Results suggested youth's lack of consideration for a wider range of sectors is often related to lack of information and knowledge. The findings highlight the need for an awareness campaign among youth in the region to inform them of the wide range of opportunities available in these sectors and come to further reinforce our commitment to bridging the gap between young talent and successful and lasting employment in the MENA region," said Joao Neves, Senior Director for Education and Human Resources research, YouGov.

Akef Agrabawi, President and CEO of JA Middle East/ North Africa, INJAZ Al-Arab, comments: "Unemployment is a growing concern in the Middle East for Arab youth. Hence, our research is considered vital as it portrays the big gap between the educational system and the labour market. It also sheds light on the reality of our youth and their lack of awareness when it comes to choosing their careers after graduating. The outcomes of this research would provide more information about the most growing industries and opportunities available for youth.

'Expand Your Horizon' was established as an initiative to reduce youth unemployment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The initiative involves a coalition of global entities from growth industries focused on showcasing employment and internship opportunities available in the region. The program will provide information about these key growth sectors with an aim to empower youth to make more informed decisions about their future career paths and to steer them towards viable work opportunities.



education system are not helping 'combat' the current unemployment crisis, with less than one-third (31 percent) of respondents claiming to have selected their degree based on the perceived career opportunities in that field. Instead, the largest proportion (48 percent) chose a field of study that best fitted their career goals. Just 17 percent selected a degree because it matched their strengths.

Students' decisions

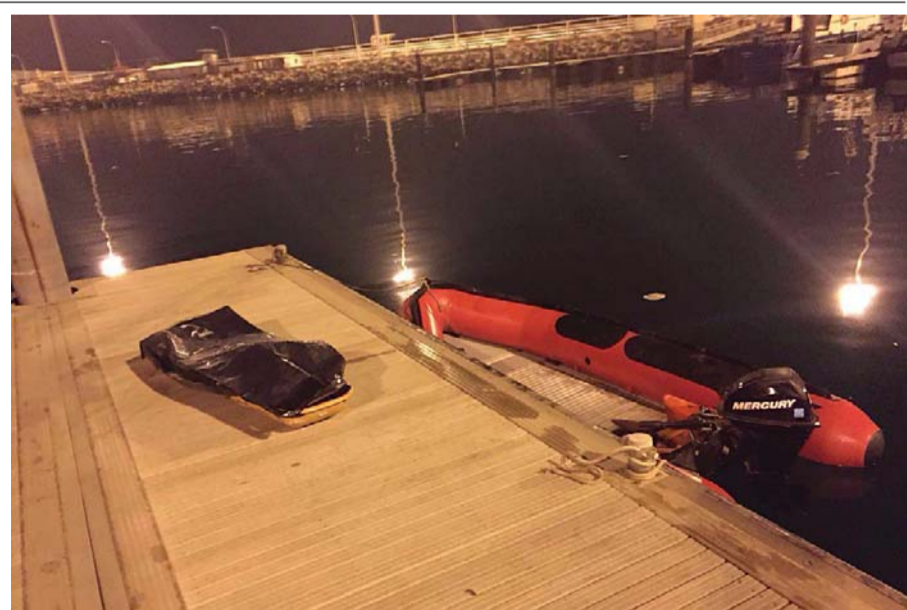
When deciding on a job, salary (59 percent) and long-term career prospects (46 percent) were amongst the most important aspects influencing students' and graduates' decisions. Salary seemed to be of higher importance for men (61 percent) than

population throughout the MENA region, their lack of work readiness and little awareness of the wide range of opportunities available outside more traditional sectors such as construction and gas/energy, gives reason for alarm which calls for urgent action.

"Since its launch, Bayt.com has always strived to provide a realistic overview of the opportunities available within the wide variety of industries across the MENA region. Young graduates and students, as well as their families, have to be educated about the wider career choices and options available to them," said Suhail Masri, Vice President of Sales, and Bayt.com. "Our aim is to provide information about the job market with an aim to empower the youth and



A collapsed ceiling at a building in a Wafra farm, which killed one worker yesterday.



The body of a truck driver waits for criminal evidence officers after it was retrieved from the waters following an accident at Shuaiba port.

CEILING COLLAPSE KILLS WORKER

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A demolition worker was killed yesterday when a ceiling collapsed on top of him in a building that was being torn down in a Wafra farm. The man was pronounced dead on the scene before his body was sent to the coroner. An investigation was opened to determine the circumstances behind the incident.

Driver killed

An Arab truck driver was killed yesterday at Shuaiba port when his truck collided into another at dawn and both trucks plunged into the sea, said security sources, noting that one of the drivers was rescued, while the other was already dead when rescue forces retrieved his body.

Vehicles set ablaze

A fire broke out in an open yard behind a Fintas building, said security sources. Mangaf firemen rushed to the scene and found that the fire had started in some debris including construction material and lumber, spreading to three vehicles that were parked in the yard. Security sources said that an expat sustained minor burns when he tried to save his vehicle.

Garage fire

A fire broke out in garage in Shuwaikh industrial area, said security sources, noting that firemen from Shuwaikh industrial area, Shuhada, Subhan and backup teams

rushed to the scene. They managed to control the fire raging in an area of 300 square meters and prevented it from spreading to adjacent garages and workshops. No casualties were reported.

SOCIETY TACKLES MARINE LIFE PROTECTION

KUWAIT: Kuwait Environment Protection Society (KEPS) has launched seminars, involving the diving team on themes such as 'diving between knowledge and marines sciences' as well as programs on 'green schools' for second term of the current scholastic year.

In a statement to KUNA yesterday, KEPS Secretary General Abdel-Amir Al-Jazzaf said the seminars were part of the environmental awareness programs in the area of preserving the marine environment. The workshop was launched by the society's diving team, with three lectures and a broader session on aquaculture of marine aquarium fish and coral reefs, he added.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Al-Saffar, a lecturer, said he discussed, through his presentation, means of aquaculture of saltwater fish and coral reefs, and problems facing this field, underlining importance of being familiar with the ratio of calcium, magnesium and salt in water. He noted that there is a big possibility of

successful use of the Gulf water in the aquaculture of coral reefs and aquarium fish after conducting certain treatments on water chemistry.

Abdul-Hamid Al-Qaed, another lecturer, stressed need to educate youth on means of aquaculture of sea creatures, for Gulf creatures require suitable atmospheres. On the 'green schools' programs, Jenan Bahzad, director of the society's activities and programs, said about 50 schools registered in these activities, adding that the program in this session included 16 education axes.

It also includes an axis on public health and environment which focuses on external factors affecting health of individuals and the society as well, she noted. Other topics included in the program were climate change and its effects, water rarity, purity of drinking water and environment protection law, she said. —KUNA

SIXTEEN FAKE COMPANIES CLOSED

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Mubarak Al-Kabeer labor department recently closed down 16 fake companies, suspended their files, banned them from sponsoring any expats and ordered deporting laborers registered with them, sources at the Public Authority for Manpower said.

Water cuts

The Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) yesterday announced it will link new freshwater lines with the existing water grid in Wafra, and this would result in cuts in water supplies in some areas today. MEW's Assistant Undersecretary for Water Operation and Maintenance Khalifa Al-Furaj said connecting the new lines would be done at 7:00 am today and this would result in cutting water supply in blocks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 11 and weak water pressure in blocks 10, 9, 6 and 5.

7,670 ILLEGAL RESIDENTS ADJUST STATUS: APPARATUS

KUWAIT: Since 2011 and until January 2016, some 7,670 illegal residents have adjusted their status in Kuwait, the Central Agency for Remedying of the Illegal Residents' Status announced yesterday. The illegal residents have adjusted their status, reverting back to their Saudi, Iraqi, Iranian, Jordanian, and other nationalities, said Colonel Mohammad Al-Wohaib, Head of the status adjustment department of the apparatus. He called on illegal residents, who are yet to adjust their status in the country, to visit the headquarters of the central apparatus to do the necessary measures needed.

Wohaib affirmed that those complying with the law will be given residency visas which could be renewed every five years in addition to healthcare, education and ration cards. Other privileges such as priority in employment after Kuwaiti nationals and facilitating procedures for obtaining driving licenses will also apply upon adjustment of their status, said the official. —KUNA



Health Minister Dr Ali Al-Obaidi is seen in a group photo with emergency medical technicians. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: Health Minister Dr Ali Al-Obaidi honors Dr Ziad Al-Alyan, CEO of the Central Circle Company.

CABINET TO CUT DOWN TREATMENT OVERSEAS EXPENSES: MINISTER LIFE-SAVING MEASURES TRAINING CAMPAIGN OPENED

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The cabinet plans to cut down the expenses of the treatment overseas program through reducing the funds allocated

to dispatch patients for treatment in other countries, Health Minister Dr Ali Al-Obaidi said.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a ceremony held recently at the Avenues Mall

to launch a campaign for training on life-saving measures, Obaidi stressed that the state's general austerity measures must be met in various fields, including the overseas treatment program. He explained that

allowances paid to the first and second companions of each patient sent for treatment abroad were reduced from KD 100 a day to only KD 75 and KD 50. Meanwhile, Obaidi hailed the role played

by the ministry's medical emergency department in training 1,700 people during a two-day course, which was organized in collaboration with the American Cardiology Society.



Health Minister Dr Ali Al-Obaidi inaugurates a campaign for training on life-saving measures at the Avenues Mall.



Health Minister Dr Ali Al-Obaidi is pictured with officials and participants at the event.



The site of the Ministry of Health's campaign for training on life-saving measures at the Avenues Mall.



Dr Ziad Al-Alyan, CEO of the Central Circle Company (left) is pictured with Mohammad Al-Rashidi from the Ministry of Health's Medical Emergency Department.



Health Minister Dr Ali Al-Obaidi listens to a demonstration on emergency medical services' equipment.



Health Minister Dr Ali Al-Obaidi listens to a demonstration on life-saving measures' training.

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CORONARY, HEART DISEASES MAIN DEATH CAUSES IN KUWAIT: OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: Coronary and heart diseases are main causes of fatalities in Kuwait, with proportion reaching 41 percent of overall deaths, a senior official announced yesterday. The announcement was made by Dr Jamal Al-Harbi, the Ministry of Health's Assistant Undersecretary for Back-up Medical Services, on behalf of Health Minister Dr Ali Al-Obaidi, at launch of the marathon, "friends of the heart," involving 1,500 contestants, with 500 children aged under 10. Dr Harbi said the marathon, launched by the Chest Diseases Hospital, is a step in the right direction with respect of implementing the health ministry's plan for boosting awareness of such diseases. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Assistant Undersecretary for Back-up Medical Services Dr Jamal Al-Harbi is seen during the marathon. — KUNA photos

DR MAHATHIR EXPOUNDS ON MIDEAST CRISES, OIL

Kuwait Times exclusive interview

By Dr Serajul I Bhuiyan

PUTRAJAYA: Dr Mahathir Mohamad is the former prime minister of Malaysia and the architect of modern Malaysia. Mahathir bin Mohamad was the leading force in turning Malaysia into a major industrial power in East Asia, and is credited with turning Kuala Lumpur into a modern city with (for a while) the world's tallest building and high-tech industry. Mahathir developed the "Malaysia Can" slogan in 1993 and developed the Vision 2020 program in which he planned to make Malaysia a fully developed country with 70 million people (compared to 20 million in 1998) by the year 2020.

Dr Mahathir focused government energies on expansive infrastructure projects and high-tech development even when Malaysia was suffering from an economic crisis during the late 1990s. Mahathir once called himself a "cyber addict." He was one of the first world leaders to have his own blog and website and said he wanted to create a paperless government in Malaysia.

Israel's creation destabilized the situation and divided the people in the Middle East

He began his career as a medical doctor before entering politics, and remains the country's longest-serving premier. From 1981 to 2003, he held office as prime minister and president of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the leading party of the government coalition still in power today.

Kuwait Times recently met Dr Mahathir in Putrajaya, the administrative capital of Malaysia, to discuss in depth his legacy and Malaysia's future direction as well as his take on the root causes of conflicts in the Middle East, his view of the challenges facing the Gulf and other key concerns of the region.

Kuwait Times: I want to start by asking what is your view of the current situation in the Middle East? What do you see as the main challenges and what is your opinion on how they will play out.

Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad: If you look at the recent history of the Middle East, you will see what is happening today is the result of decisions made 60 years ago with the creation of the State of Israel out of Palestinian land - this destabilized the situation and divided the people in the Middle East. Again, the idea surfaces that they could solve all problems if they become democratic, but they don't understand the workings of a democracy.

They thought that if they become democratic, they all would be in the government, but of course in a democracy, there would be elections and some people will form a government and some people will be in the opposition, but they do not want to be in opposition and do not want to be defeated. All of them want to win, and because of this, democracy has not brought stability and good governance in the region.

We hope to strengthen trade with GCC countries and we can do many things together

Kuwait Times: What is your opinion of the cold war-like tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran and the recently created 34-nation Saudi-led anti-terror coalition?

Dr Mahathir: We don't think confrontation is the way to solve a problem. War is not a solution to any problem. We had an experience of confrontation by Indonesia in the early years of the independence of Malaysia. Of course, they used force in the first instance, but ultimately we solved the problem of confrontation by diplomatic solutions and dialogue. We cannot treat or see any country as our enemy and if you do, they will see you as their enemy and then you have to be against each other and that is very negative, and is not productive at all. Yes, there are differences between countries,

The price of oil at \$35 today is much higher than what it originally costs. It is now much more reasonable than before

but I think problems and differences can be minimized or solved by dialogue or diplomacy.

Kuwait Times: What is your view on the GCC's shift toward the East in terms of trade? What do you foresee in terms of GCC or MENA relationship with East Asia moving forward?

Dr Mahathir: GCC countries are oriented to the West and most Arab relationships are more with the West. There are many Western experts working there in very important positions. They are not trading much with us because GCC countries are mainly importing countries. They do not produce goods for export. It is a one-way trade. But in the East, we want to export and import and we want to buy and sell things but many other things we sell can also be imported from the West.

So the GCC's trade with the East is very minimal. But I think there is a great potential for them to do more trade with the East because now more of their people are travelling East, simply because they are not welcome by the West anymore due to security reasons.

A country should not depend on only selling oil, but must diversify its economy for sustainable development

Kuwait Times: What are your expectations for future GCC/Malaysia relations?

Dr Mahathir: We hope to strengthen trade with GCC countries and we can do many things together. Malaysia is a trading nation. We want to establish more markets for ourselves. At the same time, we want to source a lot



Dr Mahathir Mohamad

of things from other countries. But of course, GCC does not produce much for trading purposes. Maybe now they are trying to industrialize, so we can have some increase in trade with them and even increase in investments.

OPEC is a kind of monopolistic organization which is not good for the economy

Kuwait Times: The recent decline in oil prices has affected not only the Gulf and all other oil producing nations, but the global economy too. What is your view on the matter with regards to the causes and how do you foresee the longer term impact, especially for Middle East and other oil producing countries?

Dr Mahathir: The price of oil has always been quite artificial. Of course, it responds of supply and demand. The price of the oil had gone up beyond the cost of production. It is not sustainable. The moment the supply of oil increases, the price falls. Some countries used to earn high income from oil because of world demand and its high price in the past. Now, due to the oil price drop, those countries are suffering and will suffer more if the price drops further. It is just a question of adjustment. The price of oil at \$35 today is much higher than what it originally costs. It is now much more reasonable than before. Of course, some countries will suffer from the low oil price in the world market because their develop-

ment budget depends on the proceeds from only oil. They must feel burnt with the low oil price at this moment. But a country should not depend on only selling oil, but must diversify its economy for sustainable development in the future.

In order for economic development, one needs to train future leaders

Kuwait Times: What is Malaysia's view of OPEC policies and its future direction?

Dr Mahathir: Even though Malaysia is an oil-producing country, Malaysia has never been a member of OPEC and at one time, we were an observer. OPEC is a kind of monopolistic organization which is not good for the economy. To fix the oil price is always bad and it has a nitty-gritty impact on the economy. It should allow the market process.

Kuwait Times: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah of Kuwait has initiated a KD 2 billion (\$6.64 billion) project to enhance leadership qualities among the young generation and aspires to develop Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Kuwait and support Kuwaiti entrepreneurs. What is your advice to enhance and make this project a success based on your experience as prime minister and chairman of Perdana Leadership Foundation in Malaysia?

Dr Mahathir: It is a good move for Kuwait for its development vision. In order for economic development, one needs to train future leaders, but we must give them the right kind of training, because if you give people the wrong kind of training, you will get very bad results. Be reminded that absolute power corrupts absolutely. When you train people, you are giving them tools of power and you must give the right kind of training where they will not abuse the power in the future.

NOTE: Dr Serajul I Bhuiyan is a professor at the Department of Mass Communications at Kuwait University

FIRST KUWAITI OFFICER GRADUATES FROM NATO DEFENSE COLLEGE

ROME: Major Saud Al-Amer is the first Kuwaiti officer to graduate from the Senior Course of the NATO Defense College (NDC) on Friday. The graduation ceremony was attended by Mohammad Al-Hajeri, the representative of Kuwait Ambassador to Italy Sheikh Ali Khaled Al-Sabah, according to a statement by Kuwait Embassy. Major Amer received a graduation diploma from the NDC Commandant Major General Janusz Bojarski.

Hajeri congratulated Major Amer on the diploma and welcomed the growing cooperation between Kuwait and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the field of military education and training which started in 2010. He said that the College plans to open a training center in Kuwait, the first of its kind in the Middle East. The plan to open the center under supervision of Kuwait National Security Bureau comes in recognition of Kuwait's leading role in regional and international security and stability, he noted.



ROME: Major Saud Al-Amer graduates from the Senior Course of the NATO Defense College. — KUNA

The course is part of NATO's major educational outreach to Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) countries and partners from the broader region of the Middle East. It brought together 76 high-ranking military and civilian participants, representing 31 countries from across the Atlantic Alliance and partner countries from a diverse geographical, cultural and professional spectrum. Over the years the Course has welcomed participants from Partner countries such as, Algeria, Georgia, Kuwait, Mauritania, Mongolia, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia and the United Arab Emirates. — KUNA



Dr Abdulwahab Al-Dhefiri

STUDENTS' RESEARCH IMPORTANT IN COMMUNITIES DEVELOPMENT: OFFICIAL

WASHINGTON: Director of Kuwait Cultural Office in Washington, DC Dr Abdulwahab Al-Dhefiri met Friday with a group of Kuwaiti graduate students enrolled in US universities and discussed with them their upcoming academic plans. Scientific research is important in communities' development, especially when conducted by male/female students at universities and colleges abroad, Dr Dhefiri stated to KUNA after meeting with the graduate students. These graduate students are set to conduct a number of scientific researches and studies of great importance to the Kuwaiti society, he said, adding that these studies will help in widening the students' experiences and prospects about their majors.

The Kuwaiti official also pointed out the benefits of conducting such researches and studies for these students when they return home, and use the outcomes of their studies in improving the Kuwaiti education and labor sectors, and forming a solid multi-faceted research and scientific base in the country. Meanwhile, Dr Dhefiri mentioned that the cultural office, in an unprecedented step, decided to sponsor this group of Kuwaiti graduate students; Tefla Al-Ajmi, Hind Al-Qaderi, Osama Al-Falah, and Khaled Al-Khashram, who are majoring in medicine, dentistry, management, and law, to help them achieve their goals. He added that the students will be taking part in series of conferences and hold a number of academic symposiums in the forthcoming period. — KUNA

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Crime

Report

MAN ARRESTED FOR IMPORTING KD 300,000 WORTH OF METH

KUWAIT: A US citizen was recently arrested with the possession of KD 300,000 worth of methamphetamine (meth), which were hidden in a parcel he imported by airmail, said security sources. The suspect had been practicing his illegal trade and delivering the drugs to his clients for a while, the sources noted. Case papers indicate that narcotics police were tipped off with information concerning the suspect's activity. After placing him under close surveillance for weeks, during which he received the parcel and stored at his house, detectives raided the place and found 20 kilograms of meth, as well as eight large and 150 small bags full of the same drug. A case was filed and the suspect was referred to relevant authorities.

Search for thieves

A citizen reported that after withdrawing KD 5,000 from a bank's branch, he visited a diwaniya in Ali Sabah Al-Salem and stayed there for a while. After he came out, he found that unknown persons had broken his vehicle open and stolen the money, said security sources. Separately, a female citizen reported that KD 1,700 in cash were stolen from her vehicle when she left it outside a private hospital in Hawalli.

Landmine found

A citizen reported finding a landmine at Al-Salmi desert, said security sources, noting that a special bomb squad headed to the scene to find out that soil erosion had uncovered the mine. They dealt with it accordingly.

'Unstable' wife charged

Getting fed up with his wife's repeated practical jokes, a citizen filed a complaint against her, accusing her of being mentally unstable. He said that she had so often accused him of intending to blow off a mosque whenever she had a problem with him. Detectives had recently received a report about the man's alleged plan. Heading to the scene, policemen found out that it was a hoax report and the man provided them with a copy of his wife's medical report at the psychiatric diseases hospital.

Accident

A young man narrowly escaped death when he lost control over his vehicle when he became drowsy while driving. The vehicle fell into a ditch along Subbiya highway, but luckily for the man, he escaped with minor injuries.

Salesman mugged

An Asian cosmetic salesman reported that four unidentified robbers dressed in sportswear stormed his store in Regea, assaulted him and stole KD 2,000 worth of makeup and perfumes.

Sexual assault

A Filipina woman recently reported that an Egyptian man raped her after he called asking to meet and settle some old disputes. The woman said that the suspect took her to an apartment in Khaitan where he sexually assaulted her. But when police summoned the man for questioning, he denied all charges. He said that the woman owes him KD 970 and argued that she had made up the accusation to avoid paying him. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Forgery

A citizen was recently arrested for attempting to stamp his wife and son's passports on entry through Al-Salmi land border exit while they were not actually accompanying him, said security sources. Case papers indicate that on arrival from Saudi Arabia, the man claimed that his wife could not step down from the vehicle. When asked to roll down the heavily tinted windows, neither his wife nor son were found to be inside the vehicle. Further investigations are ongoing. —Al-Rai, Al-Anbaa



KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait participated in the Kuwait Yacht Show 2016, which was held recently under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

GOVT TO CUT DOWN COMMITTEES, MEETINGS

KUWAIT: The cabinet has asked the Civil Service Commission to reduce the number of government committees to a minimum, and cut meetings outside working hours unless it was absolutely necessary. This would help trim down the cost of forming committees and holding meetings that reaches KD 50 million annually, a government source said. They added that State Audit Bureau reports have shown that senior government officials were receiving 'large amounts of money' for registering in government committees without necessarily attending their meetings. —Al-Jarida



الانبا

Al-Anbaa

DISGRACE NO LONGER A DISGRACE

By Saleh Al-Shayji

"Your soul is full of holiness, your eyes bring hope, your hands beget work, your words are obey-able orders, our soil got more holy when your men stepped on it...much love, appreciation and reverence to you from a resistant people and a mighty army". The above were the words famous Syrian comedian Duraid Lahham said in presence of the Iranian Supreme Leader in Iran. Does the Syrian Duraid have the right to say such words to a man with whom he has no blood or fellowship relations?

Duraid could have been right if he said such words to his own president, a Syrian soldier or even a juice peddler in the Hameediya market in Damascus. But to say such words about a man leading a people he (Duraid) does not belong to, poses severe violation of the Iranian people's rights, who ought to praise their own ruler. Such praise is not the business of a Syrian guest warmly received and generously rewarded because he knows nothing about the sufferings of that people - he never visited that ruler's prisons and torture centers. He never visited the poor neighbor-

hoods, saw the chicken coops inhabited by some of his holiness' subjects or the millions displaced by his regime.

Well, Duraid, you missed noticing a lot of things while in his holiness' land. I am not criticizing Duraid in person here because he is free to say whatever he wants to whomever he wishes. Yet, he has no right to speak for the Syrian saint, claiming that it became more holy by being stepped upon by the supreme leader's men's feet.

Well, Duraid, Syrian soil becomes holy under the feet of Syrians. The feet of little Syrian girls carrying their bags to schools, of Syrian female farmers ploughing lands and harvesting grapes, apples and peaches, by the feet of Syrian laborers and construction workers. The Syrian land became more holy by the steps of each and every Syrian and did not need to be stepped upon by Iranians to gain more holiness.

Did your parents' graves become more holy by Iranian footsteps? Oh, dear Duraid, strangers never make lands more holy!

—Translated by Kuwait Times



KUWAIT: Could the National Assembly approve increases for visa fees soon? —KUNA photo

DEPENDENCY VISA FEES INCREASE WAITING PARLIAMENT'S APPROVAL

140,000 LABORERS ARRIVE THIS SUMMER FOR MEGA PROJECTS

KUWAIT: A foreigner in Kuwait will soon be forced to pay KD 200 to issue a dependency visa for his wife and KD 150 for each child according to proposed recommendations to increase residency fees in Kuwait. The new fees are considered a 100 percent increase compared to the current charges which include KD 100 for the wife and children each.

Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah recently approved the new proposed new fees, as well as others to increase traffic fines, said informed sources. Lists containing the proposed increases will be submitted to the parliament within a few weeks to place them on its agenda pending discussion and approval, said the sources who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The sources did not give a specific date as of when the proposals would be sent to the National Assembly or are expected to be debated there. If passed, it would be the first time in Kuwait's history that MPs have approved increasing fees collected from expats to issue visas.

Nonoil income

The sources explained that due to the fall in oil prices, the new fees have been set in view of the state's plans to

cut down expenses and increase the fees collected for services that expats enjoy. This includes increasing the fees collected for residency visa and traffic fines, which have been unchanged for over 40 years, said the sources, noting that the current traffic fines have failed to deter law violators.

The sources meanwhile said that the new fees include paying KD 300 for a dependency visas issued by an expat for his parent; a fee that currently stands at KD 200. The expats working in the public or private sectors already have to receive a minimum of KD400 monthly pay in order to be qualified to apply for a dependency visa to bring his wife, child or parent to Kuwait.

Meanwhile, the sources indicated that a 100 percent increase is proposed for visa renewal charges, becoming KD 20 instead of KD 10 for all types of visas. As for visit visas, the sources said that the fee would jump from KD 2 to KD 30 a month, while the visas would only be renewed for a maximum of three months.

Traffic fines

As far as traffic fines are concerned, the sources explained that the proposal suggests collecting KD 100 for jumping the red traffic lights, KD 40 for exceeding the speed limit by 20

kilometers, KD 60 for exceeding it by 30 kilometers, KD 80 for exceeding it by 40 kilometers and KD 100 for exceeding it by 50 kilometers. "Most fines have been doubled, as those that currently cost KD 10-15 would cost KD 20-30," added the sources.

140,000 workers

In other news, Secretary general of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (SCPD) Dr Khaled Mahdi said that 140,000 laborers are expected to enter Kuwait this summer to execute projects included in the 2016-2017 development plan, including biofuel plant's project which alone requires over 40,000 laborers.

The SCPD can easily predict the numbers of expats expected to enter Kuwait through assessing the numbers needed per project, Mahdi added. The recruited laborers would leave Kuwait once the projects they work in are concluded, Mahdi stressed.

Commenting on the efforts exerted to increase the number of national labor in the private sector, Mahdi said that several meetings had been held with Kuwait University officials to create a connection between the outcome of the educational process and the local market's needs. —Al-Rai

القوس

Al-Qabas

THE DAY WE FAILED TO LEARN FROM IT

By Ahmad Al-Sarraf

Theoretically, Arabs have one enemy in the region, but we lately created other enemies such as Iran, and some added to that by deepening their hatred to Iran, in exchange of being more accepted to Israel, which became closer to being a friend than an enemy.

Our differences with Iran are not historic like our disputes with Israel, and it was historically a fluctuating difference every now and then, and from one Arab country to another, as well as from one behavior to another, and the source of every difference is the ignorance of each side with the circumstances and nature of the other, though I lean towards believing that Iran knows about the 22 Arab countries more than what those states know about it.

I studied in Kuwait schools, which its curricula during my days, were more developed and open, and despite that I do not remember that I red one line that is near positive about them, not in geography, weather, strength, weakness or history. So it was natural to point negatively towards them without a known reason.

But as for Israel, many look at it as a political and religious enemy and not as a civilized danger, and this is a grave mistake. Despite the fact that struggle with it did not stop one day, we remained with our ignorance of all what it represents, and we remained for 70 years, and still, do not know anything about it, and we did not learn anything from it.

Israel defeated us in all fields, military, science and civilization, and despite that we refused to find out the reason of its clear supremacy over us, but our description of it as the deformed entity did not stop one day, so what will the case be if it was a full entity!

Israel committed itself to democracy since the day it was established, and it still refuse to even talk about it, much less follow it. Israel allowed its people to form whatever they like of parties and we still curse its systems.

Israel gave the minorities of its citizens rights, the majority of Arab countries citizens do not dream off, also religious freedoms in it exceed those in any Arab or Muslim country. Israel paid attention to science, and spent much on research, and we are still preoccupied with the truth about the benefits of drinking or treatment with camel urine. Israel succeed in integrating those who migrated to it from more than 50 countries, and created one people out of them, and we failed in creating an army out of people whose roots are way deep into history.

Israel knew order and lines from day one, and we are still trying to find out the meaning of the two words.

Two of its prime ministers were sent to prison for corruption, and we are still discussing how to convict the large thieves among us. Israel developed its technologies and entered the agricultural, industrial and military development fields, and became an advanced state, and we became at the end of the march in every field.

Israel succeeded in enrolling its companies in world bourses, and we are thinking about selling our assets. The list is long, and the pains linger with it.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

الانبا

Al-Anbaa

WINNERS AND LOSERS IN IS DISAPPEARANCE

By Sami Al-Nisf

Reviewing the historically unprecedented global war against the magical, illogical and irrational IS organization shows that the fiercer it is fought, the stronger and wider it spreads, to the extent that it is becoming an empire on which the sun never sets. This organization that claims defending Islam and Sunnis recently had a suicide bomber blow himself up at the Maasheeg presidential palace in Aden after it assassinated its governor and chief of intelligence, which coincided with taking over the largest parts of Shabwa city by its sister organization. Who on earth funds and arms them?!

Well, if it ever happens that IS and its sister organizations are eradicated forever, the winners will be entire mankind whose civilized achievements, monuments as well as Islam itself have been disfigured by IS' brutal practices, although IS claims to represent true Islam. It also destroyed immortal human monuments in Nineveh and Palmyra and wrought considerable damage to tolerant Islam.

Winners from eradicating IS also include Sunnis who have been displaced in the millions, while we never hear of assassinating any of suspicious IS leaders. Winners also include Arabs, because after all and before the whole world, IS is an Arab organization led by Arabs that has a majority of Arab followers. Winners also include the Middle East countries and peoples who are being destroyed and are being nationally, racially, religiously, doctrinally and socially torn apart by IS operations. IS has been also destroying the tolerant peaceful coexistence and historic achievements of regional peoples over thousands of years.

IS, and its sister organizations including Zaraqawi's, has created monstrous militias such as Qais Al-Khazaali, the supervisor of Iraq's Popular Militia, who admitted in a televised interview that his militias have destroyed 80 percent of the housing units in Ramadi and 100 percent of the infrastructure while liberating his own country's cities, which heightens sectarian tension and eventually serves IS agenda. History might have also seen a similar statement made by Hulagu after destroying Baghdad.

On the other hand, the losers if IS vanishes will be enemies of Arabs, Islam, peace and humanity worldwide, as well as warlords and arms manufacturers, radicals, extremists and some psychos who find pleasure that satisfies their sick souls that are full of hatred for others and lust for self-destruction because of their unsound upbringing amidst IS crimes and genocide.

Finally, when Kurdish troops reached Saddam's grave over a year ago and dug it up, they did not find any remains. The same happened when the popular militias took photos with the empty grave a short while ago, which raises many questions about Saddam's fate and the silly staged execution that was videotaped with one mobile camera before unknown witnesses that eventually made him an Arab hero and a Muslim martyr, while he was Arabs' and Islam's prime enemy. What is the truth and where is Saddam now?!

—Translated by Kuwait Times

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2016

TRUMP RETURNS TO DEBATE STAGE; RUBIO TO FACE ONSLAUGHT

Page 9



Suicide bomber kills eight, injures dozens in Pakistan

Page 11



SEOUL: A TV screen shows file footage about North Korea's rocket launch plans at Seoul Railway Station. — AP

N KOREA SAYS ROCKET LAUNCH EARLY AS TODAY

SATELLITE LAUNCH SLAMMED BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

SEOUL: North Korea's widely-condemned launch of a long-range rocket could happen within a matter of hours, after Pyongyang shortened and brought forward the start of the launch window to today morning.

An updated notification sent by Pyongyang to UN agencies yesterday a copy of which was released by the South Korean government-said the launch would now take place between February 7-14. The initial window announced by the North on Tuesday had been February 8-25.

The planned satellite launch has been slammed by the international community as a disguised ballistic missile test that amounts to another serious violation of UN resolutions, following the North's nuclear test last month. The brief updated notice sent by Pyongyang offered no reason for the date change.

"The Seoul government believes that (North Korea) completed its launch preparation, such as fuelling the rocket after erecting it on a launch pad after considering various circumstances," South Korean news agency Yonhap quoted a defence ministry official as saying late yesterday. South Korea's military was on alert and ready to respond, Yonhap reported another ministry official as saying.

Any launch would now take place before the February 16 birthday of late leader Kim Jong-Il, the father of current leader Kim Jong-Un. The North insists its space programme is purely scientific in nature, but the United States and allies, including South Korea, say its rocket launches are aimed at developing an inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM) capable of striking the US mainland. UN sanctions prohibit North Korea from any launch using ballistic missile technology.

Superbowl launch?
While the prospective launch dates were changed, there was no amendment to the 7:00am-midday (2230-0330 GMT) daily window. That means the rocket could blast off during the biggest annual US sports event of the year—the Superbowl, which kicks off at 8:00am Monday, Pyongyang time.

Predictions of an imminent launch have been bolstered by recent satellite images of fuel tankers at the Sohae satellite launch complex in northwestern North Korea. The US and its allies have warned Pyongyang it would pay a heavy price for pushing ahead with the launch, but analysts say the North's timing has been carefully calculated to minimise the repercussions.

With the international community still struggling to find a united response to the North's January 6 nuclear test, the rocket launch-while

provocative is unlikely to substantially up the punitive ante.

North Korea last launched a long-range rocket in December 2012, placing an Earth observation satellite in orbit. Western intelligence experts said that satellite had never functioned properly, and argued that this proved the mission's scientific veneer was a sham.

Same 2012 carrier
The flight plan coordinates for the upcoming launch are almost identical to those followed by the three-stage Unha-3 rocket launched in 2012 — suggesting the same carrier would be used again. The separated first stage was predicted to fall in the Yellow Sea off the west coast of South Korea, followed by a second stage splashdown in the Philippine Sea.

Despite Pyongyang's bellicose claims to the

contrary, the North is still seen as being years away from developing a credible inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM). Orbital rocket launches, experts say, are relatively straightforward compared to the challenge of mastering the re-entry technology required to deliver a payload as far away as the United States.

The US-led campaign to impose harsh new sanctions on North Korea over its latest nuclear test have faced opposition from the North's main diplomatic protector, China. On Friday, both US President Barack Obama and South Korean President Park Geun-Hye spoke by phone with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, urging him to back punitive measures against Pyongyang. While infuriated by North Korea's refusal to curb its nuclear ambitions, China's overriding concern is avoiding a collapse of the regime in Pyongyang and the possibility of a US-allied unified Korea on its border. —AFP

SOMALI, AU TROOPS RETAKE KEY PORT FROM ISLAMISTS

MOGADISHU: Somali government troops backed by African Union peacekeepers yesterday recaptured the key port of Merka from Shebab insurgents, just one day after the Islamists swept into the city, the army and residents said.

"The Somali forces and AMISOM peacekeepers secured control of Merka again and now the situation has returned to normal," a Somali military official, Abdirisak Mohamed, told AFP by telephone from Mogadishu. "There was brief exchange of gunfire, but

the (Shebab) militants have fled."

He said "several" Shebab fighters and one Somali soldier were killed in the clashes, and "the security forces are now conducting clearing operations inside town." A resident reached by telephone said the AU force, known by its acronym AMISOM, used tanks to recapture the port, and four civilians were killed after they were caught in the fighting.

"Four people died in our neighbourhood and two others were wounded, I can

see AMISOM and Somali troops returned to the city now and they are conducting security operations", Muhidin Osman said. Another resident, Shamsa Moalim, said "Shebab fighters pulled out of the town after putting up slight resistance, the Somali forces and AMISOM are back". "There are civilian casualties but I don't know the number", she added.

AU troops had fled the city, the state capital of Lower Shabelle, as heavily armed Shehab fighters swept in with black Islamist

flags on Friday, residents and local authorities said, in one of the most dramatic reverses for the multi-national force in its nearly decade-long battle against the Shebab.

Brazen raids
The Al Qaeda-linked Shebab said on its website that one of its leaders, Sheikh Mohamed Abu-Abdallah, addressed hundreds of people gathered at the regional government headquarters in Merka after the seizure on Friday. "The enemy has lost and running away, they are fleeing from the Islamic regions," it quoted him as saying.

Residents said earlier yesterday that the Shebab had begun imposing Sharia law on the city. The historic port, some 100 kilometers south of the capital Mogadishu, was captured in August 2012 by African Union troops after four years under Islamist control. The Shebab are fighting to overthrow the internationally-backed government in Mogadishu, which is protected by 22,000 AU troops.

The group has lost ground since being routed from Mogadishu in 2011, but continues to stage regular shooting and suicide attacks, and in recent months has staged a series of brazen raids on AU bases.

Last month they stormed a Kenyan army base at El-Adde in southwest Somalia, in the latest incident of an AMISOM base being overrun, before retreating. In September, Shebab fighters stormed a Ugandan AMISOM base in Janale district, southwest of Mogadishu in the Lower Shabelle region.

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, speaking at an AU summit last month, called for more "resources for the forces in Somalia so that AMISOM can have robust power on land, air and the sea." AU troops have been hampered by a lack of air power-including attack helicopters-leaving their bases often isolated and supply lines vulnerable to attack by Shehab gunmen controlling surrounding rural areas. —AFP



MERKA: This file photo taken on January 19, 2008 shows a man walking past the old buildings of the Southern Somalia's port town. —AFP

HUNDREDS MORE CANDIDATES TO CONTEST IN IRAN ELECTION

DUBAI: Iran's powerful election vetting body, the Guardian Council, decided yesterday to allow hundreds more candidates to take part in a parliamentary election this month, in a move that rekindled the hopes of reformists and moderates.

A power struggle between Iranian conservatives and reformists has intensified since the removal of international economic sanctions against Tehran following its nuclear deal with the West. Hardliners fear Iranian voters will now be more inclined to reward reformist candidates. Former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, a close ally of Iran's moderate President Hassan Rouhani, welcomed the decision.

"The good news for the disqualified candidates is that 25 percent of them have now been allowed to run in the election ... so we will experience a competitive election in February," Rafsanjani was quoted as saying by the Fars news agency. In a setback for Rouhani and Rafsanjani last month, the Guardian Council, composed of clerics and jurists, had excluded thousands of parliamentary hopefuls and four-fifths of candidates for the body which chooses Iran's next Supreme Leader.

But the Council said yesterday it had approved an extra 1,500 parliamentary candidates for the election. It was still looking into complaints from candidates disqualified from standing for the 88-member Assembly of Experts, which will pick a replacement for Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Iran's ILNA news agency reported yesterday that Rafsanjani's son and daughter of Rafsanjani, Mohsen and Fatemeh, both considered reform-minded, were still barred from running.

Ending isolation

Last week Rafsanjani, who was Iran's president from 1989 to 1997, criticised the disqualification of reformist and moderate candidates and accused the Guardian Council which has close ties to Ayatollah Khamenei, of eliminating rivals. Although most of those disqualified belong to the reformist and moderate factions, a few hardliners such as lawmaker Hamid Rasaei have also been barred from running. —Reuters



NEW HAMPSHIRE: In this Feb 2, 2016, file photo, Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton speaks at a campaign event. —AP

TRUMP RETURNS TO DEBATE STAGE; RUBIO TO FACE HEAVY ONSLAUGHT

MANCHESTER: An aggrieved Donald Trump returns to the debate stage hoping to find his way into the winner's circle in New Hampshire, while a rising Marco Rubio looks to fend off an onslaught of attacks from his rivals.

The debate comes three days before New Hampshire's primary, a contest that will likely determine whether some Republican candidates for president in an already shrinking field will move on or be forced to abandon their White House hopes.

While Trump, a billionaire who is largely self-funding his campaign, has enough money to stay in the race, anything short of a win in New Hampshire would be a blow to his White House bid. He's held a comfortable lead in national polls, as well as surveys in Iowa and New Hampshire for months, but had to settle for second in the kick-off caucuses.

"I think we should have come in first, to be honest with you, a lot of things happened there. A lot of things happened," Trump said Friday during a rally in South Carolina. The real estate mogul skipped the final debate before the Iowa caucuses, but has committed to more traditional campaign activities in the days before New Hampshire's primary.

The edge
Rubio's third-place finish in Iowa gave him the edge in the crowded field of candidates viewed as more mainstream alternatives to the bombastic Trump and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, the fiery conservative who won the caucuses. As a result, Rubio has faced a flurry of criticism in recent days, with his rivals questioning his experience and casting him as overly scripted.

"He's a great guy, but he's not a leader," said former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush. New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie has repeatedly derided Rubio as a "bubble boy" whose staff protects him from having to answer tough questions about his record and what he would do as president. Bush, Christie and Ohio Gov. John Kasich have largely staked their presidential hopes on New Hampshire. Those who don't have a standout finish in New Hampshire will face swift pressure from within the Republican Party to step aside.

Also fighting to stay relevant Saturday will be retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson. After a disappointing showing in Iowa, he took time off the campaign trail and hasn't been a major presence in New Hampshire. Cruz carried Iowa with the support of the evangelical voters that hold significant sway in the state. In New Hampshire, he's making an appeal for support from libertarian voters who previously helped former US Rep. Ron Paul pull off respectable finishes here.—AP



SOUTH CAROLINA: Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump gestures as he speaks at a campaign rally. — AP

WINNING TRUST BACK: HILLARY'S NEW HAMPSHIRE CHALLENGE

TRYING TO CONVINCE VOTERS SHE'S AUTHENTIC

PORTSMOUTH: The private email server. The Wall Street ties. The evolving policy positions. The speaking fees. The concerns vary, but when it comes to Hillary Clinton, it seems the Democratic presidential candidate is having problems earning the public's trust.

Ahead of Tuesday's New Hampshire primary, the former secretary of state is trying to convince voters that she is authentic. Rival Bernie Sanders is stepping up criticism of her financial industry connections and questioning whether she is a true liberal.

His message connects with younger people. They seem less interested in Clinton's pitch as a "progressive who gets things done" than in Sanders' call to break up big financial institutions and expand social programs as part of a "political revolution." "I have a harder time believing her sincerity," said Suzanne Roberge, 32, of Rochester, who attended a Sanders rally. "I don't have as much trust," Roberge added: "She's changed her mind on different issues. Bernie Sanders has been so consistent."

Added Sheila Kelley, 59, of Manchester, a Sanders supporter: "She doesn't seem truthful. It seems like she's trying to be everything to everyone." Questions about Clinton's authenticity probably hurt her in Iowa, where she squeaked out a narrow victory over the Vermont senator in Monday's leadoff caucuses.

'Honest and trustworthy'

Democratic caucus-goers who cared most about candidates who are "honest and trustworthy" or who "care about people like me" overwhelmingly supported Sanders, according to precinct polls conducted for

The Associated Press and television networks. Clinton performed far better with people who listed experience or electability as a top concern.

Eight in 10 young people surveyed in Iowa said honesty or caring about people like them are the top qualities for which they are looking. The surveys of people entering the Democratic caucuses found that Sanders had over 80 percent support from people 29 or younger. Clinton was backed by nearly 70 percent of those 65 and older.

In New Hampshire, too, Sanders may have an advantage with the young. "She's the best alternative to Bernie," said Danielle Adcock, 20, of Manchester, who supports Sanders. But she added: "She takes money from Wall Street." In a Quinnipiac University poll in December, Clinton rated highly among all registered voters for her experience and leadership qualities, but 59 percent said she was not honest and trustworthy.

Most Democrats in that survey did say Clinton was honest and trustworthy. But a Washington Post/ABC News poll conducted in January suggests she may have cause for concerns there, too. That poll found that while Clinton had a substantial lead over Sanders among Democrats, she lagged behind him on the issue of trust: 48 percent said Sanders was more honest and trustworthy, compared with 36 percent for Clinton.

Asked about matters of trust during a CNN town-hall event in New Hampshire, Clinton spoke about the "velocity of attacks" she has endured from Republicans. "They don't give it up," she said. "So I know that I have to really demonstrate as clearly as I

can who I am, what I stand for, and what I've always done. I've always been guided by the same values. I have always listened to people. And I've always worked as hard as I could to produce results for people."

Plea to the young

Clinton later made a direct plea to young people at a party dinner, saying she was glad they were involved, whether or not they supported her. She noted that "you are bringing energy, ideas and urgency to our process." Sanders has fed some people's concerns about trusting Clinton while picking his fights carefully.

For example, he gave her a pass on her past email practices. But he has gone after her for taking Wall Street money, letting a political action committee raise millions to help her and for not being liberal enough, in his view. He has called her out for claiming to be a moderate earlier in the campaign, only to joust with him now over who's the true "progressive." The shift in rhetoric may raise questions about who and what Clinton really is.

"One of the things we should do is not only talk the talk, but walk the walk," Sanders said in Thursday night's debate. Clinton has accused Sanders of "cherry-picking" from her past comments and said his questions about her Wall Street ties amount to "very artful smear." National polls suggest Clinton has a strong lead over Sanders, despite her lagging position in New Hampshire, and her campaign seems confident she will perform better in South Carolina and elsewhere.—AP



OLINDA: Girls chat as they sit next to a coffin containing an Aedes aegypti mosquito puppet before the start of the "Burial of the Mosquito" carnival block parade. —AP

IN BRAZIL, WOMEN URGED CAUTION WITH KISSING

RIO DE JANEIRO: In a sign of mounting global concern over the Zika virus, health officials on Friday warned pregnant women to think twice about the lips they kiss and called on men to use condoms with pregnant partners if they have visited countries where the virus is present.

UN officials also called on many Catholic-majority countries in Latin America to loosen their abortion laws to allow women to terminate pregnancies if they fear the fetus may be at risk for a rare birth defect that causes brain damage and an abnormally small head, which may be linked to the virus. The flurry of recommendations began in Brazil, where a top health official warned pregnant women to be cautious with their kisses.

Paulo Gadelha, president of the Fiocruz research institute, told a news conference that scientists have found live virus in saliva and urine samples, and the possibility it could be spread by the two body fluids requires further study. He said that calls for pregnant women to take special precautions, and suggested they avoid kissing people other than a regular partner or sharing cutlery, glasses and plates with people who have symptoms of the virus.

Seriousness of discovery

"This is not a generalized public health measure, for the love of God," he added, stressing both the seriousness of the discovery and reality that it was too soon to say how it could impact the epidemic. Friday's announcement coincided with the start of Carnival, a five-day bacchanalia that sees millions of people take part in alcohol-fueled parties where kissing as many people as possible is a top pastime. Gadelha underscored that the discovery needn't alter Carnival plans for anyone but pregnant women.

He also stressed that the Aedes aegypti mosquito, which spreads dengue, chikungunya and yellow fever as well as Zika, remains the virus' main vector and said the fight against the mosquito should be a top priority. The Fiocruz team studied samples from two patients who showed symptoms of Zika and tested posi-

tive for the illness. Tests on cell cultures showed the virus in the samples was capable of damaging the cells, meaning it was active.

Myrna Bonaldo, who headed the Fiocruz team behind the discovery, said she was particularly surprised the virus was found in urine because Zika is generally thought not to thrive in acidic mediums. "Each discovery is a surprise and a new find for us," she said. "For us scientists, it's extremely challenging to understand Zika virus." —AP

Kuwait University
Deanship of Community Service and Continuing Education
Continuing Education Department

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Please note :

1. Study commences on 6th Mar. 2016 and lasts until 11th May. 2016, 2 hours , 2 days a week .
2. Applicants should be over the age of 15.
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ANTI-ISLAMIC PROTESTERS ARRESTED AT BANNED RALLY IN CALAIS

CALAIS, France: Around 20 anti-migrant protesters were arrested in the French port of Calais yesterday after scuffles with police at a banned rally in support of a Europe-wide initiative by the Islamophobic Pegida movement.

