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# Kuwait Times

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Amir attends Quran contest awards, visits Azayez farm



Indian student attacked in court as sedition row boils over



Iran snubs Doha proposal, won't freeze oil output



Ronaldo ends road scoring drought in 2-0 win at Roma



## SISI HAILS EGYPT-KUWAIT TIES

EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT MEETS KUWAITI MEDIA DELEGATION



CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi meets Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan yesterday. — KUNA (See Page 5)

CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi yesterday reiterated the strength and depth of ties linking Egypt and Kuwait at both official and people-to-people levels. In an interview with a Kuwaiti press delegation, including Kuwait News Agency Chief Editor Saad Al-Ali, Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan and other chief editors, Sisi stressed that the Egyptian people greatly appreciate Kuwaiti leaders and people.

KUNA's editor-in-chief Ali hailed the role played by the Egyptian armed forces during Kuwait's liberation war in 1991 and the Egyptian blood that was shed on Kuwaiti soil. He stressed that the Kuwaiti people believe that Egypt will forever remain the main supporter of all Arabs

and he fully trusted President Sisi's sincere attitudes and feelings towards Kuwait as well as the nationalistic role regionally played by the Egyptian armed forces.

Sisi began the interview by welcoming the Kuwaiti media delegation and extending congratulations on the occasion of celebrating the 55th National Day and the 25th Liberation Day anniversaries in addition to the tenth anniversary of HH the Amir's succession. Sisi expressed best wishes to HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah for achieving stability, welfare and prosperity for the brotherly state of Kuwait and its people and emphasized the great feelings and appreciation the Egyptian people felt towards the brotherly Kuwaiti people.

Continued on Page 13

### OIL WELL FIRE CONTAINED KPC INKS ASIA OIL EXPORT DEAL

KUWAIT: A fire that erupted at an oil well in northern Kuwait has been extinguished, KUNA reported yesterday. Government-run Kuwait Oil Co announced the fire earlier in the day, with an official saying that firefighters were working to put it out. Company spokesman Saad Al-Azmi was quoted by KUNA saying the incident began with an oil spill that happened late Tuesday. He did not specify where it took place or anything about its size. Prime Minister HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah later visited the site and praised efforts that led to "the speedy extinguishing of the fire".

Continued on Page 13



KUWAIT: HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah inspects the site of an oil well blaze yesterday. — KUNA

### 28 KILLED IN ANKARA ATTACK ON MILITARY

PAGE 13



CAIRO: In this Sept 19, 2015 photo, veteran Egyptian journalist Mohamed Heikal jokes with friends days before his 92nd birthday at his house. — AP

### VETERAN WRITER HEIKAL DIES

CAIRO: Veteran Egyptian journalist Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, one of the Arab world's most prominent political commentators and a former adviser to president Gamal Abdel Nasser, died yesterday aged 92, state media reported. Heikal served as editor-in-chief of state-owned daily Al-Ahram from 1957 to 1974, and under his tenure it was con-

sidered the region's newspaper of record. He had been ill for three weeks, and suffered fluid in his lungs and kidney failure, Al-Ahram reported on its website. Heikal, who was born in the Nile Delta province of Qalubiya on Sept 23, 1923, authored more than 10 books on the conflicts and political intrigues of the region. — AFP (See Page 7)

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# LULU OPENS 6TH HYPERMARKET IN KUWAIT

## STORE COUNT REACHES 123



**KUWAIT:** The 123rd Lulu Hypermarket, Egeila in Kuwait was officially inaugurated by Dr Abdullah Al-Owaisi, Undersecretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry in the presence of Sheikh Malek Al-Humoud Al-Malek Al-Sabah, Sunil Jain, Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, Yusuf Ali MA, Chairman of Lulu Group, Saifee Rupawala, CEO, Ashraf Ali MA, Executive Director, Mohamed Haris, Regional Director Lulu Kuwait.

**KUWAIT:** Middle East retail major Lulu Group has further expanded its presence in the State of Kuwait by opening its latest Hypermarket in Egeila in the Ahmadi Governorate. The new Hypermarket, which is also 6th in Kuwait was officially inaugurated by Dr Abdullah Al-Owaisi, Undersecretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry in the presence of Sheikh Malek Al-Humoud Al-Malek Al-Sabah, Sunil Jain, Indian Ambassador to Kuwait and other several high-ranking officials from various government departments and representatives from local business communities.

Located at Sama Mall in South Kuwait, the new 150,000-sq-ft Lulu hypermarket will serve the residents of Egeila and its surrounding areas with a one-stop shopping destination for the growing city dwellers, which include Nationals and Expatriate community. As always Lulu hypermarket provides the widest range of quality and value-for-money products all under one roof.

The product mix in Lulu Egeila will also include a wide selection of premium UK and US goods, including special products air-frozen for freshness. The outlet has also intro-



duced inaugural offers and deals for a range of products at attractive prices.

### Preferred destination

Speaking after the inauguration, Yusuf Ali MA, Chairman of Lulu, said "Kuwait has always been a preferred destination for us because of its stable political environment and promising market. We thank His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the people of this country for encouraging us in all our expansion strategies and efforts in Kuwait." The group has also plans to open 4 new hypermarkets in various regions of the country in the next two years in a phased manner.

Regardless of the challenges arising from the volatile oil prices, Yusuf Ali expressed optimism on the economic outlook of the country. "We are very optimistic based on the circumstances in general. The impact of fluctuating oil prices is not going to distract us from the long-term goals of our business in Kuwait."

Other important attendees at the inauguration: Lulu Group CEO Saifee Rupawala, Executive Director - Ashraf Ali MA, Kuwait Regional Director, Mohamed Haris and other top officials.





# AMIR PATRONIZES QURAN CONTEST AWARDS CEREMONY



(From left) His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah attend the ceremony.



(From left) Chairman of Kuwait's Supreme Judicial Council and the Cassation Court, and President of the Constitutional Court, Justice Yousef Al-Mutawa'a, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah are seen in attendance.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah awards a contestant.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah awards another contestant.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and other officials are pictured with the honorees during a ceremony to honor winners of Kuwait's 19th Grand Quran Memorization and Recitation Competition. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is seen with children awarded during the ceremony.

**KUWAIT:** The ceremony to honor winners of Kuwait's 19th Grand Quran Memorization and Recitation Competition was held at Bayan Palace yesterday, under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The ceremony was attended by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, chairman of Kuwait's Supreme Judicial

Council and the Cassation Court and President of the Constitutional Court Judge Yousef Al-Mutawa'a, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and senior officials and sheikhs.

His Highness the Amir presented the awards to the winners of the competition,

while the ceremony also included a movie presentation of the competition's history. In his speech at the event, Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Yaqoub Al-Sanea said that there were 200 winners out of 1,158 participants, representing 33 governmental and charitable bodies in the country. The competitions aims to spread the peaceful teachings and principles of the Quran, said the minister, adding that the General Secretariat of Awqaf will continue its efforts to develop society on all levels. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah arrives to the Azayez farm in the northern Al-Abdali yesterday. — Amiri Diwan photos

## SHEIKH ALI JABER AL-AHMAD HOLDS LUNCHEON FOR TOP LEADERS

**KUWAIT:** Sheikh Ali Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held a luncheon for the top leaders at his 'Azayez farm' in the northern Al-Abdali farming region. It was attended by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, senior sheikhs, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Amiri Diwan Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and other members of the eminent Al-Sabah Family. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah attend the luncheon.



Sheikh Ali Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah welcomes His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to the venue.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah (right) and Minister of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (left) arrive to the venue.



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## ARMY'S CHIEF OF STAFF VISITS KUWAITI TROOPS IN SAUDI ARABIA

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Army's Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Khaled Al-Khoder has visited the Kuwaiti troops in Saudi Arabia, as part of the international coalition, to check on them, meet their needs, and facilitate all potentials for them to perform their military duties to the fullest, Defense Ministry said yesterday.

During his visit, Lt Gen Khoder reiterated Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah's keenness on such visits to make sure all Kuwaiti military officers,

non-commissioned officers, and personnel are fine and have all their needs, Ministry's Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations said in a press statement.

He also listened to a briefing on the role and duty carried out by the Kuwaiti troops taking part in the international coalition, expressing his pride of the Kuwait army and its brave members for their significant role in performing and implementing their assigned duties.

He also praised their high spirit

and positive enthusiasm to perform their job to the fullest, wishing them safety and return home triumphant after assisting their colleagues and counterparts in coalition countries.

Lt Gen Khoder was accompanied by Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for planning in Kuwaiti Army Major-General Ahmad Abdulwahab Al-Amiri, Infantry Commander Major General Sheikh Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah, Air Force Deputy Commander Group Cpt. Abdullah Al-Foudari, and a number of senior army officers. — KUNA

## ESTABLISHING FOURTH TELECOM COMPANY PREMATURE: AUTHORITY

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Chairman of the newly established telecommunications authority Salem Al-Othainah explained that the authority has been established to regulate and organize the local telecom business, set rules and monitor the services subscribers receive, be they calls or Internet serv-

ices. Othainah also stressed that talks about establishing a fourth telecom company was still premature and could not be confirmed or denied because the authority had requested conducting a comprehensive study of the local telecom market before making the final decision. Othainah said that by August, the authority would officially and effectively start monitor-

ing the telecom market once national employees were appointed and the headquarters at the Liberation Tower was prepared and equipped. He added that the authority had already started adjusting all telecom and Internet companies' licenses and that an ad was published in local dailies requesting recruitment of Kuwaiti technical and administrative staff and that there was no intention in the time being to hire expats.

## GULF SUBSIDY REFORMS NOT ENOUGH TO PLUG DEFICIT: MOODY'S

**DUBAI:** Fuel subsidy reforms by Gulf states will help reduce pressure on budgets but are not enough to offset deficits resulting from low oil prices, ratings agency Moody's said. Savings from increased fuel prices in the six Gulf nations will average 0.5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) — around \$7 billion this year against an estimated deficit of 12.4 percent of GDP, it said.

"Recent moves to reform subsidies signal political willingness to address the damaging effect of low oil prices on budgets," said Moody's analyst Mathias Angonin. "However, they fall short of the scale of economic and fiscal reform required to achieve budget balance," he said.

All the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, which depend heavily on oil income, have reduced generous fuel, electricity and other subsidies to cut spending in the face of falling revenues. The GCC groups energy-rich Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman,

Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. All of them posted a budget deficit last year.

