

Students protest at private university



Trump, Sanders win big in New Hampshire



Hunting houbara: Kidnap casts spotlight on Gulf 'sport of kings'



In Aleppo, young boys box to drown out bombs



MPs AGAINST SUBSIDY CUTS, END DEBATE WITHOUT VOTE

GOVT SEEKS TO PRIVATIZE SOME MINISTRIES

By B Izzak and A Saleh

KUWAIT: Lawmakers stepped up their opposition to proposed government plans to cut subsidies on fuel and electricity in the second day of a debate, and the Assembly ended the discussion without voting on any recommendation. The Assembly action is likely to delay government plans to enforce the cuts unless the Assembly bureau resorts to measures that could accelerate the process.

At the end of the debate, a group of MPs presented a recommendation calling on the Assembly's financial and economic affairs committee to meet with the government until they agree on a comprehensive plan of economic reforms including subsidy cuts. The Assembly however could not vote on the recommendation due to a lack of quorum and then moved to other issues. When quorum was restored later, the speaker did not ask MPs to vote on the recommendation.

During the first day of the debate on Tuesday, speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem proposed that the financial panel should be consulted in an open meeting until they arrive at a comprehensive program for reforms and subsidy cuts. On the first day, several MPs opposed the cuts, saying it will lead to price hikes and eventually hurt low-income people, and demanded compensation for Kuwaiti citizens before the cuts are enforced.

But the lawmakers stepped up their opposition yesterday, echoing public resentment, as Islamist MP Hamdan Al-Azemi warned that if the subsidies were lifted or cut, he will grill the prime minister.

Continued on Page 15

AMIR RETURNS HOME



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is welcomed at the airport by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah after he returned home from the United Kingdom yesterday. — KUNA

UAE NAMES WOMEN MINISTERS FOR HAPPINESS, TOLERANCE

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates yesterday appointed women to the newly created posts of state ministers for happiness and tolerance, and a 22-year-old female for youth affairs. Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum named eight women as he revealed his latest cabinet lineup of 29 ministers in a series of tweets. Ohoud Al-Roumi, who serves as director of the council of ministers' office, was appointed "minister of state for happiness". She will also keep her former post.

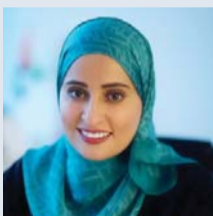
"Happiness is not just a wish in our country. There will be plans, projects, programs and indices. It will be part of the job of all ministries," tweeted Sheikh Mohammed, who is also the ruler of Dubai. The new post "will align and drive government policy to create social good and satisfac-

tion," he said earlier. Shamma Al-Mazroui, 22, was appointed state minister for youth, while Lubna Al-Qassimi, a veteran minister of international cooperation and development, was handed the new post of state minister for tolerance.

"The post of Minister of State for Tolerance has been created to promote tolerance as a fundamental value in UAE society," Sheikh Mohammed wrote when he announced the reshuffle earlier this week. The cabinet has eight new ministers, including five women, with an average age of 38, WAM state news agency said. Sheikh Mohammed described the cabinet shake-up as the "largest structural change in the history of our federal government,"

merging of our federal government,"

Continued on Page 15



Ohoud Al-Roumi



Shamma Al-Mazroui



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KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attends the State Audit Bureau's 50th anniversary ceremony. —Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



(From left) National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and State Audit Bureau's Deputy Chairman Adel Al-Sar'awi arrive to the venue.



(From left) His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Faisal Al-Saud Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah attend the event.

SHEIKH NAWAF ATTENDS AUDIT BUREAU'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT HELD UNDER AUSPICE OF AMIR

KUWAIT: Under the auspice of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the State Audit Bureau's (SAB) held a ceremony yesterday celebrating its 50th anniversary of establishment. His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attended the event on the behalf of His Highness the Amir. His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince was received by Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem and Deputy Chairman of SAB Adel Al-Sar'awi. The cere-

mony was also attended by His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, Ministers, and senior state officials.

During the ceremony, Deputy Chairman of the State Audit Bureau delivered a speech welcoming His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince as well as the senior officials. He expressed his deepest honor and pride in the bureau's strong history and celebration of its golden jubilee, revealing that His Highness the Amir was a founding member in establishing SAB back in 1954.

The bureau worked hard in developing its employee's skills to meet with the latest supervising standards and it received great support from legislative and executive authorities, said the official. Sar'awi expressed his thanks to His Highness the Amir and the state authorities in offering continuous support to SAB also reflected his gratitude to the bureau's employees. —KUNA




State Audit Bureau's Deputy Chairman Adel Al-Sar'awi speaks during the ceremony.




His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is pictured during the ceremony.




His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah tours a photo gallery held as part of the event.



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KUWAIT URGES ANEW FOR JUST MIDEAST PEACE

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait yesterday called anew for establishing just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, and re-underscored necessity that Israel abides by all UN resolutions related to its protracted strife with the Palestinians.

Kuwait's re-affirmed official stance was expressed during a meeting between First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and the visiting UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nikolay Mladenov.

Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and the UN official discussed during the meeting, held at the Foreign Ministry headquarters, various issues related to the stalled Middle East peace process and topics on the regional and international arenas.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled affirmed, during the meeting, necessity that Israel halt its escalating aggression on the occupied Palestinian territories, as well as its adherence to various UN resolutions on the Palestinian question. He hoped the Middle East witnesses just and comprehensive peace; "such peace cannot be attained without establishing an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital."

The meeting was attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Khaled Suleiman Al-Jarallah, the Minister's Assistant for affairs of Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled's bureau Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs Ambassador Aziz Al-Daihani and other officials from the Ministry. —KUNA



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nikolay Mladenov. —KUNA

SUDAN'S FM LAUDS RELATIONS WITH KUWAIT

KHARTOUM: Sudanese Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour yesterday highlighted the bilateral relations between Kuwait and Sudan. During his meeting with Kuwait's Ambassador to Sudan Talal Al-Hajri, the Sudanese minister hailed the strength of relations with Kuwaiti officials. Meanwhile, Ambassador Al-Hajri told KUNA after the meeting that the discussions with Minister Ghandour tackled aspects of joint cooperation between the two countries in the economic and investment fields as well as ways to develop bilateral ties at all levels. Ambassador Hajri conveyed greetings of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to the Sudanese counterpart wishing the government and people of Sudan more progress and stability. —KUNA



KHARTOUM: Sudanese Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour (right) meets with Kuwait's Ambassador to Sudan Talal Al-Hajri. —KUNA

MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA RENEWABLE ENERGY CONFERENCE KICKS OFF NEXT APRIL

KUWAIT: A number of global delegations, exhibitors and speakers have pledged their support for the Renewable Energy and Efficiency Exhibition (RE3), taking place 4-6th April 2016 at The Regency Hotel Kuwait, as the focus on applying renewable energy solutions continues to play a major focus in the country's plans.

The exhibition will run alongside the hugely successful MENEREC 6 conference, hosted by the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), both under the patronage of His Highness the Amir of the State of

IRENA, RCREEE, Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy Germany (BMWi), MASDAR Institute, UNDP, Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety Germany.

Platinum sponsor; EQUATE Petrochemical Company will be showcasing its sustainable operations throughout its processes, alongside International and local confirmed exhibitors; Worley Parsons, SMA, Al Dhow and Wylton from Hong Kong, and many more.

Following the decline in crude oil prices over the last year, Kuwait's commitment to renewable energy has continued to grow with much investment including the creation of Kuwait's 1st solar-thermal energy generation station, which will both help achieve the country's goal of boosting the renewable energy sector, while enhancing private investment.

Speaking last month at the World Future Energy conference in the United Arab Emirates, Dr Saad Al-Jandal, research scientist at the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research and head of the RE3 steering committee told the Guardian; "We are spending so much, something like \$8bn (£5.6bn) to \$10bn on fuel and power stations, so we want to replace part of it with renewables, and we can also do better with energy conservation and energy efficiency. Instead of using oil in power generation we might sell it and get hard currency."



Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research

Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. RE3 will allow companies to showcase their expertise; latest technology and services in the renewable energy field aimed at all the major countries from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Several ministerial delegations have already confirmed their attendance to the event from across Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Germany, UAE and Kuwait. They will join an impressive international steering committee and speaker panel from top names including UNESCWA, REN21, Arab League,

AL-ANJARI: AFTER SUCCESS IN THE GULF, COULD RESTAURANTS BECOME GLOBAL TOURISTIC PRODUCT? LEADERS GROUP ISSUES MONTHLY REPORT

KUWAIT: Leaders Group for Consulting and Development, the representative of the World Tourism Organization in Kuwait, issued its monthly report on the food services industry, an important branch of the tourism sector in the region.



Nabila Al-Anjari

Nabila Al-Anjari, Leaders Group General Manager said: "The food services industry has seen a significant growth over the past few years, and this is reflected by the number and expansion of restaurants and food companies that are today servicing the industry. Investor spending has also increased tremendously in the region, whether to attract franchisees or to establish local concepts, in addition to marketing brands. In Kuwait alone, there are over 5,000 restaurants today."

The report showed that the GCC has an encouraging and attractive environment for this industry, thanks to a flow of capital, the high income of individuals, and the growth of a population under the age of 25 years old, which represents today 45 percent of the Gulf population. This segment of the population has grown in a culture of fast food and new tastes. The industry is also supported by a diversified culture in the region, the ability to invest in franchises, as well as the high revenues brought by the industry.

In a recent report issued by

Almasah Capital Company, the food services industry in the GCC was valued at \$18.8 billion in 2014. The Company expected the industry to grow annually at 6.8 percent to reach \$24.5 billion in 2018. KSA comes in first among the GCC with total sales of the food services industry reaching \$8.9 billion, equivalent to have the GCC market.

A growing industry

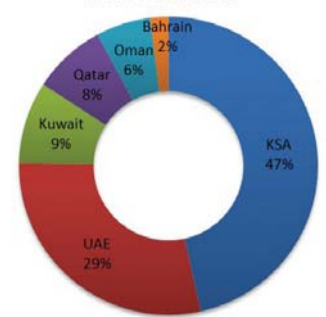
Leaders Group report also showed that the food tourism industry has gained attention over the past years, where the "Gastronomy" concept became an important part of the touristic experience for millions of tourists who are for the look for renowned names to taste their food, and who also travel to new destinations for a new and exquisite culinary experience.

The report also highlighted that countries are increasingly focusing on developing and marketing the food industry. Food tourism is generating revenue and creates many job opportunities, reviving the servicing and industrial sectors in countries, such as the transportation and logistics sectors, agriculture, manufacturing and refrigeration, printing, advertising, and many more sectors.

The World Tourism Organization considers the culinary tourism as a new trend which countries are seeking to develop as a touristic product, specially that more than a third of touristic spending is targeted to the food world.

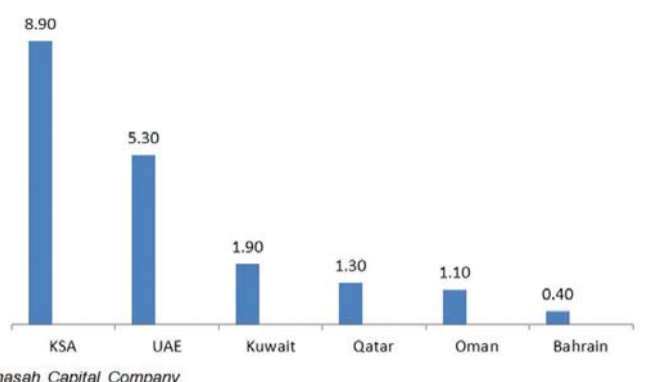
From here, the concept of restaurants has changed from being a simple food place to an entertainment and enjoyment destination. Exhibitions and fairs specific to the food industry are held periodically, such as the Horeca Exhibition. Food markets, kitchens and kitchenware offers, festivals, rating associations, chef unions, all have taken the food industry to a new level. One of the main examples that these activities are successful is the Gulf Food Exhibition held in Dubai in February. Over 5,000 companies from five continents representing 120 countries

Chart 1: Food services industry expected growth in the GCC in 2018 (US\$25 billion)
Average annual growth rate between 2012 and 2018 in the GCC: 6.8%



Source: PWC

Chart 2: Sales of the food services industry in the GCC (2014, in US\$ billion)



Source: Almasah Capital Company

participated in the exhibition. It is the largest annual food and catering exhibition in the region, and opens the door to kitchens from around the world. The exhibition was established 20 years ago, and see annually over 84,000 guests from 120 countries roaming its aisles.

Challenges

Despite the fast growing food industry in the region, challenges remain. As per Almasah Capital Company, challenges include the high competition, a poor infrastructure for the supply chain, expensive rents in prime locations, the scarcity of qualified human capital.

Another issue that is highlighted in the industry is the oversupply of food, which is generated from cooking leftovers, or food at restaurants and homes. The leftovers can usually be reused as fer-

tilizers, or reduce it so that it does not pile up as waste, or even donate it to the poor like what is being done in some countries.

In conclusion, the Leaders Group's report said that the food industry is an attractive industry for investments. Consumer spending on food in the Gulf has reached \$83 billion in 2012, while it stood at \$59 billion in 2007. Statistics by A.T. Kearny Global Management Consulting Firm show that the industry is expected to reach \$106 billion in consumer spending in 2017, growing at 25 percent in the next years.

The question to ask here is can the growth of the industry drive Gulf countries to establish themselves as a culinary tourism hub, especially with Iran and Iraq opening up, and the growing population in particular growth of the younger generations segment, which attract famous restaurants and franchises.

KUWAITIS SHOULD CONSIDER TURKEY AS SECOND HOME: SPEAKER KAHRAMAN

ANKARA: The relations between our two great countries should enable Kuwaitis to consider Turkey as their second home, Speaker of the Turkish National Assembly Ismail Kahraman said yesterday. In an exclusive interview with KUNA, Speaker Kahraman said that he was glad to have met with his Kuwaiti counterpart Marzouq Al-Ghanem on the sideline of the 11th conference of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC (PUIC) recently held in Baghdad, stressing that the upcoming visit by Ghanem to Turkey will further boost bilateral relations.

The commercial exchange between Turkey and Kuwait had reached \$624 million last year which is an improvement from 2014's \$569 million, said

Kahraman who added that both nations have established a committee in 2013 to look into more fields of cooperation. He indicated that the Turkish Foreign Ministry was coordinating with its counterpart in Kuwait to hold several meetings in the future aimed at boosting ties.

Regarding the situation in Syria, the Turkish Speaker affirmed that the international community should increase its efforts in helping the Syrian refugees and stressed that it was important to find a just solution to the crisis in Syria which began in 2011. He took the chance to thank Kuwait for its firm support of the Turkish efforts to help the Syrian refugees, affirmed that the Gulf State was on the vanguard of helping the needy worldwide. —KUNA

GOVT TO REASSESS FEES ON STATE PROPERTIES: MINISTER



KUWAIT: Oil and Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh (right) talks with MP Talal Al-Sehali during a parliament session at Kuwait's National Assembly yesterday.

—Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT: The cabinet will reassess the fees imposed on state-owned properties, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of Oil Anas Al-Saleh said during yesterday's National Assembly session.

Minister Saleh said that all industrial lands owned by the state had recently increased their fees in accordance with the status quo of the market. He noted that an international company was assigned to look into the economic situation in Kuwait as part of the government's efforts to provide feasible services and prices for the public. Cooperation with the National Assembly will enable the cabinet to carry out steps to increase the state income by 10 to 14 percent, said the minister.

Meanwhile, the session agreed

on a draft proposal to amend some items within article 37/1993 of the housing welfare law. The amendments included a proposal to speed up the process for allocating government housing for citizens with the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) carrying projects for a period of five years without previous surveillance from the State Audit Bureau (SAB).

Minister of State for Housing Affairs Yasser Abul said that the draft law came up with nothing new, revealing similar discussions were made on the issue previously. The law, if passed, will be a huge responsibility for the ministry and PAHW; however, it may speed up the process of providing housing for citizens, said the minister. —KUNA

MINISTRY SIGNS KD108 MLN ROAD RENOVATION CONTRACT

NEW STRATEGY AT HOSPITAL TO ADDRESS HIGH DEMAND

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Public Works signed yesterday a contract worth KD 108 million (\$360.90 million) to renovate the 5th Ring Road. The project aims to facilitate traffic and develop the road network in the country, Assistant Undersecretary for Road Engineering Affairs at the Ministry of Public Works Ahmad Al-Hassan told KUNA. He stressed the ministry's keenness to check and develop all roads in the country and overcome all the obstacles in this regard.

Separately, Hassan announced that a total of 49 percent of Jaber Al-Ahmad city highways and roads project was completed. The project, valued at KD 28.900 million, aims at improving the flow of traffic by building three bridges on Al-Jahra road, he added. He emphasized the keenness of the ministry to cooperate with all governmental bodies in order to finish the project at the stipulated time.

Mubarak Hospital

In other news, Director of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital Dr Ahmad Saud Al-Hussaini said yesterday that the hospital's new strategy will focus on meeting demands for better healthcare in Hawalli governorate which is witnessing an increase in population. The Hospital Management is seeking all kinds of assistance in preparation for the five-year plan aimed at reducing overcrowding and pressure on specialized hospitals, Hussaini said.

The strategy will provide the latest in healthcare services and reduce the cost of treatment, he said. Projects such as the expansion and establishment of a new emergency ward, a separate building for pediatrics, and other facilities such a multi-storey parking lot in addition to a renovated ambulance land zone will be within the strategy, he said. —KUNA

KUWAIT WINS AWARD FOR ELECTRONIC SERVICES

DUBAI: The State of Kuwait was proclaimed yesterday winner of the World Government Summit Award for the Kuwait Government Online portal 'e.gov.kw', set up by the Central Apparatus for Information Technology.

The award was handed over, during a ceremony held as part of the Fourth World Government Summit, to Kuwait's Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Acting Minister of Electricity and Water Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah by UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Dubai Ruler Sheikh

Mohammad Bin Rashed Al-Maktoum.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) and Kuwait Television, Minister Mohammad Al-Abdullah said this achievement has affirmed Kuwait's status as among the leading countries in the Gulf in government electronic services.

He revealed that the online service will be updated in the coming days to encompass tasks provided by all government departments. Minister Mohammad Al-Abdullah is head of a Kuwaiti delegation that has taken part in the three-day summit.

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KUWAIT: Students protest outside a local private university yesterday. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

STUDENTS PROTEST AT PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Around 20 to 30 students from a local private university held a protest, approved by the university administration, in front of the main campus yesterday. The students were demonstrating to protest a litany of issues including what they claim are wrongful expulsions of students, unfair English tests and other school practices.

Organized by the 'Al-Qaemah Al-Mustaqlah' student council, the demonstrating students argued that university fees were too high, that the administration has canceled subjects and even expelled students unfairly and without reason.

Persecuted

"Our members found themselves persecuted by the university's administration, and many students were expelled in one year," noted Ltifa Al-Ajmi, student and member of Al-Qaemah Al-Mustaqlah. She added that the administration had expelled some students without warning or disciplinary hearings. "They expelled one male student in our Student Council because he sent a WhatsApp message to a girl."

Also, a female student was expelled because she wrote about the university in a Twitter comment. She also noted that the administration refused to grant approval for expat students applying for drivers' licenses

unless they have high grades. Among the main complaints were objections to a university-required English language test, EL097. Asmaa' Al-Enzi said that more than 500 students failed the EL097 exam and the council was asking for a re-grading of the exam. "Because of the EL097 and not enough subjects in the summer semester, as well as a shortage of teaching staff, some students need five to seven years to [get all the required classes] to graduate," she noted.

About the issue of part-time professors, Enzi said "Some part-time professors have no office hours and when we tried to reach them via SMS, they do not respond even during an exam period." Another student, Mohammad

Al-Shammari told Kuwait Times that Al-Qaemah Al-Mustaqlah gathered the students to protest against the arbitrary decisions of the administration represented by Rector of the University Naif Al-Mutairi. Shammari vowed that this protest will be the beginning and after that the students will protest in front of the National Assembly and the Ministry of Education.

Within the law

Ghazi Al-Enzi, head of Public Relations at the university listened to the demands of the students but noted that the university operates within the law established for private universities in Kuwait.

"We wish we could implement all the demands of the students, but there are laws and regulations within the framework of the State, Private Universities Council and the British Accreditation Commission, which is a partner that we must abide by," he explained.

Regarding the expelled students, Enzi rejected the students' claims of wrongful expulsions.

"We are not living in a forest, there are rules and laws. A student will not be expelled without warning or a reason," he said.

He also said that the English test was necessary to ensure that students met the needed fluency in the language as a required part of the curriculum.

Crime

Report

No gunshots near Saudi embassy

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Reports of gun shots heard in the vicinity of the Embassy of Saudi Arabia turned out to be unfounded, according to security sources. Detectives investigated the scene and found no evidence of gunshots fired. The Saudi embassy is located in the embassies' enclave in Daiya between the Arabian Gulf Road and the Fahaheel Expressway.



Four municipality trucks are seen following an accident reported at the Seventh Ring Road.

Accident rescue

Mubarak Al-Kabeer firemen rescued four truck drivers trapped inside four municipality trucks when they collided together along the Seventh Ring Road, said security sources. Heavy hydraulic machinery had to be used to release the injured drivers from the wreckage, before they were handed over to paramedics.

Buses catch fire

A fire broke out in two buses owned by a private company while they were parked in an open yard in Mangaf, said security sources. Firemen managed to control the fire and prevented it from spreading to two other buses parked nearby. No casualties were reported. The cause of the fire was not immediately known.



A firefighter tackles a blaze at a bus in Mangaf yesterday.

Insults and disputes

A Jordanian woman accused another woman of insulting her over a traffic dispute. In a separate incident, two citizens working with the Justice Ministry's attestation department recently filed a case against a third citizen for insulting and assaulting them while on duty.

AL-SALAM PALACE TURNED INTO MUSEUM BY APRIL 2017

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: A report made by the New Kuwait Initiative, a government media body publishing the latest news about major state projects, said that construction works in progress to turn Al-Salam Palace into a museum displaying and documenting Kuwait's history and rulers was about to be concluded. They added that the project would be finished in April 2017. The idea

about the museum was suggested by the historic documents center and highly appealed to the Amiri Diwan and His Highness the Amir. The report mentions that Al-Salam Palace Museum would tell Kuwait's history through its rulers and that it would act as a touristic destination for citizens, expats and visitors. It added that the palace had been allocated to receive emirs, sultans and presidents for three decades. Notably, the project is located

over an area of 32,000 sq m, housing the two-storey palace with a basement, said the report explaining that the basement would be used for cafes and gift shops. The report added that a three-level basement would be built to be used as an underground parking so as to avoid blocking the palace's view.

KD 1.38 million compensation

Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmad

Al-Manfouhi said that the municipality compensated a citizen with KD 1.38 million upon court orders.

Manfouhi explained that the citizen had sued the municipality for a mistake its employees had committed on allocating a land for him in Salwa.

He added that employees responsible for the mistake would be referred for investigations, then to the public prosecutor.

WOMAN SENTENCED TO 5 YEARS FOR BLACKMAILING YOUNGSTERS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: A court yesterday sentenced a female citizen to five years imprisonment for blackmailing young men. The woman reportedly lured the men into having affairs with her, then went immediately and pressed charges against them. She then demanded KD 5,000 - 10,000 to drop the charges.

Case adjourned

Meanwhile, the court of misdemeanor yesterday adjourned hearing a case filed against former MP Khaled Al-Sultan for slandering Mohammed Duajj, the judge hearing the Abdaly cell case.

Schools prepared

Education Minister Dr Badr Al-Essa issued a special decision to form a field operation team headed by Undersecretary Dr Haitham Al-Athari to prepare schools to be used as polling stations in the upcoming parliamentary by-elections in the third electoral constituency. According to Essa's decision, the team will be responsible for preparing the schools and coordinate with concerned state departments like members of the judiciary, designated to supervise the process, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Information, media, Ministry of Communications and Kuwait Municipality.

Request rejected

The capital committee at the Municipal Council rejected a request made by Kuwait Ports Authority to start new commercial activities within the authority's warehouse and storage area in Shuwaikh on grounds that the area is allocated for storage purposes and could not be altered.

PRECAUTIONS TAKEN AGAINST FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

KUWAIT: Authorities have taken all necessary precautions to prevent spread of the foot-and-mouth disease, an official said yesterday. Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Kanderi, Director of Livestock Health at the Pubic Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), said in a press release that the authority had taken all precautionary measures to check spread of the disease.

The measures against FMD include quarantining, cleaning and vaccinations as well as guiding cattle raisers on steps that need to be taken in infection cases. On February 4th, Kuwait recorded a new FMD case, Kanderi said, adding that the World Health Organization (WHO), along with the Gulf early warning center against epidemics, had been notified about the single case. He also noted some cases had been reported in neighboring countries.

PAAAFR does its best to secure vaccinations, in shadow of available financial resources, particularly allotted for such cases. It also immunizes cows three times per year. The FMD is an infectious and sometimes fatal viral disease that affects cloven-hoofed animals, including domestic and wild ones. The virus causes high fever for approximately two to six days, followed by blisters inside the mouth and on the feet. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah welcomed at his office yesterday Muhsen Barrak Falah Majid, a Kuwaiti citizen who returned to Kuwait last Friday after being freed from kidnapers in Lebanon.

CO-OPS UNION COMMITTED TO CURBING PRICES: OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: The Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies (UCCS) will not increase commodities prices until a complete a comprehensive study regarding this issue is finalized, head of the Union Dr Saad Al-Shabo announced yesterday. "The Union will

put a mechanism to reduce the prices which has already increased on the pretext of low oil prices," Al-Shabo said in a statement.

He pointed out that the Union was working to provide new varieties of commodities to create competition

between the companies, so that the prices will be affordable for everyone. The UCCS, founded in 1971, was established to defend the interests of the Union's members. It also represented Kuwait on the regional and international levels. — KUNA

DEFENSE MINISTER IN BRUSSELS TO ATTEND ANTI-IS COALITION MEETING

BRUSSELS: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah arrived in the Belgian capital Brussels yesterday to participate in a meeting of the international coalition fighting the so-called Islamic State (IS), due to be held today.

Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah was received at the airport by Kuwait's Ambassador to Belgium and the EU Dharar Abdul Razzak Razzoqi, Kuwaiti defense attache in Brussels Colonel Khaled Al-Ragem, the ambassador of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Amal Al-Hamad and other Kuwaiti diplomats.

US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter will chair the meeting, to be held at NATO headquarters, grouping the anti-IS defense ministers of counter-IS coalition to review the military campaign against the militant movement in Syria and Iraq. The meeting coincides with reports about possible wide-scale ground opera-



BRUSSELS: Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Jarrah Al-Sabah is pictured shortly after arrival at the residence of Ambassador Dharar Razzoqi. — KUNA

tion, to be carried out by a multi-national force, aimed at annihilating the hardline movement, entrenched in swaths of lands in the two neighboring countries. The coalition is already staging airstrikes on IS strongholds. — KUNA

KUWAIT SHOULD NOT INTERVENE IN SYRIA: SAADOUN

LEADING ECONOMIST TALKS REGIONAL TURMOIL, OIL PRICES

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Kuwait should not intervene in the war in Syria, and should maintain good relations with its neighbors, a leading financial expert said.

Financial expert and Chairman of Al Shall Co Jassem Al-Saadoun spoke during a symposium organized by the Kuwait Economic Society titled 'Oil to Where' Tuesday evening and held at its premises. He explained many interesting facts, historical events and expectations about oil as Kuwait's main source of income.

On the situation in Syria, Saadoun said that Kuwait should maintain a neutral stance in dealing with all parties involved. "We should not intervene in the war in Syria," Saadoun said during the symposium, "and we should be careful to maintain good relations with all our neighbors. We should not be forced to deepen hostilities with our neighbors and favoring other neighbors. We should put feelings aside and seek our benefit. All countries are threatening to increase oil production, but for the benefit of all of us, we should make joint efforts."

Income sources

Saadoun meanwhile criticized the government for its failure to diversify Kuwait's sources of income. "Despite the calls, plans and strategies to diversify income sources and decrease dependence on oil, we are still depending more on it and are affected by its changes, with the third crisis in the oil market during one generation," he said. "So it is very important to know the expected trajectory of oil as our future is related to its movements."

According to Saadoun, oil has an economic price and a political price. "The strength of the oil market in the beginning of this century hiked the price of oil to its economic price after its political price was forced by the consumers," he said. "The increase was caused by the economic boom in Asia led by China, and since 2010, oil hiked by 30 to 40 percent. Then the geopolitical events in the region affected the price again and it dropped to dramatic levels due to the oil producers' conflicts." Saadoun believes that oil decisions are collective ones. He argued that as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries represent one party in this conflict, it is important to be aware of the collective decision to expect the movement of the oil market in the future. "We should know what happened in these countries after the oil market was peaking and what their expected situation in the future will be if the oil price continues to drop," explained Saadoun.

No surprise

The oil price crisis is not a surprise. "The market has witnessed ups and downs in the price of oil," Saadoun said. "Many experts assured during the rising oil market that weakness was coming, but did not specify the exact time. This crisis is the most critically effective as public administrations made the same mistakes they did during the previous peak periods, and it was sharper than before. Even if the price hikes again to the economic price level, it will not be enough as the good position of the near past."

Saadoun then talked about the mistakes made by the governments of oil-dependent countries including the production imbalance, which is reflected in



KUWAIT: Financial expert Jassem Al-Saadoun (left) attends a symposium organized by the Kuwait Economic Society. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

the complete dependence on oil. The second is the financial imbalance, as public expenses rose 4.8 times, and these expenses did not react to the decreasing income and kept increasing. Population imbalance was another mistake as the GCC population grew from 29 million, 19 million of them citizens making up 65.5 percent in 2000, to 46 million, including 24 million citizens making up 52.2 percent of the population in 2012. The final mistake is the labor

market imbalance, as in 2000, national manpower made up 36.4 percent of the labor market, while this percentage dropped in 2012 to 31.6 percent.

Global consumption

The world consumes 93 million barrels of oil daily. "Any shortage in production, even if small, will cause a great price hike, and any surplus will make the price drop," Saadoun explained. "The lower prices of oil will

cause an additional daily demand of 1.75 million barrels. Also, high-production cost oils such as stone and sand oil will go out of production as the oil price is below the production cost. Also, investments in discovering, developing, and producing oil will stop. The production of 11 countries out of 22 oil producing countries is not covering production cost, that is around the level of \$30."

"The price of oil has now settled in the range between \$30-\$70," he noted. "The price of \$111.3 a barrel in 2011 will not happen again. The oil boom had a few benefits such as establishing sovereign funds by oil-producing countries that may be used to overcome this crisis. So, we should focus on the worst scenario if the oil price remains at the present low level."

Production cost

GCC countries have a great share of the oil market, and oil production cost is the lowest. "The political situation has caused an oil war between two parties - the GCC on one side and Iraq, Iran and Russia on the other," Saadoun indicated. "Both parties increased oil production to compensate their losses due to low prices, which had a negative impact on both sides. The solution may be in decreasing production by a small percentage by all counties, which will then hike the oil price again. The GCC countries are better secured due to their sovereign funds, but the impact of this crisis is stronger than the other party as we are welfare states, while they already have problems. In fact there is a possibility of the dissolution of the GCC if low oil prices continue for a longer period."

JAPAN'S QUAKE-HIT MIYAGI PREFECTURE THANKS KUWAIT FOR MEDICAL STUDY FUND

SENDAI: Japan's quake-hit Miyagi Prefecture yesterday offered a renewed appreciation for Kuwait's heartwarming support following the 2011 disaster, as it launched the Kuwait Partnership Fund for Medical Education that contributes to the recovery of regional healthcare system. The +9 billion (\$104 million) study fund is part of the +16.2 billion (\$188 million) reconstruction fund established in Miyagi five years ago by utilizing Kuwait's crude oil donation.

Soon after the 9.0-magnitude earthquake and ensuing tsunami that hit the northeastern Japanese region including Miyagi in March 2011, Kuwait offered Japan 5 million barrels of crude oil, worth about \$500 million at that time, by the initiative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Gratitude

At a foundation ceremony held in Sendai City with participation of Kuwaiti Ambassador to Japan Abdulrahman Al-Otaibi, Governor of Miyagi Prefecture Yoshihiro Murai expressed sin-



SENDAI: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Japan Abdulrahman Al-Otaibi and Miyagi Governor Yoshihiro Murai. — KUNA

cere gratitude to Kuwait for its support in the aftermath of the massive disaster, which left more than 18,000 people dead or missing in the region. Miyagi was hit the hardest with some 11,000 victims and 500,000 damaged or destroyed buildings.

"The recovery efforts have continued to progress forward, however, especially in the heavily damaged areas along the coast, it has been difficult to secure doctors and medical support necessary for our citizens. Because of such conditions, starting in April, a new medical school will be established in the Tohoku Medical and Pharmaceutical University in Sendai," said Murai.

"In order to keep the graduates here in Miyagi, a new study fund has been established using +9 billion of the contribution received from Kuwait through the Japanese Red Cross Society. We hope the study fund, which bears Kuwait's name, will benefit the medical students for years to come," the governor added. The study fund provides scholarships to 30 medical students per year from Miyagi, who commit to working at designated medical institutions in the prefecture for 10 years after graduation from the new school.

The governor also gave the ambassador a commemorative plate presented to His Highness the Amir, which is engraved with his appreciation, saying, "The fund will support

ambitious students who will become important contribution to community health care in Miyagi Prefecture. We will work with tireless determination to restore our home, and we wholeheartedly appreciate the State of Kuwait's continued support in these efforts."

Hardship

In his speech, Otaibi pointed out that some survivors have restored their life and business activities, but there are people yet suffering from physical and mental hardship along the disaster struck area. "The governor has informed me that there are not enough hospitals and clinics there due to the lack of medical staff. Today, one clear solution to this grave concern has been crystalized and presented here," Otaibi said. He also hailed Miyagi Prefecture's determination to dedicate large portion of the reconstruction fund to the medical education, which helps alleviate the pain of the affected people and further advance their return to normal life. —KUNA



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ABK'S FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

KD30.4 Million | Net Profit

Category	31 Dec 2014	31 Dec 2015
Net Profit	37.6 KD Million	30.4 KD Million
Operating Profit	82.5 KD Million	87.3 KD Million
Operating Income	117.6 KD Million	128.5 KD Million
Total Assets	3.50 KD Billion	4.36 KD Billion

Shareholders' Equity	KD556 Million
Earnings per Share	19 Fils
Capital Adequacy Ratio	17.23%

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Al-Anbaa

SATISFYING THEM

By Saad Al-Motesh

It is impossible to satisfy all people. Such a well-established fact must be strongly considered in the minds of each and every official regardless of his/her position because every human being wishes to run the entire universe according to his or her own desires, moods and preference, even if they contradict with greater good or with the interests of others. It is always me, me, ME!

So, if you pay attention to every person's wishes and interests, then you cannot be more wrong, because you would then have to deal with endless illogical demands with utmost wisdom and rationality, because you will never satisfy them even if you give one of your own eyes.

In this regard, one would best take the holy Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) as a role model and follow in his steps, because Almighty Allah warned him by revealing the following verse: "And the Jews will not be pleased with thee, nor will the Christians, till thou follow their creed." (Al-Baqara/verse120).

What more do we need to prove that it is impossible to satisfy all people?! In this regard, there is a famous Kuwaiti saying that fits very well in this article and can be said to people dreaming of achieving such an impossible task. The saying goes like: "He who wants everything, will give away everything". So, if you wish to please everybody and win their satisfaction, you will ultimately lose everybody and win none at all.

On the other hand, another saying is completely true and goes like: "Satisfying Almighty Allah is an indispensable goal." If one satisfies Allah, he will surely win sane people who are keen on greater good.

— Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Anbaa

ORIGINS OF 'MOHAMMAR'

By Dr Saleh Al-Ojairi

Back in the old days, the fishing season took a break in winter, and accordingly, people had less catches, and thus had to store the catch they made during warmer days to be used in winter. As people did not have fridges or electricity in those days, they used to salt the fish and spread it in the sun to dry, using this ancient way of preserving food. The process was mainly done using khobbat (kingfish/king mackerel).

Later, when cooking the fish and for the sake of getting rid of the excess salt, people used to cook dates with the rice they ate with it so that its sweetness could neutralize the salinity of the fish. This dish is locally known as 'Mohammar' taking its

name from its red color. This method of cooking prevailed in the pre-oil era, but later, people opted to adding date syrup to the rice. They sometimes added sugar and called the dish 'Mohammar Shakar' (Sugary Mohammar), after Kuwait struck oil. Nowadays and on wishing to revive an old culinary tradition, people tend to caramelize the sugar before adding it to the rice eaten with khobbat. Mohammar is often eaten with fish gravy or with grilled fish. People rarely eat it on the second day of Eid Al-Adha with grilled meat. This is a brief history about cooking and eating Mohammar. I wonder what changes the future might bring to this loveable traditional Kuwaiti dish!

— Translated by Kuwait Times

Crime

Report

Envoy comments on murder case

KUWAIT: After a manslaughter case was filed against an Ethiopian housemaid who is facing charges of allegedly killing her sponsor's 23-year-old daughter, Ethiopian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammed Gudeta stressed that the embassy received very limited information about the case. He added that the embassy sent a representative to the Ministry of Interior and the hospital where the maid is receiving treatment to follow up the case. Gudeta stressed that the embassy had not yet received any official information about the case.

Car owner identified

After the remains of an 18-year-old woman were found in a charred car behind the Sabah Al-Salem University project site, security sources noted that the car's owner was identified as a Pakistani man who had left the country two weeks earlier. The sources added that DNA tests on the remains disproved detectives' suspicions that the remains belonged to an 18-year-old Bangladeshi girl who had been reported missing. However, on calling the car's owner, he stressed that he was away on vacation and that he had parked the car in an open yard. He also denied knowing anything about the woman. Security sources added that initial investigations show that the girl had been murdered and put in the car that was set ablaze to conceal the murder. Further investigations are still in progress to identify the girl.

Fatal accident

Two Syrians were instantly killed when an SUV ran them over along Jahra road, said security sources. Case papers indicate that the two victims' vehicle had collided into a truck parked on the right lane of the road, and on stepping out to check the damage, a speeding vehicle knocked them over, killing them immediately. A case was filed.

Alcohol consumption

A citizen handed his driver to police when he caught him drinking liquor in his bedroom in his house in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, said security sources. The citizen explained that on seeing the driver take a bag of ice cubes in his room during such cold weather, he suspected him and decided to watch him. He added that he barged into the driver's room a while later and found him drinking home-made liquor. A case was filed.

Two arrested for fighting

Two citizens were arrested for fighting with each other in a Salmiya shopping mall, said security sources. Case papers indicate that policemen were summoned to the scene where they controlled the two, who had sustained various injuries during the fight. A case was filed.

Fugitive caught

A female citizen was arrested in Mubarak Al-Kabeer after police discovered that she is wanted for three cases filed against her by her sister-in-law, who accused her of assault. — Al-Rai, Al-Anbaa



OOREDOO HONORS ITS OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEES
WINNERS OF QUARTERLY STAR AWARDS RECOGNIZED

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of the Ooredoo international group, held a ceremony to recognize its outstanding employees who won the quarterly Star Award for the fourth quarter of 2015. The company presents this award to its employees across all departments who show exceptional performance during every quarter. The ceremony was attended by company leaders and department heads.

Saleh Al-Houti, Chief Human Resources and Administrative Services Officer, commented: "We at Ooredoo fully believe that our employees are the reason behind our success. This quarterly ceremony reflects our commitment to invest in our employees and offer

them the incentives to continue to do better to serve all our customers."

He added: "We will continue to support all our employees and reward them for their performance and dedication. We will also continue to build their professional capacities through dedicated annual training programs and workshops."

The 15 company employees who won the Star Awards for the fourth quarter are: Mirna Jaber and Ali Salman from the Sales Department, Badr al-Otaibi and Abulaziz Ashkanani from the Customer Service department, Vikas Chhimpa from Finance, Mahmoud Mahran from B2B Sales,

Qannas Al Fajji from Corporate Communication, Abdulwahab Al-Khobaizi from Human Resources, Hakimuddin Bhura from Marketing, and Nashaat Al-Hamid and Abdul Ali Yousef from the Technology Department. The Voice of the Customer Award went to Mosaed Bohaimed from Sales and Naser Al Qasir from Customer Service. The Ooredoo Way Accomplisher award went to Sridar Dandu from Finance and Manal Sarhan from B2B Sales.

Ooredoo Star Awards are presented to outstanding employees every quarter. A special committee assesses all employees and selects winners based on certain competence and performance criteria.



CBK SHARES CELEBRATIONS

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) participated in Ahmadi Governorate's National Day and Independence Day celebrations, organized recently under the patronage of Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. The bank's participation comes as part of its comprehensive strategy towards reintroducing a new concept for social responsibility, said Amani Al-Wara, Assistant General Manager, Media and Public Relations Department.

MINISTRY MULLS USING APP IN TRAFFIC ACCIDENT INVESTIGATIONS

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs Major General Abdullah Al-Muhanna met Mol's investigations director Major General Fahd Al-Doussari and top traffic officials to discuss using a new app called 'Snap & Drive On' to be used in investigating road-blocking minor traffic accidents that result in no injuries or fatalities.

The new app, which is still being studied, will be introduced in collaboration of the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), the Ministry of Interior's investigations and traffic departments and insurance companies. The application can be downloaded to mobile phones including a link to PACI and its databases and another with the traffic department. Informed sources explained that the project would be preceded by a 6-12 month publicity campaign to introduce the application before putting it into practice in three separate phases.

The first phase will include a media campaign introducing

the app as one that can be used to photograph minor accidents by either of the involved parties' mobile phones from different angles, uploading the photos to have access to owner information through PACI and the Interior Ministry's databases and then uploading to the site using the Google Earth app and simply drive off to check with the concerned police station, where the app is linked to investigators' systems, to get a printout to take to insurance companies.

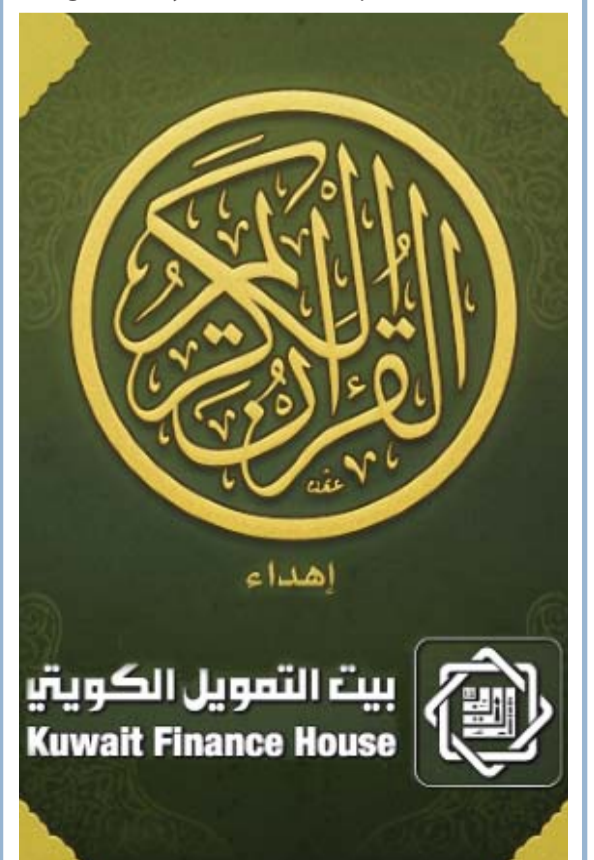
Drivers will not have to go to the police stations in the second phase and would directly go to insurance companies, then wait for traffic court orders on the case. In the third phase, the three parties (police stations, traffic department and insurance companies) will agree to directly compensate drivers without having to wait for court orders that usually take months and then have insurance companies claim the compensation sums from major ones after court orders are passed. — Al-Rai

KFH: 4.5 MLN USERS OF QURAN SMARTPHONE APP

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced that the number of users of KFH's Quran application for iPhones and Android phones reached 4.5 million users. This growth reflects the huge turnout on this important app KFH offered to serve the public as part of its social responsibility and in line with its Islamic banking identity. The Quran app allows vocal recitation of Quran by 12 of the best reciters in the Arab world. It includes interpretations of the Quran's verses, and many other details in a high-end design and different colors.

KFH's Quran app offers the option of digital searching and using different colors for search words, which allows for faster search of the required page, not to mention that the display font is clearer and compatible with various screen sizes. It has high-speed browsing, in addition to a periodical report about the pages read and the time spent on reading.

It is noteworthy that KFH is keen on enhancing and upgrading its e-services and its applications on smart phones. KFH also seeks to reach high degrees of novelty of its innovation in applications and programs, which consolidate the bank's leadership in the technological field, yet meet clients' aspirations.





Elephant rampages in East Indian town

'500 DEAD' IN REGIME'S ALEPPO ASSAULT

RUSSIAN-BACKED ONSLAUGHT LEAVES DEATH AND DESTRUCTION

BEIRUT: A Russian-backed regime onslaught in northern Syria was reported yesterday to have killed more than 500 people this month, as Turkey faced mounting pressure to open its border to people fleeing the violence. Tens of thousands of Syrians were still stranded yesterday at the frontier north of the second city of Aleppo, which remained closed despite an appeal by the United Nations to let civilians pass.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said 506 people had died since the regime launched a major offensive

against rebels in Aleppo province on February 1. They include 23 children who were killed in Russian air strikes, according to the British-based monitor, which relies on a network of sources on the ground.

More than 260,000 people have been killed and half the population displaced since the conflict began in 2011 with anti-regime protests. Turkey, already hosting 2.7 million Syrian refugees, has so far refused to let a new wave into the country, instead providing humanitarian assistance over the border in Syria.

Only wounded people are being allowed through the Oncupinar border crossing, where around 30,000 displaced people are massed on the Syrian side. Many are sleeping in tents or the open, with emergency camps already full. A Turkish official said that 10 injured Syrians were taken to hospital in the border town of Kilis after bombing in the Syrian town of Azaz overnight.

The security threat posed by the Syria war was expected to be on the agenda of a two-day meeting of NATO defense ministers in Brussels starting yesterday, as well as Turkey's request for help to deal with the migration crisis and the alliance's beefed up response to a more assertive Russia.

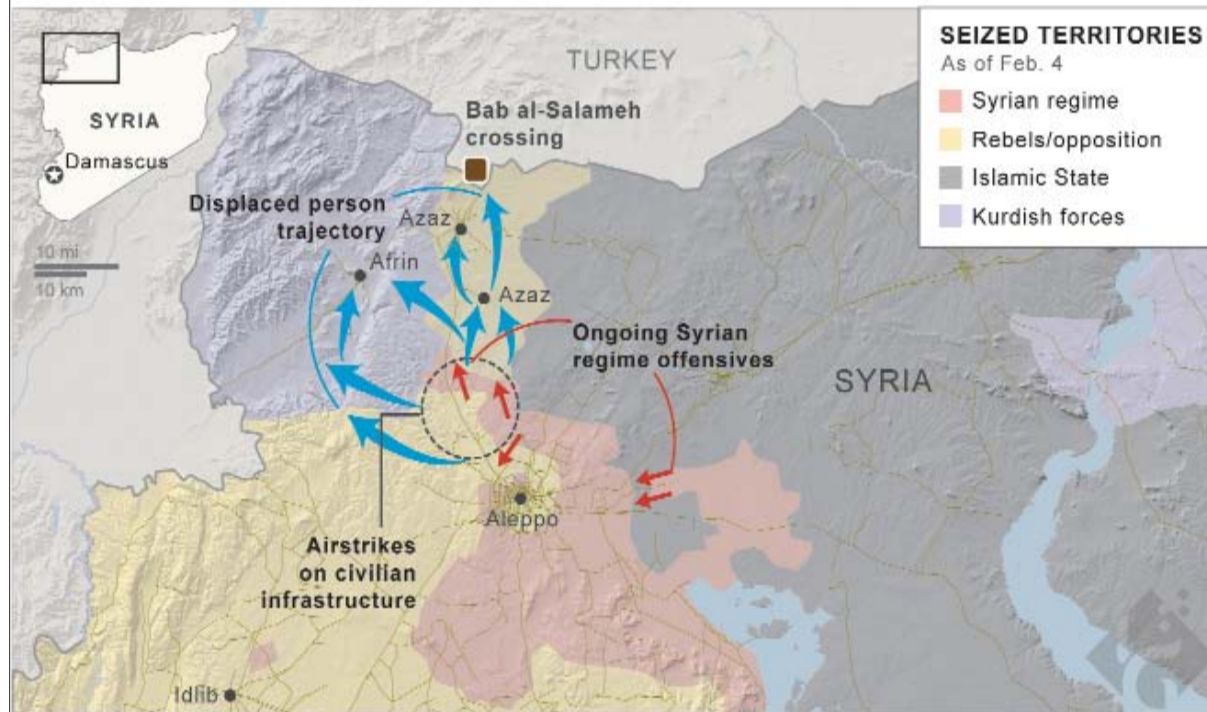
been killed in the Aleppo offensive since February 1.

Fourteen Iranian fighters and at least three militiamen from Lebanon's Hezbollah movement had died fighting alongside Assad's forces, he said. The UN has called for Russia to end its air strikes ahead of fresh peace efforts including a 17-nation meeting Thursday in Munich aimed at getting the process back on track.

Last week, UN envoy Staffan de Mistura suspended Syria peace talks amid opposition protests about the bombing, and the Munich meeting aims to pressure the sides to return to the table. "The highest need and the best humanitarian response is for the bombing to stop," UN aid chief Stephen O'Brien said Tuesday. On Tuesday night, an aid convoy entering the besieged town of Madaya near Damascus to evacuate sick people came under fire from unknown assailants, but there were no injuries, the International Committee of the Red Cross said. — AFP

UN urges Turkey to open border to Syrians fleeing Aleppo

Already home to 2.5 million Syrian refugees, Turkey insists it has an open-door policy toward Syrians escaping conflict, but has kept the key Bab al-Salameh border crossing closed for days. The United Nations is urging other nations to shoulder more of the refugee burden and to work to end the conflict.



SOURCES: Map data by Levantine Group, OCHA. AP

Map of Northern Syria shows seized territories and the direction of displaced people around Aleppo.

'Dying under bombs'

Those who have fled the offensive tell of scenes of terror and suffering. "Children are dying under bombs and from hunger and cold. They are living on the roads. They don't have any place to stay," said Abdul Karim Bahloul, who crossed into Turkey yesterday morning. Ankara is on alert for fighters infiltrating its territory, after a series of attacks on its soil that the government blamed on the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group.

The Turkish security forces said yesterday they had seized explosives and four suicide vests in the baggage of a group of suspects stopped at the border in the south-eastern town of Karkamis. Karkamis faces the IS-controlled Syrian town of Jarabulus about 100 kilometers northeast of the Oncupinar crossing.

Fighting yesterday raged around Tamura, north of Aleppo city, with intense Russian air raids on several nearby villages, the Observatory said. Pro-regime forces have made a series of gains this month in Aleppo province, severing rebel supply lines. The UN has warned 300,000 people in eastern Aleppo city could be cut off from humanitarian aid if government forces encircle the area, a tactic used by the regime to devastating effect against other former rebel bastions.

Turning point?

Rebels face a potential tipping point in the war following a string of victories by regime forces backed by Russian warplanes and fighters from Iran — another key ally of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. Observatory director Rami Abdel Rahman said that 274 rebels and foreign jihadists, 143 pro-regime fighters, and 89 civilians had

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- Canon Camera EOS 760D + Canon EF 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6 IS USM.
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- One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Bahrain - Kuwait.

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- One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Bahrain - Kuwait.

All photos should be submitted at the Kuwait Times newspaper before 17th of March 2016.

Rules & Conditions:

- The competition is open to individuals of all ages.
- The submitted photos should be taken by the participant.
- Every participant is allowed to submit maximum five entries.
- The photos can be black and white or colour size: 40X30 cm.
- All entries should be provided a hard copy and soft copy on a CD (in high resolution) with photo of the participant needs to be included in the CD.
- The original coupon should be attached to the back of each photo and should include a complete information about the participant.

The coupons are advertised at Kuwait Times and Al Anba newspapers during the period of competition.

- All submitted photos will become property of Kuwait Times newspaper and can be used for different purposes.
- The winners will be chosen by a panel of judges.
- All photos must be original and should not be doctored with any design program, such as Photoshop.

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INDIA AND UAE TARGET SECURITY TRADE AS CROWN PRINCE VISITS

NEW DELHI: India and the United Arab Emirates are eyeing a string of defense, infrastructure and other deals when Abu Dhabi's crown prince starts a visit to New Delhi late Wednesday, an official said. Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan will hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the two-day trip aimed at bolstering trade which reached \$59 billion last year. The trip comes six months after Modi became the first Indian premier in three decades to visit the UAE, as he seeks to attract more foreign investment, including from the oil-rich state's sovereign wealth fund.