A crowd of around 150 protesters had gathered in central Calais carrying signs such as "This is our home," waving the French flag and singing the national anthem, despite the government issuing a ban on demonstrations earlier this week. "Some groups began to circulate in the city centre, mainly far-right, neo-Nazi types," regional official Etienne Desplanques told AFP. Police issued warnings for the demonstrators to disperse and then fired tear gas to break up the rally. There were several skirmishes with police, an AFP correspondent at the scene reported. "We have had a series of arrests, in all about 20," said Desplanques, adding that the figure could go higher. One of those arrested was Christian Piquemal, a former general with the prestigious French foreign legion from 1994 to 1999, an AFP photographer reported.

Calais has become a hotspot of Europe's

refugee crisis. Around 3,700 migrants are living in a camp on the outskirts of the city, nicknamed the "Jungle", hoping to smuggle themselves across the Channel to Britain on lorries or trains. Anti-Islamic group Pegida, which began as a movement in Germany in mid-2014 and has since spread to France and other European countries, has called on members and sympathisers across Europe to join marches yesterday.

Ahead of the protest, Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve on Wednesday called on authorities in Calais to prevent all demonstrations "regardless of the organizers".

He said the ban particularly covered "all these groups that create tensions, division and violence" and would last as long as necessary. Pegida, an acronym for "Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident", has said it expects demonstrations to take place in 14 European countries. In France, another anti-migrant rally took place in the southern city of Montpellier. Around 200 people joined the demonstration which organiser Richard Roudier said was aimed at "saving our country... we are against migrants,

the islamisation of our country." Also yesterday, in a relatively rare attempt to reach England by sea, four migrants were rescued from their sinking boat in the Channel thanks to a fifth migrant who made it to shore and alerted rescuers.

Church call

The German Catholic Church called for a reduction in the influx of refugees arriving in Germany, saying the country cannot take in "all the world's needy," according to an interview published yesterday.

Germany has been struggling to cope with 1.1 million asylum seekers that arrived in 2015 and Berlin has not yet given an official estimate for how many it expects this year. "As a church we say that we need a reduction in the number of refugees," Cardinal Reinhard Marx, chairman of the German Bishops' Conference, told the Passauer Neue Presse daily. Germany cannot "take in all the world's needy," Marx added. The question of how to respond to the migrant crisis, he asserted, should not solely be a matter of "charity but also reason." — AFP



AMSTERDAM: A woman jokes with Dutch riot police during a Pegida demonstration against immigration and islamization of Europe, in Amsterdam, Netherlands yesterday. — AP



A woman with her child walk alongside railway tracks as refugees wait at a refugee camp to be allowed to continue their journey to Macedonia, near the northern Greek village of Idomeni yesterday. — AP

AUSTRIA, HUNGARY WARN OVER MIGRANT INFLUX

GREECE MUST CONTROL THE FLUX OF REFUGEES

AMSTERDAM: Austria and Hungary yesterday warned that if Greece cannot control the flood of refugees arriving from Turkey then the EU should consider reinforcing the borders of their Balkan neighbors.

Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz, whose country has set a refugee cap of 37,500 for this year, said the European Union did not seem to fully realize "how serious the situation is."

"I say this very clear-if we do not manage to control the situation... our only option will be to cooperate with Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia," Kurz said after an informal meeting of EU foreign ministers in Amsterdam.

More than a million migrants, mostly Syrians fleeing their war-torn country, landed in the 28-nation European Union last year, most of them crossing into Greece from Turkey, and then making their way through the Balkans to Germany and other northern member states.

The influx has exposed sharp differences and called into question the future of the Schengen

passport-free zone as several countries-among them Germany, Austria, Hungary, Sweden-have re-introduced border controls. Despite repeated efforts to halt the inflow, several thousand people a day still make the dangerous trip from Turkey to Greece and an upsurge in fighting in Syria threatens to make the problem even worse.

Foot the bill

Fanning the controversy, Austria media quoted Austrian Finance Minister Hans Joerg Schelling as demanding Brussels foot a bill Vienna estimates at 600 million euros (\$670 million) for Austria taking in some 90,000 asylum seekers last year, saying his country could only afford to pay for 35,000.

Kurier daily reproduced part of a letter to that effect which Schelling sent on January 25 to EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker.

The finance ministry was not immediately available for comment. Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto said separately that the

EU was "defenceless from the south."

"If Greece is not ready or able to protect the Schengen zone ... then we need another defence line, which is obviously Macedonia and Bulgaria," Szijarto said. Hungary has taken the lead in calls for erecting a fence along Greece's northern border in the same way it built a razor-wire barrier along its own southern frontier last year.

Athens says it is doing its best but the numbers have overwhelmed the resources of a small country which is also struggling to get its economy back on track after a third debt bailout was agreed last year. Earlier this week, the EU said Greece had to remedy a series of failings in order to re-establish full control over the border with Turkey and so preserve the Schengen area, prized as one of the bloc's greatest achievements.

If Greece failed to comply, then Brussels could allow other member states to extend border controls for up to two years, an option officials say they want to avoid at all costs. — AFP

HAITI LEADER DEPARTS AS HE CAME: AMID UNCERTAINTY, DISORDER

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: Michel Martelly came to office promising a stronger Haiti following a messy election that provoked widespread skepticism. He is due to leave power today at the close of his five-year term with few accomplishments and a legacy clouded by a new political crisis.

The singer-turned-politician had urged Haitians to set aside deep divisions at his May 2011 inauguration. But his hostile relations with Parliament resulted in gridlock. Many Haitians say Martelly squandered a golden opportunity to turn impoverished Haiti around as international aid poured into the country following a devastating 2010 earthquake that flattened much of the capital and surrounding areas. The disaster killed an estimated 300,000 people.

"He said he'd help the population and I hoped it was true. But here we are still struggling, same as ever," said fruit vendor Nadine Suzie, selling oranges on a street corner by piles of smoldering garbage. Haiti has long been one of the poorest and most unequal countries in the world. Some who worked with him closely see Martelly as a charismatic but flawed leader who doomed his presidency by surrounding himself with an entourage of unsavory cronies, including a number from his previous career as "Sweet Micky," the self-proclaimed "bad boy" of Haitian pop music.

"It hurts me to say this because I still like him as a person, but the Martelly years were a big zero. There were people around him who were very corrupt and money had a way of disappearing," said Georges Sassine, a prominent industrialist who was tasked with overseeing the country's industrial parks until he was

abruptly replaced in 2013. Martelly's former prime minister, Laurent Lamothe, who was forced to resign under pressure in late 2014 after some 2 1/2 years in office, is distancing himself from the president during his shambolic last days. He asserts Haiti made clear gains during their partnership but political feuding over the last year has rolled them back. Lamothe told The Associated Press that the endless infighting between the president and Parliament "brought Haiti back to its old days of gridlock and self-serving policies that collapsed the economy and destroyed any progress that was achieved."

The dysfunction deepened last year when the mandates of the entire lower house and a third of the Senate expired in the absence of elections, leaving Martelly to rule by decree.

He came to office after winning an election process so troubled that only international pressure kept him from being ruled out of a runoff. He leaves on Sunday as a runoff vote to choose his successor has been indefinitely postponed and officials try to negotiate a solution for a short-term interim government. Violent protests and deep suspicions of electoral fraud favoring his chosen candidate, Jovenel Moise, derailed the runoff last month. Martelly, through a party official, declined to be interviewed for this article. While he's unpopular with those in the political class and many struggling to raise families, the forceful, self-confident leader still has many admirers among the young.

"This is the first government in my lifetime that's worked to build up basic infrastructure," said 25-year-old student Pierre Richardson Olson in Haiti's crowded capital. "That's worth something, isn't it?" — AP



PORT-AU-PRINCE: Anti-government demonstrators carry a campaign poster of former presidential candidate Moise Jean Charles as they demand the president's resignation in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, yesterday. — AP

BRITISH MEMBER OF VATICAN SEXUAL ABUSE PANEL LEAVES

VATICAN CITY: A leading British member of a papal advisory commission on sexual abuse who has been among the most outspokenly critical of the Vatican has left the group, the Vatican said yesterday, in an embarrassment for the Holy See.

A statement said that at a commission meeting "it was decided" that Peter Saunders would take a leave of absence. Saunders, himself a victim of sexual abuse by a priest, did not immediately reply to a telephone message requesting a comment on the circumstances of his departure. It said Saunders, head of Britain's National Association for People Abused in Childhood, would now "consider how he might best support the commission's work".

In a separate statement on Saturday, commission president Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston said Saunders had been asked to advise the commission on the possible establishment of a victim survivor panel. His departure leaves only one victim of sexual abuse by a cleric, Marie Collins of Ireland, sitting on the commission, which has been slowed down by internal disputes.

Saunders had been increasingly critical of the commission, which was set up in 2014. Made up of clerics and lay people from around the world, its task is to help Pope Francis root out sex abuse in the Church. Eight members are women.

On the eve of the commission's cur-

rent meeting, Saunders was quoted by the Los Angeles Times as saying that the previous meeting last year was a "non-event," and demanded that the pope attend the current meeting.

"It will be outrageous if he doesn't attend, and I will say so - it will be the end of the honeymoon for Pope Francis," the Los Angeles Times quoted him as saying. In a worldwide sex abuse scandal, which first became prominent in Boston in 2001, abusers were shunted from parish to parish instead of being defrocked and handed over to authorities.

Saunders has been spoken out on several issues in the past few months. Last year, he criticised Francis for appearing to endorse parents who spanked their children in order to discipline them.

He also made waves when he said that Australian Cardinal George Pell should be dismissed over allegations he failed to take action to protect children years ago. Pell is now the Vatican's economic minister. The 17-member commission distanced itself from Saunders comments about Pell.

Last April, Saunders and three other lay commission members met with O'Malley of Boston, to complain over the over the appointment of a bishop in Chile accused of covering up abuse.

The Vatican says that as part of an advisory body, the commission's members should not comment on individual cases of abuse and leave these up to investigators. — Reuters

POPE, RUSSIAN ORTHODOX PATRIARCH TO HOLD HISTORIC MEETING IN CUBA

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis and the head of the Russian Orthodox Church will meet in Cuba next week in what could be a landmark step towards healing the 1,000-year-old rift between the Western and Eastern branches of Christianity.

The Vatican and the Moscow Patriarchate announced on Friday that Francis will stop in Cuba on Feb. 12 on his way to Mexico to hold talks with Patriarch Kirill, the first in history between a Roman Catholic pope and a Russian Orthodox patriarch.

There, they will appeal for an end to persecution and killing of Christians in the Middle East, the Russian side said. Russian President Vladimir Putin has aligned himself closely with the Russian Orthodox Church, making the meeting in Cuba not just a religious event but politically charged as well, especially when Russia is at odds with the West over Ukraine and Syria.

Modern popes have met in the past with the Istanbul-based ecumenical patriarchs, the spiritual leaders of Eastern Orthodoxy, which split with Rome in 1054. Those patriarchs play a largely symbolic role, while the rich Russian church wields real influence because it counts some 165 million of the world's 250 million Orthodox Christians.

The Vatican said the leaders would hold several hours of private talks at Havana airport, deliver public speeches and sign a joint statement. The meeting was brokered by Cuban President Raul Castro, who hosted the

pope in Cuba last year. The Vatican helped arrange the rapprochement between Cuba and the United States.

Such a meeting eluded Francis' two immediate predecessors, Benedict and John Paul, who both tried but failed to reach agreement with Kirill and previous patriarchs to hold talks on the prospects for eventual Christian unity.

CLOSER COOPERATION

Russia's ambassador to the Vatican, Alexander Avdeyev, told TASS news



VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis arrives for an audience to the Padre Pio Prayer Groups, yesterday in Vatican. Pio was revered during his lifetime (1887-1968) and his popularity has continued to grow since his death, particularly in Italy, where mini-statues and pictures of the mystical Capuchin friar are ubiquitous. — AFP

agency the meeting showed Russia could play an important role in shaping Christianity. "In conditions of Western sanctions, the meeting of the two church leaders is a confirmation of the Christian civilisational role of Russia," Avdeyev said.

Senior Orthodox cleric Metropolitan Hilarion said long-standing differences between the two churches would remain, most notably a row over the activity of the Eastern Rite Catholic church in Ukraine that is allied with Rome. Hilarion said the

Ukraine dispute was "still on the agenda, and it remains an unhealed and a still bleeding sore thwarting normal relations between the two Churches".

But he said it was being put aside so that Kirill and Francis could work together against the persecution of Christians in the Middle East. They have often decried their oppression and killing by Islamist militants.

A spokesman for The National Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kyiv Patriarchate also welcomed the move. "It seems that Moscow is now looking for all opportunities to restore relations with the civilized world," Archbishop Yevstraty Zoria told Reuters, stressing he was speaking in a personal capacity. "If the Pope manages to return the Kremlin to the fold of common sense, international law and civilized relations, let God help." The Russians had previously said outstanding differences had to be ironed out before any high-level meeting could be held.

"The situation shaping up today in the Middle East, in North and Central Africa and in some other regions where extremists are carrying out a genuine genocide of the Christian population demands urgent measures and an even closer cooperation between the Christian churches," Hilarion said. "We need to put aside internal disagreements at this tragic time and join efforts to save Christians in the regions where they are subject to the most atrocious persecution." — Reuters

HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICIAL ARRIVES IN SRI LANKA



COLOMBO: Supporters of the Sri Lankan opposition political parties backing former president Mahinda Rajapaksa protest outside the UN office. — AP

COLOMBO: The top UN human rights official arrived yesterday in Sri Lanka on a four-day visit aimed at reviewing the measures taken by the island nation to investigate alleged atrocities committed during the long civil war that left tens of thousands dead.

The visit by Zeid Raad Al-Hussein follows last year's resolution at the UN human rights body that required foreign judges to assist Sri Lanka in the investigation. Sri Lanka's civil war ended in 2009, after the government forces crushed the separatist Tamil Tiger rebels.

Both sides were accused of committing grave human rights abuses such as killing civilians and

recruiting child soldiers. Since the end of the war, Sri Lanka has been facing heavy criticism for failing to properly investigate alleged war crimes by its forces. Victims' families have been futile in their attempts to seek justice.

According to UN estimates, at least 80,000 people were killed, and possibly many more, including up to 40,000 civilians in the last month of the war. Zeid last year presented a report focusing on the period from 2002 to 2011, in which he pointed out horrific abuses, including torture, executions, and sexual abuse by security forces, as well as suicide attacks, assassinations and recruitment of child soldiers by rebels.

He called for the creation of a "hybrid special court" that would include foreign judges and investigators, saying Sri Lanka's own courts are not yet ready to carry out a fair judicial process on the atrocities. However, Sri Lankan officials have previously said they would only accept foreign technical expertise and assistance.

During his visit, Zeid will travel to the former war zone and meet victims of human rights violations. He will also talk with top government officials, civil activists and religious leaders. "I will be listening to everything that they have to say and look forward to very constructive discussions in the days to come," Zeid told reporters. — AP

PAKISTANI OFFICIALS INVESTIGATED OVER AIRLINE EMPLOYEE DEATHS

KARACHI: Pakistani police will investigate five officials, including a former adviser to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, for murder after two airline employees were shot dead during a protest against privatization.

The Pakistan International Airline (PIA) employees were killed and several more wounded at Karachi's international airport on Tuesday when clashes broke out between security forces and staff, though authorities denied opening fire.

Police yesterday registered a case against one federal cabinet minister, a senator, a former advisor to Sharif and two airline officials on the complaint of PIA employees' Joint Action Committee, accusing them of murder and torture, senior police official Rao Anwar said. "An investigation team is being constituted to take further action," he added.

The five are accused of plotting to kill the protesters, although not of opening

fire themselves. The authorities claim the victims were shot by gunmen in the crowd. The strike continues 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.

All of PIA's foreign and domestic flights remained grounded Saturday with thousands of passengers, including Pakistani domestic workers trying to fly to the Middle East, stranded at airports. 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. PIA suffers from frequent cancellations and delays and has been involved in numerous controversies over the years, including the jailing of a drunk pilot in Britain in 2013. — AFP



QUETTA: Pakistani security officials stand beside the bodies of blast victims at the site after a bomb explosion targeting a security convoy. — AFP

SUICIDE BOMBER KILLS EIGHT, INJURES DOZENS IN PAKISTAN

12-YEAR-OLD GIRL AMONG THE DEAD

QUETTA: At least eight people were killed and 40 wounded after a suicide bomber blew himself up near a military convoy in Pakistan's western city of Quetta yesterday, police and hospital officials said, the latest attack in a region home to the planned route of a \$46 billion China-Pakistan economic corridor.

"The suicide bomber was riding a bicycle and detonated himself close to a Frontier Corps vehicle," said senior police official Imtiaz Shah, referring to the branch of Pakistan's paramilitary forces targeted in the attack.

At least three Frontier Corps personnel were killed in the attack that occurred in the city centre in the late afternoon, Frontier Corps spokesman Khan Wasey said. A 12-year-old girl was also among the dead, said Ajab Khan, a doctor at the city's Civil Hospital, where the casualties were received. Pakistani Taliban spokesman Muhammad Khurasani told Reuters that the group, also known as the TTP, claimed responsibility for the attack on the convoy in Quetta, the provincial capital of Baluchistan.

Rich in resources, Baluchistan is at the heart of the multi-billion-dollar energy and infrastructure projects

China and Pakistan are planning along a corridor stretching from the Arabian Sea to China's Xinjiang region. But the province, the poorest and least developed in Pakistan, has seen nearly a decade of separatist violence against the government and non-Baluch ethnic groups.

Baluch activists and human rights groups claim the military has carried out a campaign of kidnapping, torture and extrajudicial killing of suspected separatists, and a security crackdown has severely limited freedom of movement in the province. In January, five Pakistani soldiers and two coast guard members were killed in separate attacks in the province, and a suicide bomber killed at least 15 people outside a polio eradication centre in Quetta.

Child wedding interrupted

In other news, Police have arrested six people accused of arranging the marriage of a seven-year-old boy and six-year-old girl in eastern Pakistan, officials said yesterday. The fathers of both children, the cleric performing the ceremony, and three witnesses were charged under the Child Marriage Restraint Act yesterday after being arrested in Punjab province on Friday, senior police official Saifullah Khan told AFP.

They face six months imprisonment and/or a fine of 50,000 rupees (\$500). Local police chief Mehr Riaz Hussain said the accused have denied that the wedding took place, but police have it on video. Pakistani lawmakers last month withdrew a proposal to impose harsher penalties on those who arrange child marriages after it was scuttled by a religious body which branded it "blasphemous" and against Islam.

The proposal, which would also have raised the legal age of marriages for females from 16 to 18, called for "rigorous" punishment of up to two years in prison for those who organize child marriages, still common in some parts of Pakistan. The original law stipulates the age of marriage to be 16 for women and 18 for men but Pakistani religious scholars at the Council of Islamic Ideology, believe it is not in accordance with Islamic teachings. They say there is no specific age limit for marriage in Sharia as an individual can marry when he or she reaches puberty and puberty cannot be defined by age. Rights activists strongly criticized the rejection of bill. — Agencies

BHUTAN'S QUEEN GIVES BIRTH TO A BABY BOY

GAUHATI, India: The tiny Himalayan nation of Bhutan has a new crown prince. The Royal Media Office in the capital, Thimphu, said the baby boy was born Friday to King Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck and his wife, Queen Jetsun Pema. The Oxford-educated Wangchuck, who is currently 35, married commoner Jetsun Pema, now 25, in an elaborate Buddhist ceremony in 2011.

The child, the royal couple's first, was delivered by a medical team at the Lingkana Palace in Thimphu. "Her Majesty and His Royal Highness (the newborn) are both in perfect health," the Royal Media Office said in a statement yesterday, adding that Wangchuck was by the queen's side during the delivery.

"We welcome the news with great joy and happiness. The day calls for a great celebration throughout the country," Bhutan's Prime Minister Tsering Tobgay said in a statement. But Tobgay said that the king had directed that any celebrations be modest. "Therefore, the government has decided to declare Monday a national holiday to celebrate the joyous occasion so that people may offer their prayers and good wishes."

In November, Wangchuck had announced that the couple was expecting their first child, saying, "I consider my son extremely fortunate because he will be born in our blessed country." The young couple made news in Bhutan while they were dating. Wangchuck had displayed open affection for his wife-to-be by publicly holding hands and even planting kisses on her cheek, something rare in conservative Bhutan, particularly among royalty.

Wangchuck ascended Bhutan's throne in November 2008, when his father, King Jigme Singhye Wangchuck, abdicated in his favor. By that time, Jigme Singhye Wangchuck had also guided the remote Himalayan kingdom toward democracy. In March that same year, the kingdom held its first democratic election and voted in a new parliament that can constitutionally impeach the king. However, with the monarchy idolized by much of the population, the king's influence continues to be enormous. Bhutan first began opening up to the world in the 1960s. Foreigners and the international media were first admitted in 1974, while the Internet and television finally arrived in 1999. — AP

DIRECT TALKS BETWEEN KABUL, TALEBAN EXPECTED THIS MONTH

ISLAMABAD: Direct peace talks between Kabul and the Taliban are "expected to take place" by the end of the month, representatives from four countries involved in pre-cursor roadmap negotiations said in a joint statement issued yesterday in Islamabad.

The statement by delegates from Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States came after a third round of talks between the four powers and is the strongest indication yet the Taliban are willing to return to negotiations six months after an earlier round of direct dialogue fell away. It comes as the insurgents wage an unprecedented winter campaign of violence across Afghanistan, more than 14 years after they were driven out of power by US-led NATO forces.

"The Group stressed that the outcome of the reconciliation process should be a political settlement that results in the cessation of violence, and durable peace in Afghanistan," the statement said. "Towards this end, the QCG (Quadrilateral Coordination Group) countries agreed to continue joint efforts for setting a date for direct peace talks between the representatives of the Afghan government and Taliban groups expected to take place by the end of February 2016." The statement added the group would hold its next meeting in Kabul on February 23.

The role of Pakistan, which backed the Islamist group during their 1996 - 2001 rule and is accused of continuing to provide shelter to its leaders in exile, is seen as key in persuading the Taliban to return to talks. The first round of the roadmap talks was held in Islamabad last month, where delegates began laying the groundwork for direct dialogue between Kabul and the Islamist group.

A second round was held in Kabul on January 18 which urged the Taliban groups to enter into



ISLAMABAD: In this handout photograph released by the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) on February 6, 2016, Pakistan's National Security Advisor Sartaj Aziz (center) chairs the third round of four-way peace talks with Afghanistan, US and Chinese delegates. — AFP

early talks with the Afghan government without preconditions. Taliban representatives have been notably absent during the process and analysts caution that any substantive talks are still a long way off. The Taliban has stepped up attacks on government and foreign targets in Afghanistan this winter, when fighting usually abates, underscoring a worsening security situation.

Observers say the intensifying insurgency highlights a push by the militants to seize more territory in an attempt to wrangle greater concessions during talks. Pakistan hosted a milestone

first round of talks directly with the Taliban in July last year. But the negotiations stalled when the insurgents belatedly confirmed the death of longtime leader Mullah Omar, sparking infighting within the group. The statement added the four countries "called on all Taliban groups to join the peace talks." The dominant faction of the Taliban is led by Mullah Akhtar Mansour, who officially succeeded founder Mullah Omar. A major breakaway faction meanwhile is led by Muhammad Rasul, whose faction is seen by some analysts as closer to Iran. — AFP

AS MYANMAR POWERBROKERS TALK, SUU KYI MAY EMERGE AS PRESIDENT

NAYPYITAW/YANGON: As Aung San Suu Kyi's lawmakers smiled for the cameras at the first sessions of Myanmar's parliament, a summit of generals convened at a base just minutes from the chamber. On every mind was the same question: who will be the country's next president?

The parallel events summed up the complex nature of the political transition: a much-publicized election of parliament speakers at which former foes from Suu Kyi's party and the military shook hands, while behind closed doors the country's top power brokers met to hammer out how they will run Myanmar. After a quiet period following Suu Kyi's massive election win in November, negotiations have entered a critical stage since a meeting between army chief Min Aung Hlaing and Suu Kyi on Jan. 26, lawmakers and diplomats close to the process say. With its huge mandate Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) can choose the next president but, under the constitution written by the army before it ceded power in 2011, she herself cannot take the job. The NLD wants that changed.

"Our first priority includes amending laws which are out of date and not in harmony with the present situation," Tun Tun Hein, a member of the NLD's governing council, told reporters after being appointed chairman of the key lower house bill committee. "The constitution also needs amending since it's one of the laws."

The army has so far insisted it wants no change to the constitution and would not countenance Suu Kyi's presidency. She has struck a defiant note, saying she would lead the country "standing above the president."

Now, some Yangon-based diplomats say Min Aung Hlaing might be tempted to compromise in return for a pledge from Suu Kyi that she would not infringe on the military's vast economic interests nor seek revenge for

abuses under years of junta rule.

As well as burnishing his legacy, such a move would also put responsibility for fixing an impoverished country riven by decades of ethnic conflict squarely on Suu Kyi, they say. "If you keep her without any official title she is free to strategise without the day-to-day burden of running the country," said a Western diplomat, who did not want to be named because of the sensitivity of the matter. The New York Times on Friday cited two senior members of the NLD as saying that talks with the military have included a possible deal that would allow Suu Kyi to be president in exchange for senior government posts. It did not name the party leaders and said details of the negotiations were murky.

Blurred red lines

It is not known what was discussed at this week's meeting at army headquarters, which sits close to the sprawling parliament complex in Myanmar's remote capital Naypyitaw. Confirming the gathering coincided with the opening week of the newly elected legislature, two sources familiar with the matter said senior commanders from across the country gather a few times a year to discuss military matters. But politics was likely high on the agenda - the military retains a central role in the former Burma, with a quarter of seats in parliament reserved for it, along with control of the security forces and the civil service. Moreover, with its block of seats in parliament the military wields a veto over any changes to the constitution, which requires a super-majority of more than 75 percent. Asked about the chances that the constitution could be amended to allow Suu Kyi to be president, Major General Taik Tun, the most senior military lawmaker in the lower house, did not entirely rule it out, while at the same time sticking to the military's line on the sanctity of the 2008 charter. — Reuters

AUSTRALIAN STATE OFFERS ASYLUM SEEKERS REFUGE

PERTH: The premier of an Australian state offered yesterday to look after a group of asylum seekers facing repatriation to a camp on a remote Pacific island, adding to opposition to the federal government's policy of offshore detention.

Daniel Andrews, premier of Victoria state, called on the federal government not to return the 267 refugees, including 80 children and their families, who had been brought to Australia from Nauru island for medical treatment. "Victoria stands ready to assist and care for the children and their families," Andrews

wrote in a letter to Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull that Andrews posted on his Twitter account.

His state would take full responsibility for their housing, health and education, he said. "Sending these children and their families to Nauru is not the Australian way ... It's wrong. Medical professionals tell us this. Humanitarian agencies tell us this," he said. Under Australia's immigration policy, asylum seekers attempting to come by boat are intercepted and sent to camps on Nauru or on Manus island in Papua New

Guinea. They are not offered resettlement in Australia.

Most people trying to reach Australia by boat are from the Middle East and South Asia. They usually make the voyage through people-smuggling networks via Indonesia, often in rickety vessels. The detention centre on Nauru houses about 500 people and has been widely criticized by human rights activists for harsh conditions and reports of systemic child abuse.

Andrews said sending the group, including 37 children born in Australia,

to Nauru "will needlessly expose them to a life of physical and emotional trauma." The Australian government says it does not place asylum seekers at risk of harm and offers to return them to their countries.

On Wednesday, the High Court rejected a legal test case that challenged Australia's right to deport detained asylum seekers to Nauru, about 3,000 km (1,800 miles) northeast of Australia. The High Court decision sparked protests, drew condemnation from the United Nations and prompted church leaders to

offer the asylum seekers sanctuary.

Refugee rights groups praised Andrews for his letter. "This is fantastic wonderful news," Pamela Curr, an advocate at the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre said in an emailed statement. "First legal, churches, community groups, grandmothers, unions, schools, and now a state premier." The government justifies its tough policy on asylum seekers saying it prevents deaths at sea by discouraging others from making the journey and many voters approve of it. — Reuters



OKINAWA: A vehicle carrying a PAC-3 missile interceptor arrives at a port on Ishigaki Island. — AP

EXPERTS SAY LAUNCH WON'T BRING N KOREA MUCH CLOSER TO ICBM

US ALREADY GUNNING TO PUNISH PYONGYANG

TOKYO: Japan has deployed PAC-3 missile batteries in the heart of Tokyo to shoot down any incoming rocket debris. South Korea is reportedly mobilizing two Aegis-equipped destroyers. The US is already gunning to punish Pyongyang for what it says will be a ballistic missile test in the guise of a space launch.

Whatever lifts off from North Korea's western coast space center this month, one thing is certain - since rockets and missiles inevitably have overlapping technologies, it will run afoul of U.N. resolutions that have been in place for years to bar North Korea from testing any technology that could be used to develop long-range ballistic missiles. But maybe it's time to take a deep breath.

According to many experts, the North's rockets look a lot more like what the North says they are - space launch vehicles, or SLVs - and they aren't necessarily helping Pyongyang get that much closer to having a reliable, long-range missile capable of dropping a nuclear weapon on the United States any time soon.

'Drop zones'

"What is needed now is a sober, serious, and reasonable public assessment of the threat from North Korea," said Ted Postol, a professor of science, technology and national security policy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a former scientific adviser to the Chief of Naval Operations at the Pentagon.

Less than a month after testing what it claimed was its first hydrogen bomb, North Korea earlier this week informed international organizations it is planning to launch an Earth observation satellite between Feb. 8 and 25. It also announced "drop zones" - areas mostly over the ocean where debris from the rocket's stages is likely to fall - that suggest a similar trajectory, and probably a similar or slightly larger rocket, to the Unha-3 that was launched in 2012.

The launch plan has been strongly denounced by North Korea's neighbors, including China and Russia, the UN secretary general and the United States. But Postol and other experts who spoke to The Associated Press say the devil is in the details. The distinction between a rocket used to lift a satellite into space and a long-range ballistic missile is highly technical but of crucial importance to understanding North Korea's motives and capabilities and in forming a realistic and effective strategy to deal with them. It is also crucial to understand the limitations of what space rocket launches contribute to the North's ability to develop military-use missiles.

Push of a button

According to some, that isn't necessarily very much. "A real ICBM is a weapon system that has to hit a given target on the other side of the world, being launched at any condition with the push of a button almost instantly," said Markus Schiller, a prominent expert on North Korean missile technology and founder of Munich-based ST Analytics. "Just launching a small satellite carrier every other year, which uses different technology than required for a real ICBM, does not get you much closer to this goal."

"They gain experience by launching a large rocket like Unha," said Schiller. "But this is just one minor of so many steps required for a real ICBM, and the Unha is definitely designed as a satellite launcher." David Wright, co-director and senior scientist with the Global Security Program of the Union of Concerned Scientists, also warned against quickly dismissing Pyongyang's space launches as a smoke screen.

"While launching satellites helps North Korea learn about rocket technology, I think its desire to launch satellites is real," he said. "This is partly for prestige, and it was of course a huge deal that it put something into orbit before South Korea. But I think, like other countries, it sees learning how to use

space for various activities as an important long-term capability."

None of this means the threat of North Korea developing advanced ballistic missiles is a mirage. The North started its development of ballistic missiles in the 1970s by reverse-engineering Soviet-made, 300-kilometer-range Scud Bs it acquired from Egypt, according to South Korea's Defense Ministry. The country began producing and deploying 500-kilometer (310-mile)-range Scud C missiles by the mid-1980s and the Roding missiles by the 1990s.

South Korean officials also believe that beginning in 2007, the North has been deploying 3,000-kilometer-range missiles, which foreign analysts have dubbed Musudan after the name of the village near its test site. That would theoretically put locations as far as Guam and parts of the Philippines within striking distance.

Even more advanced is the three-stage Taepodong-2 missile, which Seoul claims the North deployed after a test-firing in 2006. It has an estimated range of 10,000 kilometers (6,214 miles), bringing North's best-case scenario range out to the U.S. West Coast, Hawaii, Australia and Eastern Europe, according to the South's Defense Ministry.

Time needed

The basic structure of the Taepodong-2 is quite similar to the Unha-3 rocket. But even South Korean experts say an Unha-3-type rocket would make for a poor intercontinental ballistic missile because of the time needed for launch preparation and the requirement for it to be fired from a fixed launch site.

Alison Evans, senior analyst of IHS Country Risk, argued in a recent assessment that if the North is seriously pursuing an ICBM, its next step is to prove that its SLVs are capable of carrying a payload that can re-enter the atmosphere - which, after all, must hit targets on the ground. That has not so far been

part of any of North Korea's space launches.

But the focus on whether the North's space launch rockets are really missiles or, even if they aren't, that each launch brings the North closer to having an ICBM may be misguided.

"There is no doubt that the leadership in North Korea presents a very serious threat to South Korea, Japan, and China," said Postol, the MIT scientist. But he added that the common reaction abroad to the North's rocket launches has been "severely inflated" and has become "a distraction from the real and serious security problems that North Korea creates." The more pressing concern, Postol believes, is underwater.

He believes a "very good argument can be made" that if North Korea were to launch a nuclear-armed ballistic missile attack on the mainland of the United States, it wouldn't come from an ICBM at all, but from submarine launched ballistic missiles, which can be deployed in a far more stealthy manner and have relatively short flight times.

"If North Korea uses these submarines in ways that keep them in coastal waters, anti-submarine warfare will be almost useless against them," he said. That's because shorter-range nuclear-tipped missiles launched from submarines closer to shore would be difficult or impossible to intercept with the kind of booster-phase defenses the US and others rely on. "So if I were betting on a bad outcome in the future, my bet would be on a future North Korean

SLBM and a future nuclear warhead that could be carried by it," Postol said. He said he expects this kind of a threat to emerge from North Korea in the next five years. "But I have serious doubts about whether North Korea will be able to build a compact nuclear warhead that is sufficiently rugged to be mounted on such missiles," he added. "If these two guesses are correct, North Korea will continue being not much more than a paper tiger. If not, we are in for real trouble." — AP

CONTROVERSIAL WAR FILM FINALLY OPENS IN JAPAN

TOKYO: Angelina Jolie's "Unbroken" opened yesterday more than a year after the rest of the world in Japan, where the main character endures as a prisoner of war and where some have called for a boycott of the movie.

There were concerns that right-wing extremists may try to disrupt the opening. But the crowd at Theatre Image Forum in Tokyo, a small theater that specializes in independent films and documentaries, was peaceful, appearing engrossed in the film, flinching at the torture scenes and sympathizing with the hero, Louis Zamperini.

The distributor said in a statement that it decided to go ahead with the showing because various views on war should be expressed, and because it was unnatural for a movie about Japan not to be shown in the country.

A publicity official said the company had received some angry calls when it first announced the film's showing in October. Other than that, nothing unusual happened, and the film is scheduled to be shown in other theaters throughout Japan.

"Unbroken" is based on the true story of Zamperini, an Olympic athlete who gets shot down in a U.S. bomber and survives by floating in the ocean on an inflatable boat, but gets captured by the Japanese. He survives horrible torture in World War II camps until Japan's defeat in 1945.

Negative chatter

Much of the negative chatter on social media in Japan about "Unbroken," which still continues to some extent, alleges that the movie is "anti-Japanese." Many taking offense at the film are outraged that the book on which the movie is based mentions that

Japanese soldiers engaged in cannibalism, although the film does not touch on the subject at all. Some historians say some Japanese soldiers did engage in cannibalism.

The anger over "Unbroken" has brewed despite Japan boasting a long list of directors who made distinguished anti-war movies, including Akira Kurosawa and Kihachi Okamoto. Nagisa Oshima's "Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence," starring David Bowie, has a plot similar to "Unbroken," taking place in a POW camp.

But some in Japan have also had a hard time coming to terms with the country's brutal past of colonizing Asian neighbors and the barbaric acts carried out by the Imperial Army, such as the Rape of Nanjing, which began in 1937 and left 300,000 Chinese dead.

Similarly, they reject historical studies that show women from several Asian countries, especially Korea, were forced into prostitution by the Japanese military. Some oppose the term "sex slave," which the UN uses, preferring the euphemistic "comfort women." In "Unbroken," Japanese characters do little but grunt, scream, punch and kick. Still, the film ends on a reconciliatory note, showing an elderly Zamperini proudly carrying the torch for the 1998 Nagano Olympics, and Japanese on the streets cheering. As a young man, Zamperini had competed in the 1936 Berlin Olympics as a runner, and had hopes to go to the next games, set to be held in Tokyo. But by then the war had started.

After seeing "Unbroken," Katsuyuki Miyata, a member of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces, said that the closing scene was the best part of the film. "I'd heard it was an anti-Japanese movie," Miyata said. "But it was a good movie." — AP



TOKYO: Moviegoers wait before Angelina Jolie's "Unbroken" opens in front of a movie theater. — AP

HURLING DILDOS 'APPALLING' FOR NEW ZEALAND, SAYS PM

WELLINGTON: Dildo throwing is not a good look for New Zealand and an "appalling way" to behave on the country's national day, Prime Minister John Key said yesterday, angered by an attack on a senior government minister. Economic Development Minister Steven Joyce was hit in the face by a pink dildo thrown at him by a protester during national day celebrations in the northern town of Waitangi on Friday.

"It's appalling because that image has gone around the world and there are now people in countries all over the world saying the way New Zealanders theoretically commemorate or celebrate their national day is with a senior politi-

cian having a sex toy thrown at them," Key said. "That's the way now that people from overseas are viewing how we have a celebration on our national day. It just isn't the right image for New Zealand."

Key added that the protest was "crude and basic" on what should be a family occasion. Waitangi is traditionally the centre of New Zealand's national day as the town where the Treaty of Waitangi was signed between the British Crown and indigenous Maori in 1840, paving the way for European colonization. However, celebrations are often marred by protests with Key refusing to attend this year because of fears of violence. — AFP



BEIJING: Workers carry a ladder past a store with soft toys, which is set up for a temple fair ahead of Chinese Lunar New Year at Ditan Park in Beijing yesterday. Parks and temples across the capital city gear up for the Lunar New Year celebrations on Feb. 8 this year which marks the Year of Monkey on the Chinese zodiac. — AP

VIETNAM'S 12-HOUR TET CAKE WORTH THE WAIT

HANOI: She may be edging into her nineties, but Tran Thi Tam still refuses to serve her children store-bought banh chung, the savoury rice cake prepared in a frenzy during Vietnam's lunar new year festival known as Tet.

Instead, the 89-year-old Hanoi resident and her children spend more than a day assembling the Vietnamese delicacy made of sticky rice and beans wrapped in green leaves and tied with bamboo string. "Banh chung made outside the house is never good," she insists.

The wrapped cakes, which must be boiled for 12 hours before they are ready to eat, are one of several dishes prepared specially for Tet, the week-long holiday in Vietnam that sees nearly all schools and offices

close. Families gather to ring in the new year - which will start on 8 February and carry out a host of rituals, such as giving gifts and red envelopes of cash, cleaning and decorating homes and firing up elaborate feasts.

According to an oft-told legend, the banh chung recipe was first prepared thousands of years ago by a Vietnamese prince who wanted to impress his father in a bid for the throne. Pleased with the cake's flavor and impressed with his son's demonstration of respect, the king duly handed down his crown.

Today the cakes are laid at family altars as an offering to ancestors, who are widely venerated in Vietnam - a country that is officially atheist but still steeped in Confucian

social mores. It's become increasingly common for families to buy the dish from specialty sellers instead of making them from scratch. But rumors have bubbled in recent years about commercial banh chung makers who try to speed up the lengthy preparation by dropping a battery into the boiling pot of cakes - a method that Vietnam's state-run television warned was dangerous and ineffective in a report this week.

The broadcaster urged viewers to call immediately if there is "clear evidence of any establishments using a battery to cook banh chung". For Tam, this is just another reason to keep the cooking under her own roof. "I will never buy the ready-made banh chung," she said. — AFP



Newly-wed Syrian couple Nada Merhi, 18, and Hassan Youssef, 27, pose for a wedding picture amid heavily damaged buildings in the war ravaged city of Homs on Friday. A Syrian photographer thought of using the destruction of Homs to take pictures of newly wed couples to show that life is stronger than death. — AFP

SYRIA WARNS SAUDIS, TURKEY AGAINST MILITARY...

Continued from Page 1

The Saudi-backed opposition umbrella group, the High Negotiations Committee, says it will not return to peace talks which recently collapsed in Geneva unless its humanitarian demands are met.

"I think Saudi Arabia is desperate to do something in Syria," said Andreas Krieg of the Department of Defence Studies at King's College London. Krieg said the "moderate" opposition is in danger of being routed if Aleppo falls to the regime, whose forces have closed in on Syria's second city, backed by intense Russian air strikes. "This is a problem for Saudi and Qatar as they have massively invested into Syria via the moderate opposition as their surrogate on the ground," said Krieg, who is also a consultant to Qatar's armed forces.

"The Saudis believe that the chance of a peaceful solution for the Syrian crisis is very limited," said Mustafa Alani of the independent Gulf Research Centre. "They don't see that there is a real pressure on the regime to give major concessions... They think eventually it will have to end in the battlefield. Turkey is enthusiastic about this option (of ground troops) since the Russians started their air operation and tried to push Turkey outside the equation," Alani added.

He said the Saudis are serious about committing troops "as part of a coalition, especially if the Turkish forces are going to be involved". But he and other analysts said Saudi involvement would be limited, given its leadership of a separate Arab coalition fighting in Yemen for almost a year and guarding the kingdom's southern border from attacks by Iran-backed Yemeni rebels. "They are overstretched. But in principle I think they will not hesitate to send a certain number of their fighters to fight in Syria," Alani said, adding that this would probably include Saudi special forces.

Turkey and Saudi already belong to a US-led coalition which officially has 65 members. It has been bombing IS in Syria and Iraq, as well as training local forces to fight the extremists. Krieg said that with Saudi and other Gulf kingdoms "bogged down" in Yemen, he could only foresee a possible expansion of "train and equip" missions involving

Gulf special forces to help rebels in Syria. "Saudi and Qatar have already networks on the ground," he said, viewing Doha as a link between Riyadh and Ankara as relations improve.

On Friday, US Central Command spokesman Pat Ryder welcomed Saudi Arabia's willingness to send soldiers against IS. The United States has been calling on coalition members to do more. In November, the United Arab Emirates said it was also ready to commit ground troops against jihadists in Syria. Jane Kinninmont, senior research fellow at London's Chatham House, said Riyadh is more interested in the Yemen war than battling IS. "But what you might see is small numbers of ground troops and perhaps also special forces which would be there partly to make a symbolic point that Saudi Arabia is supporting the fight against ISIS," she said, using another acronym for IS. She declared herself "a bit skeptical" about potential Turkish army involvement in Syria, "but we might see them having some kind of interest in containing Kurdish influence".

Meanwhile, Bahrain has said it is ready to commit ground troops to Syria as part of the US-led coalition against IS. Bahraini ambassador to Britain Sheikh Fawaz bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa said in a statement that Bahrain would commit troops to operate "in concert with the Saudis" under what he called a unified military command of Gulf Arab States. He added that the United Arab Emirates, a fellow member of the Saudi-dominated Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), was also ready to commit troops, echoing an assertion made late last year by UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash.

The Bahraini ambassador said the Saudi initiative in Syria was meant to combat both Islamic State and "the brutal Assad regime", a bitter foe of Saudi Arabia. Sheikh Fawaz also announced the GCC had decided to base a new unified GCC naval operations center in Bahrain. "The establishment of a joint (Gulf Arab) force shows clearly and unequivocally that under the leadership of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states are determined to take positive action within the region and globally to combat terrorism and extremism, from whatever quarter they emanate," he said. — Agencies

14 KILLED AFTER TAIWAN QUAKE FELLS BUILDINGS

Continued from Page 1

Residents told of their horror as the quake hit, with survivors pulled bleeding and crying from the ruins, some just in their underwear. "The quake was really powerful - it shook up and down, left and right and even in a circle. It was terrifying," one elderly woman at the scene who was waiting for news of a missing friend told AFP. One survivor used a hammer to break out of her crushed home, while another tied clothes together to lower himself to safety, local media reported. Cranes towered over the disaster zone with diggers trying to move slabs of concrete as rescuers painstakingly freed survivors young and old from the ruins.

Meanwhile groups of people chanted prayers at the site, accompanied by Buddhist monks. Eight shelters have been set up around the city, with over 100 people taking refuge there. Officials said several blocks had collapsed or half collapsed in other parts of the city, with some buildings left leaning at alarming angles. Across Tainan and surrounding counties, more than 400 people were injured, with 100 still in hospital.

The quake struck at a depth of 10 km at around 4:00 am (2000 GMT Friday), 39 km of Kaohsiung, Taiwan's second-largest city. Taiwan lies near the junction of two tectonic plates and is regularly hit by earthquakes. The island's worst quake in recent decades was 7.6 magnitude in Sept 1999, killing around 2,400 people. — AFP

SYRIANS BRAVE FREEZE AT TURKEY BORDER

Continued from Page 1

"We have received already 5,000 of them; another 50,000 to 55,000 are on their way and we cannot leave them there." According to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, around 40,000 Syrian civilians have fled the regime offensive.

"Thousands have been sleeping in the open, in fields and on roads," on the border and in the nearby Syrian city of Azaz, said Mamun Al-Khatib, director of the Aleppo-based pro-rebel Shahba Press news agency. "And because the main rebel supply route between Aleppo and Turkey has been cut, the price of oil, foodstuffs and baby milk has shot up in the north of Aleppo province," he added. The Observatory said 435 people have been killed since the regime offensive began on Monday, among them 71 civilians most of whom died in Russian air strikes. Also killed were 124 regime forces, 90 jihadists from Al-Qaeda's Syria affiliate Al-Nusra Front and 150 other rebels, it said.

Turkey last faced such an influx in 2014 when 200,000 refugees fled the Syrian Kurdish town of Kobane over

three days as IS and Kurdish fighters battled to control it. Trucks were seen on Friday carrying tent parts to the refugee camp near the border gate on the Turkish side, and at least four more were seen returning to Turkey after delivering food in Syria. A Red Cross spokesman told AFP that efforts were under way to deliver aid to northern Aleppo but warned that "access is difficult".

Aleppo city, Syria's former economic powerhouse, has been divided between opposition control in the east and regime control in the west since mid-2012. Syria's army has recaptured several key rebel towns in Latakia province and advanced in Aleppo and Daraa since Russia began air strikes on Sept 30 in support of President Bashar Al-Assad. Western nations have accused Damascus of sabotaging UN-backed peace talks that collapsed this week with its military offensive, and Washington has demanded Moscow halt its air war. Top diplomats from countries trying to resolve the conflict are set to meet again next week after UN envoy Staffan de Mistura suspended the floundering Geneva negotiations until Feb 25. More than 260,000 people have died in Syria's conflict and more than half the population has been displaced. — AFP



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Focus

SYRIA REBELS RISK
COLLAPSE AFTER
REGIME GAINS

By Sara Hussein

Syria's mainstream rebels risk total collapse after a Russian-backed regime advance that severed their main supply line to Aleppo city and threatens to leave them completely besieged there. Analysts said rebels and their international backers were left with few options to prevent fresh government advances, which came as fresh peace talks backed by the United Nations fell apart. "The trajectory for the rebels is downwards, and the downward slope is increasingly steep," said Emile Hokayem, senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

Aleppo province was once a rebel stronghold, providing easy access to neighboring Turkey, a key opposition backer. The city itself has been divided between rebel control in the east and government control in the west since mid-2012. But government forces have steadily chipped away at rebel-held territory around the city, and their advances this week leave the opposition there virtually surrounded. "It is a turning point in the war," said Fabrice Balanche, a visiting fellow at the Washington Institute think tank. "The opposition wanted to make Aleppo and (neighboring) Idlib province the base of a 'free Syria.' That's over." The advance is the most significant outcome yet of the Russian intervention that began on Sept 30, ostensibly targeting the Islamic State group and other "terrorists". Analysts and activists say Russia's strikes have always disproportionately targeted non-jihadist rebels in an attempt to bolster President Bashar Al-Assad's government.

Aleppo Siege?