Moody's forecast that the price of oil will average \$33 a barrel in 2016, way below its price of around \$110 a barrel before it began to decline in mid-2014. It estimated the price to be \$38 a barrel next year.

"While the GCC governments' balance sheets remain solid on a consolidated basis, we anticipate a sharp deterioration in the governments' net asset position as a consequence of the decline in oil prices," Moody's said.

The reforms will however lead to efficiency gains, reduce distortions caused by very low prices and cut domestic energy consumption, it said. Moody's expects GCC states to take other fiscal measures such as raising corporate taxes and introducing value-added taxes in the face of a long period of low oil revenues. — AFP

### State security law

The constitutional court's contests committee yesterday accepted a contest arguing the unconstitutionality of article 4 of the state security law and decided reviewing it by the court later. Lawyer Refai Al-Ajmi argued that the article states: "He who, without government permission, mobilizes troops or commits any hostilities against a foreign country in a way that might subject Kuwait to war or cutting diplomatic relations would be punished by temporary imprisonment of not less than three years and in case such actions do cause war or cutting diplomatic relations, the penalty would be life imprisonment", which is very vague in terms of defining 'hostilities'. He argued that accordingly, bloggers had been prosecuted over freedom of expression cases though 'hostilities' should involve substantial actual actions while bloggers only commit verbal slander. "The court will look into the contest and if it is accepted, this article will be cancelled or the term 'hostilities' would be more elaborately explained," he added.

## MUNICIPALITY DENIES ALLOCATING ONLY ONE DAY FOR EXPATRIATES

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Municipality strongly denied any plans to accept expatriates' transactions only on Tuesdays, said informed sources. Some bloggers have published a fake copy of an alleged decision issued by the municipality to announce this, the sources noted. The municipality also stressed that employees responsible for making and circulating such fake directives would be held accountable because it would never discriminate between citizens' and expats' transactions.

### Mubarakiya market

Chairman of the Capital committee in the Municipal Council Hassan Kamal yesterday accompanied the committee's rapporteur Ali Al-Mousa, the council's secretary general Yousif Al-Sogobi and the municipality's deputy director Yousif Al-Menawer on a tour of Mubarakiya market, where they reviewed possible means to develop the Mubarakiya market area and add new services to the site to

make it a touristic, economic and recreational attraction.

In this regard, Kamal said that the location was so vital and that a security checkpoint would be added to the new amenities to be built there because the area is being visited by all citizens, expats and visitors, as it is a highly significant and historic one. "Street name signs will be used in both Arabic and English in the surrounding area," he added, noting that electric golf carts would be also provided for elderly people within the market.

Moussa stressed that the area was a major tourist attraction because of its unique design and historic significance. He added that new parking areas would be added and that the market's entries and exits would be developed.

### Amendments

Municipal Council member and head of Hawally committee Yousif Al-Ghareeb demanded reconsidering the amendments the Cabinet recently approved to municipal law number 5/2005 because some of those amendments had been done

without enough studies. Ghareeb gave examples of amendments that had been hastily made by the penalties imposed on committing construction-related violations, holding owners legally responsible for them without referring to official bodies that had allowed them in the first place, and increasing the number of municipal council members.

### Too many topics

Chairman of the municipal council's legal and financial committee Mane Al-Ajmi said that most of the topics in a recent meeting agenda had been postponed because they were too many to discuss. Ajmi added that a letter from the fatwa and legislation department concerning regulations of building telecom towers was discussed and that the council's secretariat general had been asked to rephrase the regulations chart before making the final decision on the committee's next meeting. "The regulations include conditioning building those towers at least 12-20 meters away from private residences," he said.



**KUWAIT:** This handout photo provided by the Interior Ministry shows the five suspects following their arrest yesterday.

## FIVE ARRESTED FOR ATTACKING OFFICER

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** The Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Information Department announced that police arrested a person who attacked a police officer yesterday along with four accomplices. Footage of the suspect who performed an indecent gesture then attacked the officer went viral on social media yesterday. The officer had to be taken to the hospital with what appeared to be a rib injury. The prime suspect was identified as Ibrahim Mohammad Ibrahim, Jordanian, 32. His accomplices were identified as Mohammad Nasser, Syrian, 20, Ahmad

Abdelmohsen, Egyptian, 23, Sultan Thamer Al-Muqaihet, Kuwaiti, 24 and Falah Hassan Ali, bedoon (stateless). All suspects were under the influence of drugs during the time of arrest, the ministry said. They were taken to the proper authorities for further action.

### Foul play

Investigations are ongoing to identify a suspect believed to have set three cars on fire yesterday. Evidence of foul play have been found on the scene where the fire was reported. Firefighters had rushed to the scene after three persons reported that their vehicles were set ablaze while parked

outside their homes.

### Truck driver arrested

Border security arrested a sewage water tanker truck driver while emptying sewage in the border area south of the country. The driver was taken to the environment police department for further action.

### Embezzlement

A citizen who owns a company that specializes in selling water tanks filed a complaint against two Egyptian workers for breach of trust, saying that they embezzled almost KD 18,000 and left the country on February 14, 2016.

## KUWAIT ARMS LAW REDUCES DEADLY, HARMFUL INCIDENTS

**KUWAIT:** The unlicensed arms and explosives' collection law, a year after its enforcement, has resulted in substantially reducing rates of incidents or accidents that lead to fatalities or critical injuries. Moreover, it has led to lower shooting occurrences during ceremonies.

The law enforcement, coupled with a media campaign, has resulted in collecting 9,407 guns, pistols (revolvers) and 'Showzen' rifles, more than 59 tons of ammunition, thus boosting the State efforts for maintaining people's safety.

Brigadier Abdulrahman Al-Suhail, the head of the General Directorate for Arms Collection of the Ministry of Interior, said in an interview with KUNA that the department would continue carrying out surprise raids to cleanse the country of unlicensed arms, ammunition and explosives, emphasizing "the law would be enforced equally on every-one."

### No pardon

There will be no pardon for those who have retained their arms beyond the four-month grace period for voluntary handover, according to instructions of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, Undersecretary Lieutenant General Sulaiman Al-Fahad and Assistant Undersecretary for Criminal Security Major General Abdulhamid Al-Awadhi.

Tasked personnel, in coordination

with the traffic authority, the special security and the media security departments, have been, after obtaining necessary legal permissions, searching suspected vehicles on main roads and alleyways for concealed unlicensed weapons. The search on the roads is a prelude to raiding locations with suspected hidden arms or explosives.

Brigadier Suhail added that the Mol personnel have set up checkpoints, data gathering points and have obtained judicial approval for raiding hideouts of persons who have not heeded the warning to surrender their arms or ammunition. He also urged informants to call 112 to report about concealment or possession of such ordnance.

### Deadly incidents

Meanwhile, Brigadier Adel Al-Hashash, the head of the General Directorate of Relations and Security Information, said that the law enforcement has contributed to cutting rates of violent and deadly incidents. He called on citizens and residents to help in the efforts to stop shooting into the air during joyful or sad occasions. The Mol has carried out a media campaign, simultaneously with executing the arms law, targeting all concerned segments of the society, he said, expressing gratitude to all those who have interacted with the campaign and have given up their guns.

Major Abdullah Al-Dosari, in charge of reports at the operations

central general directorate, said reports and tip-offs about hearing sound of gunfire shooting dropped from 1,042 in 2014 to 405 in 2015, those witnessing shooting fell from 947 in 2014 to 482 in 2015. Calls about shooting during weddings decreased from 415 in 2013 to 291 in 2014 and 83 the next year. Enforcing the law has also resulted in increasing number of calls about arms possession, reaching 37 in 2015, compared to 19 in 2014.

### Maintaining security

Meanwhile, eminent Kuwaiti lawyer Dokhi Al-Hasban, who doubles as Assistant Secretary General of the Arab Lawyers Union, lauded the law, blessed by the Parliament last year, affirming that its effectiveness would help in maintaining security and stability of the country.

The National Assembly approved, on January 27th, last year, the law which in part stipulated that possession of unlicensed military ordnance is punishable with five years in prison, along with a KD 10,000 fine, or one of the two penalties.

Those who engage in trades or hold connections with terrorist cells for making arms transactions are punished with 10 years behind bars and a KD 50,000 fine. The law in its sixth article essentially stipulates amnesty for those who hand over their unlicensed guns within four months, effective the date of publishing law in the official gazette. — KUNA

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### Fifth prize

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- Canon Camera PowerShot G15.
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### 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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CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi meets members of a Kuwaiti media delegation yesterday. — KUNA

## CONFERENCE HELPS RESOLVE CONFLICTS IN INT'L ECONOMIC ISSUES: MINISTER

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Justice, in collaboration with the international Permanent Court Of Arbitration (PCA) at The Hague, held the fourth conference on arbitration yesterday at the Regency Hotel. Minister of Justice, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Yaqoub Al-Sane said the conference will review the opinions and experiences of regional and international legal experts. "The importance of the conference lies in how we can resolve conflict in international economic issues," he said. "Arbitration is considered one of the most important mechanisms in the field of international investment as it meets the requirements of international trade and achievement," he said.

Sane also highlighted the importance of arbitration in the field of investment in terms of trade for faster economic growth, pointing to the necessity of activating ways of judicial facilitation in resolving conflicts related to trade and economic domain disputes, especially with their wide range of effects and implications on the global and regional economies. Sane added that the International Court of Arbitration is keen to open branches in countries around the world, and soon there will be an agreement between Kuwait and the court to open a branch in Kuwait for the GCC countries and the region.

Continuous development  
Ali Thunayyan Al-Ghanem, Chairman of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), said: "There is no doubt that this arbitration conference will resolve disputes by continuous development, and the KCCI is keen to participate in the organization of this conference to provide an opportunity for professionals and experts to meet and share their experiences with each other, leading to recommendations for the development of continuous techniques and methods of investment."

The two-day conference will discuss several suggestions during seven workshops about the framework of international arbitration in investment and review the most prominent international conventions, such as the Washington Agreement which established the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes, the Geneva Convention, and the convention for settlement of investment disputes within the framework of the Economic Unit Council.