"The visit takes place after we decided to elevate our relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership during the PM's August visit," India's foreign ministry secretary (east) Anil Wadhwa told reporters. The crown prince, deputy chief of the UAE armed forces, arrives late Wednesday accompanied by a large business delegation, before talks with Modi the next day. Counter-terrorism is expected to be on the

agenda, with India seeking exchanges of information with the UAE about regional security threats. The UAE is part of the US-led coalition against the Islamic State group that has seized parts of Syria and Iraq.

Delhi hopes to advance agreements on jointly producing defense equipment, as India undertakes a massive modernization of its ageing military, Wadhwa said, without specifying any deals. Delhi is also seeking to secure investment in major infrastructure projects as the government overhauls its dilapidated railway and road networks. Abu Dhabi is the largest of seven emirates making up the UAE, which is India's third largest trading partner after the US and China and is a major supplier of oil. The UAE is also home to around 2.6 million Indian expatriates who mostly work on construction sites. UAE state minister for foreign affairs Anwar Gargash said ahead of the visit the two countries were seeking to increase trade by 60 percent within five years. — AFP



NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (left) and Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan wave to the crowd after the prince arrived at an air force base yesterday. — AFP



MOSUL: This file photo taken on January 31, 2016 shows the Mosul Dam on the Tigris River. — AFP

IRAQ SAYS RISK TO MOSUL DAM AFFECTING COMBAT AGAINST IS

GROWING CONCERN OVER KEY BUT FRAGILE STRUCTURE

BAGHDAD: The risk of Iraq's largest dam collapsing and unleashing a huge wave onto Mosul is affecting plans to retake the city from jihadists, an adviser to the premier's office said. The army is deploying thousands of soldiers to a northern base in preparation for operations to recapture the city, the largest urban centre in the Islamic State group's self-proclaimed caliphate.

Concern has grown that a failure of the unstable dam, which is about 40 kilometers northwest of the city, could wipe out much of Mosul and flood large parts of Baghdad. The Americans "frequently refer to Katrina" and say a collapse of the Mosul Dam would be "a thousand times worse," the adviser to the office of Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi told reporters.

Hurricane Katrina ravaged the US city of New Orleans in 2005, killing nearly 2,000 people and leading to a wave of violence and looting that completely overwhelmed the authorities. "If the dam bursts, the centre of Mosul goes under water by about a 40-50 foot wave," the adviser said, speaking on

condition of anonymity. "It just disappears, so 500,000 people (are) killed within a few hours."

He said another dam in Samarra, hundreds of miles downstream, would also burst. It is estimated the wave would still be several meters high when it reaches Baghdad. A US assessment published Monday on the Iraqi parliament's website said Mosul Dam was "at a significantly higher risk of failure than originally understood."

'Nightmare scenario'

High-level contacts have taken place between the US administration and Baghdad, with Washington pushing for repair work to be undertaken urgently. Since the dam's completion in 1984, Iraq has sought to shore up the foundation by injecting mortar-like grout into cavities that develop under the structure. Regular minor seismic activity in the area is now seen as a potential threat. There are also fears that IS could weaponise the dam.

"If the attack on Mosul goes well, there is a nightmare scenario that

Daesh (an Arabic acronym for IS) could itself strike the dam as they withdraw from Mosul," the adviser said. He said the US-led coalition, whose primary role in retaking Mosul would be to carry out air strikes, is concerned that a major bombing campaign could have an impact on the dam.

"They are worried about it, they are thinking carefully about what kind of munitions they use in the Mosul operation," he said. Colonel Steve Warren, the spokesman for the international anti-IS operation, said the dam was far enough from Mosul for strikes not to be a threat to its integrity. Another concern as Iraq begins deploying troops southeast of the city is a mounting economic crisis.

'Moral responsibility'

The government of Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region is struggling to pay its peshmerga forces, who currently control the dam and will likely play a significant part in any Mosul assault. Speaking in Rome yesterday, Abadi said "we have a moral responsibility, a national responsibility to guar-

antee the protection of this dam." Iraq has awarded a contract to Italy's Trevi to repair and maintain the dam.

"We need to speed up the arrival of this company in Iraq and also to guarantee the security of its technicians and workers," said Abadi. Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, who has said Rome would deploy some 450 troops to protect the dam, stressed yesterday that Iraq and Italy were "working together for the security of the area."

"When the Italian force comes in, the Italian force is responsible for the security of the dam, so there's no dispute over who's responsible," and Kurdish forces who hold the dam will withdraw, the adviser said. He said Abadi hoped the contract-estimated at 284.5 million Euros (around \$320 million) — would be signed within two weeks. The World Bank is helping to finance it. A warm winter could lead to early snow melt and Trevi is expected to swiftly begin work with a seven-month phase to repair the dam's lower gates. Another 18 months are needed for the rest of the major work. — AFP

ACTIVISTS RECALL MUBARAK OUSTER AS A DISTANT DREAM

CAIRO: As the sun began to set on February 11, 2011, the protesters in Cairo's Tahrir Square wavered between hope and despair, waiting for a signal that Egypt's autocrat would step down. Hosni Mubarak had been expected to resign the day before, after 30 years in power. Instead, he delivered a truculent speech insisting he would stay on until September.

But the military had already decided his fate: he would have to go after days of protests had paralyzed the country. So just before sunset, the announcement came. Mubarak was gone, the army was now in control and Cairo exploded in euphoric celebration. Five years later, that day has a dreamlike quality for activists who say they are now living through the darkest times of their lives. "I was ecstatic," said Mona Seif, a human rights campaigner who was in Tahrir Square that night. Seif said she knew then that activists like her still had a struggle ahead. But she said she thought "the hardest thing has passed", referring to Mubarak's overthrow.

There are now more activists in prison than at any point during Mubarak's reign. Seif has a brother behind bars-prominent leftwing activist Alaa Abdel Fattah and her sister Sanaa was in jail until being pardoned recently. Their father, Ahmed Seif, died in 2014 with both children incarcerated. Egypt's preeminent human rights lawyer, he spent his last year alive in courtrooms, trying to free them and other activists. Alaa and Sanaa were allowed to attend his funeral, but wearing white prison garb.

Bloodiest crackdown

Egypt is now ruled by another leader who came from the military. President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi was elected in 2014 after overthrowing the unpopular Islamist president Mohamed Morsi, and unleashing the bloodiest crackdown on dissent in the country's modern history. Protests that are not approved by the police are banned. Alaa, Sanaa and many other activists were jailed for violating that law.



CAIRO: Egyptian human rights activist, Heba Morayef, poses for a photograph. — AFP

Hundreds of protesters, mostly Morsi supporters, have been shot dead in the streets, and the government is locked in a war with Islamist jihadists who have killed hundreds of policemen and soldiers. Reports of police abuses are also on the rise. Activists who had remained sanguine as the country lurched from one crisis to another after Mubarak's ouster are now reluctant even to talk about that day. "No, leave me alone. It's too depressing," one dissident said. For them, February 11 was not just about removing a dictator, although that in itself had been unimaginable just 18 days previously when the protests began.

It was also about empowerment, social justice and self respect in a country that brimmed with daily humiliations and abuses by corrupt officials and police. "The nature of despair (now) is so different," said Seif. "Under Mubarak, you didn't have a lot of hope. But you haven't experienced a moment with the full potential of hope and open space and then the fall down from it."

'The undoing'

Timothy Kaldas, a non-resident fellow with the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, was also in the square on February 11 five years ago. "This is the undoing of what they accomplished," he said of what has happened since. "What makes it so difficult to stomach and upsetting is not simply that the situation is very bad right now, but the fact that for a brief moment we created an opening, we forced open political space and public discourse."

Heba Morayef, a prominent rights defender who went to Tahrir to celebrate Mubarak's ouster, remembers that day as "pure joy". But "very soon we were back to doing the usual work as human rights activists". Rights activists fought abuses and military trials during the interim period of army rule until mid-2012, and then were busy during Morsi's year in power, which was marred by crackdowns on opponents. — AFP

ERDOGAN BLAST US OVER SUPPORT FOR SYRIA KURDS

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday launched a bitter attack on NATO ally the United States over its support of Syrian Kurdish groups, saying it was creating a "pool of blood" in the region. In an impassioned and sometimes angry address, Erdogan asked whether the United States was an ally or was working with groups Ankara lists as terror organizations. Turkey considers the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its People's Protection Units (YPG) militia to be terror groups allied to Kurdish rebels inside Turkey, a position not shared by Washington.

"Hey America... As you have never recognized them (as terror groups) the region has turned into a pool of blood," Erdogan said. "Hey America! How many times have we had to tell you?" he said. "Are you together with us or are you with the PYD and YPG terror groups?" Erdogan launched the attack in one of his regular speeches at the presidential palace to loyal municipal leaders known as muhtarars that have become a forum for his most vehemently anti-Western comments.

"Is there a difference between the PKK and the PYD? Is there a difference with the YPG?" growled Erdogan. "We have written proof! Allies don't tell each other my enemy's enemy is my friend. You must have principles. But there are no principles here."

'Friends can disagree'

His remarks escalated a row between Washington and Ankara over the role of Kurdish fighters in the struggle against Islamic State (IS) jihadists in Syria. The dispute also risks further complicating the search for a solution to Syria's five-year conflict, drawing a wedge between two key members of the anti-IS coalition and driving another nail into the coffin of a process of peace talks. In a further

twist, a Syrian Kurdish group yesterday opened a representation in Moscow, which is currently in the throes of a diplomatic crisis with Ankara and is working to tighten ties with the Kurds.

"This is a historical moment for the Kurdish people," claimed Merab Shamoyev, chairman of the International Union of Kurdish Public Associations, adding that those present at the ceremony had ties to the PYD. Turkey on Tuesday summoned the US envoy to Ankara in protest after the US State Department said Washington did not recognize the PYD as a terror group and would continue to support its operations in Syria. "Even the best of friends aren't going to agree on everything," State Department spokesman John Kirby said Monday. "Kurdish fighters have been some of the most successful in going after Daesh (IS) inside Syria." Ankara has also expressed outrage over a visit last week by US presidential envoy Brett McGurk to the Syrian Kurdish town of Kobane where he met YPG fighters.

'Serious Crisis'

Turkey says the Syrian Kurdish groups are simply a branch of the rebel Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is recognized as a terror group by the United States, and has carried out a string of deadly attacks in Turkey in the last few months. Can Acun, a researcher with the Ankara-based Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research, said Turkey was facing a "serious crisis" with the United States on the issue. "We don't know if the US is using the Syrian Kurds for short term tactical reasons or in the long term. If it's the second, then bilateral relations will fray," he said. Air strikes by the Syrian regime and its Russian allies have sent tens of thousands more people fleeing to the border with Turkey, which is already home to some 2.5 million refugees from Syria and hundreds of thousands from Iraq. — AFP

SYRIANS RECOUNT 'HELL' OF ALEPPO LIFE UNDER FIRE

KILIS: Syrian farmer Mahmud Turki was sitting on his couch at sunset watching the news with his family after eating supper. Then an air strike hit his home and turned his life upside down. His story is typical of accounts of the "hell" that is life in the war-scarred region around the northern city of Aleppo, where up to 31,000 people have fled as government forces press an offensive against rebels, according to the UN.

"The moment of the air strike... nobody can describe it," Turki-stitches still in his head and his body covered in bruises-said from his hospital bed in neighbouring Turkey, where he was among just a few allowed across for treatment. "I lost consciousness. The roof fell on me and on my children. I remember hearing the voice of my wife asking me if I was alive or dead," he said. Turki, 45, was admitted to hospital in the border town of Kilis on Friday after being pulled alive by his friends from the rubble of his home in Minnich.

'How can we endure it?'

Fierce fighting in Aleppo province-sparked by a week-long government assault backed by Russian air support-have displaced tens of thousands of people. Alaa Najjar also arrived in Turkey on Friday to be treated for a shoulder injury incurred during an aerial bombardment in Marea, also just north of Aleppo.

"It was like hell. We couldn't stand the bombings. Even the animals couldn't stand them," he told AFP, saying there were up to four air strikes a day. "I had a kitten. When the kitten heard the sound of the planes, she ran directly under the bed. If animals were intimi-

dated that much, how can human beings endure it?"

Russia launched a bombing campaign in Syria last year at the request of President Bashar Al-Assad, saying it was targeting the Islamic State group and other jihadist organizations. The West has accused Russia of targeting more moderate factions that oppose Assad's regime, and Syrian activists say the strikes have killed civilians, allegations Moscow dismisses as "absurd". Russian backing has helped Assad's forces make significant advances in recent months - including its latest offensive seeking to encircle rebel-held areas of Aleppo and sever their supply lines to Turkey.

Surrounded on all sides

Rebel fighter Mohammad crossed the border on Tuesday, walking with crutches and bandages around his right leg and a finger. "The situation is very bad. People are fleeing. The town was completely destroyed by Russian air bombardment," the 30-year-old whose father was killed when six Russian air strikes hit his town-said. "We are besieged by the Russians on one side, the YPG (Syrian Kurds) from the west and Daesh (Islamic State) from the east, and the (Syrian) regime from the other side." Aleppo was once Syria's thriving economic powerhouse, home to several World Heritage sites including its famed ancient souk and citadel.

But it has been ravaged by war and divided since mid-2012 between government control in the west and rebel control in the east. Regime air strikes in the east, where they also use barrel bombs, have caused

massive destruction, rendering parts of whole neighborhoods virtually unlivable.

Rebels also fire mostly crude and unguided missiles into the west, often killing civilians. Fleeing Syrians have been massing for days around the Bab Al-Salama border gate across from Turkey's Oncupinar border point, which remains closed.

'The murderer Putin'

Turkish officials say the border is kept open for "emergency situations," including the evacuation of the injured like Turki and Najjar. Ambulances and aid trucks are seen coming back and forth throughout the day. Turki was taken to Turkey in an ambulance before his family who arrived three days later.

Taking AFP to their room where his daughter Raghad was sleeping and four-year-old son Mussa was with his wife, Turki said his two children had skull fractures that required surgery. The father asked little Mussa, with a bandage on his head: "Who attacked us?" Mussa answered: "Bashar's air strikes."

Turki lashed out at the international community for lack of action on Syria and denounced Russian President Vladimir Putin over Moscow's bombing campaign. "There is no international community, no United Nations, no Geneva. NGOs are just a lie. The Security Council is also a lie," he said. He poured scorn on Putin's claim only to be targeting Islamic State and other jihadist groups, pointing sarcastically to his children and saying: "They are Daesh members hit by Putin's air strikes." "They are Daesh. The murderer Putin, the killer of children." — AFP

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TOP TAKEAWAYS FROM THE NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY

WASHINGTON: In July, Hillary Clinton offered up some prophetic words. "I always thought this would be a competitive race," she told CNN. How right she was. Her rival Bernie Sanders ran away with the Democratic presidential primary in New Hampshire, besting Clinton by more than 20 percentage points. On the Republican side, Donald Trump earned his first win of the campaign, and none of his rivals were even close. What does it all mean? Here are the top takeaways from Tuesday's primary in the Granite State, only the second stop on the long road to the White House.

Trump 1, Establishment 0

The first lesson is not to be hasty in drawing conclusions from the campaign trail. It's clear that Trump was unable to fully muster supporters last week in Iowa, when he finished second to ultra-conservative Senator Ted Cruz. But he made good Tuesday on the resounding overall lead he has enjoyed in opinion polls since last summer, earning more than a third of Republican votes in New Hampshire.

"People read a lot into Trump's performance in Iowa," said Robert Boatright, a professor of political science at Clark University in Massachusetts. The anti-establishment, anti-elite message of the billionaire tycoon resonates with an eclectic mix of voters from the center to the far right-whose unifying characteristic is the rejection of politics as usual.

Unless evidence surfaces to the contrary, those voters have not abandoned their chosen candidate. Trump's rivals are many-four of them earned at least 10 percent of the vote on Tuesday: Ohio Governor John Kasich, former Florida governor Jeb Bush, Senator Marco Rubio of Florida and Cruz, the hero of the religious right.

"The Republican leadership wanted the field of non-Cruz and non-Trump candidates to be reduced," said Kyle Kondik, managing editor of the University of Virginia's online political newsletter Sabato's Crystal Ball. "The winnowing didn't really happen tonight."

Jeb Bush: Stayin' Alive

Bush, who is looking to follow in the footsteps of his president father and brother,

spent last week insisting over and over again that New Hampshire was not a do-or-die moment for his campaign. With roughly 11 percent of the vote on Tuesday, Bush-headed for a fourth-place finish-is still alive.

New Hampshire "revives his campaign to a certain degree-it shows that he has at least as much support as Rubio and Cruz in a primary state," said Steven Smith, a professor of political science at Washington University in St. Louis. "He also probably has a larger bank account than Kasich and Rubio at this stage. So he will be in a position to put on full-scale campaigns in South Carolina and Nevada" later this month, Smith said.

What next for Rubio?

Rubio-the surprise third-place finisher in Iowa-headed for fifth place in New Hampshire, largely due to a robotic debate performance on Saturday that didn't impress voters in the northeastern US state. "Maybe Rubio was a little overvalued after Iowa-now he's probably going to be undervalued after New Hampshire," Kondik predicted. Rubio, in a campaign message to supporters hours

after the New Hampshire polls closed, admitted: "On Saturday night at the debate, I dropped the ball. I want you to know that will never happen again."

Clinton banking on black

After Tuesday's loss, Clinton's team quickly tried to downplay its significance by turning to the numbers. "The nomination will very likely be won in March, not February," campaign manager Robby Mook said in a memo sent to reporters. Voters in 28 states will cast ballots in March, with more than half of the delegates to the Democratic National Convention at stake. Notably on the calendar are contests in South Carolina, Texas, Georgia and Alabama, where black and Hispanics make up a majority of the Democratic voters. Since the presidency of Clinton's husband Bill in the 1990s, the links between the Clintons and blacks have been nearly airtight, with the exception of Barack Obama's historic 2008 run-at Hillary's expense.

"Before the primaries, you could make the argument that Iowa and New Hampshire were two of Bernie Sanders' three best states

because they're very liberal and they're very white, Vermont being the third state," Kondik said. Clinton's national profile may suffer after the loss in New Hampshire, Kondik said, but Sanders' lack of popularity in the South is borne out by several polls. According to an NBC survey, he trails Clinton in South Carolina by 37 percentage points.

The question of course is: Will African-American voters stay loyal to Clinton? "It will be very difficult, if not impossible, for a Democrat to win the nomination without strong levels of support among African-American and Hispanic voters," Mook said.

The math

So far, only two percent of the Democratic and Republican delegates on offer have been awarded in Iowa and New Hampshire. As long as the Republican race remains divided, Trump can continue to dominate, even without winning 50 percent of the vote. But, from March 15, many states will begin attributing all of their Republican delegates on a winner-takes-all basis, and not proportionally, as the Democrats do. — AFP



MANCHESTER: Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks as his wife Melania Trump and daughter Ivanka Trump look on after Primary day at his election night watch party at the Executive Court Banquet facility. — AFP

TRUMP, SANDERS FACE CHALLENGES AFTER COMMANDING PRIMARY WINS

DIVERSE STATES WILL CHALLENGE THEIR TRANSFORMATIONS

MANCHESTER: Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Bernie Sanders were moving yesterday from commanding wins in the first-in-the-nation New Hampshire primary to more diverse states that will challenge their transformation from outsider candidates to their parties' presidential nominees.

Tuesday's outcomes would have been nearly unthinkable not long ago. Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist, easily beat Hillary Clinton, a former secretary of state and first lady once seen as the all-but-certain Democratic nominee. While Clinton remains the favorite in the national race, the win by the Vermont senator could be a springboard into a competitive, drawn-out campaign.

With more than 90 percent of the vote counted, Sanders had 60 percent to Clinton's 38 percent. He swept majorities of men, independents and young people. And Sanders and Clinton were evenly divided among women, a major setback for a candidate who aims to become the nation's first female president.

Important rebound

For Trump, the brash real estate billionaire and television personality who has never held public office, the win was an important rebound after his loss to Texas Sen. Ted Cruz in last week's Iowa caucuses, the first nominating contest. Trump has led national polls for months, and the New Hampshire victory proves he can win votes and gives credibility to his upstart

populist candidacy.

Trump had 35 percent, with Ohio Gov. John Kasich a distant second with 16 percent. "We are going to make America so great again," Trump told a raucous crowd. "Maybe greater than ever before." For some Republican leaders, back-to-back victories by Trump and Cruz, an uncompromising conservative, add urgency to the need to coalesce around a more mainstream candidate. Tuesday's vote did little to clarify who that might be. Kasich, a more moderate Republican, poured nearly all of his campaign resources into the state. He pointed to his largely positive approach, saying, "Light overcame the darkness."

Former Florida Gov Jeb Bush and Florida Sen Marco Rubio vied for third place along with Cruz, ensuring all would press on to the next contest - the Feb 20 South Carolina primary. The state is a hotbed of conservative tea party groups and evangelical voters that will test Trump's staying power. New Jersey Gov Chris Christie told supporters that instead of going to South Carolina, he'll head home to "take a deep breath" and take stock of his struggling bid.

'Hungry for solutions'

Among Democrats, Sanders, who narrowly lost to Clinton in Iowa, appeals to liberal Democrats who believe President Barack Obama hasn't done enough to address the nation's wealth disparity. In her concession speech, Clinton echoed Sanders' calls for taking

on Wall Street banks and tackling income inequality. But she cast herself as more prepared to make good on her pledges.

"People have every right to be angry. But they're also hungry, they're hungry for solutions," she said. Clinton's campaign argues she will perform better as the race heads to more racially diverse states, including Nevada and South Carolina. Both New Hampshire and Iowa are overwhelmingly white states that are far less diverse than the nation as a whole.

Nevada has been considered Clinton territory, in part because of her strong relationships to the Latino community and longtime Democrats in the state. At stake Tuesday were less than 1 percent of the delegates who, at party national conventions in July, will choose nominees to succeed Obama. But a strong showing in New Hampshire can give a candidate momentum ahead of state contests in coming weeks, including the March 1 "Super Tuesday" when 11 states vote.

Clinton remains ahead in the overall delegate count due to support from super delegates - the party officials who can support the candidate of their choice at the convention. Overall, Clinton has amassed at least 392 delegates and Sanders at least 42; the magic number to clinch the nomination is 2,382. There were only 23 delegates at stake in New Hampshire's Republican primary, and they are awarded proportionally, based on the statewide vote. A candidate needs 1,237 delegates to win the nomination. — AP

SANDERS CAMP JUBILANT AFTER BIG PRIMARY WIN

CONCORD: In a school gymnasium in Concord, jubilant volunteers for Bernie Sanders could not contain their excitement over his double-digit victory in the New Hampshire primary-and the tough battle ahead with Hillary Clinton.

"Bernie, Bernie, Bernie," they screamed at the senator's victory party late Tuesday, projecting an energy matched only by supporters of the night's Republican winner, Donald Trump. "Celebrate the Bern, baby!" said Sara Stuart, 56, a teaching assistant and local campaign volunteer covered in Bernie badges. "It is huge!"

With 90 percent of precincts reporting, Sanders won 60 percent of the Democratic vote compared to 38 percent for Clinton, the former secretary of state who commands one of the biggest political machines in the country. Just months ago, the grumpy 74-year-old grandfather promising a "political revolution" was written off as a joke.

'History in the making'

But a gathering grassroots campaign and message of addressing profound inequality has stirred up liberal voters-and Sanders is giving Clinton a run for her money. "It's really history in the making," said Eric Packer, 64, a Wall Street-trained investment advisor from Massachusetts who switched from backing Clinton in favor of Sanders last year.

"I think this helps to set the stage for the potential for Bernie to be taken more seriously." Exit polls showed Sanders beat Clinton among virtually every group-among women and men, in all age groups under 45, among those with and without college degrees, and among gun owners and non-gun owners. Clinton was ahead only among whites, families earning over \$200,000 a year and voters 65 and older, US media reported.

"What began last week in Iowa, which voters here in New Hampshire confirmed tonight, is nothing short of the beginning of a political revolution," Sanders said as he declared victory.

Feel the Bern

The Clinton campaign admitted that Sanders raised \$5 million more than them last month, underlining his growing sway. Sanders often extols the fact that more than one million Americans each donated on average \$27, totalling \$3.7 million.

His campaign has a popular winning slogan-"Feel the Bern" has been printed on countless T-shirts, badges, magnets and key rings. The donations point to a grassroots popularity perhaps matched in this primary season by Trump, who packs thousands into big-venue rallies nationwide and who won the Republican New Hampshire primary. "The people want real change," said Sanders. "Together, we have sent the message that will echo from Wall Street to Washington, from Maine to California." The decisive test will come in Nevada and South Carolina, more racially diverse states in the west and south, where Clinton's support among blacks and Latinos is expected to defeat Sanders this month. — AFP



CONCORD: Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders speaks to supporters after winning the New Hampshire Democratic Primary. — AFP



SHARON: In this Friday, Dec 18, 2015, photo Syrian refugee Ahmad Alkhalaf, 9, sits on a prayer rug in a mosque. — AP

REFUGEE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS MAY OVERWHELM, SAYS EXPERTS

BOSTON: For the thousands of Syrian refugees expected to arrive in the US in coming months, the first order of business will be securing the basics - health care, jobs, education and a safe home. But what organizations helping resettle them might not be prepared for, and what refugees themselves might be in denial about, is the need to treat the mental scars of war, experts said. Iham Al Horani, a 32-year-old refugee living in Worcester, Massachusetts, said he has had little time to think about his mental health in between months of job hunting and shuttling his mother, recovering from sniper gunfire, to doctor's appointments.

"It was difficult, what we came from," Al Horani said through a translator. "The living conditions in the refugee camp were bad. But at least we're all here." Organizations that work with refugees said it's too early to assess the full scope of arrivals' mental health needs. But experts say it's important to keep tabs on the emotional state of new arrivals, since symptoms may not appear until months or years later - well after most resettlement support services have ended.

The US has taken about 2,500 Syrian refugees since the conflict there began in 2011, including about 100 in Massachusetts. The Obama administration expects to take in at least 10,000 in the federal fiscal year that began in October. Experts estimate 10 to 20 percent of incoming Syrians will have war-related psychological

problems warranting treatment.

"They're in the honeymoon phase," said Richard Mollica, a psychiatry professor at Harvard Medical School who has spent decades working with torture and genocide victims. "In the first year, they're so happy to be out of that situation. They feel something wonderful is going to happen in America. It's only about two years later or so when there's a mental health crisis," he said. "It's at that point that reality hits and they really need a lot of mental health care."

'Unstable country'

Ahmad Alkhalaf, a 9-year-old who arrived in the Boston area this past summer for medical treatment, said he used to have restless nights when he would relive his mother's screams from the night a bomb killed three of his siblings and left him without arms. But those sounds, he said, have largely faded. "I'm fine," Ahmad said through a translator. "They're gone."

Ahmad's father, Dirgam Alkhalaf, said he recently took his son to a counselor, who found nothing concerning. They don't plan to go back. Ahmad Houssein Hallak, a 51-year-old Syrian recovering from an artillery attack that left him with speech and movement problems, said winning asylum last year hasn't eased his stress. He is working to bring over his wife and three children, who remain in Lebanon. "They live in an

unstable country," Hallak said through a translator. "It's a constant fear that I'm living in."

Such stresses - finding a job, adjusting to a new culture or dealing with life apart from family - can also contribute to mental health problems, said Bengt Arnetz, a professor at Michigan State University who has been studying trauma in Middle Eastern refugees. Failure to address them could lead some refugees to withdraw from society, increasing the chances they'll be drawn to extremist groups, Arnetz warned.

Alexandra Weber, chief program officer at the International Institute of New England, an agency contracted by the US government to resettle refugees, agreed mental health services can be improved. Many agencies, for example, don't have enough Arabic speakers, she said. But, she said, agencies are increasingly asking refugees about their emotional state as part of initial health screenings - something not done in years past. "For the first time in my career, I feel encouraged," Weber said. "In some ways, Syrians couldn't be coming at a better time." A spokesman for the US Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement, declined to comment but pointed to general information on the office's website about federally funded programs for torture victims and its efforts at promoting "emotional wellness." — AP

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GOING ON PATROL WITH UGANDA'S CONTROVERSIAL 'CRIME PREVENTERS'

KAMPALA: As night falls in Uganda's capital Kampala, some 240 members of a vast volunteer "crime preventer" force parade outside a police station. "Attention!" shouts an officer as the men stand stiff-backed, before marching off in single file to help guard the city until dawn.

The volunteers are on patrol ahead of presidential polls on February 18, but rights groups have criticised the force, which they see as the enforcer of the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) of incumbent President Yoweri Museveni. Museveni, who has led the east African country since 1986, is eyeing a fifth term in the elections.

His government dismisses criticism of the crime preventers, arguing it is part of a community-policing programme in existence since the 1990s. Now, however, police say it boasts some 11 million members, more than a quarter of Uganda's 37-million-strong population. "Look, they got him!" shouts Adam Sankara, 35, the Kampala district crime preventer chief, as a suspected car thief is marched into the

police station by volunteers.

Sankara, who claims to be in charge of about two million recruits, insists they are "responsible Ugandans who want to see peace and stability". A married father of two and a businessman, Sankara has been taking part in night-time patrols since 2013. Recruits learn martial arts and attend "ideological classes". Some are teenagers, others aged over 80.

"We teach them the concept of patriotism," said Sankara. "We are not partisan." He dismisses rights groups' claims that the volunteers beat people, saying the teams are armed only with a whistle and always deploy with regular police. "Sticks are just for foot drills," he said.

'Muscle of the ruling party?'

Police chief Kale Kayihura has insisted the force is good for Uganda, with the Daily Monitor newspaper quoting him as telling critics to "go hang" after European Union election observers voiced concerns. "Nobody will stop us as long as we have the responsibility of keeping this country

safe and secure," Kayihura said.

Others say the force is adding to lawlessness and insecurity. Last month, five international and domestic rights bodies accused the reservists of brutally assaulting and extorting cash from scores of suspects and demanded it be suspended. "Crime preventers should not be undisciplined and unaccountable recruits who become the eyes and muscle of the ruling party in every village," warned Maria Burnett from Human Rights Watch (HRW).

"These forces need to be regulated, impartial, effectively trained, and held accountable to the highest standards if they take on policing functions," Government spokesman Ofonto Ofonto on Monday issued a fresh warning over security during the election, accusing opposition parties of raising militias to stage protests if they fear they are losing the vote-claims the opposition has rejected.

Museveni faces his stiffest challenge yet from Kizza Besigye, a three-time failed presidential candidate from the Forum for

Democratic Change (FDC), and Amama Mbabazi, a former prime minister and ruling party stalwart now running as an independent.

However, few expect Museveni to lose. Mbabazi's spokeswoman Josephine Mayanja-Nkangi said his supporters had "numerous unfavourable encounters" with the crime preventers. Senior FDC official Shawn Mubiru accused the force of openly supporting Museveni, with some members wearing T-shirts bearing his image. "Many were sent to disrupt our campaigns," he accused.

Crime 'creators' or 'preventers'?

Gabrielle Lynch, from Britain's University of Warwick, has questioned whether the teams are "actually 'crime creators' rather than 'crime preventers'". Lynch warned they could be "used to intimidate opposition voters at the polling stations, and to quell any signs of unrest over opposition claims of electoral malpractice".

Magnus Taylor of the International Crisis Group (ICG) argues the teams are a

"front for a project that is more about keeping the older generation in power than building a society able to gainfully employ their own generation".

"The concern is that they may be inserted in a disorganised fashion into closely fought local races, causing mayhem, or take the opportunity their new-found status may afford to extort fellow citizens," Taylor added. The force's national coordinator Blaise Kamugisha denied it was on a mission to prop up the ruling clique.

"Saying we are keeping the old generation in power is wrong," said Kamugisha, a former NRM ruling party chairman, who makes no secret of his support for Museveni. "Serving the president is a privilege and honor," he said. Meanwhile, the police say they welcome the force, with spokesman Fred Enanga claiming they are especially popular in rural areas. "We're a soft target for propaganda because we're on the frontline, ensuring that these elections go peacefully," said Enanga, insisting the scheme was "working very well". — AFP



SUN CITY: This file photo courtesy of the Gupta family released on May 3, 2013 shows Vela Gupta and her husband Indian-born Aakash Jahajgarhia posing with relatives and guests during ceremonies for their wedding. — AFP

S AFRICA SCRUTINY OVER ZUMA'S CONNECTIONS TO INDIAN FAMILY

GUPTA'S ACCUSED OF WIELDING IMMENSE POWER

JOHANNESBURG: Political scandals, huge economic deals and even extravagant wedding party controversies—an immigrant family that is one of South Africa's wealthiest is accused by critics of wielding immense power behind the scenes.

The Guptas, an Indian family that moved to the country in the 1990s, are alleged to exert a magnetic pull over President Jacob Zuma, and their influence has increasingly become the target of government's fiercest critics. To outsiders they may seem an industrious immigrant family that has made it big in their adopted country, but now their reputation is a key battleground in opposition efforts to oust Zuma from power.

The family has built a string of South African companies controlled by brothers Ajay, Atul and Rajesh with interests in computers, mining, media and engineering. Zuma ferociously defends his friendship with the Guptas, and many of his ministers have various ties to the family. The president's son Duduzane is a director of the Gupta's Sahara Computers and is a partner in some of their other businesses, while Zuma's third wife Bongie Ngema was also a Gupta employee.

"The Guptas are smart and shrewd business people and this can't be a normal relationship," political analyst Prince Mashele said. "There appears to be a Gupta hand in every business sector." Last week the radical leftist Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) opposition party put the Guptas at the centre of its campaign against Zuma ahead of municipal elections later in the year.

Political target

"We cannot allow a situation where South Africa is colonized by a family," EFF leader Julius Malema raged, as he blamed the Guptas for many of South Africa's problems and demanded that they leave the country.

"We will do to the Guptas what we did to the colonizers and apartheid," he said. "The more we talk, the more they become corrupt and they do not care about South Africa. We can no longer tolerate it. It's a battle, it's a war against the Guptas." Public anger towards the family soared in 2013, when a large private jet carrying foreign guests to a Gupta wedding was granted permission to land at Waterkloof Air Force base, outside Pretoria. The airport is a military facility that is normally used to receive heads of state.

The wedding party did not go through immigration checks, and were given a police escort to the marriage at a casino resort 160 kilometers away. The fact that several ministers attended the week-long lavish ceremonies fuelled further media and public antagonism towards the Guptas.

In another ongoing controversy, the Gupta-owned Tegeta Exploration and Resources company is in the process of acquiring a Glencore coal mine. The minister of mines, Mosebenzi Zwane, joined the firm's delegation that visited Glencore's headquarters in Switzerland last year to negotiate the sale. Zwane's surprise appointment as mines minister in September was widely seen to have been due to the Guptas, with whom he has been close for several years.

In another deal, VR Laser, partly run by a Gupta nephew, has entered into a joint venture with Denel,

the state-owned arms manufacturer, to sell its products in Asia. "Such deals smack of the capture of public entities by private individuals," said Mashele. "This is an improper relationship that goes into the heart of our national integrity."

Web of influence

The Guptas, who hail from Saharanpur, in northern India, developed a friendship with Zuma well before he became president in 2009. And he repays the loyalty by refusing to distance himself from them.

Atul, the middle brother, was the first to arrive in South Africa in 1993 to scout for business opportunities. In 1994 they founded Sahara Computer, named after their hometown. High-profile holdings in their portfolio include the New Age, a pro-government newspaper launched in 2010, and the 24-hour news channel ANN7, broadcasting since 2013.

Now their business ambitions are hatched from a huge residential compound in the upmarket Johannesburg district of Saxonwold. In 2011, Zuma's office issued an official statement rejecting allegations of Gupta interference, following claims that it was the Guptas who first told a minister of his appointment. The presidential office and Gupta spokesman Gary Naidoo did not respond to AFP's request for comment. "There is a feeling that the Guptas are almost running the state," Adriaan Basson, author of the book "Zuma Exposed," said. "Although there hasn't been any formal investigation into the relationship, all probabilities point to an improper alliance. I can't see President Zuma turning his back on the Gupta family." — AFP

FINLAND'S ANTI-MIGRANT GROUP FACE OFF AGAINST HUGGY LADIES

KEMI: Fierce-looking squads calling themselves the Soldiers of Odin have been patrolling Finnish streets in recent months claiming to protect locals from asylum seekers, but lately they've been challenged by an unexpected crew: Smiling women serving up hugs.

In the small town of Kemi, an hour's drive south of the Arctic Circle, a group of stocky men in black bomber jackets brave freezing wintry weather of minus 15 degrees Celsius (five degrees Fahrenheit) to walk the streets, insisting they're needed to protect local women and children from what their website calls "Islamic intruders".

The handful of Odins-led by founder Mika Ranta, a 29-year-old truck driver who named the group after an ancient Norse and Germanic god-keep their eyes peeled for trouble, though no asylum seekers are seen out on the streets when AFP greets the patrol. The group claims volunteer patrols are active in at least 20 Finnish towns, clad in the group's black hats and jackets emblazoned with "S.O.O." for Soldiers of Odin. But it was here in Kemi, a working class town known for its forestry industry, that the Odins first began their patrols in October.

They started after an unprecedented flow of mostly Iraqi migrants arrived via the Swedish-Finnish border, many of them crossing through Kemi on their way to towns further south in Finland. Finland, a country of 5.4 million people, received over 32,000 asylum seekers last year, one of the highest amounts in Europe per capita. The Odins-made up mostly of working class men aged around 20 to 40 — claim the influx has led to a rise in crime. Police disagree, but Ranta is undeterred and insists their presence will prove necessary in a few months when crowds hit the lakeside beaches in summer and "rape attacks will be starting," he said.

Neo-Nazi links

Finnish media have reported widely on the Odins' links to neo-Nazi movements. Ranta, who was convicted of a 2005 racially-motivated

attack against two immigrants, admits readily to being a neo-Nazi—"Yes, I am"—but insists his ideology and membership in the Finnish Resistance Movement has nothing to do with the patrols.

"Just because I am, as the founder or whatever, it doesn't mean the whole group are (neo-Nazis)... We're just a street patrol group, so why are people making it into something else?" Ranta argued. The Odins claim to have around 600 members in Finland, and support groups emerging in the Nordic countries and the US.

Neither the police nor the patrols have reported any violent incidents so far, but authorities are unhappy about their presence. Finnish police have repeatedly insisted they have no right to intervene. And the government has condemned their existence, with Interior Minister Petteri Orpo denouncing their "extremist features".

'Permission to hug'

A group of women are now intent on showing that Finland is a tolerant, safe place. The Sisters of Kyllikki-named after a joyful female character of Finnish mythology who likes to dance—are mothers, pensioners and professionals who met up on Facebook. They're countering the Odin patrols by greeting strangers with a smile and a ticket granting them "permission to hug." In Kemi, some of the passers-by look alarmed when the women approach: Talking to strangers, let alone hugging them, is unusual in taciturn Finland where respecting others' privacy is highly valued. But the women believe fear and insecurity can be overcome with simple acts of kindness. "We're here to show that Kemi is safe and peaceful and people should be nice to each other," explained Katja Hietala, the head of the Kemi branch. A local woman in her mid-20s said she was supportive of the Sisters and the migrants. "I'm more afraid of the Soldiers of Odin because they themselves are a lot scarier than anyone else who walks about here," she said, refusing to give her name for fear of reprisals on social media. — AFP



KEMI: A group of men calling themselves the 'Soldiers of Odin' are pictured on February 5, 2016 in Kemi, northern Finland. Fierce-looking men calling themselves the Soldiers of Odin patrol Finnish streets claiming to protect locals from asylum seekers, but they are now being challenged by a group of smiling women offering hugs and even some downs. — AFP

FRENCH MPs TO VOTE ON CONSTITUTION CHANGES

PARIS: French lawmakers were to vote yesterday on a controversial package of measures to change the constitution following the terror attacks on Paris in November. One of the measures proposed by President Francois Hollande would strip people convicted of terrorism of their French nationality, a contested move that has led to the resignation of the justice minister.

Another would enshrine in the constitution the state of emergency currently in force, giving security forces greater powers. The lower house of parliament has voted through both measures separately this week, but the collective package of measures still requires the support of lawmakers yesterday before it can pass on to the upper house, the Senate.

For it to be fully adopted, it will then also need the support of three-fifths of the Congress, the body formed when both houses meet at the Palace of Versailles to vote on revisions to the constitution. Prime Minister Manuel Valls said late Tuesday he was confident the reforms would pass, and warned lawmakers from his Socialist Party that voting against them would "put the government in difficulty and leave the president in a minority".

He said France faces a terrorist threat "without doubt more serious than before November 13" when gunmen and suicide bombers killed 130 people in Parisian bars, restaurants, a concert hall and the Stade de France stadium. The

Islamic State jihadist group claimed responsibility for the carnage, saying it was in response to French air strikes against the group in Iraq and Syria.

Year of attacks

It was the second time in a year that jihadists had struck at the French capital. In January 2015, gunmen attacked the offices of the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo and a Jewish supermarket. The measure to strip convicted terrorists of nationality was passed by 162 votes to 148 with 22 abstentions on Tuesday, following weeks of debate.

The nationality measure has strong public support but has deeply divided Hollande's party. Christiane Taubira resigned as justice minister last month over her opposition to the measure and Hollande's former prime minister Jean-Marc Ayrault has publicly condemned the proposal. Socialist lawmakers, those from former president Nicolas Sarkozy's right-wing Republicans party and the centrist party UDI party, voted in favour of the measure, but far-left MPs and most of the ecologist lawmakers were opposed.

On his Twitter account, veteran right-wing politician Alain Juppe, a former prime minister seen as the frontrunner in next year's presidential election, dismissed the reforms as "pointless" and said they "divide all the parliamentary groups—to be avoided!" — AFP

GERMANY PROBES CAUSE OF DEADLY TRAIN CRASH

BERLIN: German investigators raced yesterday to determine whether human error or technical fault was to blame for a train crash that killed 10 people, as police said all bodies had been recovered from the wreckage. There are "no more missing people," police said in a statement, adding that 17 people were severely injured and 63 others slightly hurt in Tuesday's collision near the southern spa town of Bad Aibling.

Two trains travelling at high speeds crashed head-on on a single track, with one slicing the other apart,

ripping a large gash in its side. Transport Minister Alexander Dobrindt said the line was fitted with an automatic braking system that should have prevented such accidents and investigators were probing whether the mechanism malfunctioned or whether there had been human error.

Newspaper group RedaktionsNetzwerk Deutschland (RND), citing sources close to the investigation, said a signalling station worker had manually deactivated the automatic signalling system to let the first train—which was running late-go past. That action

would have also shut off the automatic braking system. The second train then forged ahead on the same track in the opposite direction, before the first was able to split off where the line divides into two, according to RND. Police would not confirm the report.

'Thrown across the train'

Dobrindt himself had cautioned against any speculation on the causes of the disaster. "At the moment we will have to wait (for the result of the investigation). Everything else is speculation, and would be unhelpful and inappropriate," he had said on Tuesday.

Stefano, 24, a passenger on one of the trains, told Bild newspaper that the horrific accident began with a sudden "screech, like with an emergency brake." "Then there was a real crash, it was damn loud. The back of the train was thrust up. The lights went out and I was thrown across half the train.

"I was so scared that I was going to die. Next to me, a man was flung head-on against a window pane, he was around 45 to 50 years old. I saw how he died," recounted Stefano, who was later helped out of the train by fellow passengers. Salvage workers expect to take at least two days to remove the mangled wreckage from the site, national news agency DPA reported.

The accident is Germany's first fatal train crash since 2012, when three people were killed and 13 injured in a collision between two regional trains in the western city of Offenbach. The country's deadliest post-war accident happened in 1998, when a high-speed ICE train linking Munich and Hamburg derailed in the northern town of Eschede, killing 101 people and injuring 88. — AFP



MUNICH: Policemen stand at the site of a train accident near Bad Aibling. — AFP

News

in brief

India police to soon use chili-loaded slingshots

NEW DELHI: Police in northern India will soon use slingshots loaded with chili powder and marbles to tackle unruly protesters in the world's largest democracy, an inspector said yesterday. Not content with water cannon, tear gas and traditional wooden sticks or lathis, police in Haryana state close to New Delhi will turn to the slingshots as a "non-lethal way" to control violent crowds. "Plus it is much better than firing plastic bullets which can cause pretty bad injuries," police inspector general of Hisar district, Anil Kumar Rao, said. "It will be used only in emergency cases so that we can manage minimum collateral damage," added Rao, who came up with the idea. The locally-made slingshots are the latest in a series of unconventional measures adopted by security forces in India, which sees daily protests on a myriad of issues. Some quickly escalate out of control. In April last year police in the northern city of Lucknow said they were introducing pepper-spraying drones to control "mob crowds". Critics say the marbles could cause serious injury, but Rao said they would be used sparingly and only after the "chili balls" failed. "And it's not like we plan to use marbles on peaceful protesters, it's only meant to control hostile people," said Rao, whose officers have started practicing with the slingshots. "We have to step in and take certain action when people are burning government property, cars. This is a very, very positive step—a civilized, cost-effective weapon."

Hong Kong student held at airport after violent clashes

HONG KONG: A Hong Kong student activist was detained at the city's airport yesterday morning, apparently on suspicion of involvement in a violent Lunar New Year clash between police and protesters, his group said. The group Scholarism said on its Facebook page that 22-year-old Derek Lam Shun-hin had been detained shortly before boarding a flight to Taiwan with his family. Lam sent a voice message to friends in the group saying he was being taken away for an investigation, the group said. A lawyer working for the group has been unable to contact him, Scholarism said. At least 61 people have been held over Monday night's clashes and police have vowed further arrests. Violence broke out when activists angered over authorities' attempts to crack down on food hawkers in the crowded working class neighborhood of Monkong held running battles with police into the early morning hours of Tuesday. Protesters pelted officers with stones, glass bottles and other pieces of debris and set fires. Police responded with arrests and warning shots. The violence was the worst in Hong Kong since pro-democracy protests rocked the city in 2014, and left a growing mistrust between the public and authorities. In its statement, Scholarism said Lam had been present at the Mongkok hawkers stalls but did not participate in the violence. "We are deeply resentful of the police's indiscriminate arrest of the student as means to assault the people's right to assembly and freedom of expression," the statement said. As a participant in the 2014 protests, Lam had been charged with common assault and was due to go on trial on Feb. 18, the Hong Kong newspaper South China Morning Post reported. Yesterday was a public holiday in Hong Kong and there was no immediate comment from police or the government.

Five dead in Myanmar military plane crash

NAYPIDAW: All five crew died when a Myanmar air force plane crashed in the capital Naypyidaw yesterday, bursting into flames soon after take off and smashing into a nearby field, the military said. One man was pulled alive from the blazing wreckage and taken to hospital but later died of his injuries, according to a rare news statement on the official Myanmar army Facebook page. "Naypyidaw airport authorities, the fire brigade, air force personnel and local residents all worked together to extinguish the fire," the statement said, adding the cause of the crash was under investigation. Hundreds of people gathered in the area as officials sifted through the smoldering wreckage of the propeller plane, according to an AFP reporter at the scene earlier Wednesday. The Beechcraft passenger plane took off from the Naypyidaw airfield in the mid-morning on a routine patrol, but burst into flames soon after leaving the runway, according to an airport official, who asked not to be named because the incident involved a military aircraft. The Ministry of Information earlier published a series of pictures of the remains of the aircraft showing just one wing intact and a thick stream of smoke rising into the air. Myanmar has a busy aviation sector, partly to compensate for the country's poor road and rail infrastructure. While news of military air crashes is relatively rare, there have been several incidents involving commercial planes in recent years. In July, an Air Bagan ATR 72 twin-engine turboprop carrying 49 passengers skidded off the runway after landing during heavy rain at Yangon International Airport. —Agencies

S KOREA TO SHUT DOWN JOINT INDUSTRIAL PARK WITH NORTH

SECOND MAJOR MEASURE TAKEN FROM LAUNCH REACTION

SEOUL: South Korea said yesterday it will shut down a joint industrial park with North Korea in response to the North's recent rocket launch, accusing the North of using hard currency from the park to develop its nuclear and missile programs.

The decision to end operations at the industrial complex in the North Korean border city of Kaesong, the last major cooperation project between the rival countries, comes after North Korea on Sunday launched a long-range rocket considered by other nations to be a banned missile technology test. The move to close the park is the second major measure taken by South Korea in reaction to the launch. Seoul also has begun talks with Washington on toughening South Korea's missile defense system.

South Korean Unification Minister Hong Yong-pyo said at a news conference that the suspension of operations at the park in the North Korean border city of Kaesong would stop the North from using hard currency earned there to develop nuclear and missile technology.

Immediate reaction

The park, which started producing goods in 2004, has provided 616 billion won (\$560 million) of cash to impoverished North Korea, Hong said. "It appears that such funds have not been used to pave the way to peace as the international community had hoped, but rather to upgrade its nuclear weapons and long-range missiles," he said at the televised briefing.

The unification ministry said in

a statement that the government had "decided to completely shut down" the park. It notified North Korean authorities of the decision and asked them to help ensure the safe return of South Korean citizens from Kaesong. There was no immediate reaction to the move from North Korea.

appointment and anger. In a statement, the association of South Korean companies in Kaesong denounced the government's decision as "entirely incomprehensible and unjust."

Lee Eun Haeng, chairman of Ilung Leports, which produces fashion goods at the park, said the

Korean workers and families who rely on the Kaesong park for their living. They have become jobless overnight."

'National security'

Nonetheless, he said, he had no choice but to accept the government's measures because they

Korean companies hired 54,000 North Korean workers to produce socks, wristwatches and other goods worth around \$500 million.

In addition to the business benefits, the park also allowed people from both Koreas to interact with each other and glimpse into lives on the other side of the border. Some South Korean snacks have become popular among North Korean workers. South Korea's government and companies invested more than 1 trillion won (\$852 million) to pave roads and erect buildings in the park zone, which lies in a guarded, gated complex on the outskirts of Kaesong, North Korea's third-largest city.

South Korean companies in Kaesong survived during past periods of tensions that led to the suspension of other inter-Korean projects. A major interruption to the park's operation came in 2013, when North Korea pulled out its workers in protest of South Korea's joint military drills with the United States.

North Korea launched a long-range rocket Sunday carrying what it said was an Earth observation satellite into space. The launch, which came about a month after the country's fourth nuclear test, was quickly condemned by world leaders as a potential threat to regional and global security. Japan announced Wednesday that it will impose new sanctions on North Korea to protest the rocket launch. The US Congress is also considering imposing more stringent sanctions on North Korea. This story has been corrected to show that the park began production in 2004, not 2005. —AP



PAJU: Visitors look at a map of the Korean peninsula at the exhibition hall of the unification observatory. —AP

South Korea's government will provide financial compensation to companies that operate at the park, the finance ministry said in a statement. South Korean businesses that operate factories at the park reacted with a mixture of dis-

companies had become "victims" of a political situation. "For the companies and for their suppliers to survive, the government should give enough compensation," Lee said by phone. "There are hundreds of thousands of South

were for the sake of "national security." Combining South Korean initiative, capital and technology with the North's cheap labor, the industrial park has been seen as a test case for reunification between the Koreans. Last year, 124 South

THAI COPS BUST GANG SENDING FAKE PASSPORTS TO MIGRANTS TO EUROPE

BANGKOK: Thai police have broken up a major fake passport ring led by an Iranian known as "The Doctor" which sent hundreds of passports to Middle Eastern customers trying to enter Europe, authorities said yesterday. The kingdom has long been a hub for a forged document industry serving human traffickers and other criminals.

Five years of investigation culminated in Monday's arrest of

Clients emailed the Iranian forger their photos and specified the country for which they wanted a passport, the commander said, adding that Jafary guaranteed his top-quality counterfeits would not be detected by border officials. The forged documents were then sent via private courier companies or delivered to clients in Thailand by middlemen, who ensured that Jafary never met customers directly. It was not immediately clear if "The Doctor" provided passports to people fleeing to Europe during the current migrant crisis.

Best fakes around

Jafary's fake passports were the "best quality in the market," although he was unable to copy the latest micro chipped travel documents, Natthorn said. "He himself used six different passports—three from Brazil, and one each from Peru, Portugal and New Zealand," the officer added. "The Doctor" was wanted by security agencies in several foreign countries, especially in the EU and Japan, according to a police press release.