"Aleppo is simply the first dramatic display of how the combination of Russian air power and advisers has been able to make up for the regime's relatively low capabilities and manpower shortage," said Faysal Itani, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council's Rafik Hariri Centre for the Middle East. Opposition forces and some 350,000 civilians inside rebel-held Aleppo city now face the prospect of a government siege, a tactic that has been employed to devastating effect against other former rebel strongholds such as Homs.

"A good deal of both (rebels and civilians) will die from bombardment, starvation and the general deprivations of siege," said Itani. "The fighters inside will be killed or forced to surrender," he added, predicting fresh waves of refugees. There was already evidence of a new unfolding humanitarian disaster, with tens of thousands of people reportedly fleeing the government advance and massing on the border with Turkey seeking entry. More than 260,000 people have been killed in Syria's conflict since March 2011, with half the country's population displaced internally or abroad. Activists said the opposition felt betrayed, reporting that weapon supplies from international backers had dried up in advance of the Geneva peace talks, despite stepped-up Russia military action. "What frustrates the rebels the most is that the countries that claim to be their friends are happy with empty words and sitting on the fence," said activist Maamoun Al-Khatib, head of the Shabha press agency in Aleppo. "Meanwhile Russia and Iran are occupying and violating Syrian territory."

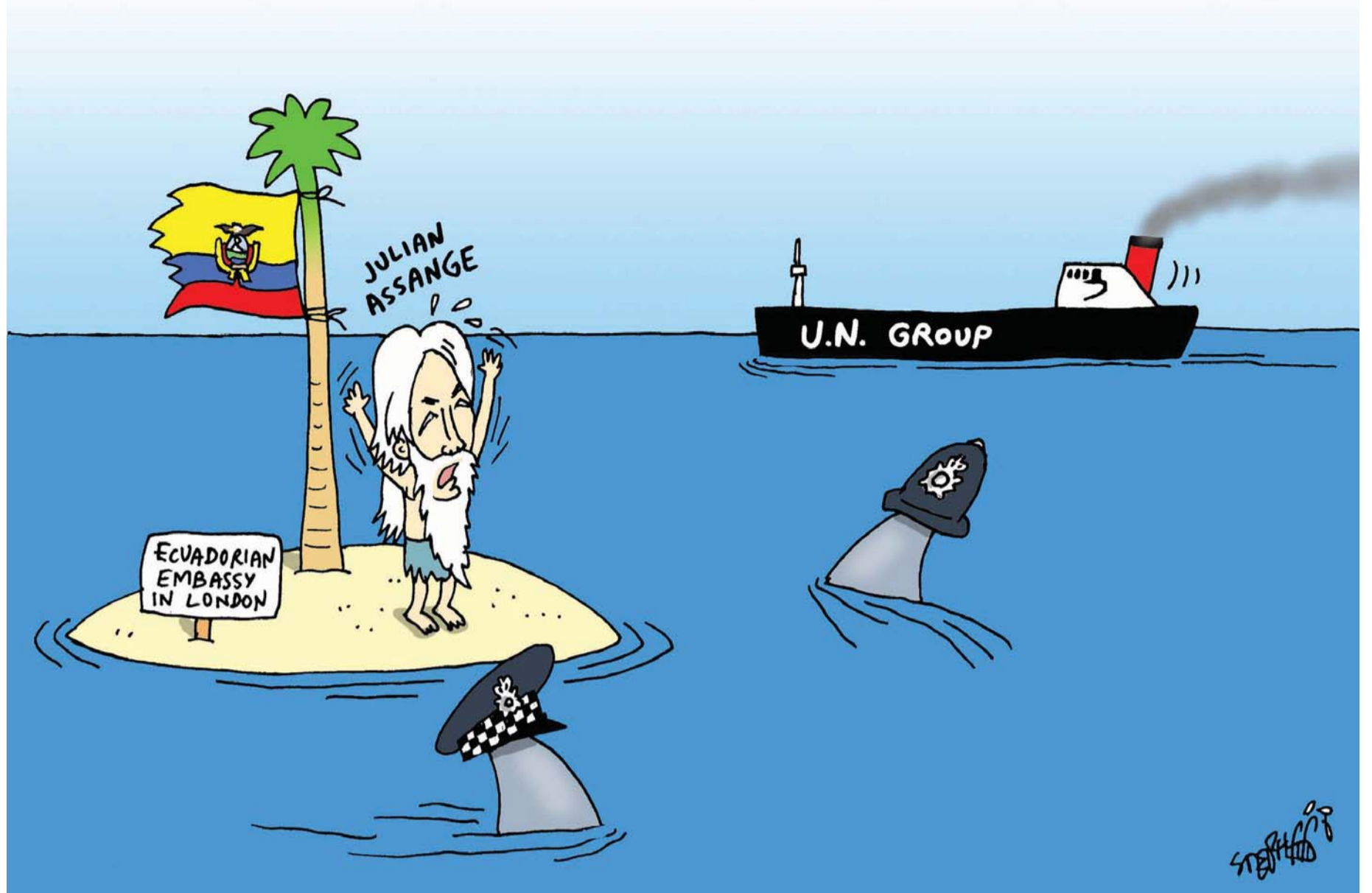
Few Options

Experts said the rebels had few options left. "There is not much manpower to spare as other rebel areas are also under pressure and this would not address the issue of enemy air power," said Itani. Syria's rebels have long sought anti-aircraft weaponry from international backers, but Washington has held back for fear they would end up in the hands of jihadists such as Al-Qaeda affiliate Al-Nusra Front or even the Islamic State group.

Some rebels, feeling betrayed by their international backers, may now throw their lot in with jihadist groups, Hokayem warned. Syria's regime, meanwhile, bolstered by Russia and Shiite fighters from Lebanon's Hezbollah movement and elsewhere, is likely to consolidate its hold over "useful Syria" - the densely populated west and coast of the country. "What the Russians and Assad are doing is they want to control western Syria and leave the Americans to deal with the jihadist monster in eastern Syria," where IS is most powerful, Hokayem said. "And it's working."

The rebel losses came as peace talks in Geneva collapsed, but analysts said they had always been doomed to fail. They said Russia's intervention and the latest advances had emboldened the regime to resist any concessions, and made it impossible for the opposition to negotiate. "Those who wanted to negotiate at Geneva would be accused of treachery, even more so given the results," said Balanche. —AFP

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Washington Watch

SILENCING CRITICS OF ISRAEL

By Dr James J Zogby

Israel doesn't accept criticism. In fact, whether from friend or foe, even mild criticism is viewed as an existential threat prompting Israeli officials to unleash a torrent of abuse in an effort to silence and/or punish critics. And given new initiatives being rolled out in Israel and here in the US, by Congress and some state legislatures, this effort to silence critics is endangering free speech and the search for peace. This worrisome tendency was on display in recent weeks as Israelis reacted with striking vehemence to remarks by United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, and US Ambassador Daniel Shapiro.

In a speech to the Security Council, the Secretary General decried the "unacceptable levels of violence and polarized public discourse" that has taken hold in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. He condemned the Palestinian attacks on Israeli civilians and insisted that "the full force of law must be brought to bear on all of those committing crimes - with a system of justice applied equally for Israelis and Palestinians alike".

But Ban went further, observing that "security measures alone will not stop the violence. They cannot address the profound sense of alienation and despair driving some Palestinians...Palestinian frustration is growing under the weight of a half century of occupation...[and] as oppressed peoples have demonstrated throughout the ages, it is human nature to react to occupation, which often serves as a potent incubator of hate and extremism".

The Secretary General went on to express his concern with recent Israeli announcements to expand settlements in the occupied lands, urging them to: stop the demolitions of Palestinian homes and confiscation of Palestinian lands; address the humanitarian situation in Gaza; and to take concrete steps to improve the daily

lives of the Palestinian people - noting that all of these behaviors made more difficult the achievement of an Israel-Palestinian peace. Ban offered, as well, a series of steps the Palestinians needed to take to end their internal divisions, put their house in order, and end incitement against Israel.

In an address to an Israeli think tank, Ambassador Shapiro echoed some of Ban's concerns, noting "we are concerned and perplexed by Israel's strategy on settlements. This government and previous Israeli governments have repeatedly expressed their support for a negotiated two-state solution - a solution that would involve both mutual recognition and separation ... Yet separation will become more and more difficult if Israel plans to continue to expand the footprint of settlements."

Shapiro also criticized the way Israel governs in the occupied lands, saying "too much Israeli vigilantism in the West Bank goes on unchecked," he said. "There is a lack of thorough investigations ... at times it seems Israel has two standards of adherence to rule of law in the West Bank - one for Israelis and one for Palestinians."

Double Standards

The Israeli reactions to both Ban and Shapiro were predictably harsh. Ban was accused of demonstrating a "double standard" with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu saying that the United Nations had "lost its neutrality and moral force" and charging that Ban had given "tail wind to terror". Netanyahu also called Shapiro's observations "unacceptable". The ambassador was accused of demonstrating a "double standard" and was crudely dismissed by a former Netanyahu aide as a "little Jew boy" courting favor.

All of this heightened hyper-reaction to criticism plays out against a backdrop of dangerous moves by Israel and its supporters in the US to not only defame and politically punish critics and in some instances to

go further by making criticism illegal. In Israel, steps have been taken to punish teachers and artists and the Knesset is considering a series of measures and the passage of a new law that target domestic critics in an effort to blacklist them as "traitors".

Meanwhile, here in the US, the Department of State has issued guidelines on anti-Semitism which, in addition, to including examples of displays of "hatred toward Jews...Jewish institutions and religious facilities" also goes down a dangerous path terming as anti-Semitic "applying double standards by requiring of [Israel] behavior not expected of any other democratic nation". And several state governments have passed laws prohibiting efforts that call for boycotting, sanctioning, or divesting from Israel because of Israel's treatment of Palestinians.

The net effect of all these measures will be to silence critics and to deny them not only their right to speak out, but to peacefully organize and act to affect change in Israel's policies in the occupied Palestinian lands. There is a certain irony in all of this because in their hysterical use of charge of "double standard" - ie that Israel is being "singled out for criticism" - it is Israel's supporters who are themselves guilty of a "double standard", since, if they were to have their way, it is Israel which would be singled out as the only country that cannot be criticized.

In the end, Ban and Shapiro are right. Israel's behavior is doing grave damage to the Palestinian people and to any hope for peace. And their critics are wrong. It is not a double standard to criticize Israel and it is most certainly not anti-Semitic. In fact, the overreaction to criticism harms our political discourse, damages the effort to combat real anti-Semitism, and because it serves to enable destructive Israeli policies, it makes a just peace a near unattainable goal.

NOTE: Dr James J Zogby is the President of the Arab American Institute

CLINTON MOVES AGGRESSIVELY TO HOLD OFF SANDERS

By Julie Pace

Hillary Clinton has been here before, watching a political rival generate youthful enthusiasm with lofty proposals she believes are going unchallenged. So on Thursday, she took matters into her own hands. In the first head-to-head debate between Clinton and Bernie Sanders, the former secretary of state tried to systematically undermine the Vermont senator's plans for a government-run healthcare system, his call for free college tuition and his foreign policy judgment. And she upbraided Sanders for his "artful smear" of the high-dollar speaking fees she received from Wall Street banks and the implication she's beholden to the financial firms as a result. "I really don't think these kinds of attacks by insinuation are worthy of you," Clinton said to Sanders. "If you have something to say, say it directly." Clinton's fiery performance was a manifestation of the frustration growing inside her campaign for weeks. Her team believes Sanders is getting away with breaking his pledge to avoid negative attacks. And they think he's not being straight with Americans about the cost of his proposals, particularly his call for a single-payer healthcare system.

With the attention of a prime-time television audience, Clinton set about trying to vet Sanders' proposals on her own. When it comes to his calls for broader government involvement in domestic programs, Clinton said, "The numbers don't add up." On foreign policy, she tried to poke a hole in Sanders' argument that his vote against the invasion of Iraq is proof he has the judgment necessary to manage America's involvement in the turbulent Middle East. "A vote in 2002 is not a plan to defeat ISIS," she said.

Addressing her own readiness to be president, Clinton said: "I've been vetted. There's hardly anything you don't know about me." While the

contest between Clinton and Sanders has grown more heated in recent weeks, Thursday's debate took the rancor to a new level. It followed Clinton's narrow victory in the Iowa caucuses and came just days before the primary in New Hampshire, where Sanders has for months maintained a large lead in preference polls.

Precarious

Clinton's allies don't believe her standing is nearly as precarious as it was during this stage of her 2008 primary fight against Barack Obama. They view Sanders as a candidate with narrower

appeal, particularly once the primary calendar moves to states with more racially diverse electorates. But there are enough eerie echoes of that contest eight years ago to spark growing anxiety, as well as a determination to not underestimate Sanders. Even if Clinton believes his proposals are unrealistic, he's amassing enough campaign cash to keep the race going for months - and potentially enough support among young voters and liberal Democrats to stay competitive in the delegate count.

In Thursday's debate, Sanders was still finding his way in his new role as a viable presiden-

tial candidate. He continued to be more at ease when discussing economic issues and was still searching for a foreign policy argument that holds up next to Clinton. He reiterated his belief that as president, he could muscle big government programs through a divided Washington, even those that include tax hikes to pay for the costs. And he kept up his intense attacks on the same Wall Street banks from which Clinton accepted speaking fees, casting her decision to take the money as an example of what he sees as the inappropriate blending of politics and big business. "Wall Street is an entity of unbelievable economic and political power," Sanders said. "That's a fact."

Even as the Democratic contest takes a more acrimonious turn, Clinton is mindful of the fine line she must walk between drawing sharp distinctions with Sanders and not turning off his supporters. She's still the frontrunner for her party's nomination and will need his voters - particularly the young people flocking to his campaign - in the general election. In the closing moments of the two-hour debate, Clinton was asked whether she might pick Sanders as her running mate if she becomes the nominee. She demurred - "I think that would be a little presumptuous" - but said Sanders would have a voice in her administration.

"If I'm so fortunate to be the nominee, the first person I will call to talk to about where we go and how we get it done will be Sen Sanders," she said. Sanders, who has his own reputation as an all-about-the-issues candidate at stake if the race devolves into personal attacks, returned the favor. "Sometimes in these campaigns, things get a little bit out of hand. I happen to respect the secretary very much," he said. What had started as a contentious confrontation then ended with a happy handshake. —AP



US Democratic presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders shake hands as they participate in the MSNBC Democratic Candidates Debate at the University of New Hampshire in Durham on Feb 4, 2016. —AFP

KITTEL CROWNED DUBAI TOUR WINNER

DUBAI: Germany's Marcel Kittel won the Tour of Dubai yesterday after he outprinted his rivals, claiming victory in the final fourth stage of the race. He replaced Italy's Giacomo Nizzolo, who had seized the overall leader's blue jersey on Friday but had to settle for sixth place in yesterday's race. Nizzolo took second place in the overall standings, four seconds behind Kittel. "I'm really, really happy. I was dreaming about this moment," Kittel said. "My team was fantastic all day and we did an incredible job to beat all the other teams, staying calm and attacking at the right moment." "There wasn't any major tactic to stop Nizzolo - we just said it's all or nothing and fully concentrated on the final sprint," he said. The German who rides for Etixx-QuickStep and had already won the first stage of the Dubai Tour, outpaced Italy's Elia Viviani, who came second, in yesterday's 132 km city-based course that ended under the world's tallest building - Burj Khalifa. —AFP

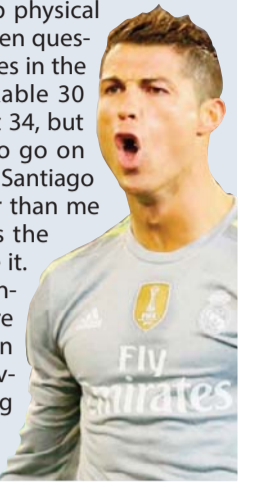


NORRIS RACES AHEAD IN MYANMAR OPEN

YANGON: South African's Shaun Norris claimed a seven-shot lead over his rivals yesterday in the third round of the Leopard21 Myanmar Open, the country's richest sporting event. The one-time Asian Tour winner started the day tied for first with India's S.S.P. Chawrasia and the pack with a 11-under-par 61 at the Royal Mingalardon Golf and Country Club in Yangon. The big drive brought him up to a three-day total of 23-under-par 193 at the tournament, which is sanctioned the Asian Tour and Japan Golf Tour Organisation (JGTO). "It was definitely a very exciting day," Norris said according to quotes provided by the Asian Tour. "Right from the start, everything went well. I could read the line and was striking it well, hitting the ball into places which I wanted it to be." Japan's Azuma Yano provided another highlight Saturday when he landed his first albatross on 14, moving him up to second place alongside Chawrasia and Korea's Wang Jeunghun. "Keeping the ball on the fairways was tough today but I managed to stay patient and my game really lifted off after that albatross where I had another two birdies on 15 and 18," Yano said. —AFP

PLENTY LEFT IN 31-YEAR-OLD 'BEAST' RONALDO: ZIDANE

MADRID: Real Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane has insisted three-time World Player of the Year Cristiano Ronaldo still has plenty more years at the top of the game thanks to his superb physical condition. Ronaldo turned 31 on Friday and has been questioned for his failure to deliver his best performances in the big games this season despite scoring a remarkable 30 goals in 28 games. Zidane retired at Madrid at just 34, but believes Ronaldo has the physical capabilities to go on longer, and hopes he also finishes his career at the Santiago Bernabeu. "All being well Cristiano can play longer than me for sure," said the Frenchman yesterday. "He feels the responsibility to look after himself and you can see it. He is 31, but physically he is a beast. "He can continue for many more years and hopefully they are here in Madrid." Zidane also highlighted his admiration for the exacting standards Ronaldo sets himself having scored 343 goals in 328 games since joining Madrid seven years ago.—AFP



HAHN SHOOTS BOGEY-FREE 65 TO TAKE PHOENIX OPEN LEAD

SCOTTSDALE: James Hahn has settled down a lot since his wild days - and nights - at the University of California led to the end of his college career. He still knows how to have a good time.

That was on display again Friday at the golf party known as the Waste Management Phoenix Open, where Hahn took the lead with a bogey-free 6-under 65 in breezy conditions.

"I'm having fun out there," Hahn said. He wasn't alone at TPC Scottsdale. An estimated 160,415 fans, not counting a large bobcat that sauntered between the first and second holes in the afternoon, packed the grounds. The crowd broke the Friday record of 123,674 set in 2014 and was the 10th-largest figure for any day in tournament history.

Hahn became an internet sensation in 2013 when he celebrated a birdie on the rowdy par-3 16th with a "Gangnam Style" dance. "It's the one week out of the year where you're allowed to do anything you want and not get fined," Hahn said. "It's good for golf, good for the game, good for the fans that come out here. They support the golf tournament, so might as well give them a show."

On Friday, he did 10 pushups after teeing off on the stadium 16th. "They came out to watch the gun show, so I popped them out right there on the tee box," Hahn said. Hahn had a 10-under 132 total on the Stadium Course to enter the weekend a stroke ahead of Rickie Fowler and Danny Lee. Fowler birdied his final hole for a 68, and Lee had a 66.

PLAYED A HUNDRED TIMES

Hahn opened with a chip-in birdie on the par-4 10th and birdied the two back-nine par 5s, making a 30-footer on the 13th and hitting a wedge to 7 feet on the 15th. On his final nine, he hit a wedge to 3 feet to set up a birdie on the par-4 second, chipped to 3 feet for another birdie on the par-5 third, and took the outright lead with a 10-footer on the par-4 sixth.

"Sleeping in my own bed this week, live about 10 minutes away," Hahn said. "I have played this course a hundred times. The only thing different about the course today, as any other day, is the greens are better."



SCOTTSDALE: James Hahn tees off on the second hole during the second round of the Waste Management Phoenix Open at TPC Scottsdale on Friday in Scottsdale, Arizona. —AFP

ZIKA WON'T STOP OLYMPICS, ONLY WAR HAS DONE THAT

RIO DE JANEIRO: The world's best known Olympic historian said Friday it will take something more destructive than the Zika virus to cancel the Rio de Janeiro Olympics. "Historically, the only times the games have been cancelled is in war - World War I and World War II," David Wallechinsky told the Associated Press. "Other than that, nothing has done it."

Brazil is the epicenter of the rapidly spreading mosquito-borne Zika virus, which is also generating rumors that South America's first games may be called off instead of opening on Aug. 5.

Researchers have linked the virus to a birth defect that can leave newborns with long-last health and developmental problems. Brazil's Sports Minister George Hilton issued a statement saying that canceling the games "is not in discussion," and Rio organizers and the International Olympic Committee have repeatedly shot down the notion it's even being considered.

Wallechinsky, president of the International Society of Olympic Historians,

said the only similar case was the 2014 Youth Olympics in Nanjing, China, when three athletes from west Africa were banned from competing over fears they had contracted the Ebola virus and the subsequent possibility of it spreading.

"That's the only time that disease has ever entered into it," he said. The 1916 Olympics were called off during World War I, and four games - two summer and two winter - were cancelled between 1940 and 1944. Two Summer Olympics were hit by partial boycotts in 1980 and 1984.

Wallechinsky said it was too late to move the games from Rio. "A lot of money has been put into this; the athletes, the infrastructure," he said. "It's pretty late to move the games so I think they'll go forward."

Brazil is spending at least \$10 billion to prepare for the games. Add to that, billions spent on television rights, and maybe just as much on sponsorship, advertising across 28 sport federations, and the more than 200 nations that participate.—AP

RENOVATED COURSE
"Wind was definitely in play today," Lee said. "The greens being so firm, you're kind of forced to hit driver. You want to hit a shorter club on the second shot." Harris English (67), Shane Lowry (70) and Hideki Matsuyama (70) were 7 under.

Keegan Bradley, penalized two strokes Thursday for having too many clubs in his bag, was 5 under after a 69. Bradley and caddie Steve Hale didn't notice the extra club until after the first hole in the first round. Bubba Watson shot his second straight 69. Two days after criticizing the renovated course and saying he was only playing the tournament out of loyalty to his sponsors, he apologized.

"I didn't explain myself well," Watson said. "My wife says that, too, when I go home. I don't communicate very well." The two-time Masters champion tied for second the last two years and has shot par or better in all 36 of his rounds in the event, playing to a cumulative 97 under.

Phil Mickelson was 2 under after a 71. The 45-year-old former Arizona State player bogeyed Nos. 14 and 15, hitting a hybrid approach into the water on 15.

"That kind of let the round get away," said Mickelson, the tournament winner in 1996, 2005 and 2013. "I'm looking forward to having another shot at this golf course tomorrow." — AP



GARMISCH: Lindsey Vonn, of the United States, competes during an alpine ski, women's World Cup downhill in Garmisch Partenkirchen, Germany, yesterday. —AP

LINDSEY VONN WINS WORLD CUP DOWNHILL

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN: Lindsey Vonn won a women's downhill on a demanding course by a big margin yesterday to extend her World Cup lead.

On a sunny day but with most of the Kandahar course in shade, Vonn made no obvious mistakes and finished 1.51 seconds ahead of Fabienne Suter of Switzerland.

Vonn raised her record to 38 downhill wins, the most by a woman in a specific discipline. With her 76th World Cup win, Vonn closed the gap on the all-time record of 86 victories held by Ingemar Stenmark of Sweden. Vonn has won five of six downhill races this season and six of the last seven going back to last season.

"You can never be unsatisfied with a one-and-a-half second lead, it was a great day, I am pretty psyched," the American said. With her fifth downhill win, Vonn equaled her record from the 2011-12 season. She now has nine wins overall.

"Everything is coming together well and I have a lot of confidence," Vonn said. Viktoria Rebensburg of Germany, winner of two consecutive giant slalom races coming into Saturday's event, was third, 1.57 seconds behind Vonn.

Only two of the first seven starters completed the course in tricky visibility, with shady and sunny sections. The race was interrupted several times to renew markings on the course.

"I skied this course a few times now and I think I had an advantage in that regard," Vonn said. "I knew exactly where I had to push the line and where I had to give extra direction to make sure I was safe in some sections and to take



GARMISCH: From left, second placed Switzerland's Fabienne Suter, first placed Lindsey Vonn, of the United States, and third placed Germany's Viktoria Rebensburg celebrate on the podium at the end of an alpine ski, women's World Cup downhill in Garmisch Partenkirchen, Germany, Saturday, yesterday. — AP

speed to the finish line. There were a lot of tactics involved." "It was definitely pretty difficult to find the right line, to find where you could attack and where you couldn't," said Vonn, who covered the 2,740-meter course in one minute, 40.80 seconds. Larisa Yurkiw of Canada was fourth, with another American, Laurene Ross, fifth. Last sea-

son's winner, Tina Weirather of Liechtenstein, was sixth.

Vonn increased her overall season lead over Lara Gut of Switzerland to 127 points. Gut made a mistake and nearly missed a gate to finish 14th. Vonn is 172 points clear of Yurkiw in downhill standings. —AP

WILLETT TAKES LEAD IN DUBAI

DUBAI: Danny Willett underlined his growing stature in European golf when a second consecutive round of seven-under par 65 at the Emirates Golf Club yesterday gave him sole possession of the lead going into the final round of the Dubai Desert Classic.

The Englishman broke through a tight leaderboard with a superb eagle on the par-5 13th hole and ended the day one shot ahead of Spain's Rafael Cabrera-Bello on 16-under par 200.

Cabrera-Bello, the 2012 champion here, submitted his third straight card of five-under par 67, while England's Andy Sullivan was third one behind the Spaniard at 202 after a round of 66.

All three players have something to prove in Dubai. Willett finished second in the Race to Dubai to Rory McIlroy after his brave attempt went down to the wire at last year's DP World Tour Championship here. In that same tournament, a McIlroy win had denied Sullivan the title and he finished runner-up.

Cabrera-Bello's biggest moment of despair of his career came in Dubai when he was leading the DP World Tour Championship by two shots before losing to Henrik Stenson in 2014 when he made a triple bogey on the 16th hole today.

World number two Rory McIlroy was languishing eight shots behind the leader. The Northern Irishman was two-over par after a terrible front nine, but then made six birdies on the back nine to finish on 68. Henrik Stenson, the second best

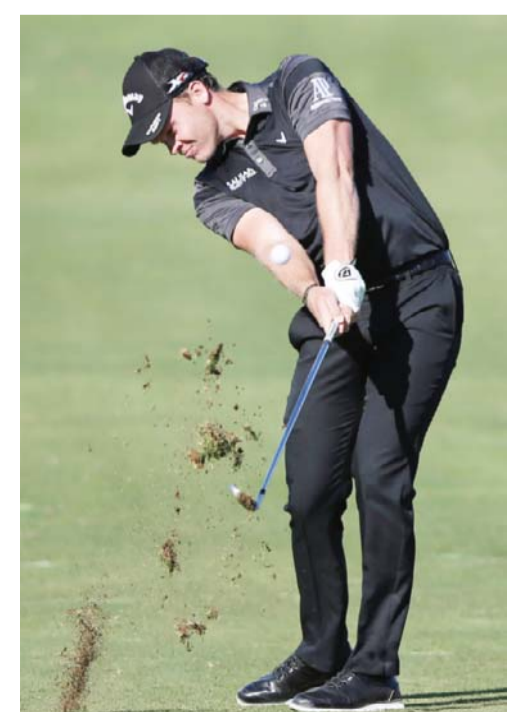
ranked player in the field at number six, was one shot better than McIlroy at nine-under par after a 70. Three time Dubai Desert Classic champion Ernie Els, who started the day one shot behind overnight leader Cabrera-Bello, struggled all day and for the first time in the history of the tournament, he posted an over-par third-round score of 74.

Willett, who saw his ball miraculously bounce out of water on the opening day, needed no such luck yesterday. He hit the ball well, making 14 greens in regulation, but putted even better, needing just 26 putts to complete the round.

The highlight of the round was the eagle three on the 13th hole, where he drained a curling 40-footer putt. That came moments after he had made his only bogey of the last two rounds on the 12th hole.

Willett was delighted with his form and said: "We came off the first obviously bogey in two days on 12, which was playing pretty tricky today. "So, come off a silly five there and two five-woods, a little bit of a different story to Thursday when we bounced off the rocks. Today, I hit a good one and saw a pretty good line straightaway. "Played some great golf yesterday and today. Kept the ball under fantastic control with some cross-winds, hit it in there close.

"Did everything right really. A couple hiccupps in there today where it could have been a little different, but kept the head on and kept moving forward." — AFP



DUBAI: Danny Willett of England plays a shot on the 14th hole during 3rd round of the Dubai Desert Classic golf tournament in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, yesterday. — AP

SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONS HAVEN'T ALWAYS BEEN 'SUPER'

NEW YORK: They have the gaudy rings and the rest of the swag that comes with being a Super Bowl champion. The prism of history, however, isn't so kind. Some years, the team that rampaged through the fall doesn't celebrate on a confetti-strewn field in winter, Lombardi Trophy thrust aloft in giddy celebration. For every '85 Bears and '72 Dolphins, there's a group whose grasp on the national imagination faded not long after the MVP's parade at Disney World.

Sure, everybody loves an underdog, but underdogs aren't born, they're made. Somewhere along the way, they tripped up before capturing the elusive "it" that carried them through the final Sunday of a six-month slog from training camp to triumph, a team of the year if not for the ages.

To call them the "worst" of the best would be a snarky misnomer. After all, the championship banners all come in the same size, right? Still, looking back, it's a wonder some got there at all.

TEAM: 1980 Oakland Raiders (11-5)
WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS? The first wild-card team to win the Super Bowl, the Raiders spent most of the year as a

mistake-prone offensive mess. Oakland turned it over 44 times and finished 16th in total yards. Jim Plunkett completed just 51 percent of his passes and had 16 interceptions to go with 18 touchdown passes. While Plunkett was markedly better in the playoffs, Oakland needed the Browns to be ... well, the Browns in the divisional round. Trailing by two in the final minute and well within field goal range, Cleveland's Brian Sipe was picked off in the end zone on a play infamously known as "Red Right 88" and the Raiders escaped with a 14-12 win.

TEAM: 1987 Washington Redskins (11-4)
WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS? Cornerback Lester Hayes and his stickum-laden fingers picked off 13 passes and the Raiders collected seven return touchdowns to bail the offense out that season. In a relatively easy Super Bowl win over the Eagles, the defense was dominant. Rod Martin picked off three passes in a 27-10 romp.

TEAM: 1990 New York Giants (13-3)
WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS? So what if they started 10-0? The Giants went 3-3 down the stretch and lost quarterback Phil Simms to a foot injury in Week 14, leaving the offense - such as it was - in the hands of a largely unproven Jeff Hostetler. New York's leading receiver

was scatback Dave Meggett (39 receptions) and the ghost of O.J. Anderson averaged 3.5 yards per carry.

TEAM: 2011 New York Giants (9-7)
WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS? Does it seem like we're picking on the Giants? Well, maybe we are. Still, these guys kind of deserve it. New York is the only Super Bowl winner to finish the regular season with a negative point differential (minus-six), ranked 25th in total defense, lost four of five in the middle of the year and was just 7-7 going into a "road" game against the Jets on Christmas Eve.

TEAM: 2011 New York Giants (9-7)
WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS? The Giants upset the 15-1 Packers in the divisional

round, dominating Aaron Rodgers at Lambeau Field in mid-January. They avoided catastrophe at rainy Candlestick Park to top the 49ers in overtime in the NFC title game, then stunned the Patriots and Tom Brady in the Super Bowl for the second time in five years. The defense that couldn't stop anybody during the regular season held Brady in check in Indianapolis and gave Eli one more Super Bowl title than big brother Peyton ... regardless of whether he's Elite or not.

HONORABLE MENTION
1967 Green Bay Packers: Even with all those Hall of Famers, Vince Lombardi's injury-decimated group was in the bottom half of the NFL in total offense and turned it over 36 times (including 17 picks by Bart Starr).

2001 New England Patriots: were 5-5 in November before Brady started to figure it out. 2012 Baltimore Ravens: only 11th in the league in point differential (plus-52) and if Denver's Rahim Moore times his jump properly on Joe Flacco's late heave to Jacoby Jones, the Ravens don't escape with the "Mile High Miracle."—AP

VAKATAWA, PLISSON SHINE AS FRANCE EDGE OUT ITALY

PARIS: Virimi Vakatawa and Jules Plisson shone in a new-look France team who secured a hard-fought 23-21 victory over Italy in their Six Nations opener yesterday.

Coach Guy Noves made a winning start as sevens stalwart Vakatawa, who had not played 15-man rugby in more than two years, scored the first try from the wing.

Damien Chouly and Hugo Bonneval also crossed the line and flyhalf Plisson kicked a conversion and two penalties.

Italy responded with tries by Sergio Parisse and Carlo Canna, who also added a drop goal, a penalty and a conversion. Kelly Haimona kicked a penalty.

The Stade de France was under tight security as the gates opened for the first time since last November's Paris attacks when assaults on bars, restaurants, a concert hall and outside the stadium killed 130 people. French president Francois Hollande attended the game.

Former Toulouse coach Noves was in charge of his first game since taking over from Philippe Saint-Andre after France were knocked out of last year's World Cup with a record defeat by New Zealand in the quarter-finals, and it was a close shave for his team.

They showed great attacking intentions, passing the ball around quickly, but scrumhalf Sebastien Bazy misfired three times before handing over the kicking duties to Plisson, and the home

side sometimes defended awfully.

"We were a bit dominated but prevailed thanks to the crowd," said captain Guilhem Guirado. "We can build on this victory but there's a lot to do and next week comes Ireland." Italy went ahead with a fine drop goal by Canna but France hit back when the burly Vakatawa, perfectly set up by fullback Maxime Medard, sidestepped a tackler and touched down for the first try of the tournament.

Louis Picamoles limped off the pitch with a right leg problem after less than 20 minutes. Parisse dived over with the ball in his armpit when the Italy forward drove over the try line after a lineout as Italy regained the lead.

Les Bleus, playing in a tricolore shirt, scored their second try shortly before the interval after Gael Fickou took a tap penalty and Chouly dived over at the end of an overlap.

Canna slotted home a penalty to put the Azzurri in front again and the flyhalf picked up the ball and touched down after Parisse was halted a couple of metres before the line. He converted his own try to give Italy an eight-point lead.

However, Vakatawa made the decisive break for Bonneval's try, which was converted by Plisson, who slotted home the winning penalty from almost 50 metres. France take on Ireland at the Stade de France next Saturday and Italy play England next Sunday. —Reuters



ANAHEIM: Anaheim Ducks' Mike Santorelli (25) steals the puck from Arizona Coyotes defenseman Oliver Ekman-Larsson (23) during the second period of an NHL hockey game in Anaheim, Calif, Friday.—AP

DUCKS BEAT COYOTES FOR 6TH STRAIGHT WIN

ANAHEIM: Corey Perry and Andrew Cogliano scored less than two minutes apart early in the third period to break open a tie game, and the Anaheim Ducks beat the Arizona Coyotes 5-2 on Friday night for their season-high sixth straight victory. Hampus Lindholm and Mike Santorelli scored 66 seconds apart in the second period, Patrick Maroon had a power-play goal and two assists, and Frederik Andersen made 23 saves. The Ducks, who were coming off Thursday's 4-1 victory over division-leading Los Angeles, are 13-3-1 since losing back-to-back road games to the Islanders and Rangers. Shane Doan had a goal and an assist for Arizona, Tobias Rieder also scored and Anders Lindback stopped 36 shots. The Coyotes are 2-6-2 since a season-best four-game winning streak.

LIGHTNING 6, PENGUINS 3

Ondrej Palat and Anton Stralman both scored twice, Tyler Johnson had a goal and two assists and the Tampa Bay Lightning beat the Pittsburgh Penguins for their eighth consecutive home win. Tampa Bay, 10-1 overall since Jan. 8, also got a goal from Alex Killorn. Nikita Kucherov had two assists to give him a point in 21 of his last 25 games (17 assists, 32 points). Patric Hornqvist, Sidney Crosby and Matt Cullen scored for the Penguins, who had a four-game winning streak end and lost in regulation for just the fourth time in 18 games (10-4-4). Marc-Andre Fleury was pulled midway through the second after allowing four goals on 14 shots and replaced by Jeff Zatkoff.

HURRICANES 5, JETS 3

Phillip Di Giuseppe, Andrej Nestrasil, Jordan

Staal and Justin Faulk scored in the first period, and the Carolina Hurricanes held on against the Winnipeg Jets. The Hurricanes scored four times on their first nine shots, taking a 4-0 lead just 10:04 into the game. Nestrasil added another goal in the third period, and Cam Ward made 33 saves. Alexander Burmistrov, Andrew Ladd and Blake Wheeler scored for Winnipeg. Jets rookie Connor Hellebuyck allowed three goals while facing only six shots before being replaced by Michael Hutchinson. Hutchinson, who hadn't played since a 4-1 loss in Anaheim on Jan. 3, finished with 21 saves.

BLUE JACKETS 2, FLAMES 1

Columbus rookie William Karlsson broke out of a slump with two goals to lead the surging Blue Jackets past the Calgary Flames. Karlsson scored the go-ahead goal 1:42 into the third period, taking advantage of a miscue by Dougie Hamilton. The 23-year-old Karlsson entered the night with just one goal in his previous 30 games. Columbus picked up six of eight possible points on a four-game road trip, and is 4-1-1 in its last six. Jiri Hudler scored at 7:09 of the opening period for the Flames, who have lost four of

NHL results/standings

Tampa Bay 6, Pittsburgh 3; Anaheim 5, Arizona 2; Calgary 1, Columbus 2; Winnipeg 3, Carolina 5.

Eastern Conference							Western Conference						
Atlantic Division							Pacific Division						
W	L	OT	GF	GA	PTS	Chicago	35	16	4	154	127	74	
Florida	31	15	5	146	113	Dallas	33	14	5	171	139	71	
Tampa Bay	29	18	4	139	121	St. Louis	29	17	8	131	131	66	
Boston	27	18	6	153	137	Colorado	27	23	4	147	148	58	
Detroit	25	18	8	126	133	Nashville	24	20	8	132	138	56	
Montreal	24	24	4	140	142	Minnesota	23	19	9	126	124	55	
Ottawa	23	23	6	146	168	Winnipeg	22	26	3	132	150	47	
Toronto	19	22	9	121	139	Central Division							
Buffalo	21	26	5	120	141	Los Angeles	31	17	3	137	119	65	
Metropolitan Division							San Jose	27	19	4	147	133	58
Washington	36	9	4	163	111	Anaheim	25	18	7	113	117	57	
NY Rangers	28	18	5	148	134	Arizona	24	22	6	139	162	54	
NY Islanders	26	17	6	137	124	Vancouver	20	19	12	123	141	52	
New Jersey	26	20	6	119	123	Calgary	22	25	3	131	149	47	
Pittsburgh	25	18	7	130	131	Edmonton	21	26	5	134	152	47	
Carolina	24	21	8	129	142	Note: Overtime losses (OT) worth 1 pt and not included in loss column (L).							
Philadelphia	23	18	8	119	132								
Columbus	21	28	5	138	170								



PARIS: France's Yoann Maestri, top, catches the ball during Six Nations tournament Rugby match, France vs Italy at Stade de France in Saint-Denis, north of Paris, yesterday. The match will be the first sporting event to be held at the national stadium since it was targeted by terrorists on 13 Nov.—AP

MANNING CHASES CROWNING GLORY

SAN FRANCISCO: Whether he wins or loses today, Peyton Manning has already assured himself a place in American football's pantheon of greats. But if the veteran Denver Broncos quarterback manages to mastermind an upset over the Carolina Panthers in Super Bowl 50 it will be the crowning achievement of a career that once looked to be in terminal decline.

Manning, 39, faced a bleak future in 2011 when neck surgeries left him struggling to throw properly, forcing him to miss the entire season with the Indianapolis Colts, who eventually cut him in March 2012.

Yet Manning went on to relaunch his career successfully with the Broncos, enjoying a vintage season to lead Denver to the Super Bowl

in 2014, where they lost heavily to the Seattle Seahawks.

This season Manning has fought through adversity once more to reach his fourth Super Bowl, where he is chasing a second championship ring to book-end the one he collected with the Colts in 2007.

The nadir of a rollercoaster season came in November when he produced a career-worst performance in a defeat to Kansas City, featuring just five completions for 35 yards and four interceptions.

Manning was benched for the first time in his career thereafter, losing his place to deputy Brock Osweiler.

But a refreshed Manning returned for the

play-offs and rewarded head coach Gary Kubiak by piloting the team through wins over Pittsburgh and New England.

"There is no question it's important to me, it's very personal to me," Manning said this week when asked to reflect on his tumultuous season. "No question this season has had some unique challenges."

Just 46 days shy of his 40th birthday, Manning will be the oldest starting Super Bowl quarterback in history when he takes to the field at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara on Sunday.

Many pundits believe it could be Manning's farewell appearance after 18 years in the NFL which have seen him accumulate more passing yards than any other quarterback.—AFP



CALIFORNIA: The Levi's Stadium is seen in advance of today's NFL Super Bowl 50 football game in Santa Clara, Calif.—AP

HALES LEADS ENGLAND TO VICTORY IN SECOND ODI

PORT ELIZABETH: Alex Hales fell one run short of a century but did enough to set up a five-wicket win for England over South Africa in the second one-day international at St George's Park yesterday.

The victory gave England a two-nil lead in the five-match series after a game where batsmen from both sides struggled to play fluently on a slow pitch. South Africa made 262 for seven and England needed a late flurry of strokes by Jos Buttler and Moeen Ali to reach the target in 46.2 overs. England captain Eoin Morgan praised his players for adapting to conditions that were much-changed from those in Wednesday's first match at Bloemfontein which they won in a high-scoring clash.

"They were completely different conditions," said Morgan. "That is what has impressed me most. The challenge was adapting to conditions. Alex Hales was magnificent." Captain AB de Villiers top-scored for South Africa with an unusually sedate 73, while Hales played a crucial anchor role for England before he was fifth man out for 99.

Hales and Joe Root (38) put on 97 for the second wicket and made sure England were always up with the required run rate. "They managed it very well and set it up for Jos Buttler, who played a magnificent knock," said De Villiers.

Hales looked set for his second one-day international hundred before he gloved an attempted pull shot against Kyle Abbott to wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock with his side still 61 runs away from their target. Buttler, who made a century in Bloemfontein, hit three boundaries in an over from Abbott, who finished with three for 58. Then he put the issue beyond doubt by hitting three sixes off successive balls from leg-spinner Imran Tahir. He made 48 not out off 28 balls, while Ali was unbeaten on 21 off 15 balls.

ALL-OUT ASSAULT

A double strike early in the last ten overs of the South African innings prevented the hosts from making a bigger total. De Villiers and JP Duminy were dismissed in the space of three balls after sharing a 107-run fourth wicket partnership.

The pair were threatening to go an all-out assault when De Villiers was superbly caught in the deep by a running, diving Chris Jordan off Ben Stokes. In the next over Duminy was leg before wicket to left-arm opening bowler Reece Topley for 47.

"We were about 20 or 30 runs short," said De Villiers. "I tried to pick it out at the end but then I got out and we lost a couple more wickets." De Villiers said his players felt "a little hard done by" after decisions went against Duminy and Rossouw, with South Africa having no more reviews after an earlier failed review by De Kock.

The normally free-scoring De Villiers took 72 balls to reach his slowest one-day international half-century in eight years, with just three fours, two of them from reverse sweeps.

De Villiers edged another four and seemed finally to be taking control when he pulled Jordan for a six, only to fall in the next over. He faced a total of 91 balls.

Duminy hit only two fours in a 66-ball innings. The tall Topley took four for 50, the best figures of his seven-match one-day international career. Stokes took two for 54 but England's two slow bowlers, leg-spinner Adil Rashid and off-spinner Moeen Ali, were mainly responsible for South Africa's innings becoming becalmed in the middle overs. Both bowled their allocation of ten overs in single spells and they conceded a total of only 84 runs.

By contrast, England did not allow South African leg-spinner Imran Tahir to settle. He conceded 66 runs in four separate spells. — AFP



WELLINGTON: Australia's Usman Khawaja bats in front of New Zealand's Luke Ronchi in their second One Day International cricket match at Westpac Stadium in Wellington, New Zealand, yesterday. — AP

AUSTRALIA BEAT N ZEALAND BY 4 WICKETS IN 2ND ODI

WELLINGTON: David Warner stood firm amid a top-order collapse to make 98 and set Australia on course to a four-wicket win over New Zealand in the second one-day cricket international yesterday, leveling the three-match series at 1-1.

Warner left Australia in a winning position as it chased New Zealand's 281-9 when he put on 122 for the first wicket with Usman Khawaja, who repaid his belated recall to one-day cricket with a classy half century. When Khawaja was out for 50, the Australia innings faltered and Warner saw four wickets fall for 22 runs, including captain Steve Smith (2) and George Bailey (0) to consecutive balls from Matt Henry.

Warner was out with Australia still 90 runs behind New Zealand but Mitch Marsh led Australia to 283-6 with 3.3 overs to spare, making an unbeaten 69 in a record 86-run stand for the seventh wicket with John Hastings (48 not out).

Australia might have feared it was a batsman short after allrounder James Faulkner, its regular closer, suffered a hamstring injury in the first match at Auckland - which New Zealand won by 159 runs - and was ruled out of the remainder of the series.

At six down when Marsh and Hastings came together, Australia was under severe pressure. But Marsh attacked from the outset, dashing to a half century from 43 balls, and Hastings took over Faulkner's role and posted his highest-ever score in a one-day international. Their partnership was a record for the seventh wicket for Australia against New Zealand.

The match now heads to a decider in Hamilton on Monday. "I'm a bit happier but I still think we've got a lot of room for improvement," Australia captain Steve Smith said. "But I thought the way we were able to scrape over the line there showed some great composure."

New Zealand fell short of a fully competitive total after winning the toss and batting. After an explosive beginning from captain Brendon McCullum, who made 28 from 12 balls, New Zealand was tied down by accurate bowling from Hastings, Josh Hazlewood and legspinner Adam Zampa who claimed two key wickets in his one-day international debut.

OUTSTANDING START

Kane Williamson made 60 and Grant Elliott 32 in a 63-run partnership for the fourth wicket which sought to rebuild a stuttering New Zealand innings. But both struggled to score fluently - Williamson made his half century from 71 balls and Elliott labored for 47 balls for his runs - and both fell to Zampa who ended his debut match with 2-57. "We were able to take plenty of wickets through the middle and that's the easiest way to slow down the scoring as we know," Smith said. "We missed a few opportunities and we've still got a lot of improving to do."

New Zealand slumped to 205-7 with fewer than 10 overs remaining before the innings was revived by a 61-run eighth-wicket stand between Mitchell Santner and Adam Milne (36). Santner went on to make an unbeaten 45 and played an important role with the ball later

when he took 3-47, with the wickets of Santner, Warner and Matt Wade (2).

Warner and Khawaja's outstanding start for Australia seemed to put the result beyond doubt. Back to his best form, Warner made a half century from only 35 balls with four fours and four sixes and completed his 100 partnership with Khawaja in 12.2 overs.

Khawaja, who was playing his first ODI in three years after being continually overlooked by the Australia selectors, reached his 50 from 48 balls with seven boundaries.

New Zealand fought back strongly when it captured the wickets of Khawaja, Smith, Bailey, Glenn Maxwell and Matt Wade in quick succession but couldn't claim the final wicket it needed to expose the Australia tail.

"I thought 281 was slightly under-par," McCullum said. "It probably summed up the game for us. We were just okay." — AP

SCOREBOARD

PORT ELIZABETH, South Africa: Scoreboard yesterday after England beat South Africa by five wickets in the second one-day international at St. George's Park.

South Africa		England	
Hashim Amla b Topley	4	Jason Roy b Abbott	14
Quinton de Kock lbw b Stokes	22	Alex Hales c De Kock b Abbott	99
Faf du Plessis c Jordan b Rashid	46	Joe Root b Abbott	38
AB de Villiers c Jordan b Stokes	73	Eoin Morgan c De Villiers b Morkel	29
JP Duminy lbw b Topley	47	Ben Stokes b Morkel	0
Rilee Rossouw c Buttler b Topley	11	Jos Buttler not out	48
Farhaan Behardien not out	23	Moeen Ali not out	21
Kagiso Rabada c Morgan b Topley	12	Extras: (11lb, 3w)	14
Kyle Abbott not out	7	TOTAL: (for 5 wickets)	263
Extras: (8lb, 9w)	17	Overs: 46.2	
TOTAL: (for 7 wickets)	262	Did not bat: Chris Jordan, Adil Rashid, David Willey, Reece Topley.	
Overs: 50.		Fall of wickets: 1-20, 2-117, 3-169, 4-176, 5-202.	
Did not bat: Morne Morkel, Imran Tahir.		Bowling: Kyle Abbott 9-1-58-3 (1w), Kagiso Rabada 9-0-35-0, Morne Morkel 8.2-0-31-2 (1w), Imran Tahir 10-0-66-0, Farhaan Behardien 6-0-35-0 (1w), JP Duminy 4-0-27-0.	
Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-53, 3-98, 4-205, 5-206, 6-225, 7-245.		Result: England won by five wickets.	