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## YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS TALK ON TURNING SMALL PROJECTS INTO SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSES

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Economic Society held a symposium on 'How small Kuwait projects turned into giant ones' at its premises on Tuesday. During this event, two young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs spoke about their success stories and how they turned their small projects into successful businesses.

Rakan Al-Fadhala, founding partner of Chocolatness, shared his success story of shifting from a home kitchen to a successful bakery. "I started with selling one kind of chocolate cake made at home in a stall at a university festival for KD 1. I sold 400 cakes in two days, which made me KD 400, and this was a great success for me as I was still a student, although it may be a small amount for the economy. It was a motivation for me to start my project," he noted.

'Just for fun'

Fadhala's project had three stages. "The first stage was 'just for fun', selling at the stall at the university in 2008. In my second participation in the same university event, I sold 800 cakes, and the third time I sold 1,000 cakes. After this unexpected success and high demand by students for my cakes, I started a home-based business and delivered to customers, which was the second phase of my project," he explained.

In 2009, he hired his first driver and launched his first branch. "Before launching my first shop, I faced many problems. The first was the condition of KD 15,000 as capital to establish my project, so I worked from home till 2011 till I collected the sum for the license. With this capital, we launched our first shop in July 2011. I used the services of 37 young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs to launch my shop from A to Z. Only the wall paint was from a company," Fadhala said.

More achievements followed. "Today, Chocolatness has six branches in all Kuwait's governorates. We also have warehouses and a small factory. And we are planning to launch branches in other GCC countries in 2017. These

results were achieved just by five years of hard work. We are not just a project, but an added value to the community. We have founded a center for social responsibility that provides many services to the community including preserving the environment, supporting students' projects, courses and symposiums and sports activities for free," Fadhala said. He also spoke about an initiative he is working on to make Kuwait a 'food capital'.

Start from starch

Abdulwahab Al-Essa, Manager of OMedia, is another success story, who set up from scratch a business worth hundreds of thousands of dinars. "I worked as a TV presenter presenting political programs. At that time, I was using social media, particularly Twitter, as most people did in 2009, and people were bothering me with demands to post their news. One time, I posted a sentence about a football match and I received about a million insults of the other team, so I decided to take revenge and exploit Twitter to set up a business, and I did. I came up with the idea of advertising through celebrities on social media. Then I founded a company to get rid of the calls and I started to love Twitter," he pointed out.

Today he participates in most regional and local conferences and summits. "Once I noticed that when I advertised for a restaurant with a fashionista, all comments were about her makeup and outfits rather than the restaurant and the meals. So I decided to benefit from the agents of these outfits and makeup who gained from the ad without paying, and I launched a virtual online store for fashionistas. I diverted the fashion comments to the link of the website and people were only sharing restaurant experiences. Furthermore, I provided GCC-wide sales for the followers of these fashionistas, which made a great turnover for my website. I made \$1 million in the first quarter by selling the items, while Amazon made just \$200,000 in the same period, which I consider a great success," beamed Essa.

## MINISTER SAYS COMMITTED TO FOLLOWING COURT ORDER ON TEACHERS' ALLOWANCES

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Education is committed to following a court order which grants female expatriate teachers an equal rent allowance compared to their male counterparts, Minister Dr Bader Al-Essa said yesterday.

The government has recently issued a decision to amend the residence allowance of female expatriate teachers to become KD 150 instead of KD 60, and pay them retroactively starting from April 1, 2011. The decision is an implementation

of a constitutional court's ruling which renders the disparity of allowance pay between male and female teachers unconstitutional.

"We are committed to implementing court orders," said Essa, who is also the state's Minister of Higher Education, during a national festival organized by Kuwait University and titled 'Kuwait: between the past and present'.

Implementing the decision retroactively means each female teacher would get around KD 6,000, while a budget of around KD 40 million would have to be allocated to pay nearly 14,000

teachers in total. Meanwhile, the ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Financial Affairs Yousuf Al-Najjar was quoted by the press yesterday as saying that the ministry cannot pay the allowances unless the Finance Ministry approves an expansion to the budget allocated for teachers' allowances.

Several lawmakers had criticized the timing of the decision, coming at a time in which the government has taken austerity measures which MPs say have affected Kuwaitis' privileges including allocations of the treatment overseas program.



KUWAIT: (From left) Abdulwahab Al-Essa, Manager of OMedia, Abdulwahab Al-Babtain, Kuwait Economic Society board member and Rakan Al-Fadhala, Founding Partner of Chocolatness attend the press conference. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

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Report

DRUG SMUGGLING ATTEMPTS FOILED

**KUWAIT:** Abdaly custom officers foiled two smuggling attempts of hashish and Captagon to the country. A customs source said the first operation included an attempt to smuggle two kilograms of hashish, while the second included an attempt to smuggle 25,944 Captagon tablets, which were caught with a Syrian truck driver coming from Iraq.

Thief caught

Salwa police arrested a citizen in his thirties, who appeared in footage on social media robbing and running over a grocery shop worker in Salmiya. He was also found to be wanted on five similar cases. The arrest was made in Salwa and detectives took the suspect to the department where he confessed to committing five thefts using the same method in various areas of Hawally governorate.

Officers injured

Captain Mubarak Al-Hajraf and policeman Mohammad Abdelhamid were run over by a reckless driver when they attempted to stop him in Taima. A security source said while Jahra patrolmen trying to control reckless drivers in Jahra, a driver in a sports car hit them, and they were taken to Jahra Hospital. The driver is being sought.

Policemen questioned

Director general of criminal detectives Maj Gen Mahmoud Al-Tabbakh ordered the electronic crimes team to question officers and policemen who photographed the body of a Kuwait woman who was allegedly killed by an Ethiopian maid in Andalus. A security source said those who handled the case are being summoned for questioning to determine who leaked the citizen's photo.

Walkie-talkie missing

A citizen told police that a walkie-talkie that belonged to his company was stolen from his car. The prosecution is investigating.

Breach of trust

A citizen accused two expats of breach of trust. He told police he gave the expats KD 29,700 to give it to a company but they did not do so. Police are investigating.

License plates stolen

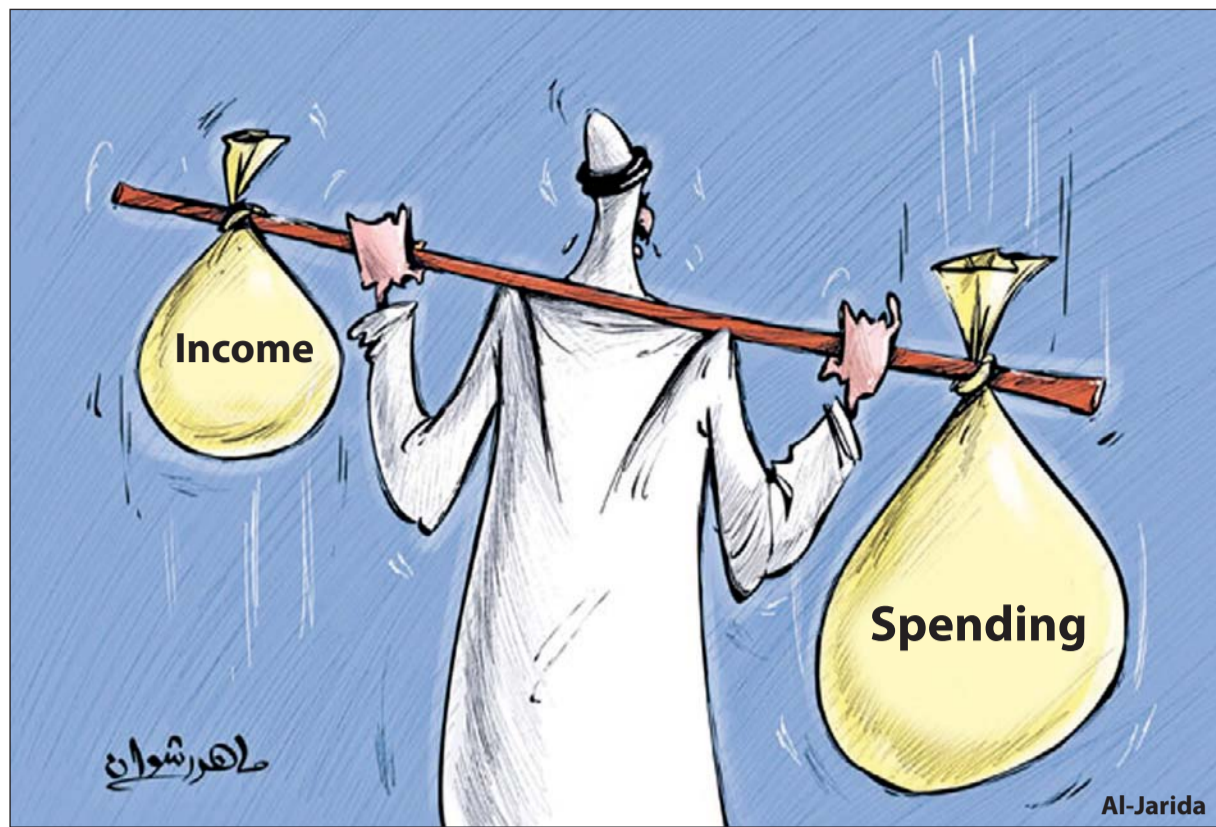
Ahmadi detectives are looking for a thief who stole license plates of a VIP's car. The car's owner complained to Nuwaiseeb police about the incident. It is believed the thief will use the plates on another car to avoid arrest.

Vice acts

Ahmadi prosecutor ordered the arrest of an expat who threatened and blackmailed a compatriot. This action came after a complaint by an Arab woman at Fintas police station, saying she was being blackmailed and urged to commit vice acts. —Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa

INTERIOR WARNS BANKS ON POTENTIAL ATM SCAMS

**KUWAIT:** Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lt Gen Suleiman Al-Fahd sent a letter to the president of Kuwait Banks Union with regards to scams by international gangs withdrawing money from ATMs illegally. He asked that a circular be sent to banks to take caution and be updated about the development of this crime. The letter carried the title "purple circular number P233 operations" and is considered classified. It reads: "Based on a letter from the Interpol secretariat general, which was issued at the request of the National Central Office in Malaysia, it describes cash withdrawals from ATMs in a fraudulent way, so be careful and send to banks to be careful and cautious." —Al-Rai



Al-Qabas

AN INEPT GOVERNMENT

By Qais Al-Usta

It is clear to any follower of our wise government that it explicitly failed to deliver the idea of how important it is to rationalize spending, because the follower of all what is published in papers and social media will realize that the citizen still doubts the numbers and ideas given to him. He also has logical and substantial questions about the rationalization process. A citizen asks why do we need a middleman every time we decide to purchase civil or military aircraft? Why do we need an intermediary each time it is decided to equip some sectors?