Five Pakistani middlemen were also arrested in raids in and around Bangkok for assisting the forgery ring, which sold the passports for up to 80,000 baht (\$2,300). Some of the nearly 200 travel documents found in a Monday raid on Jafary's home were completely forged, while others had been stolen from tourists and doctored, police said.

The raid also uncovered a laser engraving machine, rolls of ribbon, thin leather for passport covers as well as metal plates and stamps from various countries. Thousands of passports are reported missing annually in Thailand, where forged documents of every variety can be purchased on the streets.

The flourishing market has helped establish Thailand as a hub for human traffickers and smugglers. Two Uighur men awaiting trial for planting a deadly bomb in Bangkok last August have also been accused by police of running a crime group that helped illegal migrants obtain counterfeit documents. The pair are currently being held in a military prison.

In 2014, the spotlight also swung onto the Thai-based trade when two mystery passengers boarded the doomed Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 using European passports stolen in Thailand. In 2010, Thai authorities took part in an international police sting that saw two Pakistanis and a Thai woman arrested in Thailand for providing fake passports to groups behind global terror attacks. —AFP



BANGKOK: Fake passports are displayed at the immigration bureau in Bangkok yesterday after Thai police broke up a major fake passport ring led by an Iranian known as "The Doctor" which sent thousands of passports to Middle Eastern customers trying to enter Europe. —AFP

the alleged Iranian mastermind Hamid Reza Jafary who had learnt his skill from his late father, police said. The 48-year-old had for many years been crafting sophisticated forgeries from his home in Chachoengsao province east of Bangkok, they said.

"He (Jafary) produced passports for people from countries including Iran, Syria and Afghanistan who were escaping wars and wanted to enter Europe," according to immigration police commander Lieutenant General Nathathorn Prousoontorn. "The Doctor" confessed to the crime and could face a decade in jail if convicted, he added.

AUSTRALIA STRUGGLING TO BETTER LIVES OF NATIVE ABORIGINES: PM

SYDNEY: Australia is failing to close an "unacceptably wide" gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal and non-indigenous people, officials admitted yesterday, highlighting the devastating impact of drugs and alcohol on the country's original inhabitants.

Aborigines have lived on the vast island continent for at least 40,000 years and number just 470,000 out of a total population of 23 million. They have long had significantly lower education, employment and life expectancy compared to non-indigenous communities. In a bid to tackle the stark differences, the government introduced an annual "Closing the Gap" report in 2009, the latest edition of which was released yesterday.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull hailed progress towards achieving some of its targets, including a goal to halve the gap in child mortality by 2018, improvements in narrowing the divide in reading and numeracy, and an increase in the proportion of students completing high school. But noting that the life expectancy gap remained unacceptable, he admitted there was an enormous task ahead, with "real and difficult challenges... particularly in isolated communities".

"The life expectancy gap is still around 10 years, an unacceptably wide gap, and this target is not on track," he told parliament. Life expectancy for non-indigenous males was 79.7 years compared to 69.1 for Aborigines in 2010-12, according to official data released in 2013.

For women, it was 83.1 for the non-indigenous population, in contrast to 73.7 for Aboriginal people, with a small reduction in the gap of 0.8 years for men and 0.1 years for women between 2005-07 and 2010-12. Turnbull said that while indigenous people made up only three percent of the nation's population, they represented 27 percent of the prison population, with the adult incarceration rate rising.

He said drug and alcohol abuse was a key problem. "We must be honest about the catastrophe and violence created by drug and alcohol misuse and confront and respond to the cries for help, particularly from women and children," he said in an address to parliament in Canberra.

Racism and recognition

Turnbull stressed that working with indigenous communities across the country to develop local policies and solutions was key to bridging the gap, an approach emphasized by both supporters and critics of the yearly report.

"We have heard these words before," said Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda, who is the "Closing the Gap" campaign co-chair. "We take them with good heart but there's got to be a carrying-out of that new relationship so I think we're entitled to be a little bit cynical about it until it starts happening." Indigenous leaders also said steady policy and funding for the health targets was necessary as a revolving door of prime ministers, politicians and bureaucrats was hampering progress.

"It's turmoil not in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities but in this (parliamentary) house here that's got to be resolved so we have a really consistent policy approach and consistent funding," Reconciliation Australia co-chair Tom Calma told reporters. He added that wider issues, including tackling racism and recognizing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the constitution, needed to be addressed. Australia's founding document, which was written more than a century ago, fails to mention the country's first inhabitants.

Both Turnbull and Labor opposition leader Bill Shorten reaffirmed their commitment to holding a national referendum on the matter, with Shorten wanting a date set for the first half of next year. "Recognition cannot be a mere poetic sentence or two, stapled to the front of our constitution," Shorten told parliament. "It must be real, it must be substantive change. It must eliminate racism, and signal a declaration of national intent." —AFP

ELEPHANT RAMPAGES IN EAST INDIAN TOWN

KOLKATA: A wild elephant rampaged through an East Indian town yesterday, smashing cars and homes and sending panicked people running before the animal was tranquilized to be returned to the forest. As the frightened elephant ran amok, trampling parked cars and motorbikes, crowds of people gathered to watch from balconies and

roof tops. Some followed from a distance as the elephant moved through the streets.

"The elephant was scared and was trying to go back to the jungle," said Papaia Sarkar, a 40-year-old homemaker who watched the elephant amble down a street near her home. The elephant had wandered from the Baikunthapur

forest, crossing roads and a small river before entering the town of Siliguri in West Bengal state.

Divisional Forest Officer Basab Rai said the female elephant appeared to be a loner without a herd, and was likely searching for food when it strayed into the town. He said it did not attack any people, and appeared to be afraid of them. After several hours, it became clear the elephant was unable to find its way back to the forest.

Authorities eventually shot the elephant three times with a tranquilizer gun and used a crane to lift it into a truck once it had calmed down. It was then taken to a park for domesticated pachyderms that is maintained by the forest department. Once the effect of the tranquilizer wore off, authorities planned to return the elephant to the forest, Rai said.

Elephants are increasingly coming into contact with people in India, as the human population of 1.25 billion soars and cities and towns grow at the expense of jungles and other elephant habitats. In India and Sri Lanka, more than 400 elephants and 250 humans are killed each year.

Yesterday, another wild elephant trampled a farmer to death in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. The farmer had been sleeping in his paddy field when the elephant appeared, police told Press Trust of India. India's elephants are also threatened by speeding trains and illegal poachers looking for ivory to sell on the black market. Today, there are about 30,000 elephants across the country, restricted to about 15 percent of their historic habitat, according to the environment ministry. Worldwide, elephants have disappeared from some 95 percent of their historical range, which once stretched from the shores of the Mediterranean to the Yellow River in northern China. —AP



WEST BENGAL: A wild elephant that strayed into the town stands after authorities shot it with a tranquilizer gun at Siliguri in West Bengal state, India, yesterday. The elephant had wandered from the Baikunthapur forest yesterday, crossing roads and a small river before entering the town. The panicked elephant ran amok, trampling parked cars and motorbikes before it was tranquilized. —AP

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ALEPPO SIEGE SPELLS DOOM FOR WEST'S GOALS

By Eric Randolph and Michel Sallhan

The siege of Aleppo has taken the West even further from achieving its key goals in Syria of stemming the refugee flow, removing the Assad regime and tackling the Islamic State group, experts say. As the joint forces of Russia, Iran, Hezbollah and Syria encircle the divided northern Syrian city, the so-called "moderate" opposition faces a potentially devastating turning point in its five-year war against the regime of President Bashar Al-Assad. The collapse of the "moderate" opposition would have serious knock-on effects for the West.

"The civil war is feeding a horrific humanitarian crisis with obvious significance for the twin Western concerns of refugees and extremism," said Julien Barnes-Dacey of the European Council on Foreign Relations. The United Nations says more than 30,000 people have fled Aleppo in just a few days as the fighting intensifies, and officials are warning that Europe could see migrant numbers that eclipse even the record figures of the past year.

"The worst-case scenario that could happen in this region in the short term would be a new influx of 600,000 refugees at the Turkish frontier," Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus warned on Monday. Assad's main international backers - Russia and Iran - argue that the Syrian leader is the best hope for ending the war - a view that is gaining some currency in Western capitals despite them seeing Assad as responsible for most of the quarter million dead in the conflict. "There is not the same sense of urgency or moral

impulse to get rid of Assad," said Barnes-Dacey. "But Assad can't win this war outright. No one realistically believes he can stabilise the country and deal with both extremism and refugees," he said.

'Rampant Wishful Thinking'

The onslaught on Aleppo led to the collapse last week of the first peace talks between the regime and opposition in Geneva, but Washington sees little alternative but to keep the negotiation process going. The United States is unwilling to throw full military support behind the rebels - fearful of becoming mired in an indirect conflict with Russia. Instead, analysts say the White House is still hoping Moscow and Damascus will get tired of fighting and seek a settlement. "Wishful thinking has been rampant in Washington," said Hassan Hassan, of the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy in Washington. "The West is banking on the political process, on the idea that the regime campaign will get to a stalemate and will eventually accept concessions. They think the bombardment of Aleppo is just part of the negotiation. "But they are being played by the regime and Russia. The regime is seeking total victory and wants to get to a point where it doesn't need to negotiate. That's the only doctrine the regime believes in."

Boom or Bust for IS?

While it will generate still more humanitarian disasters and a fresh exodus of refugees, analysts say the fall of Aleppo will not directly impact the West's primary concern: the war against the Islamic State group (IS),

which has become practically a separate conflict in eastern Syria. "If Aleppo falls, it would be a big symbolic victory for the Syrian government over the Sunni insurgency," said Colum Strack, senior Middle East analyst for IHS in London. "But the Western strategy (against IS) shifted away from backing the Sunni insurgency in the middle of last year... It just wasn't working," Strack said.

In October, the US formally abandoned its \$500 million plan to train a moderate Sunni force to fight IS after a series of embarrassing setbacks that saw some of the first recruits simply hand over their weapons to extremists. Washington and its Western allies are now putting their hopes in Kurdish fighters, hoping they will act as ground forces against the brutal jihadist group.

Experts are divided on whether the current trends of the conflict will help or hinder the Islamic State. Some fear the decline of the moderate opposition will force many into the arms of IS. "The Russian plan is to get to a place where Assad is left alone against the Islamic State," said Agnes Levallois, a Middle East consultant in Paris. "But that will create a scenario where the Islamic State can present itself as the great and only defender of the Sunni community against the Syrian regime."

Other analysts agree that extremist groups will take advantage of losses by more moderate forces, but point out that IS is currently under considerable pressure in key areas. "Overall the current trends look bad for the Islamic State - you've got US-backed Kurdish forces and Russian-backed Syrian forces competing for the territory held by the Islamic State along the Turkish border," said Strack. —AFP

UN DRIVE TO LIFT FARMERS MUST FOCUS ON CLIMATE

By Magdalena Mis

A new push to give farmers in developing countries better access to markets, led by the United Nations' food aid agency, could fall short of its goals if it does not prioritize helping poor farmers adapt to climate change, experts have warned. Aimed at boosting incomes and improving food security, the project plans to help 1.5 million small-scale farmers across Africa, Asia and Latin America over the next three years with contracts to buy their crops, signed before they are planted, worth \$750 million.

The World Food Programme (WFP) and its partners - including agribusiness giants Bayer and Syngenta, the World Bank's International Finance Corporation, Rabobank and Norwegian fertiliser producer Yara International - will also offer farmers access to agricultural inputs, loans and insurance. "The platform will enable some of the most marginalized farmers to access reliable markets for the first time," WFP Executive Director Ertharin Cousin said in a statement as the programme was launched in Davos, Switzerland, late last month.

Half of the world's 795 million hungry people are farmers, according to the WFP, and in some African countries up to 90 percent of the population are small-holder farmers. The UN agency said the pre-agreed purchase contracts with local, regional and international buyers, together with financing and other resources, would enable more than 1 million of the world's poorest farmers in 25 countries to shift from subsistence farming to market-oriented agriculture. Experts said that, for the program to succeed, climate change should be a key factor in deciding which crops to plant. "Current climate risks which are affecting countries are a big player in the low level of agro-productivity in sub-Saharan Africa," said John Recha, a specialist with the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS). "But I'm not seeing mention of (this) programme being tied to the risks which come aboard because of the changing climate," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation from Kenya.

Global warming has led to shifts in rainfall, Recha said, meaning farmers should have the opportunity to grow a range of crops, such as sorghum, cassava or sweet potato, which are more drought-tolerant than the staple maize. In Rwanda and Tanzania, where the "Patient Procurement Platform" - so-called due to the long-term commitment required from producers and buyers - began in December, maize was the main crop covered by the contracts. "If you promote more of the maize at the expense of the drought-tolerant crops like finger millet or cassava, then you are not helping these farmers adapt to climate (change)," Recha said. Mack Ramachandran, who leads procurement for the WFP, said participating farmers would have access to climate-related training, including water management and conservation. "There will be a significant component of climate-smart agriculture," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation from Rome.

'Hooked' on Fertiliser

CCAFS' Recha said it made sense to bring the private sector on board to support small-scale farmers and raise their yields by providing them with access to fertilizers, which are underused in Africa. But Teresa Anderson, a researcher with development charity ActionAid, warned of the risk that farmers could end up reliant on chemical inputs. "Once you start adding fertilizer, it actually kills off the natural fertility (of the soil), so then you become dependent on it," Anderson told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "Unless you use fertilizers, your yields will go down, so you can't just use fertilizers and then stop; you get hooked."

She said the hybrid seeds farmers may be encouraged to buy from the WFP partners needed a lot of fertilizer, as well as reliable rainfall. That could leave farmers facing a disaster when rains - and their crops - fail, she added. "It's not an appropriate response to make farmers more vulnerable by getting them hooked on these chemicals and seeds," she said. While insurance may enable them to survive extreme weather, it will not help them adapt their practices to shifting climate risks, she said. Many farmers are now going back to traditional methods, she noted. According to Ramachandran, farmers in the WFP program will be able to buy seeds from whichever supplier they prefer, but they will receive recommendations on which seeds are best for their soil and water conditions. "The farmer choice can never be taken away - they don't have to buy from Syngenta," he said. —Reuters

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TRUMP PROVES ESTABLISHMENT CAN'T STOP HIM

By Steve Peoples

The current and former chiefs of the state Republican Party condemned him. New Hampshire's only two Republican members of Congress refused to endorse him. The conservative owner of the state's largest newspaper called him "a conman" on the front page. Donald Trump won anyway - big time. So, too, did Bernie Sanders, who will leave New Hampshire with the commanding victory one might expect of a frontrunner blessed with the near universal favor of his party. Except all that establishment support belongs to Hillary Clinton.

Trump's 18-point victory and the self-described democratic socialist's 21-point win are reminders of the limits of party power in an age of anger toward Washington and frustration with politics. Many Republican Party leaders may be terrified by Trump's ascendance, but have yet to divine a way to stop the billionaire real estate mogul. Clinton may have all the endorsements of her party's bold-faced names, but it is Sanders who is winning over the young people and independents who helped push Barack Obama to the White House.

On Tuesday, establishment-minded Republicans from New Hampshire expressed a mix of frustration and shame that it was their state that delivered Trump's first victory. "I refuse to support him under any circumstance," said Fergus Cullen, a former New Hampshire Republican Party chairman. "Trump would be a disaster." Cullen likened Trump to Pat Buchanan in 1996, the divisive former Nixon aide and conservative commentator who also won the New Hampshire primary. GOP leaders quickly coalesced behind mainstream alternative Bob Dole, the former Republican Senate leader who went on to win the nomination.

It wasn't because they loved Dole, Cullen said, but because they feared Buchanan would embarrass the Republican Party. "The party was able to stop Buchanan 20 years ago," Cullen said. "Today, they're incapable of doing it." For those like Cullen who oppose Trump, it only gets worse. Marco Rubio's underwhelming performance in New Hampshire eliminates the prospect the

Florida senator might emerge as the Republican establishment's favored alternative as the race heads into South Carolina and the Super Tuesday states.

Insiders

Competing for the support of the same group of Republicans, Ohio Gov John Kasich, former Florida Gov Jeb Bush and New Jersey Gov Chris Christie and Rubio won enough votes combined to handily beat Trump. But as they fought among themselves - four political insiders against the lone outsider - Trump won with ease. John Jordan, a California winery owner who runs an outside group backing Rubio, said that "candidate log-jam is all going to break in one night", and suggested that night will be March 15, when Florida is among the states to hold their presidential primaries.

"One of them will do better than the other, and it will be impossible for the relative loser to make the case to donors that he should continue," he said, referring to the state's native sons, Bush and Rubio. "Donors will simply move to whoever wins that state, and it will happen nearly instantly." But between now and March 15 is South Carolina, Nevada and the more than a dozen states that vote on March 1 - time that Trump, and Sen Ted Cruz, can use to further their edge. Despite questions about the strength of his ground game, Trump con-

tinues to hold a commanding lead in many preference polls in the South's first primary - and he could get a bump from his New Hampshire success.

Sanders may, too, but he has much further to climb as Democratic race moves ahead. South Carolina and Nevada are more racially diverse states than Iowa and New Hampshire, which should play to Clinton's longstanding strength with minority voters. And unlike Republicans, Democrats give hundreds of party insiders a vote at the national convention to cast as they choose. Among those so-called superdelegates, Clinton already has a commanding 352 delegate edge in the race for the 2,382 needed to win the nomination.

"This is not a two-round boxing match, it's a 12-round boxing match," said Bob Mulholland, a longtime California Democratic strategist. "And I want to remind everybody the last three presidents came second in New Hampshire - Clinton, Bush and Obama." When Trump gets to South Carolina yesterday, he isn't likely to find any GOP leaders in the Palmetto State who are eager to embrace his campaign. The state's senior Republican senator, Lindsey Graham, has said that choosing between Trump and Cruz is like choosing between being "shot or poisoned". South Carolina GOP Chairman Matt Moore lashed out at Trump's plan to temporarily ban Muslims from the US as un-American and unconstitutional.

And South Carolina Gov Nikki Haley called on Republicans to resist the temptation to follow "the siren call of the angriest voices," referring to Trump. Yet even before New Hampshire results were final, Moore declined to condemn Trump when given the opportunity - a clear attempt not to alienate his supporters. "Trump is holding rallies and drawing crowds like we've never seen, which is really impressive," Moore told AP. "Clearly he's brought a lot of new people into the fold. We'll need those people to defeat Hillary Clinton." —AP



JAPAN CAMERA MAKERS BATTLING SMARTPHONES

TOKYO: Highschooler Nao Noguchi is a perfect illustration of why Japanese camera sales have plunged the past few years - she uses her smartphone for everything and cannot understand why anyone would bother with a separate device for photos. "It is easy to take your smartphone out of your pocket if you want to take a picture of someone or something. And you can send the pictures to friends quickly" on social media, said the 17-year-old on a day trip to Tokyo's historic Asakusa district with her friend Rina. The selfie-stick toting pair are the camera industry's worst nightmare.

A rapid shift to picture-taking smartphones has torn into a camera sector dominated by Japanese firms including Canon, Olympus, Sony and Nikon - much like digital cameras all but destroyed the market for photographic film years ago. And the numbers paint a grim picture: 130 million cameras were sold globally in 2011. Four years later, that figure stood at just 47 million. The collapse was underscored this month as the firms published their latest financial results, with weak sales threatening a once-vibrant sector.

Now companies are having to scramble for a response, hitting back with upmarket options and offering web-friendly features, or in some cases simply moving away from the hard-hit business. While Apple and Samsung recently pointed to slowing sales of smartphones, they have proved a mighty rival, offering an all-in-one phone, computer and camera with comparatively high-quality pictures and Internet photo downloading.

The answer, the camera industry says, is to innovate and convince smartphone users to climb up the quality ladder. "It's kind of life insurance for the camera industry to always protect this superiority in terms of picture quality," said Heribert Tippenhauer, an analyst at market research firm GfK. "The competition from smartphones has almost killed the cheapest cameras, but at the same time so many people are taking photos, as never before in human history. "The smartphone is the first step into the topic of photography, then people want to upgrade, the potential is there."

Betting on Nostalgia

For Canon, whose Sure Shot digital camera has been hit by smartphones, the response is to offer what a phone cannot, such as more powerful zoom options. "We have been offering cameras that offer features smartphones cannot provide," said company spokesman Richard Berger. "People who use smartphones are becoming interested in photogra-



TOKYO: This file picture taken on Aug 22, 2013 shows Japanese camera maker Fujifilm's instant photo system, the "Instax mini 90 Neo Classic", allowing a user to make card-sized prints instantly. — AFP

phy, they want to take better pictures, to be more creative so they are moving up to SLR (single-lens reflex) cameras."

Another battleground has been in mirrorless cameras, which can be made nearly as small as compact cameras but with picture quality that rivals their bulkier counterparts. Sony and Panasonic have teamed up with German rivals, including Leica, while Olympus is pushing further into the medical equipment business as a leader in endoscopes, which now eclipse camera sales.

But some like Konica Minolta have thrown in the towel on cameras altogether, opting to go into print and optical devices. Fujifilm, which was nearly put out of business by the drop in photo film sales, has also shifted focus to other businesses, including the health sector - one of the companies it acquired has developed a drug to combat the deadly Ebola virus. But Fujifilm has not abandoned the sector that made its name, and scored an unlikely win with the Instax, a nostalgic throwback to the retro Polaroid.

Users can sling the bulky gadget - available in a series of flashy colors - around their neck and print pictures they've just taken.

The latest versions sell for about \$140. After a slow start, the camera's appearance on a popular South Korean television series helped jack up Asian sales in recent years, with about five million units moved in the current fiscal year to March. The appeal of giving friends physical photos sold Calvin Lau on the Instax. "We never know how photos will come out until they're fully ready," said the 31-year-old Hong Konger who now lives in Tokyo. "It's fun and exciting for people taking Instax photos and those whose photos are being taken. I like the concept that the pictures you take are the one and only ones out there... We can give our friends unique, real pictures."

Still, Seiko Mikie, who has about 20 years on Lau, thinks the Polaroid throwback is about as lame as it gets. "I'm not the least bit interested in a Polaroid-style camera - that is something from the Showa era," said the 50-year-old transportation company employee, referring to the last Japanese emperor's reign which ended with his death in 1989. "Back then, the picture quality was good enough for the time, but not any longer." — AFP

KIDNAP CASTS SPOTLIGHT ON GULF 'SPORT OF KINGS'

DOHA: Every year the houbara bustard, a rare desert bird whose meat is prized by Arab sheikhs as an aphrodisiac, migrates from Central Asia to the far reaches of Iraq and Pakistan in search of a mild climate and a place to breed. Its arrival sets off another migration - as scores of wealthy Gulf Arabs descend on Iraq to hunt the bird with trained falcons through the winter months.

But the kidnapping of 26 Qataris in December in the Iraqi desert while hunting, including members of the country's royal family, has highlighted the risks of pursuing the "sport of kings" at a time of heightened regional turmoil. No one has claimed responsibility for the kidnapping, which happened in a region dominated by Shiite militia. But what is clear is the immense wealth of Qatar and the Doha government's past successes in freeing political prisoners in war zones has made its own citizens prey to those seeking to raise money or exploit the Gulf state's diplomatic clout.

"The kidnapping of the Qatari hunters dealt a painful blow to the reputation of all the southern areas of Iraq," said Abdul Rahman Hammoud, chief of the Iraqi Hunters Association in Samawa, where the Qataris were kidnapped. "We are a tribal community and Gulf hunters are our guests. After the abduction, not a single hunter from the Gulf is coming to Iraq anymore, fearing from being kidnapped. It will take a long time to repair the damage and convince Gulf hunters to resume their Iraq trips," he told Reuters.

It is perhaps the world's most elaborate blood sport - cargo planes fly tents, luxury jeeps, and falcons worth hundreds of thousands of dollars into custom-built desert airstrips. Mega-rich owners often keep their falcons in vast air-conditioned rooms and free-flying aviaries, and use helium-filled balloons and drones to train them at higher altitudes. Local communities can benefit from the hobby, which has for decades seen Arab elites channel cash - via hunting permit fees and jobs - into remote corners of the Middle East and beyond.

To curry favor with local communities whose land they descend upon to pursue prey, the Arab hunters have also built roads, schools and mosques in places like Pakistan's Baluchistan province and Afghanistan's Helmand, while residents also benefit from the international-standard airstrips that can spring up. New four-wheel drive vehicles brought in for the hunting season are left behind as gifts for local leaders. But critics say that hunting with falcons, a practice Arab nomads used

to survive life in the desert, is today a reckless hobby that threatens the houbara, a dwindling species, and funnels money into areas controlled by militias.

Under Attack

The tradition of falconry is thought to date back thousands of years in the Middle East, and for centuries nomad hunters relied on falcons. But rapid urbanization and population growth, fuelled by the discovery of oil, swallowed the desert breeding grounds and habitats of falcons and their prey. In the 1960s, falconers began to extend their hunting grounds into Iran, Iraq and Pakistan, as well as countries like Azerbaijan, Mauritania and Morocco, to hunt in areas that cover thousands of square miles.

"It is dangerous," said Mohammed Al-Khater, a student at Qatar University who trains and breeds falcons in his spare time. "The hunters fly into hotspots because it's where you find the most prey. It's a risk - but then, it's their passion." But the hunts have proved divisive. The global houbara population is estimated at between 79,000 and 97,000, according to BirdLife International which lists the bird as "vulnerable". It says the population has declined by a third or more over the last 20 years due to hunting and habitat loss.

A ruling by Pakistan's Supreme Court last year banning hunting of the houbara - after complaints from conservationists that the bird was at risk of extinction - was overturned last month when the government argued it damaged relations with Gulf states, key investors in the country. A senior Gulf prince and his entourage killed 2,100 houbara over 21 days during a hunt in 2014, according to an official report leaked to Pakistani news media.

Hunters say they breed houbara to replace those they kill and complain that the royal visits are being unnecessarily politicized. Farooq Al-Elji, a falconer who works for the Al Gannas Society, a Qatari association of hunters, defended the practice. "These people are falconers, you cannot take that away from them. Even if you take the trips away it is in their personality. Every human emotion is connected to being a falconer. It's very deep-rooted," he said. "It's a traditional trip, they like to maintain it to recapture the mood of being a survivor in the desert. That's the beauty of it, it's a wonderful vacation for them." But the vacation is over for now, at least in Iraq. In the wake of the kidnappings, Colonel Mahmoud Abbas at Iraq's interior ministry said Gulf citizens would no longer be able to secure visas "until further notice". — Reuters

MPS AGAINST SUBSIDY CUTS, END DEBATE...

Continued from Page 1

He said the country's economic situation has deteriorated not as a result of the fall in oil prices, but because of the failure of the policies of the previous and current governments. "If the decision to raise petrol prices and cut subsidies for electricity and water is taken by the government unilaterally, the prime minister must be grilled," Azemi said.

Islamist MP Abdulrahman Al-Jeeran said the rationalization the government is talking about is negative because if oil prices rebound, the government will abandon all these proposals. He also criticized the government for listening to the advice of the International Monetary Fund and accused the ministers of failing to collect state dues from private sector companies.

MP Faisal Al-Kandari warned that all the good achievements of the Assembly will evaporate if subsidies were lifted, and warned the minister of commerce if he fails to prevent merchants from raising prices if subsidies are cut. If this is allowed to happen, the people will be hurt twice, exactly as it happened when diesel and kerosene prices were raised. MP Ahmad Al-Azemi lashed out at the government, claiming it has failed. He said the lifting of subsidies is totally rejected and

urged all lawmakers to oppose the government's plans. Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh reiterated that there is an urgent need to rationalize public spending in the face of the sharp fall in oil prices. He said that during the past decade, public expenditures increased from around KD 6 billion to over KD 21 billion, and the wage bill also increased manifold. He said that it is not acceptable to withdraw from the state reserves to finance the budget deficit and "we need to introduce a comprehensive program of economic reforms", calling for referring the issue to the financial affairs committee. The Assembly was then adjourned until March 1.

Separately, well-informed ministerial sources revealed that the government will start discussing the privatization of some official bodies in a Cabinet meeting on Sunday. The sources added that the government is seeking to privatize the ministry of communications now that the telecom authority has been established. The sources added that the same would be done with the ministry of electricity and water, and that a special authority would be established to be responsible for building power plants. "A major part of the information ministry will also be privatized," added the sources, pointing out that several health ministry sectors would be included in the plan.

UAE NAMES WOMEN MINISTERS FOR HAPPINESS...

Continued from Page 1

ministries and appointing several state ministers. The move could be seen as an attempt to cut expenditure as Gulf oil-exporters struggle to adapt to the sharp drop in their revenues after crude prices nosedived to record low levels. An oil-rich federation of seven Gulf sheikhdoms, the United Arab Emirates is considered a safe haven spared in the wave of Arab Spring uprisings that hit the region. Last year its rulers sought to widen the country's nascent democratic credentials with about a quarter of its one million citizens given the right to vote. Eighty-seven of the 330 candidates were women, who play a much larger role in public life in the UAE than in neighboring Saudi Arabia.

But the authorities have been deeply cautious and in 2014 introduced sweeping new counterterrorism legislation that rights groups have criticized as paving the way for a crackdown on dissent of all sorts. Citizens account for a small minority of the UAE's population of nine million which is overwhelmingly made up of for-

ign workers. The female ministers include also Noura Al-Kaabi, as Minister of State for the Federal National Council, or parliament, Jamila Al-Muhairi, as Minister of State for Education, and Najla Al-Awar as Minister of Community Development.

Reem Al-Hashimi was moved to the post of State Minister for International Cooperation Affairs, while Maitha Al-Shamsi kept her post as a state minister. Several key ministries remained in the hands of members of the ruling families. Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, a son of the late founder of the UAE and a member of Abu Dhabi's ruling family, has kept the portfolio of interior. His brother Sheikh Abdullah stayed at the helm of the ministry of foreign affairs, now merged with the portfolio of international cooperation, while his other brother Sheikh Mansour remains vice prime minister and minister of presidential affairs. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid himself kept hold of the defense portfolio and his brother Sheikh Hamdan stayed as minister of finance. Oil Minister Suhail Al-Mazroui remained in office. — AFP

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SHARAPOVA OUT OF QATAR OPEN

DOHA: Maria Sharapova has withdrawn from the Qatar Open tournament to be held later this month due to an injury to her left forearm, organisers announced yesterday. It is the second time the world number six has pulled out of a tournament this season because of the same injury. Earlier this year, Sharapova also had to withdraw from her intended season opener, the Brisbane International. "Unfortunately, I will not be able to play the Qatar Open because of my left forearm injury," the 28-year-old said in statement released by Qatar Tennis. "I would like to wish the tournament and all the great fans in Doha a great week of tennis and I hope to see them next year." Sharapova has won in Qatar twice—in 2005 and 2008. This year she was meant to be part of a strong line-up in Doha in a tournament featuring number one seed Serena Williams, Simona Halep and Petra Kvitova. Also there will be surprise Australian Open winner Angelique Kerber. If seeding goes to plan Kerber and Williams will meet again in the final in Doha, just 28 days after their clash in Melbourne. This year's Qatar Open will be played between February 21 and 27 and is the 14th time the tournament has been held.



TOULON FORWARD MANOA OUT FOR THREE MONTHS

PARIS: Toulon's US international forward Samu Manoa is to undergo an operation on his injured left knee and will be out for around three months, coach Bernard Laporte said yesterday. The news is a blow for the Top 14 giants, coming just a day after Irish lock Paul O'Connell announced his retirement from all rugby through injury without ever having donned a Toulon shirt. Manoa, who arrived in Toulon from Northampton in the summer, injured his knee in the 29-21 friendly defeat by the Sharks on Friday, having previously sustained an injury in December. The 30-year-old will miss several league games as well as the quarter-finals of the European Champions' Cup and possibly the semi-finals. Toulon, the three-time defending European champions, currently only have Jocelino Suta, Romain Taofifenua, Thibault Lassalle and Konstantin Mikautadze in the lock department, the latter two having also picked up injuries against the Sharks. For that reason, Toulon will look at taking on a medical joker to plug the gap left by Manoa, Laporte said. — AFP

HOEWEDES EXTENDS SCHALKE DEAL

BERLIN: Germany international and Schalke captain Benedikt Hoewedes has shown some faith in the Royal Blues by signing a three-year contract extension until 2020, it was announced yesterday. The 27-year-old, who along with Manuel Neuer and Philipp Lahm was one of only three Germany players involved in each minute of the seven games in winning the 2014 World Cup, has played for Schalke since 2001. Interestingly, there is no early-release clause in his new contract should Hoewedes be lured away from Gelsenkirchen by one of Europe's top clubs in the future. "I signed the contract with a thumping heart," beamed Hoewedes in extending his stay with fourth-placed Schalke, who are nicknamed 'the miners' due to the Ruhr valley's industrial history. "Schalke is a great club with awesome fans and I am very grateful to them that they trained me up in the 'miners' forge' and made it possible for me to make the break through in the Bundesliga. "They also showed some trust by making me captain at such a young age." Hoewedes says the young Schalke team has plenty of potential and is very ambitious, "I want to continue playing an active role in their future". The Royal Blues' director of sport Horst Heldt said he is delighted that Hoewedes had shown the club some faith. — AFP



This handout photo released by the Youth Information Service (YIS)/IOC shows athletes in action during the Speed Skating training session before the Lillehammer 2016 Winter Youth Olympic Games yesterday. — AFP

BIG-WAVE SURFERS GATHER IN HAWAII FOR PRESTIGIOUS EVENT

HALEIWA: "Eddie would go." That's the mantra of the Quiksilver big wave surf competition in memory of Eddie Aikau, a Native Hawaiian surf legend who became famous for riding monster waves and saving hundreds of lives as Waimea Bay's first official lifeguard.

For the first time in six years, the surf conditions on the North Shore of Oahu are expected

to meet the organizers' strict minimum requirements on Wednesday, with waves of around 40-foot tall. Organizers and competitors alike wait and watch each year, inspecting the ocean for the perfect conditions to arrive before announcing the competition will go on. This year, they announced on Monday that Wednesday's conditions are expected to meet

the event standards and provide hours of worthy big waves.

The Quiksilver In Memory of Eddie Aikau event began in 1984, but there have only been eight times the conditions have allowed surfers to actually compete.

According to the National Weather Service in Honolulu, the swell that is approaching the islands this week is being fueled in part by the ongoing El Nino conditions in the region. Though Hawaii gets large swells every winter, El Nino is giving the jet stream extra energy to produce more big swells than normal.

"It has taken us six years to pull the trigger, but this is the first swell we have seen that is truly lining up as an Eddie swell," said the event's director, Glen Moncata, in a statement Monday. According to organizers, however, the event is about much more than just surfing. Event spokeswoman and longtime friend of the Aikau family Jodi Wilmott told The Associated Press in a telephone interview Tuesday that while there is a prize for the winner of the competition, the surfers involved are really there to honor the legacy and generous spirit of Eddie. "The surfers invited to this event absolutely

understand the prestige of being invited," Wilcott said. "It's about coming together to honor the most famous big-wave rider there has ever been and to do that basically at the Mecca of surfing." As a North Shore lifeguard, Aikau is credited with saving hundreds of lives from the dangerous ocean surf of Oahu's North Shore, and he is said to have never had a fatality while on duty. He was a guardian of the bay and any other body of water he visited, Wilcott said, and fittingly so as he was a direct descendant of a Hawaiian high priest named Hewahewa, who was given the task of watching over the Waimea Valley long before Eddie arrived.

"He really did share aloha wherever he went," Wilcott said. "He loved to share his own spirit of what being a Hawaiian was. He played music freely and told stories of Hawaii wherever he travelled."

Wilcott said that Aikau would watch from shore as the waves grew larger in Waimea Bay, making sure everyone was safe. Then, when the surf got to be too big for most and the crowds would leave the ocean, Aikau would grab his surfboard and take on the biggest waves around. "His spirit was very caring, very accom-

modating, very peaceful, and when he would ride it was just a sight to behold," she said. Ultimately, however, Aikau gave his life to the ocean in a final attempt to save others. Part of a team that was attempting to trace the route of their Polynesian ancestors from Hawaii to Tahiti aboard the traditional Hokulea canoe in 1978, the 31-year-old Eddie made a final sacrifice. The vessel encountered very rough seas in the open waters off Hawaii, began to take on water and eventually capsized. Despite the concerns of his crew, Aikau took his surfboard and paddled away for help. The rest of the crew stayed with the boat as Aikau attempted the long trip back to the Hawaiian Islands. He was never seen again, though the rest of the crew was eventually rescued.

Some of the best big-wave surfers in the world are at Waimea Bay to compete in the event, including Eddie's brother Clyde Aikau, who is the oldest competitor at 66 years old and the only surfer to attend all of the competitions. Surfing is expected to last most of the day. Another big-wave competition, Mavericks, is expected to be held on Friday in Half Moon Bay, California. — AP



TRONDHEIM: Winner Eric Frenzel (C) from Germany, flanked by second placed Akito Watabe (L) from Japan and third placed Joergen Graabak (R) from Norway, pose on the podium after the FIS World Cup Nordic Combined competition in Trondheim, yesterday. — AFP

FRENZEL EASES TO NORDIC COMBINED WCUP WIN

TRONDHEIM: Germany's Eric Frenzel extended his lead at the top of the Nordic combined World Cup standings after winning yesterday's event in Trondheim.

The reigning overall world champion started the 10-kilometer cross-country race 27 seconds behind Akito Watabe of Japan after the ski jumping.

Frenzel caught Watabe by the four-kilometer point and stayed close behind before passing him with three kilometers left and easing away to win 15.9 seconds ahead of his rival.

Watabe has finished second to Frenzel four times this season and he conceded after the race that the German was a tough opponent.

"I don't know how to beat Eric at the moment, but I'm pretty satisfied today because I was skiing quite badly yesterday," Watabe said.

"I'm still struggling to improve my cross-country part but I'm really jumping good, I'm still continuing to make the podium." The winner of Tuesday's race, Joergen Graabak of Norway, finished third, 57.8 seconds behind Frenzel.

It was 27-year-old Frenzel's sixth win of the season as he bids to become overall champion for the fourth time in a row. He's now 147 points ahead of Watabe and 262 points in front of third-place Fabian Riessle, also of Germany. There is a nine-day break before the next event in Lahti, Finland. — AP



WAIMEA BAY: File photo provided by World Surf League, Clyde Aikau, left, brother of Eddie Aikau, drops into a wave as Tony Ray, of Australia, finishes during the Quiksilver In Memory of Eddie Aikau big wave surf competition at Waimea Bay, Hawaii. Event organizers say the competition took place yesterday, for the first time in over six years as the surf conditions on the North Shore of Oahu are expected to meet the strict minimum requirements. — AP

SHEIKH AHMAD AL-JABER ANNOUNCE 7TH KUWAIT TENNIS OPEN

KUWAIT: HE Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, President of Kuwait Tennis Federation (KTF), announced the start of applying to play 7th Kuwait Tennis Open. The tournament will be held from 1-7 March 2016 at the Tennis Center of Kuwait Tennis Federation inside Yarmouk Sports Club in Meshref.

There will be 11 events in the tournament: (Boys Under 11 - Boys Under 13 Singles - Boys Under 17 Singles - Veterans Over 45 Singles - Veterans Over 55 Singles - Veterans Over 45 Doubles - Men's Singles - Men's Doubles - Girls Under 18 Singles - Ladies Singles - Diplomats Singles). Matches start at 4:30

pm every day and 9:00 am on Fridays and Saturdays.

Deadline for receiving applications with a copy of Civil ID Card is at 6:00 pm on Saturday 27 February 2016 at KTF headquarters inside Yarmouk Sports Club, Meshref HE Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah expressed his hope that as many tennis players in Kuwait as possible to play the tournament. It is open for all players of different categories and nationalities in addition, to diplomats and veterans. 7th Kuwait Tennis Open is the biggest tennis event in the State of Kuwait. We expect more than 350 players to play the tournament.

TOP SEED GASQUET QUILTS ROTTERDAM

ROTTERDAM: Richard Gasquet handed the Rotterdam World Tennis tournament another box office body blow as the top seed quit on Tuesday a day before his opening match with a groin strain.

The pullout came a week after Roger Federer was unable to play after undergoing knee surgery which will keep him off the ATP for at least a month.

Frenchman Gasquet said that he felt his pain the day before winning the Montpellier tournament for the third time at the weekend. The 29-year-old ranked 13th came to Rotterdam in hopes he could heal but said that he is also now feeling ill and had no choice but to quit the indoor event.

Marin Cilic, the second seed, now takes the role of favourite at the tournament where he finished runner-up in 2014. Gasquet said that he hopes to be able to play in the Marseille event later this month.

"Of course I'm disappointed, I wanted to play here," Gasquet said. "It's impossible for me to play. If I don't feel 100 percent, it is better to quit. This is a big event for me, I'm sad not to be able to play here. It's tough for me but I had no choice.

"I need to rest," said the player whose season only began last week after missing the Australian summer campaign with back pain.

"I played four matches last week and maybe my body was not ready." On court, Luxembourg veteran Gilles Muller rallied to defeat Andreas Seppi 4-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-4, setting up his first career meeting with Cilic.

THREE DEFEATS

Muller, 32, had suffered three defeats at the hands of the Italian but turned the tables in slightly more than two hours at the Ahoy stadium. Muller will be keen to take on second seed Cilic for the first time after the 2014 US Open winner led a three-man Croatian waver into the second round in Rotterdam. "Cilic is one of the few guys I've not played, sometimes it happens like that," said Muller, losing quarter-finalist at the event a year ago to eventual champion Stan Wawrinka. "It will be exciting, a tough match, I hope to recover well and be ready for him." Muller's big serve accounted for 19 aces against Seppi, who dropped to 4-5 in 2016 as he played Rotterdam for the ninth time.

"It was a close match, it could have gone either way at the end," Muller, a semi-finalist last weekend in Sofia, said. "We were both fighting very hard.

"The first round of a tournament is always difficult, I also got to Rotterdam late which did not help. It's a match I'm glad I won, but I can play better than this." Crowd-pleaser Marcos Baghdatis ended an upset of fourth seed David Goffin by winning a 41-shot rally as the Belgian fired a forehand long in a 6-1, 5-7, 7-6 (7/5) loss. Baghdatis was joined in the second round by French fifth seed Gael Monfils, a 6-4, 6-4 victor over qualifier Ernests Gulbis. South Korea's Chung Hyeon advanced past Guillermo Garcia-Lopez of Spain 5-7, 6-4, 6-4 while Germany's Philipp Kohlschreiber easily eliminated Frenchman Julien Benneteau 6-4, 6-4. — AFP



Novak Djokovic

DJOKOVIC DOMINANT BUT IT'S STILL TIGHT AT THE TOP: HENMAN

MUMBAI: Novak Djokovic's domination of 2016 is not as inevitable as it might appear, former British number one Tim Henman believes, even if the other members of the "Big Four" will have to raise their game and hope the Serbian falters.

Djokovic won 11 titles including three of the four majors last year and has a 12-0 record this season, having thrashed Rafa Nadal, Roger Federer and Andy Murray to win the title in Doha and a record-equalling sixth Australian Open crown.

So impressive was the 28-year-old at Melbourne Park that many pundits believe a first calendar year grand slam in the men's game since Rod Laver in 1969 is on the cards.

Henman, while conceding there is now a gap between Djokovic and the other top players, does not think it has become a gulf.

"They can definitely challenge. Murray is at highest ranking in his career, he's number two in the world. He's playing great tennis," the 41-year-old Henman told Reuters in an interview.

"But obviously Djokovic is playing a little bit

better at the moment. "Roger was in the final of US Open last year and he was in the final of the Wimbledon last year. Djokovic stopped him in his quest to win more grand slams.

"They are still very, very close."

Henman thinks Federer, who won the last of his 17 major titles in 2012, and Murray look most likely to prevent a Djokovic grand slam sweep this year as Stan Wawrinka did at the French Open last year.

Nadal, who was knocked out of Australian Open in the first round, may not be the same player that won nine French Open titles but can still pose a serious threat on the clay courts at Roland Garros.

"The challenge for all those other players is to try and raise their levels and probably hope that Djokovic doesn't play quite as consistently," the former world number four and a four-time Wimbledon semi-finalist said.

"There's no doubt right now that Djokovic is the player to beat." Tennis is reeling from revelations in a report by the BBC and BuzzFeed in

January that 16 players who have been ranked in the top 50 had been repeatedly flagged to the Tennis Integrity Unit (TIU) over concerns they had thrown matches.

Henman, who was in the city as the brand ambassador of HSBC Road to Wimbledon programme, a joint initiative by the All England Lawn Tennis Club and India's tennis body, said his first reaction to the allegations was one of "surprise" and called for more proof and not just speculation.

"If there has been any match-fixing then we need to make sure that it's erased from our sport because it's a crime in sports. We have no place for it in any sport let alone tennis," he said.

"It's also important to educate the young players so they appreciate this is something very, very serious if it has happened and make sure it never happens again."

"We have a tennis integrity unit and if they need to invest more money in that then we must do that. We must find out the facts and we then can move on from that." — Reuters



NETHERLANDS: Luxembourg's Gilles Muller returns the ball to Croatia's Marin Cilic during their second round match at the ABN AMRO World Tennis Tournament in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, on Tuesday. — AFP

MANOR F1 TEAM SIGNS MERCEDES WEHRLEIN

LONDON: Pascal Wehrlein, reserve driver for world champions Mercedes and last year's German Touring Car (DTM) series winner, will race for Manor this season, Formula One's smallest team said yesterday.

"We're a small team up for a big challenge... so we've chosen a driver with the talent and hunger to match our own on-track ambitions," said owner Stephen Fitzpatrick in a statement.

"Pascal has impressed in testing for Mercedes and Force India, together with commanding performances in DTM... Manor Racing is perfectly placed to help Pascal make a big impact in his first season."

The 21-year-old German, whose mother is from Mauritius, became the youngest DTM champion in 2015 when he won the title with Mercedes. That domestic series pits Mercedes against rivals Audi and BMW in cars that superfi-

cially resemble production models but whose performance is closer to single-seater racers.

While Mercedes dominated Formula One last season with triple champion Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg winning all but three races, Manor - as Marussia - failed to score a point and finished last in 10th place.

Team principal and founder John Booth and sporting director Graeme Lowdown departed at the end of the year and the team's name has changed for 2016.

They have made some high-profile appointments and the switch from a year-old Ferrari engine to Mercedes power units should see them become more competitive even if they still have the smallest budget.

"Manor Racing is a great place for me to start my Formula One racing career," said Wehrlein, who thanked Mercedes for making the move

possible. "It's a small and totally focused team and I soon hope to know everyone.

"It will be a tough challenge but I think we should be able to challenge for points along the way." The team have only scored points once, with the late French driver Jules Bianchi in Monaco in 2014. They almost folded at the end of that season before being rescued from administration.

Mercedes had initially played down speculation Wehrlein could be part of the Manor deal, arguing that the former Marussia team needed drivers who brought sponsorship with them.

Manor had American Alexander Rossi, Britain's Will Stevens and Spaniard Roberto Merhi racing for them last year. Indonesian Rio Haryanto has also been linked to a 2016 race seat, but needs to raise money to secure it. — Reuters



Pascal Wehrlein, reserve driver for world champions Mercedes.

TAKEYASU, LEE SEIZE EARLY LEAD IN BANGLADESH OPEN

DHAKA: Japan's Shunya Takeyasu and Soomin Lee of South Korea carded impressive seven-under-par 64s to share the opening-round lead in the \$300,000 Bashundhara Bangladesh Open yesterday. Fresh from his maiden Asian Development Tour victory in Malaysia last week, the 23-year-old Japanese began his charge with a flawless display to hit seven birdies.

Lee, who finished in the top 10 in the Myanmar Open also last week, was equally impressive at the Kurmitola Golf Club in Dhaka. The duo hold a one-shot lead over Thitiphun Chuayprakong of Thailand, who took third place with six-under-par 65.

Takeyasu, playing his first Asian Tour event this week, needed only 23 putts around the course-including a 32-footer putt for par on the first hole.

"I played solid today, especially my putting. I sank a long putt on the first hole and that was kind of the highlight for me today," he said. Lee, who finished tied second in the inaugural edition of

the tournament last year, was thrilled to put up another excellent performance in one of his favourite hunting grounds.

"I feel very excited out there. I had a good finish last year and I was very happy because it was my first year playing on the Asian Tour," said the 22-year-old Korean in comments supplied by the organisers. Home favourite Siddikur Rahman, a two-time Asian Tour winner, is tied in 14th position on 68 along with several other players.

Leading scores:

- 64- Shunya Takeyasu (JPN), Soomin Lee (KOR)
- 65- Thitiphun Chuayprakong (THA)
- 66- Shubhankar Sharma (IND) Pavit Tangkamolprasert (THA), Mithun Perera (SRI)
- 67- Kevin Techakanokboon (THA), Sutijet Kooratanapisa (THA), Namchok Tantipokhukul (THA), Gaganjeet Bhullar (IND), George Gandranata (INA), Rahul Bajaj (IND), Piya Swangrunporn (THA). — AFP

MARC GASOL SIDELINED AFTER BREAKING FOOT

LOS ANGELES: Memphis Grizzlies star Marc Gasol faces a lengthy layoff after suffering a fracture in his right foot, the team confirmed Tuesday. The towering center exited early from Monday's defeat to the

Portland Trail Blazers but had complained of pain over the weekend. An MRI scan at Campbell Clinic in Tennessee confirmed the fracture. "Marc is a cornerstone of our franchise, and we are focused on getting

him healthy," Grizzlies general manager Chris Wallace said. "Marc will be out indefinitely and a further update will be provided after the All-Star break." Gasol had been averaging 16.6 points, 7.0 rebounds, 3.8

assists and 1.35 blocks after starting all 52 of the Grizzlies games this season. "It's certainly not great for Marc and his family. I know he's disappointed," Grizzlies coach Dave Jaeger told The Commercial Appeal

daily in Memphis. "It's bad for our team. This is a tight bunch of dudes. They care about each other. It hurts everybody. Marc is a guy who lays it out there for his teammates and the fans." — AFP

ODI FALLOUT HAS AUSSIES FIRED UP FOR NZ TEST

WELLINGTON: Australia have warned of a "fiery clash" in the first Test against New Zealand starting in Wellington on Friday as tensions continue to simmer over the bizarre ODI dismissal of Mitchell Marsh.

Australian captain Steve Smith, who was clearly annoyed at the way Marsh was given out in the third one-day international on Monday, has diplomatically said there was no lasting animosity.

But Australian quick John Hastings gave a blunt warning Wednesday that relations remained strained between the two sides and there would be fireworks, and not just to celebrate New Zealand captain Brendon McCullum's 100th Test.

It will be "a nice fiery clash, I'm sure there will be plenty on it," Hastings said as the players took a look at the green Test wicket that offers venom for the quick bowlers.

"They (New Zealand) want to be the 'big spirit of cricket' in the ICC, but when it comes down to it, with a big series on the line, you're obviously going to take that one aren't you?"

Marsh was given out after a vociferous crowd reaction to replays on the big screen at the ground brought the umpire's attention to the caught and bowled dismissal.

The replays showed the ball had rebounded off Marsh's boot and not the ground to be caught by bowler Matt Henry and the batsman was given out. The loss of the wicket started an Australian collapse that gave New Zealand the game by 55 runs and the series 2-1. Both sides struggled in the middle order with their batting, but New

Zealand go into the Test with their tails up after their overall success. "I think we just take a bit of confidence," coach Mike Hesson said. "Knowing that if we're able to put Australia under pressure from a batting point of view then that can create opportunities for us." The Basin Reserve offers a typical New Zealand green wicket for the first Test, but David Warner expected that would matter less than the swing movement offered by the atmosphere to New Zealand strike bowlers Tim Southee and Trent Boult.

"The ball will swing for a lot longer than what it does in Australia," Warner said. "Looking at the wicket here it looks nice and green, but that's irrelevant.

I don't think the ball will do much off the wicket. "It will swing around a lot, and obviously with two world-class swing bowlers in the attack it's going to be a challenge for us guys at the top of the order."

Australia still have nightmares of the Ashes Test at Trent Bridge last year when they failed to cope with the swing and were all out for 60 in their first innings.

"Look at Trent Bridge, it was swinging around, you don't want those memories back again. We just have to adapt to whatever we face on game day," Warner said.