PORT ELIZABETH: South Africa's A.B. De Villiers, right, at the wicket with England's Jos Buttler keeps wicket, left, during the second One Day International cricket match in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, yesterday. — AP

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close of play in the second One Day International between New Zealand and Australia yesterday in Wellington, New Zealand.

New Zealand Innings		Australia Innings	
M. Guptill c Khawaja b M. Marsh	31	U. Khawaja c∓b Santner	50
B. McCullum b Boland	28	D. Warner lbw b Santner	98
K. Williamson c Smith b Zampa	60	S. Smith c Ronchi b Henry	2
H. Nicholls c Wade b M. Marsh	4	G. Bailey b Henry	0
G. Elliott c Maxwell b Zampa	32	G. Maxwell b Boult	6
C. Anderson c Wade b Hazlewood	16	M. Marsh not out	69
L. Ronchi c M. Marsh b Boland	19	M. Wade c Milne b Santner	2
M. Santner not out	45	J. Hastings not out	48
A. Milne c Smith b Hazlewood	36	Extras (lb-2 w-6)	8
M. Henry b Hazlewood	0	Total (for 6 wickets, 46.3 overs)	283
T. Boult not out	2	Fall of wickets: 1-122 U. Khawaja, 2-133 S. Smith, 3-133 G. Bailey, 4-144 G. Maxwell, 5-191 D. Warner, 6-197 M. Wade.	
Extras (lb-4 w-4)	8	Did not bat: A. Zampa, J. Hazlewood, S. Boland	
Total (for 9 wickets, 50 overs)	281	Bowling: T. Boult 9.3-0-66-1(w-3), M. Henry 10-0-57-2, K. Williamson 2-0-16-0 (w-1), A. Milne 9-0-58-0 (w-1), M. Santner 10-0-47-3, G. Elliott 3-0-20-0 (w-1), C. Anderson 3-0-17-0.	
Fall of wickets: 1-35 B. McCullum, 2-88 M. Guptill, 3-95 H. Nicholls, 4-158 K. Williamson, 5-164 G. Elliott, 6-193 L. Ronchi, 7-205 C. Anderson, 8-266 A. Milne, 9-266 M. Henry		Result: Australia won by 4 wickets.	
Bowling: J. Hazlewood 10-0-61-3 (w-1), J. Hastings 10-1-42-0 (w-1), S. Boland 10-0-61-2, A. Zampa 10-0-57-2 (w-1), M. Marsh 6-0-30-2			

CELTICS STUN CAVALIERS ON BRADLEY'S 3-POINTER AT BUZZER

CLEVELAND: Avery Bradley made a corner jumper at the horn to give the Boston Celtics a stunning 104-103 win over the Cleveland Cavaliers on Friday night. Bradley's shot just in front of Boston's bench dropped through as the final second ticked off the clock, giving the Celtics their eighth win in nine games. Boston trailed by five points with 18 seconds left before Celtics forward Jae Crowder made a 3-pointer - his only basket - and Evan Turner scored on a layup while being fouled by J.R. Smith with 4 seconds to go. Turner missed his free throw but the ball went out of bounds off Cleveland's LeBron James. Boston coach Brad Stevens drew up an inbounds play during a video review and Bradley dropped his shot, triggering a wild celebration by the Celtics. James led the Cavs with 30 points.

NUGGETS 115, BULLS 110

Danilo Gallinari scored 33 points and Denver rallied after Chicago lost All-Star Jimmy Butler to a sprained left knee. Emmanuel Mudiay scored 22 points and Will Barton had 18 for the Nuggets, who outscored the Bulls 42-21 in the fourth quarter. It was their ninth straight victory over Chicago in Denver. Butler was fouled near the basket by Joffrey Lauvergne and fell awkwardly to the floor with 1:06 remaining in the second quarter. He was tended to by medical personnel before getting to his feet and gingerly making his way to the free throw line, where he made one of the two foul shots. Butler was then helped to a rolling chair and

wheeled into the locker room for further examination.

SPURS 116, MAVERICKS 90

Kawhi Leonard scored 16 of his 23 points in the first half and San Antonio handed Dallas its largest halftime deficit in franchise history in a blowout. LaMarcus Aldridge had 14 points and 10 rebounds in his first game in his hometown since signing a four-year, \$80 million contract with the Spurs. San Antonio (42-8) matched its best 50-game start with its 14th win in 16 games against its Texas rival. Patty Mills added 10 of his 16 points before halftime, when the Spurs led by 36 at 62-26 to top Dallas' biggest previous deficit by a point from Dec. 29, 1992, at Sacramento. That 58-point loss to the Kings (139-81) was the worst in Dallas history.

HEAT 98, HORNETS 95

Hassan Whiteside had 10 points, 10 rebounds and 10 blocked shots and Miami came up with two key steals in the closing seconds of a victory over Charlotte. Dwyane Wade scored 22 points and Chris Bosh added 20 points for the Heat, who have won six of seven. Marvin Williams scored 27 points for the Hornets, and Nicolas Batum added 21. The Hornets led 93-90 with 1:10 remaining, but Wade made a layup and Bosh added a three point play to make it 95-93 with 23.5 seconds left. Charlotte had a chance to tie it, but Justise Winslow's steal set up a free throw by Luol Deng for a 96-93 advantage with 13.2

seconds left. Wade then stole the ball from Kemba Walker and passed to Deng for a fast-break dunk with 4.3 seconds remaining and the Heat's biggest lead of the game.

GRIZZLIES 91, KNICKS 85

Jeff Green scored 16 points, including two free throws with 6.2 seconds left, to help Memphis hold off New York for its fifth straight win. Matt Barnes had 12 points and Zach Randolph and Marc Gasol each had 10 for Memphis. Jose Calderon led the Knicks with 18 points. Kristaps Porzingis had 17 points and 10 rebounds. The Grizzlies led by nine points in the fourth quarter but could not pull away from the Knicks, who were playing without Carmelo Anthony. Arron Afflalo's 3-pointer brought New York within 87-85 with 35 seconds left. After Gasol missed a layup, Afflalo missed a potential tying jumper with 8 seconds remaining. Afflalo then fouled Green, and he made his two free throws.

CLIPPERS 107, MAGIC 93

Chris Paul had 21 points and six assists, DeAndre Jordan had 12 points and 18 rebounds and Los Angeles beat Orlando for its fifth win in six games. J.J. Redick and Jamal Crawford each scored 20 points for the Clippers. Victor Oladipo led the Magic with 18 points, and Evan Fournier scored 16 off the bench. Tobias Harris had 13 points and eight rebounds before leaving with an injury during the fourth quarter. Orlando has lost three straight. The Magic never led and gave up at

least 107 points for the eighth straight game.

NETS 128, KINGS 119

Joe Johnson had season highs with 27 points and 11 assists, and Brooklyn had its best offensive performance of the season in beating Sacramento. The Nets set season bests for points and 3-pointers while snapping a five-game losing streak. Reserve Bojan Bogdanovic made seven of their 18 3-pointers, while Johnson added five and Donald Sloan made four. Brooklyn was 18 for 28 (64.3 percent) from behind the arc and shot 55.8 percent overall. Brook Lopez added 26 points and 12 rebounds for the Nets, Bogdanovic scored 23 points.

WIZARDS 106, 76ERS 94

John Wall had his fourth career triple-double with 18 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists, leading Washington over Philadelphia. Marcin Gortat had 21 points and had 13 rebounds for the Wizards, who had lost five of their previous six. Bradley Beal scored 22 in his first start since Dec. 9. Ish Smith, cut by Washington during training camp, led Philadelphia with 22 points. Smith, playing for his ninth NBA team in just six seasons, scored 18 points in the third quarter. The Wizards never trailed and thanks to their highest scoring first quarter of the season, raced to a 38-18 lead. By midway in the third quarter, they led 76-51. The 76ers cut the lead to 92-83 with 6:12 to play, but made no further headway. — AP



CLEVELAND: Boston Celtics' Jared Sullinger, center, drives to the basket against Cleveland Cavaliers' Tristan Thompson and Cleveland Cavaliers' Kyrie Irving, top, in the first half of an NBA basketball game Friday, in Cleveland. — AP

NAPOLI FANS TO DEFY RACISTS WITH KOULIBALY MASK PLAN

MILAN: Thousands of Napoli fans are set to show their support for racism victim Kalidou Koulibaly by donning masks of the defender when the Serie A title challengers host Carpi today. France-born Senegal international Koulibaly was the victim of monkey chants during Napoli's 2-0 win at Lazio on Wednesday when the referee, in accordance with league regulations, halted the match to demand a stop to the abuse. Lazio were later handed a 50,000 euros fine and will see the Curva Nord (North End) of the Stadio Olimpico closed to fans for their next two league games.

Referee Massimiliano Irrati's decision to stop the game for three minutes to

restore order was roundly applauded, including by Koulibaly—who showed his disdain for the racists by offering his Napoli shirt to a young Lazio-supporting ball boy.

A supporters' group, 'Quelli del Sangue Azzurro' (The Blue Blooded Ones), are now encouraging Napoli fans to show they stand fully behind Koulibaly by wearing the masks during today's home game at the San Paolo stadium. Napoli are commonly known as the Azzurri (The Blues).

A statement from the group said: "Everyone in Naples is offended by what happened to our young star. Because of this, we want to show our full support to

Koulibaly.

"We are all with you, Kalidou. Our invitation to Napoli fans is to print a photo of the defender and put it on your face when the teams come on the pitch." The gesture is reminiscent of the stance taken by Treviso players in 2001 to show their support for 18-year-old Nigerian player Schengun Omolade. He fell victim to the racism of Treviso's 'Blue Army' supporters' group—notorious for abusing black players from other teams—when they turned on him and sang: "We don't want blacks in our team."

At their next game, Treviso's starting team ran out on to the pitch with their faces blackened as Omolade—who had

not been informed of the players' plans—sat on the bench astounded.

For what is now regarded as the first real stand against racist supporters in Italian football, Treviso's players were feted in the national press—although they famously refused to blacken their faces for a subsequent photo call.

"Our gesture has been made, and we don't want to be seen to be benefiting from it," said then Treviso senior player Fabio Viviani. Italy's problem with racist supporters is well documented, with several high profile players falling victim to abuse over the years. Black Dutch players Ruud Gullit and Aaron Winter complained of racist abuse in their time in

Italy, sparking a 'No al razzismo!' (No To Racism) day in 1992. Former France and Arsenal midfielder Patrick Vieira was insulted by Lazio fans when he played at Inter Milan, as was former England player Paul Ince when he played with the Nerazzurri between 1995-1997. Mario Balotelli, the Liverpool striker who is on loan at AC Milan, has suffered from racist taunts on and off during his years of playing in Italy's top flight.

In January 2013, AC Milan player Kevin-Prince Boateng sparked a walk-off by the team after he and several of the team's black players were victim to monkey chants in a friendly with lower league side Pro Patria. —AFP

PSG LOOKING TO EXTEND UNBEATEN RUN AT MARSEILLE

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain will be looking to extend their Ligue 1 unbeaten streak at bitter rivals Marseille today as the hosts bid to end their own record winless run at home. Laurent Blanc's champions stretched their unbeaten run to a record 33 matches with a 3-1 win over Lorient mid-week and next tackle Marseille who have not won at their Velodrome Stadium since September. PSG—with 66 points from 24 games—have an impressive 24-point lead with their fourth consecutive and sixth overall league title beckoning. The Parisians have won their past eight 'Classique' clashes with Marseille, and another would give them a new record of consecutive wins against their rivals.

"To win we have to stick to our philosophy. We can't change it during a Classique," said Brazilian defender Maxwell, who has never been on the losing side in 10 previous meetings with Marseille.

"We're in a good place. We have to be confident, and have the same desire we've shown up until now. That makes the difference in these matches." Marseille, who claimed the last of their ten Ligue 1 titles back in 2010, are eighth in the league — 32 points behind PSG. A 1-0 victory at Montpellier Tuesday pushed Marseille's unbeaten league run to 11 matches, with their last away loss a 2-1 defeat to PSG at the Parc de Princes on October 4.

But that impressive statistic conceals misery at their Velodrome stronghold where they have not won since September 13.

Blanc's side will be looking to further flex their muscles with a Champions League last 16 tie against Chelsea on February 16. But counterpart Michel can count on the support of their loyal fans with PSG's supporters banned from travelling to Marseille because of security concerns.

'MUST WIN MATCH'

Marseille will be without newly-signed winger Florian Thauvin after he received a red card against Montpellier, but Scotland striker Steven Fletcher, also a transfer window signing, should give the southern giants fresh legs. "It's a match we have to win, for the club, for the fans and above all for us," said Marseille midfielder Remy Cabella.

"If we got a result against Paris it would give us a boost." Striker Georges-Kévin Nkoudou added: "I know that there is always pressure between Paris and Marseille, but it remains a classic, and it's up to us to rise to the occasion."

Second-placed Monaco, 24 points behind PSG, host Nice, three points behind in third, in a classic Riviera derby on Saturday.

The clash is crucial for qualification for elite European football next season, with Monaco's billionaire Russian owner Dmitry Rybolovlev making a rare appearance at training to motivate the troops.

"He said some words to motivate us, to wake us up and to take this match seriously," said Morocco midfielder Nabil Dirar.

Lyon, back into the top half, above 11th-place Bordeaux on goal difference, are six points adrift of the Champions League spots. Coach Bruno Genesio is hopeful their 3-0 win over Bordeaux will boost his side. "It's good for morale," said Genesio. "I hope it will be the spark that will open the way to some good results."

Lyon travel to Angers, sitting fourth with 37 points, and looking to get back to winning ways after losing 2-1 at Reims, while Bordeaux host fifth-placed Saint-Etienne.

Nantes will be looking to extend their unbeaten streak to 11 matches at Toulouse as Lille host Rennes, Guingamp travel to Corsica side Gazelec Ajaccio and Reims visit Caen. —AFP



BERLIN: Dortmund's defender Mats Hummels (L) and Hertha Berlin's Japanese midfielder Genki Haraguchi vie for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match, Hertha Berlin v Borussia Dortmund, at the Olympic stadium in Berlin yesterday. — AFP

AUBAMEYANG FAILS TO FIRE AS MOURINHO SEES DORTMUND DRAW

BERLIN: Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, the Bundesliga's top-scorer, failed to fire yesterday as Borussia Dortmund were held to a goalless draw at Hertha Berlin with Jose Mourinho watching in the stands.

Aubameyang, who has scored 20 league goals this season, had a rare off day at Berlin's Olympic Stadium, managing just 11 touches, with no shots on goal, in his 71 minutes. The Gabon forward-Africa's player of the year—was eventually hauled off by Dortmund coach Thomas Tuchel and was left scowling on the bench.

It was only the sixth time this season that 'Auba' has failed to score in one of Dortmund's league games. Berlin's Ivory Coast striker Salomon Kalou went close for Hertha, while Vedad Ibisevic was denied a second-half penalty.

The game failed to deliver as second-placed Dortmund remained ten points clear of Hertha. "It took a while for us to get into the game and come to terms with the conditions," said Tuchel, who criticised the Berlin pitch.

"We dominated the second half, but the bottom line is that we didn't have the form to

decide the game." Mourinho made a surprise appearance in Berlin after being invited to the Olympic Stadium by Dortmund's CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke.

The visit came just 24 hours after Mourinho's representatives reportedly held talks with Manchester United about replacing Louis van Gaal as manager of the Premier League club.

The 53-year-old has been linked with the Old Trafford post since being sacked by Chelsea in December. Dortmund's result means leaders Bayern Munich can go 10 points clear if they win at Bayer Leverkusen on Saturday night.

Less than a fortnight before their Champions League last 16, first-leg clash at Ghent, Wolfsburg crashed to a 3-0 defeat at Schalke to remain winless in their last five games.

Dieter Hecking's Wolves had few answers as Klaas-Jan Huntelaar, Johannes Geis and new-signing Alessandro Schoepf netted for Schalke.

The result pushed the Royal Blues up to fourth as Wolfsburg drop to eighth.

Stuttgart are now up to 11th, five points from the bottom three, with their fourth straight league win in a bad-tempered 4-2 victory at

Eintracht Frankfurt as both sides finished with 10 men. Stuttgart raced into a 2-0 lead as Christian Gentner, then Daniel Didavi scored for the visitors before but the latter was shown a red card after picking up a second booking on 67 minutes.

Frankfurt captain Alex Meier pulled it back to 2-1 with 40 minutes left before Stuttgart pulled away with goals by defender Georg Niedermeier and Filip Kostic.

Eintracht defender Carlos Zambrano also saw red after being sent off 15 minutes from time for his second booking. Frankfurt's Szabolcs Huszti then made it 4-2 by scoring in the 90th minute.

Hanover 96 remain rooted to the bottom of the table after their 1-0 defeat at home to Mainz as Spanish midfielder Jairo scored the first-half winner. Ingolstadt won the Bavaria derby with a 2-1 win at home to Augsburg thanks to Moritz Hartmann's winning penalty five minutes from time. On Friday, Borussia Moenchengladbach got back to winning ways with a 5-1 thrashing of strugglers Werder Bremen as teenage Danish defender Andreas Christensen, on loan from Chelsea, netted twice. —AFP

HAZARD REVEALS MOURINHO APOLOGY

LONDON: Eden Hazard sent a text message to Jose Mourinho after his sacking to apologise for his poor form, the Chelsea winger revealed in a British newspaper interview published today.

"I sent him the message to say I was sorry he had gone and ... well ... just that I was sorry," Hazard told The Guardian. "We'd enjoyed all that success together last season, but this time round we hadn't."

Hazard, 25, swept the board in last season's player of the year awards after Chelsea won a Premier League and League Cup double.

But his form has nose-dived this season, mirroring the fortunes of the team, whose record of nine defeats in their opening 16 league game saw Mourinho sacked as manager in December.

"I felt a little bit guilty because I'd been player of the year," added Hazard, who is yet to score in the league this season.

"I'd been one of the most decisive players, and this year I'd performed less well. I hadn't been at the same level. So I sent that text to Jose and he came back to me, wishing me all the best for the future.

"For a team of champions to go through what we have this year, even I can't explain. Things have been better recently, but we're still not winning games quite as we used to.

"No one can put his finger on what's happened at Chelsea." Chelsea, with interim manager Guus Hiddink now at the helm, host Manchester United in the league today. — AFP



BOLOGNA: Bologna's forward from Italy Emanuele Giaccherini (L) fights for the ball with Fiorentina's midfielder from Chile Matias Ariel Fernandez during the Serie A football match Bologna vs Fiorentina at "Renato Dall'Ara" Stadium in Bologna yesterday. — AFP

VAN GAAL CIRCLED BY CHELSEA MANAGERS PAST AND PRESENT

LONDON: Manchester United's tentative resurgence will be tested today when Louis van Gaal pits his side against a Chelsea team slowly finding their feet under his countryman Guus Hiddink.

It is only two weeks since United were booed off at Old Trafford after a 1-0 home defeat by Southampton, but consecutive wins — 3-1 at Derby County in the FA Cup and 3-0 at home to Stoke City in the league—have convinced Van Gaal that his side can still win the title.

United go into the weekend 10 points below leaders Leicester City in fifth place and five points below the Champions League berths.

"We don't have to exaggerate, but I have the feeling if we shall beat Chelsea—although that is very difficult, because under Guus Hiddink they don't lose—then I think our league is starting again," Van Gaal said.

"Michael Carrick said to me and I have the same feeling, the competition is not yet finished, not for Manchester United or the other teams. "We have the feeling, and that's because we are winning twice in a row and with sparkling football."

United played with scarcely seen enterprise against Stoke, rejuvenated captain Wayne Rooney scoring his seventh goal in seven games and Anthony Martial capping a flowing move by curling in a goal that left the pundits purring.

But United remain a puzzling team and Van Gaal continues to be dogged by speculation about his future, with reports emerging on Friday that the club's hierarchy have made an approach to Jose Mourinho, who was sacked by Chelsea in December.

The excitement sparked by the announcement of Pep Guardiola's impending arrival as Manchester City manager has only served to underline the sense of uncertainty hovering over the dug-outs at both United and Chelsea.

Mourinho's shadow looms large above Van Gaal's head, while Hiddink knows that he is only keeping the seat warm for whomever Chelsea decide to appoint as the long-term successor to the Portuguese.

'BEAUTIFUL SPRING'

Guardiola, 45, will join a posse of highly regarded forty-something coaches in England that already includes Liverpool's Jurgen Klopp and Tottenham Hotspur's Mauricio Pochettino, and at 64 and 69 respectively, Van Gaal and Hiddink could be forgiven for feeling like yesterday's men.

Hiddink can at least console himself that unlike his compatriot, he is not deemed to be sitting on an ejector seat.

The objectives of his mission were clearly defined from the start and for the moment he is fulfilling them, having stabilised Chelsea in the league and steered them into the FA Cup

fifth round, ahead of their Champions League last 16 clash with Paris Saint-Germain.

But although the champions are unbeaten in nine games under Hiddink, they have won just two of the seven league matches he has overseen, and he sees Sunday's game at Stamford Bridge as an opportunity to make a breakthrough.

"This is a big match," Hiddink told his pre-game media conference. "Big clubs through the years, both Manchester United and us like to compete for the title. They have underperformed and we are getting back on track a little bit."

"Of course I would like some more victories instead of the unbeaten draws, but the team is step by step more stable and now we hope to go to in a beautiful spring time."

Eden Hazard is expected to return for Chelsea, having made a positive impression off the bench in the mid-week 0-0 draw at Watford, and fellow winger Pedro Rodriguez is fit after a groin injury.

Loic Remy (calf) and Radamel Falcao (thigh) remain out and loan signing Alexandre Pato is not yet match-fit, while skipper John Terry could line up against United for the final time in a Chelsea shirt.

United, who have not beaten Chelsea in nine encounters, could welcome back Phil Jones (ankle), but remain without Bastian Schweinsteiger, Ashley Young, Marcos Rojo, Antonio Valencia and Luke Shaw. — AFP

Sports

Lindsey Vonn
wins World
Cup downhill



Torres scores
100th goal
for Atletico



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MANCHESTER: Manchester City's Sergio Aguero, centre, scores during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and Leicester City at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, England, yesterday. — AP

HUTH FIRES LEICESTER SIX POINTS CLEAR



MANCHESTER: Robert Huth scored twice as Leicester City produced an astonishing demonstration of their Premier League title credentials by winning 3-1 at closest rivals Manchester City yesterday.

Huth broke the deadlock in the third minute from a Riyad Mahrez free-kick and after Mahrez had netted a brilliant solo goal early in the first half, the German centre-back headed in his second goal from a corner on the hour.

Sergio Aguero replied for City with a glancing header in the 87th minute—his seventh goal in five games—but a rain-lashed day at the Etihad Stadium belonged to Leicester.

It was the most sensational win to date of their fairytale 12-month rise from the bottom to the top of the table and left Claudio Ranieri's side six points clear of second-place City. Tottenham Hotspur, who host ed Watford yesterday, and Arsenal, who visit Bournemouth today, are both two points further back. Leicester have now won three league games in a row and remain on course for the most improbable English title triumph since promoted Nottingham Forest won the league in 1977-78.

City, playing at home for the first time since Pep Guardiola was announced as the successor to manager Manuel Pellegrini, have now lost six league games this season-

as many as when they last won the league in 2014. With this stunning result, any doubts about Leicester's ability to pull off the most unlikely title victory in Premier League history were removed once and for all. Furthermore, the four-goal swing in goal difference meant that as well as a six-point lead over City, Leicester's goal difference of +20 is now just one goal worse than their chief rivals'.

Most had predicted an exciting meeting between two sides who believe that attack is the best form of defence and the opening three minutes did not disappoint. Leicester shot into the lead in dramatic fashion from a free-kick conceded when Aleksandar Kolarov felled Mahrez, who took the set-piece himself.

After much jockeying for position in the area, City did a poor job of marking and Huth was able to ghost ahead of Martin

Demichelis, scoring from six yards with a shot that deflected in off the unfortunate home defender.

The goal allowed Leicester to play on the counter-attack—their preferred modus operandi—and City mustered just one shot on target in the first half, with Kasper Schmeichel smothering a shot from Aguero. City goalkeeper Joe Hart had to rush out and save from Jamie Vardy and Danny Drinkwater, but Leicester continued to probe and three minutes into the second half they doubled their lead.

N'Golo Kante won the ball inside his own half and advanced before finding Mahrez, who neatly evaded Pablo Zabaleta's vain sliding effort to intercept.

There was still much for Leicester's in-form winger to do, but he did it, outfoxing Demichelis with a step-over and rifling an unstoppable right-foot shot past Hart from

15 yards. It was a stunning development and one which prompted Pellegrini to throw on Fernando and Kelechi Iheanacho.

The changes almost brought instant results as Fernando headed a David Silva corner goalwards, only to see ex-City goalkeeper Schmeichel brilliantly claw his effort off the line. City's recovery was short-lived, however, and Huth punished them for yet more slack defending from Leicester's next attack, a 60th-minute corner won after good work and dogged persistence by Vardy. Christian Fuchs swung over a left-wing corner and Huth rose high above the static Demichelis to send a perfect header soaring into Hart's top-right corner.

Hart prevented his England colleague Vardy from making it 4-0, but although Aguero reduced the arrears, nothing could overshadow Leicester's magnificent performance. — AFP

TRIPPIER TAP-IN STOKES SPURS' TITLE DREAMS



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur strengthened their Premier League title challenge as Kieran Trippier's goal moved Mauricio Pochettino's side up to second place following a 1-0 victory over Watford yesterday.

The north London club took full advantage of Manchester City's 3-1 loss to Leicester City earlier in the day to move above Manuel Pellegrini's side and to within five points of leaders Leicester.

Having been on the fringes of the title race for much of the season, Spurs are now reinforcing their status as one of the main contenders to be crowned champions in May.

The margin of victory should have been much more comfortable, with Pochettino's side dominant for all but the opening moments of the game. But a string of missed opportunities, together with a fine display from Watford goalkeeper Heurelho Gomes, meant that they had to rely on Trippier's 64th-minute tap-in to claim all three points.

It was the right-back's first goal for

the club on only his fourth league start since making a £3.5 million (\$5.1 million, 4.5 million euros) switch from Burnley last June.

There were few positives for Watford manager Quique Sanchez Flores, whose side failed to register a single effort on target. Spurs initially appeared to be missing the creative influence of Dele Alli in midfield, with the youngster named among the substitutes after being forced out of last weekend's win at Norwich City with illness. The visitors, though, had few options going forward and were unable to relieve the gradual build-up of Spurs pressure after a dour opening 25 minutes. Pochettino allowed his three attacking midfielders—Nacer Chadli, Erik Lamela and Christian Eriksen—to roam and with full-backs Trippier and Ben Davies getting forward well, Watford began to appear vulnerable. Trippier provided a succession of good crosses from the right and Chadli should have done much better then direct his header against Watford defender Allan Nyom after being picked out by the right-back. Moments later Nyom again intervened, this time to deflect Davies's shot away to safety.

When Chadli again miscued a header, this time from Lamela's free-kick, it appeared only a matter of time before Spurs took the lead. Watford's sole response during the first half came from Almen Abdi, who



LONDON: Tottenham's Nacer Chadli, center, attempts a shot and is blocked by Watford's Miguel Angel Britos, right, as Watford's Ben Watson looks on during the English Premier League soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Watford at White Hart Lane in London, yesterday. — AP

floated a chip onto the roof of the net after Spurs keeper Hugo Lloris had rushed from his line. But there were few signs of the confidence that has made Flores's side one of the unexpected successes of this season.

And it was no surprise when the manager responded to his side's first-half display by making a double substitution, withdrawing the ineffectual Abdi and Mario Suarez and introducing Valon Behrami and Troy Deeney. However, the switch back to a more familiar formation made little difference for the visitors, who continued to find themselves under the cosh. Gomes had received a warm reception from the home fans before kick-off on his return to his former club.

And the Brazilian provided a reminder of why he is fondly remembered at White Hart Lane with a string of fine saves early in the second half that added to the feeling that this would not be Tottenham's day. But the introduction of Alli on the hour helped transform the home side's fortunes.

Within four minutes of replacing Chadli, the England international was released on the left by Mousa Dembele and drilled a low cross across the face of Gomes's goal with the outside of his right foot. Trippier had timed his run to the far post excellently and the defender met Alli's cross to side-foot home from close range. — AFP

SUNDERLAND FIGHT BACK TO DRAW 2-2 WITH LIVERPOOL



LIVERPOOL: Jermain Defoe capped a dramatic Sunderland fightback as the Premier League strugglers recovered from two goals down to draw 2-2 with Liverpool yesterday.

Goals from Roberto Firmino and Adam Lallana seemed to be enough to give Liverpool all three points, but Adam Johnson's 82nd minute free-kick started the revival and Defoe's 89th minute strike stunned a half-empty Anfield.

Thousands of Liverpool supporters missed their team's late meltdown after walking out of the ground after 77 minutes in protest at the club's announcement of ticket price rises in the newly refurbished Anfield. Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp was also spared the sight of his team's collapse as he was absent with a bout of appendicitis, leaving assistant manager Zeljko Brusic to pull the strings.

The Reds' insipid 2-0 loss at Leicester in midweek virtually ended their already distant hopes of a top four place this term, but in comparison with Saturday's visitors to Merseyside, Liverpool are having a great season.

Sunderland went to Anfield with just

two wins in their last 11 matches in all competitions and seem to be lurching towards an inevitable relegation until this stirring recovery.

Liverpool named Daniel Sturridge on the bench following a prolonged injury absence that has raised questions about his long-term future at Anfield. And they could have done with Sturridge's talents early on in this match as the opening moments were notable for nothing apart from the loss of Dejan Lovren to injury after 11 minutes. The match appeared to finally wake up after 20 minutes when an Alberto Moreno shot was impressively blocked by Vito Mannone as Liverpool looked like they had found some fluency.

James Milner squandered one decent opportunity after half an hour as he opted to square the ball into the box rather than shoot when well placed and then Jordan Henderson was next to miss a decent chance when he failed to connect sweetly with a Joe Allen cross.

As half-time approached Firmino came closest to breaking the deadlock but his 25-yard shot just curled over the Mannone's crossbar before Moreno somehow missed a point-blank header when it looked easier to score.

After the break, a Firmino effort went closest for Liverpool after 53 minutes as he tried his luck from 20 yards, but the frustration in Anfield continued to grow as both sides looked listless and short of inspiration. Finally though, after 59 minutes, Liverpool produced a moment that lifted the home fans. — AFP

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MIAMI: Nicole Kelly (left) interviews Justin Rushing for a server job at a job fair held by The Genuine Hospitality Group, in Miami. The restaurant group is expanding in South Florida and is hiring for all positions at its restaurants. — AP



HALIFAX: A Danier retail outlet is seen in Halifax. The Canadian leather goods retailer has begun insolvency proceedings that could lead to a sale of all or part of the company, including bankruptcy. — AP

OPTIMISM DESPITE SLOWER US JOB GROWTH

JANUARY JOBS REPORT SEEN 'SOLID REPORT IN DISGUISE'

WASHINGTON: Consider looking past January's so-so job growth. At first glance, Friday's government report on US hiring was a downer - 151,000 added jobs, well below the pace of the previous few months.

Yet once you take a fuller view, a brighter picture of the job market emerges: A sub-5 percent unemployment rate. Healthy pay raises. And a stream of people who grew confident enough in the job market to start looking for work.

"The January report is a solid report in disguise," said Douglas Holtz-Eakin, a former director of the Congressional Budget Office and president of the conservative American Action Forum.

That seems especially true given that the job gains come at a delicate time for the US economy. Analysts have warned that the economy faces a growing risk of another recession within a year or two after having recovered only gradually from the Great Recession. Economic weakness overseas and reeling financial markets have slowed growth and squeezed manufacturers.

Last month's pay raises and the addition of retail jobs suggest that consumers have the resilience to bolster growth. Average hourly wages have jumped 2.5 percent over the past 12 months, evidence that years of steady job growth are finally helping generate pay raises for more Americans.

The strong fundamentals in the jobs report could make the Federal Reserve somewhat more likely to raise rates again this year - a prospect that likely contributed to a sharp sell-off in stocks. The Dow Jones industrial average tumbled 211 points or about 1.3 percent.

"The wage numbers were the most encouraging bit of news all around," said Carl Tannenbaum, chief economist at Northern Trust. Tannenbaum said the figures gave him "extra comfort that the expansion wasn't sliding toward an untimely conclusion."

With the unemployment rate now 4.9 percent - its lowest level since 2008 - many workers have managed to gain raises because their employers have had to offer better incentives to compete for talent. The unemployment rate dipped in January even though a sizable 502,000 more people began hunting for jobs.

Reversing a trend

That reversed a trend in which the unemployment rate had been dropping for a discouraging reason: Jobseekers had

stopped looking for work and were no longer counted as unemployed.

Wage growth is a crucial indicator for the Fed, which is weighing whether to raise interest rates in the face of global risks that could imperil broader economic growth. The Fed wants to see earnings accelerate after years of sluggish gains.

In December, the Fed boosted rates from record lows. But investors have largely dismissed the likelihood of a rate hike at the next Fed meeting in March. The January jobs report, with a slowdown in job growth but a pickup in wages, complicates the outlook for the Fed.

"Nobody really knows what to do with this jobs report - and ultimately for the Fed it may not matter because we'll get another jobs report before the March meeting," said Megan Greene, chief economist at Manulife Asset Management. January's hiring, though modest, followed robust job growth of a seasonally adjusted 280,000 in November and 262,000 in December. Last month, companies shed education, transportation and temporary workers but stepped up hiring in manufacturing, retail and food services.

The number of people working or seeking work rose last month, while the number of unemployed slipped from 7.9 million to 7.8 million, which caused the unemployment rate to dip from 5.0 percent. January's income growth meshed with retailers hiring a seasonally adjusted 57,700 workers. Restaurants and bars added 48,800 jobs in a sign of robust consumer demand. With low gas prices leaving more money in people's wallets and borrowing costs low, most economists expect Americans to spend at a decent pace this year and provide support for economic growth that offsets any global headwinds.

Rising confidence

Adam Xavier, CEO of Los Angeles-based RoadLok, which makes motorcycle locks, says it plans to add three sales account managers to its headquarters staff this year. With consumer confidence rising, "people are starting to ride more," thereby boosting sales, Xavier says.

Manufacturers hired a solid 29,000 workers last month, even though other indicators show factory activity weakening as the rising value of the dollar and the sluggish economies of major trade partners have squeezed exports of US goods.

The health care sector added a sturdy

44,000. But other areas sputtered. Education services, an area sheltered from the global economy, shed 38,500 workers after gains in prior months.

The most notable decline was in temporary workers, whose ranks fell by 25,200 in January. The decrease may indicate that companies are wary that the economy can continue its 61/2-year-old expansion at its previous pace. Corporate profits are declining and goods are piling up on warehouse shelves. Those trends have elevated concern that a US recession may loom in the next year or two. Most analysts say that while the economy may slow this year compared with 2015, an outright recession remains unlikely.

Economists at Bank of America Merrill Lynch have put the odds of a recession within the next 12 months at 20 percent. While still low, that estimate is up from 15 percent last year.

Agonizing recovery

For most of an agonizingly slow recovery from the Great Recession, millions of out-of-work Americans huddled on the sidelines of the job market. Yet Friday's jobs report added to evidence of a long-awaited shift:

Some have grown confident enough to start looking for work. The percentage of Americans working or looking for a job, though still historically low, rose for the third time in four months. It's now at its highest level since May. Americans in their prime working years - ages 25 through 54 - are driving the improvement and offsetting powerful demographic forces pushing in the other direction. In particular, the vast baby boom generation is retiring, which is reducing the proportion of adults with jobs or looking for one. This has created a "tug of war," says Joshua Shapiro, chief U.S. economist at forecasting firm MFR, Inc., between rising retirements and the employment opportunities created by an improved economy.

"The fact that we've stabilized now after a long decline suggests people are finally getting enticed back into the labor force," Shapiro said. The workforce includes both people who are employed and those looking for jobs. Earlier in the recovery, increasing retirements and sluggish hiring were pushing in the same direction. The result: A sharp drop in the proportion of adults in the workforce. The unemployment rate fell. But the reason was nothing to cheer: With fewer people seeking jobs, fewer people were counted

as unemployed.

Now, the trend is more promising. More people are looking for work. And the decline in the unemployment rate in the past two years - from 6.6 percent in January 2014 to 4.9 percent last month - has occurred mostly because people are finding jobs. The overall improvement remains modest. The percentage of Americans working or looking for work ticked up to 62.7 percent in January, up from 62.4 percent in September, which was near a 40-year low. Figures for those ages 25 through 54 are more hopeful: The proportion working or looking for work has reached 81.1 percent, the highest point in a year. And the percentage in that age bracket with jobs has reached its highest level since 2008.

In addition, Americans appear to have a modestly rosier view of the job market. Their perception of the availability of jobs has recovered to nearly its pre-recession level, according to the Conference Board's consumer confidence survey. Felix Miranda, CEO of ARCPoint Labs, a chain of testing laboratories that focuses on drug and alcohol screening, has seen more resumes from people who have been out of the workforce rather than already employed. Though many employers are reluctant to hire people with long gaps in their resumes, Miranda says he is opens to them.

The bulk of those jumping back into the mix in the past four months have only a high school degree or less. That likely reflects the strength of job growth in such lower-paying areas as retailers, restaurants and hotels. But many of those businesses are paying higher wages than in the past, either voluntarily or because of higher state minimum wages. The pay increases could be a big reason more people are coming off the sidelines, said Tara Sinclair, chief economist at Indeed.com, a job search website. On Friday, after the government issued the January jobs report, President Barack Obama highlighted the uptick in the workforce. But he also acknowledged that many Americans who have lost jobs in recent years lack the skills needed for the positions that are now available. "I get a lot of letters from middle-aged workers who got laid off, aren't confident about their current skills, and so have not yet re-entered the workforce," Obama said. "They need to get retrained. And so that's a special group - folks in their late 40s, early 50s - still far away from retirement, but feel like they can't adapt." — AP

IRAN'S CRUDE OIL SALES TO EUROPE REACH ABOVE 300,000 BARRELS

DUBAI: Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh said yesterday that Iran's crude oil sales to Europe after the lifting of international sanctions on Tehran had already reached above 300,000 barrels, according to the ministry's news agency. Iran's oil exports, which had peaked at more than 3 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2011, fell to a little more than 1 million bpd after tougher sanctions were imposed in 2012 because of its nuclear programme.

After the rubber-stamping of the nuclear deal with world powers last year, however, Tehran has ordered a 500,000 bpd increase in oil output.

"Based on the contract signed between the National

Iranian Oil Co and France's Total, it was agreed that Total will buy 160,000 bpd of crude oil from Iran to be delivered in Europe," Zanganeh was quoted as saying by news agency SHANA, adding that the contract would be finalised on Feb 16. Zanganeh also said Italy's Eni was interested in buying 100,000 barrels of crude oil from Iran and its representatives would visit Tehran in near future to discuss the contract.

"Eni has voiced its interest in one of Iran's fields which will be treated like the agreement reached with Total," he said. Iran's oil minister said Italian refiner Saras was interested in buying 60,000 to 70,000 barrels of crude oil from Iran. Tehran is sweetening the terms it

offers on oil development contracts to draw the interest of foreign investors deterred by sanctions and low crude prices, as its pragmatic president seeks to deliver on his promise of economic recovery.

The new contracts, which include those in the upstream exploration and development sectors are expected to attract more than \$40 billion in foreign investment.

Iran has postponed a planned oil conference in London, which was due to have taken place in February to reveal its new contracts, until November. An Iranian official said "the U.S. urged Tehran to hold off" until a final nuclear deal was penned. — Reuters

BAD LOAN WORRIES GRIP ITALIAN BANKS

MILAN: Italian banking shares are getting battered this year as the government tries to bundle and dispose of billions of euros in bad loans while attempting to reform and consolidate the ailing sector.

Since the start of the year, Italian banks have lost more than 35 billion euros (\$39 billion) in market capitalization as investors sold their shares amid concern about some 300 billion euros in soured loans, more than 30 percent of the eurozone's total.

Economy Minister Pier Carlo Padoa-Schioppa told the Senate on Thursday that the banks had been caught up in "volatility hitting the global markets," with high level of bad loans on Italian banks' balance sheets attracting investors' wrath. He argued that the reaction doesn't reflect "the economic reality of Italian credit institutes."

"The Italian banking system is solid," Padoa-Schioppa concluded. Still, analysts and experts say there are multiple reasons that Italian banks have become the object of a sell-off.

"There's a feeling that the government is struggling to do anything at all in terms of the banking sector," said Wolfango Piccoli, managing director of the Teneo Intelligence think tank.

While the government last year pushed through a reform of the mutual banking sector, its implementation has been delayed, and hoped-for mergers among the banks have so far not materialized. Only one is in discussion, and the terms became less attractive as long as banking shares are under assault. Piccoli argued that the market reaction, meanwhile, put necessary pressure on the government to finally reach agreement with Brussels on a way to clean up non-performing loans. Still, the government was supposed to enact this week a decree on implementing the clean-up, along with a reform of the cooperative banking sector, but postponed it until next week.

"There is a sense of paralysis. The government is struggling and the market decided to test it," Piccoli said. Andrea Resti, a banking expert at Milan's Bocconi University, said external factors are also at play, noting that the situation of bad loans at Italian banks has actually improved in the last year.

Weakness in China may be prompting investors to also off-load Italian bank shares as they seek safer investments, like German bonds, to increase the average quality of their portfolios. And he said the transfer of banking supervisory mechanisms last year to the European Central Bank in Frankfurt, Germany, may have increased scrutiny of the Italian sector, with officials pushing for banks to get the bad loans off their balance sheets.

"The ECB is growing nervous," Resti said. "They very much would like to see banks offload those bad loans into separate vehicles to make sure that any losses won't hit the banks. Instead, they will hit third-party investors." — AP

PREPARING FOR A JOB FAIR: 7 EMPLOYER TIPS FROM BAYT.COM

KUWAIT: Job fairs allow employers to meet many prospective employees in a single day. But with so many people attending the job fair, the atmosphere can sometimes become hectic, making it difficult to connect with qualified applicants. To make the most of a job fair, employers need some tips to help maximize their experience. Here's a checklist from the career experts at Bayt.com, the Middle East's leading job site:

1. Let people know you'll be there. Before heading out to the job fair, it's advisable to let people know that you

will be there. You can do this by advertising your presence through targeted emails, social media or online ads. This ensures that there will be the right crowd at your booth-at all times.

2. Prepare brochures and brand your booth. Job fairs should be used both as a way to source talent and to introduce people to your company by distributing company brochures and advertising your space with banners and other branding materials. The idea is to stand out so that you can attract the best-and most relevant-candidates.

BAYT.COM WEEKLY REPORT

3. Train your staff. Your staff must remember that they will be representing your company and their actions are likely to leave a lasting impression on visitors. You may therefore consider preparing a sheet of talking points and guidelines for staff working at the booth to ensure they know exactly what to say, what not to say, and how to answer questions asked by visitors.

4. Arrive beforehand. Come at least 2 to 3 hours earlier to set everything up and make your booth look appealing and inviting.

ing and inviting.

5. Make a list of your job vacancies. Staff representing your company at the job fair should be aware of what job vacancies are currently available and what the requirements are for each vacancy. So make sure that your representatives are familiar with all open positions and other hard-to-fill niche career opportunities.

6. Decide if you will be accepting CVs-and how. When job seekers hand you their CV, will you be accepting them, or will you direct them to apply online? Will you be setting up a web

page for candidates to upload their CVs? An easy way to upload CVs on the spot is via the CV Kiosk, a service provided by Bayt.com that helps companies gather CVs electronically during job fairs, without the need to gather a stack of paper CVs.

7. Have your business cards and name tags with you. Candidates aren't going to magically remember your name, so have your business card and name tag with you at all times. Ensure your name tag contains your first and last names, job title and company name before the job fair begins.

FOUR QUESTIONS FOR NEXT CEO OF DELTA AIR LINES

NEW YORK: On May 2, Ed Bastian takes over as the new CEO of Delta Air Lines, replacing the retiring Richard Anderson. Bastian has been Anderson's close deputy, helping to turn around the airline from bankrupt carrier to one of the world's leading airlines, one whose playbook is often copied by others.

Bastian has been with Delta - except for a brief break - since 1998 and has held various leadership roles including chief financial officer and his current post as president.

Wall Street analysts expect Bastian to continue running Delta with the same general strategy as Anderson. They did, after all, work side by side on most of the changes.

The Associated Press interviewed Bastian by phone following his appointment. The incoming CEO explained the need to still invest internationally, improve the airline's regional jet service and continue its efforts to make passengers want to fly Delta because of the experience, not the ticket price. The answers have been edited for length and clarity.

Q: Low fuel prices have caused other airlines to irrationally set prices and routes. How do you defend against that?

A: There's always going to be a low-cost competitor in our market-place. The answer about how it is

different today, compared to how we've competed in the past, is that we've got the staying power. We've got the cash returns that we're investing in the product, service and our people. Price is always an important part of a travel decision. But we've been very clear that we don't see our product as a commodity. We're out to break the commoditization cycle.

Q: Are increased labor costs a problem?

A: Our people need to share in the success of the airline. We're paying out bonuses equal to 21.4 percent of annual salaries, across the board. But we've got to stay disciplined. When we look back at our fourth-quarter results, we retained about two-thirds of the fuel savings to the bottom line. Some of it went, as it should, to improved employee profit-sharing and compensation, some of it went to lower fares, which were down 5 percent on average.

Q: What is the role of regional airlines?

A: They play an important role but less than they have in the past. The regional fleet is smaller. Four or five years ago, we were at over 700 regional jets and we'll get down close to 400 by the time we're done with the fleet changes we're making. But they're still a very important part of the product. What are the things Delta needs to do to



WASHINGTON: Delta Air Lines CEO Richard Anderson speaks during a panel discussion at the National Press Club in Washington. Anderson, who oversaw Delta Air Lines' transformation into one of the world's most profitable airlines, will retire in May 2016. His right-hand man, airline president Ed Bastian, will take over as CEO. — AP

improve in the future? I would say the space with the greatest opportunity still for improvement is the quality of the regional experience.

Q: You have a stake in Brazil's GOL. Any concerns?

A: Brazil is in a tough place. There's no question about it. It's a tough place from the economy, from a political situation, from a currency perspective, commodity prices are really hurting the local

economy there. But it's also the most important market in Latin America. We own about 10 percent of GOL currently and we are assisting in its restructuring, in terms of trying to raise additional liquidity because the next two years will be tough. We do think that GOL, over time, will have the staying power and strength. We're very impressed with the quality of the product and service. — AP

GREEK FARMER BLOCKADES PILE PRESSURE ON GOVT

THESSALONIKI: Greek farmers protesting against pension reforms heightened highway and border protests around the country yesterday, piling pressure on the leftist government of Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras. Farmers in Thessaly began a one-day blockade of the main highway between Athens and Thessaloniki despite compromise efforts by the government. The mobilisation which began in mid-January has created tractor blockades at dozens of highway locations and key border crossings to Bulgaria and Turkey, which the farmers intermittently open for a few hours each day. "What we are doing is tiresome but we are not stopping. We will take it to the end and stay as long as it takes," local protest organiser Stergios Litos told state agency ANA.

The farmers on Saturday briefly

opened the main border crossing into Bulgaria to allow some 200 freight trucks to enter Greece. Tsipras' government has announced plans to lower the maximum pension to 2,300 euros (\$2,500) from 2,700 euros currently, and introduce a new minimum guaranteed basic pension of 384 euros.

The reform is part of the country's cost-cutting efforts under its EU bailout. The government also wants to merge insurance funds and increase social security contributions by both employers and staff.

Farmers are also angry as the government plans to scrap benefits such as income tax breaks and cheaper fuel. The income tax rate for farmers is also to progressively double to 26 percent.