Another asks about facilitators in oil deals and the astronomical figures we hear about. Why are the names of the mediators not published and the amount of money they receive? A third citizen asks: Why is a facility established in China (for example) for a certain cost, and established with the same specifications at three times the cost here? Is the Kuwaiti brick made of gold and the bricks of others made of copper? A fourth citizen asks: Why create new authorities? And why are they added to the documentary cycles? If it is to benefit some individuals and give them positions, give them the incentives and let them stay at home, because this will be less costly for public funds and less harmful.

Why did we increase the number of appointed municipal council members? And are we going to see the innovation of a municipality minister in the appointments? What about treatment abroad? And why its numbers jumped in a scary fashion in the past four years? What about tenders? And why companies that were convicted in the United States for paying bribes in Kuwait were qualified, and where are the 60,000 supervisory departments?

Now, after all these questions, I realized why the government failed along with some parties in the National Assembly in convincing the street with the process of stopping the squandering. By the way: Municipality and Communications Minister Essa Al-Kandari's arrival at the premises of a National Assembly candidate proves without a shadow of a doubt that we are in a country of capriciousness, because logic has it that if there was any accountability, the minister would be forced to resign because his presence means the government supports candidates at the expense of others, and it is not enough for some to act smartly by saying this is a personal act, because the minister is a public figure who belongs to a cohesive government. I advise any candidate who loses in the by-elections to accuse the government of interfering in the election process, because of the presence of the minister in the premises of a candidate, which is seen as the government's backing of this candidate. And please appoint legal advisors instead of this bad situation.

Was the message delivered? I hope so.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

Al-Anbaa

CHEAP OIL AND THE WEAPONS MARKET

By Thaar Al-Rasheedi

In an article published on Sept 7, 2013, I wrote that our country is lucky and history has proved this. I wrote that our country was very lucky because when Japanese cultured pearls were invented in 1928, the pearling industry in Kuwait was negatively affected and the years following 1932 were known as the 'diving setback' years. Yet that setback did not last long and within a few years we found black gold and struck oil, starting with the first oil well in 1936, then discovering the world's second largest oilfield - Burgan - in 1938. Thus, Kuwait shifted from a country that almost vanished and got crushed by a severe economic crisis into one running one of the most important natural resources in the world.

Something else proves that this country is blessed by both oil and luck. In the late 1990s, oil prices dropped to \$7 a barrel, which led to a \$5 billion deficit in 1999. However, luck revived again and oil prices jumped to \$24 and kept rising for years, during which the country

made considerable surpluses when oil prices remained over \$100 a barrel for over eight years.

I wrote this in an article over two and a half years ago, and today, when prices have fallen to less than \$30 a barrel, experts, analysts and others came out to predict how the country would look like in the post-oil era, giving lots of pessimistic opinions. Well, the truth is that our country is full of luck and oil prices will go back to normal rates of over \$100 in less than 24 months. I say this out of political analyses, because America will not simply allow oil countries' economies to collapse, because they are the main buyers of weapons manufactured in their factories.

The US will work on reviving high oil prices in political and economic ways. However, to know how and when this will be done, one has to wait for the coming months, particularly in view of the accelerating regional tensions.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

NEW AIRPORT TERMINAL TO MAKE KD 500M ANNUALLY LANDING, TRANSIT FEES TO BE INCREASED: FOUZAN

**KUWAIT:** Efforts are in progress to develop Kuwait international airport and increase its capacity to meet growing traffic, as over 11 million passengers used the airport last year, civil aviation director Yousef Al-Fouzan said. Fouzan added that the new terminal would serve 25 million passengers annually and that it would increase the directorate's annual revenues fivefold to over KD 500 million.

Fouzan said that the civil aviation was also considering increasing the fees collected for landing at and using Kuwait international airport as a transit stopover in order to increase the revenues to around KD 140 million. "Planes flying through Kuwait's air space currently pay \$20, which is the cheapest fee in all GCC states as it had been set in the 1980s," he noted, explaining that the new fees would be equal to those collected in other GCC airports. He added that the back-up terminal that would serve 5 million passengers would act as an overflow terminal in high seasons due to overcrowd-



An artist's rendition for the new terminal.

ing because the current terminal is now serving twice as much as its capacity.

Fouzan said that the total aviation and travel companies operating in Kuwait and supervised and inspected by Civil

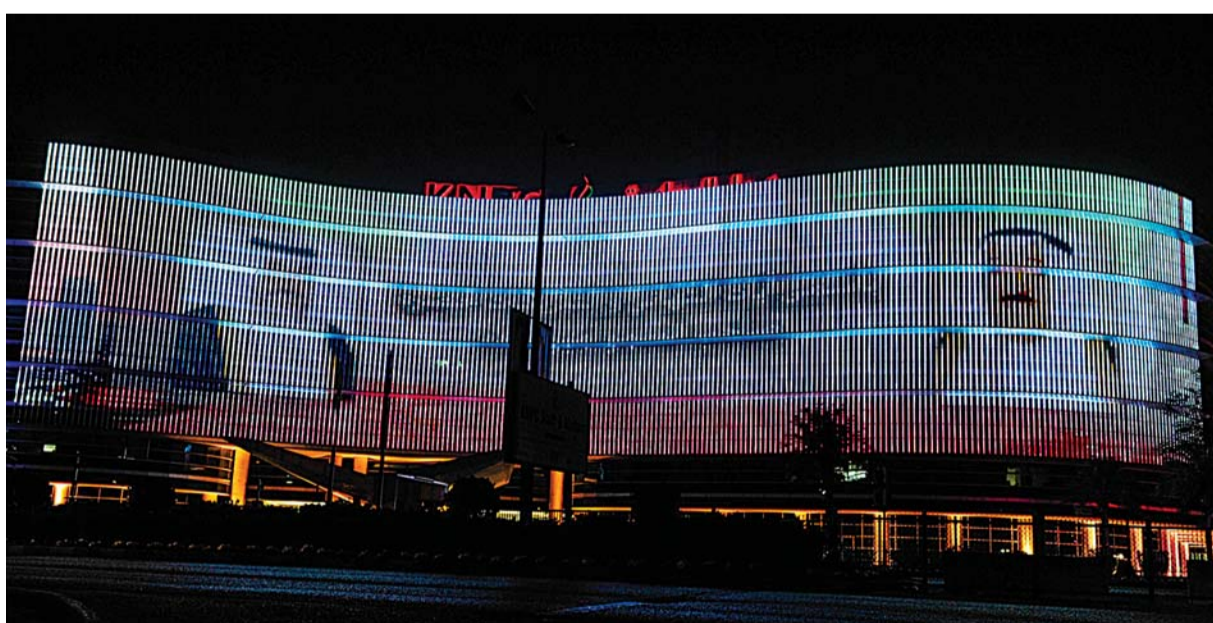
Aviation number 676. "This requires a great deal of work to monitor their operation and receive complaints and take proper measures that may go as far as closure," he explained. —Al-Qabas

MINISTER INQUIRES ON CASES AGAINST UNKNOWN PERSONS

**KUWAIT:** An informed security source said Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah expressed disappointment over statistics issued by the research and studies center which revealed that security departments recorded 12,000 cases out of 32,000 cases against unidentified perpetrators in 2014, which is equal to 48 percent of the total cases. The source said Sheikh Mohammad asked security sectors to determine the reasons for the rise in crimes registered against unidentified perpetrators, and not arresting the suspects.

The source said the minister received an answer on the reason why crimes against unidentified perpetrators are on the rise, saying there are many crimes of lesser importance registered against unknowns that do not affect the security situation, and some of them are related to private disputes or regarding financial issues, but as for important cases, stats show that the arrest percentage is on the rise.

The source said investigations is some thefts registered against unidentified perpetrators shows victims' negligence, as they behave in a way that encourages thieves to commit crimes, by leaving things such as wallets or mobile phones in the car that are visible, or leaving the car running while going into a store. The source said the majority of those arrested are juveniles, unemployed people, ex-convicts and drugs addicts who usually commit robberies to get money to buy their daily needs. —Al-Qabas



AHMADI PREPARES FOR NATIONAL CELEBRATIONS

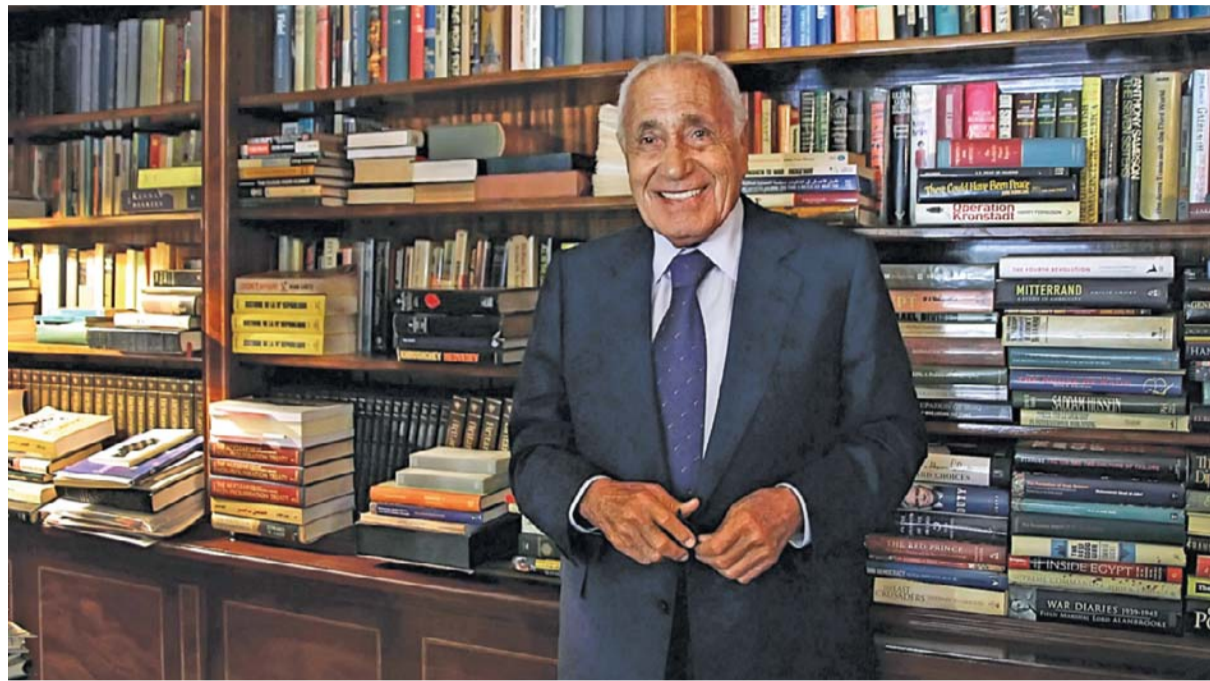
**KUWAIT:** Al-Ahmadi Governorate turns into a symbol of beauty during February as it gets ready to celebrate Kuwait's National Day and the Liberation Day anniversary with colorful lightings and attractive decorations all over the streets. —KUNA