The last time Australia played at the Basin Reserve, in 2010, they won by 10 wickets. New Zealand last played at the Basin a year ago and beat Sri Lanka by 193 runs. In a drawn Test against India the previous year, McCullum hit his career best 302, the only triple century scored by a New Zealander. — AFP



OAKLAND: Golden State Warriors' Stephen Curry, left, loses the ball while being guarded by Houston Rockets' Patrick Beverley (2) and Dwight Howard during the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, in Oakland, California. — AP

CURRY LEADS WARRIORS PAST ROCKETS FOR 42ND HOME WIN

OAKLAND: Stephen Curry had 35 points, nine assists and six rebounds and the Golden State Warriors relied on a signature putaway fourth quarter to hold off the Houston Rockets 123-110 on Tuesday night. Andrew Bogut added 13 points, 11 rebounds, a season-high six blocked shots - three in the fourth - and three steals in one of his best games yet. Andre Iguodala and Harrison Barnes hit back-to-back 3-pointers to start the fourth to get the defending champions going after the game was tied at 93 after the third. Golden State won its 42nd straight regular-season home game and is 24-0 at Oracle Arena this season. The Warriors are within two home victories of matching the Chicago Bulls' NBA-record home winning streak of 44 games from March 30, 1995-April 4, 1996. James Harden overcame a scoreless first quarter to finish with 37 points, five assists and five rebounds in Houston's eighth straight loss to Golden State.

SAN ANTONIO SPURS 119, MIAMI HEAT 101
LaMarcus Aldridge scored 28 points, Kawhi Leonard added 23 and the San Antonio Spurs got seven points on one possession in the fourth quarter to help them beat the Miami Heat 119-101 on Tuesday night. Danny Green added 15 for the Spurs, who have won six straight over the Heat going back to the 2014 NBA Finals. Dwyane Wade scored 20 points on 9 for 12 shooting for Miami, which goes into the All-Star break on a two-game slide. Chris Bosh scored 18 and Hassan Whiteside added 14 points and six rebounds before getting ejected in that pivotal possession in the fourth. Whiteside was assessed a flagrant-2 for elbowing the Spurs' Boban Marjanovic as they tried to get position for a rebound. That was part of a seven-point trip for the Spurs, who pushed an 87-80 lead to 94-80 in 16 seconds and weren't threatened again.

JAZZ 121, MAVERICKS 119, OT
Gordon Hayward hit a fadeaway jumper at the buzzer in overtime and Utah extended its season-best winning streak to seven games. Rodney Hood had a tying 3-pointer with 1.5 seconds left in regulation as the Jazz ended a 10 game losing streak in Dallas. Their last win on the Mavericks' home court was Jan. 9, 2010. Hood finished with 29 points, and Hayward had 20, including 13 in the second half and overtime. Chandler Parsons led Dallas with 24 points but missed an open 3-pointer for the lead with 24 seconds left in the Mavericks' second straight overtime game and NBA-high eighth of the season.

WIZARDS 111, KNICKS 108
John Wall had 28 points and 17 assists, Bradley Beal scored 26, and Washington beat New York in the Knicks' first game under Kurt Rambis. Wall made four free throws in the final 6.6 seconds and the Wizards held on when Langston Galloway's 3-pointer at the buzzer was just short. Carmelo Anthony had 33 points and 13 rebounds, but the Knicks lost their sixth straight in their first game since firing Derek Fisher on Monday. They have dropped 10 of 11 and started Rambis' era the same way Fisher's ended, by quickly falling in a huge early hole. Rookie Kristaps Porzingis scored 20 points, but just two after his 14-point third quarter.

BUCKS 112, CELTICS 111
Khris Middleton made one of two free throws with 0.6 seconds left and Milwaukee defeated Boston. Middleton drew a foul on Avery Bradley to get to the line. Boston had tied the game when Kelly Olynyk made two free throws with one second remaining. Milwaukee appeared to have won the game on Greg Monroe's last-second hook shot, giving the Bucks a 111-109 lead. Olynyk then drew the foul with no time expiring off the clock. Monroe, who was removed from the starting lineup, had 29 points and 12 rebounds as the Bucks ended a five-game losing streak. Middleton had 20 points and Michael Carter-Williams, who also was benched, added 16. Crowder and Bradley had 18 points each for the Celtics. — AP

NBA results/standings									
San Antonio 119, Miami 101; Washington 111, NY Knicks 108; Milwaukee 112, Boston 111; Utah 121, Dallas 119 (OT); Golden State 123, Houston 110.									
Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
Atlantic Division					Northwest Division				
Toronto	35	16	.686	-	Oklahoma City	39	14	.736	-
Boston	31	23	.574	5.5	Utah	26	25	.510	12
NY Knicks	23	32	.418	14	Portland	26	27	.491	13
Brooklyn	14	39	.264	22	Denver	21	32	.396	18
Philadelphia	8	44	.154	27.5	Minnesota	16	37	.302	23
Central Division					Pacific Division				
Cleveland	37	14	.725	-	Golden State	47	4	.922	-
Indiana	28	24	.538	9.5	LA Clippers	35	17	.673	12.5
Chicago	27	24	.529	10	Sacramento	21	31	.404	26.5
Detroit	27	26	.509	11	Phoenix	14	39	.264	34
Milwaukee	21	32	.396	17	LA Lakers	11	43	.204	37.5
Southeast Division					Southwest Division				
Atlanta	30	24	.556	-	San Antonio	44	8	.846	-
Miami	29	24	.547	0.5	Memphis	30	22	.577	14
Charlotte	26	26	.500	3	Dallas	29	26	.527	16.5
Washington	23	27	.460	5	Houston	27	27	.500	18
Orlando	23	28	.451	5.5	New Orleans	19	32	.373	24.5



Umar Gul

PAKISTAN PICK FIVE UNCAPPED PLAYERS, AXE GUL FOR WORLD T20

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan named uncapped bowlers Rumman Raees and Mohammad Nawaz in their squad for the World Twenty20 in India while leaving out experienced pacer Umar Gul, the second highest wicket-taker in the shortest format.

Left-arm fast bowler Raees and all-rounder Nawaz were rewarded for their strong domestic form and the same 15-man squad will play in the Feb. 24-March 6 Asia Cup in Bangladesh. Only skipper Shahid Afridi (91) has taken more wickets than Gul (85) in Twenty20 Internationals but the 31-year-old pacer, who was part of the Twenty20 squad that lost 2-1 in New Zealand last month, has been struggling for form as well as fitness in recent times.

"The T20 team has been selected keeping in mind the conditions during Asia cup and World T20 and the recent performances of some players in domestic and A Team tours," chief selector Haroon Rashid said in a statement. "The team is a fine blend of experience and youth and the selectors believe that team will do well in both tournaments."

Opening batsman Ahmed Shehzad was also dropped from the squad with his place going to Khurram Manzoor, who has played 16 tests and seven one-day internationals but is yet to make his debut in Twenty20 international. Batsmen Babar Azam and Iftikhar Ahmed are the other players in the Afridi-led squad who have played one-dayers for Pakistan but are yet to represent them in the shortest format. Towering left-arm pacer Mohammad Irfan, who was rested for the Twenty20 series in New Zealand, also returned to the squad for the March 8-April 3 tournament.

Pakistan's participation in the World T20, which they won in 2009, across the border depends on government clearance as there are specific threats, according to Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Shaharyar Khan.

Squad: Shahid Afridi (captain), Mohammad Hafeez, Shoaib Malik, Umar Akmal, Sarfraz Ahmed, Babar Azam, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim, Anwar Ali, Mohammad Irfan, Wahab Riaz, Mohammad Amir, Mohammad Nawaz, Khurram Manzoor, Rumman Raees. — Reuters

WINDIES BOARD REJECTS CALL FOR NEW DEAL IN WORLD T20 ROW

KINGSTON: West Indies players will be thrown off the squad for the World Twenty20 if they do not agree to financial terms by Sunday's deadline, the head of the region's cricket board said on Tuesday. The hard-line stance comes in the wake of reports that the 15-man squad, upset at a huge pay cut, has rejected the contract offered by West Indies Cricket Board (WICB). Cricinfo.com on Tuesday published a letter from Darren Sammy to the WICB in which the West Indies captain said the financial terms for the World Twenty20, which starts in India on March 8, were unacceptable.

"We want to represent the West Indies but the financials on offer we can't accept," Sammy wrote. WICB chief executive Michael Muirhead did not sound in a negotiating mood, however, when he spoke on Jamaican radio. "The WICB is committed to

play in the tournament, let me say that first," Muirhead said on Hitz 92fm.

"No one will leave the shores of the West Indies without signing a contract and if these players in particular choose not to sign, then I guess we'll be left with no option but to substitute other players for them." Muirhead added that the board was not in a position to improve the remuneration package, negotiated with the players association nine months ago. "They have had lots of time to digest and argue and do everything," he said. "Five of the players were instrumental and were there at the onset, so at this point, I'm hoping that the players will sign and take advantage of the other benefits that are there." He said that players would receive half of any shirt sponsorship the board negotiates in addition to a portion of prize money. —Reuters



NEW YORK: Washington Wizards guard John Wall (2) and Wizards guard Grant Temple watch from the floor as New York Knicks forward Kristaps Porzingis (6) goes up for a shot in the second half of an NBA basketball game at Madison Square Garden in New York, Tuesday. The Wizards defeated the Knicks 111-108. — AP

HEART PROBLEM FORCES STEVENS TO RESIGN AT HOFFENHEIM

BERLIN: Huub Stevens resigned as coach of Bundesliga strugglers Hoffenheim yesterday due to an acute abnormal heart rhythm as he awaits surgery. The 62-year-old Dutchman, who only had a contract until the end of the season and has been in charge for 10 games since last October, was examined in Heidelberg on Monday and announced his decision in a press conference with immediate effect.

"The risk is too great that something will happen and I don't want that," said Stevens with his side second from bottom in Germany's top flight. "I think my career is

over. The drive isn't there anymore - it's a pity." Stevens, who has coached Schalke 04, Hertha Berlin, Cologne, Hamburg, PSV Eindhoven and PAOK during his career, says he had been having heart problems for weeks. "The club needs someone who is 100 percent fit and I am not," said Stevens, who will undergo heart surgery in either Heidelberg or back in the Netherlands.

"The doctors haven't advised me to quit, but I can feel it in myself. I haven't got so many years ahead of me any more and I want to enjoy them." For now, Stevens' assistant coaches Alfred Schreuder and

Armin Reutershahn are in charge ahead of Hoffenheim's next league game at fellow strugglers Werder Bremen on Saturday.

The Sinsheim-based club is still seven points from safety with 14 games left and are in serious danger of being relegated after eight seasons in Germany's top flight. The club has already appointed youth team trainer Julian Nagelsmann as head coach of the senior side for next season and, if the club stays up, he will become the youngest coach in Bundesliga history at just 28 years of age. Hoffenheim's director of sport Alexander Rosen has hinted



Huub Stevens

that Nagelsmann may take over from Schreuder and Reutershahn in the near future. Hoffenheim's 2-0 defeat at home to Darmstadt last Sunday was Stevens' final game in charge.

He only took over from Markus Gisdol in October with the club, backed by billionaire software mogul Dietmar Hopp, in their current league position of 17th.

But Stevens says he believes Hoffenheim will stay in Germany's top flight. "Hopefully, I don't need to worry," he said. "I will keep following Hoffenheim and the Bundesliga." — AFP



UPTON PARK: Liverpool's Brazilian midfielder Philippe Coutinho (R) hits his freekick through the West Ham wall to score their first goal during the English FA Cup fourth round replay football match between West Ham United and Liverpool at The Boleyn Ground in Upton Park, east London, on Tuesday. — AFP

WEST HAM BEAT LIVERPOOL TO REACH 5TH ROUND OF FA CUP

LONDON: Angelo Ogbonna headed home a winning goal in stoppage time of extra time to give West Ham a dramatic 2-1 victory over Liverpool in their FA Cup fourth round replay on Tuesday.

Ogbonna's strike in the 121st minute at Upton Park earned West Ham a last-16 match at Championship team Blackburn Rovers. "It is a special night for our club and I'm so proud and happy for our players and proud of everyone who has any connection with the club," manager Slaven Bilic said after West Ham's first ever FA Cup win against Liverpool.

"We scored a great header in the last sec-

ond of the game, and we had injuries, and we overcame all of that. So that's why this game will go down in the history as one of the greatest nights and games for our club."

West Ham opened the scoring on the stroke of halftime when Ecuador striker Enner Valencia sent a ball across the Liverpool goal that was met with a volley by winger Michail Antonio. Liverpool equalized from a free kick in the 48th minute after Pedro Obiang brought down striker Christian Benteke on the edge of the area.

Philippe Coutinho drove the ball low and hard under the wall to score, but the match

remained deadlocked at 1-1 after 90 minutes. It then looked destined for a penalty shootout until Italy international Ogbonna grabbed the winner, meeting Dmitry Payet's curling free kick with a powerful header.

Liverpool had earlier been fortunate that a tug on Valencia by Tiago Ilori in the penalty box was ignored by referee Roger East in the 66th minute.

But it was less lucky with the performance of Benteke, who squandered a series of chances, either by missing the target or seeing his goal-bound efforts saved by Randolph, who was in fine form.

MUCH-CHANGED TEAM

Liverpool fielded a much-changed team from the side that drew 2-2 with Sunderland in the Premier League on Sunday, but started off on the front foot, showing plenty of attacking intent. West Ham keeper Darren Randolph made a couple of smart first-half saves from Benteke, while Brazilian midfielder Coutinho hit the post.

But the hosts gradually grew into the match, with France International midfielder Payet hitting the post from a free kick and right back Joey O'Brien going close, before Antonio opened the scoring. Liverpool man-

ager Jurgen Klopp was back at the helm after missing Saturday's Premier League match because of appendicitis.

"Tomorrow when we get up the sun will shine and if we feel all at one at Liverpool then we can take a lot of positives from this game and make the next step," he said after a game that saw the return of England striker Daniel Sturridge, who has been sidelined since December. West Ham, which is three places above Liverpool in the Premier League standings, had already completed its first league double over the Merseyside club since the 1963/64 season. — AP



ALEPPO: This file photo taken on January 16, 2016 shows Syrian coach Shaaban Kattan (R) supervising young boxers during a training session at the Shahba boxing club in a rebel-controlled neighbourhood of Aleppo's old city. Bathed in the fluorescent light of a sparse basement in Syria's war-torn Aleppo city, young boys pummel red punching bags under the close supervision of a former national boxing champion. — AFP

YOUNG BOYS IN ALEPPO CITY BOX TO DROWN OUT BOMBS

ALEPPO: Bathed in the fluorescent light of a sparse basement in Syria's war-torn Aleppo city, young boys pummel red punching bags under the close supervision of a former national boxing champion.

The rhythmic sound of gloves at Shahba boxing club can at times drown out the blasts of air strikes and shelling coming from eastern parts of the city. "I come to the centre to train because I've dreamt of becoming a boxing champion since I was a little boy," says Omar, a young trainee with dark, straight hair. "When this centre opened, I started coming here so I could make my dream come true. For the past four years, we've had no sports activities at all, only destruction and shelling," he says.

Since Syria's bloody conflict erupted in March 2011, more than 260,000 people have lost their lives and millions have been displaced. According to the United Nations, more than two million Syrian children are out of school, and one in four schools has been destroyed.

Syria's second city Aleppo has been divided by a dangerous front line since 2012, with government forces controlling western neighbourhoods and rebel groups the east.

Opposition fighters fire rockets into the west, and regime forces pound the east with mortars and air strikes. In opposition-held areas, dozens of young children are finding a new life at the Shahba boxing club, where they train for free.

"Because of the war in Syria and especially in Aleppo province, sports activities stopped altogether, including boxing," says Shaaban Kattan,

who founded the club. Kattan, 31, began boxing professionally in 1994 and became Syria's national champion only a year later, going on to win gold medals across the region.

'FUTURE CHAMPIONS'

Slender with short, buzzed hair, Kattan walks the ruined streets between the gym and his modest home, which is full of trophies and professional head shots.

Along with colleague Ahmad Mashallah, Kattan opened the club in the summer of 2015 to bring boxing back to a conflict-ravaged city.

"We opened the Shahba club centre to get back to our former level and participate in Arab and Asian competitions again," Kattan tells AFP. Kattan and Mashallah rented the underground basement, previously used as a warehouse. They kitted it out with equipment that they bought from another gym in Aleppo city which had closed. At a training session, about a dozen teenage boys in nylon exercise clothes were doing push-ups in the boxing ring before Kattan handed each a pair of gloves.

Taking turns, they flitted around the ring trading punches with Kattan, who assessed their performance. The boys also take part in local tournaments hosted by the gym. Late last year, Kattan and Mashallah staged a tournament for some of their younger pupils as well as one for older children, including competitors from the northwestern province of Idlib, central Homs, and Raqa—a bastion of the Islamic State jihadist group. — AFP

AUBAMEYANG NETS 30TH GOAL AS DORTMUND REACH SEMIS

BERLIN: Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang claimed his 30th goal of the season on Tuesday to help fire Borussia Dortmund into the German Cup semi-finals with a 3-1 victory at VfB Stuttgart.

Gabon striker Aubameyang and Germany winger Marco Reus, who have provided 45 of Dortmund's goals in all competitions this season, netted before Henrik Mkhitaryan claimed their late third.

Aubameyang has now scored in each of Dortmund's last seven German Cup games, dating back to the start of last season, having also netted in Dortmund's 3-1 Cup final defeat to Wolfsburg last May.

"Auba knows how to take his chances and he works hard on his finishing every day," said Reus. "It's fun to play alongside him." Dortmund are in the semi-finals for the third season in a row while spirited Stuttgart had their five-match winning streak, dating back to mid-December, ended. Pep Guardiola's Bayern Munich will attempt to join Dortmund in the last four when they play VfL Bochum on Wednesday while minnows Heidenheim host Hertha Berlin. Dortmund took the lead at Stuttgart's Mercedes Benz Arena when Reus fired home off the crossbar with just five minutes gone. Stuttgart fought back and levelled when Lukas Rupp's shot deflected off Mkhitaryan and into the Dortmund net on 21 minutes to the home fans' delight.

The visitors regained the lead when Reus set up Aubameyang for his 30th in all competitions, on 31 minutes as Stuttgart failed to cope with Dortmund's pace. With time running out, Aubameyang broke clear and pulled Stuttgart goalkeeper Mitchell Langerak off his line to allow Mkhitaryan a simple tap-in on 89 minutes. Earlier, veteran Claudio Pizarro helped seal Werder Bremen's 3-1 quarter-final win at ten-man Bayer Leverkusen by playing a key role in their shock victory.

There was a strong Latin American flavour at Leverkusen's BayArena as Bremen booked their place in April's semi-finals. Mexico's Javier Hernandez put Leverkusen ahead, then Bremen's Argentinian centre-back Santiago Garcia levelled before Brazilian defender Wendell was sent off for Bayer just before the half-time break. After Wendell's dismissal, Peru's 37-year-old striker Pizarro scored Bremen's second by converting the resulting penalty, then set up their third. "We did very well defensively and we reacted as a unit after conceding a goal," beamed Pizarro.

"Now we get to go further in the Cup." Leverkusen took the lead when ex-Manchester United forward Hernandez continued his record of scoring in each round of the cup.

It was his 22nd goal for Bayer this season in all competitions. After Stefan Kiessling was up-ended by Bremen's Spanish defender Alejandro Galvez in the area, 'Chicharito' rifled home the resulting penalty in the 22nd minute. The lead lasted nine minutes as Bremen's Argentinian centre-back Santiago Garcia put



STUTTART: Dortmund's Gabonese forward Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang (2ndL) vies for the ball with Stuttgart's Bosnian defender Toni Sunic (L) during the German Cup (Pokal) quarter final football match VfB Stuttgart v Borussia Dortmund on Tuesday in Stuttgart. — AFP

Werder level by hitting the bottom left-hand corner of Leverkusen's net to make it 1-1.

Disaster struck for the hosts when Wendell was shown a straight red for hauling down Bartels, who was through on goal, just before the break. The 37-year-old Pizarro, who last weekend became the first

foreign player to make 400 Bundesliga appearances, hit his eighth goal of the season.

Pizarro then played a big part in Bremen's third as his shot was saved by Leverkusen goalkeeper Bernd Leno, but Florian Grillitsch tapped home the rebound on 82 minutes. — AFP

MESSI, SUAREZ, NEYMAR RESTED FOR VALENCIA TRIP

BARCELONA: Barcelona's star attacking trio of Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Neymar were all left out of coach Luis Enrique's squad for their Copa del Rey semi-final, second-leg against Gary Neville's Valencia yesterday with Barca already leading 7-0.

Messi underwent treatment on kidney stones which affected his participation in the Club World Cup last month on Monday and Tuesday, but is expected to be fit to face Celta Vigo on Sunday.

Suarez, who scored four times in the first-leg, and Neymar have been rested along with the likes of Andres Iniesta, Sergio Busquets and Gerard Pique as Enrique takes advantage

of the dead rubber amongst a hectic schedule, which sees Barca play six games in the next 18 days.

Neville is fighting for his job after suffering what Valencia sporting director Jesus Garcia Pitarch described as one of the worst results in the club's history in the first-leg.

The former Manchester United captain has also failed to win any of his nine La Liga matches since taking charge in December.

"I've got full belief in myself, full belief in the players and from my point of view the only thing we can do now for the club and the fans is win football matches," Neville told the club's website. — AFP

Sports

Big-wave surfers gather in Hawaii for prestigious event



Djokovic dominant but it's still tight at the top



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2016

YOUNG BOYS IN ALEPPO CITY BOX TO DROWN OUT BOMBS Page 19



DENVER: Daniel Sedin #22 of the Vancouver Canucks passes the puck to Henrik Sedin #33 of the Vancouver Canucks as Gabriel Landeskog #92 of the Colorado Avalanche and Erik Johnson #6 of the Colorado Avalanche dive to the ice to help goalie Semyon Varlamov #1 of the Colorado Avalanche defend the goal at Pepsi Center on Tuesday in Denver, Colorado. — AFP

BOUCHER LEADS DEVILS OVER OILERS

NEWARK: Reid Boucher set up a goal and scored the game-winner 7:13 into the third period, and New Jersey edged Edmonton after retiring Martin Brodeur's No. 30 jersey in a rousing ceremony. Adam Henrique also had a goal and an assist as the Devils snapped a three-game losing streak and sent the Oilers to their third straight loss. Cory Schneider made 19 saves for New Jersey. Connor McDavid, the top pick in last year's draft, set up Jordan Eberle's goal for Edmonton.

PANTHERS 7, SABRES 4

Panthers defenseman Alex Petrovic scored in the first minute of the second period to cap Florida's four-goal opening surge against Buffalo. Florida scored seven goals for the second time this season after managing just two in its past two games, including a 3-0 loss at Detroit on Monday night. Reilly Smith scored twice, including an empty-netter, and added an assist. Petrovic, Jussi Jokinen and Brian Campbell had a goal and assist apiece for the Atlantic Division leaders. Jaromir Jagr and Brandon Pirri also scored in helping Florida improve to 6-1-1 in its past eight. The Panthers are 8-0-2 in their past 10 games at Buffalo. Roberto Luongo stopped 30 shots to improve to 14-2-2 in his past 18 starts. Sabres rookie Sam Reinhart scored two power-play goals in the second.

LOS ANGELES 9, BOSTON 2

Milan Lucic scored in his return to Boston, Drew Doughty had a power-play goal for his 300th career point and the Los Angeles Kings had nine goal scorers in a 9-2 rout of the Bruins on Tuesday night. Marian Gaborik added a goal and an assist for Los Angeles, which had lost four of six. Doughty also had an assist. Jeff Carter, Andy Andreoff, Dwight King, Trevor Lewis, Luke Schenn and Dustin Brown also scored for the Kings, who chased Tuukka Rask during the second period on the way to setting a season high for goals. Los Angeles also had a season-best 57 shots on net. The 27-year-old Lucic played eight seasons with the Bruins and was a member of their 2011 Stanley Cup championship team. Boston traded the popular wing at the beginning of last summer. Brad Marchand scored his team-leading 25th goal, and Tyler Randell had the other score for the Bruins, who lost in regulation for just the third time in 11 games (7-3-1). Rask gave up five goals on 32 shots. Jonathan Quick made 35 saves for the Kings.

DUCKS 4, FLYERS 1

Rickard Rakell had two goals, Chris Stewart scored on a penalty shot and Andrew Coglianò added an empty-netter to lead Anaheim over Philadelphia. Frederik Andersen made 28 saves for the Ducks, who bounced back from Monday's 6-2 blowout at Pittsburgh that snapped their six-game winning streak. Anaheim improved to 14-4-1 since Christmas while getting the victory in the second game of a seven-game road trip

that will cover 7,300 miles in 13 days. Wayne Simmonds scored for the Flyers, who dropped their third straight overall and fifth in the last six home games.

ISLANDERS 3, BLUE JACKETS 2, SO

Cal Clutterbuck scored the winning goal in the shootout, lifting New York to a comeback victory over Columbus. Frans Nielsen also scored in the shootout and Jaroslav Halak stopped three of four attempts by the Blue Jackets. Anders Lee had the tying goal early in the third period. Ryan Strome also scored in regulation for the Islanders, who completed a four-game sweep of the season series. Alexander Wennberg had Columbus' lone shootout goal. Cam Atkinson and Brandon Dubinsky each had a goal and an assist in regulation. Rookie goalie Joonas Korpi made a career-high 44 saves.

SHARKS 2, BLACKHAWKS 0

Martin Jones made 33 saves for his fifth shutout this season and Patrick Marleau scored a power-play goal in the second period to lead San Jose past Chicago. Joe Thornton added a long empty-netter with 1:42 left. Marleau's goal, on the Sharks' only man advantage, ended his six-game drought and was just his second in his last 17. But it was all the offense San Jose needed to improve to 18-8-2 on the road, best in the Western Conference. The Sharks, who ended Chicago's three-game winning streak, are 10-2-2 in their last 14. Jones rebounded to earn his 12th career shutout after allowing five goals on 29 shots in a 6-2 loss at Nashville on Saturday. He is 9-2-1 in his last 12 starts and 16-5-2 on the road. Chicago goalie Corey Crawford made 25 saves

as the defending Stanley Cup champions were blanked for the sixth time this season.

CANADIENS 4, LIGHTNING 2

Tomas Plekanec scored twice and added an assist, helping the Canadiens to a victory over Tampa Bay that extended Montreal's winning streak to three games. Brendan Gallagher and Devante Smith-Pelly also scored for Montreal. With 37 saves, Ben Scrivens earned his third consecutive victory after going 0-4 to start the season. Valtteri Filppula and Victor Hedman scored for the Lightning. Ben Bishop stopped 23 shots but Tampa Bay has dropped consecutive games in regulation for the first time since Nov. 27-28.

JETS 2, BLUES 1, SO

Mark Scheifele scored in the fourth round for his first career shootout goal in four attempts, lifting Winnipeg over St. Louis. Bryan Little had his 16th goal in the opening minute of the second period for the Jets, who beat the Blues for just the second time in 15 games (2-11-2) since moving back to Winnipeg in 2011. Dustin Byfuglien had an assist a day after signing a \$38 million, five-year contract extension with the Jets, who are 4-0-1 in their last five on the road. Brian Elliott made 32 saves in regulation and overtime for the Blues, held to one goal or none in five of their last six games. Colton Parayko ended a 20-game goal drought in the second period.

CAPITALS 5, PREDATORS 3

Marcus Johansson had a goal and two assists to lead Washington past Nashville. Tom Wilson and Justin

Williams each had a goal and an assist, and Jason Chimera and Alex Ovechkin also scored. Braden Holtby made 23 saves for the Capitals, winners of four straight. Filip Forsberg scored twice and Roman Josi had a goal for Nashville. The Predators have lost three of four since the All-Star break.

STARS 4, WILD 3, OT

John Klingberg scored in overtime and Kari Lehtonen made 37 saves to win for the first time in more than a month as Dallas defeated slumping Minnesota. It was the 11th loss in 12 games for the fading Wild. Jamie Benn, who had two assists, set up Klingberg's high shot from the slot that eluded Darcy Kuemper at 2:39 of the extra period. Patrick Eaves added a goal and an assist and Tyler Seguin had two assists for the Stars, who recovered from a 5-1 loss Saturday at Chicago. Kuemper stopped 26 shots for the Wild, who fell to 1-10 in the 3-on-3 overtime format this season. They are 1-10-1 since a 2-1 win Jan. 9 at Dallas. Mikko Koivu's power-play goal evened the score 76 seconds into the third period. Erik Haula and Justin Fontaine scored on breakaways for the Wild in the first. Alex Goligoski and Jason Demers also scored for Dallas.

CANUCKS 3, AVALANCHE 1

Bo Horvat had a goal and an assist, and Jacob Markstrom made 29 saves and chipped in with an assist in Vancouver's victory over Colorado. Sven Baertschi and Matt Bartkowski also scored for the Canucks, who stopped a four-game losing streak. Francois Beauchemin had the lone goal for Colorado, and Semyon Varlamov made 25 saves. The Avalanche fell to 12-13-4 at home.

FLAMES 4, MAPLE LEAFS 3

Markus Granlund scored short-handed for his first goal in 21 games and added an assist to lead Calgary over Toronto. It was the first multipoint game of the season for Granlund, a healthy scratch the previous three games. The Finnish center was back in the lineup due to three benchings at forward by Flames coach Bob Hartley. All-Star Johnny Gaudreau and Sean Monahan - the team's top two scorers - along with veteran Lance Bouma were healthy scratches for disciplinary reasons after reportedly arriving to the arena late for practice on Monday. Mikael Backlund, Michael Ferland and Dougie Hamilton also scored for Calgary, which won consecutive games for the first time in a month. Peter Holland, Josh Leivo and Jake Gardiner scored for Toronto. The Maple Leafs were also without several key players, the most notable being captain Dion Phaneuf, who was involved in a nine-player trade with Ottawa earlier in the day. — AP

NHL results/standings

Anaheim 4, Philadelphia 1; NY Islanders 3, Columbus 2 (SO); Los Angeles 9, Boston 2; Florida 7, Buffalo 4; Montreal 4, Tampa Bay 2; Winnipeg 2, St. Louis 1 (SO); Washington 5, Nashville 3; Dallas 4, Minnesota 3 (OT); New Jersey 2, Edmonton 1; San Jose 2, Chicago 0; Vancouver 3, Colorado 1; Calgary 4, Toronto 3.

Western Conference							Eastern Conference						
Central Division							Atlantic Division						
	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS							
Chicago	36	17	4	159	130	76	Florida	32	16	6	155	123	70
Dallas	34	15	5	176	147	73	Tampa Bay	29	20	4	142	130	62
St. Louis	30	17	9	136	134	69	Detroit	27	18	8	134	134	62
Nashville	25	21	8	141	145	58	Boston	28	19	6	157	147	62
Colorado	27	25	4	150	155	58	Montreal	27	24	4	151	146	58
Minnesota	23	20	10	130	132	56	Ottawa	25	23	6	157	170	56
Winnipeg	24	26	3	138	153	51	Buffalo	21	27	6	125	150	48
							Toronto	19	24	9	125	149	47
Pacific Division							Metropolitan Division						
Los Angeles	32	17	3	146	121	67	Washington	39	9	4	174	118	82
San Jose	28	20	4	151	139	60	NY Rangers	30	18	5	153	137	65
Anaheim	26	19	7	119	124	59	NY Islanders	28	18	6	149	132	62
Arizona	24	22	6	139	162	54	Pittsburgh	27	18	7	139	135	61
Vancouver	21	20	12	127	146	54	New Jersey	27	21	7	124	129	61
Calgary	24	25	3	139	153	51	Carolina	24	21	9	130	144	57
Edmonton	21	29	5	137	167	47	Philadelphia	23	20	9	124	142	55
							Columbus	21	28	6	140	173	48

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



Warba Bank consolidates position in local market

ABK ANNOUNCES OPERATING PROFITS OF KD 87.3 MILLION



AHMEDABAD: Indian farm laborers dry newly-arrived chillies at a farm in Sertha, some 25 km from Ahmedabad yesterday. — AFP

ZAIN GROUP GENERATES REVENUES OF KD 1.14 BN

KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces its consolidated financial results for the year 2015 & fourth quarter ended 31 December, 2015. Zain served 45.6 million customers at the end of the period, reflecting a 3% increase year-on-year (Y-o-Y). For the full-year 2015, Zain Group generated consolidated revenues of KD 1.14 billion (USD 3.78 billion), down 6% year-on-year (Y-o-Y), while consolidated EBITDA for the period reached KD 499 million (USD 1.66 billion), relatively stable Y-o-Y, reflecting a healthy EBITDA margin of 44%. Consolidated net income reached KD 154 million (USD 513 million), down 21% reflecting Earnings Per Share of 40 Fils (USD 0.13).

The Board of Directors of Zain Group recommended a cash dividend of 30 Fils (USD 0.10) per share subject to the Annual General Assembly and regulatory approvals. Additionally, shareholders' equity stood at KD 1.54 billion (USD 5.09 billion) as at 31 December, 2015. For the fourth quarter of 2015, Zain Group recorded consolidated revenues of KD 283 million (USD 933 million), a decline of 3% on the same period of the previous year (Q-o-Q). EBITDA for the quarter reached KD 127 million (USD 418 million), up 7% Q-o-Q, reflecting a healthy EBITDA margin of 45%. Net income for the quarter reached KD 36 million (USD 119 million), up 8% Q-o-Q, reflecting Earnings Per Share of 9 Fils (USD 0.03).

Key Operational Notes for 12 months ended 31 December 2015:

1. Substantial investments in 3G and 4G LTE network expansion and upgrades continue to pay off as Group data revenues (excluding SMS and VAS) surged by an impressive 15%



Zain Group CEO Scott Gegenheimer

during 2015 has seen several million people displaced internally with Zain Iraq enduring frequent temporary network interruptions and associated higher network operational costs. These unavoidable occurrences coupled with heightened levels of price competition and implementation of a new 20% sales tax on mobile services as well as wide-ranging tax increases on other sectors in Iraq that hit spending on mobile services, all contributed to a negative impact on Zain Iraq's and consequently Zain Group's overall key financial metrics (24% decline in revenues recorded at Zain Iraq and a 52% decline in net income at the operation).

5. Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Sudan operations all reflect robust growth for the year, with Zain Kuwait's performance impacted by intense price competition despite customer growth.

ment to overcome the many challenging socio-economic factors in a number of our markets, particularly with regard to the social unrest in Iraq and the intense price competition in Kuwait. The positive performances in Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Sudan underline that the company's strategy is fundamentally sound in driving the business forward and we shall continue managing the highly changeable environments we face in a pragmatic and effective manner."

The Chairman continued, "We have invested significantly in 3G / 4G network expansion upgrades and spectrum license fees across all our markets in order to improve the mobile experience for our customers. Our investments in capital expenditure reached USD 797 million (excluding Zain Saudi Arabia) which represents 21% of our revenues, reflecting Zain's commitment to innovation and quality of service. I remain proud that we have been able to maintain our leadership position in the majority of the markets we operate in, testament to our valued brand reputation and attention to customer service."

Zain Group CEO, Scott Gegenheimer said, "Zain Group remains resilient to the wider challenges facing a number of its markets, and the region in general. It is unfortunate that some factors outside of our control have impacted overall performance for the year considering the sound operational progress and transformation we have undertaken across all our markets. Nevertheless, we are pleased with the progress of our data monetization initiatives and draw much confidence from the growth in the uptake of data services, which now account for 20% of overall service revenues, and the Group will continue to foster and develop this key area of the business."

The Group CEO continued, "Furthermore, our efficiency and optimization initiatives are producing tangible positive results reflected in our improving EBITDA margin of 44% and 45% for the full-year and fourth quarter respectively. However, we have incurred an additional amortization cost of USD 52 million on 3G and 4G spectrum license fees in two key markets which impacted our bottom line for the year. We do still draw encouragement from our overall performance in the fourth quarter of 2015, which saw EBITDA and net income increasing 7% and 8% Q-o-Q respectively."

Additionally Gegenheimer noted, "We are committed to our strategy that will leverage on our strengths, including our people, brand, customer experience, cutting edge technology innovations, and geographic coverage. We shall also continue on the path towards implementing operational efficiency initiatives, looking to develop new business areas and becoming a diversified and innovative digital lifestyle operator." Operational review of key markets for the 12 months ended 31 December, 2015:



Chairman Asaad Al Banwan Zain Kuwait

Maintaining its market leadership, the flagship operation of Zain Group saw its customer base grow 9% to serve 2.9 million in a very challenging year that saw intense price competition impact its financial performance for the year. Revenues reached KD 323 million (USD 1.1 billion), EBITDA amounted to KD 158 million (USD 526 million) and net income came in at KD 94 million (USD 314 million). Zain Kuwait's healthy EBITDA margin of 49% for the year reflects the efficiency drive implemented by the operation, with Zain Kuwait's nationwide 4G LTE network saw data revenues (excluding SMS & VAS) form 36% of total revenues, reflecting an annual growth rate of 8%.

Iraq

The exceptional circumstances facing the operation as mentioned above saw Zain Iraq's financial performance severely affected with

by 13% Y-o-Y to reach SDG 4.56 billion (USD 717 million, up 7% in USD terms) for the full-year 2015. EBITDA increased by 22% to reach SDG 1.98 billion (USD 311 million, up 15% in USD terms) while net income increased 77% to reach SDG 1.04 billion (USD 163 million, up 67% in USD terms). Data revenues (excluding SMS and VAS) formed 11% of total revenues, with an impressive annual growth of 102% (91% in USD terms).

Saudi Arabia

The transformation efforts of the third operator in the Kingdom are taking effect, resulting in an annual 32% increase in customers to serve 11.9 million at the end of 2015. For the full-year 2015, the operator posted improved financial results, recording an 8% Y-o-Y increase in revenues to reach USD 1.86 billion, a drastic 48% increase in EBITDA to reach USD 434 million and net losses narrowing by 23% to reach USD 259 million. EBITDA margin rose to 23% in 2015, up from 17% in 2014. Impressively, the operator witnessed a 58% rise in data revenues (excluding SMS & VAS) Y-o-Y, which represents 25% of total revenues as the company invested heavily and expanded its modern 4G LTE network.

Jordan

Despite the intensification of price competition, Zain Jordan managed to increase its customer base by 6% Y-o-Y, serving 4.1 million customers, and maintaining its lead in the market. Y-o-Y revenues decreased 2% to reach USD 459 million, with EBITDA increasing 30% to reach USD 251 million, and net income increasing 7% to reach USD 122 million. With the launch of 4G services, data revenues (excluding SMS & VAS) represented 29% of total revenues, growing by

Total Active Customers	45.6 million	up 3% on 2014
Consolidated Revenues	KD 1.14 billion	- (USD 3.78 billion)
EBITDA	KD 499 million	- (USD 1.66 billion)
EBITDA Margin	44%	
Net Income	KD 154 million	- (USD 513 million)
EPS	40 Fils	- USD 0.13

during 2015, representing 20% of the Group's consolidated revenues.

2. Foreign currency translation impact mainly due to the appreciation of the USD against the KD cost the company USD 218 million on revenue, USD 95 million on EBITDA and USD 30 million on net income for the year 2015.

3. Specifically for the fourth quarter of 2015, currency translation impact cost the company USD 41 million on revenue, USD 18 million on EBITDA and USD 5 million in net income.

4. The continued political instability in Iraq

6. Heavy investment in 3G & 4G network expansion upgrades across operations saw CAPEX spend for the year amount to USD 797 million (excluding Saudi Arabia), reflecting 21% of Group revenues.

7. Additional amortization on both Zain Iraq's 3G license fee and Zain Jordan's additional 3G and newly acquired 4G spectrum license fees impacted the bottom line by USD 52 million. Commenting on the results, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group, Asaad Al Banwan said, "The Board is working closely with the executive manage-

Consolidated Revenues	KD 283 million - (USD 933 million)	down 3%
EBITDA	KD 127 million - (USD 418 million)	up 7%
EBITDA Margin	45%	
Net Income	KD 36 million - (USD 119 million)	up 8%
EPS	9 Fils - USD 0.03	

revenues for the full-year reaching USD 1.22 billion, a decrease of 24% on 2014, with EBITDA reaching USD 480 million, down 17%, and net income amounting to USD 122 million, down 52% Y-o-Y. Notably the operation's efficiency drive saw its EBITDA margin increase to 39%, and with the launch of 3.9G services at the beginning of the year, data related revenue formed 7% of the total revenues, reflecting an annual growth of 34%.

Sudan

In local currency (SDG) terms, the operator continues to perform well, as revenues grew

18% as compared to the same period in 2014.

Bahrain

During 2015, Zain Bahrain generated revenues of USD 191 million, down 2% Y-o-Y. EBITDA for the period reached USD 75 million, up 4%, reflecting a healthy EBITDA margin of 39%. Net income amounted to USD 14 million, reflecting a 24% increase. The totally revamped 4G network in which Zain Bahrain has invested in excess of USD 100 million recently saw data revenues (excluding SMS & VAS) increase 11%, representing 33% of overall revenues.

Pharmacist
Dar Al-Shifa Hospital
Kuwait

You will be responsible for providing pharmacy services to patients and medical practitioners, filling prescriptions, dispensing medicines, counselling patients and medical practitioners regarding the nature and use of drugs, and training and/or supervising pharmacy interns, as well as, preparing and maintaining all necessary records.

Apply Now [JB3447737](#)

Principal Metadata Analyst
Huxley Banking & Financial
Services - Kuwait

You will be responsible for capturing, managing and publishing business, technical and processing metadata, acquisition, design, management and enhancement of metadata as an Information Asset Catalogue and Business Glossary, as well as, the development of queries and reports against operational systems.

Apply Now [JB3447438](#)

Sales Manager
Lone Star General Trading Co.
Kuwait

You will be responsible for targeting and identifying the potential leads to visit and introduce our products and services, especially for the projects to increase the business volume and you will be required to have 5 years experience within sales in Kuwait.

Apply Now [JB3447620](#)

Restaurant Assistant Manager
ASCEND Retail
Kuwait

You will be responsible for preparing schedules for all personnel according to the forecast and within the limits of the staffing guide and to ensure adequate manpower at all times and under the guidance of the Restaurant Manager, recommending hiring, promotions and dismissal to the Restaurant Manager as well as, ensuring the proper maintenance and cleanliness of all restaurant areas.

Apply Now [JB3447347](#)

Head Chef
ASCEND Retail
Kuwait

You will be responsible for planning menus, scheduling and coordinating the work of chefs, cooks and other kitchen employees to assure that food preparation is economical and technically correct and within budgeted labor cost goals, as well as, approving the requisition of products and other necessary food supplies.

Apply Now [JB3447346](#)

Brand Manager - Watches & Accessories - Jashanmal & Partners Limited - Kuwait

You will be responsible for stewarding of the brand that supports our new brand promise, brand vision, brand position, brand architecture and achieving overall business goals for the brand, as well as, engaging, inspiring and galvanizing the organization around the brand vision, position and strategies.

Apply Now [JB3447331](#)

HR Manager
Progressive Personnel
Kuwait

You will be responsible for providing guidance and managing the overall provision of Human Resource services, policies, and programs, all aspects of employee relations and development, staffing and recruitment, organizational development, performance management, training, compensation / benefits, etc.

Apply Now [JB50099812](#)

Group Internal Audit Manager
Michael Page International
(UAE) Limited - Kuwait

You will be responsible for monitoring the independent evaluation and appraisal of the effectiveness of policies, rules and procedures which manage the organization, as well as, ensuring that audit work is planned, executed and communicated in an effective manner in accordance with Internal Audit's terms of reference, current policies and procedures.

Apply Now [JB3447838](#)

Sales Manager
Michael Page International
(UAE) Limited - KSA

You will be responsible for analyzing customer specifications and coordinating with design and proposals teams to deliver suitable offers, assisting in the preparation and optimization of the technical and commercial proposals, as well as, preparing, analyzing and ensuring the overall sales budget and market share.

Apply Now [JB3443080](#)

Manager Eastern Province
Kanoo Logistics
Kanoo Group - KSA

You will be responsible for ensuring the overall development of the Kanoo Logistics division business in Eastern Province by ensuring consistent profitability, delivering quality service at competitive pricing, as well as, safe operational excellence and financial excellence.

Apply Now [JB3443007](#)

Senior Director - Internal Audit - Manpower Middle East - KSA

You will be responsible for integrating audit services to provide Company X executive management and the Audit Committee of the Board of Directors with assurance as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal control throughout the company.

Apply Now [JB3343291](#)

Sales Manager - Electrical & Automotive - Petrochemical Conversion Company - KSA

You will be responsible for developing and implementing business development strategies related to own category area which are aligned with the overall business development strategy of PCC Sales Planning, as well as, developing and executing sales plans based on the overall PCC business development plan.

Apply Now [JB3443069](#)

Senior Manager, Continuous Improvement - Manpower Middle East - UAE

You will be responsible for managing the assigned portfolio of work to ensure optimal resource utilization, supporting a culture of continuous improvement that values the ability of all caregivers to improve on the performance of the organization, as well as, tracking project impacts and overall return on investment for the assigned portfolio.

Apply Now [JB3381164](#)

Parts Manager - Automotive
Randstad Middle East
UAE

You will be responsible for managing the entire spare parts operations from inventory control, pricing policy (in coordination with the senior management), and warehouse & personnel management, maximizing profit through the effective operation of the parts department, as well as, providing excellent customer service support.

Apply Now [JB3443128](#)

Solution Lead - Global Enterprise Services Company
Networkers Intl - UAE

You will be responsible for high level solution framework (during early engagement) for Customer Business Case, taking the proposed solution successfully through the Deal Assurance Process, leading and performing due diligence for all solution aspects, as well as, winning outsourcing deals EMEA.

Apply Now [JB3441755](#)

E-Discovery Manager - Relativity - Huxley Banking & Financial Services - UAE

You will be responsible for managing and delivering electronic document reviews to investigators and lawyers and you will be required to have experience of managing a team and discovery projects, excellent verbal and written communication skills in English, as well as, strong problem solving and conceptual thinking capabilities.

Apply Now [JB3441729](#)

Commercial Manager
EGIS
Qatar

You will be required to have experience in Infrastructure projects (i.e Roads and/or Rail), at least 20 years of experience in a Construction Industry, preferably experience in a consultancy firm, with experience in the GCC being a must, as well as, contracts and Quantity Surveying experience.

Apply Now [JB3212134](#)

Deputy Programme Manager (Water Infrastructure)
CH2M - Qatar

You will be required to have a qualified degree, ideally engineering or technical related with at least 20 years of experience within the infrastructure/ construction industry of which the last 10 years will be in project/ programme management capacity and you will be able to develop and lead strategies for managing and monitoring the commercial, contractual, and controls performance on sophisticated contractors.

Apply Now [JB3443082](#)

HR Manager
Forum International
Qatar

You will be responsible for implementing the general strategy as set by the Group and developing a local strategy to facilitate HR functions and supporting day-to-day operations, creating action plans based on strategy needs and in support of growth/ crisis resolution issues and accordingly monitoring/ synchronizing the operational needs with all HR functions.

Apply Now [JB3442951](#)

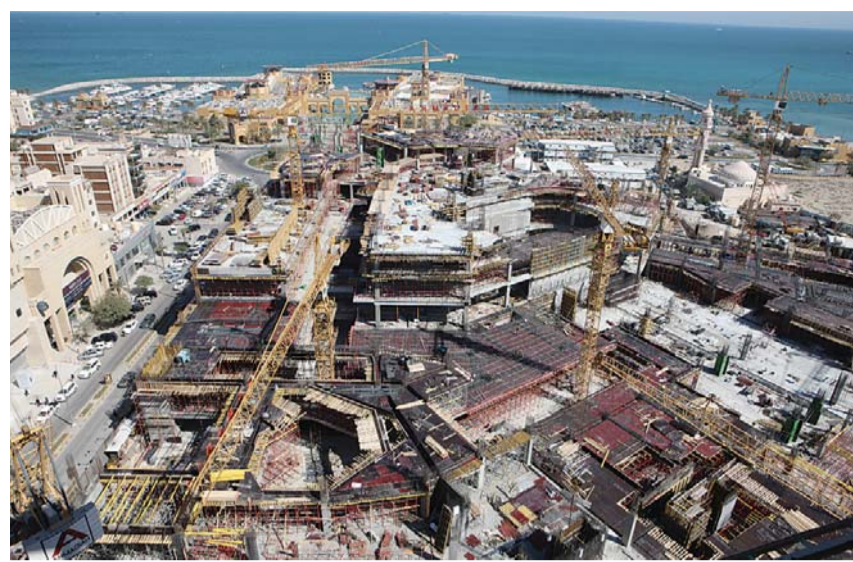
Manager Service Delivery - Operations
Qatar Airways - Qatar

You will be responsible for controlling the day to day running of Service Delivery department, accountable for the management of the department in relation to cost control, resource planning, operational change management and reporting of KPI's and ensuring that the department remains completely compliant with the SLA's, as well as, accountable for all performance and improvement initiative and implementation.

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AL KOUT, a project under the overarching umbrella of the Tamdeen Group. —Photos by Joseph Shagra

TAMDEEN GROUP'S AL KOUT - TAKES SHAPE

WATERFRONT RETAIL, LIFESTYLE, LEISURE DESTINATION



KUWAIT: AL KOUT, a project under the overarching umbrella of the Tamdeen Group (Kuwait's leading mixed-use property developer that is reshaping the urban and social landscape of the country through innovative projects) is on schedule to formally open in the fourth quarter of 2017. Mohammed Jassim Khalid Al Marzouq, Chairman, Tamdeen Group said "The New AL KOUT in southern Kuwait is set to become an Arabian landmark through its fusion of traditional architecture and modern contemporary design and will be a true representation of the growing lifestyle, shopping, leisure and entertainment aspirations of our country."

The development of AL KOUT is being carried out by a Tamdeen Group subsidiary company. When completed, the development will include six different experiences, all reflecting the architectural heritage of Kuwait. In its entirety, AL KOUT, will be a single but multi-faceted destination with diverse offerings for those with a love of retail, lifestyle and leisure experiences. A major component of the project is the replacement of Al Manshar Mall and four residential towers, with the new Al Kout Mall, built at a cost of KD 70 million.

The expansion of the mall will reflect additional retail space, making AL KOUT the largest shopping center in southern Kuwait with over 100,000 sq.mtrs of retail leasable area. The mall will have multi-storey car parking to accommodate 3,600 cars. "Construction is well underway and we are building the mall to the highest specifications," said Ahmed Al Sarawi, CEO of Tamdeen Shopping Centers.

Anchor tenants will move in to the mall in 2017, as they start their fit-out in order to complete the works by the mall opening date. The remaining tenants will move in once the mall is ready. The mall will be managed and operated by GLA, a professional mall-management firm. Leasing for the mall is ongoing with huge interest from several leading international and regional players. The mall is over 50 percent leased and committed for by tenants, 1.5 years ahead of the grand opening. The destination will include the popular anchor and key

brands including but not limited to: Zara, Sephora, GAP, Victoria's Secret/Pink, Infinity - Family Entertainment and a 12-screen Cinescape cinema.

The new retail component will have outlets, restaurants, cafes, as well as a food court, a gym and spa. The adjacent luxurious 200-suite Rotana Hotel has been a huge success from the day it opened. The hotel will connect directly to the shops and restaurants within the new Al Kout Mall. Rotana has a huge demand for weddings, conferences and other gala events. To cater to this, a brand new purpose-built ballroom of 3,700sq.mtrs is being added to the property. This facility will be unique in Fahaheel and will add value to the entire destination.

The new Al Kout Mall will be linked by a signature bridge to Souq Al Kout which is significant for its traditional design and serves as the community hub of southern Kuwait. With its landmark fountains and stunning views of the marina, the redeveloped souq will have a new upscale offering, along with Nag'at Al Kout, the traditional fishing wharf where fishermen ply their trade. AL KOUT's stunning 1.6 km of immaculate seafont across Fahaheel Beach is now being renamed Sahel Al Kout. The beachfront offers uninterrupted views of the Arabian Gulf and blends seamlessly with the state-of-the-art marina, Marsa Al Kout with its excellent facilities for over 150 boats.

In addition, AL KOUT includes a traditional market, a supermarket, banks, international entertainment venues, a marina, a fishing port, musical fountains and Al fresco dining opportunities. Shavak Srivastava, Board Member of Tamdeen Shopping Centers, added: "AL KOUT will transform the Al-Fahaheel area into a vibrant social and economic center that is truly iconic, reflecting the architectural heritage of Kuwait and the region. With projects worth US\$ 2 billion in the pipeline, the Tamdeen Group is truly developing significant symbols for Kuwait." Upon completion of all phases, AL KOUT will occupy a massive 300,000 sq.mtrs of area creating Kuwait's largest waterfront mixed use destination.