The government has invited farmer leaders to talks on Tuesday. — AFP

HSBC REACHES \$470M DEAL WITH US, STATES OVER BANKING ABUSES

WASHINGTON: Banking giant HSBC has reached a \$470 million settlement with the federal government and nearly all states over mortgage lending and foreclosure abuses that officials say helped intensify the country's economic meltdown, the Justice Department announced Friday.

The agreement requires the bank to pay \$100 million and to provide an additional \$370 million in consumer relief to borrowers and homeowners, including by reducing mortgage interest rates as well as the principal on mortgages for homeowners who are at risk of default. The deal also requires the bank to improve standards for how it services loans and handles foreclosures.

Officials say those changes are intended to discourage past banking practices, such as robo-signing and poor-quality loans, that exacerbated a financial crisis starting in 2007 in which millions of Americans lost their homes to foreclosure. HSBC had already agreed in a separate 2013 deal with Federal Reserve and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency to pay \$249 million to settle federal complaints that its U.S. division wrongfully foreclosed on homeowners who should have been allowed to stay in their homes.

"This settlement illustrates the department's continuing commitment to ensure responsible mortgage servicing," Benjamin Mizer, head of the Justice Department's Civil Division, said in a statement. "The agreement is part of our ongoing effort to address root causes of

the financial crisis."

The settlement involves the departments of Justice and Housing and Urban Development, and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Attorneys general from 49 states plus the District of Columbia signed on.

The \$100 million payment will mostly be distributed among the federal government and an escrow fund administered by the states to make payments to borrowers who lost their homes to foreclosure between 2008 and 2012. The \$370 million in relief to homeowners already is underway, the Justice Department said.

Even so, the settlement did little to allay public criticism that the Justice Department has been soft on banking abuses and has not targeted individuals for financial misdeeds.

Bartlett Naylor, a financial policy advocate at Public Citizen, a watchdog and advocacy group, said a "strongly written press release is no substitute for true justice." "There must be human beings involved," said Naylor, who argued that the Justice Department was overinflating the impact and public benefit of the HSBC deal. "This can't be yet another immaculate fine, where the government alleges widespread fraud and yet no individual was responsible."

The agreement does not prevent state or federal authorities from pursuing criminal action in the future. An independent monitor will be appointed to oversee the bank's compliance with the settlement terms. — AP

SRI LANKA REQUESTS IMF BAILOUT TO TACKLE DEFICIT

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka has made a formal request for an IMF bailout package to aid its struggling economy after a sharp slowdown in growth and with its budget deficit widening, officials said yesterday.

The International Monetary Fund confirmed the island nation had asked for assistance, but did

not give details on the value of a potential program or say whether it would grant the request.

"The IMF has received a request for a program with Sri Lanka," the fund said in a statement from its headquarters in Washington DC. Sri Lanka enjoyed a blistering economic growth rate averaging more than

8.0 percent for two years after a prolonged civil war ended in 2009.

But the pace of expansion has since slowed, falling to 4.8 percent in the third quarter of 2015, according to official data. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe told parliament last month that he was keen on negotiating an IMF bailout to deal with the fallout of a global economic downturn on his country of 21 million people.

The IMF, which sent a mission this week to review Sri Lanka's economy, said Saturday it had warned the authorities they should make a "stronger effort" to immediately reduce the budget deficit. "The mission has advised the government to urgently make a stronger effort to narrow the fiscal deficit and put the public finances on a sustainable path," the IMF said in a statement. Sri

Lanka's government sought an IMF bailout immediately after taking power in January last year but the fund turned down the request, saying the country's reserves were at a comfortable level.

It received \$2.6 billion from the IMF in 2009 to boost its financial reserves, which had dropped below \$1 billion at the height of fighting between Tamil Tiger rebels and government forces.

The IMF also said Saturday it had warned of rising debt levels saying the Sri Lankan government had been unable to keep to its budget deficit target last year and that it was unlikely to meet it in 2016. "These imbalances are also set against an increasingly less benign external environment," the statement said. "Set against such risks, the mission emphasised the urgent need for Sri Lanka to bolster its economic defenses." — AFP

KUWAITI OIL PRICE DOWN 66 CENTS TO \$26.75PB

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil dropped 66 cents on Friday reaching \$26.75 per barrel (pb) compared with \$27.41 pb on Thursday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. On global markets, oil price went up in Friday's trading with an anticipation of reports

on possible coordination between OPEC and non-OPEC producers. The future contracts of US oil for March delivery rose by three percent, climbing to \$31.8 per barrel, however Brent oil price declined by 0.09 percent to stand at \$34.4 per barrel. — KUNA

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.581
Indian Rupees	4.476
Pakistani Rupees	2.895
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.098
Nepali Rupees	2.786
Singapore Dollar	216.040
Hongkong Dollar	38.734
Bangladesh Taka	3.839
Philippine Peso	6.323
Thai Baht	8.509

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.496
Qatari Riyal	82.919
Omani Riyal	784.044
Bahraini Dinar	801.650
UAE Dirham	82.185

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	36.950
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	38.596
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.409
Tunisian Dinar	149.950
Jordanian Dinar	425.080
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.010
Syrian Lira	2.151
Morocco Dirham	31.427

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	301.700
Euro	339.870
Sterling Pound	440.630
Canadian dollar	218.390
Turkish lira	103.300
Swiss Franc	307.700
Australian Dollar	216.170
US Dollar Buying	300.500

GOLD	
20 Gram	231.260
10 Gram	118.550
5 Gram	60.120

UAE EXCHANGE CENTRE WLL

CURRENCIES

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	0.431654	0.440654
Czech Korune	0.004506	0.016506
Danish Krone	0.041368	0.046368
Euro	0.331879	0.339879
Norwegian Krone	0.031502	0.036702
Romanian Leu	0.086544	0.086544
Slovakia	0.008974	0.018974
Swedish Krona	0.031912	0.036912
Swiss Franc	0.298040	0.308240
Turkish Lira	0.097993	0.108293
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.205560	0.217060
New Zealand Dollar	0.194165	0.203665
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.212015	0.220515
US Dollars	0.297600	0.302100

US Dollars Mint	0.298100	0.302100
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Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003488	0.004088
Chinese Yuan	0.044314	0.047814
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036826	0.039576
Indian Rupee	0.004155	0.004545
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002505	0.002685
Kenyan Shilling	0.003135	0.003135
Korean Won	0.000243	0.000258
Malaysian Ringgit	0.068970	0.074970
Nepalese Rupee	0.002860	0.003030
Pakistan Rupee	0.002569	0.002849
Philippine Peso	0.006226	0.006506
Sierra Leone	0.000067	0.000073
Singapore Dollar	0.213049	0.219049
South African Rand	0.013099	0.021599
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001746	0.002326
Taiwan	0.008966	0.009146
Thai Baht	0.008171	0.008721

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.793379	0.801379
Egyptian Pound	0.034377	0.038713
Iranian Riyal	0.000083	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000198	0.000258
Jordanian Dinar	0.421517	0.429017
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.000251
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021260	0.045260
Nigerian Naira	0.001242	0.001877
Omani Riyal	0.777217	0.782897
Qatar Riyal	0.082158	0.083371
Saudi Riyal	0.079567	0.080517
Syrian Pound	0.001278	0.001498
Tunisian Dinar	0.146447	0.154447
Turkish Lira	0.097993	0.108293
UAE Dirhams	0.081161	0.082310
Yemeni Riyal	0.001363	0.001443

WHY PENSIONS ARE THE NEW FLASHPOINT IN GREEK CRISIS

ATHENS: Combine a rapidly aging population, a depleted work force and leaky finances and any country's pension system would be in trouble. For debt-hobbled, unemployment-plagued Greece, it's a nightmare. Hemmed in by a grim economic reality and tough-talking bailout creditors, the leftwing-led government in Athens is now attempting the seemingly impossible: to reform the pension system without cutting pensions, largely through a steep increase in social security contributions.

The overhaul, which creditors are demanding in return for rescue loans, means Greeks who have a job — and who are outnumbered by the unemployed and retired — have to pay for the rest.

Unions are up in arms about the move, which has become the main hurdle in Greece's negotiations with its European creditors and the International Monetary Fund.

Critics say the reform will heap the most pain on self-employed professionals and farmers, forcing them to pay up to three quarters of their income in pension contributions and taxes. They warn the majority will be forced to change jobs or emigrate — accelerating the brain drain the country has suffered since the crisis started in 2010.

"We are fighting for our very survival," said Georgios Stassinou, head of the country's biggest engineers' union. If the reforms are adopted, he said, "the country will be left without engineers, doctors, lawyers, pharmacists and economists."

The head of Greece's bar associations, Vassilios Alexandris, said the new system would reduce some lawyers' net incomes to as little as 31 percent of their gross intakes, from the current 46 percent. "Professionals will not pay their (pension) contributions, not out of choice but because they will be unable to," he said.

In Greek cities, a wave of protests has become known as the necktie revolution, from a series of demonstrations by formally-dressed professionals. The discontent is even more obvious in the countryside, where farmers have manned highway blockades for over two weeks.

Costas Alexandris, a farmers' union leader in the northeastern area of Thrace, said he stands to pay 75 percent of his income in taxes and contributions next year under the government's proposals, which include taxation on subsidies and a leap in farmers' pension contributions from 7 to 28 percent.

But if Greece wants to make its pensions system viable, it has few options.

Current retirees have already seen their pensions cut repeatedly under austerity programs since 2009 and the retirement age has been raised from about 62 to 67.

Greece has the sixth oldest population in the world, according to United Nations data, and spends more than 16 percent of GDP on pensions — above the European average — up from 11.7 percent of GDP before the financial crisis, as the economy shrank.

Out of a population of nearly 11 mil-

lion, Greece has 3.6 million workers — but 2.66 million pensioners and 1.2 million unemployed. The situation will only get worse in years ahead, as deaths have overtaken births since the financial crisis broke out.

Past governments sweetened voters by offering mass pension rights to people who contributed little to the system, were generous on early retirement and provided pensions that were sometimes higher than what retirees earned at their jobs.

The average pension is currently about 900 euros (\$1,000), and a recent study found that pensions are the main source of income for 52 percent of all Greek households — up from 40 percent in 2011.

In defense of the proposed reforms, farmers had until now contributed very little for their pensions, and retirement contributions are based on declared income, which is often understated in Greece.

"We want a pension system that doesn't place the burden of subsidizing other people's pensions on the usual victims, salaried employees," Labor Minister George Katrougalos said.

His draft would involve merging all pension funds into one with common rules for all, and providing a basic, state-funded pension for all — 384 euros — that is supplemented with contributions. Katrougalos insists current core pensions will be left untouched, while future pensions will not change drastically for the worse.

The popular protests against the government are ironic, because for years as a small opposition party, the now-governing Syriza was the standard bearer of demonstrations against pension reform. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras was first elected on pledges to reverse creditor-demanded austerity, but was forced into a U-turn last year after other European countries threatened to kick Greece out of the eurozone.

The pension proposals, which opposition parties reject, are likely to be submitted this month to Parliament, where Tsipras' coalition controls only a slim majority, 153 of the 300 seats. "So far these protests have not threatened government cohesion, but this will not always be the case," said Megan Greene, chief economist of Manulife Asset Management. "The Tsipras government has little room for maneuver."

Former labor minister Tassos Giannitsis, who attempted sweeping reforms 15 years ago, only to be defeated by a union revolt, argues that Greece's pension problems triggered the country's financial crisis in the first place by bloating the budget deficits before 2009. "As long as the target is to avoid any new (pension) cuts, people who work will have to sacrifice much more than previous generations, through higher contributions or new taxes ... and bear the burden of future repayment of the heavy debts of the past," he told a recent panel discussion. "Furthermore, they lack any certainty regarding their own future pensions." —AP



BUENOS AIRES: Butchers make beef cuts at a market in Buenos Aires, Argentina on Friday. Argentines are being advised to cut back on meat consumption as beef prices soar. —AP

ENERGY LOANS LIKELY TO CAUSE FURTHER LOSSES FOR BIG BANKS

LOW OIL PRICES SAP PROFITS OF OIL FIRMS

NEW YORK: The nation's six largest banks have hit an oil slick. They have tens of billions of dollars of exposure to risky energy loans that won't all be paid back because low oil prices have sapped the profits of oil companies. The value of those loans will have to be written down even further, and bank profits are going to take a hit, the credit agency Moody's said in a report issued Friday.

The loans on the balance sheets of the biggest banks on Wall Street - JPMorgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, Citigroup, Morgan Stanley, Wells Fargo and Bank of America - represent only a small percentage of these firms' overall loans, but the losses will be noticeable.

"While the banks' exposure are not outsized, these loans have already resulted in banks taking loan-loss provisions and we expect that if oil prices remain low for longer these firms are going to take additional losses," said David Fanger, senior vice president at Moody's who

wrote the report. Oil prices have fallen by more than 70 percent over the course of the last 19 months, to a recent \$31 a barrel. Energy analysts expect that prices will be extremely slow to rise again because there is an enormous global oversupply of crude.

The troubled energy loans, while sizable, do not pose nearly the same threat to the banks or the financial system that mortgage loans did when the housing market collapsed leading up to the financial crisis. Wells Fargo is more exposed to these risky energy loans than the other big banks. Moody's estimates that Wells Fargo's total energy exposure is heavily weighted toward loans to oil exploration and production companies, as well as oil field services companies, which have been hardest hit by the decline in oil prices. Moody's estimates that nearly 40 percent of Wells Fargo's energy loan portfolio are at what Moody's considers to be a heightened risk of facing delinquent payments.

"It's an early indicator of problems, but not a sign these loans are causing losses yet," Fanger said. On a percentage basis, Morgan Stanley has the most exposure to energy loans, at 5 percent of the firm's funded loans and 8 percent of total loans, including lines of credit. JPMorgan has the least exposure to energy loans, at 1.5 percent of funded loans and 3.5 percent of total loans, though the dollar value of JP Morgan's exposure is bigger.

Another risk to the banks from the energy sector, Moody's Fanger said, is the apparent drag on the US economy from super-low oil prices. Many economists expected a boon, because low oil prices generally leave households with more money to spend. But that lift has been outweighed by concerns about weaker global economic growth that super-low oil prices signal and job losses and lower spending in the large US oil and gas industry. —AP

GULF BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF AL-DANAH DAILY DRAWS

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its Al-Danah daily draws on 31 January 2016 announcing the names of its winners for the week of 24 January - 28 January 2016. The Al-Danah daily draws include draws each and every working day for two prizes of KDI,000 per winner.

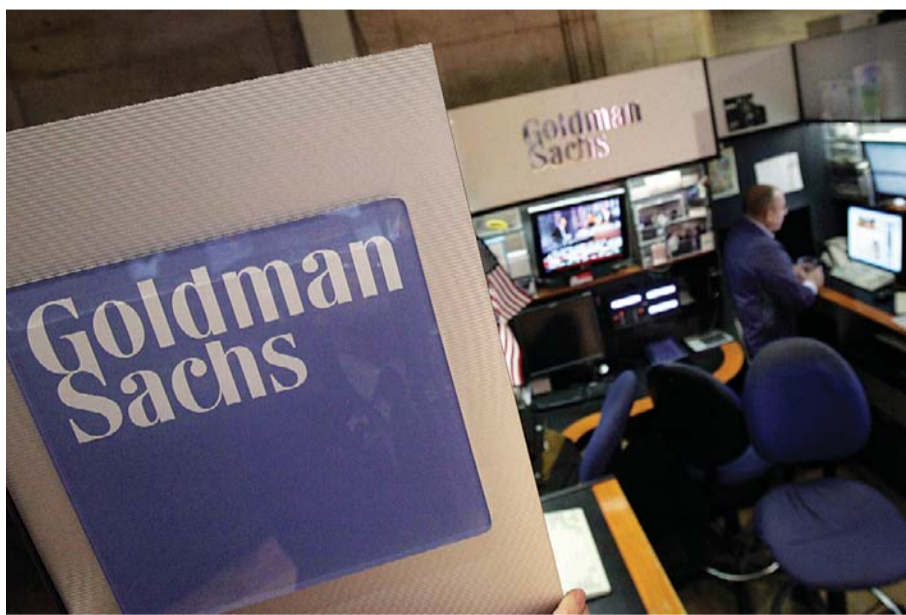
The winners are:
 (Sunday 24/1): Abdullah Abdullhussain Abdullah Al-Foudari, Hamda Qassem Ahmad
 (Monday 25/1): Fawziah Qablan Redini Al-Azmi, Mohammed Abdulkarim Mohammed Al-Awadhi
 (Tuesday 26/1): Zahra Mohammed Zaman Asadi Khashouei, Najeeb Mohammed Shareef Abdulateef
 (Wednesday 27/1): Juri Yaser Haji Yacoub Abulhassan, Hanan Hussain Ali Al-Sayegh
 (Thursday 28/1): Alia Shaker Abdulmajeed Al-Kazemi, Ahmad Salah Mohammed Saleem Salakah
 Gulf Bank's Al-Danah 2016 draw lineup includes daily draws (2 winners per working day each receive KDI000). Al-Danah's 1st Quarterly draw will be held on 31 March, 2nd Quarter - 30 June, 3rd Quarter - 29

September. The final Al-Danah draw for the Million Dinars will be held on 5 January, 2017 whereby the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced.

Five reasons why the Al-Danah account is the best:
 1) Kuwait's single biggest yearly cash prize of KD 1 million



- 2) Kuwait's biggest quarterly cash prizes, up to KD500,000
- 3) Two winners of KD1,000 every working day
- 4) The most opportunities to win
- 5) Only Bank that transfers your chances to win from year to year



NEW YORK: A trader works in the Goldman Sachs booth on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. Goldman Sachs has reached a \$5 billion settlement as part of a federal and state probe into its role in the sale of mortgages in the years leading up into the housing bubble and subsequent financial crisis. Goldman will pay \$2.39 billion in civil monetary penalties, \$875 million in cash payments and provide \$1.8 billion in consumer relief in the form of mortgage forgiveness and refinancing. —AP

AIR BERLIN MANAGERS, PILOTS AGREE TO 2016 PAY CUTS

FRANKFURT: Managers and pilots of Air Berlin have agreed to pay cuts as the struggling German airline tries to rein in costs with a new restructuring program, the carrier said yesterday.

About 80 managers will see their remuneration slashed by between 5 and 10 percent this year, and the pilots will also make a contribution to the latest cost cutting effort, a spokesman said. According to German magazine Der Spiegel, the 1,250 pilots are waiving a 4 percent 2016 pay increase and will vote in the autumn on whether to also give up a salary increase in 2017. —Reuters

TWO OF 6 ARGENTINA BONDHOLDERS AGREE TO SETTLEMENTS: MEDIATOR

NEW YORK: Two of six leading bondholders that years ago refused Argentina's invitation to trade their bonds at steep discounts have agreed to settle their longstanding claims after the South American nation offered bondholders with cases in federal court in Manhattan \$6.5 billion in what a court-appointed mediator described Friday as a "historic breakthrough."

Mediator Daniel Pollack said Argentina offered bondholders the deal to settle cases stemming from its 2001 default. Holdout bondholders were seeking about \$10 billion.

Pollack said the agreement followed a week of negotiations between high-level Argentine government officials and senior principals of leading financial institution bondholders that were "intense but civil." He said he spoke Friday by telephone with President Mauricio Macri and Minister of the Economy Alfonso Prat-Gay.

"They both stand solidly behind this proposal," he said. "Both have shown courage and flexibility in stepping up to and dealing with this long-festering problem, which was not of their making."

He said Argentina's offer was breakthrough that could allow the republic to return to global financial markets to raise much needed capital. He said the offer must be approved by Argentina's Congress and is subject to a lifting of a Manhattan court order.

Lawyers for bondholders and Argentina have met several times since last month as Argentina seeks to end a long-running legal dispute that impedes its ability to help its struggling economy in global credit markets. US hedge funds are among bondholders that refused to trade bonds at discounted prices after Argentina defaulted on \$100 billion in debt.

Among others, billionaire hedge fund

investor Paul Singer's NML Capital Ltd. took Argentina to court and won judgments against it.


Lawyers for Argentina and the bondholders did not immediately return messages seeking comment Friday. Pollack said all of the senior principals for bondholders worked diligently to resolve differences between their firms and Argentina, with two of the six leading bondholder groups signing agreements in principle with Argentina. He said negotiations will continue for the other four.

"It is my strong hope that, with continued negotiations, those firms, too, will be able to resolve their differences and reach agreements," Pollack said. "The events of this week and today were an important step in resolving Argentina's debt crisis; more remains to be done." Pollack hasn't disclosed the names of the bondholders or details of their agreements. —AP

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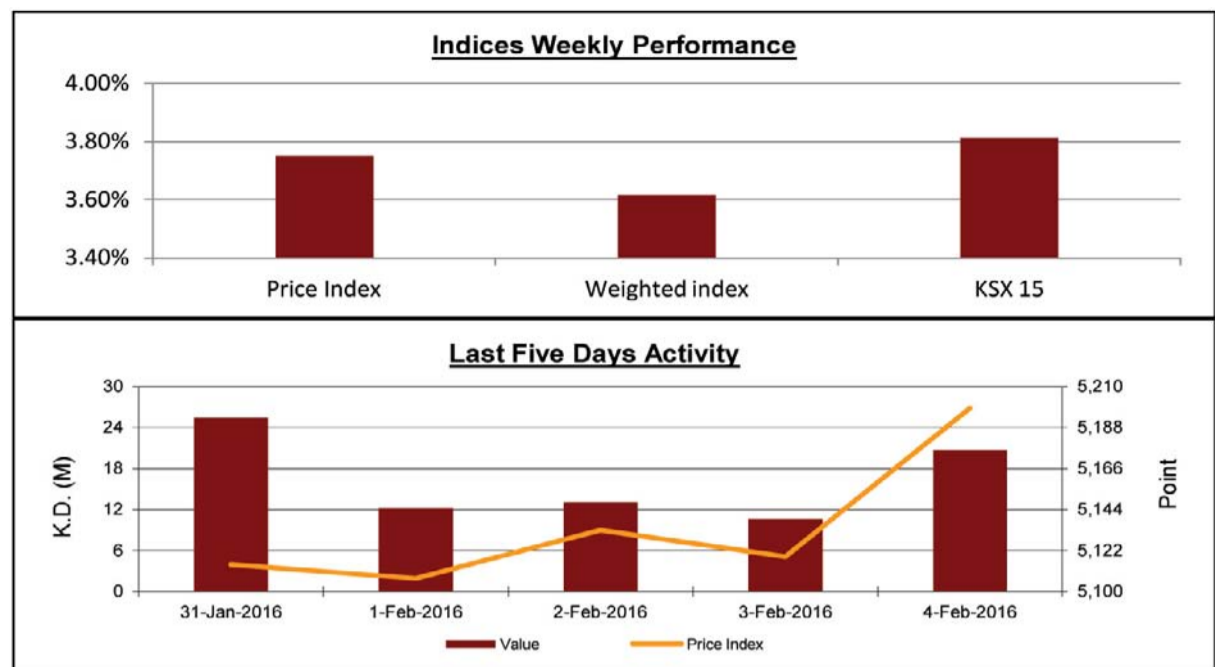
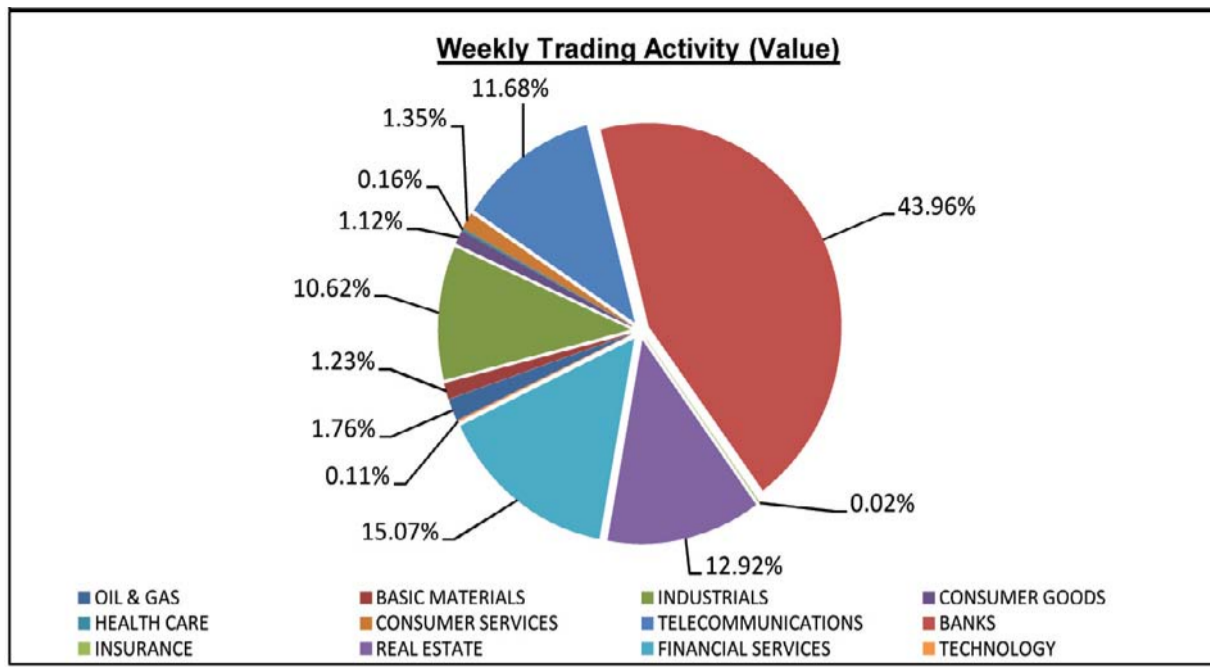
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KUWAIT BOURSE GAINS ON POSITIVE SENTIMENT

BAYAN WEEKLY MARKET REPORT

KUWAIT: Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) ended last week in the green zone. The Price Index closed at 5,198.37 points, up by 3.75 percent from the week before closing, the Weighted Index increased by 3.62 percent after closing at 357.34 points, whereas the KSX-15 Index closed at 840.55 points up by 3.81 percent. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover increased by 29.51 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching KD 16.38 million, whereas trading volume average was 183.98 million shares, recording an increase of 10.45 percent.

The stock market witnessed a positive performance, however speculative, whereas the three indices were able to realize gains for the second consecutive week, among an increased purchasing operations that included many stocks of different sectors, especially after the big declines that hit such stocks lately, which made its prices tempting for purchase. The stock market witnessed such positive performance despite the watch and cautious state that is controlling the traders, waiting for the listed companies disclosures for the financial year 2015; especially that more than one third of the legal given period for the listed companies to announce its results have passed, though only 27 listed company have disclosed its results, including some companies with year-end before 31 December, representing 14.21 percent of the 190 total listed companies in the official market.

The stock market initiated its first sessions of the week with noticeable growth to the three indicators, among an increased trading activity compared to the previous session, supported by the active purchasing operations that witnessed by many stocks of most of the sectors, especially in the Financial Services and Banks sectors, which increased the most during the week. The next session witnessed a limited decrease in the three indices as a result to the profit collection operations that many stocks were subject to, especially the ones of previous strong gains, among a sharp decline in the trading activity, especially the value which dropped by more than 50 percent by the end of the session.

In the mid of week session, the three stock market indicators returned to close in the green zone, benefiting from the random purchasing operations that included some leading stocks, before the return of the profit collection operations to negatively control the market indicators' performance once again, and concentrated on the leading and heavy stocks, which affected the Weighted and KSX-15 indices to record strong losses by the end of the session. On the end of week session, the three stock market indicators were able to realize noticeable growth affected by the return of the purchasing operations in controlling the trading direction, among a big increase in

KSE INDICES				
		Price Index	Weighted index	KSX 15
Weekly	Last week	5,198.37	357.34	840.55
	Previous week	5,010.39	344.87	809.68
	Change (Point)	187.98	12.47	30.87
	Change (%)	3.75%	3.62%	3.81%
Annual	Last year	5,615.12	381.70	900.43
	Change (Point)	-416.75	-24.36	-59.88
	Change (%)	-7.42%	-6.38%	-6.65%

the trading activity during the session, whereas the trading volume increased by more than 115 percent, and the trading value grew by around 95 percent.

The market capitalization for KSE reached by the end of last week K.D. 23.69 billion, increasing by 3.7 percent, compared to its level in a week earlier, which was KD 22.85 billion. On an annual level, the market cap for the listed companies in KSE declined by 6.22 percent from its value at end of 2005, where it was KD 25.27.

As far as KSE annual performance, the price index ended last week recording 7.42 percent annual loss compared to its closing in 2015, while the weighted index decreased by 6.38 percent, and the KSX-15 recorded 6.65 percent loss.

Sectors' Indices

All of KSE's sectors ended last week in the green zone except for one sector. Last week's highest gainer was the Financial Services sector, achieving 6.63 percent growth rate as its index closed at 539.47 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Industrial sector's index closed at 979.20 points recording 4.27 percent increase. The Consumer Goods sector came in third as its index achieved 3.89 percent growth, ending the week at

1,036.97 points. The Technology sector was the least growing as its index closed at 816.99 points with a 0.70 percent increase. On the other hand, the Telecommunications sector was last week's only loser as its index declined by 1.12 percent to end the week's activity at 579.87 points.

Sectors' Activity

The Financial Services sector dominated a total trade volume of around 305.65 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 33.23 percent of the total market trading volume. The Real Estate sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 28.43 percent of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 261.53 million shares.

On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around KD 36.02 million or 43.96 percent of last week's total market trading value. The Financial Services sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 12.35 million representing 15.07 percent of the total market trading value. —Prepared by the Studies & Research Department, Bayan Investment Co.

SECTORS' WEEKLY TRADING ACTIVITY				
Sector	Volume	To Market %	Value	To Market %
OIL & GAS	67,382,680	7.32%	1,441,117	1.76%
BASIC MATERIALS	3,123,558	0.34%	1,011,278	1.23%
INDUSTRIALS	81,336,121	8.84%	8,702,322	10.62%
CONSUMER GOODS	2,437,304	0.26%	917,098	1.12%
HEALTH CARE	649,210	0.07%	132,155	0.16%
CONSUMER SERVICES	7,340,622	0.80%	1,103,192	1.35%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	29,926,588	3.25%	9,565,957	11.68%
BANKS	158,734,026	17.26%	36,015,353	43.96%
INSURANCE	272,632	0.03%	16,982	0.02%
REAL ESTATE	261,529,433	28.43%	10,580,854	12.92%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	305,653,667	33.23%	12,347,917	15.07%
TECHNOLOGY	1,528,026	0.17%	86,713	0.11%

MARKET ACTIVITY			
	Last Week	Previous Week	Ch. %
Volume	919,913,867	832,894,673	10.45%
Value (K.D)	81,920,938	63,252,442	29.51%
Deals	22,741	18,922	20.18%

MARKET CAPITALISATION (K.D.)			
Last Week	Previous Week	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
23,694,054,864	22,847,874,625	3.70%	-6.22%

TOP GAINERS OF THE WEEK				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
MARAKEZ	32.50	23.00	9.5	41.30%
CABLETV	32.50	23.50	9.0	38.30%
NIH	51.00	40.00	11.0	27.50%
SENERGY	10.50	8.50	2.0	23.53%
ALMAL	28.00	23.50	4.5	19.15%

TOP LOSERS OF THE WEEK				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
UFIG	96.00	132.00	-36.0	-27.27%
SGC	87.00	97.00	-10.0	-10.31%
MUNSHAAT	48.00	52.00	-4.0	-7.69%
VIVA	920.00	990.00	-70.0	-7.07%
ENERGYH	34.00	36.50	-2.5	-6.85%

SECTORS INDICES PERFORMANCE				
Sector	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
OIL & GAS	764.60	745.58	2.55%	-6.61%
BASIC MATERIALS	887.93	867.36	2.37%	-9.98%
INDUSTRIALS	979.20	939.07	4.27%	-6.12%
CONSUMER GOODS	1,036.97	998.13	3.89%	-5.29%
HEALTH CARE	952.05	937.68	1.53%	2.89%
CONSUMER SERVICES	954.63	929.85	2.66%	-5.36%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	579.87	586.41	-1.12%	-3.13%
BANKS	821.78	799.83	2.74%	-9.40%
INSURANCE	1,056.94	1,048.83	0.77%	-6.22%
REAL ESTATE	847.49	819.95	3.36%	-9.91%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	539.47	505.92	6.63%	-9.39%
TECHNOLOGY	816.99	811.30	0.70%	-0.39%

US STOCKS LOSE MORE GROUND AS JOBS REPORT DISAPPOINTS

WALL STREET WEEKLY REPORT



NEW YORK: Trader Fred DeMarco, left, works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on Friday. US stocks moved moderately lower in early trading Friday after a report showed that US job creation slowed last month. —AP

NEW YORK: US stocks posted steep losses Friday, ending the week with broad declines, as investors fretted over a report showing that US job creation slowed last month.

Technology stocks fell especially hard, and shares of LinkedIn had their worst day in history. Energy and consumer discretionary stocks fell as oil prices declined and investors continued to worry that the risk of the US economy slipping into recession, while low, is growing.

The Dow Jones industrial average fell 211.61 points, or 1.3 percent, to 16,204.97. The Standard & Poor's 500 index lost 35.40 points, or 1.9 percent, to 1,880.05 and the Nasdaq composite dropped 146.41 points, or 3.3 percent, to 4,363.14.

Stocks were mostly lower throughout day, but losses accelerated as the end of trading approached. With Friday's losses, the Dow was down 1.6 percent for the week, the S&P 500 fell 3.1 percent and Nasdaq lost 5.4 percent.

Investors were discouraged by a report that showed US employers added 151,000 jobs last month, a sharp deceleration from recent months as companies shed education, transportation and temporary workers. That was below economists' forecasts of 185,000 new jobs, according to data from FactSet.

The report included some positive signs, however. The unemployment rate fell to 4.9 percent from 5 percent, the lowest level since February 2008. Average wages jumped 2.5 percent over the past year to \$25.39 an hour, evidence that the past years of job growth are helping to generate larger pay raises.

"It's a rather difficult report to interpret. It confirms there has been some deceleration in the US economy. We're not falling off the cliff, but it clearly shows the US economy is not immune to the global slowdown," said Russ Koesterich, global market strategist with asset manager BlackRock.

The jobs report, while less than what economists were looking for, still showed that the US economy is growing, albeit slowly. The report caused the dollar to strengthen against other currencies, reversing some of the last two days of declines.

The report also raised a new worry about Federal Reserve interest rate policy. Investors had been betting in recent weeks that a slowing US economy might prompt the Federal Reserve to delay plans to raise interest rates. But the Fed could see the data showing the growth in hourly wages as an early sign of inflation, which in turn might cause them to keep raising rates even in a slowing economy, Koesterich said.

"You have the possibility of soft growth and monetary tightening, and that's not a great place to be as an investor," he said. Technology stocks were hit hard by disappointing results from professional social network company LinkedIn and data analysis company Tableau Software. LinkedIn shares dropped \$83.90, or 44 percent, to \$108.38, its worst single-day performance in the company's history. The company provided a weak outlook for 2016 and announced it was winding down an advertising platform that was supposed to be a new venture.

Tableau Software plunged \$40.40, or 49 percent, to \$41.33 after the data analytics company reported a wider-than-expected loss and its software license revenue missed analysts' predictions. Tableau's dismal results spread to other software companies, like Salesforce.com, which fell 13 percent, and Adobe Systems, which fell 8 percent.

US government bond prices were mostly unchanged. The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note remained at 1.84 percent. The dollar rose to 116.89 yen from 116.71 yen. The euro fell to \$1.1164 from \$1.1214, inching back from its highest level in more than three months.

In the energy markets, US crude fell 83 cents to \$30.89 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, the international benchmark, fell 40 cents to \$34.06 a barrel in London. Heating oil fell 2 cents to \$1.059 a gallon, wholesale gasoline fell 3.6 cents to 99.27 cents and natural gas rose 9 cents to \$2.063 per thousand cubic feet.

In precious and industrial metals trading, gold edged up 20 cents to \$1,157.70 an ounce, silver fell 7 cents to \$14.78 an ounce and copper fell 3 cents to \$2.10 a pound. — AP

ROTANA UNVEILS STRATEGIC ROADMAP FOR KUWAIT EXPANSION

GCC LARGEST OUTBOUND AND INBOUND TRAVEL MARKET IN REGION FOR ROTANA

KUWAIT: Rotana, one of the leading hotel management companies in the Middle East, Africa, South Asia and Eastern Europe, has revealed ambitious plans for the Kuwaiti market as it continues on its aggressive expansion drive in the region. In 2018, Rotana will open a new hotel, the company's Chief Operating Officer Guy Hutchinson said at a media roundtable hosted yesterday in Al-Manshar Rotana, launching the 2016 GCC Roadshow, where he also shared insights on expected hospitality trends in 2016 as well as the outlook for the region's hospitality industry in the year ahead. The new hotel that is scheduled to open in two years will be under the "Centro by Rotana" brand, Rotana's lifestyle affordable hotel brand, and will add 200 rooms to its inventory in Kuwait.

The GCC represents the largest outbound and inbound travel market in the region for Rotana, both in terms of volume and value. Currently, 37 percent of Rotana's room nights and 40 percent of Rotana's room revenue are generated from the GCC region, Hutchinson said, adding that the company has been seeing an increase of more than 8 percent year on year.

Commenting on the growth prospects for Rotana and the wider industry in 2016, Hutchinson said at the roundtable, "We are very optimistic about the outlook for Kuwait and GCC tourism sector in 2016, despite the fact that market conditions are expected to remain challenging well into the year due to the fall in oil prices. Increased spending

by GCC governments to enhance infrastructure and accelerate the pace of economic diversification is expected to positively impact continued investor appetite for the region and its tourism industry.

On the top hospitality trends expected in the Middle East in 2016, Hutchinson said, "The Millennials, or the new-generation travelers, have been the latest focus for the industry.



Guy Hutchinson, Chief Operating Officer, Rotana.

on investment in developing the mobility platform."

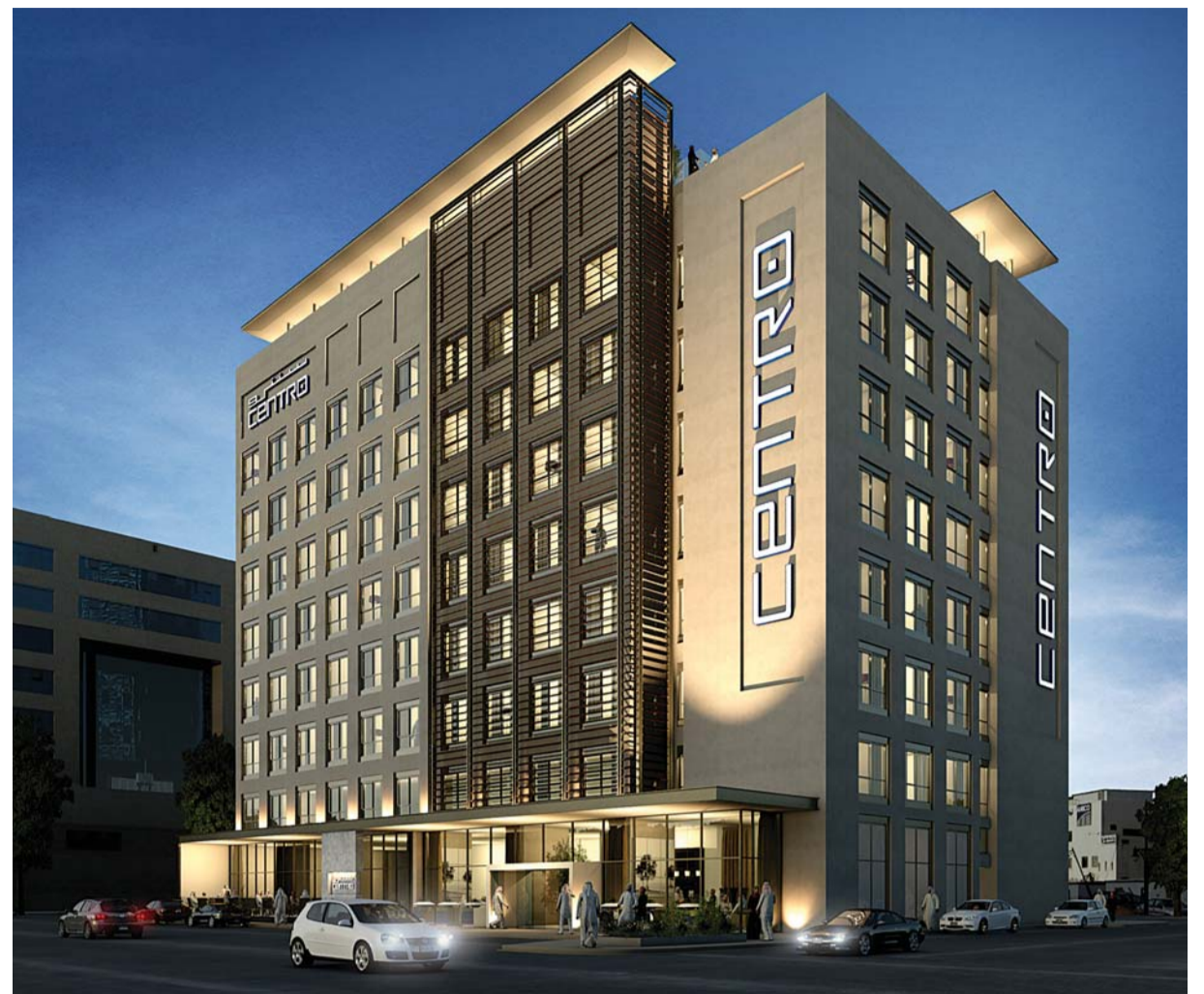
Rotana currently manages more than 100 hotels in the Middle East, Africa South Asia and Eastern Europe, with an aggressive expansion plan for the future.

Rotana currently manages a portfolio of over 100 properties throughout the Middle East, Africa, South Asia and Eastern Europe with an aggressive

We're seeing a lot of growth in that area and then they're influencing the older generations as well. Rotana has been pioneering e-commerce-focused innovations in the Middle East hospitality industry. Furthermore, we have developed a Rotana Mobile App which has posted a 20 percent increase in monthly mobile bookings in 2015, delivering a significant return

sive expansion plan in place. Rotana has chosen to acknowledge how precious time is by making all time spent in their range of hotels 'Treasured Time'. This means Rotana has pledged to understand and meet the individual needs of all guests. In so doing, Rotana has evolved its product brands to include, Rotana Hotels & Resorts, Centro Hotels by Rotana, Rayhaan

—Photos by Joseph Shagra



Hotels & Resorts by Rotana, Arjaan Hotel Apartments by Rotana and The Residences by Rotana. Treasured Time.

The Rotana promise to you. Further information on any Rotana property, its brands or reservations

can be obtained by visiting rotana.com or by contacting one of the regional sales offices.



KUWAIT: Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain, Aman Exchange General Manager Adel Yousef Al-Muzaini, Philippines Ambassador Renato Perdro Villa, Nepalese Ambassador Yagya Bahadur Hamal and E D Titus, Head, Operations, Aman Exchange, along with other dignitaries, cut the cake marking the inauguration of the new branch.

AMAN EXCHANGE OPENS 7TH BRANCH IN SALMIYA

NEW ENTRANT TO INDUSTRY OFFERS PREMIUM SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS

By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: Aman Exchange, the new entrant to the Kuwait money remittance business, yesterday opened its 7th branch in Kuwait in the prime location on Issa Al-Qatami Street in Salmiya. Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain officially inaugurated the branch in the presence of Aman Exchange General Manager Adel Yousef Al-Muzaini, Philippines Ambassador Renato Perdro Villa, Nepalese Ambassador Yagya Bahadur Hamal, E D Titus, Head of Operations, Aman Exchange and Mohamed Al-Sager, Owner Alyasra Group & Shareholder Aman Exchange.

Prior to the official inauguration, Aman Exchange hosted an introductory session over breakfast at the Movenpick Hotel, Salmiya. Uzbekistan Ambassador to Kuwait Diyor Rakhmanov, Bangladesh defense attaché in Kuwait Maj Gen Nasimul Gani, Indian Embassy Second Secretary (Press and Information) A K Srivastava, Dr Gargi Jain and many Kuwaiti and Indian dignitaries were among those who attended the meeting. Titus, who looks after the operations of the company, presented an overview of the global remittance industry focusing on fast-developing trends in the money exchange industry in Kuwait.

Remittance industry

Titus said the global remittance industry is growing at a fast pace today with a 250-million-strong immigrant population across the globe that is projected to do \$600 billion worth of transactions in 2016. In 2014, India topped the countries in global remittances with \$70 billion worth of transactions followed by China with \$65 billion. The other countries in the top list are the Philippines (\$30 billion), Nigeria (\$25 billion), Mexico (\$25 billion), France (\$25 billion), Germany (\$20 billion), Pakistan (\$20 billion), Lebanon \$10 billion and Spain \$10 billion.

"We focus on bringing a premium service to remitters in terms of speed, commission and rates. With the advent of new technology available in the market, it is possible to provide a better service to the remitter and make the entire process of remittance a hassle-free experience," Titus said.

Aman Exchange places great importance on compliance and KYC as required by the regulators. An advanced system of data collection keeps the data of the customer up to date and always available on demand to the management. Over the past six months, Aman Exchange opened six branches in Kuwait. Starting with Farwaniya at Megathree Mall, the next one was the Fahaeel branch, followed by branches in Hawally on Tunis Street and another on Beirut Street. In the subsequent months, two more branches opened, one in Hasawi in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and another premier branch at the Avenues Mall opposite to the popular Carrefour hypermarket.

Having started operations in Kuwait in July 2015, the inauguration of the seventh branch in a short span of six months signals one of the fastest expansions by any exchange company in Kuwait. "With three more branches slated for opening in Feb 2016, Aman is on a target to become a major player in the industry," said Titus.

Muzaini manages the company while Titus looks after the operations of the company. Both of them come with over 25 years of experience in the money exchange industry. Aman Exchange has opened correspondent relationships with major banks in India, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the Philippines. The company also serves the remittance needs of its customers to the GCC, Americas, Europe and Africa. With a vibrant currency handling department, the company offers all major currencies in cash in Kuwait, Titus informed. With a distinct red and blue logo, Aman Exchange is set to make a difference in terms of service and competitive rates in the Kuwait market, he added.



GULF BANK INTRODUCES VISA SIGNATURE CREDIT CARD TO ITS PREMIUM CREDIT CARDS

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank announced the introduction of VISA Signature credit card to the premium credit cards offered by the Bank, presenting the bank's Priority Banking customers with more exciting benefits through this credit card. The new Gulf Bank VISA Signature credit card became available for customers on 1 February 2016.

Through Gulf Bank's VISA Signature credit card, the Bank's Priority Banking Customers will enjoy a wide variety of benefits. Cardholders will benefit from automatic free enrollment to Gulf Rewards, the fastest and most rewarding loyalty program in Kuwait. It includes Gulf Points for free flights and hotels redemptions, as well as Gulf Bank Entertainer, Kuwait's first geo-locator mobile application offering exclusive deals in Kuwait, UAE, and London.

Gulf Points are earned for each and every transaction made with a Gulf Bank credit card; the more a customer spends on their credit card, the more points they will earn. With the Gulf Points program customers benefit from instant points that can be redeemed online for free travel anytime, anywhere, and to stay free in one of 300,000 hotels worldwide. When travelling on awards tickets, customers will still earn airline frequent flyer miles. If customers don't have enough points for a free award ticket, they can pay the remaining balance with their Gulf Bank credit cards and earn Gulf Points for the payment. Furthermore, customers can earn even more points when they use their credit cards for international transactions. For every KD1 spent locally customers will earn 2 points and 4 points for each KD 1 spent internationally.

Gulf Bank's VISA Signature customers can also enjoy the Gulf Bank 'Entertainer' app, Kuwait's first geo-locator mobile application offering exclusive deals in Kuwait, UAE, and London where the offers are available instantly on your mobile phone and include deals at restaurants, hotels, spas, as well as offers on children's activities and interests. The Gulf Bank 'Entertainer' app is available for VISA Signature Gulf Bank credit card holders to download at App Store for iOS/iPhone and the Google Play Store for Android. You can also visit www.e-gulfbank.com/entertainer-en to receive an activation code.