**Trump attacked from every sides in bitter primary race**

**LAWYERS AND PROTESTERS CLASH OVER STUDENT'S ARREST**



CAIRO: In this Sept 23, 2014 photo, Mohamed Heikal poses for a picture on his 91st birthday, at his office. — AP



CAIRO: This file photo taken on February 6, 1999 shows Egyptian journalist Mohammad Hassenin Heikal (right) and comedian Adel Imam attending the funeral of Egyptian writer Lotfi Al-Kholi. —AFP

**PROLIFIC EGYPTIAN POLITICAL WRITER HEIKAL DIES**

DESCRIBED AS 'THE NATION'S AUTHENTIC MEMORY'

CAIRO: Mohamed Heikal, a close confidant of Egypt's nationalist leader Gamal Abdel Nasser since the 1950s and later author of insider accounts of his country's wars and peacemaking with Israel, has died. He was 92.

State television said Heikal, whose health rapidly deteriorated at the start of the year, died yesterday in Cairo. Better known among Egyptians by his full name, Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, he recently suffered kidney problems that required regular dialysis. The popular author rose to prominence as a confidant and later a Cabinet minister under Nasser, Egypt's socialist and Arab nationalist president who ruled from 1954 until his sudden death in 1970.

His close friendship with Nasser cast Heikal in

the role of a top authority on Egyptian and regional politics at a time when much of the Arab world was shaking off colonial European rule and embroiled in armed conflict with Israel.

The leftist Nasserist ideology, which centered around what Nasser called "Arab-socialism," commands little influence in present-day Egyptian politics, but Heikal remained relevant long after Nasser died, respected for his wide network of international contacts and extraordinary analytical skills. Career diplomat Mustafa el-Fiqi described Heikal as "the nation's authentic memory." During his years as editor-in-chief of Cairo's Al-Ahram daily, Heikal tampered Egyptians' distrust of the country's tightly controlled state media under Nasser with his insider's take on the coun-

try and the region in his eagerly awaited Friday column entitled "Frankly." The column, closely followed across the Arab world, became known for Heikal's "literary journalism," a writing style emulated to this day by some of his proteges.

**'Magnificent style'**

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi eulogized Heikal in a statement, saying the late author "established a distinctive journalistic school that combined political analysis with a magnificent writing style." Heikal's critics, however, often accused him of being an "apologist" for Nasser's authoritarian style and restrictions on individual freedoms, as well as for Egypt's humiliating defeat in the 1967 war with Israel.

Nasser's successor, Anwar Sadat, sidelined Heikal shortly after he took office in 1970, removing him from Al-Ahram in 1974, though he offered him the post of presidential adviser, which Heikal declined. A decade later, in 1981, Sadat jailed him along with hundreds of government critics just a month before the US-backed president was assassinated by Islamic militants. His successor, Hosni Mubarak, released Heikal and the others but kept the author at arm's length throughout his 29 years in office.

Heikal, who published about 40 books, passed a damning judgment on Sadat's 11 years in power in his 1983 book "Autumn of Fury, The Assassination of Sadat." His sharply critical views of Mubarak were evident in his Arabic-language

book - "Mubarak and his age" - published in 2012, a year after Mubarak was ousted in a popular uprising. Despite his poor health, Heikal was frequently on TV in the past few years, sharing his political views in lengthy interviews, first on Qatar's Al-Jazeera network and more recently on the privately owned Egyptian network CBC. Heikal is survived by three sons: Ali, Ahmed and Hassan. Later yesterday, Heikal's body was taken to Cairo's landmark Al-Hussein mosque in the city's historic medieval district, where a prayer for the dead was held. He was later buried at the "House of Return" - the name his family has given to its private burial ground on the eastern edge of Cairo. Muslims swiftly bury their dead in accordance with their faith's teachings. — AP

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## TURK COP ON TRIAL FOR KILLING WOMAN IN 'ANTI-TERROR' RAID

**ISTANBUL:** An Istanbul policeman went on trial yesterday charged with shooting dead a 25-year-old Turkish woman suspected of links to far-left activists during an "anti-terror" raid in the city. Prosecutors have asked for 26.5 years jail for the officer, named only as Y.M., over the killing of Dilek Dogan in the raid on her family home in the Sariyer district on October 18.

She died of her wounds in hospital on October 25. Turkish media later pub-

lished harrowing footage of the moment her family realized she had been shot. The case has won huge resonance with the police under scrutiny over allegedly heavy-handed tactics employed in a massive crackdown against Islamist, Kurdish and Marxist militant groups.

The trial got underway amid a heavy security presence at the Istanbul courthouse with Dilek Dogan's mother, father and brother all present, the DHA news

agency said. At least 22 people were detained when police used water cannon to break up a group of supporters of the family who sought to enter the courthouse without authorization, reports added.

Dogan's parents have claimed their daughter is an innocent victim and so far no concrete evidence has been put forward linking her to attacks. They say she was killed after the policeman drew his weapon when she yelled at the anti-

terror squad to put on overshoes so as to not dirty the floor.

The police have said the gun was fired in a scuffle after the family tried to snatch it away. Media reports have said the authorities suspected her of membership in the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C), links to a gun attack on the US consulate in Istanbul and possible involvement in plans for a suicide bombing in the city.

The authorities have been cracking

down on the DHKP-C, which has staged a sporadic series of attacks in Turkey in the last years, as part of a broad anti-terror operation also aimed at Islamic State (IS) and Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) members. Turkish media reports Tuesday also said a separate investigation had been launched against her father Metin, her mother Aysel and her brother Mehmet on accusations of impeding the police officers in their work during the raid. —AFP

## 14 DEAD IN ADEN IS SUICIDE BOMBING

**ADEN:** A suicide bomber killed at least 14 soldiers in Aden yesterday, in the latest attack on Yemen's second city claimed by jihadists of the Islamic State group. The southern port city has been the headquarters of forces loyal to President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi and his backers in a Saudi-led military coalition but has seen growing violence by IS and its jihadist rival Al-Qaeda.

"A man detonated his explosive vest among soldiers," a military source said. The troops were attending a training session run by Sudanese forces of the Saudi-led coalition, another military source said. The bomber, who was disguised as a soldier, attacked the Ras Abbas camp in the west of Aden. After the attack, panicking soldiers grabbed their weapons and fled the camp, witnesses said. The little-known "Aden and Abyan Province" branch of IS said the suicide bombing was carried out by one of its militants and alleged it killed 20 "apostate"

soldiers. It came a day after Al-Qaeda claimed an attack on the convoy of Aden's governor and police chief in which four jihadists were killed.

Since March last year, when the Saudi-led coalition intervened in support of Hadi, IS has ramped up its operations in Yemen. Its rival Al-Qaeda also has a significant presence in the south and southeast. In October, IS claimed its first attacks in Aden—a series of bombings that targeted the government's temporary headquarters and two military camps run by the coalition in which 15 people were killed.

Coalition forces have been training pro-government militiamen whom Hadi merged into the army after they drove Iran-backed rebels out of Aden and other southern provinces last year. The United Nations says more than 6,100 people have been killed and 29,000 wounded since the coalition began its intervention, about half of them civilians. —AFP

## CHAOTIC MIX OF ACTORS, INTERESTS IN SYRIA WAR

**PARIS:** Syria's brutal five-year war has turned increasingly messy, threatening a broader regional conflict as a tangle of internal and external players push their own multi-faceted agendas. Who are the key foreign actors and what are their goals?

### Assad's allies

Russia and Iran are the major backers of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. Their ultimate objectives differ, but both appear determined to annihilate the opposition and keep the regime in power. Syria is a key foothold for Russia in the Middle East, an important military staging post from which to project influence across the region. Analysts say Moscow is not necessarily wedded to keeping Assad in power in the long term, but wants to ensure control over any future political transition.

Russia launched its own air strikes in Syria in September to support Assad and fight "terrorists", saying it was targeting the Islamic State group and other jihadists. But the West has accused Moscow of seeking to eliminate all opposition rebels, including more moderate groups.

The Russian-backed regime assaults on rebel bastions in the northern city of Aleppo that began on February 1 have shifted the momentum decidedly in Assad's and Moscow's favor. Advances by regime forces have seen indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas, killing hundreds of people and causing some 50,000 to flee Aleppo.

Tehran has also sent thousands of "military advisors" to Syria, including Shiite militias and members of its Lebanon-based proxy force, Hezbollah. Assad has long been a close ally of Iran as part of its battle for regional dominance against the leading Sunni power, Saudi Arabia.

### Rebel supporters

The countries backing the opposition are fractured, often finding themselves at odds even with their allies. Russia's bulldozer approach to the conflict has caught the West off guard, undermined its repeated calls for a political solution and triggered a virulent reaction from the leading supporters of the rebels—Turkey and Saudi Arabia. The war of words has escalated between Moscow and Ankara, already at daggers-drawn since Turkey shot down a Russian fighter jet on the border in November. The West fears the consequences of further aggression between Russia and Turkey—a NATO member which boasts the alliance's largest military force after the United States.

Turkey—once a friend of Assad—now vehemently opposes the Damascus regime, and analysts say it initially saw the conflict

as an opportunity to extend Ankara's influence south. But Turkey is now hosting 2.6 million Syrian refugees and trying to keep security in a border region where IS jihadists are active.