WORLD TOURISM MAP REDRAWN AMID ATTACKS AND EPIDEMICS

HOLIDAY MAKERS SWITCH PREFERENCES

PARIS: The world's tourism map is being redrawn at lightning speed as holidaymakers switch preferences prompted by terror attacks, epidemics and migrant crises. Jihadist attacks on tourists in Tunisia last year and the October 31 crash of a Russian plane which took off from its Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm El-Sheikh have devastated the tourism sectors in both countries. But Muslim countries everywhere are the main losers of the shift in tastes, sector professionals say, as tourists move to destinations they consider safe so long as they're also sunny.

Overall, world tourism has never been in better shape. Nearly 1.2 billion people travelled abroad in 2015, an increase of 4.4 percent over the previous year, but the casual observer could be fooled by the sight of deserted North African beaches, once tourist hotspots. Tunisia, which built its tourism industry on guaranteed sunshine and rock-bottom prices, is the most stunning example of the devastating impact of security fears after murderous attacks targeted foreigners. Visitor numbers to Tunisia tumbled by two million in 2015, leaving coast resorts empty, hotels idle and the economy in tatters. Tunisia's tourism sector accounted for almost 10 percent of the nation's economy.

'Muslim countries are suffering'
Turkey is another victim of attack fears. Germany's TUI, the world's biggest tourism group, said Tuesday that it had seen bookings to Turkey drop by 40 percent in the wake of an Islamic State suicide attack in Istanbul. Turkish media, meanwhile, reported that visitor numbers to the top Turkish resort of Antalya dropped by 17 percent last month, the lowest level for the month of

January in a decade. Some destinations are collateral damage from attack fears, as tourists appear to make little distinction between countries within the Middle East or North Africa, as Jordan has found to its cost. "There was no attack, but we were affected tremendously by a drop of visitors coming from Europe," Jordan's tourism minister Nayef Al-Fayez said recently. "All Muslim countries are suffering to a greater or lesser degree, even those which have been made totally secure, like Oman," said Jean-Francois Rial, chairman of French travel operator Voyageurs du Monde. "The only exception is Iran, but they've started from scratch," he said, noting that many European agencies have

begun offering travel to Iran since Western powers have started dismantling sanctions. "There is no doubt that the whole Middle East region is today associated with insecurity in the mind of the Western tourist," said Wouter Geerts, analyst at the Euromonitor research company. "We expect countries such as Greece, Portugal and Spain to largely benefit from the situation, offering similar weather, competitive prices, and security," he said. The sudden surge in demand is leading to higher prices in these destinations. "Hotel owners tell clients 'Instead of charging 50 euros per double room, I'm going to charge 55, take it or leave it. If you don't want it, others will,'" said Olivier Petit, at the In Extenso firm.

Cuban bottlenecks
Cuba, which already got a boost from the thawing of relations with the United States in late 2014, is now also battling with bottlenecks, with daily arrivals of huge cruise ships in the Havana bay. "I have a group of 250 people arriving this week and I've just heard that I can no longer count on 80 rooms that were booked and paid for in March, all because of over-booking," said Stephane Ferrux, director of French specialist travel agency "Cuba autrement" ("Cuba with a difference"). Tourism numbers in Cuba rose by 17 percent in 2015, "but the country is not ready, they don't have the quality to justify prices that have gone up by half in a year. Everybody wants a piece of the cake," he said.—AFP

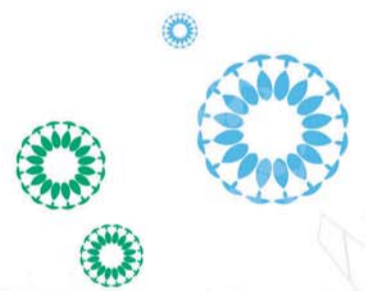
GLOOM HANGS OVER AFRICAN MINING; CHINA GROWTH SLOWS

CAPE TOWN: An air of gloom hung over Africa's biggest annual mining conference this week as corporate giants and governments wrestled with boom times gone bust in the wake of China's downturn. Politicians urged mining firms to limit job losses in economies already facing shrinking tax revenues from their mineral wealth, while struggling miners called on governments to provide investment and stability. Phrases like "tough times" and "extraordinary circumstances" littered speeches and panel discussions at an unusually subdued Mining Indaba in Cape Town, which has drawn some 6,000 delegates. "If we don't adapt, we perish," said Mark Cutifani, chief executive of Anglo American, which has announced plans to cut its portfolio of 55 mines by nearly half and shed some 85,000 jobs.

But like other CEOs and politicians, Cutifani also looked for silver linings in the clouds that have seen commodity prices drop across the board as growth slows in China, the world's biggest market. "China is

moving from its infrastructure-fuelled growth to a consumer-led economy. It will be a bumpy ride but it is a supertanker that is not going to stop despite its slowdown," he said. "Things may still get worse before they get better. We can't rely on a reversal of this price slump any time soon. For many of us in the industry, 2016 is already shaping up to be the most challenging year yet."

On a continent where mining is a mainstay of many national economies, it is not only the miners who are facing this year with dread. "We are asking mining companies to reinvest during this difficult period," South Africa's Minister of Mineral Resources Mosebenzi Zwane said on the sidelines of the conference. He urged firms to work with the government in a country rich in natural resources to minimize the impact of job losses, which could run into the tens of thousands. "Let's not take advantage of the situation to make people worse off," Zwane said.—AFP



2015 Year End Results for Mobile Telecommunications Company - Zain

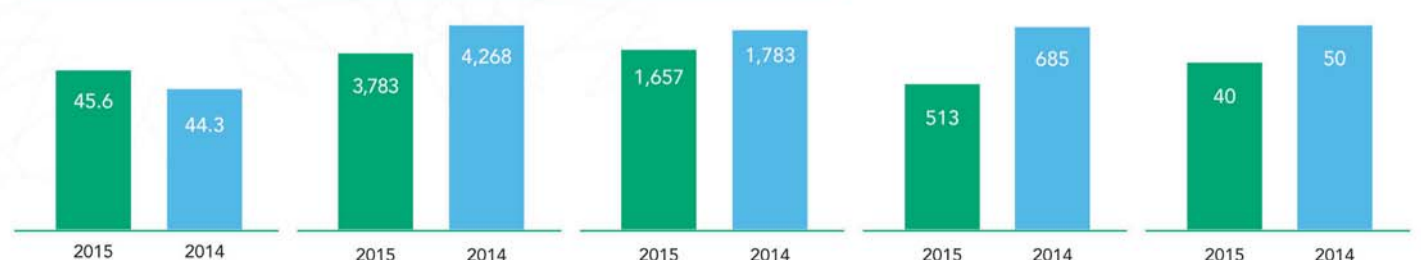
The Board of Directors of Mobile Telecommunications Company K.S.C.P. would like to announce to its shareholders that the company achieved a Net Profit of **KD 154 million (USD 513 million)** for the twelve months ended 31 December 2015.

The Board proposed a cash dividend of 30 Fils per share. The proposal is subject to General Assembly and statutory approvals.

The Board would like to express its gratitude to its customers and stakeholders for their confidence and assures them of the company's commitment to excellence and profitable growth.

Board of Directors

45.6 Million	3,783 USD Million	1,657 USD Million	513 USD Million	13 Cents
Customers	1,138 KD Million	499 KD Million	154 KD Million	40 Fils
Revenues	EBITDA	Net Income	EPS	



BANKS PUSH EUROPEAN SHARES HIGHER

MARKET LOOKS TO YELLEN FOR FED RATES GUIDANCE

LONDON: European stocks rose yesterday, rallying after losses in Asia, as concerns about the health of banks that have hammered shares globally in recent days eased and oil prices recovered from Tuesday's steep falls. The more upbeat tone took the shine off safer assets such as the Japanese yen and low-risk government debt, though gold powered ahead for the eighth day in nine. Investors and traders were looking ahead to Congressional testimony from Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellen for clues to the outlook for monetary policy.

Sharp falls in global stocks and weak US economic data have led markets to slash expectations for the pace and extent of Fed interest rate rises to follow December's first hike in nearly a decade. The pan-European FTSEurofirst 300 index rose 1.5 percent, with investors cheered by a Financial Times report that Deutsche Bank was considering buying back several billion euros of its debt. Germany's flagship lender, whose shares have fallen almost 40 percent this year, rose more than 7 percent. The STOXX Europe 600 banks index was up 3.5 percent.

"The rebound in Deutsche Bank is helping to reassure some investors who had been concerned about possible contagion in the banking sector," said Francois Savary, chief investment officer at Geneva-based Prime Partners. The FTSEurofirst index has fallen for the last seven trading days and on Tuesday hit its lowest since September 2013.

The big banks' fortunes are seen as closely linked with the global growth outlook, which is faltering, while the adoption by several major central banks of negative interest rates to help lift growth

has hit their business.

Those concerns have spread across the globe and yesterday helped drive Tokyo's Nikkei index to its lowest since 2014. Mitsubishi UFJ Financial

Group fell 7.1 percent. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan fell 0.3 percent. Australian stocks touched a 2 1/2-year trough and closed down 1.2 percent. Oil prices, which fell 8

percent on Tuesday, picked up after Iran said it was open to cooperation with Saudi Arabia on current conditions in the market. Brent crude, the international benchmark, rose 73 cents to \$31.05 a barrel, though prices were expected to stay volatile. Rising stocks dulled the appeal of perceived "safe-haven" assets, among which the yen has shone lately. The Japanese currency, gained 0.5 percent against the dollar but was below a 15-month high hit on Tuesday. It last traded at 114.50 yen per dollar. The euro was marginally firmer at \$1.1295.

Yellen eyed

BNP Paribas currency strategist Michael Sneyd, in London, said Fed chair Yellen's testimony, due at 1330 GMT, was unlikely to provide any kind of rebound for the dollar. "It seems we're likely to remain in this regime where the dollar continues to lose ground against the euro and the yen," German 10-year government bond yields, another safe haven, edged up just 0.6 basis points to 0.24 percent. "The risk backdrop remains fragile... however, now that the oil price has stabilized, Bunds are trading unchanged to slightly weaker," said Alexander Aldinger, senior analyst at Bayerische Landesbank. Ten-year Japanese government bonds closed in Tokyo yielding 0.005 percent, having hit a record low of -0.035 percent. The JGB yield went negative on Tuesday, in the wake of the Bank of Japan's introduction of negative policy rates on Jan 31. Gold, another asset sought in times of trouble, rose towards a 7 1/2-month high. It was last at \$1,186.80 an ounce.— Reuters



DELHI: Indian laborers unload materials from a bullock cart at a market place in the old part of Delhi, India yesterday. Densely populated markets in the old part of Delhi have been around for more than three centuries and were once visited by merchants from Turkey, China and even the Netherlands. — AP

RUSSIA'S SECHIN FLOATS IDEA OF OIL OUTPUT CUTS

LONDON: The head of Russian state-run oil company Rosneft yesterday floated the idea of a coordinated output cut by major oil-producing countries to prop up sagging prices but fell short of saying whether Moscow would contribute to such a plan. Rosneft Chief Executive Igor Sechin, a close ally of President Vladimir Putin, told the IP Week conference in London that the global oil glut was predominantly the fault of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Sechin suggested major oil producers cut production by 1 million barrels per day (bpd) to reduce oversupply, which he estimated at 1.5 million bpd: "That would help the price significantly." Oil prices have slumped more than 70 percent to near \$30 a barrel over the past 18 months as supply exceeded demand after OPEC, seeking to drive higher-cost producers out of the market, decided not to cut production.

Sechin has in the past criticized OPEC's strategy, saying the group, of which Russia is not a member, had "lost its teeth". He has also said Moscow would never cooperate with OPEC as Russia's oil industry could withstand any price rout thanks to cheap labor and a weak local currency. Yesterday, Sechin gave similar messages but chose his words more carefully, rarely mentioning OPEC and blaming only "some producers" for creating the glut. Oil markets have risen in recent weeks on hopes of a deal between OPEC and non-OPEC producers after a number of Russian officials suggested dia-

logue should begin. But Putin has not spoken yet on the subject. Yesterday's speech by Sechin was also his first statement on the subject in recent weeks.

Who will cut?

Sechin declined to say whether Russia would participate in any coordinated cut, when quizzed by reporters after the speech. "Who are we supposed to be talking to about cuts? Will Saudi Arabia or Iran cut production?" Sechin said. Struggling oil-producing countries have urged OPEC leader Saudi Arabia in recent weeks to call a special meeting to discuss output cuts. Riyadh has indicated it would be willing to consider a cut only if all major producers agreed to one, while Iraq and Iran have said they intend to boost their output this year.

Sechin said he expected Iran to ramp up oil production to between 5 million and 6 million bpd by 2025 from 3 million now as the country opens up after the lifting of sanctions. Sechin also said US shale production, another key driver behind the global glut, would decline in the long term. "Shale oil production has its limitations in scope and time... US shale oil production will reach its peak in 2020," he said. Sechin said however that onshore US producers had proven more resilient to the oil price downturn. "Shale oil markets reacted very quickly to the price shock as productivity rose dramatically, costs of production dropped and fracking became more efficient," Sechin said.— Reuters

WARBA BANK CONSOLIDATES POSITION IN LOCAL MARKET, EXPANDS ITS OPERATIONS

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, which is one of the fastest growing banks in Kuwait offering the entire spectrum of world-class Shari-compliant banking and investment service, announces its annual fiscal results for year ending 31st December 2015, reporting a growth in profits of 770% to reach KD 1 million. compared to 115,000 for the same period in 2014, as well reporting gains in its shares to reach 1 fils compared to 0.12 in 2014.

Commenting on the results of the Bank, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Warba Bank Imad Al-Thaqib said that the Bank witnessed in 2015 noticeable and remarkable growth on all indicators with the support of its operational revenues which amounted 4.5 million Kuwaiti Dinars to reach 26.3 million KD compared to 18.5 in 2014, and deposits rose by 25% to reach 433.5 million KD compared to 346.1 in 2014.

Al-Thaqib added that the Bank's resulting net gains were 4.1 million Kuwaiti Dinars in 2015 compared to 1.9 in 2014 with an increase of 770%. While the Bank's financial portfolio has grown to 8.543 million Kuwaiti Dinars by the end of last year compared to 388.3 in 2014 with a growth percentage of 40%, and the Bank's assets rose to 776.1 million Dinars by the end of last December in comparison to 594.8 million KD by the end of 2014 with 30% growth

Al-Thaqib also remarked that the aggressive strategy of the Bank, which was announced last year and will continue till 2017, has started to bear fruit and effect in strengthening the Bank's presence amongst other Islamic banks in the local and regional markets, especially because this strategy serves as the safe platform upon which the Bank rests to ensure it renders the best services and to develop its performance and increase its market share as well as its competitiveness by enforcing and applying the best acceptable practices and innovation in the sector while seeking high level international expertise in the field.

He also emphasized that the Bank's strategy effectively strengthens its position and enabled it to succeed in achieving a leading role in the Islamic banking industry despite its short five years of existence, and it will continue to expand in the local market while ensuring a strong and healthy financial status for the protection of its shareholders.

Healthy level

It is worth noting that Warba Bank has elevated, healthy levels of capital due not only to the strength of its foundation capital but also to the strength of its asset portfolio where the first tier of its principal risk-weighted capital assets at 24.92% and the over-all principal capital reaching 26.07%. Such high percentages indicate the bank's ability to realize high future growth and to take advantage of good investment opportunities and optimize return on capital for the shareholders.

Moody's Investors services

Al Thaqeb continued: "The bank had its first credit rating from international rating institutions where it was awarded by Moody's int'l with "Moody's Investors services" and with Baa2/Prim-2 for deposit with local and foreign currency. This rating comes despite the unstable economic situation on both regional and international levels which usually alert the rating institutions to be cautious in giving ratings for financial institutions and banks; considering the bank's young age in the market, we do see the ratings we've attained as an

achievement that we pride and will pave the way for a promising future for Warba bank".

From his end, Deputy Chairman and CEO of Warba bank, Jassar Dhakhil Al Jassar said: "The results of 2015 were in line with our expectations in 2014 for growth in gains and expansion, and this was due to the diligence of the Bank's management and staff to ensure that their hard work is in line with Bank's strategy to support and strengthen its operations in the company and personal sectors, both in banking and financing, and we work diligently to be close to our customers through our current and future branches as well as through the use of state-of-the-art technologies.

The bank's financial performance development indicators include the continued increase in financing revenues and deposits, ensuring a continuity of revenue sources from the principal operational activities, which realized an average growth of 46% in revenues amounting to 20.2 million Kuwaiti Dinars in 2015 compared to 13.9 million Kuwaiti Dinars in 2014.



Jassar Dakheel Al-Jassar-Vice Chairman & CEO



Emad Abdullah Al-Thaqeb Chairman

Operations and assets

With this increase in the bank's operations and assets, Warba Bank has succeeded in maintaining the excellence of its financing portfolio which is noticeable through the low percentage of unstable financing compared to the overall average in the banking sector. The defaulting financing recorded 0.92% at the end of 2015, while the defaulting financing coverage was 170% as the bank allocated some good levels of provisions, which was commensurate with the volume of its operations which realized a growth of 56% in allocations. It is to be noted that per the requirements of Kuwait Central Bank, most of these allocations and appropriations were general precautionary provisions of 79% of the bank's total allocations.

Al-Jassar noted that Warba Bank has made a number of achievements during 2015 which have contributed to its expansion in the regional and international markets in line with the Bank's strategy which aims at utilizing all recognized investment opportunities in the region and around the world. He indicated that the Bank has lately acquired a leasing portfolio of equipment from ATEL Capital Group, which is an independent equipment leasing company in the USA, to become the first Kuwaiti establishment investing in this Group. Also one of the funds considered as a primary investor in it has acquired The Nathaniel commercial building in New York City.

Warba Bank is deemed one of the pioneer investors concentrating on real estate strategy in the USA which is managed by the Wafra Investment Advisory Group. On the local level, the Bank has

participated in the aircraft leasing deal for Kuwait Airways which marks the first such deal with the International Air Finance Corporation for the leasing of five A330-200 aircraft for Kuwait Airways. Within the same framework, the Bank acquired in 2015 a financing portfolio from Al Mulla International Finance Company through a deal worth 20 million Kuwaiti Dinars or nearly \$66m.

On the regional level, Warba Bank has contributed \$25m in a deal to finance a compound in line with Islamic Sharia where the total value of \$155m project was led by Al-Noor Bank for and on behalf of Ajman Bank in the UAE, and the Bank also led the arrangement of a financing deal in line with Islamic Sharia for and on behalf of Azerbaijan International Bank for the amount of \$150m. Furthermore, in 2015 the Bank adopted new technology which offered its customers online banking services, as well as smart phone banking compatible with android and IOS, which enables customers to carry out fast transactions that in the past required the customer to visit the bank.

This emanates from the Bank's belief in making such innovative products and services available for the different tiers of the public, and in line with its strategy of launching new products that meet the aspirations of customers. Warba Bank has launched the new BCT service which serves as a platform for trading domestic and international goods, and launched the Murabaha Express in line with Group's efforts of continuing to offer the best to a customer in personal financing and in helping the customer to obtain whatever he or she wishes to possess in line with Islamic Sharia and personal financing controls.

On the social and community level, the Bank has ensured during 2015 to strengthen its relationship with the Kuwaiti community by sponsoring and patronizing social, cultural and health-related events that aimed at strengthening the Kuwaiti youths' competence and diligence towards creativity and excellence. For example, Warba Bank takes part in the Innovation Challenge 2016, which is sponsored by the Kuwaiti Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences in cooperation with Executive Education Center from the College of Business Administration in Cambridge University from November 2015 to May 2016, which is considered to be one of the important applied executive education practices which enables Kuwaiti private sector companies to innovate and develop.

Al-Jassar also added that Warba Bank believes strongly in the investment in human resources as partners in its success, and as such the Bank has organized a number of training and development workshops run by talented experts for its employees to enable them to provide the best services to customers in turn. The year 2015 also noticed a good number of training functions which also included a workshop with the title "The Art of Persuasion" in order to develop the staff's knowledge in offering the best services to customers. Another training session was done to promote banking operation services and trained 50 young Kuwaiti people in the field where they learnt the various banking services.

Promoting potential

As well, in line with its policy to recruit national cadre and promoting their banking potential, the Bank has certified and graduated a new batch of trainees who passed their intensive training courses; where they learnt basic banking operations that will equip them to work in the Bank in the future. In the field of excellence, Warba Bank's performance in the past years saw it landing a number of awards, of which was the Best Call Centre award from the Banker Middle East magazine's industry awards in Kuwait 2014, from CBA Financial, and the award of Fastest Growing Bank in Kuwait, as well as the Best Developing Bank in the Middle East in 2014 from the same magazine in recognition for its banking services.

The Bank also was given its first credit classification from the international classification agency, Moody's, where it was assigned Baa2/Prime-2 rating for long and short term local and foreign currency deposit with a stable future outlook. Finally, Al-Jassar emphasized that Warba Bank is continuing its efforts during 2016 to be the first choice for customers and to expand in the various Kuwaiti areas to be with its customers anywhere and anytime to provide them the best quality Islamic banking services in order to strengthen their banking experiences.

GOLD SLIPS FURTHER

LONDON: Gold slipped further from a 7-1/2 month high yesterday as European shares rose, dimming safe-haven demand and investors awaited guidance on the pace of further US rate increases. US Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen will address Congress at 1330 GMT for the first time since hiking interest rates in December and is expected to insist that further rises this year remain on track, albeit at a slower pace.

A slowing of rate hikes could help bullion, keeping down the opportunity cost to hold it. "The gold market will listen carefully to what Janet Yellen has to say (as) it is not factoring in a 100 percent probability of a Fed hike until well into 2017," Danske Bank senior analyst Jens Pedersen said. Spot gold was down 0.5 percent at \$1,183.06 an ounce by 1302 GMT. The metal climbed to \$1,200.60 on Monday, the highest since June 22, 2015, benefiting from a weakening dollar and lower appetite for risk amid worries about European banks.

Gold will likely push higher on continued jitters in global equity markets, dollar weakness, bullish

technicals and an increase in bullion investment buying, INTEL FCStone analyst Edward Meir said. "We suspect (Yellen's) remarks will come across as unusually dovish, allowing the dollar to resume its descent and giving commodity markets a bit of a lift late in the day on Wednesday," Meir said. European stocks rallied after losses in Asia, while the dollar was unchanged against a basket of currencies, close to a 3-1/2 month low. The US Treasury benchmark yield declined to a one-year trough.

The gold price rally has hurt demand from physical buyers of the metal, traders said. Prices in India slipped to a record discount as traders struggled to draw buyers. Dealers were offering a record discount of up to \$25 an ounce to the London benchmark price. Top consumer China is closed this week for the Lunar New Year holiday. In other precious metals, spot silver was down 0.6 percent at \$15.13 an ounce, after hitting a three-month high of \$15.45 on Monday. Spot platinum fell 1.5 percent to \$921.37 an ounce while palladium fell 0.9 percent to \$508.55.— Reuters

ABK ANNOUNCES OPERATING PROFITS OF KD 87.3 MILLION

KUWAIT: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) yesterday announced Operating Profits of KD 87.3 million for 2015, up 5.8% from last year. Operating Income also saw a 9.3% jump to KD 128.5 million, while net loans and advances to customers increased by 25.8% over the same period, underlining the Bank's strong growth momentum. Net Profits, however, were down 19.2%, from KD 37.6 million to KD 30.4 million, following aggressive precautionary provisioning on the Kuwait book (KD 28 million for the 4th Quarter and total provisions of KD 61.4 Million for 2015) to reflect the current market volatility and depressed asset prices.

ABK will continue its conservative policy of provisioning during 2016. The Group's total assets at year-end increased by 24.6% to KD 4.36 billion, while customer deposits were 28.8% higher at KD 2.50 billion. Shareholders' equity amounted to KD 556 million, and the Group achieved a return on equity of 5.5%, with earnings per share of 19 fils.

The major event of the year was the successful acquisition of a 98.5% stake in Piraeus Bank of Egypt (PBE). This acquisition represents a key milestone for the Bank. It also

generated an extraordinary net one-off gain of KD 8 million (Note that Operating Profits would have been KD 95.3 million had ABK included this gain relating to the acquisition of Piraeus Bank of Egypt). PBE provides banking services to its customers in corporate banking, retail banking, treasury, as well as leasing products through a fully-owned subsidiary. It operates 39 branches and contributed KD 428 million to the total assets of the Group.

Talal Behbehani, ABK's Chairman, said: "This year has been a very special year as it recorded a key milestone in the Bank's history with the acquisition of Piraeus Bank - Egypt. This represents a major step towards the Bank expanding its presence across the MENA region. ABK is now the second Kuwaiti bank operating in Egypt." This is a good set of results, which show continuous improvements, while our top-line organic growth continues to accelerate. Consequently, the Board has proposed a cash dividend of 10 fils, subject to approval by the Bank's Annual General Meeting and financial regulators.

"The Bank's strong position was reaffirmed by Fitch, one of the world's leading



Talal Behbehani

credit rating agencies. Fitch issued an update in November confirming the Bank's stable outlook and its long term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) of A+. This confirmation of the Bank's solid position is an endorsement of our strategy and will help us to continue our growth in the future. "In closing I would like to recognize the Bank's management team and all ABK employees for their hard work and commitment.



ABK's CEO Michel Accad

They are what differentiates us and makes us unique." ABK's CEO, Michel Accad, said: "The underlying progress of the Bank during the course of the year has been excellent, despite making further precautionary provisions on the Kuwait book, which is only prudent in the current economic climate. We owe a great deal of our success to the customer-focused strategy we have adopted, which has allowed us to deliver the highest

service standards and provide customer experiences designed to make our clients' lives easier and simpler.

We will continue to invest in our infrastructure and systems, and we will further develop our 'Simpler Banking' concept, in line with the Bank's vision of "Reimagining a Simpler Bank" and its Core Values of Transparency, Integrity, Simplicity and Excellence. "I believe that the combination of ABK's customer-focused strategy and diversified business model is one that will both meet the needs of our customers and create long-term value for our customers and our shareholders."

In 2015 the Bank received a number of significant industry awards, which include: the Banker Middle East award for Best Retail Bank; Asian Banker award for Most Improved Retail Bank in the Middle East; Best Retail Bank from "The European" - a Thomson Reuters Affiliate; Best Loyalty Program in Kuwait, Banker ME; Elite Quality Recognition Award from JP Morgan Chase; Best New Product Award from Visa International; and the Award for Excellent Quality from International Commerzbank AG.

News

in brief

Omantel scraps its \$130 m dual-currency sukuk issue

MUSCAT: Oman Telecommunications Co (Omantel) scrapped plans for a \$130 million, five-year dual-currency sukuk issue because the interest rates offered by lenders were too high, the company's chief executive said yesterday. Last month, the state-run company priced the sukuk at a profit rate of 5.3 percent, having received commitments worth \$82.1 million in the US dollar tranche and 18.4 million rials (\$47.9 million) in the rial tranche. But Omantel has now shelved plans to issue the sukuk "at the present time", it said in a statement to Muscat's bourse yesterday. "The interest rates on the sukuk were higher than what we expected," chief executive Talal Al-Mamari said. "We have taken the advice of our financial advisor that now is not the right time to issue the sukuk due to the current economic situation worldwide." The sukuk proceeds would have helped to fund construction of Omantel's new headquarters as well as diversify its investment portfolio. Mamari said the company's capital investments would not stop; he did not elaborate.

French Hermes warns of fading chic in sales

PARIS: French luxury goods group Hermes warned yesterday that sales growth would probably fall below target this year because of economic and political uncertainties, prompting a sharp fall in its share price. Hermes sales in 2015 rose by 18 percent from the previous year, the company also reported, and by 8 percent once the favorable impact of the strong dollar was stripped out. In the fourth quarter alone, sales were up 15 percent, and 7 percent at constant exchange rates, "despite the impact of the recent events in France and, to a lesser extent, in Europe," it said. But weakness in the luxury goods sector in the wake of terror attacks in Paris and elsewhere would probably take its toll on turnover this year, it warned. "Due to the economic, geopolitical and monetary uncertainties around the world, sales growth in 2016 could be below the medium-term goal of 8 percent revenue growth at constant exchange rates," it said. Hermes, which is to publish full annual earnings in March, gave an early indication that its profit margin on operations would be close to 2014's 31.5 percent.

Tourism: A tenth of the world economy

PARIS: Terrorism and epidemics now and again make a dent in tourism numbers, but the sector usually quickly rebounds and it now employs hundreds of millions and accounts for a tenth of global output. Here are five key points about the sector, which grew 4.4 percent last year to nearly 1.2 billion people taking a trip outside of their country: Europe (including Russia) remains the most visited region with 609 million visiting last year, followed by the Asia-Pacific region at 277 million visitors, and the Americas at 190 million. However the number of visitors to north Africa fell by 8 percent according to data from the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). In 2014, international tourism receipts from lodging, meals, transportation and purchases hit \$1.5 trillion, up from 900 billion in 2010. The Chinese were the biggest spenders, followed by Americans. Tourism accounts for 10 percent of gross domestic product and accounts for one in 11 jobs, according to the UNWTO. China, the United States and Britain led outbound travel growth in 2015, while Russians and Brazilians travelled less due to the economic crises in their countries.

After Germany, France reports falling output

PARIS: Industrial production in France, Europe's second biggest economy, fell again in December, data showed yesterday, a day after powerhouse Germany reported a surprise drop in output. France's industrial output dipped by 1.6 percent in December after also slipping 0.9 percent the previous month, the national statistics agency INSEE said. In December it was weighed down by the transport equipment, agriculture and food industry sectors. Manufacturing output also fell by 0.8 percent, after increasing by 0.6 percent in November, INSEE said in a statement. Unusually mild weather hit electricity and gas production, while output in the auto sector decreased 3.7 percent, it added. Figures released Tuesday cast a shadow over the outlook for Germany, showing a surprise drop in industrial production in December, as well as a decline in exports. According to data compiled by the economy ministry, German industrial output fell by 1.2 percent in December, disappointing analysts' expectations for a modest increase. Factory output - a key yardstick for gauging the health of Europe's biggest economy - had already declined fractionally by 0.1 percent in November.

Maersk profit plunges amid weak trade, low oil prices

COPENHAGEN: Danish conglomerate AP Moller-Maersk yesterday reported an 82-percent drop in annual profit as its shipping unit was hit by lower freight rates and its oil business suffered from lower oil prices. Shipping unit Maersk Line, seen as an international trade bellwether as it controls around 15 percent of global sea freight, was hit by a "combination of low demand and high supply increase... in the second half of 2015," the group said in a statement. Net profit plunged to \$925 million (821 million euros) from \$5.19 billion a year earlier as revenue dropped 15 percent to \$40.30 billion.

INDONESIA PLANS 'BIG BANG' OPENING OF ECONOMY TO FOREIGN INVESTMENT

E-COMMERCE, RETAIL, HEALTHCARE AMONG SECTORS TO BE OPENED UP

JAKARTA: Indonesian President Joko Widodo yesterday unveiled plans for a "big bang" loosening of restrictions on foreign investment in nearly 50 sectors to encourage competition in an economy long dominated by powerful vested interests. The president's proposal, which will ease rules in the e-commerce, retail, healthcare, movie and several other industries, could pit a relative newcomer on the political stage against an establishment resistant to change.

It would be the most far-reaching yet in a string of stimulus packages rolled out over the past six months to drive industry and employment beyond the economy's traditional mainstays of agriculture and mineral extraction. Southeast Asia's largest economy has been growing at its slowest pace in six years because of falling commodity prices and cooling growth in major trading partner China. But Widodo told Reuters in an interview at the presidential palace he was very optimistic that growth would rebound to 5.3 percent this year after a slide to 4.8 percent in 2015.

His trade minister, Tom Lembong, told Reuters separately that the planned overhaul of the so-called 'Negative Investment List' signaled a greater openness to foreign investment and would partly prepare the country for free trade agreements, including eventually the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). "We are seriously considering deregulation across the board, but focusing on e-commerce, healthcare, and creative industry," Widodo said ahead of a cabinet discussion of the proposals. "There are 49 sub-sectors (affected) so in my opinion this is the big bang."

Lembong said retail was also among the sectors that would be opened up, and there would be some degree of deregulation in each of the 16 main sectors on the negative list, which include agriculture, forestry, energy, communication and transport. In some cases this would raise the limit on foreign stakes in companies from a minority to a majority, helping Indonesia comply with limits on "equity caps" stipulated under the TPP and other trade pacts, like one under negotiation with the European Union. The healthcare push, which would open up investment in hospitals, clinics and laboratory services, could bring a sea-change in a country where at present foreign medical professionals are not allowed to practice. Although foreign direct investment into Indonesia has risen in recent years, it remains among the lowest in Southeast Asia in relation to total investment and gross



JAKARTA: An Indonesian trader checks her tablet computing device during trading at a securities office in Jakarta. — AFP

domestic product. Foreign investors have pushed for years for a greater access to opportunities in Indonesia's vast domestic market, valued at some \$840 billion at market exchange rates. Singapore was Indonesia's largest foreign investor last year, with a 20.2 percent share of the \$29.28 billion total realized investment, followed by Malaysia and Japan, the Investment Coordinating Board said last month.

History of protectionism

Indonesia has a long history of protectionism, and vested interests have often stood in the way of trade and investment from abroad. The last revision to the negative list was done in 2014 and was seen by many as less investor-friendly. Widodo said that, so far, he has not faced any political backlash or resistance to the steps he has taken towards liberalization.

"For me competition is very important," he said. "If we have already launched our deregulation,

the bureaucracy and the system must follow the new rules." Widodo's meteoric rise from furniture businessman to president of the world's third-largest democracy - and the first to come from outside the political or military establishment - was widely seen in 2014 as a watershed moment for Indonesia. Supporters had predicted that the former governor of Jakarta would root out corruption, promote people based on merit rather than connections and create a vibrant economy.

Instead, as economic growth sagged last year, critics said he seemed out of his depth at times and battling to get around politicians determined to preserve the status quo. A cabinet reshuffle last August, which brought experienced technocrats into his team, set a new tone. Since then Widodo's administration has rolled out nine stimulus packages cutting red tape, offering tax breaks and loosening regulations. Widodo said there were two prongs to his growth strategy:

Deregulation to create competition, efficiency and better services, and infrastructure development. His government has struggled to disburse funds for roads, ports and power stations, and many critical infrastructure projects were hamstrung by bickering ministers and red tape.

However, data released last week showed that investment growth picked up in the last quarter of the year thanks to rising public spending. The final quarter also saw a jump in foreign direct investment, taking its rise for the year to 2.8 percent in dollar terms. Despite the collapse in commodity prices, the mining sector saw the most inward investment, followed by transport, warehouses and telecommunications. Bank Indonesia spurred growth prospects further in January by cutting interest rates for the first time in 11 months. Widodo said in the interview he wanted to see rates even lower but could not force the hand of an independent central bank. — Reuters

NO EASY WAY OUT FOR DEUTSCHE BANK AS INVESTORS 'LOSE FAITH'

TWO TOP 10 INVESTORS RUNNING OUT OF PATIENCE WITH TURNAROUND

FRANKFURT: Deutsche Bank bosses face a formidable task to drag its shares off a 30-year low, with reassurances about its capital levels doing little to improve investor confidence and few other options on the table to trigger a recovery. Germany's flagship lender has trailed its rivals in bouncing back from the 2008 financial crisis, hamstrung by having to pay out billions of dollars in fines to end a string of legal disputes and ageing technical infrastructure. It is the last of the major European banks to embark on a painful restructuring of its bloated investment bank, in the face of tougher regulation that reduced profitability, and the cost of that overhaul contributed to it posting its biggest annual loss on record last month.

Deutsche Bank's shares have fallen around 40 percent since the start of the year, leading a slump across the European banking sector - with a relief rally on Tuesday after the bank said it had reserves to pay coupons on its riskiest type of debt extinguished and erased by the afternoon. Shareholders are worried about the ability of management to execute a two-year turnaround plan, announced last October, against the backdrop of a deteriorating global economic outlook and negative interest rates.

"Investors have completely lost their faith in the bank," a top 10 shareholder told Reuters, adding that a fast recovery in the share price was unlikely given the magnitude of the problems weighing on the company. Several investors told Reuters they feared Deutsche would need to tap markets for more capital - despite raising a total of nearly 20 billion euros (\$22.6 billion) from investors in 2010 and 2014 - to deal with regulatory and legal issues. "We believe that Deutsche Bank has a capital shortfall of up to 7 billion euros, depending on the outcome of a range of litigation issues, which could necessitate a highly dilutive capital increase," Citi analysts

wrote in a note last week.

Deutsche Bank declined to comment on its capital position when contacted by Reuters. But the bank's co-Chief Executive John Cryan wrote to employees on Tuesday, telling them they could reassure clients the bank's capital position was "absolutely rock solid". "The market also expressed some concern about the adequacy of our legal provisions but I don't share that concern. We will almost certainly have to add to our legal provisions this year but this is already accounted for in our financial plan," he added. But several investors said they felt time was running out for the bank to show successes - such as returning to profit or stabilizing its share price - after other large lenders had moved on and closed the chapter of financial crisis.

'No benefit of doubt'

"There's no benefit of the doubt," another top 10 investor said, adding currently investors were voting with their feet. "Two years (as planned by Cryan for the revamp) is a long time. There's no margin for error." Questions are also being raised about the quality of the bank's supervisory board. "We miss competence in financials on the supervisory board," said the first top 10 shareholder, adding that support for Chairman Paul Achleitner was also waning and a new face was needed for a fresh start for the bank. "However, at this stage, there's no obvious candidate to succeed him, so he will likely be kept in charge until the end of his mandate in May 2017," the shareholder said.

Deutsche declined to comment on Achleitner's position or about investor concerns about the board. A share price slide of this magnitude - Deutsche's market value has roughly halved from a year ago to around 19 billion euros - would normally trigger speculation that it could become a takeover target. — Reuters



INFINITI AL BABBAIN LAUNCHES ITS HALA FEBRUARY CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babbain Co, the exclusive agent of Infiniti in Kuwait, launched the Hala February campaign celebrating the national and independence day of Kuwait. As part of participating in the patriotic celebrations, Infiniti Al Babbain is giving exclusive offers on services and registrations to give customers the best value to the Hala February success in this special month. Infiniti Al Babbain is offering a one-year full insurance and a five years free service for new Infiniti buyers, free third party insurance and free car registration. The offer includes all Infiniti cars throughout the whole month. Therefore, the customer has to just buy the car and worry about nothing more when it comes to services and registrations.

Hala February is considered the biggest celebration throughout the whole year and it gets many participants from all ages and gives them a combination of art, culture, religion and entertaining activities. That is exactly why Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babbain always wanted and always will want to be a part of this patriotic celebration. There is no

doubt Infiniti Al Babbain's Hala February offers are just a continuation to the many offers Infiniti Al Babbain always gives throughout the year and the exceptional and very professional services that our professional and experienced team provides to please our loyal customers.

Infiniti is considered one of the very famous luxuries, elegant and attractive car brands all over the world. Infiniti cars are also known for their power and always up-to-date techniques, which makes Infiniti cars one of the smartest and most developed cars. All these values are for sure shown in the Infiniti showroom by Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babbain, which gives our unique VIP customers a very luxuries experience. The showroom has a very special spot to guarantee the customers the best most amazing experience and the service center is very well equipped, fast and accurate to provide the best service to our loyal customers. Now Infiniti Al Babbain is asking all our VIP clients to come celebrate Hala February and enjoy our exceptional offers and luxurious cars.

EXPORT-HOOKED GERMANY REBALANCES ECONOMY - UP TO A POINT GERMANS' APPETITE FOR IMPORTS GROWS AS REAL INCOMES RISE

BERLIN: In 2010, France's then Finance Minister Christine Lagarde urged Germany to boost economic demand at home and help weaker euro zone states recover from the global crisis. Six years on, it is delivering - up to a point and as much by accident as by design. Those who say Germany is gradually rebalancing its economy, after decades of relying mainly on its exporters for growth, point to forecasts that domestic demand will account for all of this year's expansion. Others, however, doubt whether the shift towards greater spending by private citizens, industry and the state marks a lasting, structural change in the economy. Germany's trade and broader current account surpluses remain high, they say. A third group warns that if Germany gets too keen on consuming, rather than producing the high quality goods it has long sold to the world, it may not bounce back from future downturns in the way it did from the global crisis of 2007-09. One thing is certain: Germans are sucking in more imports from other euro zone countries, helping to encourage growth and employment among the neighbors. One such is 35-year-old house husband Augustin Tougas whose wife works as a teacher

in Berlin and has just got a pay rise of more than four percent, well above inflation which hit a record-low of 0.1 percent last year.

They've just spent 300 euros (\$340) on an Italian espresso machine. After disturbed nights caring for their two small children, a stiff coffee is what they need to prepare for the day. "It's a belated Christmas present for ourselves. We just felt we should give ourselves a treat," Tougas said. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), which Lagarde now heads, cautiously welcomes the trend towards greater consumption. "Domestic demand is increasingly playing more of a role as growth driver in Germany, which should contribute to rebalancing both inside and outside the euro area," said an IMF official, speaking to Reuters on condition of anonymity.

The year Lagarde made her plea, net foreign trade accounted for almost a third of growth in the German economy, which was then recovering from the financial crisis much more rapidly than other major euro zone countries. By last year, this contribution had shrunk sharply with domestic demand instead accounting for the lion's share: 1.5 percentage points of the 1.7 percent growth rate. This year, Berlin expects

growth to be entirely domestically-driven. Net foreign trade will only hinder the expansion, with overall exports hurt by waning demand for 'Made in Germany' goods from emerging markets such as China, where the economy is slowing, and Russia which is in recession.

Refugee factor

The rebalancing that has been achieved so far is due both to factors over which Berlin has no control, and government policy decisions - some made over a decade ago. Chancellor Angela Merkel can claim some of the credit in at least one respect. Her public welcome for refugees from wars in Syria and elsewhere helped to encourage more than one million people to seek asylum in Germany last year. The conservative chancellor has decided to spend not only a large part of her political capital on the migrant crisis, but also last year's entire budget surplus of 12 billion euros on accommodating and integrating the record influx of refugees. While Merkel's refugee policy is politically controversial, it is undoubtedly an economic game-changer for Germany's ageing society. The DIW economic institute estimates that the

state will spend over 30 billion euros on refugees in 2016 and 2017, adding about 0.3 percentage points to annual growth. Other factors lie beyond her influence. Record low interest rates set by the European Central Bank are encouraging Germans to borrow and spend, while the slump in global oil prices has helped to push down inflation, raising their purchasing power. With Germans' appetite for foreign goods rising, imports from other euro zone countries climbed to 350.5 billion euros in 2014 from 302.2 billion in 2010, data from the Federal Statistical Office show. This helped to reduce Germany's trade surplus with the rest of the euro zone to 63.2 billion euros in 2014 from 88.6 billion euros in 2010. In 2015, imports from other euro zone countries further rose by nearly four percent, preliminary data showed on Tuesday. Germany, however, can't shake off its habits that easily. The trade surplus with the world jumped to 247.8 billion euros last year from 213.6 billion in 2014, the data showed.

The wider current account surplus also hit a record 249.1 billion euros in 2015. This reflects how Germans also remain a nation of savers, with pension funds investing this money in

the likes of French and Italian government debt, and returning interest payments boosting the surplus. Holger Schmieding, chief economist at Berenberg private bank, says the collapse in oil prices is masking the underlying trend of imports rising faster than exports. "Over time, Germany's external surplus will decline," he said. "But as Germany can now import its energy much more cheaply, the current account surplus may not yet shrink in 2016."

Others are less confident. "Germany's trade and current account surpluses are still big. When the surpluses start declining, then I will be confident that a lasting rebalancing has taken place," said Professor Paul De Grauwe of the London School of Economics. Economics commentator Philippe Legrain sees no sign that the current account surplus - which he called the "biggest economic imbalance in the euro-zone and indeed the world" - is shrinking. "A genuine rebalancing requires much higher wages commensurate with workers' increased productivity over the past two decades and increased domestic investment, both public and private."

'LEADING BY EXAMPLE' TO DRIVE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH QALAA CO-FOUNDER AT AMCHAM UNDP CONFERENCE

CAIRO: Qalaa Holdings Co-founder and Managing Director, Hisham El-Khazindar, discussed the private sector's role in ushering in a new era of inclusive growth for Egypt at a forum organized by the American Chamber of Commerce and the UNDP. "Private sector investors are becoming increasingly aware that their ability to grow and generate profits is directly linked to the existence of a stable and prosperous society and thus there is tremendous overlap between the interests of the public and private sectors," said Hisham El-Khazindar, Co-Founder and Managing Director of Qalaa Holdings, an African leader in energy and infrastructure.

El-Khazindar participated in the opening panel at the AmCham UNDP Forum; "Expanding Horizons in Development: The Rising Role of the Private Sector," which was attended by former Mexican President Felipe Calderon during his visit to Cairo. El-Khazindar's co-panelists included Minister of Social Solidarity, Ghada Waly and Dina Sherif, Co-Founder, Ahead of the Curve and Director of the Center for Entrepreneurship at the American University in Cairo.

The focus of the panel, moderated by Laila Iskander, former Minister of Urban Renewal and Informal Settlements, was to discuss the findings of a new report published by the UNDP, the Egyptian Corporate Responsibility Center (ECRC) and the Industrial Modernization Center (IMC) on the role of the Egyptian private sector in development. "We need to create an environment of inclusive growth to make sure that no one is left out," said Waly.

"This will require partnership and more private sector investments in sectors such as health, education, infrastructure and micro-finance." Highlighting the fact that businesses can do more than just give back to society by donating a portion of profits to charitable organizations as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR), El-Khazindar noted that, "we need to move beyond the concept of CSR.

The scale of the problems is so large that in order to achieve our development goals more businesses need to incorporate the social dimension as part of their core activities by pursuing the types of responsible or impact investments that will foster inclusive growth. Since inception Qalaa Holdings has provided close to EGP 400 million in funding across a spectrum of projects. "Out of belief in the importance of investing in human capital and the future leaders of Egypt, we established the



Hisham El-Khazindar

Qalaa Holdings Scholarship Foundation (QHSF) in 2006. This year we are celebrating our 10th anniversary.

Including the 2016 class of scholarship recipients, the Foundation will have provided more than 150 scholarships for Egyptian students to pursue graduate studies abroad at some of the world's most prestigious universities with one condition, that they return to work in Egypt after graduation, which is something that we are extremely proud of. It is sustainable philanthropy," said El-Khazindar. "We have also joined the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) out of a belief in transparency

and accountability, and have evolved from CSR to responsible, impact investing," he added. Qalaa has been a regional pioneer in the area of impact investing by pursuing what can be referred to as the "the Double Bottom Line," a term coined to measure a company's success based on both positive social impact and financial performance.

"Over the years we have tried to invest in businesses that spur job creation, develop human capital by transferring knowledge to the wider community, and provide products or services that will have a positive impact on the lives of average citizens such as gas distribution, electricity generation, solid waste management and even microfinance through our subsidiary, Tanmeyah which directly addresses those at the base of the pyramid who have no access to the banking system," said El-Khazindar. Waly praised Qalaa's and the private sector's initiatives in pioneering solutions and addressing national challenges and invited them to continue their efforts. "Qalaa Holdings is doing great work by focusing on education, which is vital in order to develop generations of youth who can help rebuild the country."

Qalaa Holdings was the first company in Egypt to receive an "A" grade rating from the UNGC's Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) on its first Sustainability Report issued in 2015. The GRI which helps businesses and governments communicate the impact of business on critical sustainability issues, awarded Qalaa Holdings for aligning the company's business operations with the UNGC's principles for environmental, social and governance policies.

Sherif, who is the lead author of the UNDP Report, also noted that Qalaa Holdings is a company that is serious about the issue of self accountability. "Qalaa's Sustainability Report is an excellent example of an Egyptian company that has moved beyond basic compliance to voluntarily report on where it stands against global sustainability indicators." "We represent the tip of the iceberg, we need to lead by example," said El-Khazindar.



TAKAUD, BKIC PARTNER TO PROTECT BAHRAINIS, MENA

MANAMA: TAKAUD, the specialist provider of savings, investment and pension solutions for the MENA region, is joining forces with BKIC (Bahrain Kuwait Insurance Company) to protect the people of Bahrain and the GCC and MENA regions, by helping them take better care of their tomorrows. The two Bahrain-based financial institutions have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at creating strong synergies between the two institutions, which in turn enhances the customer offerings and experiences for both firms. The partnership will allow both providers to explore areas of cooperation that will enhance their respective customer propositions.

The MoU was signed recently by TAKAUD's CEO Luc Metivier and BKIC's CEO Ebrahim Al Rayyes at a special signing ceremony held at the BKIC offices. Areas of cooperation include providing BKIC's customers with information about TAKAUD smart-saving programs, including Employee Savings Plans for corporations, and Financial Consultancy and Wealth Management services for individuals of all income levels. TAKAUD customers, in turn, will get access to information about insur-

ance products from group life insurance programs for corporations to domestic-worker, house and car insurance for families.

"Insurance and smart savings are products that everyone knows they need but it isn't always easy for people to get access or information about these services," TAKAUD's CEO Luc Metivier said. "Our partnership with BKIC brings information about TAKAUD smart savings to BKIC outlets and their Website at the same time as TAKAUD links its customers to BKIC insurance products. It is a natural partnership of financial products to make people's lives easier, more secure and simply better."

Ebrahim Al Rayyes, BKIC's CEO said, "Now, when BKIC agents talk to our corporate and individual customers about car and medical insurance, we can also let them know how they can create smart-savings plans to secure their future. Both BKIC and TAKAUD are about making tomorrow better. We protect people from dangers that can hurt their homes and families; TAKAUD protects them by helping to ensure their futures are as bright as or better than today."



flydubai CEO
Ghaith Al Ghaith



FLYDUBAI ANNOUNCES 4TH FULL-YEAR OF PROFITABILITY

KUWAIT: flydubai yesterday reported profits of AED100.7 million (\$27.4 million) for 2015 following a stronger second half-year which saw increased numbers of passengers travel across its network. Total revenue for the full year was AED 4.9 billion (\$1.33 billion), an increase of 11% compared to 2014. The overall yield, in terms of filp per Revenue Passenger Kilometer (RPKM), was under pressure attributable to the strong dollar, the challenging trading environment across the network; disruption resulting from the suspension of flights on some established routes and a large number of recently launched routes with a lead time required to reach maturity.

His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman of flydubai, said: "2015 was an important year for flydubai. It was a year in which through determination and commitment we continued to realize our vision to increase connectivity in support of the UAE's economic development. The year culminated in two achievements: The delivery of our 50th aircraft; and our fourth full-year of profitability." Ghaith Al Ghaith, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of flydubai, added: "The overall trading environment has remained challenging but we have maintained our growth story and ended the year positively. Our robust passenger growth of 30%, in terms of RPKM, underlines the demand for travel within our geographic focus; the continued appeal of Dubai as a destination; and the popularity of our service."

Cost performance

A stronger performance in the second half of the year coupled with cost management efforts has resulted in a positive end to the year. Fuel costs reduced to 30.3% of operating costs benefiting from lower fuel prices with 59% of fuel costs unhedged. In line with flydubai's active fuel hedging policy, 16% of the fuel requirements for the next 24 months are currently

hedged. This will provide a level of certainty and control to its fuel costs due to the ongoing fluctuation in fuel prices.

EBITDAR reduced slightly compared to the previous year, but remained healthy at 20.5% of revenue. The closing cash and cash equivalents position, including pre-delivery payments for future aircraft deliveries, was robust at AED2.4 billion. Ghaith Al Ghaith, CEO of flydubai, commenting on flydubai's cost performance, said: "The solid foundation we laid when the airline launched has ensured that we are best placed to respond quickly to manage the challenging socio-economic environment, in a controlled manner, both in the short term and for the long term."

Operational performance

Ready for business: Business Class was introduced on 17 new routes in 2015 representing 87% of all departures from Dubai. flydubai saw the number of passengers from across its network who travelled in Business Class increase by 72% compared to 2014. Highest demand came from Africa followed by the Subcontinent and the Middle East, highlighting the demand for business class air travel, especially in the markets that have not had access to this service before. Demand for this service is also reflected in the UAE's position as an internationally recognized centre for business and trade.

Driving demand at second hub: the start of flydubai's new operations at Al Maktoum International-Dubai World Central saw services become available to Amman, Beirut, Doha, Kathmandu and Kuwait while flights to these destinations continued to be available at Dubai International. Services started on 25 October 2015 and during these first 10 weeks of operations passengers welcomed the choice and convenience offered by the new airport. Al Maktoum International-Dubai

World Central continues to provide passengers from across Dubai with increased opportunities for travel.