The Entertainer app offers 'Buy 1, Get 1 Free' deals from participating retail merchants in Kuwait, the UAE, and London. Customers can also benefit from offers from free hotel nights at participating international hotels in over 25 countries including Malaysia, Thailand, UAE, Indonesia, Egypt, and other countries. Plus, each time a customer makes a payment transaction with a participating Gulf Bank credit card through the 'Entertainer' app, they will earn points in the Gulf Points program.

To ensure the Gulf Points redemption procedure is as straight forward as possible, the Bank has created a dedicated webpage on its website at www.e-gulfbank.com/gulf-points-en, where customers can view their

points, check their balance, redeem points instantly online for flights and hotel stays, and benefit from frequently advertised special offers.

Moreover, Gulf Bank's VISA Signature credit card holders will enjoy Worldwide Lounge Access, providing customers with unlimited complimentary access to over 500 airport lounges.

VISA Signature credit card holders can also take advantage of a wide variety of discounts through its discounts program, at over 100 outlets in Kuwait, as well as seasonal discounts and promotions throughout the year.

To ensure safety when travelling the Bank's VISA Signature comes with complimentary travel insurance when the airline tickets is paid for with the card. The travel insurance includes full coverage of up to



USD 500,000 for each ticket paid for by the VISA Signature card.

Fine dining offers are also a part of Gulf Bank's VISA Signature credit cards. These premium dining discounts and rewards are available in Kuwait at over 45 restaurants, ensuring all different tastes are satisfied.

The Bank's VISA Signature credit card also presents customers with exclusive treatment at a unique portfolio of hotels with the VISA Luxury Hotel Collection. Customers will experience unsurpassed value at around 1,000 world-class hotels from boutique properties to world-renowned venues and resorts. Benefits include best available rate guaranteed, automatic room upgrade upon arrival (when available), Free in room internet (when available), complimentary continental breakfast daily, 3pm checkout and VIP guest status. This, in addition to being part of the Global Concierge Services, giving Gulf Bank's VISA Signature credit cardholders more benefits and facilities when in Kuwait or abroad.

Gulf Bank's customers will benefit from purchase protection when paying with their VISA Signature credit card and benefit from Purchase Protection for lost, stolen or damaged goods purchased customers are insured against theft or accidental damage within 90 days from the date of purchase.

VISA Signature cardholders will also benefit from an extended warranty on new purchases for a period of 12 months in addition to the warranty period provided by the original manufacturer which includes the repair or the replacement of their new purchases.

NOOR FINANCIAL INVESTMENT COMPANY DEBT REPAYMENT

KUWAIT: Under the terms of the debt restructuring agreements with the local banks, Noor Financial Investment Company has repaid the amount of KWD 4,314,375 (Four million three hundred fourteen thousand three hundred seventy five only) to Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait as on 4th February 2016 being a partial repayment of the total

debt amount. This repayment brings the total debt amount settled to the local banks as per our debt restructure agreements to KWD 58,016,375 (Kuwaiti Dinar: Fifty eight million sixteen thousand three hundred seventy five only) which represents 37.5 percent till date.

KUWAIT'S DRAFT BUDGET AND REFORM PROGRAM

AL-SHALL WEEKLY MARKET REPORT

KUWAIT: The draft budget for FY 2016/2017 contains explicit regression from the financial reform efforts, or a blatant disability to exert reform effort. Though total estimates of expenditures in the amount of KD 18.9 billion seem obvious and marginal and less by KD 0.279 billion, it is higher in fact. Saving in the subsidy item in the draft budget in the amount of KD 0.7 billion is irrelevant to rationalizing those expenses but is a de facto due to the drop in oil prices. If the figure is added to total expenses, the increase in total public expenditures will score 2.2 percent above the expenses of the current fiscal year estimated at KD 19.17 billion. Even the reduction in subsidy or most of it, about KD 1.53 billion, in the current fiscal year came from reduced subsidy item in the 2014/2015 budget due to drop in oil prices and not as advance planning for reform sake.

The estimated deficit in the draft budget at about KD 12.2 billion equals 30 percent of the estimated GDP for 2016 in accordance with the Information Unit of the Economist (EIU); it also equals about 65 percent of estimated expenses. Half of such figures are unprecedented, unsustainable and represent an advanced ailment case. A warning against a forthcoming recession cycle for the oil market was made more than 10 years ago. The oil market entered into a long concession period more than one and half years during which oil prices lost about 70 percent of their levels. Contrary to all public statements and promises, the Government increases all its public expenses if we exclude the mandatory reduction in the subsidy costs as a result of dropping oil prices.

On the other hand, oil production increased by 100,000 barrels per day during its cheap price. About 17 percent of production cost per barrel was reduced by reducing production cost from KD 2483 million in FY 2014/2015 to KD 2131 million in FY 2016/2017 despite increased production. If this is true, they mean that former costs are doubtful or perhaps imply corruption. Consequently, they increase revenues slightly which requires investigation because it is wrong and contradictory to reform efforts.

Yet what is more dangerous than that advance economic and financial sick case is the government's belief that it fulfilled its commitment to comprehensive reform, economic and financial. The Minister of Finance said that the government adopted well planned and phased structural reforms and is proceeding with the structural reform. He added that these reforms began to appear clearly in 2016/2017 budget and that this reform led by the Ministry of Finance on behalf of the government will mitigate this deficit in the forthcoming years especially as international reports confirm that it is impossible for oil prices to remain between US\$ 30-40 per barrel forever.

So as not to be lost in details, economic reform has unmistakable indicators such as proceeding with bridging the gaps of the four structural imbalances: public sector dominance, dominance of oil, or withdrawal from financial reserves -oil based- to finance public finance, demographic imbalance, and the imbalance in the workforce. The four imbalances increased deepened and led to deteriorating economic competitiveness and its weak opportunities to moving into a competitive economic and financial hub. Financial reform means continued reduction in public spending, while it is rising. More important still is the fundamental change in the bad structure of public expenses created by boom era of the oil market. If this does not change and the reliance on increasing construction spending by 13 percent is undoubtedly below the required figure for the appropriate capital formation. In terms of quality, it is not measured by the number of created national job opportunities and does not support the other development goals. It is no more than a forthcoming burden that widens the structural imbalances.

The government's inability to adopt real reform policies is anticipated; our complete hope was to stop the direction opposing reform. But the government's belief it did what it should do and more, it is going on with its economic and financial reform policies, and that the 2016/2017 draft budget is an indicator and title for the illusive reform efforts are the spots of danger. Not only that, it adds that the deficit is temporary and that all international reports agree that oil prices will increase. We concur with that but it is irrelevant to reform efforts. By so doing, the government provides politicians with the excuse to relax because even if the price of oil reaches US\$ 100 per barrel, it is an unsustainable danger. This proves that the obstacle is in the belief that governs the decision making authority and not in the visions or resources.

Oil and Public Finance

By the end of January 2016, the tenth month of the current fiscal year 2015/2016 ended and oil prices continued their drop at a quicker pace than in September, October, November and December months and broke the US\$ 20 per barrel level downward. The lowest average price for Kuwaiti oil during January was at US\$ 19.14 per barrel on January 20 and the highest was at US\$ 28.65 per barrel on January 04, 2016. Average oil price for January 2016 scored US\$ 23.3 per barrel, which is US\$ -7.8 per barrel (-25.1 percent) less than the average of December 2015 which was at US\$ 31.1 per barrel. It is also less by US\$ -21.7 per barrel, -48.2 percent than the hypothetical price per barrel estimated for the current budget at US\$ 45 per barrel. It is also lower by US\$ -51.7 than the hypothetical price of the barrel for the past fiscal year which was at US\$ 75 per barrel. It lost about -44.9 percent of its average price for January 2015 which was at US\$ 42.3 per barrel. The past fiscal year 2014/2015 which ended by the end of last March scored US\$ 81.3 per Kuwaiti oil barrel. This means the average price for January 2016 lost about -71.3 percent of the average price of the barrel of oil for the past fiscal year.

According to figures published in the monthly follow up report of the State's financial accounts for December 2015 issued by the Ministry of Finance, Kuwait achieved actual oil revenues until the end of last December -9

months- about KD 10.523 billion. Kuwait is supposed to have achieved about KD 0.9 billion in oil revenues in January. Therefore, anticipated oil revenues will increase during the 10 months to about KD 11.4 billion, 6 percent higher than the estimated oil revenues in the budget during the entire current fiscal year in the amount of KD 10.757 billion. Kuwait also achieved an amount of KD 858.2 million in non-oil revenues during the first nine months of the current fiscal year and will increase to KD 954 million in the 10 months' period. Therefore, projected revenues will score KD 12.3 billion during the period.

Assuming that production and prices would continue at their present levels -an assumption which may not be realized- it is expected that value of potential oil revenues for the entire current fiscal year would score about KD 13.3 billion, which is about KD 2.5 billion higher than the oil revenues estimated for the budget. Adding some KD 1.4 billion in non-oil revenues, total budget revenues for the current fiscal year would score KD 14.7 billion. If that is realized and assuming

that all budget expenditures estimate in the amount of KD 19.2 billion is spent and without deducting what is transferred to the future generations reserves because it is meaningless in case of a deficit financed by the general reserve or by borrowing guaranteed by the future generations reserve, actual deficit would score KD 4.5 billion. However, this deficit figure might be more or less subject to the developments in oil prices in the next two months remaining from the current fiscal year. The deficit will be less by any reduction of the estimated budget expenses when actual expenses are reviewed in the final account. Under all circumstances, the current fiscal year will realize the first deficit in 16 fiscal years.

KSE performance

The year 2015 ended with a negative result for the three main indexes which achieved heavy losses due to the continued sharp drop in oil prices (below US\$ 30 per barrel in the last quarter of 2015) as well as the threats of geopol-

itical situation in the region and using the oil as the main weapon for it. This all reflected negatively for January. The market continued its sharp regression during January 2016. The price index dropped to 5,114.5 points (5,615.1 points in the end of last year), a decline by -8.9 percent. The weighted index scored 353.4 points (381.7 points in the end of last year), with a drop by -7.4 percent. Kuwait 15 Index dropped about -7.8 percent compared with its level in the end of last year. When we compare the performance of the three indexes (Price, weighted, and Kuwait 15) with their performance in January 2015, they remained losers by (-22.2 percent, -20 percent, and -22.6 percent) respectively.

AlShall index reading in the end of Sunday 31/01/2016 scored 334.6 points, a drop by 31.3 points, or by -8.5 percent, compare with its closure in the end of last year at 365.9 points. It dropped by -24.8 percent vis-a-vis January 2015. The highest reading during the month was at 362.4 points scored on 04/01/2016 and

the lowest was at 306.1 points on 21/01/2016.

Traded value of shares during (20 working days) scored about KD 282 million rising by KD 40.3 million, or by 16.7 percent compared with KD 241.7 million in the end of December 2015. It however drops by -43.8 percent if compared with the end of January 2015. The highest trading value in one day during the month scored KD 27.7 million on 17/01/2016 and the lowest was recorded on 06/01/2016 about KD 6.7 million. The daily average value of traded shares was KD 14.1 million (KD 11 million in December 2015), up by 28.3 percent. The banking sector led other sectors in liquidity and captured KD 120.8 million, 42.8 percent of the total of market liquidity. The real estate sector came second by 15.4 percent, financial services sector came next by about 15.3 percent when compared with the end of December 2015. Total volume of traded shares scored 2.697 billion shares rising by 15.3 percent if compared with 2.340 billion shares in the end of December 2015. Total number of transactions 64.7 thousand deals with a daily average scored 3,233 deals up by 19.9 percent compared with the end of December 2015.

Market value of all listed companies -190 companies- scored KD 24.3 billion declining by KD 1.902 billion, or by -7.3 percent, as reflected by the weighted index versus KD 26.2 billion in the end of 2015. It is worth mentioning that the number of gaining companies was 24 out of 190 common companies and 141 companies recorded varying losses in their values. And value of 25 companies remained unchanged. After excluding the companies whose capitals are increased -two companies- or reduced, GFH Financial Group recorded the highest rise in value by an increase of 22.4 percent. Al-Mowasat Health Care Co" came next by 16.7 percent rise. On the other hand, Tiba Kuwaiti Holding Co achieved the highest loss in its value by -76.7 percent. Munshaat Real Estate Projects Co came next and lost -41.4 percent of its value. 11 sectors out of 12 sectors dropped in value including basic materials sector which dropped by -12.4 percent and the oil and gas sector came second in losses by -11.6 percent, while the health care sector scored the only rise by 1.3 percent. February performance will be linked by two factors and the companies do not have the ability to influence them, and their impact will be greater than the profit and dividend announcements, those two factors are the developments in the oil market and the hottest or break through geopolitical events, thus, it's likely that extreme inequality is a performance feature for the month of February, and a few months to come followed.

Comparative Performance for Selected Stock Markets

A very negative situation prevailed over the sample markets in January. The 14 markets' performance was negative at varying degrees. The negative performance of the mature and emerging markets as well as the GCC markets was all mixed. The lowest loss was at -2.4 percent and the highest was at -22.6 percent. 10 markets achieved medium losses which ranged between -4.2 percent and -9.1 percent.

The biggest loser which dragged all other markets behind it was the Chinese market whose index lost in one month about

-22.6 percent of its value. The transfer of infection was the fear of the transfer of the disease to the real economy of the biggest global trade partners. The Chinese stock exchange was subject to a major correct movement in June 2015 which incited authorities to provide unprecedented support to it. It seemed that its measures yielded positive outcome until the end of last year. It however returned to failure in January similar to all support experiences in the world throughout four centuries.

The second major loser in January was the Saudi market which lost -13.2 percent. This seems logical due to the severe deterioration in oil prices and the continued regional wars on more than one front. The Qatari market shared the two major losers in losses for the same Saudi market's justifications and lost about -9.1 percent. The Kuwaiti market weighted index was not far away in it losses which scored -7.4 percent though they were less than the Japanese and German's losses. The least market in losses was the Bahraini which lost -2.4 percent only with the British market being close at -2.5 percent.

It seems what is happening to China and its impact on the demand side on oil deepened in January the losses of the oil market which is passing through a price war among traditional producers. The drop of oil prices below the US\$ 30 limit per barrel is a negative factor even to the performance of consuming economies. It is also an element that foretells instability to some oil producing countries. IMF warning about a potential weakness in the global economic growth in this year perhaps sums up those conditions although we believe that correction to the markets may be due after an era of inflation in stocks prices due to the abundance of cheap funds in the era of quantitative facilitation.

Performance of most of those markets may be positive in February due to the substantial losses in January which are usually followed by some compensation and secondly due to the impact of some statements of a likely reduction in the surplus of oil supplies on prices. Nevertheless, there is a likelihood that the opposite might occur because an agreement on limiting the surplus in supplies is a political decision which is extremely unpredictable.

The Weekly Performance of KSE

The performance of Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) for last week was more active compared to the previous one, where all indexes showed an increase, the traded value index, the traded volume index, the number of transactions index, and the general index also showed an increase, AlShall Index (value weighted) closed at 338.7 points at the closing of last Thursday, showing an increase of about 14.3 points or about 4.4 percent compared with its level last week, while it decreased by 27.2 points or about 7.4 percent compared with the end of 2015.

The following tables summarize last week's performance of KSE

Description	Week 5	Week 4	Diff %
	04/02/2016	28/01/2016	
Working days	5	5	
AlShall index (38 Companies)	338.7	324.4	4.4%
KSE index	5,198.4	5,010.4	3.8%
Value Trade (KD)	81,920,938	63,257,907	
Daily average (KD)	16,384,188	12,651,581	29.5%
Volume Trade (Shares)	919,913,867	832,920,723	
Daily average (Shares)	183,982,773	166,584,145	10.4%
Transactions	22,741	18,924	
Daily average (Transactions)	4,548	3,785	20.2%

Most Active Sectors & Companies

Description	Value Traded	% of Total
Sectors	KD	Market
KUWAIT FINANCE HOUSE	14,580,474	17.8%
MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY K.S.C (ZAIN)	8,031,315	9.8%
NATIONAL BANK OF KUWAIT	6,594,149	8.0%
WARBA BANK	6,240,717	7.6%
AGILITY PUBLIC WAREHOUSING COMPANY	4,446,849	5.4%
Total	39,893,504	48.7%
Description	Value Traded	% of Total
Sectors	KD	Market
BANKS SECTOR	36,015,353	44.0%
FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR	12,347,917	15.1%
REAL ESTATE SECTOR	10,580,854	12.9%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR	9,565,957	11.7%
INDUSTRIALS SECTOR	8,720,887	10.6%

ALSHALL INDEX	Week 5	Week 4
	04/02/2016	28/01/2016
Increased Value (# of Companies)	27	25
Decreased Value (# of Companies)	4	2
Unchanged Value (# of Companies)	7	11
Total Companies	38	38

Company Name	THU	THU	DIFF	CLOSE	DIFF
	04/02/2016	28/01/2016	%	2015	%
1 The National Bank Of Kuwait	359.3	348.8	3.0	401.1	(10.4)
2 The Gulf Bank	170.7	172.3	(0.9)	211.3	(19.2)
3 Commercial Bank Of Kuwait	402.3	418.4	(3.8)	402.3	0.0
4 Al-Ahli Bank Of Kuwait	232.4	225.9	2.9	245.5	(5.3)
5 Kuwait International Bank	208.4	204.3	2.0	235.5	(11.5)
6 Ahli United Bank	360.2	348.2	3.4	424.2	(15.1)
7 Burgan Bank	331.0	307.2	7.7	359.6	(8.0)
8 Kuwait Finance House	963.0	907.4	6.1	1052.0	(8.5)
Banking Sector	369.4	358.1	3.2	409.7	(9.8)
9 Commercial Facilities Co	109.7	112.6	(2.6)	125.6	(12.7)
10 International Financial Advisors	210.7	190.5	10.6	235.1	(10.4)
11 National Investments	93.1	84.3	10.4	110.7	(15.9)
12 Kuwait Investment Projects	1225.6	1158.8	5.8	1292.5	(5.2)
13 Coast Investment & Development	39.0	34.2	14.0	43.7	(10.8)
Investment Sector	322.5	306.5	5.2	347.4	(7.2)
14 Kuwait Insurance Company	70.6	70.6	0.0	67.3	4.9
15 Gulf Insurance Company	427.7	427.7	0.0	427.7	0.0
16 Al-Ahleia Insurance Company	167.1	163.3	2.3	199.0	(16.0)
17 Warba Insurance Company	85.2	80.3	6.1	88.5	(3.7)
Insurance Sector	156.6	155.3	0.8	162.9	(3.9)
18 Kuwait Real Estate Company	75.5	72.2	4.6	88.6	(14.8)
19 United Realty Company	193.7	193.7	0.0	193.7	0.0
20 National Real Estate Company	194.4	185.6	4.7	187.8	3.5
21 Salhiah Real Estate Company	1433.4	1332.5	7.6	1494.0	(4.1)
Real Estate Sector	179.4	171.4	4.7	184.3	(2.7)
22 The National Industries	107.2	98.3	9.1	112.6	(4.8)
23 Kuwait Cement Co	572.9	572.9	0.0	595.5	(3.8)
24 Refrigeration Industries Co	109.8	100.0	9.8	104.9	4.7
25 Gulf Cable & Electrical Industries	143.9	127.9	12.5	149.9	(4.0)
26 Contracting & Marine Services Co	69.7	69.7	0.0	64.8	7.6
Industrial Sector	166.7	159.6	4.4	172.4	(3.3)
27 Kuwait National Cinemas	615.2	590.1	4.3	577.5	6.5
28 Kuwait Hotels Company	121.0	121.0	0.0	115.5	4.8
29 The Public Warehousing Co	1688.2	1630.0	3.6	1862.8	(9.4)
30 Mobile Telecommunications Co - ZAIN	400.6	338.2	18.5	353.8	13.2
31 Safat Energy Co	10.2	8.3	22.9	11.7	(12.8)
Services Sector	599.0	550.6	8.8	598.6	0.1
32 Livestock Transport & Trading Co	105.0	98.3	6.8	106.7	(1.6)
33 Danah Aalsafat Foodstuff Company	74.7	71.6	4.3	81.8	(8.7)
34 Kuwait United Poultry Co	63.3	65.3	(3.1)	65.3	(3.1)
35 Kuwait Food Co	1970.7	1734.2	13.6	1970.7	0.0
Food Sector	679.6	603.3	12.6	681.5	(0.3)
36 Sharjah Cement Co	350.0	341.6	2.5	362.5	(3.4)
37 Gulf Cement Co	334.7	286.3	16.9	322.6	3.8
38 Umm Al-Qaiwain Cement Industries	515.0	515.0	0.0	588.6	(12.5)
Non Kuwaiti Companies	225.3	215.8	4.4	228.6	(1.4)
General Index	338.7	324.4	4.4	365.9	(7.4)

3-D TECHNOLOGY PROVIDES CUSTOM FIT, BENEFITS IN KNEE REPLACEMENTS

CEDAR RAPIDS: The future has arrived, on bended knee. And Larry Johnson, 80, of Hiawatha, said yes - twice. He's so happy with the 3-D custom replacement in his left knee on Nov. 2 that he's having his right knee rebuilt Feb. 25. His wife, Eleanor, 81, is happy with the conventional knee replacements she had in 2000 and 2005, but marvels at her husband's faster recovery and improved range of motion - as well as how far technology has come in her lifetime.

Her grandmother was told to "take two aspirins and keep crocheting, keep moving," said Eleanor, who attributes her own bad knees to osteoarthritis and heredity.

Her husband, a retired Rockwell Collins manager, traces his knee woes to rheumatoid arthritis; unloading 100-pound bags of potatoes "constantly" in a grocery warehouse job at age 18; and years of volunteering to help

friends with home concrete projects like pouring driveways, patios, garage floors and sidewalks.

When nature and nurture finally left bone rubbing bone, Dr. Sandeep Munjal at Physicians' Clinic of Iowa, 202 10th St. SE, deemed Johnson a good candidate for customized 3-D knee implants.

Among the criteria for any knee replacement, the patient should exhibit advanced arthritis, with bone touching the bone, and severe pain with daily activities, which no longer responds to other therapies, Munjal said.

To be a good candidate for a 3-D implant, the patient should have minimal physical deformities in the leg. Johnson's leg bones are very straight from hip to ankle, with no bowing or knock-knee misalignments. The ConforMIS 3-D implant, fabricated in Boston, is

based on the patient's CT scan to ensure a precise fit.

Cost to the patient and insurance coverage are the same for conventional and custom implants, said Munjal, 52, of Cedar Rapids, one of few physicians in the nation using this 3-D technology.

He's done about 4,000 knee replacements over the past 20 years, and even though the emerging 3-D technology has been around for six or seven years, he's been keeping an eye on it for about five years.

"I was waiting for the early results to come along before we started doing them," he said.

He trained on the procedures in Florida, and has done about 30 to 40 3-D replacement surgeries in the past year.

"The surgery is no different from what I do every day," he said. "The exposure is the same, the cuts are slightly different. It's the frame of

mind. I've done 4,000 knee replacements. You have to change a little bit in your thinking, your process - you have to evaluate it.

Whereas 85 percent to 90 percent of patients are said to be happy with a knee replacement, Munjal aims for the 95- to 100 percent satisfaction rating that Johnson has experienced.

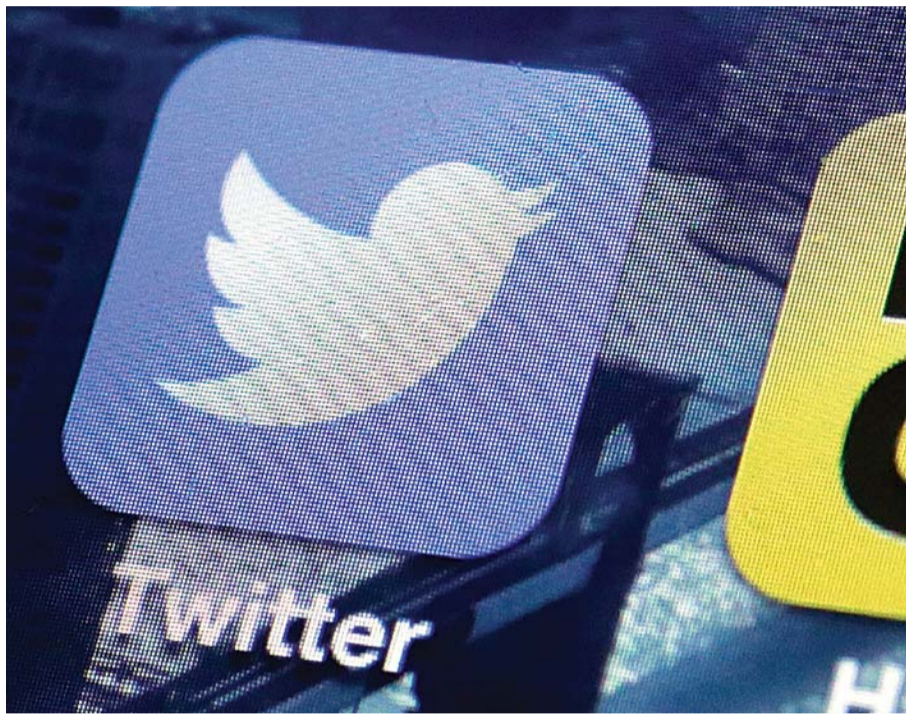
"That 10 percent may not seem like a lot to you, but if I'm doing 400 (replacements) a year, that 10 percent is 40 patients a year," Munjal said. "To increase that satisfaction to the next level is important to me and to the patient's life."

Johnson is thrilled with his range of motion, which aids in everyday movements like standing and climbing stairs. "This knee replacement is custom-built for the patient, so the sizing and the fit (are) way more natural, as compared to what they call the 'over-the-shelf' knee,"

Munjal said. "The motion is reproduced just like a natural knee. It is also bone-sparing - you don't cut as much bone. You not only save the patient's ligaments, but what you do is put it exactly where the natural knee belongs. So it moves better and patients feel more secure on that knee... they feel more strong, more stable."

The 3-D process takes six to eight weeks from shipping the patient's CT scans to the manufacturer on the East Coast, until the box arrives, containing all the pieces and templates for making the required cuts in the bone. The surgery, itself, takes about an hour.

Patients are up and walking within hours after surgery and can typically stop using a cane after three or four weeks. The patients return for periodic checkups: after two weeks for staple removal, five weeks for X-rays and range of motion, then at three months, one year, and after that, every five years. —AP



This file photo shows a Twitter app on an iPhone screen, in New York. Twitter says that four executives are leaving the company. Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey posted Monday, Jan. 25, 2016, that Alex Roetter, Skip Schipper, Katie Stanton and Kevin Weil are exiting the company. Roetter served as senior vice president of engineering, Schipper was vice president of human resources, Stanton was vice president of social media and Weil was senior vice president of product. —AP

TWITTER BLOCKS 125,000 ACCOUNTS FOR 'PROMOTING TERRORIST ACTS'

WASHINGTON: Twitter Inc has shut down more than 125,000 terrorism-related accounts since the middle of 2015, most of them linked to the Islamic State group, the company said in a blog post on Friday. Twitter has said it only takes down accounts when they are reported by other users, but said that it has increased the size of teams monitoring and responding to reports and has decreased its response time "significantly." (<http://bit.ly/1KvrmZ5>)

Twitter's announcement comes as many tech companies - led by Facebook - have taken stronger steps to police controversial content online in the face of threats from legislators to force the companies to report "terrorist activity" on their sites to law enforcement.

Silicon Valley has been wary of engaging with government officials, concerned about endless demands for similar action from countries around the world as well as fears about being perceived by consumers as tools of government.

The announcement was also notable because Twitter has said little about its efforts to combat Islamic State, also known as ISIS, and similar groups even though it has been criticized for not doing enough.

Islamic State, which controls last swaths of Iraq and Syria, has heavily relied on the 300 million-person site, as well as others, to recruit fighters and propagate violent messages.

Seamus Hughes, deputy director of George Washington University's program on extremism, said Friday's report showcased an "impressive number" of take-

downs, but said that Twitter still appears to police extremist content in a mostly "episodic" way.

Many extremists have migrated toward smaller, less monitored platforms in recent months in response to major Silicon Valley firms stepping up their content policing, Hughes added.

In January, a delegation of top national security officials met tech industry leaders from Twitter, Facebook Inc, Apple Inc, and

Google parent Alphabet Inc, but most companies, including Twitter, did not send their chief executive officers.

Rep. Adam Schiff, the top Democrat on the House of Representatives Intelligence Committee, called Twitter's announcement a "very positive development," but said more was needed.

"Addressing the use of social media by terrorists will require a

sustained and cooperative effort between the technology sector, the Intelligence Community, and law enforcement," he said.

Still, Twitter said in a blog post that it has cooperated with law enforcement when appropriate.

It said that it tries to strike a balance between enforcing its rules on prohibited behaviors, the needs of law enforcement and the desire by users to share their views - including offensive ones. —Reuters



WASHINGTON: A view of an iPhone in Washington showing the Twitter apps among. Twitter is now using spam-fighting technology to seek out accounts that might be promoting terrorist activity and is proactively looking at other accounts related to those flagged for possible removal, the company announced Friday. —AP

IN 'XCOM 2,' EARTHLINGS TRY TO GET THE BUGS OUT

When the aliens come - and they will - don't expect the government to save us. If you've ever watched "The X-Files," you know half of them are in cahoots with the invaders anyway.

Besides, we tried that already in 2012's "XCOM: Enemy Unknown." In "XCOM 2" (2K, for the PC, \$59.95), we find out that all our efforts were for naught. Twenty years have elapsed, and the extraterrestrials have pretty much taken over Earth with the help of human collaborators.

You are the commander of a ragtag bunch of desperate, ill-prepared men and women who are nonetheless determined to stick it to our new bosses. You don't have much in the way of firepower - just some rickety pistols, rifles and grenades - but you do have a cool airborne base, the Avenger, that you can fly to hot spots all over the planet. In each mission, you send four recruits to the surface to battle the insect-like aliens, sabotage installations, gather intelligence or rescue civilians. Each confrontation takes place on a three-dimensional map viewed from above. Your four soldiers move in turns, and can do two things each turn. The first thing is usually moving closer to the enemy, and the second is usually shooting at it. You can also spend one of your action points healing a comrade, hacking a computer or hunkering down behind cover.

From the start, these missions are quite challenging, even at the default difficulty

setting. My best advice is to save your game frequently, because you never know when one of your hapless squaddies is about to get his head lasered off. And in "XCOM," death is permanent, with no magical spells to reincarnate your lost partners.

The good news is that your soldiers get tougher and smarter with each mission they survive. Meanwhile, the scientists you rescue are eager to get their hands on whatever alien technology you can salvage, which they can then use to create more powerful weapons and armor.

The overarching game - where you're adding new facilities to the Avenger, leveling up your soldiers and deciding which attacks will be most effective at stopping the alien takeover - is quite satisfying. You never have all the resources you need to put out every fire, so you have to make plenty of tough decisions. And I became quite attached to some of my brave guerrillas - so much so that it was heartbreaking to lose one in a particularly desperate battle.

"XCOM 2" looks lovely, but it is marred by technical hiccups, with the action slowing down or freezing all too frequently. And since it generates new missions on the fly, the loading times can be excruciating.

Players who are used to the run-and-gun antics of first-person shooters like "Halo" may find "XCOM 2" too demanding, but I found its strategic challenges far more satisfying. I, for one, welcome our new insect overlords. Three stars out of four. —AP

FOXCONN AGREES WITH SHARP ON MOST POINTS OF A TAKEOVER DEAL

OSAKA, Japan/TAIPEI: Taiwan's Foxconn is aiming to finalize a deal to acquire Japan's Sharp Corp by the end of the month, after the two firms reached a consensus on most points, Foxconn Chief Executive Officer Terry Gou said. Foxconn, known formally as Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., has been given preferred negotiating rights and most remaining issues to be resolved were legal and regulatory, Gou said after meeting with executives of the struggling electronics maker on Friday.

The Apple Inc supplier has offered to invest around 659 billion yen (\$5.6 billion) in Sharp, sources familiar with the matter have said - which would make it Foxconn's biggest deal to date and the largest acquisition by a foreign company in Japan's insulated tech sector.

"We have a consensus," Gou told reporters. "The rest is a process... I don't see a problem completing this process." The meeting with Sharp executives came one day after Sharp's board decided to focus on Foxconn's offer over a rival bid from a Japanese state-backed fund.

While many investors have faith in Gou's business acumen, noting he has built up the world's biggest contract maker of electronic gadgets from scratch, buying Sharp is seen as carrying as many, or more, risks than potential benefits.

A deal would give Foxconn access to the Japanese display maker's cutting-

edge technology at a time when clients such as Apple are likely looking ahead to more advanced flexible screens.

However, key concerns include slowing global sales for smartphones as well as fierce competition from South Korea and Chinese rivals that have hammered demand for Sharp's liquid crystal displays and hindered it from making a recovery despite two major bank-led bailouts in the last four years.

The macro environment is not so great," said Vincent Chen, head of regional research with Yuanta Research in Taipei. "Terry is very calculating. He has guts, but I really think there is still a big risk."

Foxconn is also seen by some as overpaying for a loss-making company with the acquisition likely to weigh heavily on its balance sheet.

"Foxconn's offer is expensive, which shows how desperately the company wants Sharp's technology," said Takatoshi Itohsima, chief portfolio manager at Commons Asset Management.

Japan-based sources familiar with the matter have also said there was still some wariness among Sharp and its creditors towards Gou after a 2012 agreement to form a strategic alliance and capital ties broke down. But Sharp CEO Kozo Takahashi stressed on Thursday that Sharp and Foxconn had since forged a good relationship through the joint management of a plant in Japan. —Reuters

TOP CYBERCRIME RING DISRUPTED AS AUTHORITIES RAID MOSCOW OFFICES

WASHINGTON: Russian authorities in November raided offices associated with a Moscow film distribution and production company as part of a crackdown on one of the world's most notorious financial hacking operations, according to three sources with knowledge of the matter.

Cybersecurity experts said a password-stealing software program known as Dyre - believed to be responsible for at least tens of millions of dollars in losses at financial institutions including Bank of America Corp and JPMorgan Chase & Co - has not been deployed since the time of the raid. Experts familiar with the situation said the case represents Russia's biggest effort to date to crack down on cyber-crime. A spokesman for the Russian Interior Ministry's cybercrime unit said his department was not involved in the case. The FSB, Russia's main intelligence service, said it had no immediate comment.

Nikolay Volchkov, the chief executive of the film company named 25th Floor, said he could not answer questions about the raid.

Without an official confirmation, much remains a mystery. Reuters could not determine a direct link between the program's shutdown and the raid.

The sources said that a number of people were questioned by the authorities but Reuters

was unable to ascertain further details, including whether there were arrests or criminal charges. Reuters has no evidence that Volchkov or the film company is implicated in any wrongdoing and couldn't determine precisely who is.

Hackers targeting Western financial institutions and individuals are rarely punished in Russia. Consequently, the November raid is seen as potentially a landmark event by Western cyber-crime watchers. The Dyre hackers used a range of tricks to insert sophisticated computer code into consumer Web browsers to manipulate communications between those customers and more than 400 financial institutions, according to analysts at Dell SecureWorks. IBM said it was the most pervasive financial theft software hitting its customers last year. (see <http://goo.gl/dFYm62>)

But then Dyre stopped spreading, banking and security experts said. "We have seen a disruption over the last few months that is definitely consistent with successful law enforcement action," said cybersecurity expert John Miller of US-based security firm iSight Partners, who had no knowledge of specific arrests. The Dyre investigation in Russia is being aided by Kaspersky Lab, a top cyber-security firm. A person close to the company said it would reveal details about the case at its annual conference for security experts

starting Sunday. Kaspersky declined to comment on its conference plans.

CYBER-CRIME THRILLER

Adding further intrigue to the November raid is that 25th Floor is in the midst of producing a film called Botnet, a cyber-crime thriller loosely based on a 2010 case in which 37 people in the United States and elsewhere were charged in a \$3 million scam.

Prosecutors in the 2010 case touted the bust as a big win against organized cybercrime. Tabloid media outlets loved the story, especially as photos circulated of one of the suspects, a blue-eyed Russian brunette named Kristina Svehinskaya, who was referred to by The Sun newspaper in Britain as "the world's sexiest hacker."

However, most of the people charged were lower-level in the scam and the key figures were never named, let alone arrested. The hackers used a variant of the then-top program for hijacking bank accounts, known as Zeus, which law enforcement sources say is related to the present-day Dyre.

Housed in a fashionable Moscow skyscraper, 25th Floor distributes movies and television shows in Russia and neighboring countries as well as producing some of its own. Last year's distribution slate included "The Runner," with Nicholas Cage, and this April it is slated to ship "Exposed," a police corruption drama with Keanu Reeves.

Two people briefed on the November raid said it involved both 25th Floor's office and a related neighboring office. In treatments for the movie version of the crime story seen by Reuters, the lead female character grows up poor in a Moscow housing complex, is lured into an imagined high life of New York hackers, and eventually gets arrested by the US National Security Agency before turning on the worst of her criminal associates and walking free.

"HE WAS AFRAID"

Ilya Sachkov, chief executive of Group-IB, a Moscow-based computer security company, said his firm was hired by 25th Floor to advise the Botnet director and writers on the finer points of cybercrime.

Sachkov said he was initially approached at a security conference by Volchkov. "He asked if we would be interested in consulting with a scriptwriter they would hire in the United States," Sachkov said. Sachkov said he met with Volchkov about half-a-dozen times to discuss aspects of the plot.



SAN FRANCISCO: An Apple iPhone with a cracked screen after a drop test from the DropBot, a robot used to measure the sustainability of a phone to dropping, at the offices of SquareTrade in San Francisco. Apple for the first time is accepting banged up iPhones as a trade-in from those wanting to upgrade. —AP

BRAZIL'S ANTI-ZIKA WAR GOES HOUSE TO HOUSE

SAO PAULO: Sao Paulo resident Juliana Matuoka always thought her stunning tropical flowers were something to appreciate from afar. Now, however, they are enemy territory. "Here, I got one!" exclaimed Marcio Hoglhammer, a municipal health department worker who arrived along with colleagues and two young soldiers as part of Brazil's massive house-to-house effort to eradicate the Zika virus and dengue-carrying mosquitoes.

Hoglhammer reached into the huge leaves of the bromelia flowers and used a syringe to suck out water, then held it up triumphantly. "I found larvae of the *Aedes aegypti* (mosquito)," he said. "This plant was a real incubator."

As Matuoka looked on in surprise, the health agent explained that mosquitoes are more likely to breed in certain plants than others. "They don't need a jungle for this, but they do need certain plants,"

he said. "So I recommended that if they don't pay attention to this plant, then better to change it to something else."

The mosquito hunters were working their way through the upscale neighborhood of Alto Pinheiros in the west of Brazil's biggest city, stopping at Matuoka's house because she recently contracted dengue fever. Checks have long been made in an effort to prevent dengue. But with national and international concern growing over the explosion in the region of Zika cases, the mosquito-checking program has taken on new urgency. Matuoka, who has an art gallery, said she had no idea that bromelias could be part of a problem sending tremors across the continent.

Although nearly all Zika cases result in nothing more than the mildest symptoms, there are concerns that Zika can cause serious birth defects in babies born to infected mothers and also cause

a rare, sometimes deadly disorder called Guillain-Barre syndrome in adults. Brazil is pouring considerable resources into what President Dilma Rousseff calls a "war" against mosquitoes.

Officials say that simply ridding houses and public areas of standing water, where mosquitoes like to breed, will strike a major blow. In some places, including future Olympic sites in Rio de Janeiro, heavy spraying and fumigating is planned. The health ministry says more than 30 percent of Brazilian homes—about 20.7 million in total—have already been visited by soldiers and healthcare workers to make checks and inform residents. In just one day, Hoglhammer recently managed to visit 300 houses, he said. But in a country of 204 million people at the height of Tropical summer, with mosquitoes everywhere, the end to the battle is not in view. "I don't know if we're advancing much," he said. — AFP



OLINDA, Brazil: Brazilian Army soldiers distribute flyers with information on how to combat the *Aedes aegypti* during the "Burial of the Mosquito" carnival block parade. — AP



CARACAS: A Health Ministry employee fumigates against the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito inside a church. — AFP

FIRST ZIKA-LINKED DEATHS REPORTED IN COLOMBIA

BOGOTA: The mosquito-borne Zika virus sweeping through Latin America has claimed three lives in Colombia, as the United Nations urged increased access to abortion because of fears of severe birth defects.

In the first direct statements from government health officials blaming Zika for causing deaths, Colombia's National Health Institute (INS) said Friday that the patients died after contracting the virus and developing a rare neurological disorder called Guillain-Barre syndrome. Cases of the syndrome in which the immune system attacks the nervous system, causing weakness and sometimes paralysis, have increased in tandem with the Zika outbreak, fueling suspicions that it is a complication of the otherwise mild tropical fever, which is also blamed for causing brain damage in babies born to infected mothers.

"Other cases (of deaths linked to Zika) are going to emerge," said epidemiologist Martha Lucia Ospina, director of the INS. "The world is realizing that Zika can be deadly. The mortality rate is not very high, but it can be deadly." Most Guillain-Barre patients recover, but the syndrome sometimes causes paralysis or even death.

Citing the rise in babies born with microcephaly, or abnormally small heads and brains, the UN human rights office urged countries hit by Zika to give women access to contraception and abortion. Women's reproductive rights are a touchy subject in largely Catholic Latin America, but the UN human rights office said countries urging women to avoid pregnancy—a list that comprises Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Jamaica and Panama—had to give them

ways to control their fertility.

"How can they ask these women not to become pregnant, but not offer... the possibility to stop their pregnancies?" spokeswoman Cecile Pouilly told reporters. Many Latin American countries outlaw abortion or allow it only if the mother's life is in danger. In El Salvador, one of those warning against pregnancy, abortion is punishable by up to 40 years in prison. Honduras, which earlier this week declared a state of emergency after tallying some 3,700 cases of Zika since mid-December, said it is planning a full day dedicated to eradicating the mosquitoes that carry the virus. President Juan Orlando Hernandez has allocated an initial tranche of \$10 million in an attempt to halt the spread of the virus.

Safe sex or none at all

Health officials in Brazil and the United States meanwhile warned that sex or even kissing could potentially spread the typically mosquito-borne disease. Brazil's top research center, the Fiocruz institute in Rio de Janeiro, said Zika had been detected in urine and saliva. The scientists were careful to clarify that there is no proof the virus can be transmitted through those fluids, but said people should take precautions, especially expecting mothers.

"Avoid sharing glasses, silverware, contact with someone who has symptoms of a possible infection. Don't kiss, obviously," said the institute's director Paulo Gadelha. The US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for their part urged people to use condoms or abstain from having sex if they live in or have traveled to Zika-infected areas. Earlier this week, US health officials

confirmed the first case of sexually transmitted Zika—a person who had traveled to Venezuela and infected a sexual partner in Texas upon return. In the US territory of Puerto Rico, officials declared a health emergency over Zika and confirmed a pregnant woman had been infected, bringing the number of cases on the island to 22. The emergency measures included freezing the price of condoms and combating mosquitoes.

Calls for more research

The World Health Organization, which has declared the rise in Zika-linked birth defects an international emergency, warns that Zika could infect up to four million people in the Americas and spread worldwide. The WHO has advised countries against accepting blood donations from people who have traveled to affected regions. The new warnings on intimate contact highlight how little is known about Zika, a virus that was first identified in Africa in 1947 but had been considered relatively mild until the current eruption of apparent complications.

Both the US CDC and Fiocruz in Brazil said more research was needed on person-to-person transmission. Brazil has been the country hardest hit by the outbreak, with an estimated 1.5 million cases. Colombia is next on the list, with more than 20,000 cases. Zika often goes unnoticed, and causes a relatively mild fever and rash in those who do develop symptoms. But Brazil sounded the alarm after recording a surge in babies born with microcephaly. It has registered 404 cases since October and 3,670 suspected cases, up from 147 in all of 2014. — AFP

BRAZIL CONSIDERS CHANGE TO BIO-SECURITY PROCEDURES

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazilian officials will soon decide whether to amend the South American nation's rigid procedures for sharing Zika samples, the Cabinet chief's spokeswoman said Friday, as officials announced that they were sending a set of samples to US researchers amid complaints of hoarding.

The developments came on the heels of an Associated Press report earlier this week that revealed that international health officials were frustrated at Brazil's refusal to share enough viral samples and other information to answer the most worrying question about the outbreak: Whether the disease is truly causing a spike in babies born with abnormally small heads?

Cabinet chief Jaques Wagner planned to meet with the health minister and science and technology minister next Wednesday to craft a presidential decree to reform Brazil's biosecurity law, Sonia Abranches, a spokeswoman for Cabinet chief's office, told the AP. Abranches said she could not provide more details on what the changes might look like or comment on whether Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff would enact the decree.

In a Friday statement to The AP, the health ministry said it was "at the disposal" of international researchers studying Zika. In a statement posted to its website Thursday, the ministry said that two-thirds of the material gathered during recent field work with an American team would be shipped to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The ministry did not answer multiple requests on Friday for more details on the sample sharing. Paulo Gadelha, president Fiocruz, a state-run health research institute in Rio, said that cooperation was important but that it had to be tightly regulated. "It can't be an out of control sending of material abroad, or vice versa," he said. "This must be protected, regulated by rules that guarantee the greater scientific objective and the equality and the horizontality of the cooperation."

Accurate diagnostics

US and UN officials have told the AP that Brazil has so far probably shared fewer than 20 samples when experts say hundreds or thousands of samples are needed to track the virus' evolution and develop accurate diagnostics and effective drugs and vaccines. Many countries' national laboratories are relying on older strains from outbreaks in the Pacific and Africa, the AP found.

After the story's publication, the World Health Organization sent out a flurry of

messages acknowledging that existence of a "data gap." "Given the complexity of unanswered questions on Zika & (associated) disease, our goal is to encourage all researchers to share their data ASAP," the WHO said on Twitter. "Rapid data sharing is critical during an unfolding health emergency."

The number and precise nature of the samples was not made explicit. It was also unclear under what conditions the Brazilian viruses were being shared. "One crucial question is whether the bilateral sharing comes with any strings attached," said Lawrence Gostin, a global health law expert at Georgetown University. In an email, he said countries would likely be reluctant to share samples freely without agreements to ensure they wouldn't be frozen out of any resulting products from their viruses, like drugs and vaccines.

Zika was discovered in a Ugandan forest in 1947; until last year, the virus had never caused serious disease. It has now spread to more than 20 countries. Many scientists say having access to current samples is critical to figuring out whether it is mutating into a more transmissible or dangerous form. With so many unknowns about Zika, researchers are keen to sequence the virus to see if it has evolved into a form capable of causing microcephaly, or an abnormally small head in infants.

The AP's revelation that Brazil was not sharing many virus samples came as a surprise to several senior scientists, including officials at WHO and elsewhere. Dr. David Heymann, chair of WHO's Zika emergency committee, said that virus-sharing was not discussed during the hours-long crisis meeting on Monday. "Virus-sharing was not mentioned as an issue of concern," he said.

CDC Director Dr Tom Frieden said his agency has found the Brazilian government to be open and transparent. "There are challenges with specimen sharing, but they have not undermined our response at this point," he said. Some were dismissive even after the AP's report was published. When asked Thursday about the importance of sharing samples, senior WHO official Dr Sylvie Briand said that obtaining the latest strains wasn't critical because the mosquito-borne virus had not mutated.

Shortly afterward, WHO said that breaking the logjam over sharing was a top priority. "Deficiencies (with) existing data-sharing mechanisms (have) brought the question of data access to the forefront of the global health agenda," the UN health agency said in a tweet. — AP

EPA: MINE SPILL DUMPED 880K POUNDS OF METALS INTO RIVER

DENVER: A 3 million-gallon spill from a southwestern Colorado gold mine last year may have dumped more than 880,000 pounds of metals into the Animas River, the US Environmental Protection Agency said Friday.

Some of the metals reached the San Juan River, which the Animas joins in New Mexico, but most settled into the Animas riverbed before that, the EPA said in a preliminary report on the metals. Utah officials have said some contaminants reached their state, but Friday's report didn't address that.

The report didn't identify the metals but said researchers were looking at cadmium, copper, lead, mercury, nickel and zinc. Tests done after the spill also found arsenic and lead in the wastewater. The EPA said most of the metals consisted of small particles and came from Cement Creek, a tributary that carried the water from the mine to the Animas.

Officials have said contaminants in the rivers returned to pre-spill levels shortly after the incident. An EPA-led cleanup crew inadvertently triggered the spill on Aug. 5 while doing preliminary cleanup work at the inactive Gold King Mine near Silverton, Colorado.