Turkey has long rejected claims of aiding IS, which has now carried out string of attacks on its soil. But it is also increasingly concerned by the growing influence of Kurdish fighters in Syria, fearing they are seeking to carve out an autonomous region on Turkey's border and embolden the homegrown rebel Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). It has carried out air strikes on the Syrian Kurdish militias, even though they are backed by the West as one of the few forces capable of tackling IS.

### Saudi, US and France

Officially, Saudi Arabia's main concern has been IS, saying it will increase its air strikes against the jihadists. However, analysts say Riyadh is primarily interested in supporting opposition rebels as part of its regional competition with Iran, which has also seen it battle Iranian proxies in Yemen.

While, US forces have been bombing Islamic State positions in Iraq and Syria since September 2014, carrying out the vast majority of strikes by the anti-IS coalition. But despite repeatedly calling for Assad to step down, President Barack Obama has been reluctant to directly back the "moderate" opposition rebels. Having been elected in 2008 on a mandate to pull US forces out of Iraq, he has been unwilling to involve the country in another grinding war in the Middle East even when Assad was shown to have crossed Obama's supposed "red line" of using chemical weapons in 2013.

Washington's efforts to train and equip a "moderate" rebel force to take on IS was a spectacular failure in 2015. It struggled to find recruits among the opposition, whose primary concern was fighting Assad, and its first fighters were almost immediately intercepted and disarmed by jihadists, leading to the scrapping of the \$500 million program in October. The United States has continued to press for dialogue and a political transition, but its critics say this has allowed Russia to seize the momentum with its more ruthless military aggression.

France has been one of the most hostile opponents of Assad, and following the jihadist attacks in Paris in November it has stepped up air strikes against IS. However, France lacks the military or diplomatic clout to direct Western actions. Outgoing foreign minister Laurent Fabius bemoaned Washington's lack of commitment to the rebel cause when he resigned last week, but his government finds itself powerless to alter the dynamics of the conflict. —AFP



**MADAYA:** A Red Crescent convoy prepares to leave Damascus to the besieged areas of Madaya and Zabadani yesterday during an operation in cooperation with the UN to deliver aid to thousands of besieged Syrians. — AFP

## SYRIA AID DELIVERIES DUE IN 'TEST' FOR WARRING SIDES

PROSPECTS FOR CEASEFIRE CONTINUES TO FADE

**DAMASCUS:** Convoys were to deliver aid to thousands of besieged Syrians yesterday in what the United Nations has described as a test for the country's warring sides ahead of a hoped-for ceasefire. The UN announced the planned deliveries late on Tuesday, as its envoy Staffan de Mistura held talks in Damascus aimed at restoring hope for a "cessation of hostilities" world powers want in place by Friday.

Prospects for the ceasefire—announced by top diplomats in Munich last week—have been fading as violence continues to shake Syria, including strikes on hospitals on Monday and repeated Turkish shelling of Kurdish militia. The Syrian Red Crescent said about 100 trucks carrying flour, other food supplies and medicines were to leave for five besieged areas yesterday. About 20 trucks had departed for Fuaa and Kafraya, two Shiite towns in northwestern Idlib province besieged by rebels, the Red Crescent said. About 40 trucks were due to depart later for Moadimayet Al-Sham, a rebel-held town near Damascus encircled by President Bashar Al-Assad's forces, Muhammad Al-Asadi of the Red Crescent said. Another 35 vehicles were to travel to Madaya and Zabadani, two other regime-besieged towns near Damascus, he said. An AFP journalist in Damascus saw nearly 20 trucks ready to depart for Madaya and Zabadani from outside UN offices in the Syrian capital, with about two dozen Red Crescent volunteers on hand. Almost half a million people in Syria are in areas under siege, according to the UN. Aid workers say several dozen people have died of starvation just in Madaya, which became a symbol of the plight of besieged Syrians after shocking images of starving residents spread last month.

### 'Duty' to allow aid

"It is the duty of the government of Syria to want to reach every Syrian person wherever they are and allow the UN to bring humanitarian aid," De Mistura said on Tuesday in Damascus. "Tomorrow we test this," he said. A Syrian foreign ministry source rejected talk of a test.

"We don't need anyone to remind us of our duties to our people," the source told the official SANA news agency. Diplomats have been pressing the ceasefire deal as a step forward in efforts to end the nearly five-year conflict that has left more than 260,000 dead, devastated the country and forced millions from their homes.

A major international push to resolve the conflict, including Western and Arab nations that have largely backed Syria's opposition and Assad's key supporters Russia and Iran, was launched last year. But peace talks between the regime and opposition in Geneva quickly collapsed earlier this month and a major regime offensive, backed by Russian air strikes, has continued in northern Aleppo province.

Air strikes on five medical facilities and two schools in northern Syria earlier this week killed at least 50 people, the UN said. One of the strikes hit a hospital supported by charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF), killing 25 people and prompting widespread condemnation.

MSF did not assign blame for the attack though a Britain-based monitoring group, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said a suspected Russian strike had hit the hospital. Moscow rejected any responsibility and Syria's UN envoy Bashar Al-Jaafari on Tuesday said MSF was responsible because it was not coordinating with the government.

### Turkey warns Kurds

The situation in Syria has also been complicated by Turkey's launching this week of an assault on Kurdish forces who have been advancing in northern Syria. Ankara has shelled a Kurdish-led militia which it says is allied with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) that has waged an insurgency on its soil for decades.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday vowed Turkey would never accept the creation of a Kurdish stronghold in northern Syria, saying there was "no question" of Turkey ending its shelling. "We will not allow a new Qandil on our southern border", Erdogan said in a televised speech, referring to the mountain range in northern Iraq which for years has been stronghold of PKK militants. Turkey on Tuesday called for foreign ground forces to deploy in Syria, part

of a longstanding push by the NATO member for a more robust response to the conflict. Yesterday Deputy Prime Minister Yalcin Akdogan told A Haber television Ankara wanted to create a 10-kilometre "safe line" inside Syria that would include the flashpoint town of Azaz near the border. Turkey has long pressed for a safe zone, backed up by a no-fly zone, inside Syria and has warned Kurdish forces it will not allow them to seize Azaz, which is held by rebel forces. German Chancellor Angela Merkel yesterday also reiterated her call for a no-fly zone to protect civilians, saying the humanitarian situation in Syria was "intolerable". "If we were able to reach an agreement between anti- and pro-Assad forces on a kind of no-fly zone... then this would save many lives and aid the political process about Syria's future," she told the German parliament. —AFP



**ANKARA:** This handout picture taken and released by the Turkish Presidential Press Office on February 16, 2016 shows Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (C) getting a briefing from Chief of Staff General Hulusi Akar (R) during his visit to the Gendarmerie Commando Special Forces headquarters. — AFP

## ERDOGAN VOWS 'TO' DENY KURD STRONGHOLD IN NORTHERN SYRIA

**ANKARA:** President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday vowed Turkey would not allow the creation of a Kurdish stronghold in northern Syria, saying there was no question of Turkish forces stopping their bombardment of Syrian Kurdish fighters.

"We will not allow a new Qandil on our southern border" with Syria, Erdogan said in a televised speech in Ankara, referring to the mountain in northern Iraq which for years has been stronghold of Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants. "They (the West) tell us to stop shelling" the Kurdish fighters in Syria, Erdogan said after Turkey hit their positions for the last four days in a row.

"Forgive me, but there is no question of us doing such a thing. Whoever fires shells on Turkey will get not just a tit-for-tat response but an even greater one," he added. Erdogan renewed his assault on the United States, which supports the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its People's Protection Units (YPG) militia as the best fighting force on the

ground against Islamic State (IS) jihadists.

"The fact that the United States is continuing to support the YPG is something I find hard to understand," said Erdogan. "Aren't we NATO allies?" he said, addressing Washington. "Are you our friend or the friend of the PYD?" "We know that we need friends. But if you don't see us as friends then please say it loud and clear."

Washington recognizes the PKK as a terror group but not the PYD and YPG. But Erdogan said the links between the PKK and PYD were as tight as those between Al-Qaeda and its affiliate Al-Nusra Front. Erdogan said that Turkey would "not allow... the provocative" steps taken by the Syrian Kurds in the northern Aleppo province where their advance has greatly alarmed Turkey.

Turkey fears the Syrian Kurds want to carve out a continuous autonomous region in northern Syria stretching from the Iraqi border almost to the Mediterranean. Ankara also accuses the PYD of becoming a proxy of its regional foe Russia and working specifically to harm Turkish interests. —AFP



**DARAA:** Smoke billows following reported air strikes by Syrian government forces in a rebel-held area. —AFP





ENCINITAS: A man carries a young boy over his shoulder as he walks among beachgoers enjoying unusually warm winter temperatures. — AP

## HEAT BRINGS OUT BEACHGOERS AS OTHER REGIONS CLEAN UP

**SAN DIEGO:** John Larson sat on a blanket on a Southern California beach, furiously posting videos on Facebook of his sons jumping in the waves and bracing for the expletives from friends in Buffalo, New York. It was 5 below zero when Larson and his sons left this weekend for their trip to San Diego, where a heat wave sent temperatures into the mid-80s on Tuesday.

"Oh yeah, they hate me," the 51-year-old graphic designer said of the response he got to his beach posts. "I get quotes like, 'Jerk!'" Beaches in Southern California were crowded after the holiday weekend saw record-breaking heat from Los Angeles to San Diego, while the East Coast and the South cleaned up from a deep freeze and tornadoes.

It was even hotter in Phoenix: Tuesday's high topped out at 87 degrees, which broke the previous record of 84 set in 2014. The National Weather Service is forecasting a high of 90 degrees in what would be the earliest 90-degree day on record for the desert city.

**High-pressure system**

The normal temperature for this time of year is in the 70s. The previous mark was set on Feb 24, 1986. Phoenix also saw record highs last week as an unusually strong high-pressure system lingered. The surge in temperatures has been bringing rattlesnakes out of hibernation. A fire agency in southern Arizona started getting calls in the last two weeks from panicked residents about the poisonous snakes on their yards and patios, something they don't usually see until late March and early April.

Millions along the East Coast, meanwhile, were still shivering from freezing temperatures. A treacherous mix of snow, sleet and freezing rain caused car crashes from the Mid-Atlantic states through Pennsylvania to northern New England on Tuesday, a day after twisters tore through parts of the South.