Creating free flows of trade: increased accessibility to previously underserved markets has benefited cargo revenues which remain strong, posting an increase of 28.4% with 40,441 tons carried during the year. Increased spending aids ancillary revenue: continued strong performance for pre and onboard sales including inflight entertainment, food, seat preferences, checked baggage allowance, car rental, hotel bookings, travel insurance and visa facilitation services contributed 15.1% of revenue.

The introduction of new technology has provided more flexibility and opportunity to increase sales. Growing in experience and talent: in support of its growing fleet flydubai staff numbers rose to a total of 3,393 including 658 pilots, 1,435 cabin crew and 273 engineers representing 114 nationalities. This is a reflection of the opportunity created by opening previously underserved markets and flydubai's ability to attract some of the best talent in the aviation industry.

Listening to our customers

flydubai's onboard survey continues to provide the airline with unique insights into emerging travel trends. Feedback through the onboard survey came from 230,016 passengers and covered 36 touch points. flydubai reviews and analyses the data on a weekly basis and uses it to drive innovation across the airline. This approach further emphasizes its commitment of putting the customers' experience at the core of its operations.

Creating real connections

flydubai's strategy to support the vision of the Government to create a globally recognized centre for trade and tourism has seen: flydubai launch 18 new

destinations including Asmara, Astana, Chennai, Giza, Jofu, Quetta and Shiraz. An increase in business and leisure travel between KSA and the UAE contributed to flydubai's market growth of 26%. flydubai's commitment to open direct air links between KSA's regional airports and Dubai saw the number of flights increase by 29% including the start of the first international flights from Jofu Airport.

flydubai's comprehensive network across the GCC (including Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman) saw passenger numbers grow by 18%. Passenger numbers from 14 points in the Middle East (including Jordan and Lebanon) grew by 37%. Demand for travel between India and the UAE remained strong. flydubai accounted for 15% of the total passenger growth which represented 4.5% of the overall market. In March, Chennai became the 8th point on flydubai's network in India with three flights a week.

With 11 points in Europe and 9 points in Russia flydubai passenger numbers grew by 14% across these markets however passenger numbers between Russia and Dubai decreased by 22% reflecting the current economic situation. Passenger numbers from the Caucasus grew by 21% and from Central Asia by 15%. The start of flights to Quetta and Faisalabad saw the network in Pakistan increase to five points and a 77% increase in passenger numbers contributed to an overall market growth of 12%. Since its launch, flydubai has opened 59 destinations on its network that were previously underserved or that did not have direct air links to Dubai. 2015 saw flydubai increase connectivity offered by Dubai's aviation hub and contributed 29% of the total increase in passengers using Dubai's airports.

Optimizing a modern and efficient fleet: flydubai took delivery of seven new aircraft during 2015 which included its 50th aircraft, marking the last delivery from

the first aircraft order made at the Farnborough Airshow in 2008. Aircraft utilization was 13.6 block hours together with an industry-leading record of 99.77% technical dispatch reliability. Ghaith Al Ghaith, CEO of flydubai, commenting on flydubai's operational performance, said: "We have been focused on increasing access to Dubai and during the last two years we have launched 41 new routes. In support of our expansion plans, we have continued to create demand for travel whilst maintaining the efficiency of our operations and meeting the needs of our passengers."

Outlook

Starting in May, flydubai will take delivery of 16 new aircraft over the next 24 months. This includes five new Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft due to arrive in the second half of 2017. In line with its strategy to maintain a young and efficient fleet these aircraft will support flydubai's continued growth as well as replace some of the original aircraft in the fleet. During this period, seven aircraft will be retired. The continued focus on cost improvement and efforts to increase operational efficiencies are expected to contribute further cost savings to the airline.

The airline's route network will continue to strengthen as it sees all the 41 new routes launched in the last two years mature. flydubai has a network of 89 destinations in 43 countries. Ghaith Al Ghaith, CEO of flydubai commenting on the year ahead, said: "Our network is maturing and so we continue to monitor capacity and review the opportunities for existing routes as well as for new routes. In response to the changing environment, considered, balanced adjustment and management will be required. Our prudent outlook will help flydubai remain well-positioned to take advantage of the opportunities within our flying radius and continue our sustained growth trajectory."

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME ENVIRONMENT WITH WINDOWS APPS

By Charles Nahas

KUWAIT: Most people know that Windows 10 helps them to be more productive at work, but did you know it can also help you to be more productive at home too? Whether you simply want to manage your family's schedule better, capture special memories or you're planning to do some redecorating, here's how Windows apps can help:

Keep tracks

Outlook.com makes it easy to share your Microsoft Calendar with the people you care about. All they need is a Microsoft account, and then it's as simple as sharing permissions with them and controlling which parts of the calendar they can view and access. You can also share an online view-only link with people, who can then access it via Microsoft Outlook, iCal and Google Calendar. If you're a parent, this is the ideal way to keep track of your chil-

dren's school commitments and play dates, and make sure you never miss a recital or leave them stranded at school.

Share notes

Using your Microsoft account login gives you access to powerful cloud-based storage. OneDrive powers document sharing in Office 365, which allows multiple users to access, edit, comment and change a single document from any device. OneNote is a "catch-all" app for information, ideas and inspiration in any form, and makes accessing this information quick and effortless no matter where you are. These features are the perfect sharing repository for your family, keeping everything safely in one place. Whether you're grocery shopping and want to access the shopping list that your family has added to; you find an article for your daughter's research project you want to save for her, with the relevant parts marked; or your whole family want to have their say on your latest inspiration for

a home makeover, OneDrive and OneNote make collaborating and sharing easier.

Capture memories

No matter if you live with family, friends or even alone, your home is the place where memories are created. Capture those special moments easily with the 20 megapixel camera on your Microsoft Lumia phone. It's one of the most powerful smartphone cameras and its features like Carl Zeiss optics and triple LED flash ensure your photos are of a high quality. Best of all, it's easy to create albums with just a few clicks and share these on your OneDrive account for safe keeping. And, when you're not snapping photos of your children or your friends, you might come across the inspiration for your next table setting or lounge remodel. Snap a few shots to remind yourself to get the creative juices flowing.

Get creative

Talking about creative juices, there are

several apps available to help you create your own little haven. For inspiration, why not try out Houzz? The Houzz app is a digital repository of home-related ideas, tips and inspiration, with over eight million pictures of home decor and remodeling ideas. Then, if you're feeling really creative, try out the drawing and painting app, Fresh Paint. It's been hailed for its ability to accurately mimic watercolor, oil, pencil, pen and pastel, so you could try your hand at creating your very own art for your home. And what would a haven be without the right lighting? Ambieye is an app that connects with Philips Hue light bulbs and allows you to control their color, intensity and brightness.

Optimize your home life

With an ever-greater part of our lives becoming digital, it makes sense that we capitalize on digital technology to make our home life more organized, our homes more comfortable and see our productivity at home increase.



Charles Nahas



TAIPEI: A video game enthusiast experiences a virtual reality headset at the Taipei Game Show 2016 in Taipei, Taiwan. Oculus founder Palmer Luckey and other pioneers of modern virtual reality technology from such companies as Google and Sony gathered for a summit yesterday, about the immersive medium in Hollywood. — AP

GOOGLE COMPUTERS 'CAN QUALIFY' AS DRIVERS: US SAFETY REGULATORS

A BOOST TO SELF-DRIVING CARS

WASHINGTON: US vehicle safety regulators have said the artificial intelligence system piloting a self-driving Google car could be considered the driver under federal law, a major step toward ultimately winning approval for autonomous vehicles on the roads. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration told Google, a unit of Alphabet Inc, of its decision in a previously unreported Feb 4 letter to the company posted on the agency's website this week.

Google's self-driving car unit on Nov 12 submitted a proposed design for a self-driving car that has "no need for a human driver," the letter to Google from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Chief Counsel Paul Hemmersbaugh said. "NHTSA will interpret 'driver' in the context of Google's described motor vehicle design as referring to the (self-driving system), and not to any of the vehicle occupants," NHTSA's letter said.

"We agree with Google its (self-driving car) will not have a 'driver' in the traditional sense that vehicles have had drivers during the last more than one hundred years." Major automakers and technology companies such as Google are racing to develop and sell vehicles that can drive themselves at least part of the time. All participants in the autonomous driving race complain that state and federal safety rules are imped-

ing testing and eventual deployment of such vehicles. California has proposed draft rules requiring steering wheels and a licensed driver in all self-driving cars.

Karl Brauer, senior analyst for the Kelley Blue Book automotive research firm, said there were still significant legal questions surrounding autonomous vehicles. But if "NHTSA is prepared to name artificial intelligence as a viable alternative to human-controlled vehicles, it could substantially streamline the process of putting autonomous vehicles on the road," he said. If the car's computer is the driver for legal purposes, then it clears the way for Google or automakers to design vehicle systems that communicate directly with the vehicle's artificial pilot.

In its response to Google, the federal agency offered its most comprehensive map yet of the legal obstacles to putting fully autonomous vehicles on the road. It noted existing regulations requiring some auto safety equipment can not be waived immediately, including requirements for braking systems activated by foot control. "The next question is whether and how Google could certify that the (self-driving system) meets a standard developed and designed to apply to a vehicle with a human driver," NHTSA said. Google is "still evaluating" NHTSA's lengthy response, a company spokesperson said on Tuesday. Google executives

have said they would likely partner with established automakers to build self-driving cars.

Undermining safety

Google told NHTSA that the real danger is having auto safety features that could tempt humans to try to take control. Google "expresses concern that providing human occupants of the vehicle with mechanisms to control things like steering, acceleration, braking... could be detrimental to safety because the human occupants could attempt to override the (self-driving system's) decisions," the NHTSA letter stated. NHTSA's Hemmersbaugh said federal regulations requiring equipment like steering wheels and brake pedals would have to be formally rewritten before Google could offer cars without those features.

For example, current federal rules require alerts on dashboards if tire pressure runs low. NHTSA said a test would need to be created that shows the vehicle computer is informed of the problem. NHTSA raised the question of whether humans in the vehicles should also be made aware. In January, NHTSA said it may waive some vehicle safety rules to allow more driverless cars to operate on US roads as part of a broader effort to speed up development of self-driving vehicles. — Reuters

CANON WINS PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD AT THE CIRCULARS 2016

DUBAI: Canon, world leader in imaging solutions, announced that the company has won the prestigious People's Choice Award for its toner cartridge recycling program at The Circulars 2016. The Circulars is an annual awards program and initiative of the Young Global Leaders of the World Economic Forum in collaboration with Accenture. It aims to recognize individuals and organizations from commerce and civil society across the globe that have made a notable contribution to driving circular economy principles - where growth does not depend on the use of scarce natural resources.

The awards ceremony took place in Davos, Switzerland. Canon was presented with the accolade, voted for by the public, to recognize Canon as an organization that shows circular economy leadership through its innovative closed loop recycling system for cartridges. "We are delighted that our recycling program has been acknowledged in these respected awards and that Canon's circular approach is delivering great value and innovation," commented David Bateson, Senior Vice President of Legal, IP and Sustainability, Canon Europe.

"In 1990, Canon became the first com-

pany to launch a global recycling program for toner cartridges and we now operate this program in 24 countries worldwide. This program is just one part of our ongoing commitment to sustainability initiatives. We are honored to be selected by the public to receive this People's Choice Award and also grateful to our customers for supporting the program through their own commitment to recycling."

In 2015, Canon celebrated the 25th anniversary of its laser toner cartridge recycling program, designed to minimize the use of resources whilst enabling customers to achieve their high quality printing requirements. The program, which is free for customers, has recycled more than 344,000 tons of cartridges globally, saving over 502,000 tons of CO2, since it launched. Last year, Canon also launched a new recycling plant in Japan that has helped improve sorting capability and enabled 50% greater processing capacity. Customers can find out how to recycle their cartridges with Canon by visiting Canon's recycling website. For outstanding results, Canon recommends use of genuine cartridges. More information about Canon's recycling program can be found on the 25th anniversary recycling website.



David Bateson, Senior Vice President of Legal, IP and Sustainability Canon Europe accepting The Circulars award trophy presented by Andy Wales, Corporate Affairs Director, SAB Miller.

HOW TO FIND THE BEST FITNESS APP

MIAMI: There's no reason to set foot in a gym thanks to hundreds of new fitness apps and online workouts, but choosing one can be overwhelming. We asked sports medicine doctors for help finding the one that's best for you.

Personalize it

Look for programs that offer personalized screenings and gather details on your past injuries, health conditions and fitness goals. "There's a lot of cookie-cutter apps out there and people that just want to get your monthly subscriptions, and they're really not concerned about helping you reach your goals or, more importantly, if any of these movements are going to injure you," said David Alexander, who's trained LeBron James and Dwyane Wade and owns DBC Fitness in Miami.

"It's beneficial if you can find an app out there or an online program where you're having conversations via email, phone, or face time with the trainer that can help make sure you're doing the exercises correctly." Some apps offer daily or weekly check-ins with trainers and a few offer real time feedback. While those are more costly, you can also pop into a live class in your area to get some pointers so if you're a new yogi starting at home with an online subscription, it's important to take a class a couple times a month to have someone check your form.

Have fun

It doesn't matter whether all the supermodels are doing barre classes if the thought of it totally bores you. Find something you love because you're much more likely to stick with it. "It's pretty well known that the novelty of these things wears off within several months," said Dr. Daniel Vigil, a UCLA Health doctor who has served as the USA team physician for several international competitions, including the World Cup. It doesn't have to be super high intensity and it doesn't have to be the 'it' workout. Movement is movement. "Find the device that truly is the most appealing to you, something that looks good to your eye and makes you have that visceral response, that's what going to make you use it and keep you curi-

ous and keep it entertaining."

Don't be afraid to modify

High intensity interval training can offer mega results, but if you're just starting out and have never done sumo squats with a kettlebell, make sure to tailor the program to your needs. That means if an exercise comes onscreen that irritates an old knee injury, take a rest, modify it or replace it with a move that works for you. "That's where I can get a little worried about some of the apps is that folks might be compromising form just to get some of the moves done ... don't stretch to pain," said Dr. Jeff Mayer, who specializes in sports medicine and has worked with the Baltimore Ravens. "When you're compromising form and you're compromising the integrity of the exercise you open yourself up for an increased chance for injury and we see that all the time." Don't be afraid to do fewer repetitions at first and work your way up. Five reps with proper form are far more effective than 10 done incorrectly.

Give it a rest

While your Instagram feed may be full of #fitspo (that's fitness inspiration), it's important to pick an app that includes rest days to avoid injury and physical and mental burnout. "You want to find something that gives you three workout days and one recovery day, whether it's a yoga day, a stretch day, a Pilates day. Find something that's not high intensity every day while you're building your foundation," said Alexander.

Mix it up

You've heard it before, but if it's worth repeating. Cross training is key not just to avoid injury but to keep your muscles from plateauing. It's all about muscle confusion so if you're a die-hard yogi or barre lover, find an app to help you add in some higher intensity interval training. "It may be a combo of these apps would be best ... it goes back to what's your main goal? Is it to get better cardiovascular fitness, is it to get more flexible, is it to get stronger," said Mayer. — AP

NIKON, PHOTOGRAPHY MAESTRO BRINGS 'SEEING CREATIVELY' TOUR TO KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Nikon, the world leader in digital imaging, is proud to present 'Seeing Creatively', a regional photography tour that is set to inspire and excite photography enthusiasts across multiple cities in the Middle East and Africa region. The sessions will be conducted February 21, 2016 at Yarmouk Cultural Centre by the world-renowned, multi-awarded commercial photographer, Bryan F Peterson (www.bryanfpeterson.com), author of 8 best-selling photography books published in 11 languages.

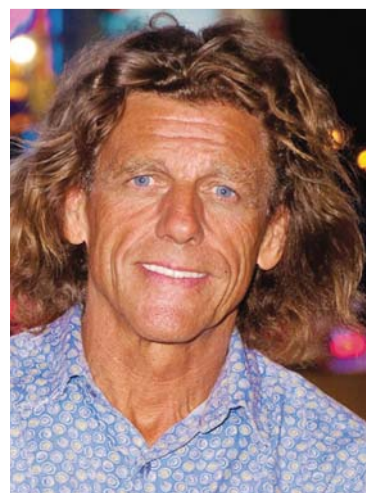
The tour will provide both aspiring and professional photographers an opportunity to enhance their skills and learn new techniques. The sessions will be conducted across countries including Kuwait, Oman, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. Bryan

Peterson expressed his excitement about the workshop: "I am eager to meet the aspiring photographers in Kuwait and assist them in reaching their photography potential through the platform Nikon School has provided. The workshops, open to everyone, will familiarize aspiring photographers to the different aspects of photography and demonstrate to how a simple shot can be turned into a creative image."

Takashi Yoshida, the Managing Director for Nikon Middle East, stated "Through ongoing Nikon School initiatives, like 'Seeing Creatively', Nikon aims to spread support to ambitious photographers in the region as well as across the globe. The ultimate goal for Nikon School sessions is to revive photographers' passions through

inspirational talks and seminars that provide platforms for the local community to meet with professionals such as Bryan Peterson, where they can discuss ideas that will pave their way to creating high-quality, creative content."

Yoshida added, "There is a lot of potential in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa regions, and together with our Nikon ambassadors, we hope to nurture and grow the pool of photographers through ongoing Nikon School workshops." To find out more on how to register and be a part of the exciting workshop, follow Nikon on Facebook on www.facebook.com/nikonmea. The workshops will be taking place in Muscat, Jeddah, Doha, Cape town, and more.



Bryan Peterson

BIGGEST EVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE SURVEY TO SPEED END OF TRACHOMA

LONDON: Surveyors were taken hostage in Yemen, accused of being representatives of Dracula in Papua New Guinea, worked in sandstorms and temperatures of 50 degrees Celsius in Ethiopia. It was all part of the day's work for some of the thousands of people who have completed what the organizers say is the largest ever survey of an infectious disease, examining 2.6 million people in 29 countries for the eye infection trachoma.

"They faced tribal warfare and rogue villagers in Papua New Guinea who spread a rumor that the teams were vampires," said Anthony Solomon, chief scientist of the Global Trachoma Mapping Project (GTMP).

"They worked in Ethiopia's Afar region, one of the most hostile territories in the world in which to conduct community-based research, amid sandstorms, temperatures of 50 degrees Celsius and deadly venomous spiders," he added. The scale and quality of the survey mean trachoma, an extremely painful disease which causes blindness, could be eliminated by 2020, according to the GTMP

organizers - the World Health Organization, the Carter Center, and the international NGO Sightsavers. "We know where it is, we know how prevalent it is, so we know what to do," said Tom Millar, who co-led the project. "We're very hopeful it can now be eliminated."

Trachoma is one of 17 so-called neglected tropical diseases earmarked by the WHO to be controlled, eliminated or eradicated by 2020. It has partly or completely blinded at least 1.8 million people, and affects some of the poorest and most marginalized rural communities, the WHO says. "In countries like Ethiopia (prevalence) is mind-numbingly, shockingly high - in some communities over 50 percent of the population have trachoma," said Millar, who is neglected tropical diseases operations director at Sightsavers. Before the survey began in 2012, only one region in Ethiopia had received support for tackling the disease. "They did not know what to do. They were just looking into a black hole. Now they've mapped the whole country and they almost have funding and support to deliver

all the interventions for the country," Millar said. "They are now talking about when they eliminate trachoma."

Eyes scraped blind

The disease is spread through contact with infected clothing, hands or flies, and affects communities with little access to clean water and sanitation. Repeated infections make a person's eyelashes turn inward, so that they scrape the surface of the eyes with every blink. "It's a hugely painful way to go blind," Millar said. More than 550 teams of health ministry staff in the countries surveyed were trained to spot the disease and use smartphones with GPS systems to record the data. They also recorded water and sanitation levels.

Trachoma rates were lower than expected in some countries including Nigeria, Laos, Cambodia and Egypt. "A lot of that is because, since this was first looked at in the 1980s and 1990s, there's been a lot of social and economic development ... that has helped reduce

the spread of the disease," Millar said. Not everywhere could be mapped. Eighteen countries had districts where it was too dangerous, including Borno and Adamawa states in northeastern Nigeria which had to be left out because of the militant Islamist group, Boko Haram. Quite large areas in Ethiopia's Somali Region could not be mapped because of not safe to go there.

"Without mapping we cannot launch interventions," said Solomon, who is medical officer for trachoma at WHO. "But I think that's ok. If there are bullets in the air the biggest health problem is not the risk of blindness in 20 or 30 years' time, it's something much more visceral and immediate," he added.

Countries support each other

As well as gathering quality data, the survey has helped develop strong ties between countries where the disease is endemic. "We now have a lot of countries officially supporting each other, and need very little in the way of external support. It's very important for ...

trachoma elimination in a lot of these countries," Solomon said. To eliminate trachoma, people living in areas with high levels of the disease need up to five years of antibiotic treatment, given once a year. Between 1987 and 2012, about 1,100 districts in the countries at risk were mapped, leaving a further 1,200 districts that were suspected of having trachoma.

"In 2012 everybody realized that the biggest hurdle to elimination was the fact that we only had about 50 percent of the data required," said Millar. So Solomon and Millar spent months gathering experts to help work out the best way to gather reliable data at speed and on a massive scale. "It felt like pushing boulders up hills at the beginning, but once you got it to the top it was fantastic, and we struggled to hold onto it on the way down the hill as the momentum has taken over," Millar said. "The challenge now is: how does it encourage new funders to the table to make sure that we get over the line and do eliminate by 2020," he added. — Reuters



LONDON: Junior doctors shout slogans and hold placards as they protest outside Guy's Hospital during a 24-hour strike over pay and conditions in London yesterday. — AFP photos

DOCTORS STAGE SECOND STRIKE IN ENGLISH HOSPITALS

LONDON: Thousands of junior doctors at English hospitals staged a second strike yesterday against proposed new conditions and pay rates for working unsociable hours.

Junior doctors—all medics below consultant level—are providing only emergency care during the 24-hour strike, which runs until 8:00am (0800 GMT) today. Nearly 3,000 operations have been postponed, National Health Service (NHS) England said. The main point of dispute between doctors and the govern-

ment is over whether Saturday should be classed and paid as a normal working day.

Prime Minister David Cameron's centre-right government says the reforms are needed to help create a "seven days a week" NHS where the quality of care is as high at the weekends as on weekdays. Junior doctors demonstrated outside hospitals around England. Abhishek Joshi, a heart doctor at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London, said the new contracts could stop hospital operators from being penalized if doctors

work prolonged shifts, "at the end of which we'll be tired and therefore dangerous". "There have been studies to show that tired doctors are even worse than drunk drivers," he told AFP.

"Would you want a drunk driver operating on you?... Saving your heart in the middle of the night? That's not what we want." Outside Guy's Hospital in London, demonstrators held placards reading "Not fair, not safe" and "Tired doctors make mistakes". Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt insisted junior doctors were being offered "a fair deal". Eight studies in five years had shown weekend mortality rates were higher and he had to "do something about that", he told the BBC. A first 24-hour strike was staged on January 12. A 48-hour strike planned for January 26 was called off.

There are more than 50,000 junior doctors in England, making up a third of the medical workforce. They are qualified medical practitioners who work while studying for qualifications for more senior roles. A senior government source said there was a "very reasonable offer on the table" and "hopefully they can accept it." "At the moment there doesn't seem to be any sort of movement from the BMA side," the source said. The government could simply impose the new contracts, and "we're not going to remove that from the table," the source added.

Doctor Johann Malawana, chairman of the British Medical Association's junior doctor committee, said the strike was "a resounding rejection of the government's threat to impose an unfair contract." "Junior doctors already work around the clock, seven days a week and they do so under their existing contract," he said. "If the government want more seven-day services then, quite simply, they need more doctors, nurses and diagnostic staff, and the extra investment needed to deliver it." — AFP



LONDON: Junior doctors supported by other healthcare workers take part in a 24-hour strike as they stand on a picket line with placards outside St Mary's Hospital.

AUSTRALIA INTRODUCES MEDICINAL CANNABIS LEGISLATION

SYDNEY: Australia yesterday introduced legislation into parliament to legalize the growing of cannabis for medicinal purposes, with the government calling it "the missing piece in a patient's journey". Health Minister Sussan Ley said the law, if passed, would allow cultivation of cannabis through a national licensing and permit scheme, opening the way to a safe, legal and sustainable supply of locally produced product for the first time.

"This is an important day for Australia and the many advocates who have fought long and hard to challenge the stigma around medicinal cannabis products," Ley said. "For Australia, this is the missing piece in a patient's journey. Importantly, having a safe, legal and reliable source of products will ensure medical practitioners are now at the center of the decision making process on whether medicinal cannabis may be beneficial for their patient." Research, including findings published last year in the Journal of the American Medical Association, showed marijuana has some effectiveness in helping treat chronic pain. But there are concerns about side effects and the issue of whether or not it works remains a matter of debate globally. The Labor opposition and the Greens have indicated they support the move, the government envisaging that cannabis will only be available to patients through a doctor's prescription or a medical trial. "I sincerely hope the parliament can continue to work together to pass this legislation in a bipartisan fashion as quickly as possible in the interest of Australian patients seeking access to medicinal cannabis," said Ley. Ley made clear though that the move did not mean legal recreational use of the drug was any closer. — AFP

IN EGYPT, MEDICINES DISAPPEAR FROM SHELVES AS DOLLAR CRISIS BITES DRUG-MAKERS STRUGGLE TO IMPORT MATERIALS DUE TO DOLLAR SHORTAGE

CAIRO: Nahed Ibrahim has scoured Egypt in vain to find a regular supply of medication to help her mother to recover from a stroke she suffered four months ago, since then the 75-year-old has struggled to follow conversations. "I searched for the medicine everywhere, I travelled to several provinces but I still can't find it. My mother's condition is deteriorating day after day," said Ibrahim as she left, empty-handed, a pharmacy in the industrial town of Helwan, southwest of the capital.

Declines in the value of the Egyptian pound coupled with a shortage of foreign exchange have made it harder for Egyptian pharmaceutical companies to import active ingredients they need to make generic medicines millions of poor Egyptians rely on. Though medicines are classed as essential goods, putting them high on the priority list at banks deciding how to allocate precious dollar rations, pharmaceutical companies say they still face serious problems that force them to slow or pause production.

A weaker currency has also made it more expensive to import raw materials while the

price of finished medicines is fixed by the Health Ministry, forcing manufacturers to stop making some cheap generic medicines to staunch growing financial losses. The result: people like Ibrahim find the medication they need is missing from pharmacy shelves for weeks at a time or is available at only a handful of outlets around the country.

Egypt has struggled to revive its economy since a 2011 uprising ushered in years of political instability, scaring off foreign investors and tourists-key sources of hard currency. Economic and political discontent has helped to unseat two presidents in the last five years. Ahmed Al-Sayed, a Cairo pharmacist, said he struggles to source basic medicines such as eye drops as well as anti-coagulants and other drugs used to treat heart disease and high blood pressure. A medical source at the El Salam Oncology Center in Cairo said three important cancer drugs were currently in short supply.

Widespread shortages

Drug shortages are not new to Egypt, but

have become so widespread in recent years that the Health Ministry set up a Drug Shortages Directorate (DSD) in 2012 to minimize the impact. It began publishing a monthly table of medicines that were in short supply with suggested generic or branded alternatives. In December, the ministry's tally showed 189 drugs were in short supply but had available substitutes and a further 43 drugs were in short supply with no substitute.

Walaa Farouk, who heads the DSD, acknowledged that the dollar crisis was exacerbating shortages and said the Health Ministry was looking at raising more prices to encourage production. Medical professionals, however, said the shortages were more widespread and urgent than the official figures suggest. "According to data provided by pharmacies, 180 out of 14,000 pharmaceutical drugs registered with the Health Ministry are in short supply with no substitutes," said Osama Rostom, commercial director at EIPICO, a leading manufacturer of generic medicines, and deputy head of the Chamber of

Pharmaceutical Industries. Egypt has introduced a series of measures in recent months aimed at cutting imports of non-essential goods to free up precious foreign currency for priority goods like medicine.

But manufacturers say limits on the amount of dollars companies can deposit in banks and difficulties opening letters of credit have resulted in payment delays, landing them with demurrage and storage costs for goods stuck at port. "Before the dollar crisis, we used to pay for the cost of raw materials by writing letters of credit. We would then import the materials and pay the rest of the money after the shipment is received," Sabri Tewella, who heads the pharmaceutical manufacturers committee in the Pharmacists Syndicate, told Reuters.

"Now, it's obligatory to pay the entire cost before shipment. The economic crisis negatively affected agreements with foreign countries." With Egypt importing about 12 billion Egyptian pounds (\$1.53 billion) worth of medicines and ingredients, according to Tewella, the crisis has hit the industry hard. — Reuters

HOW TO TRAP ELEPHANT POACHERS WITH THEIR OWN TECHNOLOGY

DAR ES SALAAM: One day last October, agents from a crack Tanzanian crime unit raced past Dar es Salaam's Palm Beach Hotel in pursuit of the suspected leader of a global elephant poaching ring. The chase was the result of new breakthroughs in Tanzania's fight against an increasingly rapacious poaching trade, which has felled 60 percent of the country's elephant population in the past five years. The agents' target that day was Yang Feng Gan, a 66-year-old Chinese national dubbed the "Ivory Queen," who is accused of running a smuggling empire stretching from the game parks of Tanzania to the clandestine ivory markets of Asia.

Her arrest was the culmination of more than a year's work and relied in large part on the novel use of old crime fighting methods at Tanzania's National and Transnational Serious Crimes Investigation Unit (NTSCIU). Helped by a \$1.5 million donation from an American philanthropist, the serious crimes squad has started to tackle poaching using the lessons it learned hunting al Qaeda in the years after the group bombed two U.S. embassies in East Africa in 1998.

A Tanzanian court in October charged Yang with heading a criminal network responsible for smuggling 706 pieces of ivory worth 5.44 billion Tanzanian shillings (\$2.51 million) between 2000 and 2014. Prosecutors say Yang organized, managed and financed a criminal racket in ivory totaling 1.9 tons. Yang, currently in jail, could not be reached for comment. But her lawyer, Nehemia Mkojo, says she is innocent of all charges.

The new techniques follow work done in neighboring Kenya, where poaching rates have nosedived. In both countries the police have started concentrating on the poachers' own technology - guns and phones - and using it against them. By combining that with old-fashioned detective work, they have captured more suspects. "From just one arrest, you can open up the syndicate, and go up the ladder from grassroots to brokers, to dealers and transporters ... all the way up to international traffickers," said one agent from the squad. The history of a suspect's gun, the phone calls he or she makes, and the money they move, create a trail of evidence.

Tanzania has been hit hard by a global spike in poaching over the past decade. Its elephant population has dropped to about 43,000 in 2014 from 109,000 in 2009. Interpol has said a "significant portion" of ivory reaching international markets originated from elephant herds in Tanzania. The region has also become a vital part of the African "Smack Track," a smuggling route for Afghan heroin bound for Europe; Western diplomats see a growing overlap between ivory smugglers and narcotics traffickers. "They are all interlinked. Drugs traffickers in East Africa use the same people that weapons smugglers use and that the ivory smugglers use," said one Nairobi-based agent from the U.S. Drugs Enforcement Administration (DEA).

Swahili speaker

The capture of Yang Feng Gan started with a tip-off in 2014. In the baobab-studded hills of the Ruaha-Rungwa ecosystem, where the elephant population plummeted from 20,000 to 8,000 between 2013 and 2014, local informants pointed crime squad agents towards Manase Philemon, a suspected Tanzanian ivory dealer who was barely literate but could mysteriously

speak Chinese. Under interrogation, Philemon fingered Yang, who police believe taught him Mandarin. "Manase worked so closely with this woman for a long time," the NTSCIU agent told Reuters.

Yang's ties to Tanzania spanned four decades. She studied Swahili at a Chinese university and moved to the country in the 1970s to work as a translator for Chinese engineers building a railway line to Zambia, according to court documents, police sources and an interview she conducted with the China Daily newspaper. In the 1990s she returned to Tanzania and opened a popular Chinese restaurant in Dar es Salaam. She was also the secretary-general of the Tanzania China-Africa Business Council. After Philemon's tip-off, she became the NTSCIU's top target.

'Follow the gun'

But the anti-poaching team had problems. Many of the NTSCIU's agents were trained by Western spy agencies in the wake of the US embassy bombing in Tanzania, and their main task was to counter the threat from home-grown Islamists. There was not enough cash or manpower to act against poaching and the unit did not operate country-wide.

At this point the not-for-profit PAMS Foundation got involved. Its leader Wayne Lotter sought help from David Bomberman, an American billionaire who made a fortune in private equity and had the Rolling Stones play at his 60th birthday bash. Bomberman's Wildcat Foundation donated about \$1.5 million, and the NTSCIU anti-poaching team began recruiting trusted people from the Tanzania Intelligence and Security Service, police, army, immigration, judiciary and the national wildlife service.

"I believe (NTSCIU) provides a model of how serious enforcement against wildlife poaching and trafficking can be accomplished if a country's leadership has the political will to make it happen," said Wildcat Foundation director Rodger Schlickeisen. By the time of Yang's arrest, about 60 people were working on the anti-poaching team out of 200 or so NTSCIU agents. They set about building networks of informants, and built a strategy.

They called it "follow the gun, save the elephant." Immediately after a suspect is captured, the agents focus on the suspect's weapon. Tracing how the poacher obtained that gun leads to the person one level above in the syndicate, and points in the direction of a team. Philemon helped here. "He gave us the cream of the dealers," said the agent. But just as they began building a case against Yang, she vanished. In June 2014 a Tanzanian court charged Philemon with trafficking ivory and Yang fled to Uganda, according to sources familiar with the case. Philemon has not entered a plea and could not be reached for comment.

Follow the mobile money

More than a year later, her phone revealed where she was. NTSCIU is able to pull up poachers' phone numbers and call histories, said one security expert who works closely with the squad. Computer software is used to delineate links between on-the-ground poachers, dealers and transnational criminal gangs. A server flags to NTSCIU mobile phone numbers when they become active, but does not record calls. "The machine is on 24 hours," said the expert. — Reuters

DETECTION OF GRAVITATIONAL WAVES CAN OPEN NEW WINDOW ON UNIVERSE

'THE DRIVING FORCE OF THE UNIVERSE IS GRAVITY'

WASHINGTON: The first-ever detection of gravitational waves, which scientists could announce today, would open a new window on the universe and its most violent phenomena. Scientists will hold a press conference today to discuss the latest in their hunt for these waves, whose existence Albert Einstein predicted in his theory of general relativity 100 years ago, according to a statement from the National Science Foundation, which has funded the research.

Scientists from the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the Laser Interferometer Gravitational Wave Observatory (LIGO) who have been working on the detection of these waves for years will participate. Press conferences are also simultaneously scheduled at Paris's National Center for Science Research (CNRS) and also in London. The announcement of a press conference revived rumors that have been circulating in the scientific community for months that the LIGO team may have indeed directly detected gravitational waves for the first time.

These waves are produced by disturbances in the fabric of space and time when a massive object moves, like a black hole or a neutron star. Einstein theorized that they would appear like ripples in a pond that form when a stone is thrown in the water, or like a net that bows under the weight of an object

placed within-with the net serving as a metaphor for the bending of space-time. According to the rumors, the team may have observed the collision of two black holes and their fusion-leading to the detection of gravitational waves. Science magazine cited Clifford Burgess, a physicist at McMaster University in Canada and also a member of the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics, as saying he deemed the rumors credible, even though he had not yet seen any documentation from LIGO.

New look at universe

The ability to observe these gravitational waves would offer astronomer and physicists a new look at the most mysterious workings of the universe, including the fusion of neutron stars and the behaviors of black holes, which are often found in the centers of galaxies. "The driving force of the universe is gravity," said Tuck Stebbins, Gravitational Astrophysics Lab Chief at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. "These waves are streaming to you all the time and if you could see them, you could see back to the first one trillionth of a second of the Big Bang," he told AFP.

"There is no other way for humanity to see the origin of the universe," Stebbins said he believes "we stand at a threshold of a revolutionary period in our

understanding, our view of the universe." The LIGO detectors-one in Washington and one in Louisiana-can "measure changes of spacetime at the level of 1/1000 diameter of a proton," he added. Catherine Man, an astronomer at the Cote d'Azur Observatory in France, said the detection of these waves-if confirmed-would allow astronomers to probe the interior of stars and perhaps resolve the mystery of gamma rays, which are among the most powerful explosions in the universe and whose cause remains poorly understood.

"Now we are no longer observing the universe with telescopes using ultraviolet light or visible light but we are listening to the noises produced by the effects of the gravitation of celestial bodies on the fabric of space-time, which could come from stars or black holes," she told AFP. "And since the star or black hole does not stop these waves, which move at the speed of light, they come right to us and we can therefore make models... to distinguish and detect their signatures." Previously, two Princeton scientists won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1993 for discovering a new type of pulsar that offered indirect proof of the existence of gravitational waves. The LIGO team is collaborating with a French-Italian team on another detector, called VIRGO, that should become operational soon. — AFP

GENOME OFFERS CLUES ON THWARTING REVILED, DISEASE-CARRYING TICKS

WASHINGTON: Scientists have unlocked the genetic secrets of one of the least-loved creatures around, the tick species that spreads Lyme disease, in research that may lead to new methods to control these diminutive arachnids that dine on blood. The researchers said on Tuesday they have sequenced the genome of Ixodes scapularis, known as the deer tick or blacklegged tick, which transmits Lyme and other diseases by chomping through the skin of people and animals and releasing infected saliva as they devour blood.

The study identified more than 24,000 genes involving traits such as blood-meal digestion, manipulation of the immune response of the host being bitten to permit long periods of feeding, and detoxification of compounds such as insecticides. "They are so persistent, resilient and tenacious," said Purdue University entomologist Catherine Hill, who led the study published in the journal Nature Communications. "No need to hate the ticks, but people should be informed, understand the risks and make informed decisions to protect their health."

Cracking the tick's DNA code may expose vulnerabilities that can be exploited with new insecticides, repellents or other methods to control this parasite that thrives in wooded and grassy areas.

For example, the researchers gained insight into how the ticks regulate excretion and manage the large volume of blood they ingest, providing a possible target for new ways to control them. In addition, researchers working on a companion study identified a hormone in female ticks that regulates egg development. Determining how to block this hormone could lead to a "birth control pill" for ticks, North Carolina State University entomologist R. Michael Roe said.

The ticks, which can ingest up to 100 times their own body's size in blood, transmit bacteria, parasites and viruses that cause Lyme disease and other ailments through saliva while getting a blood meal. "Tick saliva contains a repertoire of cement compounds that binds the tick to the skin, as well as anti-coagulants, molecules that disrupt the host's immune system and prevent the human or animal from feeling the tick bite," Old Dominion University tick-borne diseases expert Daniel Sonenshine said. Lyme disease is caused by a corkscrew-shaped bacterium, Borrelia burgdorferi. It generally can be cured using antibiotics but if left untreated it can become permanently debilitating with complications including joint pain, facial paralysis, fatigue, memory loss and irregular heart rhythm. — Reuters

MEDTRONIC MAKES WAVES FOR THE MEACAT REGION, INCLUDING KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Coinciding with celebration of the first anniversary of the incredibly successful Medtronic Academy, Medtronic the global leader in medical technology, launched the ValleyLab FT10 energy platform, available in Kuwait from March, at the Arab Health Exhibition and Congress in Dubai. "Last year we launched the Medtronic Academy, which has gone on to be a resounding success, having trained 600 physicians across the MEACAT region, and this year we revealed the ValleyLab FT10 energy platform," said Dr Ned Cosgriff, Medtronic's Chief Medical Officer Emerging Markets and VP Medical Affairs, EMEA.

Dr Abdullah Al-Mulaifi, Head of the Surgical Department at The Ministry of Defense Hospital in Kuwait, who attended the ValleyLab FT10 launch at the Arab Health Exhibition, said medical innovations are vastly changing the surgical practice in Kuwait. "Patients' knowledge regarding surgical techniques are improving with eas-

ier online access and they prefer to opt for more minimally invasive techniques, as advantages far outweigh the complications," Dr Abdulla said. "As far as Kuwait and other GCC countries are concerned, whose medical infrastructure are aspiring to implement the most modern techniques in medicine, they are competent enough to support growth and innovation in the medical field including adopting the ValleyLab FT10, which is an integral and unavoidable part of modern day surgery," he said.

In addition to the ValleyLab FT10 launch, Medtronic showcased therapies that treat nearly 70 major conditions including movement disorders, spinal conditions, ear, nose and throat conditions and urological disorders such as diabetes and heart conditions.

Numerous support products that are used across a variety of procedures were also on display, including medical supplies, surgical instruments and navigation systems that help doctors see inside patients, devices that monitor patients during surgeries and technologies that monitor patients remotely.

"I think this illustrates the importance we place on matching our portfolio innovations with a solid commitment to training and support for the surgical community, thereby elevating the level of healthcare practice across the region," said Dr Cosgriff. The Medtronic Academy is a partnership with Sharjah University that provides the advantages of academic expertise, state-of-the-art facilities and innovative technologies, ultimately establish-

ing a comprehensive training platform for physicians right across the region. The Medtronic Academy has trained almost 600 physicians from across the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia and Turkey who have participated in one or more of the 30 courses offered at the training center of excellence.

Majid Kaddoumi, VP and Managing Director of Medtronic MEACAT said that a training academy was a key deliverable for Medtronic when relocating the MEACAT headquarters to Dubai. "Our primary objective is to deliver training courses to hundreds of healthcare practitioners to improve their knowledge and skills across the areas of cardiac and vascular therapies, as well as general, thoracic and spine surgery at every level." The ValleyLab

FT10 is used by surgeons who perform gynaecological, colorectal, bariatric, general and urologic procedures for intricate techniques such as heat-sealing blood vessels and delicate incisions into body tissues. The new energy platform is designed to sense exactly the level of energy required during the procedures and deliver precisely what is needed to the tissue, allowing surgeons to perform critical procedures more efficiently. "We've built a generator that is smaller, simpler, and more intelligent in its energy delivery to provide surgeons with the ideal tool for today's complex procedures," Dr Cosgriff said. "Its innovative design reflects our commitment to meeting the needs of surgeons and Healthcare systems around the world by providing them with advanced technology and training focused on improve patient outcomes," he added.



KUWAIT: Dr Abdullah Al-Mulaifi, Head of the Surgical Department at The Ministry of Defense Hospital in Kuwait.



KUWAIT: Photo shows the ValleyLab FT10.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH DR ABDULLA AL-MULAIFI TALKING ABOUT VALLEYLAB FT10

Kuwait Times: How is medical innovation changing the healthcare landscape in Kuwait? Can you share some examples from your own field?

Dr Abdullah Al-Mulaifi: Medical innovation has largely influenced the healthcare sector in Kuwait. Introduction of laparoscopy (Key hole surgery) in abdominal surgery considerably reduced the operating time, avoids large incisions thus avoiding surgical trauma, less post operative pain, and shorter duration of hospital stay. Thus significantly reducing morbidity and mortality following surgery. There is an overall reduction in incidence of post op complications like deep vein thrombosis, lung infections as patients were mobilized early on. More complex gastrointestinal surgeries including cancer surgeries are made easier by sophisticated laparoscopic instruments (eg: linear cutters, anastomotic staplers, harmonic scissors, ligasure, ligaclips etc are a few of many laparoscopic instruments)

THD (Transanal haemorrhoidal dearterialisation) is one of the novel techniques used in the modern day management of piles. Locating the feeding vessels to pile masses by ultrasound guidance and ligating those is the technique used. Again there is no surgical wounds, post-operative pain is considerably low when compared to conventional techniques, and early resume to normal activities.

KT: How do you think it will change in the next 5 years?

Al-Mulaifi: In the next 5 years, surgeons will be increasingly using the above mentioned techniques which are patient friendly.

The recent medical innovation will definitely change the surgical practice in Kuwait and GCC in the long run. The patients knowledge regarding the surgical techniques are fast improving with easier online access and they prefer to opt for more minimally invasive techniques as advantages far outweigh the complications.

KT: How do products like ValleyLab FT10 contribute to this development?

Al-Mulaifi: ValleyLab FT10 is an integral and unavoidable part of modern day surgery, which provides energy platform for cautery for almost all surgical procedures of different surgical specialties and laparoscopic instruments.

As far as Kuwait and other GCC countries are concerned, whose medical infrastructure are aspiring to implement most modern techniques in modern medicine, are competent enough to support growth and innovation in medical field.



ERFURT, THURINGIA, Germany: Lion "Joco" lays in his enclosure and yawns during an inventory at the Thuringer Zoopark zoo in Erfurt, eastern Germany yesterday. — AFP

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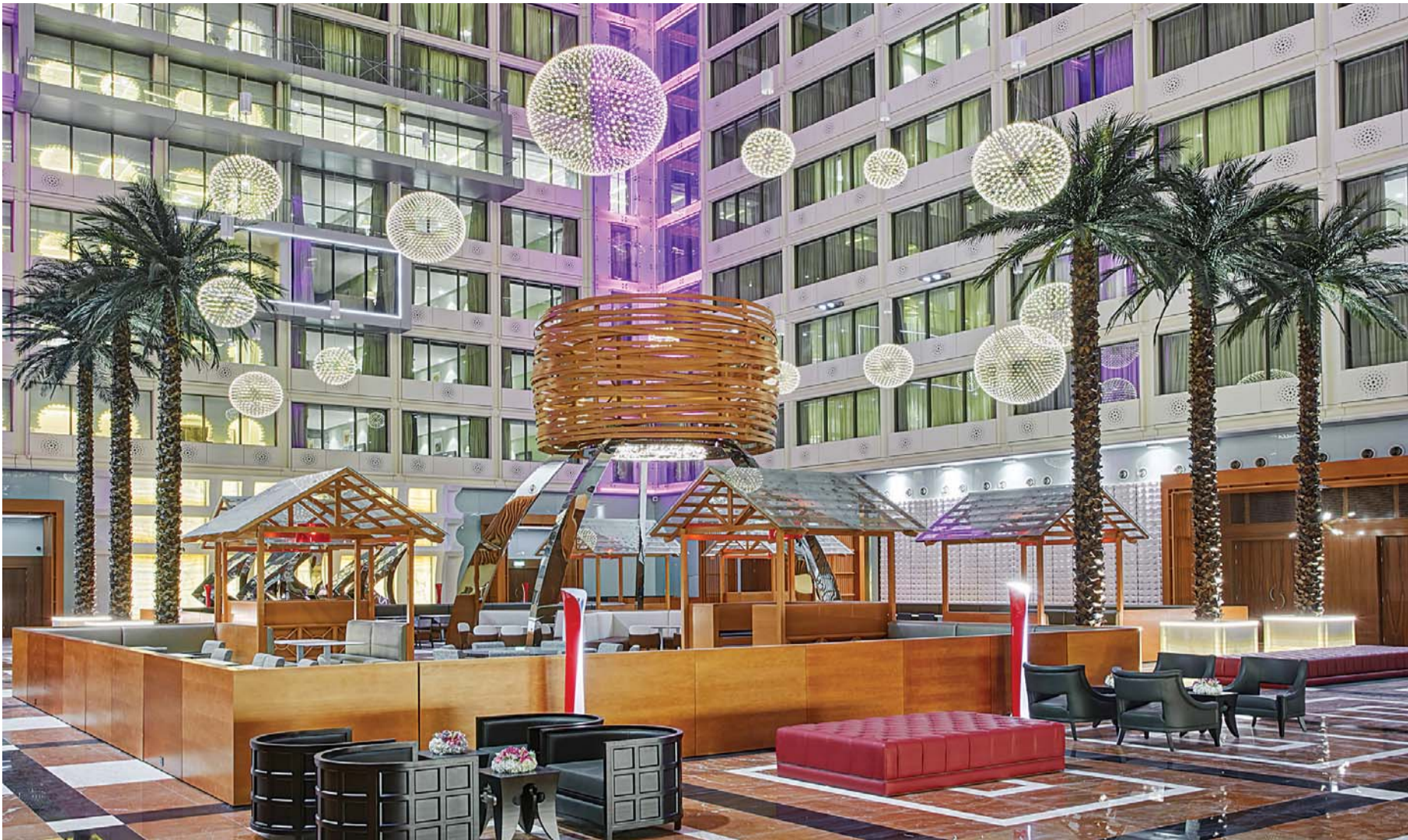


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VELVET DREAMS ARE MADE OF THESE AT AL THURAYA CITY

To set the scene for Valentine's Day, Crowne Plaza Kuwait Al Thuraya City and Silk Restaurant are pleased to announce an exclusive evening for 14th February 2016. The surrounding contemporary decor enhanced by ambient lighting and a 315 square meter

large skylight ceiling will provide the perfect setting for an unforgettable Valentine's dinner.

Commenting on the special occasion, Thierry Foehrenbach, F&B Director, said: "We have crafted a romantic soiree having in mind couples looking for a unique din-

ing experience in a tranquil and enchanting atmosphere." The evening will start at 7pm and will be accompanied by live violin music from 8 to 10pm. Guests will enjoy international specialties prepared by Silk's skilled chefs, a glass of Fauchon sparkling juice, and a romantic table setup.

MEETING ON THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

The CEFAS and the National Council for Culture, Arts & Letters, together with CNRS and Universite de Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne is organizing a conference on the archaeology of the Arabian Peninsula. The aim of the meetings is to create links between specialists and to build a group of researchers focusing on topics related to the region. For this workshop, the CEFAS and the National Council for Culture, Arts & Letters offer the opportunity to organize a meeting in Kuwait, with international researchers, a large part of them being directors of archaeological operations and actors of archaeology and heritage, dealing with new data, new methods and recent works. The National Library of Kuwait will be also presented new discoveries and recent studies on the ancient Arabian cultures, carried out on sites dating back from Prehistory until the early Islamic periods.

INDIAN EMBASSY ON AMNESTY TO RESIDENCY VIOLATORS IN KUWAIT

On 10 January 2016, the Ministry of Interior, Kuwait has announced special dispensation (partial amnesty) for all illegal residents in Kuwait. As per the announcement, residency violators will be allowed to pay their fines and either legalize their status or leave the country without being black-listed. But this would apply to those who voluntarily participate in the above scheme and that the Residency Affairs Departments across the country are ready to receive violators in order to rectify their legal status, for payment of fines for leaving the country.

1) There are approximately 28,000 Indians illegally staying in Kuwait due to residency/visa violations. All Indian illegal residents are urged to avail the above dispensation to either legalize their status or leave the country after payment of fines without being black-listed. They should contact the concerned Residency Affairs Department of Kuwait with available documents to rectify their status or for payment of fines for leaving the country to avail the above opportunity.

2) The Embassy is ready to provide all necessary assistance to all those seeking the above special dispensation by issuing Emergency Certificates (travel document) expeditiously if required by the local authorities who are processing their documents under above scheme. The requirement for issue of Emergency certificate is as under:

- (a) Prescribed format for issue of EC (copy enclosed)
- (b) Three recent passport size photograph;
- (c) A copy of the passport (relevant pages)
- (c) Payment of KD 5,000 consular fee for EC



THE MEDIA AND JOURNALISM CLUB OPENS OPERETTA

By Faten Omar

The Media and Journalism club held the opening of operetta of Sahfoa'a and Sahfoa' (boy journalist and girl journalist) on Tuesday at Grand Cinemas in Hamra Mall. Amira Azzam, Board Chairwomen of the media and journalism

club, pointed out that the idea of the operetta is about two young journalists that named Sahfoa'a the journalist and Sahfoa' the photographer, who are showing the children of the importance of media.

Azzam participated with the broadcaster Abdulrahman Al-Deen. She noted that the

operetta features 6 melodies of hers, and the lyrics were written by Kuwaiti astronomer Dr Saleh Al-Ojairi, Am Abdullatif Banai and poet Abdulaziz Al-Twajiri. The operetta took almost two years to be done. Azzam invited the children to attend operetta for free on Friday at Plaza complex in Hawally from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm.



KUWAIT CITY MAR THOMA SALMIYA ZONE CONDUCTS KUDUMBASANGAMOM

Kuwait City Mar Thoma Parish Salmiya Zonal Prayer group conducted its 9th Annual Kudumbasangamom at Indian Community School, Salmiya. Rev Sam T Koshy (Vicar - Kuwait City Mar Thoma Parish) gave

the presidential address & inaugurated the function. The evening was marked by a variety of programs which included fusion, skit, dance, solo, mime, instant quiz for audience & group song. Attractive gifts were distributed

among the winners for the instant quiz. The most distinctive program of the evening was the couple fusion dance with songs on old numbers. The grand finale was the 1 hour drama named "Thirichuvaravu". The fictitious story

depicts lives of individuals and families who co-relate "Spiritual gains" to achieve mere "Worldly luxury gain" and finally what happens to them and where they land. Various committees for

Kudumbasangamom had operated for the success of the event which was coordinated by the Program Conveners. Parimanan Manoj (General Convener) conveyed vote of thanks for making the function a grand success.