The spill provoked a storm of criticism from Congress, especially from majority Republicans, who have also accused the agency of trying to impose unreasonable controls on water and air pollution. The mountains north of

Silverton are pocked with dozens of idle mines like the Gold King, which release a steady flow of tainted wastewater every day.

The report released Friday said the amount of metals carried downstream by the Gold King spill is similar to the quantity released into that part of the Animas during one day of high runoff from melting snow in the springtime. The report said the researchers found "hot spots" of metals in the Animas and San Juan that weren't related to the Gold King spill and said they might warrant further study.

The EPA installed a temporary water treatment plant last fall to remove metals from the water still flowing out of the Gold King. The agency is weighing long-term cleanup plans. The EPA has previously sought to declare the area north of Silverton a Superfund site, which would release millions of dollars in federal money for a cleanup. Residents in and around the scenic village resisted because - among other things - they feared it could discourage tourism, a mainstay of the local economy.

Residents and officials are reconsidering and have been negotiating with the EPA over the scale and terms of a cleanup. They haven't yet made a formal request for a Superfund designation. The EPA says it won't consider the site for Superfund status without the support of state and local officials. — AP

DOCTOR GETS 30 TO LIFE AFTER PAINKILLER OVERDOSE DEATHS

LOS ANGELES: A Los Angeles-area doctor convicted of second-degree murder for prescribing pain killers that killed three patients was sentenced Friday to 30 years to life in prison in a landmark case that many in the medical community believe will create a chilling effect among physicians across the country.

Dr Hsiu-Ying "Lisa" Tseng received the lengthy sentence after she apologized to the families of her dead patients and others who became addicted to prescription drugs under her care. "I suffer every day from the impact and I will do everything I can to take responsibility," she said. "I have learned a very hard lesson on this that will stay with me forever."

That did little to sway Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge George Lomeli, who said Tseng wrote reckless prescriptions even after learning her patients were dying. "(She's) a person who seemingly did not care about the lives of her patients in this case but rather appeared more concerned about distributing dangerous controlled substances in an assembly line fashion so as to collect payments which amounted to her amassing several million dollars," Lomeli said.

The mother of two children, 8 and 11, will be over 70 before she has a chance at release. She had asked Lomeli for a 15-year prison term. Prescription drug abuse has skyrocketed in recent years. Opioids - primarily prescription painkillers and heroin - were factors in more than 28,000 deaths across the US in 2014, and opioid overdoses have more than quadrupled since 2000, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Tseng's murder conviction has sent a message to doctors across the US, said Dr Bill McCarberg, president of the Chicago-based American Academy of Pain Medicine. "Prescribers see that and they say to



LOS ANGELES: In this March 16, 2012 file photo Dr Hsiu-Ying "Lisa" Tseng sits in a Los Angeles courtroom during her arraignment. Tseng, convicted of murder for prescribing "crazy, outrageous amounts" of painkillers that killed three patients. — AP

themselves and I say to myself, 'What did she do wrong and could that happen to me?'" McCarberg said.

'My heart is broken'

The reaction will leave some people in legitimate pain unable to get painkillers, a problem that already has emerged amid a crackdown on improp-

er prescriptions, McCarberg said. "Providers are very hesitant to give any medication for pain, so they'll give a Motrin or an Advil," he said. But more hesitation among doctors may not be such a bad thing, said Larry Driver, a pain medicine and clinical ethics professor at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston and president of the Texas Pain Society.

"It may be an opportunity to pause and reflect for a moment and think rationally about appropriate care for a patient," Driver said. He and McCarberg said they'd like to see state medical boards better police their own, rather than having cases escalate to criminal charges. Deputy District Attorney John Niedermann told jurors during Tseng's trial that the doctor prescribed "crazy, outrageous amounts of medication" to patients who didn't need the pills.

Twelve of her patients died, but she was charged with just three murders because other factors were involved in the other deaths, including drugs prescribed by other doctors and a possible suicide. Defense lawyer Tracy Green has said the 46-year-old doctor had been naive to prescribe so many medications and didn't think her patients would abuse them. Tseng's patients often hid addictions to painkillers and Tseng thought she was helping ease their pain, Green said.

After the sentencing, Tseng's 72-year-old mother wept outside the courtroom, saying 30 years is too much prison time. "My heart is broken," she said. The Drug Enforcement Administration says Tseng wrote more than 27,000 prescriptions over a three-year period starting in January 2007 - an average of 25 a day. She operated a storefront medical clinic with her husband in the Los Angeles suburb of Rowland Heights. — AP

SPACEWALKERS COLLECT SEEDS, TOSS FLASH DRIVE OVERBOARD



This photo taken from video provided by NASA shows Russian cosmonauts Yuri Malenchenko and Sergey Volkov install fresh experiments outside the International Space Station. — AP

CAPE CANAVERALL: Spacewalking Russians gathered seeds and spores that have been stuck outside the International Space Station for months if not years and gave a ceremonial send-off to a flash drive containing special messages for their motherland.

Cosmonaut Sergey Volkov waited for good camera views before tossing the flash drive overboard as the space station sailed 250 miles above the Pacific. The blue, cloud-specked Earth provided a stunning backdrop. The flash drive includes videos and messages pertaining to the 70th anniversary of Russia's Victory Day last year. It was attached to a small bundle stuffed with towels to provide some bulk.

"There it goes," Volkov said in Russian as he let go of the package with his right gloved hand. "Just beautiful," he noted as it spun slowly, appearing to tumble toward Earth. Spacewalking partner Yuri Malenchenko floated nearby. "That's perfect guys," Russian Mission Control radioed from outside Moscow.

The job was added just a few days ago. NASA said the jettisoned package would pose no hazard to the orbiting lab. Flight controllers expect the bundle to harmlessly re-enter the atmosphere in a few weeks.

With that accomplished, the spacewalkers set off to retrieve research equipment that has been

outdoors since 2009. The trays include plant seeds as well as spores from fungi and bacteria; the specimens typically were replenished every year or two and returned to Earth for analysis. The cosmonauts set out fresh experiments elsewhere on the space station, then found themselves fussing over a dispenser in a surface-coating experiment.

The roll of tapelike film in the dispenser kept jamming, frustrating Malenchenko and Volkov as they tried to coat an outdoor sample board. Only one attempt appeared to succeed. "It glued on so nicely. It's like a perfect sticker," one of the spacewalkers reported. "Are we done?" They weren't, but Russian Mission Control advised them a few minutes later to wrap it up and head back in.

The spacewalk lasted nearly five hours. NASA, meanwhile, is still trying to understand why water leaked into a US astronaut's helmet last month. The Jan 15 spacewalk had to be cut short because of the problem, a repeat of what happened to an Italian spacewalker in 2013. That first incident was considerably more serious, involving much more leakage. The Russians use different types of suits, which functioned well Wednesday. As for US spacewalks, astronauts will go out only in an emergency until the leakage is understood and corrected, according to NASA. Six men currently live at the space station: three Russians, two Americans and one Briton. — AP

SIXTH MAN ON THE MOON PASSES AWAY IN FLORIDA

MIAMI: Apollo 14 astronaut Edgar Mitchell, who became the sixth man on the moon when he and Alan Shepard helped NASA recover from Apollo 13's "successful failure" and later devoted his life to exploring physics, the mind, and unexplained phenomena such as psychics and aliens, has died in Florida. He was 85.

Mitchell died Thursday night at a West Palm Beach hospice after a short illness, his daughter, Kimberly Mitchell, said. Mitchell's passing coincides with the 45th anniversary of the Apollo 14 mission from Jan. 31-Feb. 9, 1971.

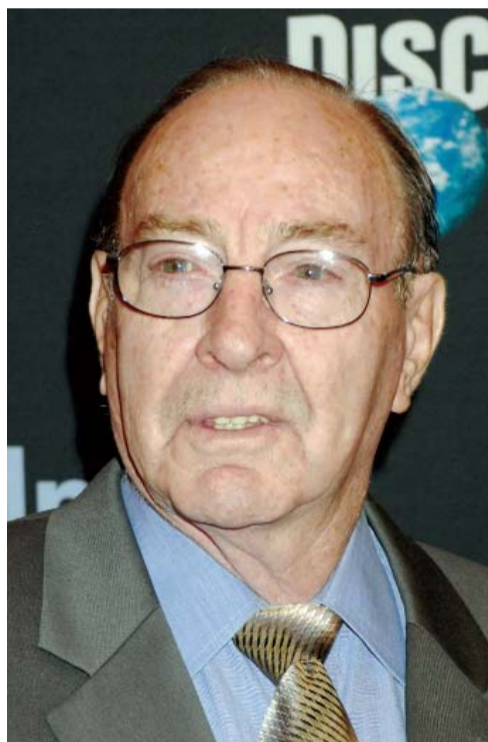
Mitchell, one of only 12 humans to set foot on the moon, was not a typical strait-laced astronaut: In later years, he said aliens visited Earth and faith healers were legit. He attempted to communicate telepathically with friends at home during his Apollo mission. He had an "epiphany" in space that focused him on studying physics and mysteries such as consciousness.

"What I experienced during that three-day trip home was nothing short of an overwhelming sense of universal connectedness," Mitchell wrote in his 1996 autobiography. "It occurred to me that the molecules of my body and the molecules of the spacecraft itself were manufactured long ago in the furnace of one of the ancient stars that burned in the heavens about me."

In an emailed statement, NASA Administrator Charles Bolden called Mitchell, "one of the pioneers in space exploration on whose shoulders we now stand." Mitchell's passion for exploration led him to become an astronaut, and he joined NASA in 1966. He helped design and test the lunar modules that first reached the moon in 1969 with Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin.

Falling support

Shepard, the first American in space in 1961, picked Mitchell to be on Apollo 13's three-person crew. But they were bumped to the next mission so Shepard would have more time to train. Apollo 13's astronauts were nearly killed when an oxygen tank exploded as they neared the moon in 1970. They made it home safely, but never set foot on the moon. A year later,



NEW YORK: In this file photo, former astronaut Edgar Mitchell arrives for the premiere of the "In the Shadow of the Moon," at the Hayden Planetarium at the Museum of Natural History.

Shepard, Mitchell and Stu Roosa were the first crew to try again amid falling support for the moon missions from President Nixon, Congress and the public.

"Had we blown it, had it failed for whatever reason, that would probably have been the end of the Apollo program right there," Mitchell said in 1997. Fortunately, their mission, the third lunar landing and Mitchell's only trip in space, was a success. Shepard collected about 95 pounds of samples in more than nine hours walking the lunar surface. They showed for the first time that astronauts could walk long distances on the moon, covering nearly two miles on their second expedition on the surface. That proved the crews of later missions could walk

back to their spacecraft if the buggy-like Lunar Rover broke down.

Their mission was best known to the public because Shepard became the first and only golfer on the moon. Mitchell joked when Shepard duffed his first shot: "You got more dirt than ball that time." Less well known was that Mitchell made the only "javelin" throw on the moon when he tossed an unneeded metal rod.

But Shepard and Mitchell almost didn't make it to the surface because of problems in the lunar module. First, a loose piece of metal in a switch triggered an abort signal as they prepared to travel down to the moon. Had the descent engine been on at the time, the module would have automatically aborted the landing. They traced the problem's cause by tapping on the switch with a flashlight and a pen.

'Mr Unflappable'

Computer programmers back home wrote instructions to get around the abort problem and Mitchell entered them with just minutes to spare. Shepard later wrote that Mitchell remained "Mr Unflappable" during the scare.

Once they started for the surface, though, the landing radar wasn't working correctly. Shepard and Mitchell agreed to take the dangerous and rule-breaking step of landing without radar, but didn't have to when the device started working just in time. It was the telepathy experiment on the ride home that would give Mitchell notoriety. Even before he left, he told The Associated Press about his fascination with psychic phenomena and extrasensory perception and that he thought humans weren't the only intelligent life in the universe.

Those interests almost got him removed from the mission, said Gene Cernan, the last man to walk on the moon and backup commander for Apollo 14. Cernan wrote in his autobiography that despite Mitchell's impeccable skills and vast intelligence, flight crew director Deke Slayton and Shepard were bothered with the fascination. Mitchell claimed the experiment was a success, but most press reports dismissed him and some colleagues shunned him. — AP

DATA GAPS DELAY EXPLANATION FOR ALASKA SEABIRD DIE-OFF

ANCHORAGE: A preliminary investigation into the massive die-off of common murre, one of the Northern Hemisphere's most abundant seabirds, off Alaska's coast is revealing gaps in basic information on North Pacific waters and the wildlife that inhabit them.

Federal scientists say the mortality may reach the hundreds of thousands. Emaciated common murre carcasses began washing ashore on Alaska beaches in March. No one knows why common murre appear to be starving. Speculation is hampered by unknowns in common murre's winter diets, the habits of their prey, and conditions in waters far from shore, their preferred habitat, where it's notoriously expensive to perform research.

"We know a lot more about what they eat in the summer than what they eat in the winter," said Heather Renner, a US Fish and Wildlife Service biologist at a presentation last week. Alaska researchers do not routinely survey forage fish eaten by murre, such as capelin, a kind of smelt, and sand lance, another finger-length silvery fish. Scientists say unusually warm water in the North Pacific may have had an effect on forage fish and the zooplankton eaten by small fish. Murre themselves will eat larger zooplankton such as krill, a small crustacean that floats in the water column.

"The birds have told us something is amiss in the food web," Renner said. "We desperately need targeted studies on lower trophic levels at the same spatial scale as the bird data. Without these, we can't disentangle the complex reasons why the birds are starving." Three federal agencies, joined by university and private wildlife experts, are analyzing data for a report on the die-off, said John Piatt, a US Geological Survey research wildlife biologist and seabird expert.

Unprecedented degree

Common murre are large by seabird standards and can weigh more

than two pounds. They routinely live 20-25 years but have a metabolism rate so high that they can use up fat reserves and drop to a critical threshold for starvation, 65 percent of normal body rate, in three days of not eating, Piatt said. The Alaska population is estimated at 2.8 million that breed at 230 colonies.

Die-offs have been documented before but not to this degree. During the first 10 days of January, researchers counted 17,293 dead murre on beaches and 854 more in vessel surveys. Only about 15 percent of carcasses reach shore and only a fall fraction of beaches were surveyed, leading researchers to estimate the deaths will be in the hundreds of thousands.

"What's unprecedented about this die-off is, first the spatial extent of this die-off, which covers most of southern Alaska," Renner said. "Second, it represents an extended period of time." Carcasses began washing ashore in March and other signs of trouble appeared in the summer. Some colonies thrived in 2015 but at a major colony on remote East Amatuli Island, one of the Barren Islands, murre were not fledging chicks. If stressed, and in the interest of self-preservation, common murre females can choose not to lay an egg. "In more than three decades of monitoring birds in the Barrens, we've never had complete reproductive failure before," Renner said. "And it wasn't just there."

By early winter, starving and disoriented birds were found not only in near-shore waters but as far inland as Fairbanks, 360 miles from salt water. After a fierce winter North Pacific storm the last week of December, 8,000 dead common murre washed ashore at the Prince William Sound community of Whittier. In the January review of recovered carcasses, Piatt said, birds hatched in 2015 were apparently absent. Body size measurements suggested that many were sub-adults, or less than 5 years old. — AP

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RADISSON BLU CHEFS BAG HORECA'S TWO MAJOR AWARDS



By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Chef de Partie Tuan Tony Azeez and Commis 1 Chef Krishna Regmi of Radisson Blu Hotel Kuwait were awarded with one gold and one silver medals during the recent Horeca competition and exhibition. Azeez bagged the gold medal for the '3 Plated Dessert Presentation' and Regmi with silver medal for 'Cold Sandwich Making Competition.' Horeca, Kuwait's wide-ranging event covering hospitality, catering and food industry sectors in the country and the region. Chef Azeez boasted that there were at least 140 participants in the '3 Plated Dessert Presentation' category vying for the first place, adding that in order to win he had to work

creatively to come up with his original recipes and presentations. "I knew that originality and taste are two of the biggest factors that are essential to win the prize and with more than one hundred entrants, you could only but hope. I was emotional when my name was called and announced the winner," commented the Chef. Chef Azeez added that he prepared there plates of desserts which consisted of chocolates, fruits and Arabic sweets. He thanked his team for the support during the competition. "This is all about teamwork and contributions of ideas," added Chef Azeez. "This was the first time I ever joined a contest and I am overjoyed for winning this competition." Chef Regmi expressed his excitement when his

name was announced as the winner for the live cold sandwich making contest. Regmi added that no one got the gold medal before, so his prize was considered first in the contest. Similarly, he said that this was his first time to join the contest, adding that he was overjoyed to have won the major award. Executive Chef of The Radisson Blu Hotel Chef David Harnois congratulated the winners and thanked them for adding prestige to the culinary department of the hotel. In a brief monthly awarding and announcement of staff promotions and appointments, Philippe Pellaud, General Manager of the Radisson Blu Hotel Kuwait congratulated Regmi and Azeez for a job well done.



AHMADI CONCLUDES NATIONAL CELEBRATIONS WITH LIVE CONCERTS

The Ahmadi Governorate hosted a musical concert Friday night in conclusion of its celebrations' program for Kuwait's National Holidays. Notable Kuwaiti singers including Nawal Al-Kuwaiyiya, Metref Al-Metref and Suleiman Al-Qassar performed in front of a capacity crowd that filled the Ahmadi Stadium.





Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Youth Affairs.



Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah honors Sebamed's Ayman Al-Sharaa



Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah honors the Ministry of Defense Camp's management.



Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah honors the Ministry of Health's Dental Department.



Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah honors the Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakery Company.



Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah honors Sarah Yousuf.

KUWAITI DAY FOR THE CHILD HELD AT MINISTRY OF DEFENSE'S CAMP

The Kuwaiti Day for the Child, a special activity concerned with childhood, opened recently at the Ministry of Defense's Camp with attendance of Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Youth Affairs. An event was held to honor the sponsors, including the Ministry of Youth Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Kuwait Fire Service Department and Sebamed.



ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:50 Gator Boys
- 01:45 Gator Boys
- 02:40 Gangland Killers
- 07:36 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:00 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:25 Big Fish Man
- 09:15 Bugging Out
- 09:45 Bugging Out
- 10:10 Rugged Justice
- 11:05 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 12:00 Dinosaurs In The Outback
- 12:55 Austin Stevens: Snakemaster
- 13:50 Bahama Blue
- 14:45 Wildest Latin America
- 15:40 North America
- 16:35 Wildest Middle East
- 17:30 Wildest Islands
- 18:25 Wild Mexico
- 19:20 Wild Capture School
- 19:50 Wild Capture School
- 20:15 Rugged Justice
- 21:10 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 22:05 Dinosaurs In The Outback
- 23:00 Wild Capture School
- 23:30 Wild Capture School
- 23:55 Austin Stevens: Snakemaster

Discovery Channel HD

- 00:20 Chaos Caught On Camera
- 00:45 Mythbusters
- 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 Siberian Cut
- 11:25 Alaska: The Last Frontier
- 12:15 Railroad Alaska
- 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 Fast N' Loud
- 16:50 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 17:15 How Do They Do It?
- 17:40 Street Outlaws
- 18:30 Street Outlaws
- 19:20 The Pop Illusionist
- 20:10 The Liquidator
- 20:35 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop Edition
- 21:00 X-Ray Mega Airport
- 21:50 Extreme Engineering
- 22:40 Wheeler Dealers: Trading Up
- 23:30 Cuban Chrome

Discovery Science

- 00:35 Mythbusters
- 03:42 Weird Or What?
- 07:37 How Do They Do It?
- 08:23 Food Factory
- 12:08 How Do They Do It?
- 12:53 How It's Made
- 15:57 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 16:44 Storm Chasers
- 19:50 Mythbusters
- 23:45 How The Universe Works

ID. INVESTIGATION DISCOVERY

- 00:40 Deadly Women
- 01:30 Scorned: Crimes Of Passion
- 02:20 California Investigator
- 02:45 California Investigator
- 03:10 Swamp Murders
- 04:00 Deadly Sins
- 04:45 Deadly Women
- 05:30 Scorned: Crimes Of Passion
- 06:20 The Will
- 07:10 The Will
- 08:00 Fatal Encounters
- 08:50 Disappeared
- 09:40 Disappeared
- 10:30 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
- 11:20 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
- 12:10 The Will
- 13:00 The Will
- 13:50 California Investigator
- 14:15 California Investigator
- 14:40 Dr G: Medical Examiner
- 15:30 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
- 16:20 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
- 17:10 Disappeared
- 18:00 Disappeared
- 18:50 California Investigator
- 19:40 I Almost Got Away With It
- 23:00 House Of Horrors: Kidnapped
- 23:25 House Of Horrors: Kidnapped
- 23:50 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall

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 Mouk
- 06:00 Lolirock
- 06:25 Sofia The First
- 06:50 That's So Raven
- 07:15 Gravity Falls
- 07:40 Jessie
- 08:05 Shake It Up
- 08:30 Shake It Up
- 08:55 That's So Raven
- 09:20 That's So Raven
- 09:45 Jessie
- 10:10 Violetta Recipes
- 10:25 An Extremely Goofy Movie
- 12:00 I Love Violetta
- 12:15 Whisker Haven Tales
- 12:20 Jessie
- 12:45 Jessie
- 13:10 Liv And Maddie
- 13:35 Liv And Maddie
- 14:00 Austin & Ally
- 14:30 Austin & Ally
- 14:55 Lolirock
- 15:20 I Didn't Do It
- 15:45 I Didn't Do It
- 16:10 Best Friends Whenever
- 16:35 Best Friends Whenever
- 17:00 Girl Meets World
- 17:25 Girl Meets World
- 17:50 I Love Violetta
- 18:00 Brother Bear
- 19:30 Gravity Falls

- 19:55 Dog With A Blog
- 20:20 Mako Mermaids
- 20:45 Good Luck Charlie
- 21:10 Good Luck Charlie
- 21:35 H2O: Just Add Water
- 22:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 23:10 Hank Zipzer
- 23:35 Binny And The Ghost

EHD

- 00:00 New Money
- 00:30 Fashion Bloggers
- 00:55 Fashion Bloggers
- 01:25 Stewarts And Hamiltons
- 02:20 E! News
- 03:15 Sex With Brody
- 03:40 The Grace Helbig Show
- 04:10 The E! True Hollywood Story
- 05:05 The E! True Hollywood Story
- 06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 07:50 Style Star
- 08:20 E! News
- 09:15 House Of DVF
- 10:15 House Of DVF
- 11:10 Fashion Bloggers
- 11:35 Fashion Bloggers
- 12:05 E! News
- 13:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 15:00 Dash Dolls
- 16:00 Dash Dolls
- 17:00 Botched
- 18:00 E! News
- 19:00 Fashion Bloggers
- 19:30 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 21:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 22:00 Christina Milian Turned Up
- 23:00 Fashion Police

food network

- 00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 01:00 Chopped
- 02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 03:00 Man v Food
- 04:00 BBQ Crawl
- 05:00 Chopped
- 06:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 06:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 07:00 Man Fire Food
- 07:30 Man Fire Food
- 08:00 Chopped
- 09:00 Amazing Wedding Cakes
- 10:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 10:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 11:00 Siba's Table
- 11:30 Siba's Table
- 12:00 Chopped
- 13:00 Guy's Big Bite
- 13:30 Guy's Big Bite
- 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 17:00 Chopped
- 18:00 Siba's Table
- 18:30 Siba's Table
- 19:00 Dinner At Tiffani's
- 19:30 Dinner At Tiffani's
- 20:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 20:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 21:00 All Star Academy
- 22:00 Ching's Amazing Asia
- 23:00 The Freshman Class
- 23:30 The Freshman Class

itv CHOICE

- 00:10 Coronation Street
- 00:35 Coronation Street
- 01:10 Blue Go Mad In Ibiza
- 02:00 Coach Trip
- 02:30 Coronation Street
- 02:55 Coronation Street
- 03:20 Coronation Street
- 03:40 Coronation Street
- 04:05 Coronation Street
- 04:40 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 05:30 Vera
- 07:10 Murdoch Mysteries
- 08:00 Murdoch Mysteries
- 08:50 Murdoch Mysteries
- 09:40 Murdoch Mysteries
- 10:30 Murdoch Mysteries
- 11:20 Shelland
- 12:15 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 13:05 Midsomer Murders
- 14:40 Code Of A Killer
- 15:30 The Royal Variety Performance 2015
- 17:40 Pick Me!
- 18:35 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
- 19:30 The Royal Variety Performance 2015
- 21:50 The Jonathan Ross Show

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD

- 00:10 How To Win At Everything
- 00:35 How To Win At Everything
- 01:00 Beyond Magic
- 02:00 The Border
- 02:55 Planes That Changed The World
- 03:50 Man vs Ride
- 04:45 Zeb's River Journey Thailand
- 05:40 Lawless Island
- 06:35 Big Fish, Texas
- 07:30 Cold Water Gold
- 08:25 100%: Planes
- 09:20 Planes That Changed The World
- 10:15 How To Win At Everything
- 10:40 How To Win At Everything
- 11:10 Beyond Magic
- 12:05 4 Babies A Second
- 13:00 Dog Whisperer
- 14:00 Taiwan: Island Of Fish
- 15:00 Lawless Island
- 16:00 Big Fish, Texas
- 17:00 Drain The Titanic
- 18:00 Planes That Changed The World
- 19:00 Lawless Island
- 20:00 Big Fish, Texas
- 20:50 Drain The Titanic
- 21:40 Planes That Changed The World
- 22:30 Lawless Island
- 23:20 Monster Fish

OSN FIRST HD COMEDY

- 01:30 Saturday Night Live
- 02:30 The Big C
- 04:00 Men At Work
- 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 06:00 Tili Death
- 06:30 Community
- 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 08:00 Men At Work
- 08:30 Cristela
- 10:30 Community
- 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 12:00 Tili Death
- 13:00 Calvary
- 13:30 Community
- 16:30 Tili Death
- 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 18:00 New Girl
- 18:30 The Goldbergs
- 19:00 Grandfathered
- 20:00 Bad Judge
- 20:30 Marry Me
- 22:00 Family Guy
- 22:30 Man Seeking Woman
- 23:00 The Big C
- 23:30 Bad Judge

OSN FIRST HD

- 00:00 Chicago Fire
- 01:00 Criminal Minds
- 02:00 The Blacklist
- 03:00 Minority Report
- 04:00 American Crime
- 05:00 Good Morning America
- 06:00 Stitches
- 07:00 Backstrom
- 08:00 American Crime
- 09:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 10:00 Criminal Minds
- 11:00 Backstrom
- 12:00 Coronation Street
- 12:30 Coronation Street
- 13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 14:00 Stitches
- 15:00 Backstrom
- 16:00 Live Good Morning America
- 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 18:00 American Crime
- 19:00 Bones
- 20:00 Suits
- 21:00 Scandal
- 22:00 How To Get Away With Murder
- 23:00 The Last Kingdom

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 00:00 The A-Team
- 02:00 John Wick
- 04:00 Special ID
- 05:45 Battleship
- 08:00 Born To Race: Fast Track
- 10:00 The Assault
- 12:00 The Italian Job (2003)
- 14:00 Assassin's Bullet
- 15:45 Battleship
- 18:00 Transit
- 20:00 The Assault
- 21:45 Gone In Sixty Seconds

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 00:00 John Wick-18
- 02:00 Special ID-PG15
- 03:45 Battleship-PG15
- 06:00 Born To Race: Fast Track
- 08:00 The Assault-PG15
- 10:00 The Italian Job (2003)-PG15
- 12:00 Assassin's Bullet-PG15
- 13:45 Battleship-PG15
- 16:00 Transit-PG15
- 18:00 The Assault-PG15
- 19:45 Gone In Sixty Seconds
- 22:00 Get Lucky-PG15

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 00:00 Wanderlust
- 02:00 Renaissance Man
- 04:15 Space Dogs
- 06:00 Dunston Checks In
- 08:00 UHF
- 10:00 Space Dogs
- 11:45 Renaissance Man
- 14:00 The Love Guide
- 16:00 UHF
- 18:00 High Road
- 20:00 Lay The Favorite
- 22:00 This Is 40

OSN MOVIES HD DRAMA

- 01:00 The Truth About Emanuel
- 02:45 Zulu-PG15
- 04:45 The Dependables-PG15
- 06:30 For Greater Glory-PG15
- 09:00 Jack Strong-PG15
- 11:15 The Dependables-PG15
- 13:00 Late Bloomers-PG15
- 14:30 Mr. Pip-PG15
- 16:30 Jack Strong-PG15
- 19:00 As Cool As I Am-PG15
- 20:45 Go For Sisters-PG15
- 23:00 Jayne Mansfield's Car-18

OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

- 02:30 Till Human Voices Wake Us
- 04:30 Calvary
- 06:30 Mood Indigo
- 09:00 Medicine Man
- 11:00 Safe Haven
- 13:00 Odeio O Dia Dos Namorados
- 15:00 Secret Window
- 17:00 Medicine Man
- 19:00 We Gotta Get Out Of This Place
- 20:45 The Mirror Has Two Faces
- 23:00 25th Hour

OSN MOVIES HD

- 01:00 Grave Halloween-PG15
- 02:45 Project Almanac-PG15
- 04:30 Million Dollar Arm-PG15
- 06:45 The Fault In Our Stars-PG15
- 09:00 Project Almanac-PG15
- 11:00 Horizon-PG15
- 13:00 JLA Adventures: Trapped In Time-PG
- 14:00 Billy Elliot The Musical-PG15
- 17:00 Some Girls-PG15
- 18:45 The Expendables 3-PG15
- 21:00 The Canal-18
- 23:00 Neighbors-18

OSN MOVIES HD KIDS

- 01:00 Hatching
- 02:45 Pororo: The Racing Adventure
- 04:30 Marco Macaco
- 06:00 Hook
- 08:30 Daddy I'm A Zombie
- 10:00 Snow Queen
- 11:30 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
- 13:00 Pororo: The Racing Adventure
- 14:30 Goat Story 2
- 16:00 True Story Of Puss'n Boots
- 18:00 Snow Queen
- 20:00 Blackie And Kanuto
- 22:00 Goat Story 2
- 23:30 True Story Of Puss'n Boots

OSN MOVIES HD PREMIERE

- 00:30 The Woman In Black 2: Angel Of Death-PG15
- 02:15 The Numbers Station-PG15
- 04:00 The Mark-PG15
- 06:00 Blended-PG15
- 08:00 A Promise-PG15
- 10:00 Stolen Child-PG15
- 12:00 No Good Deed-PG15
- 14:00 Trigger Point-PG15
- 16:00 A Promise-PG15



ASSASSIN'S BULLET ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 18:00 Welcome To The Punch | 21:50 The Autistic Gardener | 12:00 Monster In My Family | 09:00 Zou |
| 20:00 The Savages-PG15 | 22:40 Long Island Medium | 13:00 Steven Seagal: Lawman | 09:20 Loopedoo |
| 22:00 Wild-18 | 23:05 90 Days To Wed | 16:00 Crimes That Shook Britain | 09:35 Art Attack |
| | | 17:00 Nightmare In Suburbia | 10:00 Calimero |
| | | 20:00 Killers | 10:10 Zou |
| | | 23:00 Ms. Homicide | 10:25 Loopedoo |
| | | | 10:40 Miles From Tomorrow |
| | | | 11:05 Sofia The First |
| | | | 11:30 Doc McStuffins |
| | | | 11:45 Henry Hugglemonster |
| | | | 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 Jake & The Never Land Pirates |
| | | | 16:50 Lion King 2: Simba's Pride |
| | | | 18:10 Miles From Tomorrow |
| | | | 18:35 Jake & The Never Land Pirates |
| | | | 19:00 Sofia The First |
| | | | 19:25 Jungle Cubs |
| | | | 19:50 Aladdin |
| | | | 20:15 Gummy Bears |
| | | | 20:40 Jake & The Never Land Pirates |
| | | | 21:05 Miles From Tomorrow |
| | | | 21:30 Sofia The First |
| | | | 21:55 Doc McStuffins |
| | | | 22:10 Jake & The Never Land Pirates |
| | | | 22:35 Miles From Tomorrow |
| | | | 23:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse |
| | | | 23:30 Sofia The First |



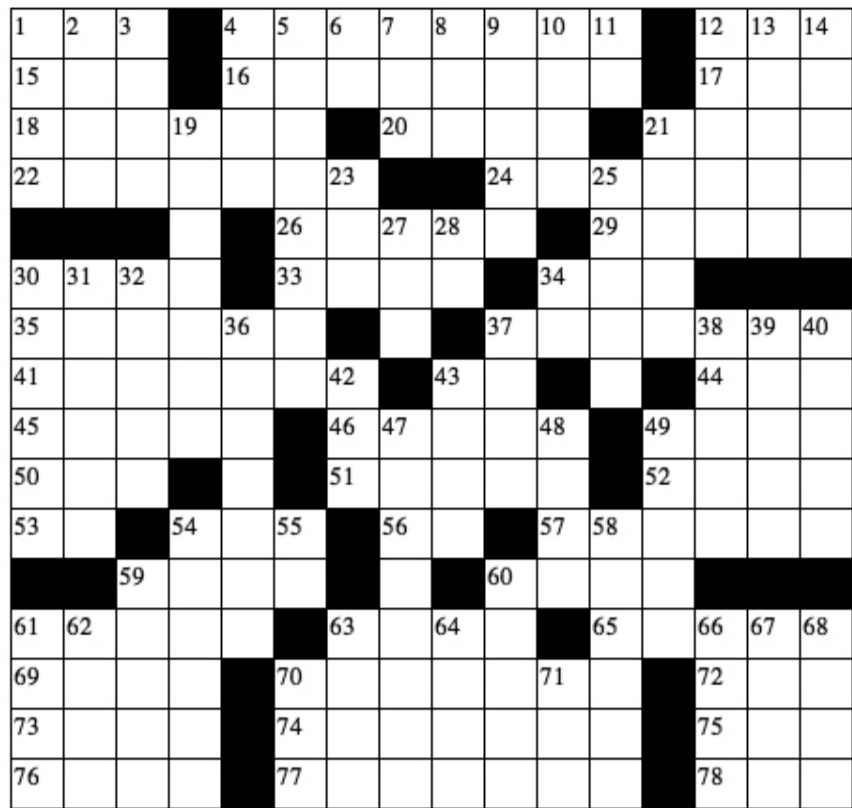
THE EXPENDABLES 3 ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 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 Annetroids
- 08:40 Lab Rats
- 09:10 Kirby Buckets
- 09:35 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 10:00 Toy Story 2
- 11:30 Phineas And Ferb
- 11:45 Annetroids
- 12:10 Kirby Buckets
- 12:35 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 13:00 Lab Rats
- 16:30 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
- 16:55 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
- 17:25 K. C. Undercover
- 17:50 Supa Strikas
- 18:15 Lab Rats
- 18:40 Mighty Med
- 19:10 Annetroids
- 19:35 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 20:00 Kirby Buckets
- 20:25 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 20:55 K. C. Undercover
- 21:20 Supa Strikas
- 21:45 Lab Rats
- 22:10 Mighty Med
- 22:40 Super Matrak
- 23:05 Super Matrak
- 23:30 Boyster

HISTORY HD

- 00:20 Ax Men
- 01:10 Alaska Off-Road Warriors
- 02:00 Ice Road Truckers
- 02:50 American Pickers
- 03:40 Lost In Transmission
- 04:30 Duck Dynasty
- 05:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 06:00 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
- 06:50 Mountain Men
- 07:40 Shark Wranglers
- 08:30 Storage Wars
- 08:55 Alaska Off-Road Warriors
- 09:45 Ice Road Truckers
- 10:35 American Pickers
- 11:25 Hoard Hunters
- 12:15 Pawn Stars
- 12:40 Pawn Stars
- 13:05 Ice Road Truckers
- 13:55 Shark Wranglers
- 14:45 Pawn Stars

CROSSWORD 1161



ACROSS

- System of measurement based on centimeters and grams and seconds.
 - A genus of herbs and shrubs belonging to the family Euphorbiaceae.
 - A master's degree in education.
 - Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
 - Damaged by blows or hard usage.
 - A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
 - Administer an oil or ointment to.
 - The bags of letters and packages that are transported by the postal service.
 - Reading carefully with intent to remember.
 - A town in northern Egypt.
 - A telegram sent abroad.
 - Hard red wheat grown especially in Russia and Germany.
 - (of molten metal or glass) Formed by pouring or pressing into a mold n 1.
 - Largest known toad species.
 - Of or belonging to an aecium.
 - A large ax with a broad cutting blade.
 - The most common computer memory which can be used by programs to perform necessary tasks while the computer is on.
 - Garlic mayonnaise.
 - A member of an American Indian peoples of NE South America and the Lesser Antilles.
 - The upper side of the thighs of a seated person.
 - United States tennis player (born in Czechoslovakia) who won several singles championships.
 - United States inventor who manufactured the first elevator with a safety device (1811-1861).
 - A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
 - A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
 - A mythical Greek warrior who was a leader on the Trojan side of the Trojan War.
 - The state prevailing during the absence of war.
 - A clique that seeks power usually through intrigue.
 - (used of count nouns) Every one considered individually.
 - Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
 - United States tennis player who was the first Black to win United States and English singles championships (1943-1993).
 - Substitute a person or thing for (another that is broken or inefficient or lost or no longer working or yielding what is expected).
 - The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet.
 - Wild or seedling sweet cherry used as stock for grafting.
 - A pair of adhesive patches worn to cover the nipples of exotic dancers and striptease performers.
 - Any of several small ungulate mammals of Africa and Asia with rodent-like incisors and feet with hooflike toes.
- DOWN**
- A small fragment of something broken off from the whole.
 - A self-replicating protein molecule that occupies a fixed place on a chromosome.
 - (music) A curved line spanning notes that are to be played legato.
 - The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
 - Moths whose larvae are cutworms.
 - A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
 - Your general store of remembered information.
 - An affirmative.
 - To move or force, esp. in an effort to get something open.
 - Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
 - A public promotion of some product or service.
 - A woman of refinement.
 - A high wave (often dangerous) caused by tidal flow (as by colliding tidal currents or in a narrow estuary).
 - Depressing in character or appearance.
 - Of or relating to a wedding.
 - Swedish oceanographer who recognized the role of the Coriolis effect on ocean currents (1874-1954).
 - The act of slowing down or falling behind.
 - Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
 - A partially opened flower.
 - A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
 - In or belonging to the air or operating (for or by means of aircraft or elevated cables) in the air.
 - The quantity a scoop will hold.
 - The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
 - (psychology) An urge to accept or approach a situation or an object.
 - Marked by the reception of pay.
 - Talk pompously.
 - (folklore) A corpse that rises at night to drink the blood of the living.
 - Collect or gather.
 - Being ten more than one hundred eighty.
 - The template for protein synthesis.
 - Goat grass.
 - (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
 - An Italian woman of rank.
 - A city in western Germany near the Dutch and Belgian borders.
 - (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
 - Imperial moths.
 - A civil or military authority in Turkey or Egypt.
 - A river of southwestern Africa that rises in central Angola and flows east and then north (forming part of the border between Angola and Congo) and continuing northwest through Congo to empty into the Congo River on the border between Congo and Republic of the Congo.
 - Freedom from difficulty or hardship or effort.
 - A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
 - Adherents of an exclusive system of religious beliefs and practices.
 - A lyric poet.
 - Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
 - A mountainous landlocked communist state in southeastern Asia.
 - Alsatian artist and poet who was cofounder of Dadaism in Zurich.
 - (informal) Of the highest quality.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

If you are involved in a move, others may be fascinated by your ability to quickly make an empty, dull looking place presentable. Your imagination soars! Awareness and insight into others' minds and into spiritual matters are especially acute. Leave any task requiring attention to precise detail for another day. Escape the rigors of the daily grind with a good fantasy or romance novel-perhaps even write one yourself. Do not worry-reality always returns, but today you need a rest. Perhaps this is the time to invest a few hours into that talent of yours. Your good taste and your artistic abilities may grow into either a full-time business for yourself or at the least, a very fine hobby. There are opportunities this evening to date, go to parties or dance, etc.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may not have to work today but you will probably end up making a sale or doing a favor for someone from the office before the day is over. Perhaps you will advertise to sell or trade an appliance or piece of furniture. Whatever the case, you will have good luck with this endeavor. You are an excellent shape changer. Moving or changing the past into something very pleasant for the future is a common occurrence in your life. Respect others and ask before making changes in someone else's area of living. This is a time to broaden your horizons, both intellectually and spiritually. A new bookstore may be just too appealing to you and other members of your family this afternoon-look and find. A book is a fun time this evening.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This morning is a time for you! If you are not working you are taking some time to enjoy your day. This could mean you just have set out before you all the equipment needed to repair, paint or touch up a counter in your home and you are ready to get to the task. You may even have instructions for putting down a new type of flooring. Work alone, if possible; you know exactly how you want the end results to look. Now is your chance to be yourself, for yourself! If you actually are alone you could enjoy your own special music while you work. Do not forget to include some physical activity after a day of labor... Stretching and reaching and hauling could call for a time on the treadmill. You enjoy family later this evening and may get takeout food.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You are in a social frame of mind and may be willing to go along with most any activity just to be with groups of people. The passion around you is invigorating and alive. If you are in a spiritual environment, you may decide to volunteer to take some kids to one of the more popular movies for the afternoon. This is an excellent time for spiritual growth and a deeper understanding of the forces that move the world and each other. It also may be time to reflect on the direction your life has taken. Create some warm, fuzzy feelings with your own loved ones this evening. Use this time to open an invitation of conversation.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

There are stimulating opportunities now to change your life in positive ways. Reading, research and writing-all lead you to where you want to go. You may consider taking a couple of classes with regard to these subjects for the next semester. You could soon be learning about a different culture from your own. Although one enjoys independence, there is nothing like positive feedback from the people that know and love you the most-family. You are very aware of other people and their needs today. Your receptiveness to input from others may encourage them to ask you for help.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your sensitivity to the needs of others is strong. If you are working today, this should be one super-busy day. If you are a salesperson, you should achieve twice your quota! Your awareness of others and the way you attract attention in positive ways are just a couple of reasons that people like to see you and hear what you have to say. You would make a good representative for most any company where you like the product. This afternoon is conducive to the creation of poems and music: a feel-good day! Friendships are a source of great pleasure and you, in turn, should be quite popular. This harmony should be very useful in easing past tensions in a relationship or in concluding some difficult financial matters.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Take an active role now in changing the pattern of your usual activities. You may find yourself shopping or just enjoying time away from the work world. New technology grabs your attention and you may find yourself looking through the new technical magazines at a bookstore or library. You are at your mental best with sharp ideas and clear thoughts. This is an excellent time to write out your ideas or make plans-perhaps to gather the paperwork necessary for someone else to do your taxes this year. Law, politics, education, travel, religion-these are some of the areas where emotionally charged conversations can be enjoyed.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This is definitely a day to get a lot of things done. Your drive is high, your mind is clear and understanding should not be a problem. You could find yourself involved in some volunteer program for the youth in your city or neighborhood. This is a commendable involvement for you and will bring you much pleasure. This is a time when your path of self-development and expression becomes more and more unusual-setting you apart from the crowd and from all that is traditional. The new, the futuristic, the high-tech are the hallmarks of your lifestyle as this cycle gets underway. Ideas and technologies that change the way people live are a major new focus in your life.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Your mind takes an introspective turn today and the needs and desires of others take precedence over your own. It is a good time to sit down with a loved one and discuss what each of you need from the relationship. This is a favorable day for creative pursuits. You may find yourself coaching or counseling young people this afternoon. Consider this a good year for an adventure through travel, educational pursuits, writing and publishing, legal affairs and perhaps, a new spurt of spiritual growth. Begin now to confer with loved ones and set some goals for some of these things. This is a time when your path of self-development and expression becomes more and more unusual-setting you apart from the crowd and from all that is traditional.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This is an easy-flow day. You seem resigned to the way things are at this moment. You may even find that people want to know how you are. This relaxed state is a change for you-and a good one to continue. You are encouraged to finish what you started last weekend or to do some sort of improvements around your living area. Later today, you will look for any excuse to get together with friends or to make new friends. You are patient and your desire to nurture and protect your loved ones is strong-you could find yourself entertaining young children for an evening. You also may enjoy reminiscing about pleasant or fun memories from the past.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Being in the spotlight is a familiar place to you-continue to move forward by checking out the areas where you can be most helpful. You spend time communicating with friendly co-workers and people apart from work most of this day. If the work you do now is not what you want to do forever, you might think about looking into a new position within your company or further education so that you will be in step with your vision. Additionally, you may find it beneficial to voice your ideas when you return to work-for your supervisors only. Supervisors will watch your professional behavior and help you progress. There will be a place for you that will be right where you want to work. Smile for the camera. Have fun!



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may be hungry for emotional excitement today and could find yourself in some sort of verbal sparring match. You may be seeking new and different kinds of people or maybe new and different kinds of places in which to spend the day or evening. You can demonstrate great understanding toward others and may soon be encouraged to teach. You could pull in a little extra spending money by tutoring. A problem relationship will heal and even gain in meaning. Your life begins to take on a kind of mystical quality at the emotional and instinctive level. No one is a stranger today-camaraderie with old friends or daily associates is not unusual. The barriers between people dissolve and results are a greater psychic and spiritual sensitivity.

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

Movie Actors 1

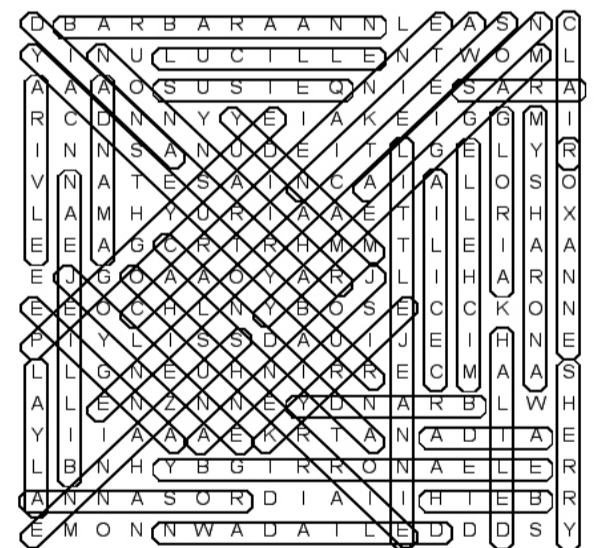
Find and circle all of the Movie Actors that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of a movie for which Jeremy Irons won an Oscar.