At least three deaths were reported on slick roads, all in Virginia, and thousands were left without power from weather-caused outages. Down South, people combed through the

wreckage after a big storm system turned several homes to rubble Monday in the northwest corner of Florida's Panhandle and in Mississippi. More than a dozen homes were destroyed in both states, but there were no immediate reports of deaths or serious injuries, authorities say.

In the Pacific Northwest, a President's Day storm brought record rainfall and sent rivers overflowing their banks in Washington state. The weather woes nationwide were no problem for Larson in sunny Southern California. He has five more days here and is in no hurry to get home to Buffalo, where extra crews removed overnight snowfall and accumulations could reach up to 18 inches in some parts of the region, the weather service said.

He's soaking up the sun with his sons, ages 11 and 17, since the unseasonable heat is expected to dissipate. California's warmth was likely to end overnight when a low-pressure system brings rain to a large part of the state and snow of up to 2 feet to the mountains. — AP

## SCALIA DEATH PHONE INQUEST UNUSUAL BUT PRECEDENTIAL

**MARFA:** A county judge's determination via telephone that Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia died of natural causes and required no autopsy was unusual, Texas officials said, but sometimes happens in rural areas of Texas where a county can be bigger than some US states.

Within two hours of Scalia's body being found Saturday at Cibolo Creek Ranch in remote West Texas, Presidio county Judge Cinderela Guevara, who was 60 miles away, consulted by phone with the county sheriff and a US marshal and concluded there was no foul play. After speaking to Scalia's personal doctor later that evening, she decided that he had died of natural causes and no autopsy was necessary.

"I have no issue with how she handled his death," said David Beebe, a justice of the peace in Presidio County, where Scalia died. Beebe is one of two justices of the peace in the county who are routinely called by authorities to verify a death. Both Beebe and the second justice of the peace were out of town Saturday. Presidio County Sheriff Danny Dominguez, in need of a justice to conduct a death inquest, then called Guevara, who offered to hear the matter.

In rural areas, a justice of the peace typically makes the determination of the cause of death in cases when no witnesses were present. An inquest by phone is as valid as one in person under state law, said Bronson

Tucker, an attorney for the Texas Justice Courts Training Center who offers instruction to justices of the peace.

**No red flags**

"The huge majority of the time, if you have a 79-year-old overweight person and you have a statement from the physician and zero indicators of foul play, then it's not unusual for there to be no autopsy," said Tucker. "I didn't see any red flags and nothing to say that the judge didn't follow her statutory obligation."

Guevara issued a statement Tuesday defending how she handled the inquest. She said the attorney for Scalia told her the family did not want an autopsy performed because they believe he died of natural causes and they preferred not to delay his body's return to them. Guevara said she consulted with Scalia's physician and the sheriff before deciding against an autopsy.

"I respected the wishes of the Scalia family. ... I did this based on credible reports to me from law enforcement and from Justice Scalia's personal physician," Guevara said. Susana Gonzales, a justice of the peace in adjacent Brewster County, said she's never done an inquest by phone but understands there may be situations where it's necessary. "There's not a procedural mechanism to challenge or appeal the determination by the justice of the peace," Tucker said. — AP

## TRUMP ATTACKED FROM EVERY SIDES IN BITTER PRIMARY RACE

OBAMA SAYS TRUMP WILL NOT BE ELECTED

**NORTH AUGUSTA:** Donald Trump pushed back Tuesday against his rivals for the Republican nomination and criticism from President Barack Obama, as the real estate mogul sought to cement victory in South Carolina.

With just four days until the state's crucial primary, Trump became yet again the focus of attacks by challengers to his frontrunner status, including his nearest adversary Ted Cruz who blasted the businessman turned reality TV star as a liberal. He also traded political punches with Marco Rubio and Jeb Bush and laid out attack lines ahead of the crucial primary, the third in the long party nominations races and the first in the US South.

While Trump was busy scrapping with rivals, Democrat Obama joined the fray, offering a scathing assessment of why he thinks the American people will not elect the . "I continue to believe that Mr Trump will not be president. And the reason is because I have a lot of faith in the American people. And I think they recognize that being president is a serious job," he told reporters in California.

"It's not hosting a talk show or a reality show. It's not promotion. It's not marketing. It's hard," he said on the sidelines of a summit with leaders and representatives. Trump, 69, reacted with scorn. "This man has done such a bad job, he has set us back so far," Trump said in a television interview, adding however that in a way, being singled out-even for reproach-by the sitting US president was "a great compliment." Cruz, a first-term senator from Texas, piled on Trump during a rally in Anderson. Clearly speaking of Trump, Cruz called on Americans not to nominate and elect a Republican who has "defended abortion or partial birth abortion for the first 60 years of his life." The controversial billionaire for his part played up his international business acumen at a rally in North Augusta ahead of Saturday's primary.



BEAUFORT: Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks on stage during a campaign event. — AP

**'Why aren't they beating me?'**

Trump leads handily in South Carolina, with a new CNN poll showing him with 38 percent support over arch-conservative Cruz, who has 22 percent. The 16-point spread is down from the 20-point RealClearPolitics average, suggesting a softening in some support after Saturday's bruising debate slugfest. "Why aren't they beating me?" Trump taunted, to loud cheers.

Even with his commanding lead, he was calling on supporters to crowd the polls. "Assume that we're behind, because you've gotta go vote," Trump said. Cruz highlighted his experience with Constitutional law in dwelling on a Saturday event that hit the political landscape like an earthquake: the death of conservative Supreme Court justice Antonin Scalia.

Cruz has joined other Republican candidates in insisting that no nominee to replace Scalia be confirmed by the Senate until there is a new president next January. "We are one justice away from losing our fundamental liberties," he said, underscoring the stakes of the election as conservatives see the appointment of a liberal judge as potentially ending conservative efforts to overturn landmark cases on abortion, health care and immigration.

Bush, riding high a day after his brother and former president George W. Bush hit the campaign trail with Jeb for the first time, caused an earthquake of his own Tuesday. Seeking to present himself as the candidate most capable of rebuilding the military, Bush visited a gun manufacturer in state capital Columbia, where he spoke to company employees and walked away with his own personally engraved hand gun.

He tweeted a photograph of the firearm afterwards, with a single word of commentary: "America." Bush is the consummate establishment candidate, the son and brother of two presidents. But Trump's ascension has upended the race, and forced Bush into underdog status. Trump supporter Jennifer Twilley, reflecting on the anger and frustration coursing through the US electorate, said Trump's status as a magnate and political outsider made him ideal for the job.—AFP

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## MERKEL URGES EU COMMON STANCE IN REFUGEE CRISIS

**BERLIN:** German Chancellor Angela Merkel yesterday urged an EU "common stance" on the migrant crisis and on protecting the bloc's frontiers, as eastern members move to shut internal borders. On the eve of an EU summit, Merkel said "the main thing now is to have a common stance on how to secure the external borders, and here the EU-Turkey plan offers a good solution".

Merkel, under heavy pressure at home to reduce arrivals, supports a plan under which transit country Turkey would seal its borders and then fly refugees to Europe where they would be settled under an EU quota system. However, most EU countries have shown little enthusiasm for the idea, and the so-called Visegrad Four—Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary—have openly defied Merkel.

They have pledged to help Macedonia and Bulgaria close their borders with Greece, which would leave Athens with rapidly rising numbers of refugees while effectively excluding it from Europe's passport-free Schengen zone.

Merkel said that "we will speak at the upcoming EU Council about how we can work together to protect our external border, and I want us to work together on the EU-Turkish agenda that

28 members have decided". She was speaking at a Berlin joint press conference with Sri Lanka's visiting President Maithripala Sirisena before she was set to address the German parliament on the EU summit's topics.

Merkel, a decade in power, has seen her long-stellar domestic support drop over her liberal migration policy since more than 1.1 million asylum seekers came to Germany last year. She has also

been increasingly isolated on the EU stage, where even a plan from last year to resettle 160,000 refugees has so far seen only several hundred asylum seekers moved to other EU countries.

Merkel conceded that "the issue of quotas is currently not a priority" for the EU, since the bloc had already agreed on the 160,000 figure and now had to distribute them as agreed, she said. — AFP

## DEMOGRAPHY VS ECONOMY AS UGANDA HEADS TO THE POLLS

**KAMPALA:** Labyrinthine and cacophonous, Kampala's sprawling Owino Market is private enterprise unchained, a place where Ugandans struggle daily to survive and thrive. And after three decades of President Yoweri Museveni's rule, his election promise of jobs and wealth rings hollow to many here. Francis Ssendawula is a trained schoolteacher, but after failing to find work he moved into the informal sector and is now the proprietor of a wardrobe-sized second-hand shoe store on one of Owino's narrow mud alleys.

"We need the chance to participate in our national cake," said the 29-year old who, like many of the capital's urban youth, will vote for opposition candidate Kizza Besigye in Thursday's polls. Ssendawula has little time for Museveni's election promises. "You should not mind about more jobs with this government," he said. Instead Ssendawula has made a job for himself, selling his stock of shoes—designer knockoffs imported from China—in the hope of earning enough to make a living and perhaps start a family.

"On a good day I can make something like 50,000 (Uganda shillings, \$15, 13 Euros), but other days no coin," he said with a shrug. Since seizing power in 1986 Museveni has emphasized peace and stability, contrasting his rule to the preceding decades of strife and civil war under Idi Amin and Milton Obote.

### 'Make jobs for ourselves'

The dominant political narrative portrays Museveni as the guarantor of peace and bulwark against chaos and it has been effectively drummed home. "Stability is the catalyst for everything else," said Levis Nuwemanzu, a clean-cut 33-year old.

"Where Uganda is and where Uganda is going, we are not doing bad," said Nuwemanzu, who studied economics at university and now sells jeans and shirts in Owino. "Progress isn't a boom thing, it is continuous, gradual," he said echoing the president's campaign slogan, 'Steady Progress'. A short way up the same tight, tarp-roofed corridor a barrel-chested former security guard, Eddy Mupere, said the lack of economic opportunities meant it was time for a change.

"The government has not created jobs for people! We make jobs for ourselves," said the 38-year old, who has sold secondhand T-shirts here for a dozen years. "The government has done nothing, completely. That's why some guys have degrees and yet they are working here," he said, gesturing towards Nuwemanzu.