MARRIOTT HOTELS UNVEIL EXCLUSIVE OFFERS FOR VALENTINE'S DAY

Romance is in the air this February at JW Marriott Hotel Kuwait City, Courtyard by Marriott Hotel Kuwait and Residence Inn by Marriott Kuwait. Marriott Hotels in Kuwait invite guests to celebrate the most romantic day of the year with special room packages and series of elegant dining experiences.

JW Marriott Hotel Kuwait has created a diverse range of romantic packages, including a scrumptious valentine buffet, hand-picked red roses for the ladies, at the French-inspired La Brasserie Restaurant. The celebrations continue at Kuwait's best steakhouse, Terrace Grill, with a lavish Valentine set menu dinner accompanied by a live jazz band set in an intimate candle-lit ambience. Courtyard by Marriott Kuwait is also

offering a selection of fine-dining experiences, perfect for both couples and families. Guests can indulge in a mouth-watering valentine-themed menu for dinner, including beverages and a breathtaking table setting at the renowned Indian restaurant-Soul and Spice.

For those seeking a cozy dining experience, they can dine at the Atrium restaurant - set in the heart of the hotel's signature 8-storey high panoramic lobby - which will feature an international upgraded Valentine buffet with specialties that have been carefully crafted by Marriott's world-class chefs. Moreover, couples can celebrate this Valentine's Day with a gourmet set menu at Sushi Japanese restaurant. The special menu includes grilled salmon glazed with miso sauce, grilled beef with teriyaki

sauce, ebiKatsu, batter fried shrimp ball and a lot more.

Furthermore, Residence Inn by Marriott Kuwait has launched a tailor-made offer "A Whole Week of Romance", so no need to worry if it is too early or too late. The package is valid from February 11th to February 14th, 2016, and includes one night stay, a romantic dinner for two in the room, complimentary breakfast, free heart-shaped cake and special decoration in the room.

George Aoun, Cluster General Manager of Marriott Hotels in Kuwait, said "we are raising the bar this Valentine's Day with our tailor-made and exclusive packages. Our goal is to constantly offer our guests unique and memorable experiences that exceed their expectations."



MILLENNIUM HOTEL & CONVENTION CENTRE NEW 'HONEYMOON EXPERIENCE' PACKAGE

Millennium Hotel & Convention Centre is giving married couples the chance to re-experience their honeymoon with an unforgettable Valentine's Day Package that incorporates romantic accommodation and dining offerings at the newly opened five-star hotel.

Ideal for both newly-married couples and those seeking to rekindle old passions, the package includes a specially-decorated Executive Suite adorned in elegant arrangements complete with a gorgeous Valentine's Day themed cake. Couples will also be entitled to a complimentary gourmet dinner buffet and breakfast for two at Lamar International Restaurant. Moreover, ladies may receive a pampering treatment at the hotel's very own La Plus Belle Beauty Salon thanks to a promotional voucher included in the offer.

In addition to the Executive Suite Package,

non-staying couples may seize the opportunity to enjoy a Valentine's dinner buffet at Lamar International Restaurant. Available upon request, the dinner will include a special arrangement in-line with the Valentine's Day mood.

"It brings me great pleasure to unveil this year's Valentine's Day Package at a time when countless couples are looking to celebrate their love away from the routine day-to-day environment," explained Dani Saleh, Area General Manager of Millennium & Copthorne Hotels Kuwait.

Located in Salmiya near the intersection of Fahaheel Expressway and 4th Ring Road, Millennium Hotel & Convention Centre offers 295 luxurious accommodations, first-class service and top-of-the-line facilities that include an outdoor swimming pool, a health club with a modern technology gym, a sauna and steam room.

OSN MARKS REGION'S 1ST ALL-TRANSACTION WINDOW BUYOUT DEAL WITH GULF FILM

Movie-lovers can now have the best of both worlds as OSN, the region's leading pay-TV network, and Gulf Film, a distributor of major studio productions and independent movies, have signed a six-year exclusive partnership through 2021 for premium film content. Marking a regional first,

films will be available in glorious high-definition (HD) for an unbeatable home-viewing experience, and most of these films will be available for OSN viewers shortly after their theatrical release. David Butorac, Chief Executive Officer of OSN, said: "The exclusive multi-year output deal with Gulf Film is industry-

watch some 56 trailers of the newest movies playing at Novo Cinemas, owned by Gulf Film, daily on its various channels. Further, Gulf Film will cross-promote OSN content at all Novo Cinema screens across the Middle East.

Selim El Azar, Chief Executive Officer, Gulf Film, said: "As the pioneering film distribution house in

the films on its digital platforms including OSN Play and Go, assuring an anytime, anywhere film experience for its subscribers. Some of the movies that subscribers can watch first and only on OSN with the partnership going into effect on January 1, 2016, include: Dirty Grandpa starring Robert De Niro & Zac Efron; Colossal starring Anne Hathaway; The Headhunter's Calling starring Gerard Butler; Russel Crowe's Fathers and Daughters; Henry Cavill's Sand Castle; Miss Sloane starring Jessica Chastain; Florence Foster Jenkins starring Meryl Streep and Hugh Grant; and Criminal Activities starring John Travolta. The partnership with Gulf Film marks a concerted development strategy by OSN to strengthen its programming during 2016 to underline its credentials as the go-to place for the latest movies, series and general entertainment. OSN has already entered into multi-year exclusive partnerships for content with HBO, Warner Bros, NBC Universal and Paramount, among others. OSN recently launched five new channels with several additional premium and exclusive channels joining the platform through the year.

OSN has also launched 'OSN Store', the region's first and largest buy & keep, electronic sell-through platform in the Middle East that enables customers to purchase and 'store' movies in true high-definition for unlimited viewing. More than 1,500 movies, including over 20 titles, will be available just days after its theatre release exclusively on OSN Store.

In addition to the new line-up of movies, in 2016, OSN will bring over 50 new and exclusive shows plus 70 continuing series premiering only on the network. Over 25 of the biggest and award-winning shows will premiere at the same time as the US so OSN viewers see the most talked about shows first.



the partnership is underlined by OSN's acquisition of the entire transaction window building exclusivity for the first-time across all platforms including over-the-top (OTT) content access available on the award-winning digital platform, OSN Play, that is free to subscribers and GO, the fast-growing non-subscriber based online TV service.

The deal will give OSN access to nearly 1,000 brand-new films distributed by Gulf Film in Arabic and English over a period of 6 years - exclusive to OSN. All the

defining for the MENA region. It marks the first time that an exclusive content sharing agreement has been signed with the region's leading distributor of films. While OSN has built an incredible library of content through our 'only-on-OSN' partnerships with leading Hollywood studios, our association with Gulf Film significantly enhances our brand-new film content to define OSN as the home of blockbuster and the latest movies."

OSN will also provide movie fans the added opportunity to

the region, Gulf Film brings new theatrical releases every week. Through our partnership with OSN, we can further strengthen the visibility of our new releases via movie trailers and other behind-the-scenes looks. OSN subscribers will also have the opportunity to watch their favourite movies first on television on their network, and in truly spectacular HD quality. OSN will be the only platform to offer these movies to viewers in the region. "As part of the agreement, OSN also holds the rights to broadcasting



ASSE CONDUCTS SEMINAR

American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) organized a Training seminar on "Overview on Safe Crane Lifting & Rigging" for General and Construction industries". The program was conducted on 22nd January 2016; exclusively for ASSE members; at Star Udayam Restaurant's Banquets Hall, Maheboula, State of Kuwait.

American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) Kuwait Chapter is Kuwait's premier voluntary & non-profit organization providing professional guidance, training and consultancy; in the field of Health, Safety and Environment; to the industrial and social sectors in the region. ASSE Kuwait Chapter adheres itself to solid social commitment and actively shoulders many socially responsible and community service activities.

The Head of Chapter's Training Committee, Babu VSVRA, inaugurated the

program and introduced Muruganatham, the trainer for the session. The trainer explained the topics like why train the crane operator/ riggers and inspectors?, regulations & standards, roles & responsibility of personnel, qualifications/certifications, crane lifting activity risk assessment & crane lifting plan, critical lifts, rigging types, chain, rope slings and lifting gears, selection /calculation on rigging items, rules for takeout lifting wire ropes from service includes basic components of wire ropes in class room practical.

Crane inspection and lifting tackles inspection/record keeping, crane/lifting incident investigation & case study, Safety videos on crane operation and rigging. The participants, who emerged successful in the assessment; received a participation certificate from ASSE Kuwait Chapter. 32 ASSE Members utilized this distinct opportunity and benefited from the program.





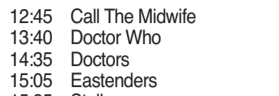
- 00:20 Ricochet
- 02:10 Mighty Fine
- 03:30 Quigley Down Under
- 05:30 Bound For Glory
- 07:55 Mannequin
- 09:25 A Star For Two
- 11:00 The Bridge In The Jungle
- 12:25 Pieces Of Dreams
- 14:05 Seven Years In Tibet
- 16:20 Puckoon
- 17:45 Punks
- 19:20 Captain Jack
- 21:00 Breaking Bad
- 22:00 Rob Roy



- 00:50 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
- 01:45 Swamp Brothers
- 02:15 Swamp Brothers
- 02:40 Dog Rescuers
- 03:30 Tanked
- 04:25 Roaring With Pride
- 05:15 Gator Boys
- 06:02 Treehouse Masters
- 06:49 Dog Rescuers
- 07:36 Swamp Brothers
- 08:00 Swamp Brothers
- 08:25 Bad Dog
- 09:15 Dog Rescuers
- 10:10 Treehouse Masters
- 11:05 Tanked
- 12:00 Bad Dog
- 12:55 Bondi Vet
- 13:50 Dog Rescuers
- 14:45 Gator Boys
- 15:40 Treehouse Masters
- 16:35 Tanked
- 17:30 Roaring With Pride
- 18:25 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
- 19:20 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 20:15 Tanked
- 21:10 Roaring With Pride
- 22:05 Treehouse Masters
- 23:00 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 23:55 Gator Boys



- 00:25 Eastenders
- 00:55 Call The Midwife
- 01:50 Call The Midwife
- 02:45 Ripper Street
- 03:40 Doctors
- 04:10 Eastenders
- 04:45 Starlings
- 05:30 Starlings
- 06:20 Doctors
- 06:50 Eastenders
- 07:20 Stella
- 08:10 Call The Midwife
- 09:05 Doctor Who
- 10:00 Doctors
- 10:30 Eastenders
- 11:00 Death In Paradise
- 12:00 Stella
- 12:45 Call The Midwife
- 13:40 Doctor Who
- 14:35 Doctors
- 15:05 Eastenders
- 15:35 Stella
- 16:25 Dickenson
- 17:10 Doctor Who
- 18:00 Doctors
- 18:30 Eastenders
- 19:05 Death In Paradise
- 20:00 Holly City
- 21:00 Stella
- 21:50 Ripper Street
- 22:45 Death In Paradise
- 23:40 Doctors
- 00:25 Eastenders
- 00:55 Call The Midwife
- 01:50 Call The Midwife
- 02:45 Ripper Street
- 03:40 Doctors
- 04:10 Eastenders
- 04:45 Starlings
- 05:30 Starlings
- 06:20 Doctors
- 06:50 Eastenders
- 07:20 Stella
- 08:10 Call The Midwife
- 09:05 Doctor Who



- 12:45 Call The Midwife
- 13:40 Doctor Who
- 14:35 Doctors
- 15:05 Eastenders
- 15:35 Stella
- 16:25 Dickenson
- 17:10 Doctor Who
- 18:00 Doctors
- 18:30 Eastenders
- 19:05 Death In Paradise
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- 22:45 Death In Paradise
- 23:40 Doctors
- 04:10 Eastenders
- 04:45 Starlings
- 05:30 Starlings
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- 07:20 Stella
- 08:10 Call The Midwife
- 09:05 Doctor Who
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- 10:20 Eastenders
- 11:00 Death In Paradise
- 12:00 Stella
- 12:45 Call The Midwife
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- 14:35 Doctors
- 15:05 Eastenders
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- 18:30 Eastenders
- 19:05 Death In Paradise
- 20:00 Holly City
- 21:00 Stella
- 21:50 Ripper Street
- 22:45 Death In Paradise
- 23:40 Doctors



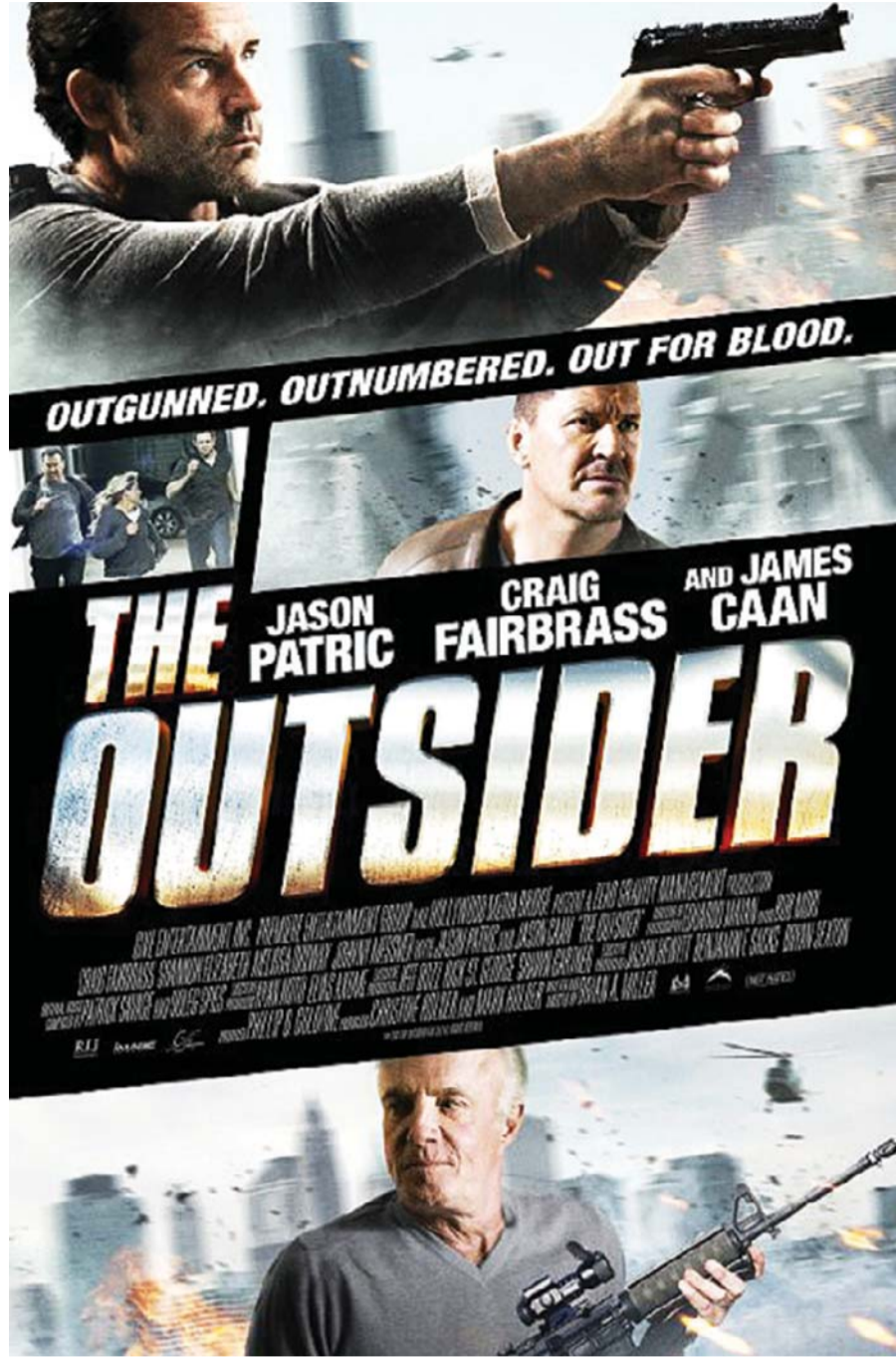
- 00:00 The Haunting Of...
- 01:00 The Ghost Inside My Child
- 02:00 I Escaped My Killer
- 03:00 Crime Stories
- 04:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 05:00 The Ghost Inside My Child
- 06:00 The Haunting Of...
- 07:00 The FBI Files
- 08:00 The FBI Files
- 09:00 Private Crimes
- 09:30 Frenemies
- 10:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 11:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 12:00 Beyond Scared Straight
- 13:00 Fatal Vows
- 14:00 Crime Stories
- 15:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 16:00 Private Crimes
- 16:30 Frenemies
- 17:00 The FBI Files
- 18:00 Beyond Scared Straight
- 19:00 Crime Stories
- 20:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 21:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 22:00 Private Crimes
- 23:00 Frenemies
- 23:30 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover



- 00:20 Fast N' Loud
- 01:10 Mythbusters
- 02:00 You Have Been Warned
- 02:50 You Have Been Warned
- 03:40 Storage Hunters
- 04:05 The Liquidator
- 04:30 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop
- 05:00 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 05:30 How Do They Do It?
- 06:00 Flying Wild Alaska
- 06:50 Highway To Sell
- 07:40 Fast N' Loud
- 08:30 Storage Hunters
- 08:55 The Liquidator
- 09:20 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop
- 09:45 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 10:10 How Do They Do It?
- 10:35 Mythbusters
- 11:25 You Have Been Warned
- 12:15 You Have Been Warned
- 13:05 Storage Hunters
- 13:30 The Liquidator
- 13:55 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop
- 14:20 Flying Wild Alaska
- 15:10 Highway To Sell
- 16:00 Fast N' Loud
- 16:50 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 17:15 How Do They Do It?
- 17:40 What On Earth?
- 18:30 Unearthed
- 19:20 The Pop Illusionist
- 20:10 The Liquidator
- 20:35 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop
- 21:00 What On Earth?
- 21:50 Unearthed
- 22:40 Treasure Quest: Snake
- 23:30 Highway To Sell



- 00:40 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 01:05 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 01:30 The Haunted
- 02:20 Ghost Lab
- 03:10 Scomed: Crimes Of Passion
- 04:00 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
- 04:45 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 05:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 05:30 The Haunted
- 06:20 Fatal Encounters
- 07:10 True Crime With Aphrodite
- 08:00 Dr. G. Medical Examiner
- 08:50 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 09:40 Fatal Encounters
- 10:30 Murder Shift
- 11:20 Deadly Affairs
- 12:10 True Crime With Aphrodite
- 13:00 The Will
- 13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 14:40 California Investigator
- 15:55 Dr. G. Medical Examiner
- 16:45 Fatal Encounters
- 17:35 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 18:25 Murder Shift
- 19:15 I Almost Got Away With It
- 20:05 The Will
- 20:55 Deadly Affairs
- 21:45 True Crime With Aphrodite
- 22:10 California Investigator
- 22:35 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 23:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 23:50 Swamp Murders



THE OUTSIDER ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

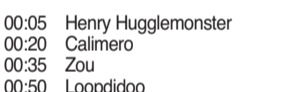
- 11:00 How It's Made
- 11:23 Food Factory
- 11:45 Food Factory
- 12:08 Space Pioneer
- 12:53 Prototype This?
- 13:38 How It's Made
- 14:23 How It's Made
- 14:46 Violette
- 15:10 Mythbusters
- 15:57 Food Factory
- 16:20 Food Factory
- 16:44 Space Pioneer
- 17:31 Prototype This
- 18:18 Mythbusters
- 19:05 Weird Or What?
- 19:50 Mega Builders
- 20:40 Space Pioneer
- 21:25 How It's Made
- 21:50 How It's Made
- 22:15 Mythbusters
- 22:50 Mega Builders
- 23:45 Space Pioneer
- 17:00 The Next Step
- 17:25 Liv And Maddie
- 17:50 Jessie
- 18:15 Austin & Ally
- 18:40 I Didn't Do It
- 19:05 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
- 19:30 Violette
- 20:20 The Next Step
- 20:45 Good Luck Charlie
- 21:10 Good Luck Charlie
- 21:35 H2O: Just Add Water
- 22:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 23:10 Hank Zipzer
- 23:35 Binny And The Ghost



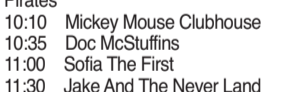
- 00:05 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:20 Calmero
- 00:35 Zou
- 00:50 Loopdidoo
- 01:05 Art Attack
- 01:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:45 Calmero
- 02:00 Zou
- 02:15 Loopdidoo
- 02:30 Art Attack
- 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:05 Calmero
- 03:20 Zou
- 03:30 Loopdidoo
- 03:45 Art Attack
- 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:20 Calmero
- 04:35 Zou
- 04:45 Loopdidoo
- 05:00 Art Attack
- 05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:35 Calmero
- 05:50 Zou
- 06:00 Loopdidoo
- 06:15 Art Attack
- 06:35 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:50 Calmero
- 07:00 Zou
- 07:20 Loopdidoo
- 07:35 Art Attack
- 07:50 Calmero
- 08:10 Zou
- 08:25 Loopdidoo
- 08:40 Miles From Tomorrow
- 09:05 Sofia The First
- 09:30 Doc McStuffins
- 09:45 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 10:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 10:35 Doc McStuffins
- 11:00 Sofia The First
- 11:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 12:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 12:25 Special Agent Oso
- 12:40 The Hive
- 12:50 Handy Manny
- 13:15 Jungle Junction
- 13:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 14:00 Sofia The First
- 14:25 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 14:50 Doc McStuffins
- 15:15 Zou
- 15:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 15:55 Loopdidoo
- 16:10 Miles From Tomorrow
- 16:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 17:00 Sofia The First
- 17:25 Jungle Cubs
- 17:50 Aladdin
- 18:40 Gummi Bears
- 19:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 19:30 Miles From Tomorrow
- 19:55 Sofia The First
- 20:10 Doc McStuffins
- 20:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 21:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 21:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 22:00 Sofia The First
- 22:25 Aladdin
- 22:50 Gummi Bears
- 23:20 Lilo And Stitch
- 23:50 Cars Toons



- 00:00 Violette
- 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 Violette
- 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 Violette
- 05:45 The Hive
- 05:50 Mouk
- 06:00 Lolirock
- 06:25 Sofia The First
- 06:50 That's So Raven
- 07:15 Gravity Falls
- 07:40 Jessie
- 08:05 Shake It Up
- 08:30 Shake It Up
- 08:55 That's So Raven
- 09:20 That's So Raven
- 09:45 Austin & Ally
- 10:10 Austin & Ally
- 10:35 A.N.T. Farm
- 11:00 A.N.T. Farm
- 11:25 Jessie
- 11:50 Jessie
- 12:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
- 12:45 Fish Hooks
- 12:55 Good Luck Charlie
- 13:35 I Didn't Do It
- 14:00 Dog With A Blog
- 14:30 H2O
- 14:55 Girl Meets World
- 15:20 Jessie
- 15:45 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
- 16:10 Violette



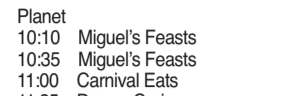
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- 01:05 Art Attack
- 01:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:45 Calmero
- 02:00 Zou
- 02:15 Loopdidoo
- 02:30 Art Attack
- 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:05 Calmero
- 03:20 Zou
- 03:30 Loopdidoo
- 03:45 Art Attack
- 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:20 Calmero
- 04:35 Zou
- 04:45 Loopdidoo
- 05:00 Art Attack
- 05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:35 Calmero
- 05:50 Zou
- 06:00 Loopdidoo
- 06:15 Art Attack
- 06:35 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:50 Calmero
- 07:00 Zou
- 07:20 Loopdidoo
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- 21:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 22:00 Sofia The First
- 22:25 Aladdin
- 22:50 Gummi Bears
- 23:20 Lilo And Stitch
- 23:50 Cars Toons



- 00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 01:00 Chopped
- 01:30 All Star Academy
- 02:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 03:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 04:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 05:00 Iron Chef America
- 05:30 Chopped
- 06:00 Grandmother's Secret Cookbook
- 06:30 Grandmother's Secret Cookbook
- 10:00 The Kitchen
- 11:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 11:30 Chopped
- 13:00 Guy's Big Bite
- 13:30 Guy's Big Bite
- 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 15:00 Man Fire Food
- 15:30 Man Fire Food
- 16:00 Chopped
- 17:00 The Kitchen
- 18:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 18:30 Grandmother's Secret Cookbook
- 19:00 Chopped
- 20:00 Iron Chef America
- 21:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 21:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 22:00 Dinner At Tiffani's
- 22:30 Dinner At Tiffani's
- 23:00 Siba's Table
- 23:30 Siba's Table



- 00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 01:00 Chopped
- 01:30 All Star Academy
- 02:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin



- 10:10 Miguel's Feasts
- 10:35 Miguel's Feasts
- 11:00 Carnival Eats
- 11:25 Dream Cruises
- 12:15 A Marriage Of Flavours
- 12:40 Bangkok Airport
- 13:35 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 14:00 Eat Street
- 14:30 Eat Street
- 14:55 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 15:50 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
- 16:20 Miguel's Feasts
- 16:45 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 17:15 Street Food Around The World
- 17:40 Dream Cruises
- 18:35 A Marriage Of Flavours
- 19:05 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 20:00 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
- 20:25 Miguel's Feasts
- 20:50 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 21:15 Street Food Around The World
- 21:40 Dream Cruises
- 22:30 Bangkok Airport
- 22:55 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia



- 00:00 Save The Date
- 02:00 Happy Gilmore
- 04:00 Garfield's Pet Force
- 06:00 The Devil Wears Prada
- 08:00 Simon Birch
- 10:00 Zoolander
- 12:00 Happy Gilmore
- 14:00 Garfield's Fun Fest
- 16:00 Simon Birch
- 18:00 Down To Earth
- 20:00 That Awkward Moment
- 22:00 John Tucker Must Die



- 00:00 Salem
- 01:00 Marvel's Agent Carter
- 02:00 The Flash
- 03:00 American Horror Story: Hotel
- 04:00 Good Morning America
- 06:00 The Fosters
- 07:00 Backstrom
- 08:00 The Player
- 09:00 The Fosters
- 10:00 Marvel's Agent Carter
- 11:00 Backstrom
- 12:00 Coronation Street
- 12:30 Coronation Street
- 13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 14:00 Once Upon A Time
- 15:00 Live Good Morning America
- 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 18:00 The Player
- 19:00 American Idol
- 20:00 The Flash
- 21:00 Blindspot
- 22:00 Wicked City
- 23:00 Scream Queens



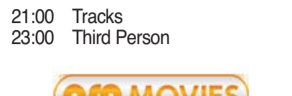
- 00:00 Kiss The Girls
- 02:00 Skin Trade
- 04:15 Justice League vs. Bizarro
- 05:30 Jaws III
- 07:45 Northmen: A Viking Saga
- 10:00 The Outsider
- 12:00 The Prince
- 14:00 Jaws: The Revenge
- 16:00 Justice League: Throne Of Atlantis
- 18:00 Northmen: A Viking Saga
- 20:00 The Prince
- 22:00 Last Passenger



- 00:00 Skin Trade
- 02:15 Justice League vs. Bizarro
- 03:30 Jaws III
- 05:45 Northmen: A Viking Saga
- 08:00 The Outsider
- 10:00 The Prince
- 12:00 Jaws: The Revenge
- 14:00 Justice League: Throne Of Atlantis
- 16:00 Northmen: A Viking Saga
- 18:00 The Prince
- 20:00 Last Passenger
- 22:00 In The Blood



- 01:00 Yellow Rock
- 03:00 Every Day
- 05:00 Middle Of Nowhere
- 07:00 Second Coming
- 08:00 The Fold
- 11:00 Middle Of Nowhere
- 13:00 Shadow Witness
- 15:00 Two Men In Town
- 17:00 The Fold
- 19:00 A Long Way Down



- 02:45 Belle
- 04:45 At Any Price
- 06:45 Half Of A Yellow Sun
- 09:00 A Civil Action
- 11:00 The Invisible Woman
- 13:00 Vanity Fair
- 15:30 Heaven's Door
- 17:30 A Civil Action
- 19:30 How I Live Now
- 21:00 Siberian Education
- 23:00 I Origins



- 01:00 Devil's Knot
- 03:00 Metallica: Through The Never
- 05:00 The Giver
- 07:00 The Book Of Life
- 09:00 Penhouse North
- 11:00 Quartet
- 13:00 Ita
- 15:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 17:00 The Maze Runner
- 19:00 St. Vincent
- 21:00 Barely Lethal
- 23:00 The Boy Next Door



- 01:00 Blue Elephant 2
- 02:45 The Olsen Gang In Deep Trouble
- 04:30 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
- 06:00 Saving Santa
- 08:00 Moomins And The Comet Chase
- 09:45 Hatching
- 11:30 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure
- 13:15 The Olsen Gang In Deep Trouble
- 15:00 Tom And Jerry: Santa's Little Helpers
- 16:00 Egon And Donci
- 18:00 Hatching
- 20:00 Marco Macaco



- 00:45 Persecuted
- 02:30 The Package
- 04:15 Oggy & The Cockroaches: The Movie
- 06:00 The Intruders
- 08:00 Step Up Revolution
- 10:00 A Stranger In Paradise
- 11:45 Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes
- 14:00 40 Days And Nights
- 16:00 Step Up Revolution
- 18:00 Imogene
- 20:00 Begin Again
- 22:00 Buggy



- 01:00 Live MSNBC Mtp Daily
- 02:00 Live MSNBC With All Dues Respect
- 03:00 Live NBC Nightly News
- 03:30 ABC World News With David Muir
- 04:00 Live MSNBC All In With Chris Hayes
- 05:00 Live MSNBC The Rachel Maddow Show
- 06:00 Live MSNBC The Last Word With Lawrence O'Donnell
- 07:00 NBC Nightly News
- 07:30 ABC World News With David Muir
- 07:57 NBC Nightly News
- 08:18 ABC World News With David Muir
- 08:39 Live ABC Nightline
- 09:06 MSNBC The Rachel Maddow Show
- 10:00 MSNBC The Last Word With Lawrence O'Donnell
- 11:00 Live ABC World News Now
- 11:30 Live ABC World News Now
- 12:00 Live NBC Early Today
- 12:30 Live ABC America This Morning
- 13:00 Live ABC America This Morning
- 13:30 Live ABC America This Morning
- 14:00 Live ABC America This Morning
- 14:30 MSNBC First Look
- 15:00 Live NBC Today Show
- 18:57 MSNBC Hardball W/ Chris Matthews
- 19:38 MSNBC The Rachel Maddow Show
- 20:19 MSNBC The Last Word With Lawrence O'Donnell
- 21:00 Live MSNBC Live With Thomas Roberts
- 23:00 Live MSNBC Live With Kate Snow



LAST PASSENGER ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 10:00 Doctors
- 10:30 Eastenders
- 11:00 Death In Paradise
- 12:00 Stella
- 12:45 Call The Midwife
- 13:40 Doctor Who
- 14:35 Doctors
- 15:05 Eastenders
- 15:35 Stella
- 16:25 Dickenson
- 17:10 Doctor Who
- 18:00 Doctors
- 18:30 Eastenders
- 19:05 Death In Paradise
- 20:00 Holly City
- 21:00 Stella
- 21:50 Ripper Street
- 22:45 Death In Paradise
- 23:40 Doctors

- 17:00 News Update
- 17:15 World InSight
- 18:00 Asia Today
- 18:30 Culture Express
- 19:00 News Update
- 19:30 The Heat
- 20:00 Africa Live
- 21:00 Global Business
- 21:30 Dialogue
- 22:00 News Update
- 22:15 China 24
- 23:00 News Update
- 23:15 World InSight

- 13:00 The Will
- 13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 14:40 California Investigator
- 15:55 Dr. G. Medical Examiner
- 16:45 Fatal Encounters
- 17:35 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 18:25 Murder Shift
- 19:15

CLASSIFIEDS



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (11/02/2016 TO 17/02/2016)

SHARQIA-1	THE FINEST HOURS	1:00 PM	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	5:30 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	1:30 PM	THE FINEST HOURS	7:30 PM	THE FINEST HOURS
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	3:30 PM	THE FINEST HOURS	10:00 PM	THE FINEST HOURS
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	5:30 PM	THE FINEST HOURS	12:30 AM	
THE FINEST HOURS	7:30 PM			
THE FINEST HOURS	10:00 PM			
THE FINEST HOURS	12:30 AM			
SHARQIA-2				
SHAKET DABOUS	11:45 AM			
SHAKET DABOUS	1:45 PM			
SHAKET DABOUS	3:45 PM			
SHAKET DABOUS	5:45 PM			
SHAKET DABOUS	7:45 PM			
SHAKET DABOUS	9:45 PM			
SHAKET DABOUS	11:45 PM			
SHARQIA-3				
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES	11:30 AM			
BROOKLYN	1:30 PM			
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES	3:45 PM			
BROOKLYN	6:00 PM			
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES	8:15 PM			
BROOKLYN	10:30 PM			
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES	12:45 AM			
MUHALAB-1				
THE FINEST HOURS	12:15 PM			
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	2:45 PM			
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	4:45 PM			
THE FINEST HOURS	6:45 PM			
THE FINEST HOURS	9:15 PM			
THE FINEST HOURS	11:45 PM			
MUHALAB-2				
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES	12:45 PM			
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES	3:00 PM			
BROOKLYN	5:15 PM			
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES	7:30 PM			
BROOKLYN	9:45 PM			
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES	12:05 AM			
MUHALAB-3				
SHAKET DABOUS	12:15 PM			
SHAKET DABOUS	2:15 PM			
SHAKET DABOUS	4:15 PM			
SHAKET DABOUS	6:15 PM			
SHAKET DABOUS	8:15 PM			
SHAKET DABOUS	10:15 PM			
SHAKET DABOUS	12:15 AM			
FANAR-1				
BROOKLYN	11:45 AM			
BROOKLYN	2:00 PM			
THE BENEFACTOR	4:15 PM			
BROOKLYN	6:15 PM			
THE BENEFACTOR	8:30 PM			
BROOKLYN	10:30 PM			
THE BENEFACTOR	12:45 AM			
FANAR-2				
THE FINEST HOURS	1:00 PM			
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	1:30 PM			
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	3:30 PM			
FANAR-3				
FITTOOR - Hindi	11:45 AM			
THE DORAEMON MOVIE	2:30 PM			
THE DORAEMON MOVIE	4:30 PM			
FITTOOR - Hindi	6:30 PM			
FITTOOR - Hindi	9:15 PM			
MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	12:05 AM			
MARINA-1				
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES	11:30 AM			
BROOKLYN	1:30 PM			
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES	3:45 PM			
BROOKLYN	6:00 PM			
BROOKLYN	8:15 PM			
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES	10:30 PM			
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES	12:45 AM			
MARINA-2				
THE FINEST HOURS	12:30 PM			
THE FINEST HOURS	3:15 PM			
VERY BIG SHOT	5:45 PM			
VERY BIG SHOT	7:45 PM			
THE FINEST HOURS	9:45 PM			
THE FINEST HOURS	12:15 AM			
MARINA-3				
SHAKET DABOUS	12:00 PM			
SHAKET DABOUS	2:00 PM			
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	2:00 PM			
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	4:00 PM			
SHAKET DABOUS	6:00 PM			
SHAKET DABOUS	8:00 PM			
SHAKET DABOUS	10:00 PM			
SHAKET DABOUS	12:30 AM			
AVENUES-1				
FITTOOR - Hindi	11:30 AM			
FITTOOR - Hindi	2:30 PM			
FITTOOR - Hindi	5:30 PM			
FITTOOR - Hindi	8:30 PM			
THE REVENANT	11:30 PM			
AVENUES-2				
BROOKLYN	12:00 PM			
BROOKLYN	2:30 PM			
BROOKLYN	5:00 PM			
BROOKLYN	7:30 PM			
BROOKLYN	10:00 PM			
BROOKLYN	12:30 AM			
AVENUES-3				
SHAKET DABOUS	11:30 AM			
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES	1:30 PM			
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES	3:45 PM			
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES	6:00 PM			
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES	8:15 PM			
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES	10:30 PM			
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES	12:45 AM			

Job Vacancy

1- Storekeeper

2- Auditor

- Knowledge of computer software
- Minimum 3 years experience

- Transferable visa

Send your C.V & Personal photo, with job vacancy #
 Email: careers@ntsqs.com / Fax: 24761122

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Kaleel S/o Mohamed** Mohideen, holder of Indian Passport No. G3449357, residing at No. 2 Samayana Sheik Mohamed Moopan Street, Melapalayam, Tirunelveli Dist., Pin-627005, Tamilnadu. Shall henceforth be known as **Kaleel Rahman. (C 5131) 11-2-2016**

I **Amir Karim Makandar** holder of Indian Passport No. F7734039, A/P - 173 Aggani Tal-khed Dist. Ratnagiri, hereby changed my name to **Amir Karim Nevarekar. (C 5129) 6-2-2019**

I, **Kerodawala Rajani** holder of Indian Passport No. M6422448, resident at D.No. 7-79 (B) Kadali village, Razole Mandal, hereby changed my name to **Kerodawala Zainab. (C 5125)**

ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation available in a C-AC flat for decent couple or working ladies at Jabriya, area 10, near Jabriya Indian school from 1st March 2016. Please contact: 99300513. (C 5130) 7-2-2016

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**



REQUIRED PERSONNEL

HVAC, FIRE FIGHTING & PLUMBING (Engineers, Foremen, Draftsman, Workers)

PLANNING & ESTIMATION (Mechanical Engineer)

All candidates should have minimum 5 years work experience in Electro mechanical construction works with local transferable visa

Contact by E-mail - hvacdivi@gmail.com

FOR RENT

A Villa in West Mishref

- 5 bedrooms
- Internal garden
- Swimming pool

Rent KD 2300

Contact: **99259529**

BUSINESS IN OMAN

We Are Providing Visas, Registration, Local Sponsor, Business Partner, Document Clearing.

Contact Us: 00968-98457638
 Email: Info@Eiglcoman.Com

Prayer timings

Fajr:	05:11
Shorook:	06:31
Duhr:	12:02
Asr:	15:11
Maghrib:	17:34
Isha:	18:52

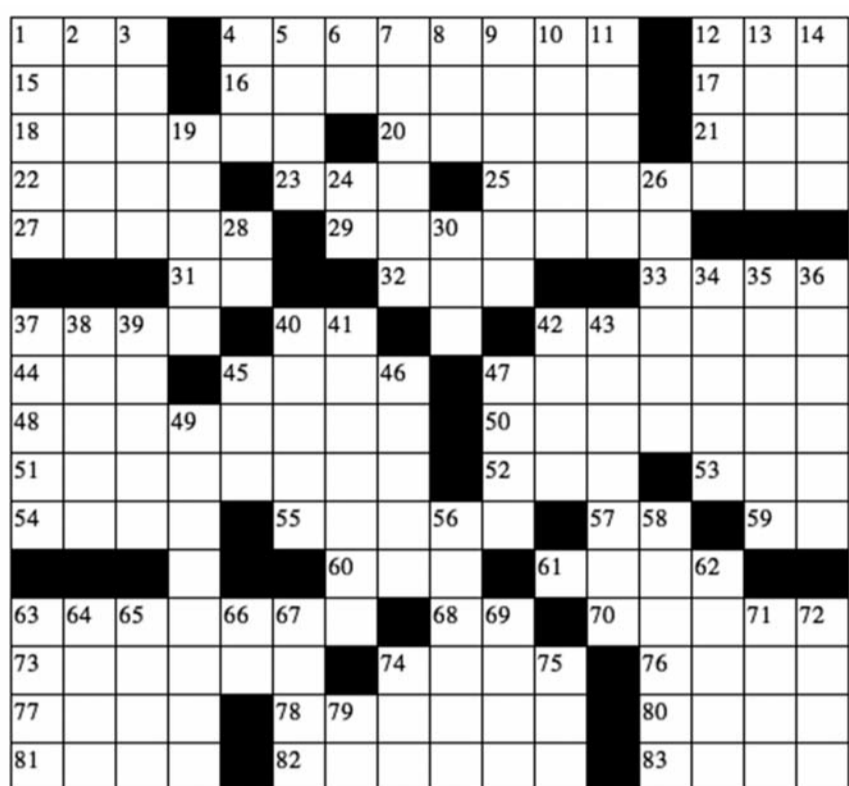


Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

In case you are not travelling, your proper cancellation of bookings will help other passengers to use seats

Arrival Flights on Thursday 11/2/2016			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	415	Sohag	00:05
KLM	411	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:20
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55
RJA	642	Amman	01:05
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30
DLH	635	Doha	01:35
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:45
PJT	858	Istanbul	02:00
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:45
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55
FDB	067	Dubai	03:05
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10
QTR	1076	Doha	03:15
KKK	6507	Istanbul	03:20
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:25
LMU	510	Cairo	04:05
QTR	8511	Doha	04:40
JZR	503	Luxor	05:15
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55
FDB	5061	Dubai	06:30
BAW	157	London	06:40
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	06:55
KAC	412	Manila/Bangkok	07:20
KAC	204	Lahore	07:40
QTR	1086	Doha	07:40
FDB	053	Dubai	07:45
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50
SVA	512	Riyadh	07:50
KAC	206	Islamabad	08:25
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	08:30
KAC	344	Chennai	08:30
KAC	352	Kochi	08:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40
KAC	362	Colombo	08:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:50
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00
KAC	284	Dhaka	09:10
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:20
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
OMA	641	Muscat	10:05
IRA	673	Ahwaz	10:10
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
UAE	873	Dubai	11:05
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:15
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30
NIA	151	Cairo	11:55
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45
JZR	241	Amman	12:50
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
THY	766	Istanbul	13:45
KNE	460	Riyadh	13:50
KAC	382	Delhi	13:50
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10
FDB	057	Dubai	14:10
AXB	393	Kozhikode	14:20
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:30
KAC	672	Dubai	14:45
KAC	788	Jeddah	14:50
KAC	538	Sohag	14:50
GFA	221	Bahrain	15:00
KNE	472	Jeddah	15:05
NIA	251	Alexandria	15:30
OMA	645	Muscat	15:30
KAC	562	Amman	15:40
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:45
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
JAD	301	Amman	15:55
DLH	635	Frankfurt	16:10
ETH	621	Addis Ababa	16:10
QTR	1072	Doha	16:10
FDB	051	Dubai	16:30
KNE	474	Jeddah	16:35
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	16:40
KAC	542	Cairo	16:55
RJA	640	Amman	16:55
JZR	787	Riyadh	17:00
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
KAC	678	Muscat/Abu Dhabi	17:50
MSR	614	Cairo	17:50
JZR	777	Jeddah	17:55
KAC	118	New York	17:55
UAE	875	Dubai	18:00
KAC	502	Beirut	18:00
FDB	063	Dubai	18:05
SYR	341	Damascus	18:15
JZR	177	Dubai	18:20
KAC	786	Jeddah	18:30
ABY	123	Sharjah	18:45
KAC	742	Dammam	18:55
QTR	1080	Doha	18:55
KAC	614	Bahrain	19:10
KAC	774	Riyadh	19:25
GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30
KAC	618	Doha	19:35
KAC	104	London	19:40
KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
KAC	154	Istanbul	19:45
KAC	176	Geneva/Frankfurt	19:55
MSR	618	Alexandria	20:05
KNE	480	Taif	20:10
FDB	061	Dubai	20:20
OMA	647	Muscat	20:20
ABY	121	Sharjah	20:35
FDB	5053	Dubai	20:50
DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:55
JAI	572	Mumbai	21:00
QTR	1088	Doha	21:00
MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
ALK	229	Colombo	21:25
UAE	859	Dubai	21:40
GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45
JZR	125	Bahrain	21:55
QTR	1082	Doha	22:00
KLM	417	Amsterdam	22:05
AIC	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25
ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:25
KAC	564	Amman	22:25
FDB	059	Dubai	22:30
JZR	185	Dubai	23:15
PIA	205	Lahore	23:40
FDB			

CROSSWORD 1165



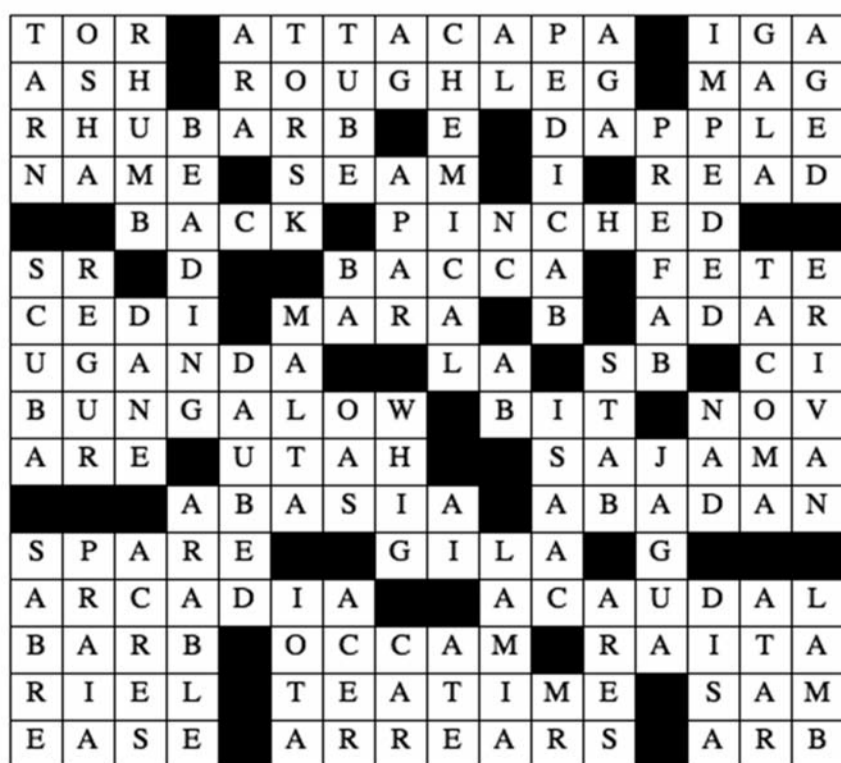
ACROSS

1. Liquid excretory product.
4. Happening or recurring at regular intervals.
12. A fatal disease of cattle that affects the central nervous system.
15. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
16. Often cultivated for the decorative foliage.
17. Electronic warfare undertaken to prevent or reduce an enemy's effective use of the electromagnetic spectrum.
18. The capital and largest city of Rwanda.
20. An ancient Assyrian city on the River Tigris and traditional capital of Assyria.
21. A barrier constructed to contain the flow or water or to keep out the sea.
22. Type genus of the Aceraceae.
23. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
25. A person who lacks confidence, is irreligious and wishy-washy.
27. Australian clover fern.
29. Any of numerous trees and shrubs grown for their beautiful glossy foliage and sweetly fragrant starry flowers.
31. Half the width of an em.
32. The chance to speak.
33. Norwegian mathematician (1802-1829).
37. Predatory black-and-white toothed whale with large dorsal fin.
44. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
48. A person who eats human flesh.
50. The quality of being lax and neglectful.
51. A language spoken by the Atakapa people of the Gulf coast of Louisiana and Texas.
52. A religious belief of African origin involving witchcraft and sorcery.
53. Fish eggs or egg-filled ovary.
54. Any of a group of antidepressant drugs that inhibit the action of monoamine oxidase in the brain and so allow monoamines to accumulate.
55. Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
57. A person forced to flee from home or country.
59. A New England state.
60. A lipoprotein that transports cholesterol in the blood.
61. A signal transmitted along a narrow path.
63. A Mexican-American teenager who belongs to a neighborhood gang and who dresses in showy clothes.
68. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
70. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
73. Common house and field crickets.
76. Toward the mouth or oral region.
77. Fertility goddess in ancient Greek mythology.
78. Something whose name is either forgotten or not known.
80. Portuguese explorer who in 1488 was the first European to get round the Cape of Good Hope (thus establishing a sea route from the Atlantic to Asia) (1450-1500).
81. Tear or be torn violently.
82. Third son of Elizabeth II (born in 1964).
83. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.

DOWN

1. Large dark brown North American arboreal carnivorous mammal.
2. Any plant of the genus *Erica*.
3. Having or showing keen interest or intense desire or impatient expectancy.
4. A unit of force equal to the force that imparts an acceleration of 1 foot/sec/sec to a mass of 1 pound.
5. A member of an Iroquoian people formerly living on the south shore of Lake Erie in northern Ohio and northwest Pennsylvania and western New York.
6. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
7. (Greek mythology) Son of Daedalus.
8. An association of countries in the western hemisphere.
9. Catch sight of.
10. cause to accept or become hardened to.
11. Genus of large deciduous nut-bearing trees.
12. English monk and scholar (672-735).
13. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
14. An annual award for outstanding achievements in television.
19. Type genus of the Ardeidae.
24. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
26. Decisively defeated in combat.
28. In operation or operational.
30. A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
34. Someone who bites.
35. A permanent council of the United Nations.
36. East Indian tart yellow berrylike fruit.
38. A long noosed rope used to catch animals.
39. The highest part (usually the melody) in a piece of choral music.
40. Hungarian choreographer who developed Labanotation (1879-1958).
41. A member of a North American Plains people (now living in Oklahoma and Wyoming).
42. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
43. In some classifications considered a genus of subfamily Melinae.
45. A local and habitual twitching especially in the face.
46. A cloth having a crisscross design.
47. Walk heavily and firmly, as when weary, or through mud.
49. Something resembling the head of a nail that is used as an ornamental device.
56. Type genus of the Alaudidae.
58. An Asian temple.
62. A dark region of considerable extent on the surface of the moon.
64. A dull persistent (usually moderately intense) pain.
65. Wild goose having white adult plumage.
66. The local time at the 0 meridian passing through Greenwich, England.
67. (of a young animal) Abandoned by its mother and raised by hand.
69. Indicating the most important performer or role.
71. A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.
72. An edge tool used to cut and shape wood.
74. An arrangement of objects or people side by side in a line.
75. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
79. A doctor's degree in optometry.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You have a wonderful quantity of spunk to go the extra mile when you are asked to move outside your routine responsibilities. You may be representative for your company and today there could be a need to help a fellow worker with a territory that you do not know. Your attitude is full of cheerful anticipation of meeting new people and helping to support a co-worker. You seem to have a determined spirit as you move about your day and you have the ability to go the extra mile in accomplishing all the tasks. With the new people and the new territory, you have a creative mind that will construct additions to a book you may be writing or a short story you think of creating. You might even consider writing a mystery.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Going all the way with a project today is a plus for you. Higher-ups observe your progress and are pleased. You seldom give up until you are finished with your project. You are not afraid to try something new and if supplied with instructions, you can do just about anything. Later this afternoon, you will be teaching young people and they want to please you. Take some time to point out the good parts of each person's project before giving criticism. You might be the teacher in a cooking, building, craft or repair shop of some sort. Take a few pictures and record the names of the students in the pictures. Working with your hands or lending all your energies to one project is where your interests are at this time. You will excel.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may appear to be psychic and very few people try to fool you-on any issue. It takes a while before the people around you realize that you appreciate the truth and despite how it sounds, you are a supporter of the truth in all its forms. You also have a knack for knowing things about people before they tell you. You could be the best salesperson or social worker. You have the nicest ideas for gifts or jobs that fit an individual; this is a talent that matches each personality. Teaching and working with kids is a real plus for you. If you are rich, you can direct your gifts to help people or animals become rehabilitated. Today you will find a large number of requests coming your way for guidance. Remember, people are stronger when they help others achieve.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Take the day one hour at a time. It may seem stressful but the project you are into now is near an end. After work you enjoy one of your favorite times of day with a loved one. There is time for talk and relaxing together before the evening duties begin. You are good at listening and helping others to come to good results or create good ideas. You are a good mate, friend or family member in that you lend your support to whatever is developing or is in need of attention. You will find that as your family grows and changes, your most concentrated effort will be in keeping with the routine you begin for your family gatherings during these times. One topic of conversation this evening may be in pets. If you do not have a pet, this could turn into a survey.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

If you are not a top-class, award-winning salesperson, you will be soon. You can talk most anyone into buying whatever you have to sell. There is always a key to an individual's personality that shows a vulnerable side. You can find it and sell whatever sales deal you have to offer. They will be lucky to buy from you. You will give the item a special slant that connects the individual to the product. Back in the office you are feeling good and may find it difficult to stay focused. An admirer of your talents may want to join you in some business venture. Research this venture first, as well as buy some time before making a long-term decision. You know all the corners and all the potholes-now it is a matter of time.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

It is a time for original thinking, or perhaps for seeking new and more daring associations. Impatience can give you a bit of trouble today, but if you add up the pros and cons of a tempting project you want to tackle, you may find it irresistible. Get a second opinion in order to uncover any hidden pitfalls and then make up your mind. Enjoy a bit of exercise during the noon break; perhaps a walk down a block or two will give you a lift and refresh your thinking as well. This is a time when you can expect encouragement from your co-workers and those around you. There is extra support toward your method of doing things and you will have recognition. At home you enjoy giving support to your family. There are gentle, kind and well-meant compliments to share.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You are always eager to meet new people but today may be extreme. You will have an opportunity to be a greeter or to volunteer in taking people on a tour or leading a class. Whatever the case, you will be expected to meet and greet each person. This could be a case of someone handicapped, elderly or some schoolchildren who love to have their names repeated back to them. It might be a good idea to have a little notepad ready for names-perhaps some sort of body mark or color of hair or clothes will help you remember each one. You can sneak a peek at your notes from time to time. Music, car games and playing the i-start-the-story, you-finish-it game always seems to catch on and will often prompt individual offerings. You can relax this evening.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may come across a couple of co-workers that would like to pull you into some conversation that needs an opinion. It is best to be very busy so that you do not get pulled into anything negative. Equipment may need updating or replacing and this will happen soon-patience. Your use of your memory to find the answer to some question without particular tools is impressive. You may be quite thankful that you had to learn the hard way in your education. This afternoon you may decide a bookstore is a good place to visit. There are many things to discover... It is one of your favorite things to do and one might even find that you hold several library cards. You might consider joining a book review club and getting to know some new people.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This might be a great time to think about your own business. Perhaps you have a place you have set aside in your home to attempt a beginning or plan for a business. Not quitting your day job yet, but privately and meticulously putting it all together, you will soon see great results. By the first part of the summer, you should be ready to send out advertisement of your services. Before the end of the year, you might be able to think about quitting your day job. You can be most successful at any number of things and may not want to hem yourself in to one thing. So... Take it for granted that when your business is doing well, you will be able to sell it for a very pretty penny and then start again. New adventures, new discoveries keep you interested in what is next.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Oh, you are so clever and you learn very quickly. If you are not teaching, nursing or performing any other helpful job, you could volunteer to help others in some way. Your cleverness will try its way under any heart and find the key that will aid most people that may need your insight and kind words. Any job with counseling involved will be applying your talents. If this is not a possibility, perhaps you can be the helpful person in your family. The family trusts you with their questions about which way they should travel with their life paths. Not one to really hold on to animals long, you love the animals of others and this evening you may find that you have become quite close to a pair of unusual creatures. There is plenty of laughter shared this evening.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

If you can wear white to work this morning, do it. This is your color today-meaning purity, peace and protection. You are the one that many people confide in when they want to have clarity or peace of mind. Your attitude is calming. Professionally, you are able to help a lot of people. You go to nature for your fresh-breath-of-calm reassurance. Once out-of-doors, you gain composure as you count the animals or the faces that you can imagine in the clouds. Later today you and a friend might enjoy riding bicycles in the park. Occasionally, you enjoy stopping off at an exhibit such as an aquarium on your way home-new faces. You are lucky, upbeat and a person that makes for delightful company. Music is in the air tonight.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

A project you are working on this morning gets all your attention. You can become so absorbed with a particular subject that you may not notice how many hours have passed. Setting a timer or an alarm will help you to remember there are other things you will need to tend to each day. For a while, it may take putting a note on the timer or alarm that says the next project or to stop for a little break. You are intrigued by anything you can't see, understand, touch, read, etc. Because of this, you will climb the mountain or take your camera into the ocean to take pictures or follow a distant stream to find a rare flower or plant. Get a sponsor, manager or concerned friend to help support your research; then you will gain the recognition you deserve.