Y E N O O L C D R T E B A R D E M
F N V N I L A W R P H O E N I X E
O R A R E N A A S G S P A C E Y R
X A O M I E V A N O S B I G L O E
X N R E K O S I H M C K E L L E N
S W L U L C V O T N F B A C O N T
F S A T S A A T N M E N O M A D S
O B A H E S E J R U M L P P E D O
R L D W L N E E F L A D L O T O C
D A I C T B E L K B H U S Y H U C
R C C R A V E L C L D T N E E G G E
T K A H E I A R O L A C N R I L G
N H P S A S N O G O T A O R O A D
A S R T U N W E U G S N J A V S I
R U I C Y E H G U A N O C C M N R
G R O E N A M K C A H P E S C I B

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| BACON, Kevin | DUNCAN, Michael Clarke | MCKELLEN, Ian |
| BARDEM, Javier | FORD, Harrison | NEESON, Liam |
| BLACK, Jack | FOX, Jamie | PESCI, Joe |
| BRIDGES, Jeff | GIBSON, Mel | PHOENIX, Joaquin |
| CAINE, Michael | GOLDBLUM, Jeff | REEVES, Keanu |
| CARREY, Jim | GRANT, Hugh | RUSH, Geoffrey |
| CHAN, Jackie | GYLLENHAAL, Jake | RUSSELL, Kurt |
| CLOONEY, George | HACKMAN, Gene | SPACEY, Kevin |
| COSTNER, Kevin | HARTNETT, Josh | STATHAM, Jason |
| CUSACK, John | IRONS, Jeremy | TRAVOLTA, John |
| DAMON, Matt | JACKMAN, Hugh | VOIGHT, Jon |
| DANIELS, Jeff | JONES, James Earl | WAHLBERG, Mark |
| DEPP, Johnny | LAW, Jude | WEAVING, Hugo |
| DICAPRIO, Leonardo | MCCONAUGHEY, Matthew | WOOD, Elijah |
| DOUGLAS, Michael | | |

Yesterday's Solution

Songs With Girls' Names



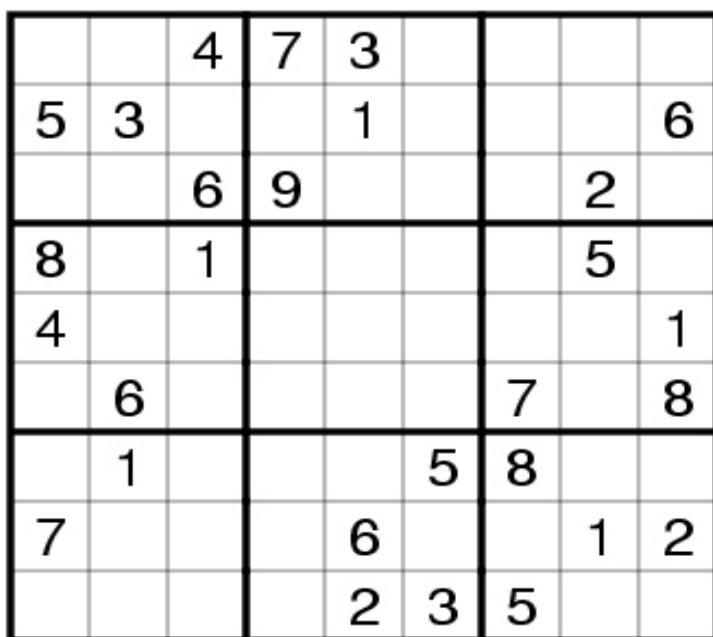
- | | | |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| ADIA | DIANA | MY SHARONA |
| ALISON | ELSAHOR RIGBY | NIKITA |
| AMANDA | ELVIRA | OH SHERRIE |
| ANGIE | GLORIA | PEGGY SUE |
| BARBARA ANN | JOANNA | RHIANNON |
| BETH | JOLENNE | ROSANNA |
| BILLIE JEAN | KYRIE | ROXANNE |
| BRANDY | LAYLA | RUBY TUESDAY |
| CANDIDA | LITTLE JEANNIE | SARA |
| CARRIE ANNE | LUCILLE | SHERRY |
| CECILIA | MAGGIE MAY | SUSIE Q |
| CLAIR | MANDY | SUZANNE |
| DELLAH | MICHELLE | SWEET CAROLINE |
| DELTA DAWN | | |

The hidden song title is: LUCY IN THE SKY WITH DIAMONDS

Yesterday's Solution

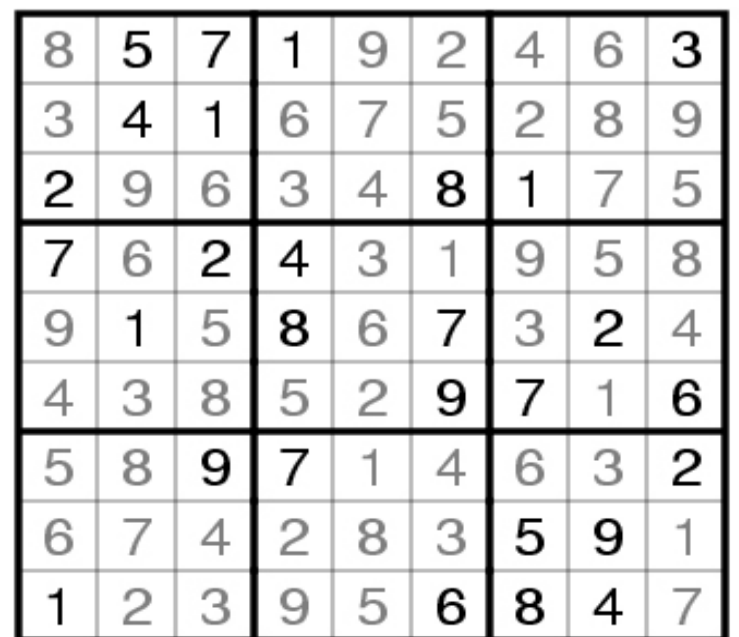


Daily SuDoku



hard

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	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Luxembourg	00352
Albania	00355	Macau	00853
Algeria	00213	Macedonia	00389
Andorra	00376	Madagascar	00261
Angola	00244	Majorca	0034
Anguilla	001264	Malawi	00265
Antigua	001268	Malaysia	0060
Argentina	0054	Maldives	00960
Armenia	00374	Mali	00223
Australia	0061	Malta	00356
Austria	0043	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	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	Sao Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tone	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Toga	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lithuania	00370		

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

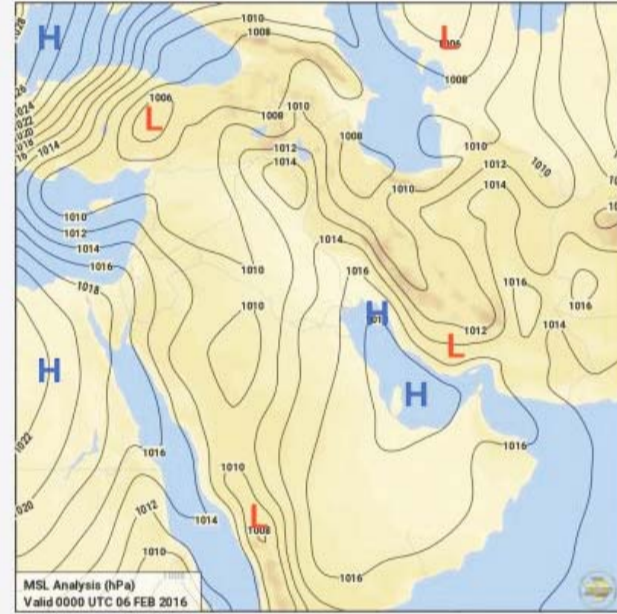
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 06/02/2016-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 24 °C

By Day : Warm with light to moderate southerly to south easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 35 km/h
By Night : Cold with light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 12 - 32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Expected Weather	partly cloudy + scattered rain +blowing dust	sunny	sunny	sunny
Min Temp °C	07	05	04	05
Max Temp °C	23	21	20	19
Wind Direction	south easterly changing to north westerly later on	north westerly	north westerly	north westerly to light variable
Wind Speed km/h	15 - 40	10 - 32	15 - 38	08 - 30

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C	REC	Max °C	EXP
KUWAIT CITY	11		22	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	03		24	
ABDALY	07		24	
BUBYAN	07		21	
JAHRA	08		23	
FAILAKA ISLAND	08		19	
SALMIYAH	13		19	
AHMADI	12		18	
JAL ALIYAH	06		21	
QAROH ISLAND	15		18	
UMM AL-MARADEM	14		18	
NUWAISIB	07		20	
WAFRA	06		22	
MANAGISH	05		23	
SALMY	06		24	
MUTRIBA	07		23	

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	21
Min Temp (°C)	04
Max Rel Hum (%)	84
Min Rel Hum (%)	25
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	25 NW
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	06:34
Sunset	17:30

Prayer Times

Fajr	05:13
Sunrise	06:34
Zuhr	12:02
Asr	15:08
Sunset	17:30
Isha	18:49



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	22639920
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	
DrAdrian 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 Gupare	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. Foaid 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

Rupert Grint says Weasley and Granger relationship 'doomed'

The 27-year-old actor believes his and Emma Watson's 'Harry Potter' characters, who went from friends to a married couple by the end of the wizard saga, would not have enjoyed their own happily ever after and are most likely to have divorced. He told The Huffington Post: "I would expect Ron has probably divorced Hermione already. I don't think that relationship would have done very well." Adding further thoughts on Ron's depressing life, he added: "He's living on his own, in a little one-bedroom apartment. He hasn't got a job." Meanwhile, Rupert recently admitted that he found kissing Emma, 25, for 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2', extremely "surreal". He said: "I've known Emma since she was literally nine years old and we had this very brother-sister relationship. And it just felt very surreal. I have a memory of her face getting closer and closer. Like, 'Oh my God.' I can't really remember anything apart from that."



Kim KARDASHIAN adds SEXY EMOJIS TO HER APP

The 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians' star has updated her Kimoji app with some animated GIFs, including her cartoon likeness showing her skills on a stripper pole, dropping low in a fur coat, slapping someone around with a designer bag and doing a 'come hither' call. Other new graphics include pastel-colored love hearts emblazoned with slogans such as 'Go away', 'Send nudes', 'I've had better', and 'I hate you'. Following the release of Kimoji last year, the app was downloaded over 9,000 times a millisecond at one point and even caused Apple's app store to break. Kim apologized to her many social media followers in a series of tweets shortly after the technical issue arose. She wrote: "We worked so hard on this app & we know there are some issues due to the massive downloads that the whole tech team is so working on!" "My Kimoji app will be up and running again soon! They are also working on fixing the search so u can easily find it!" Buyers of the app are able to use a number of Kim-inspired images through their phones, including that of the infamous backwards selfie she took while wearing a white swimsuit in October 2013.



Chris Hemworth never felt at 'home' in Los Angeles

The 'Thor' actor is delighted to have moved back to his native Australia with wife Elsa Pataky and their children India, three, and Tristan, Sasha, 22 months, because he feels he is right where he belongs. Speaking on Australian TV show 'Today', he said: "LA, I loved it, it was great being there with the opportunities with work, [but] it didn't feel like home. "Instantly, when I get off the plane, I'm back." And the 32-year-old star was particularly keen for his kids to live on the coast, just like he did as a youngster. He added: "Which is I think is essential to what we want to give [the children]." Meanwhile, the hunky actor admitted he was "scared out of his mind" when he started working on the female-driven 'Ghostbusters' remake because it was so different to anything he'd done before, particularly with Kristen Wiig and Melissa McCarthy being so good at improvising. He said of the comedy: "It was new, but scary. "Walked on set the first day, I was scared out of my mind."

Tyga seeks extended custody of his son

The 'Rack City' hitmaker is said to be concerned for the welfare of three-year-old King Cairo after the little boy's mother, his ex-girlfriend Blac Chyna, was arrested for public intoxication and possession of a controlled substance in Texas last week, and is now preparing to go to court to have their agreement changed. According to TMZ, Tyga is keen to have his son live with him during the week and spend weekends with Blac as he believes he is the more responsible parent. Blac has recently embarked on a relationship with Rob Kardashian but Tyga - who has an on/off relationship with the reclusive reality star's half-sister Kylie Jenner - is fine about her new romance as he thinks the sock designer is a "cool guy" and doesn't have a problem with him. Following Blac's arrest at Austin International Airport, it was discovered in a police affidavit that officers discovered two white pills inside a sunglasses case and after testing they were revealed to be methylenedioxy-methamphetamine, known as ecstasy. Police said she was "going from extremely angry, cursing at everyone then to crying" during the incident.



James Corden thinks 'Carpool Karaoke' worth thousands

The 37-year-old presenter welcomes the 'Rocket Man' legend into his vehicle as the next guest on his popular 'Late, Late Show' segment and knows he is very "lucky" to be treated to such a personal performance. Asked what viewers can expect from Elton, whose appearance airs during the show's Super Bowl special, James said: "We did 'Crocodile Rock', and it's flamboyant. "To sing 'Tiny Dancer' with Elton John in a car, you just think: If this was an auction prize, it would go for hundreds of thousands of dollars. I feel lucky every time I get in the car with any of these people who I just really admire and respect." And James thinks his carpool guests - who have included Justin Bieber, Mariah Carey, Adele, One Direction and Coldplay's Chris Martin - have an equally nice time belting out their back catalogues. Discussing Chris' recent appearance, he told Entertainment Weekly magazine: "After every song he was like, 'Oh, I haven't heard that for ages!' Or, 'It brings me back to where I wrote this!' "It's actually quite a lovely thing for them to reminisce; they hear their whole career in eight songs."

Ryan Reynolds doesn't think his daughter's name is that 'weird'

The 'Deadpool' actor and wife Blake Lively named 13-month-old James in honor of his late father, James C Reynolds, and though the couple caused a stir by giving her a moniker traditionally given to males, Ryan thinks it could have been much worse. He said: "We named her after my father. "In the spectrum of weird celebrity baby names, I feel like we're not really breaking any new ground here. "It's not like Summer Squash Meadow Lark, or something. I also thought of all the letters being silent in her name, so it would be just be 'haaaa." The 39-year-old actor is a devoted father but worries about becoming a baby bore. Speaking on UK TV show 'Good Morning Britain', he said: "She's teething at the moment. I love being a father. I don't want to be one of those celebs who talks about being a parent like they're the only person in the world who has ever done it." When he finished shooting 'Deadpool', Ryan brought his iconic costume home, much to the horror of his 28-year-old wife. He joked: She was a bit concerned. She thought it was a bit twisted. Happy anniversary! "I keep it in the TV room, where it scares the dogs. I would hate to be the person to break into my house."



Billie and SAM FAIERS will go HEAD-TO-HEAD

The two sisters have been shortlisted for icelolly.com's honor alongside the likes of singer Adele, mum-of-five Katie Price and Coleen Rooney, who recently gave birth to her third son. And Billie - who scooped the accolade last year - would be happy if she lost her crown to her younger sister, who gave birth to son Paul in December. The 'Only Way is Essex' star - who has 18-month-old Nelly with fiance Greg Sheperd - said: "It's a great feeling to have been nominated for the second year in a row. The fact my sister Sam has also been included in the shortlist makes it even more special and it'd be amazing for either of us to win it!" Other stars to make the shortlist include Peter Andre's doctor wife Emily MacDonagh, YouTube star Louise Pentland, McFly singer Tom Fletcher's pregnant spouse Giovanna, athlete Jessica Ennis-Hill and model Danielle Lloyd.



Chris Rock thinks black women have the 'hardest gig'

The 50-year-old comic insists Jennifer Lawrence - who sparked debate last year when she revealed she was paid less than her male 'American Hustle' co-stars - would "really have something to complain about" if she weren't white, and thinks the 'Hunger Games' actress is in a much better position than other actresses. In an interview conducted before the #OscarsSoWhite controversy, he told Essence magazine: "I've never done a movie, any movie, the silliest movie, where someone, some studio person hasn't gone, 'Does the girl have to be black?' It happens every time. "Black women get paid less than everybody in Hollywood. Everybody's talking about Jennifer Lawrence. "Talk to Gabrielle Union. If you want to hear stories, talk to Nia Long. Talk to Kerry Washington. They would love to get to Jennifer Lawrence's place, or just be treated with the same amount of respect. "Black women are the least represented on-screen. They just are. You can go see a lot of movies and there's not one black woman in there with, like, a real part. It's a real, real, real problem. "Black women have the hardest gig in show business. You hear Jennifer Lawrence complaining about getting paid less because she's a woman - if she was black, she'd really have something to complain about."





A traveler heads to the international departures area at the airport in Beijing yesterday ahead of the Lunar New Year. — AFP/AP photos



This picture taken on February 5, 2016 shows a Chinese tourist holding incense sticks as she offers prayers at the Erawan shrine.

New Year, new travel: More Chinese choose tourism over tradition

While hundreds of millions of his Chinese compatriots pack into planes, trains, and automobiles to return to their ancestral homes for the Lunar New Year celebration, Zhang Hao, 30, is getting as far away as he can. "I decided to go abroad this year because my parents are pressuring me to marry," he said.

Instead of making the 1,200 kilometer trek from Beijing, where he works as a designer, to his icy northern hometown of Harbin, Zhang booked a 20,000 yuan (\$3,000) trip to Thailand for February 6 — one day before Chinese custom would dictate he ought to be with his parents. The festival, which compares in importance to Christmas in the West, marks a time when far-flung family members return home for merriment and meals according to tradition, they must be back by midnight on the eve of the New Year. But rising individualism and financial independence are seeing more and more young Chinese choose to defy custom, while at the same time tourism and outbound travel are surging.

'Growing up'

"There was no choice" but to go abroad, Zhang said. "It's mostly the generation who grew up in the 90s who are taking off because they were by their parents' side the whole time they were growing up." He is not alone. More than 30 percent of Chinese planning a break over the holiday, also known as Spring Festival, say they are doing so because they want to "get far away from relatives" or feel that "spending New Year at home is getting boring," according to a



This picture taken on February 5, 2016 shows tourists including Chinese offering prayers at the Erawan shrine in downtown Bangkok.

customer survey by Chinese travel planning and booking website Mafengwo.

Growing numbers are also seizing the opportunity for tourism, despite slowing growth in the world's second-largest economy. The China Youth Daily devoted its entire opinion page to the issue on Friday, with writer Chen Fang saying that many people now

resent going home because of boredom and stress, while children are less excited about customary gifts such as new clothing.

"I prefer to view Spring Festival as a slightly longer holiday," Chen wrote. "Wherever the people are, wherever the family is, that's where the festival is." But Huang Wei argued in a contrasting column that the ancestral hearth was critical. "When I was young and unmarried, going home for Lunar New Year to spend time with my parents was merely a way to carry on an ancient tradition," he said. "Now that I'm over 40 and a husband and father as well as a son, reuniting the family for Spring Festival is a great responsibility."

'More independent'

The Chinese government estimates that 2.91 billion trips of all kinds will be taken over the holiday's 40-day travel season, in what is thought to be the largest yearly movement of people in the world. Mafengwo said that among its festival season bookings, 40 percent were for tourist travel—twice the proportion of two years ago, although some were going with relatives. Practicality was increasingly trumping tradition, Hong Kong University sociology professor Gary Wong said.

"One of the most important elements is that it's the longest period of holiday for the whole year," he said. But older generations, he added, "still prefer to have the whole family get together." Nearly six million people, the most ever, will pack their bags for a leisure destination during the coming week, China's biggest outbound travel portal Ctrip estimated last month, which said its bookings were up 15 percent from 2015. — AFP



People walk past an entrance gate of Ditan Park decorated with red lanterns ahead of the Chinese Lunar New Year in Beijing.

No Super Bowl halftime show for Metallica

While Metallica has steadily attracted more of a mainstream audience throughout its 35-year career, frontman James Hetfield feels they will never play the Super Bowl, and he doesn't seem to mind. "As far as us playing halftime for the Super Bowl, I have a feeling that ship has passed," Hetfield told The Associated Press before a sound check on Friday in San Francisco.

He added: "We're not a variety show. We're not pop. We're not sparkly, and all that kind of stuff that seems to be what's needed for that." While not sparkly, pop, or a variety act, the band is more versed at rocking your socks off, so playing The Night Before concert Saturday at AT&T Park provides a better alternative for their devoted fan base.

"It's great to be hosting the thing. It would be great if my team was in it," Hetfield said of his team, the Oakland Raiders. "But having the city come alive with any kind of sport is great. The fact that we're here getting to represent Bay area music at The Night Before is pretty exciting." Because the band is not currently on tour, Hetfield joked about the set list.

"All covers, no. All Coldplay, not even that, no. We're going to be doing probably a best of, you know, when you're in a situation like this, you know stadium, catchy, bouncy, and heavy, which we do," Hetfield said. Coldplay will play the Super Bowl Halftime Show on Sunday with special guest Beyoncé.

At the sound check for Saturday's



James Hetfield of the band Metallica performs at the Super Bowl 50 Metallica Soundcheck held at AT&T Park on Friday, Feb 5, 2016, in San Francisco. — AP

concert, the band gave a few devoted members of their fan club a taste of what they can expect, playing classics like "Master of Puppets," and "(Welcome Home) Sanitarium." Hetfield also reflected on the recent passing of musicians such as David Bowie, Glenn Frey (of The Eagles) and Maurice White (from Earth, Wind, and Fire).

"It's always sad when brothers, musical brothers pass on - go on to the next gig or the next journey," he said. "They're dying of natural causes. Age, age-related stuff. That's bet-

ter than hearing about a Kurt Cobain or a Layne Staley, something where they've inflicted that upon themselves." But it was the death of Motorhead founder Ian "Lemmy" Kilmister, late last year, that seemed to affect Hetfield the most.

"He single-handedly inspired Metallica to be Metallica. That was a tough one, a real tough one. The fact that he lived the life he wanted to and pretty much died doing what he wanted, that's key," Hetfield said. — AP

Iggy Azalea: I have more belief in myself as a trendsetter

As Iggy Azalea readies the release of her sophomore album, the rapper says she's feeling more self-assured and less worried about being or sounding cool. "I think I'm more confident, and I think I have more belief in what I think is cool rather than worrying about what other people are going to like," Azalea said in an interview Friday. "I think I have more belief in myself in being a trendsetter, which all artists should. So I hope to maybe move the dial a little bit more than I did last time," she added.

The 25-year-old made the comments before she performed at a Sports Illustrated pre-Super Bowl Party in San Francisco - a city she said she loves visiting. Azalea said she wasn't attending Sunday's Super Bowl in Santa Clara, California, but she's happy to watch Beyoncé, Bruno Mars and Coldplay perform during the halftime show.

"I have to go home and work, but I will be watching

them on television. I'm excited to watch them at home," the pink-haired performer said. She signed autographs and took photos with fans outside of the 1015 Folsom nightclub, and inside she shook hands with concertgoers in the loud crowd while also performing songs like "Fancy" and "Black Widow."

Azalea said her new album will be released "this half of the year." It won't include as many guest artists as her Grammy-nominated debut, "The New Classic," she said. "Less features than last time. I went a bit feature crazy," she said of the 2014 album, which included songs co-starring Jennifer Hudson, mentor T.I., reggae artist Mavado and pop singers Rita Ora and Charli XCX.

"I'm hoping people will see my growth, being able to hold my own on a song without needing somebody else's companionship," she added. "But I still will do some features because I love that, too." — AP



Iggy Azalea performs at the Sports Illustrated Super Bowl Party held at 1015 Folsom on Friday, Feb. 5, 2016, in San Francisco. — AP

Hop on down: Miffy the rabbit gets her own museum

To some she's just a plain white bunny, to others she's a prime example of minimalist art. But for six decades Miffy has been delighting young kids around the world, and now she's getting a museum of her own.

After a two-year renovation project, what was formerly known as the Dick Bruna Huis (house) in the Centraal Museum of the Dutch city of Utrecht, is reopening this weekend as a bright, playful space dedicated to Miffy herself and carefully re-imagined as a hands-on experience for her young fans.

The original space devoted to Miffy's creator-Dutch artist, author and graphic designer, Dick Bruna, who was born in Utrecht—opened in 2006 and drew some 50,000 visitors a year from all over the Netherlands, but also largely from Japan where she is a huge star. But it was primarily more of an adult museum, packed full of a permanent collection of Bruna's original drawings. And the question on every child's lips was "where's Miffy?" said curator Yolanda van den Berg.

So now children are getting an invitation to visit Miffy's house—divided into 10 rooms designed specifically with kids in mind, where they can play and learn, and find out a little more about the man who created their idol. Although she celebrated her 60th birthday in 2015, Miffy has changed very little down the years. Bruna wrote more than 120 picture books of which 32 are devoted just to Miffy. Small and square, designed to fit little hands, each book tells a simple tale such as a outing to the zoo, a day at school or playing in the snow.

They have sold more than 85 million copies and been translated into more than 52 languages, including Russian in 2011. It is her endearing simplicity, along with her friends like Poppy the kind pig lady and Snuffy the dog, which has cemented the books' universal appeal to pre-schoolers down the decades.

Room for imagination

Miffy is a white girl bunny drawn with thick black outlines, pointy ears (although in her early days they were slightly more floppy), two dots for eyes, and an X for her mouth. She is always drawn against a background of bold primary colours, especially mixed for Bruna, mainly blue, green, yellow and what is known as "Bruna red".

"What he wanted to do with his books was to create a safe world in which children can explore by themselves," said Van den Berg. "And that's what we've tried to do in the museum as well." Absent from the museum though are the computer animations and games seen in many exhibits today. "If it's not a real experience, but a virtual one, it's different," said Van den Berg.

Bruna, 88, was born in Utrecht in 1927, and had been expected to follow his father's footsteps and join the family publishing company, which was once the largest in the Netherlands. But drawing and art were his first love, and during a long study tour in Paris in the 1940s he became heavily influenced by the works of French painters Henri Matisse and Fernand Leger.

Returning to Utrecht, he started drawing book covers for the novels published by the Bruna company. It was during a family holiday in 1955 on the North Sea coast that he spotted a white rabbit hopping around the garden, and turned it into a drawing for his young son Sierk. Thus Miffy was born.

The simple pictograms in the Miffy books "have room for imagination and fantasy. They're very clear lines," said Evaline Reeskamp, education officer with the museum. Bruna himself retired in 2011, and now the Utrecht museum has faithfully preserved his fastidiously neat, light-filled top floor studio where he worked for 30 years, and opened it up to the public to visit. — AFP



A photo taken on February 3, 2016 shows books on display at the Miffy Museum in Utrecht. To some she's just a plain white bunny, to others she's a prime example of minimalist art. But for six decades Miffy has been delighting young kids around the world, and now she's getting a museum of her own. — AFP

Part 1

Japan: A great nation



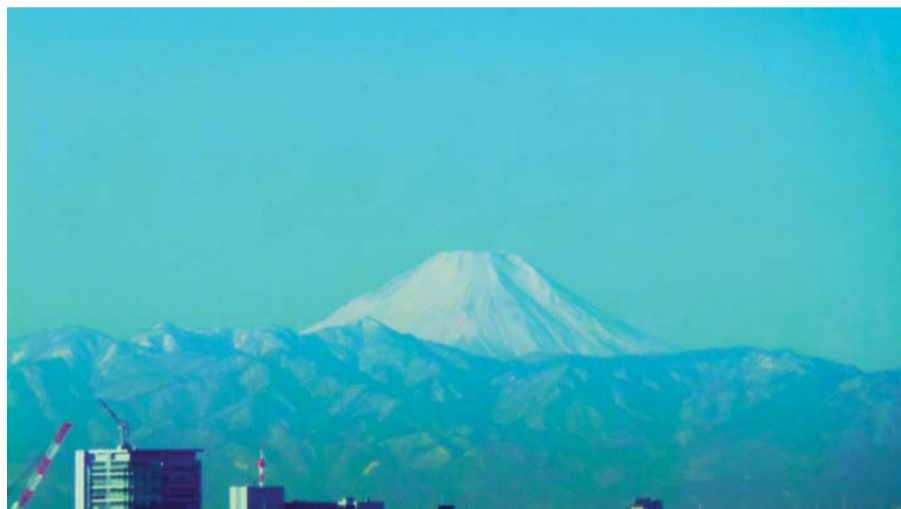
The New Otani Hotel



Tokyo: The wonderful capital



Buddist temple in Asakusa



Mount Fuji



Prayer room in Nagoya airport



A general view of the capital

Inspiring Japanese rituals and traditions

- The visitor will notice that the Japanese do not use phones in restaurants, and many restaurants, especially those frequented by foreigners, put signs asking to refrain from using mobile phones while at the table.
- Daily meal timings are fixed. Most citizens eat quietly, and we cannot find anyone having a sandwich in the streets.
- All car passengers use seatbelts whether in the front or back seats.
- The Japanese work in all fields and professions, such as taxi drivers, guards and waiters, without being embarrassed and with total honesty, and always with a smile.
- There are signs at the airport that places designated for Japanese citizens can be used by those who are not Japanese nationals if they are not occupied.
- At public transport stations, passengers stay on one side and leave the other side for those in a hurry and may miss the train or trip.
- Total compliance with traffic laws, and all places that require queuing, eg elevators, restaurant reservations, train stations and payment areas in stores.
- Major hotel restaurants put explanatory drawings if the food contains pork.

No tipping

Most books and tourist instructions draw the attention that a tourist does not have to pay tips for any service he receives, except if it was extra. The majority of workers at restaurants and hotels rejected tips if offered, and others will not accept it until after strongly insistence.

A rumor: Japan is the most expensive country

The first thing one notices while roaming through Japanese markets is that what is said that this country is the most expensive place in the world is not true. Prices at prestigious and popular markets are moderate and highly acceptable, compared with similar ones in the West and some Arab countries.

By Mohammed Bassam Al-Husseini

In the middle of the sea, amidst volcanoes and on top of earthquakes, are people who wrote one of the most beautiful stories in history, transforming danger into security, challenges into success, and exporting sublime human values ahead of the highest quality goods.

The Japanese know about us more than we expect them to know, and during an era of IS and terrorism, we find Japan declare that it is proud of its Muslim citizens and opens the doors wide for visitors from Muslim countries by educating its people about the principles of halal food and the importance of facilitating services related to prayers, such as signs for the direction of qibla, means of ablution (wudu) and prayer timings. At Nagoya airport, for example, all the above services are provided and can be considered a clear welcome message.

They meet you with a smile and a bow, wherever you go, which proves that

glory comes from humbleness, and the sun in the "Land of the Rising Sun" or Nihon (Nippon) as pronounced by its citizens, is more than just a red circle on a white flag - it is work that starts and never ends, and a group of instilled values that couples modernization with originality in the best way possible.

You are as successful as the achievements you accomplish, and also as much as you are inspired for more success and the ability to rise, and this is what Japan confirms by word and deed. We spent nine days at the kind invitation from an intense program at the Japanese foreign ministry for Al-Anbaa, and the doors of Japan were opened for us, so that we could enter its world that is named by some in respect as "Planet Japan". We met a large number of officials and visited many places, but were asked to finish all stops in the program quickly, so we were inspired by the bullet train which links Japan cities. And why not, as every-

thing in Japan is possible!

The Etihad Airlines flight from Kuwait to Tokyo via Abu Dhabi landed at Narita International Airport, and the journey to discover the city started from the New Otani Hotel, one of the most prestigious hotels famed for its gardens that are decorated with lakes and waterfalls and which overlooks Mt Fuji, the symbol of Japan that is linked to legends and history.

The Japanese capital Tokyo is a modern city that has everything - a vibrant day that people fill with vitality in various neighborhoods; and a living night that has many touristic choices. Restaurants serve all what the tourists imagine or hope for from around the world, and of course there are halal restaurants and shisha cafes.

Amongst the most beautiful neighborhoods in the city is Roppongi, where the Tokyo Tower is located, which was seared in our minds as children when we used to see Japanese cartoons. The

Shinjuku and Shibuya neighborhoods are most famous for nightlife and restaurants. The prestigious Ginza district is where the most famous brands are. It is an integrated world for shopping, going for sushi, noodles, teppanyaki and the traditional Japanese sweets that are mostly made of rice, and green ice tea. Chiyoda district is where the castle and imperial palace can be visited.

The ideal place for popular shopping is Asakusa, which has a distinguished market in which we can find all that is related to Japan's heritage, specially kimonos, and is located inside a famous Buddhist temple. There are, besides skyscrapers and the Tokyo Tower, high-rise buildings such as the Skytree, which is one of the tallest towers on earth, the metropolitan building, which is the seat of the Tokyo local government, and from it all, tourists can look at the capital from above and buy souvenirs, besides taking pictures along the way.

Improvement in relations with China despite tensions

Takako Ito, the foreign press secretary and official spokesperson of the foreign ministry, is a seasoned diplomat, and her charismatic personality and belief in the Japanese woman's ability qualified her for this high-ranking position.

She said during a lunch she invited us to at one of Tokyo's prestigious restaurants, that the duty of a spokesperson is complicated, but is a challenge that she always works to win. Ito insisted on Japan's belief in the freedom of expression and its encouragement of a free and responsible press. She spoke about several political issues including Japanese-Chinese relations over the tensions that followed escalations at the disputed Senkaku islands, which is under Japanese sovereignty.

The official Japanese Foreign Ministry

spokesperson said that despite tensions, matters, one year after the APEC summit, have witnessed notable improvement at the level of meetings between the two countries' leaderships, the two foreign ministers, and the restoration of action of the joint working committees following a lengthy freeze in various political, security and financial fields.

Ito said despite the drop in the number of Japanese tourists in China to nearly 2.5 million in 2015 compared to 3.98 million in 2007, and drop of direct investment volume by China in Japan by nearly 25.2 percent in 2015, the number of Chinese tourists rose to more than 5 million in 2015, which is double than the previous year.

Ito alluded to relations with Russia, confirming Japan's clear stand in rejecting

Russian action in Ukraine and the unilateral annexation of Crimea. She said the issue will be discussed again during the visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to Japan to attend the G7 summit.

Ito reminded of her diplomatic beginnings when she worked in the Japanese embassy in Canada in 1990, when the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait took place. She was newly married, and had to work long hours to follow events as they happened and send reports. She said history proves the humanitarian stands Japan took at the time were correct. Amendments were made to legal texts that were keeping Japan from joining wars, until it became possible to participate in humanitarian support operations to help victims of disputes and fulfill the core of Japanese values.



Mohammed Al-Husseini with members from the Japanese Foreign Ministry

Part 1

MP Koike: The UN charter is no longer acceptable

Yuriko Koike is Japan's strongwoman, former defense minister and national security advisor, and continues as member of the National Diet legislative establishment and a major personality in the country's political life, and one of the main pillars of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, besides being a well-known media personality before getting into politics.

She is an outstanding friend of Kuwait and chairperson of the parliamentary friendship committee between the two sides. She told me jokingly: "I visited Kuwait a few years ago, but my first visit was before you were born, as I visited it with my father, a businessman, in 1972. Then I went to study in Cairo, and lived the Oct 6 events, and was attached to the region and Arab world, which was our focus in recent years during the Arab Spring.

Koike described her feelings towards happenings in the region as "worried", explaining: "I hoped the Arab world becomes more democratic, but this has not happened yet, so we consider what is going on as a transitional stage to take the region from one experience to a richer one, we hope. We consider Kuwait an example of a democracy that is able to accommodate the people, especially after granting full opportunities to women, and I usually describe it as the leader in the region.

"We know the Amir of Kuwait, HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, and he is a person we highly respect in our country, and I had several meetings with him. I also met the Crown Prince HH Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad during my last visit to Kuwait. Before that, when I was advisor of national security, I met the Prime Minister HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak when he was defense minister after the Iraq war. I visited Ali Al-Salem air force base, as Kuwait gave a base for the Japan defense forces, which worked on providing freshwater to some areas of Iraq as part of humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, in which we participated and we are thankful for that," said Koike.

"When I visited Kuwait, relations between GCC and Iran were tense as the case is today, and Kuwait's stand was cautious, and we hope things calm down in the region," she added. Koike described relations between Japan and Kuwait as old and well-established. She said Kuwait suffered major marine pollution in 2000 because of natural problems with the oilfields that threatened the marine environment. But a professor from Japan, which is a nation surrounded by water and has experience and vast studies and many experts, was able to find the cause of the problem and gave valuable recommendations to deal with the situation, and helped in putting an end to a challenge that worried the country, as there was a major worry with regards to the consumption of fish, which is used extensively in Kuwaiti dishes. "We cannot



Managing Director Mohammed Al Hussaini with MP Koike in her office

forget, on our side, Kuwait's generosity in supporting Japan following the major earthquake tragedy and the tsunami that hit it in 2011. I received a call at that time from Kuwait's ambassador, who said: We want to stand with you, so how can we help? I told him we wanted oil, so Kuwait donated five million barrels of oil, which contributed to helping us get through the crisis, and this is a stand that we will not forget and always remember," Koike said.

Daesh

We spoke with MP Koike about terrorism and Islamic State (Daesh), and whether Japanese officials worry about its expansion to their country following the threats in Malaysia and blasts in Indonesia, which proved that this terrorist organization is everywhere. "Daesh is not a religious group, rather they are terrorist gangs and have nothing to do with religion and true Islam, and we know this. They are moving from one place to another in Syria and Iraq taking the opportunity of any void that occurs in any area, like water that goes down when we pour it, so it is not wise to discuss the issue of Daesh from a religious point of view, rather our work should be to restore legitimacy and power to areas they control so as to push them out," she said.

"All what we see are negative results of the spread of internet and mobile phones and their misuse, as the coordination that links Daesh gangs around the world was not possible in the past. We in Japan do not have a large Muslim populace, with

regret, among our citizens, so it is difficult for Daesh to infiltrate here. Besides that, the explosives control system in Japan is strict and it is not easy to get them here. We used to face some sort of terrorism in the past from certain organizations through the use of chemicals. We must be vigilant, cautious and always ready to confront any scenario if it takes place.

Amendment of the constitution and North Korea

About the amendment of the constitution, particularly article 9 that is related to banning participation in wars, and if the matter is related to North Korean threats, she said: "The constitution amendment is something normal and all countries of the world agreed and even encouraged it, except for China and North Korea for their own goals, who wish Japan does not play a larger role in the international arena. "North Korea causes us much worry, as it is being led today by a person aged 33 years old, and we see that he has no experience and cannot predict what he may decide. Pyongyang is not a compliant member of the United Nations and international community, and it is hard to communicate with them. They are doing this instead of developing their country, as we are seeing millions of hungry people compared to the very few of the rich that benefit from the state. They have detained Japanese citizens for a long time, and this is unacceptable."

United Nations charter is no longer accepted

Koike said Japan is looking

forward to work actively during 2016/2017 when it joins as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, and will try to mediate in many disputes and problems at the international level. "We look with great regret at the UN which still considers Japan as 'an enemy country' in its charter. The Security Council today is made up of countries that won the war along with China, but Japan and Germany are described as enemies although Japan is the second largest donor to the international organization, and Germany is known for its humanitarian actions, the latest of which is its stand on refugees," she said.

"So the situation at the organization is not fair and illogical, and needs many amendments, including making Japan a permanent member of the Security Council. Also, it is not realistic to have five countries monopolize global decisions, so we seek an amendment, though we realize that the issue is very complicated and not easy," Koike added. "We do not see anything positive at the UN, and the organization's management is highly expensive along with many ineffective activities."

Japanese economy

Koike commented on the government's efforts to emerge from the economic crisis that dragged the Japanese economy for many years, by saying that Japan is suffering from deflation, "which means that when we want to buy today, we expect prices to drop tomorrow, so we do not buy, and wait for a cheaper price".

So the government is

attempting to reshuffle things through several incentive policies that may restore life to the economy. Koike said the drop in oil prices is beneficial to Japan, as it reduces the oil bill. She expressed optimism towards abilities to overcome the crisis, and having the Japanese economy restore its vitality, as Japan is creative and able to create opportunities.

"We know the Amir of Kuwait, HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, and he is a person we highly respect in our country"

"We look with great regret at the UN which still considers Japan as 'an enemy country' in its charter"

Schools set up for Syrians in Turkey



MP Koike intergrates the school project in Turkey

On the Syrian issue, Koike expressed sympathy with refugee children. "I am touched because of the children, so I personally collected donations and established an elementary school that provides education to 222 students in the Hatay region of Turkey, using Arabic curricula, because it is difficult for Syrian students to study Turkish curricula. The project provided job opportunities for 19 teachers, who are also refugees. We must help the children there, because they are living in darkness and if we do not provide them with education, they will be without a future, and we must help countries where they live including Europe which faces many problems due to the war in Syria," she said.

National Diet is the legislative establishment in the country: The most beautiful building in Tokyo



The building of the Japanese legislative establishment, known as the National Diet, is an architectural marvel, and was built between 1920 and 1936. It is one of the most beautiful buildings in Tokyo and has beautiful halls including a hall for the emperor to rest when he visits the building to open legislative terms, and is open for his majesty and state visitors only.

The National Diet is made up of two chambers. One is for the representatives, who comprise of 475 members who are elected every four years according to a system that combines majority voting with proportionality. The other is the advisors council, which has 242 members elected for six-year terms, who are elected every three years.

The National Diet legislates laws, approves the budget, ratifies international treaties, appoints the prime minister and amends the constitution.

Japan Foreign Ministry: Extreme concern for Middle East

Contrary to the extreme quietness that shrouds the building of Japan's foreign ministry located in the center of Tokyo, inside, it is like a beehive that does not rest, as the case is with the general policy of the Japanese administration and people: Discipline and productivity. A large group of employees monitor all what goes on around the world and the Middle East minute by minute, and from contacts with accredited embassies in the region.

On the first official day of our visit to Japan, we went to the foreign ministry building and met five officials in charge of the region's issues:

Coordinating diplomatic and popular efforts

The first was the advisor of public relations Ruriko Suminaga, who set up the following four meetings, starting with director of popular diplomacy Ayoshiro Mori, who told us about the work of his department in coordinating efforts between embassies and consulates to present the correct information to the people of the world about Japan, its policies and values, communicate with intellectuals around the world and exchange views with them so the correct image of Japan can reach the largest groups of people, and project attractive factors which are of interest to people about the country. Mori spoke about the Japan Up Close website, which shows what is being published about Japan.



Ruriko Suminaga

Kuwait and Japan

This was followed with a meeting with Kunyochi Sakai, the official of the second division at the Middle East and Africa Department at the Foreign Ministry, where his division covers the Arabian Gulf, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen affairs. Sakai spoke about bilateral relations between Japan and Kuwait. These relations began on Dec 8, 1961 following Kuwait's independence, and Kuwait's embassy in Tokyo opened in Feb 1962, and Japan's embassy in Kuwait in March 1963.

The year 2011 witnessed the 50th anniversary of bilateral relations between the two countries, which were proven strong through experience, especially through Japan's stand towards the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and Kuwait's stands in helping Japan face natural catas-



Ayoshiro Mori

trophes including the earthquake that hit Japan in March 2011 when Kuwait announced its donation of five million barrels of crude oil, in addition to the contributions of the Kuwait Red Crescent following the meltdown of the Fukushima reactor. Sakai said Kuwait oil and oil derivatives exports to Japan in 2014 reached \$12.386 billion, representing 8 percent of Japan's oil imports, making Kuwait the fifth most important source in this field, compared with Kuwait's imports of \$1.891 billion (most of which are cars, electric appliances and industrial material).

Sakai spoke about the distinguished relations between the Japanese leadership, specially Emperor Akihito and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe with HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad.



Kunyochi Sakai

Fighting terrorism

The fourth meeting was with the deputy director of security and protection at Japan's foreign ministry Kintaro Minami, who spoke about Japan's policy in the field of fighting terrorism, as he affirmed his country's intention to present all possible support to the international community to uproot terrorism. He said his country condemns all terrorist acts and pointed out that the issue will be on the agenda of the G7 Summit to be held in Japan in May. Kintaro presented a paper that set three bases for Japan's policy in the field of fighting terrorism:

1- Boosting measures of facing terrorism through direct material support to Middle Eastern and African countries, as Japan allocated \$15.5 million, for example, to improve the process of controlling



Kintaro Minami

borders, investigation and legal systems in the region's countries, and work on providing the legal umbrella to face terrorism as the case was in backing the issuance of resolutions 2178 and 2253 in the Security Council, bilateral cooperation with countries and protecting Japanese citizens abroad.

2- Supporting stability and growth efforts, and strengthening intelligence cooperation in the field of fighting terrorism.

3- Contribute to building societies that are opposed to terrorism.

Refugees crisis

The fifth meeting was with the deputy director of the first division in the Middle East Affairs and Africa Department Masunari Takano, who spoke about the role of his country in facing the refugee crisis and



Masunari Takano

Japan's great interest in this humanitarian issue, which made it allocate \$810 million to support international efforts to face its repercussions.

Takano spoke about Japan's support to the Palestinian people both in Palestine and abroad, adding that total Japanese aid to the Palestinians since 1993 (the date of signing the Oslo accord) has reached \$1.5 billion.

On the Syrian crisis, until Oct 2015, Japan has given \$1.147 billion to support refugees in the countries that host them (Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq). This shows the large support in aid Japan gave and is giving to all people of the region. Japan projects higher humanity and a sense of major international responsibility, which characterizes this country.



Revelers of the Aguia de Ouro samba school perform during the first night of the carnival parade at the Sambadrome in Sao Paulo, Brazil. — AFP

Monkey Year inspires kung fu, predictions of fire, disease

The new Chinese year is the one to go bananas over. On Feb 8, the zodiac calendar enters the Year of the Monkey - the ninth of 12 animal signs. Plastic monkeys are adorning shopping centers and office buildings, and government departments have been giving out toy monkeys.

Having a baby in the Year of the Monkey is generally thought to be more auspicious than in that of its predecessor, the sheep, and the cute creature is in any case largely beloved by the masses for its playful and human-like characteristics, despite a penchant for stealing food.

The new lunar year is already boosting a fighting style that imitates the movements of a monkey. It also offers an excuse to cash in on China's most famous monkey - Sun Wukong, or the Monkey King - a fabled demon-slayer. Less happily, feng shui predictions foresee fire, disease and volatile stocks. A look at what mischief the Year of the Monkey may have in store.

Mischief

Those born in the Year of the Monkey are held to be playful, mischievous and clever - much like a monkey. "Many people say people born in the Year of the Monkey are smart and have a very good imagination, but it is thought that their chances of achieving success are not very good as they are less capable of executing things," said Beijing resident Wang Jinping, whose zodiac sign is the monkey.

As is customary when it is the year of one's zodiac, Wang, who turns 60 this year, will be wearing red to ward off bad spirits. Ahead of the new lunar year, the museum manager was already wearing a red silk

jacket in the style of those worn by officials more than a century ago at formal occasions, bought for him by his daughter-in-law's mother.

"My son and daughter-in-law also bought me four pairs of long red underwear, four red underpants and four pairs of red socks," he said. "Actually I don't think these are something people must wear, but, in my year, the Year of the Monkey, I must do things very prudently and cautiously."

More births expected

This year, not only has China's one-child policy been loosened to a two-child policy, but some superstitious Chinese will be raring to give birth. During the previous 12 months, the Year of the Sheep or Goat (it's the same character in Chinese), some people were reluctant to have children as they considered the year inauspicious and believed sheep babies would be more likely followers than leaders.

According to China's national statistics, there were 16.55 million births in 2015, compared with 16.87 million in 2014. Some state media reports have attributed the drop in births last year to the Year of the Sheep.

Fires and viruses

Market ups and downs, fires and viruses, the Year of the Monkey is predicted to have them all. Hong Kong feng shui master Louis Wong foresees "a lot of fires happening around the world, especially in the forests. So we need to watch out for fire hazards," he said. "Southeast Asia will see a lot of viruses or disease, so we need to be very careful about the Zika virus now."

To enhance a couple's relationship this year, Wong advises placing a pink crystal on the woman's side of the bedroom and a purple crystal on the man's side. He added: "And if we want them to have fewer quarrels and arguments, we can put a firecracker behind the door." While watching out for fire risks, of course.

Wong cautioned that bad luck is more likely to befall those who are monkeys - "they need to be careful about their career and wealth" - and tigers - "they need to be careful about accidents, especially car accidents." Wong says the lucky signs in the coming year will be the dragon and rat. "For the people born in the Year of the Dragon it will be good for their career and wealth, while for the rat it is good for their relationships with people," he said.

The CLSA brokerage says US presidential campaigner Donald Trump should watch his cash outflow and beware the "golden-tongued" Hillary Clinton, who was born in the Year of the Pig and is therefore a good pal of the monkey.

Jungle out there

Also on the agenda: A revival in houquan, or monkey kung fu. Practitioners imitate monkey moves, in the same way as other strands of martial arts are based on animals such as tigers and white crane. The monkey style dates back to China's Western Han Dynasty around 200 BC, said Chen Qifang, the head of Lin'an City Martial Arts Council in Zhejiang province. "It's a kind of kung fu that attempts to imitate a monkey's lively, mischievous and cute features with some of its typical moves like leaping, somersaulting, scratching ears and looking around as if for



Visitors take pictures of a monkey statue which is set up for a temple fair ahead of Chinese Lunar New Year at Ditan Park in Beijing. — AP photos

peaches or to see if someone is attacking its territory."

Because of its somersaults and other challenging moves, it's not as popular as other styles, says Chen. His organization has taught houquan in the past, but never seen as many primary school students sign up for it as in its latest class - almost 200. "The coming Year of the Monkey may boost the resurgence of houquan, as it would be a lot of fun for the kids to show

off some monkey moves at the family party during the Chinese New Year holiday," he added.

Monkey business

The Year of the Monkey gives a little-needed excuse to reference the much-loved Monkey King character from the 16th century adventure novel "Journey to the West." The supernatural Monkey King, also known as Sun Wukong, accompanied

a monk on a journey to retrieve sacred scriptures and the story has inspired countless TV shows and movies over the years. Unashamedly trying to capitalize on the new zodiac year, yet another Monkey King adaptation will be released on the first day of the lunar new year - Feb. 8. The 450 million yuan (\$68 million) budget movie stars Aaron Kwok as Sun, Feng Shaofeng as the monk and Gong Li playing the skeleton demon. — AP



In this Feb 4, 2016 photo, a monkey reacts on stage during a show at a monkey park in Wuhan in central China's Hubei province.



A girl rides on a child's scooter under decorations for a temple fair ahead of Chinese Lunar New Year at Ditan Park in Beijing.