WORD SEARCH

Adverbs

Find and circle all of the adverbs that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.

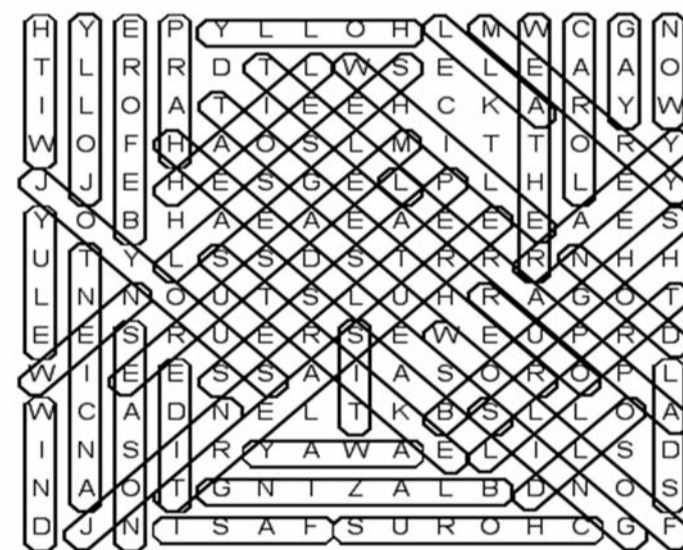


- | | | | | |
|----------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| ACROSS | BEHIND | HENCE | ONCE | SOMETIMES |
| AGAIN | BELOW | HIGH | PRESENTLY | SOMEWHERE |
| AHEAD | BRISKLY | HOWEVER | QUICKLY | SOON |
| ALMOST | DOWN | HOWEVER | QUIETLY | THEN |
| ALREADY | EARLY | LITTLE | QUITE | THERE |
| ALSO | EASILY | LONG | RARELY | TODAY |
| ALWAYS | FAST | LOUDLY | RATHER | TOMORROW |
| ANYWHERE | FIRST | MONTHLY | REALLY | UPWARD |
| APART | FOREVER | NEARBY | SHORT | WEEKLY |
| AWAY | FORWARD | NEVER | SLOWLY | WISELY |
| BACK | GENTLY | NOWHERE | SOFTLY | YESTERDAY |
| BEFORE | GREATLY | OFTEN | | |

Yesterday Solution

Mystery Christmas Carol

This is the solution to the puzzle located here.



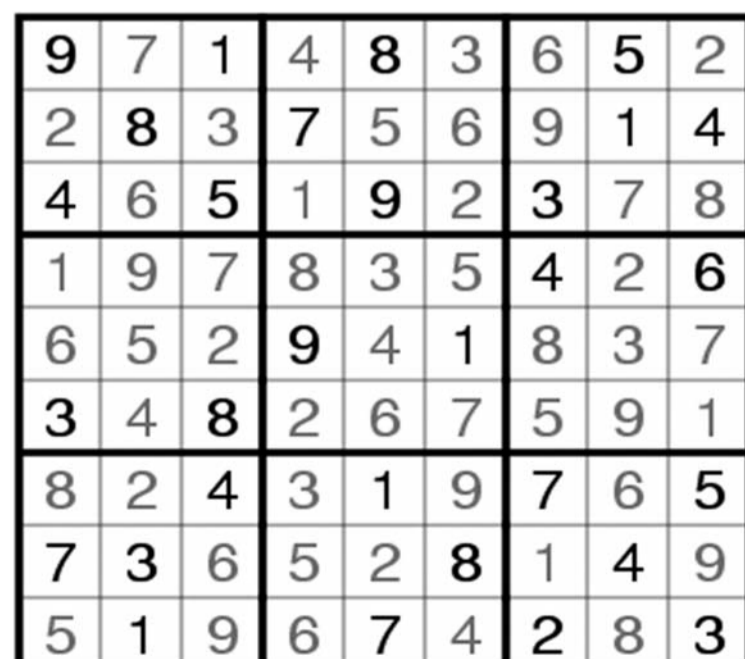
- | | | | |
|---------|----------|---------|----------|
| ALL | FOLLOW | MEASURE | TIDE |
| ANCIENT | GAY | MERRY | TIS |
| APPAREL | HAIL | NEW | TOGETHER |
| AWAY | HARP | NOW | TREASURE |
| BEFORE | HEEDLESS | OLD | TROLL |
| BLAZING | HOLLY | OUR | WEATHER |
| BOUGHS | JOIN | PASSES | WHILE |
| CAROL | JOLLY | SEASON | WIND |
| CHORUS | JOYOUS | SING | WITH |
| DON | LADS | STRIKE | YEAR |
| FAST | LASSES | TELL | YULE |

The Mystery Christmas Carol is: DECK THE HALLS

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	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	00660
Argentina	0054	Maldives	00960
Armenia	00374	Mali	00223
Australia	0061	Malta	00356
Austria	0043	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Nigar	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Toga	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lithuania	00370		

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

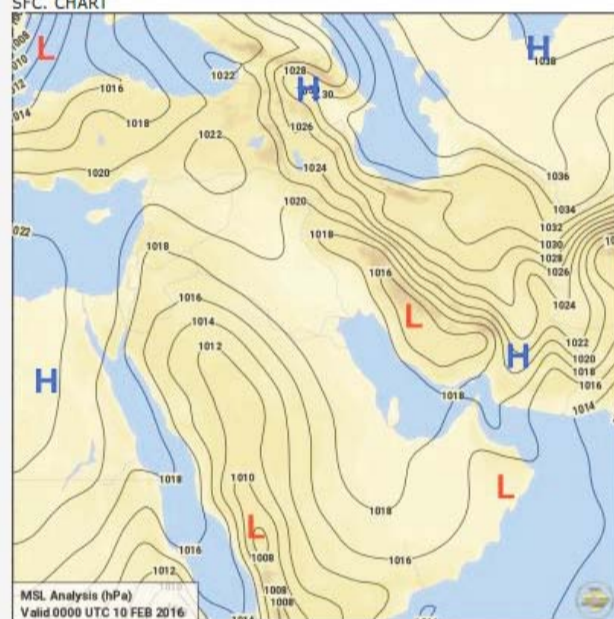
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 10/02/2016-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 21 °C

By Day : Sunny with light to moderate north westerly to light variable later on wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h
By Night : Cold and clouds will increase gradually with variable wind changing to light to moderate north easterly later on wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain later on

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Expected Weather	clouds to decrease + scattered light rain	sunny + raising dust over open areas	sunny	Mostly sunny
Min Temp °C	09	08	07	07
Max Temp °C	20	22	22	23
Wind Direction	north easterly changing to north westerly	north westerly	north westerly	north westerly
Wind Speed km/h	20 - 38	15 - 40	15 - 38	08 - 26

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	20
KUWAIT AIRPORT	04	21
ABDALY	05	20
BUBYAN	07	19
JAHRA	09	20
FAILAKA ISLAND	10	20
SALMIYAH	12	19
AHMADI	12	19
JAL ALIYAH	06	19
QAROH ISLAND	14	18
UMM AL-MARADEM	14	18
WAFRA	06	21
MANAGISH	05	19
SALMY	04	18
MUTRIBA	05	20

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	20
Min Temp (°C)	06
Max Rel Hum (%)	77
Min Rel Hum (%)	23
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	53 N
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm
Sunrise	06:31
Sunset	17:33

Prayer Times

Fajr	05:11
Sunrise	06:31
Zuhr	12:02
Asr	15:10
Sunset	17:33
Isha	18:51



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	Plastic Surgeons
Dr. Abidallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	2455050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	2455050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaezem	22636920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abidallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Paediatricians	Endocrinologist
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarouf	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. Abidallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdalateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abidallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Family Doctor	Psychiatrists	Gynaecologists & Obstetricians
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047	
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0	
Dr. Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581	
Dr. Verginia s. Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321	
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539	
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406	
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272	
Dr. Salem soso	22618787	
General Surgeons		
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044	
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148	
Internists, Chest & Heart		
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939	
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300	
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004	
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515	
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446	
Dr. Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3	

Physiotherapists & VD	Rheumatologists:	Internist, Chest & Heart
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291	
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060	
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290	
DR. Mohammed Akkad	2455050 Ext 210	
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC		
Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667	
Consultant Cardiologist		
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555	
Inaya German Medical Center		
Te: 2575077		
Fax: 25723123		

Psychologists /Psychotherapists	Soor Center Tel: 2290-1677 Fax: 2290 1688	info@soorcenter.com www.soorcenter.com	Kaizen center 25716707	Noor Clinic 23845955	William Schuilenberg, RPC 2290-1677 Zaina Al Zabin, M.Sc. 2290-1677
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In this file photo, actress Diane Keaton attends the LA Premiere of "Love The Coopers" at The Grove in Los Angeles.



This undated photo provided the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising Museum in Los Angeles shows costumes from last year's Oscar winner for costume design, 'The Grand Budapest Hotel'.



In this file photo, 'Downton Abbey' actress Lesley Nicol poses for a portrait at The Peninsula hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. — AP photos

5 places in LA to soak up Oscars vibes

It's Oscar season in Los Angeles. With the 88th annual Academy Awards scheduled for Feb 28, here are five places in LA to soak up those glitzy Oscars vibes and maybe even run into one of the nominees.

The Peninsula Beverly Hills

The Peninsula Beverly Hills hotel is known as the ultra-luxe stay for Oscar nominees. While the hotel won't name names, Kate Winslet and Cate Blanchett have stayed there, and Oscar winners Anne Hathaway and Reese Witherspoon have been spotted there. VIP guests get personally monogrammed - yes, monogrammed - pillowcases. For those who can afford some true Oscars-worthy pampering, the hotel offers services such as a week-long "Red Carpet Ready" package of personal training sessions and spa treatments, including a body scrub with detox wrap. The total cost? A cool \$3,000.

If, like most of us, you don't have that much cash to blow, consider, say, a 15-minute lip-plumping treatment for \$45, or snagging a drink at the hotel's sun-soaked bright blue rooftop pool and garden. Nearby are several other glam lodging options: the Beverly Hilton Hotel, home of the boozy Golden Globe Awards, and the century-old Beverly Hills Hotel with its star-packed Polo Lounge.

With its sprawling swath of swanky stores, including Barneys New York, Swarovski and Diane

von Furstenberg, this outdoor retail center always attracts a slew of movie stars, from Mark Wahlberg to Oscar winner Halle Berry. Walk along the main path, or take a quick trolley ride to the historic Farmers Market next door. Around since 1934, the Farmers Market - a savory-smelling mix of colorful stalls - serves up everything from thick pizza to gumbo. It's also a Hollywood institution. Legendary visitors have included Marilyn Monroe, Frank Sinatra and the Beatles.

Runyon Canyon Park

Those tabloid photos you see of celebrities and their pooches huffing it up a winding dusty path? More than likely, they're photos of Runyon Canyon, a 160-acre nature park nestled in the Hollywood Hills. Hit the park's trails for panoramic views of LA at the top, and keep your eyes peeled to avoid dog droppings. You might just see Runyon fans such as Miley Cyrus and Jake Gyllenhaal sweating it out to prep for the onslaught of Oscars events.

Arclight Hollywood

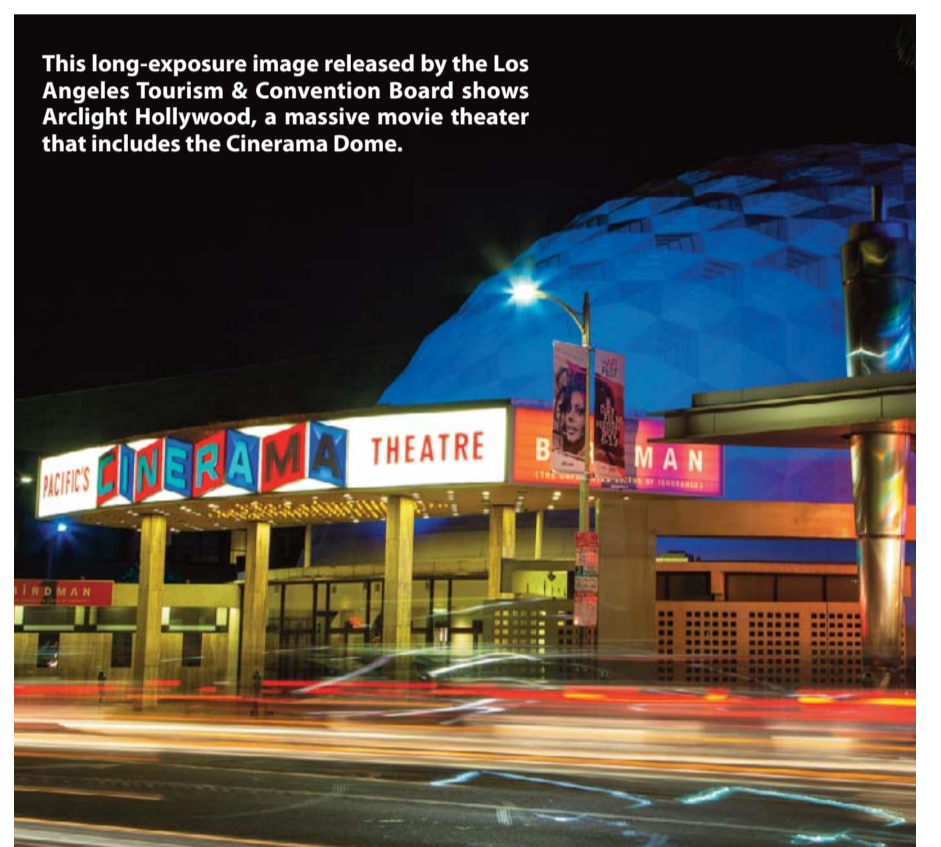
One of the most striking movie theaters in the country, the Cinerama Dome has hosted oodles of big Hollywood film premieres since opening in 1963. It has more than 800 seats and looks like an enormous white golf ball chopped in half. In 2002, the Dome became part of the newly opened ArcLight Hollywood multiplex, the massive 14-screen flagship of the ArcLight Cinemas chain.

With reserved seating, cushy stadium seats, a bar and cafe, and various film exhibits, the Arclight Hollywood is a popular place for movie fans and celebrities alike. Oscar winners such as Charlize Theron have caught late-night showings there. Grab a martini, get some popcorn and see all the Oscar-nominated films!

Fidm museum's art of motion picture costume design exhibit

Anyone who covets the spiky, apocalyptic clothes in "Mad Max: Fury Road" or the silky 1920s outfits in "The Danish Girl", both nominated for best costume design Oscars, will love the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising Museum's 24th annual Art of Motion Picture Costume Design exhibit. The free exhibit, in downtown LA, opens to the public from Feb 9 to April 30. It showcases more than 100 costumes from 20 films released in 2015, including costumes from all five films nominated for best costume design.

On display? Cate Blanchett's sleekly retro hat and fur coat from Oscar-nominated "Carol" and the big bouncy blue ballroom dress from Oscar-nominated "Cinderella." Nowhere else can you see every stitch and button this close. — AP



This long-exposure image released by the Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board shows Arclight Hollywood, a massive movie theater that includes the Cinerama Dome.



Style your season with Centrepoin's Spring, Summer looks

Centrepoin, the region's largest fashion retailer, has a collection that brings out your inner trendsetter to take on the season in your own personal way. Centrepoin's fresh, fun and fashion looks let you transform every day basics in to statement styles with a collection of strong trend choices for the whole family.

This spring, Babyshop's collection for tots and teens will have kids and moms excited and eager to shop. Little girls can look forward to a fresh color palette of earthy green, soft yellow and feminine peach. Floral patterns remain a Spring staple along with flora and fauna imagery. Key shapes include front knot shirts, relaxed pull-on pants, denim dungarees, two-tier, prom and skater style dresses, and angel sleeves. Little lads will be dressed in bold, bright shades of vermilion orange, bright and navy blue, and softer green and grey. Key collection pieces include slim-collared shirts and tees and Henley neck t-shirts. The casual spring look is accentuated by chinos and jog pants. Denim continues to make a dominant statement and multi-stripe paneling and prints feature in staple pieces.

Splash's seasonal selection includes trendy silhouettes in shades of pink, coral and blue with monochrome adding depth and subtlety to the range. Womenswear styles are showcased in a range of summer dresses, skirts, tops and comfortable pants that will keep fashionistas dressed on-trend through the day. The collection also unveils bright hues and rustic tones ranging from orange and red, infused with cooler blues. Black, blue and white stripes add a contemporary touch to the nautical styles.

For the stylish and sporty man, Splash has a range of T-shirts, parka shirts, long

sleeveless sweats, grid checks, knee slit denims, and ripped shorts in subtle colors of ivory, grey, blue and beige. 70s Style is still big this season with a re-interpretation of wardrobe staples such as classic blue jeans, textures blazer, summer jackets and floral printed Polos.

Shoe Mart's latest footwear and accessories collection has a range of Boho chic, and Mod styles. Ladies can choose from footwear styles in denim works, floral prints and a line-up of neon shoes. The men's range has comfortable summer sandals, leather moccasins, and laced formal footwear. The children's range has fun and comfortable styles in trendy summer colours.

Lifestyle brings you an assortment of fresh and fashionable accessories to make your spring outfits pop this season. Trendy bags and jeweled accessories elevate your style-quotient. For fun and fabulous make up styles try bright summer hues like oranges, pink, gold and cool blues this season from popular cosmetic brands like NYX, Misslyn & Make-up Factory. Lifestyle also has a selection of tasteful and elegant home decor products such as charming tea sets, scented candles and home fragrance assortment like no other, lamps & chandeliers, cushions and bathroom accessories. All of this and more available at great prices, to spruce up your home this season or gift to friends and family.

This spring Centrepoin is the definitive one-stop shop for the family's fashion and lifestyle needs. The new collections are available at all Centrepoin stores located in Al-Rai, Avenues, Hawally, Salmiya, Fintas, Jahra, Fahaheel, Sulaibikhat, and Kuwait City.

Behbehani Group debuts latest showroom at Gate Mall

Adding to its ever expanding network of locations, Behbehani Group (Morad Yousuf Behbehani Company), recently announced the opening of its latest showroom at the Gate Mall in Eqaila on February 4th, 2016.

The showroom, which is located on the lower ground floor of the mall, is a representation of Behbehani Group's long-standing tradition of luxury and excellence. Utilizing expert interior design, impeccable display areas and highly trained staff, it offers a warm and welcoming atmosphere to enhance every shopping experience. Brands available at this location include Balmain, Calvin Klein, Certina, Caran D'ache, Dunhill, Ebel, Frederique Constant, Hamilton, Korloff, Longines, Movado, Oris, Pandora, Rado and Tissot. With such a wide assortment of luxury brands, Behbehani Group further strengthens its role as Kuwait's leading retailer of exclusive timepieces and jewelry.

On the occasion, Shahzad Gidwani, the Group's General Manager said, "We're proud of this newest addition to our network of locations and look forward to pro-

viding our Gate Mall patrons with the same exceptional service standards they have come to expect from us everywhere else." The showroom was inaugurated by Amthal Marafi, Head of Business Development.

With more than 80 years of expertise in luxury brand retailing, Behbehani Group has come to mean the standard of premium boutiques and showrooms stocking only the finest in global timepieces, accessories and jewelry. The Group's showroom network ensures that it remains in close contact with its customers and their cultural sensitivities, enabling them to cater to their every need while fulfilling their demand for world-class services and experiences. Behbehani Group currently has showrooms at Salihiya Complex, Souq Sharq, The Avenues Mall, Al-Kout Mall, Laila Gallery, Marina Mall, 360 MALL and Al-Hamra Luxury Centre in addition to its newest location at the Gate Mall.



Man who gave name to 'Peanuts' Linus dies at age 90

Linus Maurer, a cartoonist and illustrator whose old friend and colleague Charles M Schulz borrowed his first name for Charlie Brown's blanket-wielding best friend Linus in his "Peanuts" comic strip and cartoons, has died at age 90. Maurer died Jan. 29 in Sonoma, California, his longtime partner Mary Jo Starsiak told The Associated Press on Friday night. His exact cause of death was not clear, but he had struggled with Parkinson's disease and heart trouble late in life.

About 65 years ago, Maurer and Schulz worked together at Art Instruction Schools Inc. in Minneapolis, when "Peanuts" was getting started. Schulz told the story in a book celebrating "Peanuts" 50th anniversary. "Linus came from a drawing that I made one day of a face almost like the one he now has," Schulz wrote. "I experimented with some wild hair, and showed the sketch to a friend of mine who sat near me at art instruction, whose name was Linus Maurer. It seemed appropriate that I should name the character Linus." It was a common practice for Schulz, who named many "Peanuts" characters, including Charlie Brown, after the people that surrounded him.

Schulz, who died in 2000, and Maurer remained lifelong friends, both settling in the same part of Northern California north of San Francisco later in life. There, Maurer drew editorial cartoons for the Sonoma Index-Tribune, which first reported his death.

Maurer had a successful run with comics in his own right, with syndicated strips in the 1960s and 1970s called "Old Harrigan," "Abracadabra" and "In the Beginning." He also created the "Challenger" puzzle that was syndicated in newspaper crossword sections. Before that, he had worked as an illustrator for IBM and AT&T in New York and as an art director for the McCann Erickson ad agency and Wells Fargo Bank in San Francisco. — AP



In a Sept 23, 2003 file photo, the real Linus, artist Linus Maurer, cuts a ribbon during unveiling a statue of Linus of 'Peanuts' comic strip fame during a ceremony at his hometown of Sleepy Eye, Minn. — AP



Frank Larrazaleta presents a bottle of Hennessy Paradis Imperial to 'Creed' star Sylvester Stallone after he received the prestigious Montecito Award presented by actor Carl Weathers during the 31st Santa Barbara International Film Festival. — AP photos



Executive Director Roger Durling, 'Creed' star and Montecito Award recipient Sylvester Stallone and wife Jennifer Flavin attend the Hennessy Paradis Imperial Lounge.

Pharrell Williams becomes co-owner of G-Star Raw jeans

Pharrell Williams, the pop culture renaissance man who is a designer, performer and hit songwriter, was named Tuesday as co-owner of jeans brand G-Star Raw. The company, based in Amsterdam and Los Angeles, said that Williams would be involved in design but also in decisions on business strategy and advertising. "G-Star is an independently minded and forward-thinking company. I believe they will be the definitive jeans brand of the 21st century," Williams said in a statement.

Williams, whose financial terms and time commitment to the brand were not disclosed, has been involved in fashion for years including as a co-founder of the Japanese clothing maker Billionaire Boys Club. Through another of his projects, Bionic Yarn, Williams has worked with G-Star Raw to design a line of jeans whose denim is produced from plastic bottles found in the ocean. G-Star Raw said that eco-friendly initiatives would be a key focus with Williams, who has been outspoken on environmental protection. Williams, 42, made his name as part of the duo The Neptunes and became a behind-the-scenes producer and songwriter to major pop acts including Madonna, Britney Spears and Shakira. Williams in recent years has become a star in his own right with the globally viral hit "Happy." — AFP

Sylvester Stallone says 'Creed' feels like Balboa's last ride

Oscar-nominated "Creed" star Sylvester Stallone stopped by the Santa Barbara International Film Festival Tuesday night for one of the week's many tributes and to accept the Montecito Award from friend and "Rocky" co-star Carl Weathers. When prompted about a sequel to Ryan Coogler's fresh take on the material, however, he seemed quite reticent, perhaps concerned about diminishing returns or souring such a storybook experience. "I really have mixed feelings about this, seriously," he said. "I feel like Rocky, at the end of this movie on the steps, with the help of a young man, and he looks out and says, 'From here, you can see your whole life'-it sort of summarizes the whole thing. I don't know how much further you can push Rocky."

Ostensibly a career retrospective, the program still never strayed too far from the Balboa narrative, a full-circle experience for Stallone that has already put him in rare air with the nomination, but could send him into the next chapter of his career with an Academy Award for his most lasting legacy in tow. That sense of legacy was very much on Stallone's mind throughout the evening, as it has been all season. "I learn that as I get older you have to be really thankful for what you leave behind," he said. "Hopefully we left something good behind." Stallone said that all his life he has been drawn to the "Rocky attitude," the philosophy of punching through, that everyone is an underdog at some point in time. And that, of course, is why the character resonated then and now. "Just when we

think we have it together, something happens-it's called life," Stallone said.

At times appearing like a wise sage seated before a classroom of eager learners, Stallone had a number of seemingly platitudinous notions to dispense, but they felt earned, built on the back of experience. "You learn from failure." "Success doesn't teach you anything." "There's something to be said about struggle." "Don't be afraid to be sloppy the first time out-that doesn't apply to architecture, but it does apply to creative endeavor."

Sound guys

With that last sentiment, he was speaking of the knocks he took crafting a screenplay like "Rocky," what it took to see it through as an actor and watch it take life in the culture and define him to this very day. Stallone told stories of getting into it with one of the sound guys on the set of the 1976 boxing drama, who was so annoyed with the actor he took his name off the film (it was Oscar-nominated for Best Sound, sans the disgruntled individual's credit). He espoused Norman Jewison's attention to detail and authenticity (1978's "F.I.S.T.") and John Huston's on-set storytelling (1981's "Victory"). He spoke about viewing "First Blood" as an incarnation of Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" and feeling compelled to change the ending to a more hopeful one at a time when Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder was claiming 20,000 Vietnam vet victims a day.

And he recounted finding himself on a low-altitude flight back to a Santa Monica after "anatomical freak" Dolph Lundgren punched him so hard in the chest on the set of "Rocky IV" that four nuns ended up posted at his hospital bed. He also said he understood what Leonardo DiCaprio must have gone through while filming "The Revenant" after having his own experience with embarking on a tough production in the elements (1992's "Cliffhanger"). He laughed remembering times in a New York pancake house, packing on pounds for "Cop Land" at a time when he was eager to sink back into drama after years in the action movie limelight. And of course, he beamed about how grateful he is to Coogler for breathing fresh life into his 40-year-old creation. "He just had a certain sense of relatability," he said of the 29-year-old filmmaker. "He made it fresh and made it his own. I never in my life would have done this on my own. So that's why it's great to take a chance and embrace your fears."

Stallone came into this race swinging, and as the rounds tick by, it looks more and more like he'll be the last supporting actor standing on Oscar night. But come what may on that score, on this particular night, as he sipped cognac at a modest after-party and spoke to well-wishers with a gleam in his eye and patience to spare, he looked like a guy content that indeed, he's left something good behind. — Reuters

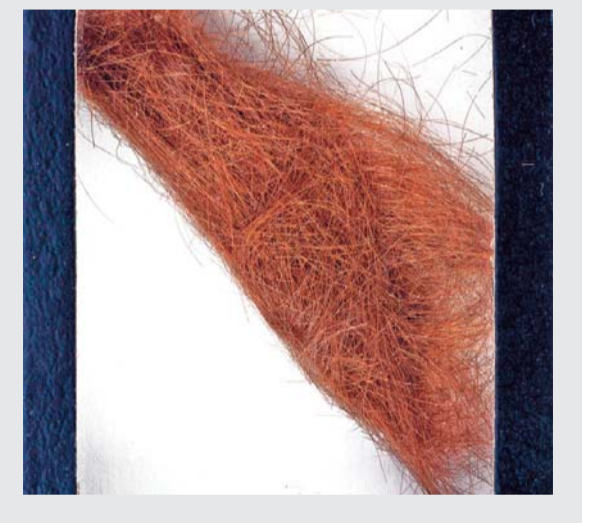


This October 13, 2014 file photo shows US singer Pharrell Williams performing on the stage of the Zenith in Paris, France. — AFP

Lock of Lennon's hair expected to fetch \$10K at auction

A lock of hair snipped from the head of John Lennon as the Beatle prepared for a film role is expected to sell for \$10,000 at a Dallas auction later this month. Heritage Auctions said in a news release Monday that the 4-inch lock was collected by a German hairdresser who trimmed Lennon's hair before he started shooting "How I Won the War."

The dark comedy, released in 1967, follows the World War II misadventures of British troops led by an inept commander. The auction will be held Feb 20 and Heritage says it will include other rare items linked to The Beatles, such as a signed photograph of all four members. Memorabilia from other artists such as Elvis Presley and Led Zeppelin also will be auctioned. — AP



Warner settles 'Happy Birthday' copyright suit for \$14 mln

The copyright to the world's most popular song, "Happy Birthday to You," has been in dispute for decades, but if an agreement by Warner/Chappell Music to pay \$14 million to end a lawsuit over the song is approved by a US court, it will be free for all to use as they please. The settlement, unveiled in federal court in Los Angeles on Monday, would eliminate the music publisher's claimed ownership of the song. It also specifies that once the settlement is approved by the court, the song will be in the public domain. A hearing is scheduled for March 14.

A group of artists and filmmakers filed a class action lawsuit in 2013 against Warner/Chappell, the music publishing arm of privately held Warner Music Group. In a court filing on Monday, the group hailed the settlement as "unquestionably an excellent result." "We are pleased to bring this matter to resolution," a Warner/Chappell spokeswoman said in a statement on Tuesday. The settlement money will be distributed among those who paid licensing fees for the song back to 1949. — Reuters



Johnny Depp to star as 'Invisible Man' for Universal

Johnny Depp is set to star in Universal's reboot of "The Invisible Man," sources tell Variety. The film is currently without a director or writer but is part of the studio's new classic monster universe initiative spearheaded by Alex Kurtzman and Chris Morgan. Based on the classic H.G. Wells novel, the original 1933 film starred Claude Rains as the scientist who finds a way to become invisible for devious purposes. The first film in this rebooted monster universe is "The Mummy," which stars Tom Cruise and bows in June 2017.

Morgan and Kurtzman will now look to tap a writer to pen the reboot; no timetable has been set for production. Exec VP Jon Mone and VP Jay Polidoro will oversee production for Universal. Depp can be seen next in "Alice Through the Looking Glass" and also has "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales" set to bow in summer 2017. He is also being courted to star in Paramount's crime thriller "Triple Frontier." He is repped by UTA. The news was first reported by Deadline Hollywood. — Reuters



Charlize Theron in talks to join 'Fast 8' as villain

Charlize Theron is in early conversations to join the cast of Universal's next "Fast and Furious" movie, "Fast 8," as a new villain. While it's unclear where negotiations stand currently, sources close to the situation tell Variety that the studio is eager to add Theron to the ensemble cast. Universal had no comment. Vin Diesel, Dwayne Johnson, Tyrese Gibson and Jason Statham are all expected to return, along with other franchise favorites. It was announced in October that, following the success of "Straight Outta Compton," F Gary Gray would direct the project.

Production is set to start next spring with the film dated to bow on April 17, 2017. Theron is attached to star in "The Gray Man" for Sony, but the film is going through a rewrite to change the main character from male to female, making it possible to fit both movie into her schedule. This isn't the first big star to join the "Fast and Furious" cast mid-series. Dwayne Johnson joined the cast in "Fast Five"-Universal likely hopes to mirror that move with Theron's casting, adding a fresh face for not only "Fast 8," but for the remaining installments. Theron is currently filming Focus spy thriller "The Coldest City." — AP

Charlize Theron

'Frozen' set for Broadway in 2018

It took cinemas by storm and now the smash-hit Disney animation "Frozen" is heading to Broadway, the entertainment giant said Tuesday, confirming months of fevered speculation. The musical adaptation will open outside New York in August 2017 and then hit Broadway in spring 2018. "As you know, a sequel of Frozen is in the works," Disney chief operating officer Tom Staggs said during a conference call with analysts. "In the meantime Disney Animation is creating the first ever Frozen television special, which will air on ABC

during the 2017 holiday season, and in the tradition of Lion King and Aladdin, we have a new Frozen musical slated for Broadway in 2018."

Released in 2013, the film is one of the most successful in history, making \$1.27 billion at the box office, according to the specialized website Box Office Mojo. The musical will feature the same writers as the film-music and lyrics by Robert Lopez and Kristen Anderson-Lopez. Loosely based on Hans Christian Andersen's "The Snow Queen," the film tells the sto-

ry of princess Anna, who sets off on a journey to find her sister Elsa, whose hard-to-control icy powers have trapped the kingdom of Arendelle in eternal winter. The hugely popular film picked up two Oscars and a clutch of other awards along the way. — AFP



This file photo shows Directors Chris Buck (left) and Jennifer Lee (center) as they stand with producer Peter Del Vecho (right) after winning the Best Animated Feature Film award for 'Frozen' in the press room during the 86th Academy Awards on March 2nd, 2014 in Hollywood, California. — AFP



With costumes, beads, music, New Orleans marks Fat Tuesday



Dressed in elaborate costumes, dancing to the beat of brass bands and clamoring for beads from passing floats, thousands of people gathered in the streets of New Orleans to mark the culmination of the famous Mardi Gras celebration Tuesday. The last day of parades rolled along St Charles Avenue and Canal Street, float riders throwing beads to bystanders as revelers in other parts of the city like the French Quarter and the Marigny partied in the streets in elaborate costumes. Fat Tuesday is the last day of the Carnival season before Lent, a period of spiritual renewal and penance, begins today. "It's fun. You see all the people. You see everybody dressed up, and you have a good time. I love New Orleans," said Barbara Tate, who came down from Maryland for the holiday.



The costumes

When it comes to Mardi Gras, anything goes for costumes. Caroline Thomas, from New Orleans, spent weeks creating her elaborate costume featuring a massive feathered headdress so striking that bystanders wanted to take photos with her. "I'm not anything specific because I think the beauty of Mardi Gras is that you don't have to be a thing. You just have to look cool," she said. "I just wanted to be my own Mardi Gras priestess." Others costumes included an man wearing a Steve Harvey mask standing with two women wearing beauty queen sashes that read "Miss Colombia" and "Miss Philippines," in homage to Harvey's blunder at the Miss Universe contest. One woman dressed as a jellyfish while others dressed as dragons.



The parades

The Krewe of Zulu parade is put on by the Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club, a historically black organization in New Orleans. Their parade dates back to roughly 1910, and is followed by the Rex Organization's parade, which dates back to 1872. Rex's history is closely tied with Mardi Gras traditions. For example, Rex's colors - purple, green and gold - have become the symbolic colors of Mardi Gras as well. The two truck parades that follow Rex mark the end of the major parades in the city until 2017.

After the parades, the street party generally moves to the French Quarter, where revelers pack Bourbon Street and the celebration gets a bit more risqué. The festivities come to an end at the stroke of midnight when a wedge of mounted police officers rides down Bourbon to clear it of revelers and declare the party over.

The 'throws'

Riders on the floats generally wear masks and throw beads or other specially made trinkets to people along the parade route. One especially prized "throw" is the coconuts given out by members of Zulu. The coconuts have been hollowed out, and the outside hair is removed; they're then decorated with glitter or elaborate designs. Riders in the Zulu parade also threw out small stuffed animals, specially decorated beads and hats with the words "Zulu" emblazoned in yellow.

The family

Despite Mardi Gras' reputation as being a raucous, adults-only party, much of the celebration is actually family-friendly. Families lined up early along the side of the streets or on the median - called the neutral ground in New Orleans - to get a good seat, often bringing ladders with specially designed seats on top for kids to sit in and catch beads or throws. Naomi Shows, from Covington, Louisiana, came to the French Quarter with her three children, their black-and-white faces painted like skeletons inspired by Dia de los Muertos, the Mexican Day of the Dead: "It's been a tradition here for so long. They grow up with it, and they love it."

The morning

Before sunrise Tuesday, about 100 people turned out at the Backstreet Cultural Museum to see the North Side Skull & Bone Gang come out. The gang is a longtime Mardi Gras tradition. Members wear costumes resembling skeletons with papier-mache masks covering their heads. They go through the neighborhood waking people up on Fat Tuesday. Dabne Whitmore came to the door in her white bathrobe after hearing the gang and its drums coming from down the street: "I was laying in my bed upstairs in the back, and I heard the drums coming and I knew it was time. ... They come and wake me up every morning for 15 years."

The weather

Cold. Winds gusting up to 30 mph made mid-40s temperatures feel lower. People along the parade route wore thick jackets and hats, and wrapped themselves under layers of blankets as they watched the floats roll by. Tate, from Maryland, said it was fun but a little chilly: "I was hoping it would be a bit warmer. I didn't know I needed to bring long underwear." — AP



Zulu rolls down St Charles Avenue toward Canal Street in the New Orleans CBD. — AP photos

Features



In this photo provided by RH Baby & Child, dramatic oversized art can be a great way to decorate a contemporary child's room. — AP photos



RH Baby & Child offers several murals, including a photograph of a fighter jet and an illustration of the constellations.



In this photo provided by J and J Design Group, bold pops of color and playful details make for nurseries and children's rooms that are stylish and sophisticated.



In this photo provided by The Land of Nod, acrylic neon hues and tropical-themed shapes evoke the '80s in this Paradise nightlight.

New nursery decor with style

Baby, it's a brand new year. And when it comes to creating the perfect sleep space for little ones, there are more fun options than ever. Styles range from haute to homespun, vintage to vanguard. A look at some of the best:

Blurring the lines

Traditional parameters like gender-specific motifs and colors, and room-specific furnishings, are giving

able to the child's interests, and easy to swap out as they grow. We like to use mixed media - prints as well as wood and metal sculptures - to create a really interesting gallery."

Baby glam

Parents-to-be should view the baby's room as a place to let their own imaginations fly, says Naomi Alon, owner of the Irvine, California-based Little

damask wallpaper, a baroque mirror, organza furniture skirts and a big fluffy rug to create a glamorous, girly confection.

Los Angeles duo Emily Current and Meritt Elliot designed gold, arrow-shaped lamps and finials, and gold-woven storage bins for their new Pottery Barn Kids collection. A bold, black-and-white diamond pattern graces a quilt. RH Baby & Child's new collection features upholstered cribs resembling wing chairs; conversion kits allow them to be turned into beds down the road. There's a big selection of chandeliers, too.

Granny chic

Antique (or antique-looking) furniture, quilts and afghans give baby's room homespun charm.

Connecticut-based designer Eileen Blanchard crafts sweet pillows, bedding and soft toys using chenille and fabrics with vintage children's prints and winsome cottage florals.

Artist Emily Isabella's Homestead organic fabric collection features an array of animals, scenery and farm folk.

Mod modern

As in the rest of the home, decor in the nursery is revisiting the past. Midcentury and '70s- and '80s-era cribs and other furniture bring in style elements that can match the home's aesthetic. Room & Board, DwellStudio and AllModern have great options. Gick and O'Dowd did a feature wall in a boy's room that featured a big, '70s-style geometric design, and balanced it with a similarly bold rug.

Garnet Hill's got butterfly chairs from Argentina with canvases embroidered with boho crewelwork designs. And Zulily has some pretty boho crib bedding with paisley and elephant prints. Land of Nod's managing director, Michelle Kohanzo, thinks the 1980s in particular fit the vibe of kids' rooms now. "There's no better decade for kid's decor," she says. "The trend is all about bold, playful color and pattern - it's over-the-top and just plain silly."

There's nostalgic appeal for mom and dad, too. "This is exactly how I remember my own room growing up!" Kohanzo says. Look for acrylic wall cubes, and

banana and flamingo nightlights in hot neon hues. Land of Nod partnered with Kansas City-based studio Ampersand on a whimsical bedding collection stitched with rainbows and geometrics, in retro color combos like pink, blue, red and turquoise.

Prep school

Crisp stripes and a palette of whites, navy, reds, greens, yellows and oranges create a preppy vibe. "Almost any color pops with navy," says Gick, and it works for both boys' and girls' rooms. Pottery Barn Kids' Harper bedding collection pairs white with chevrons, dots or stripes in bright hues. Monogrammed wall art ties it all together.

Neutral territory

Even parents-to-be who know their baby's gender may prefer a neutral nursery. Beyond yellow, gender-neutral decor includes gray, greige and cream along with muted, chalky pastels. Julia Rothman's wallpaper patterns are a good example: Hand-drawn birds and clouds move across the wall in soft, daydream-y hues.

Tiny traveler

Introduce baby to the big wide world and the skies above with printed bedding and accessories to spark imagination. Rifle Paper Co.'s Safari wallpaper puts zebras, gazelles, ostriches and elephants in metallic gold on a hunter-green background - great for boys or girls.

RH Baby & Child has dramatic murals of constellations, maps and jet planes. Minted also has art to spark a child's flight of fancy. Put the sky overhead with one of Gale Fitzsimmons' photo murals on the ceiling: Puffy white clouds bound across an azure vista, perfect for daydreaming. Or naptime. — AP



In this photo provided by The Land of Nod, design motifs of the 1980s inform a new collection.



In this photo provided by The Land of Nod, design motifs of the 1980s inform a new collection.

way to a more free-spirited approach. Designers are deploying to the nursery dressers, credenzas, art, lighting, mirrors and seating more typically found in grown-up rooms like the master, dining or living room. Joanna Gick and Jennifer O'Dowd, interior designers in Scottsdale, Arizona, like to use vintage dressers, toys and books as nursery inspiration. Art's a big element, too.

"Gallery walls seem to be a hot trend," Gick says. "The fun thing about them is they're totally custom-

Crown Interiors. "I encourage my clients to think about the nursery as their inner child's fantasy space," she says. "This is the one room in their home where they can get away with neon pink wallpaper or an over-the-top chandelier. The nursery is just as much about the parents as it is about the baby, and making it a place where mom and dad feel comfortable is key."

In one of Alon's favorite projects, a nursery in Newport Beach, California, she used pink and gold



Colorful bunting fluttering in the breeze along Independencia Avenue in Tlaquepaque. — AP photos



The Santuario de Nuestra Senora de la Soledad, the Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Solitude, built in a mix of styles include Byzantine and neo-classical, in Tlaquepaque.



A cafe advertising the daily specials and 'musica en vivo-live music' on a street in Tlaquepaque.



'El Grito Continua', a street sculpture in Tlaquepaque.

Tlaquepaque: Arts and crafts enclave near Guadalajara

Strolling the boutique-lined streets of this arts-and-crafts enclave near Guadalajara, Mexico, is like stepping into the brightly colored pages of a storybook. Above, rainbow-colored bunting flaps beneath an often cerulean sky. Fantastical sculptures on the sidewalks cast stark shadows on the vivid yellow, white and terra cotta walls of the stucco buildings. Even the name has an engaging rhythm - tuh-lah-keh-pah-keh. And the best part is this fairy tale visit to Tlaquepaque's historic center includes tacos.

How to get there

Tlaquepaque, historically known as San Pedro Tlaquepaque, is a suburb of Guadalajara, capital city of the state of Jalisco. To get here from downtown Guadalajara you can rent a car or take a taxi. Another option is to take an open-air tour bus. Once in Tlaquepaque, head for the historic center. The main street is Independencia, which is lined with stores, galleries, restaurants and bars. You'll also want to explore the smaller side streets. A major landmark is the Jardin Hidalgo, a large plaza flanked by two colonial-era

churches on Independencia and the Parian, 199 Calle Juarez, which is a block of restaurants and bars known for mariachi music, especially on weekends.

Where to eat

Casa Luna, at Independencia 211, is a restaurant is set in the courtyard of an old mansion with art-decked walls and colorful lanterns hung above the tables, lending a warm glow at night. Live bands play during the dinner hour and the menu offers traditional Mexican cuisine with a high-end twist, like the duck carnitas tacos. Tlaquepasta, 139 Reforma, is also a popular spot. For a more casual experience, street vendors sell a variety of foods including sweet corn on the cob.

What to do

Shop: Independencia is lined with upscale boutiques selling handmade jewelry, pottery, glassware and home goods.

See: There are two ceramics museums. The Regional Ceramic Museum is at 237 Independencia. The larger

Museo Premio Nacional de Ceramica Panteleon Panduro, 191 Prisciliano Sanchez, is named after Panteleon Panduro, considered the father of modern ceramics in Jalisco. Admission is free and the museums are open 10 am -6 pm Tuesday-Saturday, closing around 3 pm Sundays.

Sit: The Jardin Hidalgo, on Independencia between Guillermo Prieto and Francisco I. Madero, offers shady benches where you can watch the world go by. The garden is named after Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, a key figure in Mexico's fight for independence, and there is a statue of him here. Two churches overlook the garden, the Parroquia de San Pedro and the larger Santuario de Nuestra Senora de la Soledad. If you visit in June, you may catch the celebrations of the saints' days of St Peter and St Paul, which include music, dance and fireworks. — AP



A man sells balloons on the banks of the Yalu River in the Chinese border town of Dandong opposite to the North Korean town of Sinuiju yesterday. — AFP

Some are wary after attacks, but Paris magic still enchants tourists

Some visitors may be steering clear of the world's top tourist destination after terror attacks in the French capital, but for lovers, shoppers and gourmands who dare to go, Paris will always be Paris. Quaint Parisian streets have been a little quieter and lines outside the Louvre museum or under the Eiffel Tower a little shorter since a November jihadist attack which killed 130 people.

Francois Navarro, head of the Paris region tourist board, said hotel reservations were down about 20 percent, with many cancellations from Japanese, Chinese and Russian tourists in the wake of the second devastating attack to hit the City of Light within a year.

He said it had taken the Paris region three months to recover from the January 2015 attacks on the Charlie Hebdo magazine and a Jewish supermarket. "There has been more of an impact" after gunmen and suicide bombers went on a killing spree at Paris nightspots in November, Navarro said. "But security has also never been as high in Paris. That reassures tourists," he said, adding that visitor figures were expected to pick up again in March.

'The magic of Paris took over'

The full impact of the terror attacks on 2015 tourism figures is not yet known, but while some backed out of their dream trip, the allure of Paris was too strong for others. "At first, I didn't want to come at all, because of the attacks. But I decided not to give into fear... Visiting Paris had always been one of my wishes," said Annika, a 23-year-old German on her first solo trip abroad. "I came to realize that I could just as easily be hit by a car anywhere in the world anytime and I wouldn't be able to do much about it either," she said. Her attitude reflects that of many who keep coming to Paris, said Navarro, adding that travellers today have "adapted to the fact that these tragic events can happen anywhere."

Annika said the presence of police and soldiers on the streets and bag checks at tourist sites "made me feel a little bit safe." "The magic of Paris totally took over," she said, adding



This file photo taken on February 07, 2014 shows tourists on the Trocadero, in front of the Eiffel tower, in Paris. — AFP

she was glad to visit the Place de la Republique, a square which has become a shrine to the victims of the attacks. Immortalized in song, movies and the hearts of romantics the world over, "there is something so particular about Paris," said Navarro, who is cheerily optimistic that tourist figures will recover.

The city is a magnet for museum lovers, with its rich history and architectural gems, foodies dreaming of buttery croissants and little bistros, and shoppers looking for Parisian glamour. The greater Paris region attracted some 19 million

foreign tourists in 2014, while France as a whole lured 83 million travellers from abroad, making it the world's top tourist destination.

Reassuring China, Japan

China, the fifth biggest contributor of tourists to France after Britain, the United States, Germany and Italy, is one of the biggest markets for growth and tourist authorities are keen to allay any nervousness among travellers there. Wang Yang, of the Liurenyou travel agency in Beijing, told AFP that

60 percent of their clients had cancelled trips to France after the November attack. "In the mind of many Chinese tourists, security in France is lacking," she said. In a bid to win over Chinese tourists, France has cut visa waiting times and Navarro said the city would welcome 55 Chinese tour operators at the end of February to "talk security and show them what the destination has to offer."

The operators would spend two hours visiting police headquarters on their trip to Paris. Chinese and Japanese tourists are some of the biggest spenders in France and a delegation of tourism officials will also visit Tokyo in June in a bid to reassure tourist agencies there. "We are seeing a certain impact from the attacks, with the number of tourists to France down compared to the past years," said Hidekazu Kihara, a spokesman for the Nippon Travel Agency in Japan. One Japanese official in Paris spoke of a "drastic" drop in visitor numbers to France.

'Part of our history'

To Navarro, the Paris attacks have "now become part of our history." "But Paris remains the capital of love, of gastronomy, of shopping." Joel Haywood, 34, and his girlfriend Yao, who live in Beijing, were walking through the unusually calm quaint streets of the Ile Saint Louis, a normally bustling island in the heart of Paris. "It is just like the Paris we always heard about," said Yao, adding they had been intrigued to come and see how Parisians were coping after the attacks, and found "everyone is happy."

Like many others, they shrugged off security concerns with the phrase: "It can happen anywhere." A short walk away, across the Seine, Mark Woods and Samantha Arnold from England were waiting in line under the gargoyles and bell towers of the Notre Dame cathedral. The glowing couple can attest to the fact that Paris is still very much the city of magic and romance. "He proposed to me on Friday, that just proves it," said Samantha. "Under the Eiffel tower," added Mark. — AFP



Revelers, their bodies painted with a mixture of cane sugar syrup and coal depicting the devil, perform during the 2016 National Carnival Parade yesterday in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The name in Haitian creole of the carnival for this year is 'Ayiti Toutan' (Haiti Always). The launch of the carnival two days ago was postponed due to the political situation affecting Haiti. — AFP



Revelers in devil costumes dance during a street parade on the last day of Carnival celebrations in Panama City. — AP