"We have got bad leadership and that means a bad economy." Uganda has not crashed, but nor has it taken off. Foreign companies have found billions of barrels of oil beneath Lake Albert, yet none of the thick crude has been extracted. The economy is growing at more than five percent a year but remains dependent on exports of agricultural products such as coffee, tobacco, fish and tea. Inflation is below eight percent. But demographics are against the country, and Uganda is failing to supply the jobs that its youthful, fast-growing population needs. More than half of Uganda's 39 million people are under 16, with estimates of the proportion of jobless as high as four out of five. With population growing at a staggering pace, Uganda is predicted to reach 100 million by mid-century.

### Peace is not enough

Fred Muhumuza, an economist and former finance ministry advisor, blamed Uganda's five-year election cycle, patronage politics and mismanagement for the economic stagnation. "Talk of oil has been on for 10 years now: no progress. We talk of railways: no progress. All these five-year plans, you might as well just change the dates. That is a great failure," he said. Muhumuza was impressed with Museveni's first decade but the advent of competitive elections in 1996 meant, "populism took over and development became secondary." Patronage politics—the purchase of support in parliament and among the people—took centre stage and, "You don't build effectiveness through patronage," he said.

After 30 years in power and a series of electoral victories, Museveni and his National Resistance Movement (NRM) party are complacent. "The government is so comfortable, it has relaxed," said Muhumuza. Far less comfortable are ordinary folk like Benon Muyomba, a 32-year-old self-employed driver of a motorbike taxi, or boda-boda. Five years ago Muyomba took a \$580 (520 Euros) loan to buy his first motorbike, starting a business that can pay much better than formal employment: as much as \$9 (8 Euros) on a good day, versus the \$26 (18 Euros) a month he used to earn as a hotel bellboy.

"We are happy with the peace that we have - but it's not enough," said Muyomba, a Besigye supporter, who says successive governments are failing to provide the basics of healthcare, education and employment. "As long as those are there we don't want anything else," he said. — AFP



SEILAND: Arzoo Abdul Hakim holds a freshly caught cod fish as he chases other children round the temporary Altneis camp refugee camp. — AP

## MIDDLE OF NOWHERE: MIGRANTS FIND FROZEN REFUGE IN NORWAY

### INTEGRATING TO LIFE 280 MILES NORTH OF THE ARCTIC

**HAMMERFEST:** After hiding below the horizon for two long months, the sun has finally risen in Hammerfest, casting a pale pink hue over the Arctic landscape surrounding the world's northernmost refugee shelter.

From her modest room, Huda Al-Haggar admires the wonderland of snow and ice, a sight so different from her native Yemen, where a Saudi airstrike destroyed her home, forcing her to flee with her young son. "It's wonderful when I wake up in the morning and see this picture, the sea and the mountains. It's a wonderful place," the young woman says as 5-year-old Omar plays with Lego on her lap.

The wooden barracks where Al-Haggar and her son live used to house oil workers until Europe's migrant crisis reached the jagged shores of northern Norway, where the continent drops dramatically into the Arctic Ocean. Waiting for their asylum claims to be processed, hundreds of people in emergency shelters in Hammerfest and neighboring towns are slowly getting used to the extreme climate and unfamiliar customs of the High North.

### Adapting to the cold

They say they have adapted to the cold - the temperature rarely drops below minus 10 degrees C (14 F) along the coast, though it gets much colder further inland. It's the darkness that throws them off. Rami Saad, a 23-year-old Syrian from Damascus with a neatly groomed beard and tight slacks, says workers at the Hammerfest center warned him about the polar night but he didn't believe them until late November, when "suddenly there was no sun." The lack of daylight messed up his body clock, like the day when he rolled out of bed at 11 and ambled to the cafeteria to have lunch. "But there was nobody there," Saad says, giggling. "It was 11 pm" Few of the asylum-seekers expected to end up here, 280 miles north of the Arctic Circle, when they left their homelands in the Middle East, Africa and Asia to escape violence, poverty, forced marriages or armies they didn't want to join.

Some were relocated by Norwegian authorities after entering the country from Sweden in the south. Others blazed a new trail into Western Europe by first entering Russia and then crossing its Arctic border with Norway. More than 5,000 people, mostly Syrians and Afghans, used that route last year before the government tightened the border in November and started deporting those who were not deemed to be in need of protection in Norway.

Though that's just a trickle compared to the 1 million people who entered Europe last year from the south across the Mediterranean Sea, it forced Norwegian authorities to quickly set up migrant shelters in small towns separated by mile upon mile of untouched wilderness.

In Alta, a scenic two-hour drive to the south, the Northern Lights Hotel was converted into a shelter for unaccompanied minors. On Seiland Island, a nature reserve west of Hammerfest, Stig Erland Hansen was asked to temporarily house dozens of asylum-seekers in a remote lodge where he hosts adventure tourists during the summer.

### People in darkness

"At first I thought it was crazy," Hansen says, clapping a cup of black coffee inside the main cabin. "Is it possible to have people in darkness on an island?" Not only was it possible, it was a big success, according to Hansen and Paal Mannsverk, who manages the camp, a cluster of wooden houses facing a pristine fjord. Reachable only by boat, the isolated location gives you a sense of being at the end of the world - or as Mannsverk put it: "North of the middle of nowhere."

Yet the 36 asylum-seekers staying here, all but one from Afghanistan, seem surprisingly at ease. Hansen and Mannsverk say it's because they try to

keep them active: Fishing, chopping wood, sledging, skiing, and hiking instead of just sitting around waiting for a decision by the Norwegian Immigration Directorate, which can take more than a year. The camp on Seiland is a far cry from the crowded and jail-like migrant centers in some parts of Europe. Afghan children laugh and holler as they sled down the slope from the camp to the rocky shoreline, where men speaking Dari rinse fish caught in the icy fjord. Later, as the sun drops behind the mountains, they will cook them over an open fire with onion, tomatoes, eggs and spices brought in from the mainland.

To some the contrast with the life they left behind is almost surreal. "I was in Afghanistan, a country far away from here and now I'm in the north of Norway, I could never have imagined this," says 20-year-old Zakria Sadequi. He says he fled Afghanistan's Maidan Wardak province after the Taliban tried to recruit him. An ugly scar over his left eyebrow suggests they didn't ask nicely. Sadequi says they rammaged the butt of a Kalashnikov rifle into his forehead. He documented the bloody mess with his cellphone camera.

Inside the camp, 62-year-old Shukria Nawabi tears up as she recalls the hardship her family faced in Kabul. She has lived on Seiland since October with her husband, daughter and grand-daughter Helenar, a 7-year-old with pigtails, pink tights and a sheepish smile. "We escaped from enemies in our life," Nawabi says through an interpreter, declining to delve into the details. Wrapped in a shawl, her daughter, Sufya, seems almost offended when asked whether the family struggled to adjust to the darkness on this desolate island. "If you were in my place," she says, "where bombs are going off in the street, where women are treated badly, and you come to this place, would you worry about the darkness and the isolation?"

A handful of young men who were transferred to Seiland didn't see it that way. They decided this wasn't the place for them, packed up their belongings and asked to be taken ashore. Some went back to Russia, where they had been studying. A

couple traveled all the way to Italy, says Mannsverk.

### Integrating asylum-seekers

By the spring, the lodge will go back to its regular tourist business and the asylum-seekers will have to be transferred elsewhere, perhaps to permanent asylum centers like the one in Alta. The city of 20,000 has years of experience with integrating asylum-seekers into the local community.

The staff at the Hero asylum center in Alta try to prepare the newcomers for life in Norway by teaching them local customs, including how to treat women, a subject given particular attention after reports of mass sex assaults blamed on migrants in Germany on New Year's eve. "Norwegian women can drink alcohol and be loud just like men. This is completely normal in Norwegian society," says Ingunn Soergaard, a petite woman with waist-length hair and a crystal-white smile.

Her audience of 18 asylum-seekers, mostly from Syria, look at her with bewilderment. Not because they think it's weird that Norwegian women drink, but that Soergaard thinks they don't know that. "We've seen that on TV. And we know that's how it is here. It's not an issue," says Anod Al-Ali, a 31-year-old teacher from Syria. Soergaard's co-presenter, Goeran Johansen, decides to push the issue further. "Let's say I'm meeting Ingunn for the first time and she invites me home to have sex," Johansen says. "And then suddenly at home she says, 'No, I don't want to have sex.' What do you do?" Some of the students shift awkwardly in their seats. Wala Aziri, a 23-year-old Palestinian woman with a hijab turns bright red and hides her face in her hands.

Finally, Ahmed Dawwas, a 36-year-old engineer who fled the Syrian city of Raqqa, an Islamic State stronghold, breaks the silence by turning the question around. "What if she invites me and I say no? How should she react?" Dawwas asks. When the laughter dies down, he strikes a more serious tone. "We have come here to live in peace," he says. "We have fled war. We're not here to go after women. I don't understand why this has to be explained to all Syrians." — AP



KAMPALA: A woman sits against a wall plastered with campaign posters for opposition leader Kizza Besigye, as well as for local members of Parliament, in a poor market area. — AP

## MUGABE'S EX-DEPUTY SETS UP RIVAL ZIMBABWE PARTY

**HARARE:** Zimbabwean former vice president Joyce Mujuru announced yesterday that she had founded a new party to challenge President Robert Mugabe's all-powerful ZANU-PF, in a move that could shake up the country's politics. Mugabe, who turns 92 on Sunday, has ruled since independence in 1980 during an era marked by vote-rigging, mass emigration, accusations of human rights abuses and economic decline.

He is expected to stand again for election in 2018, but jockeying over his succession has intensified due to his advanced age and speculation about his health. "We are 'People First,'" Mujuru said by telephone, confirming the name of her new party but giving no further details. "We don't lead the people, but people lead themselves." Mujuru, the widow of Zimbabwe's first post-independence army general, was fired from Mugabe's government and the ruling ZANU-PF party in December 2014. Her ousting came after a campaign by the president's wife Grace denigrating Mujuru and accusing her of corruption, fomenting party division and plotting to topple Mugabe.

Many of her allies and perceived sympathizers met a similar fate in a party purge. Mujuru, who was replaced as vice president by long-time Mugabe ally Emmerson Mnangagwa, denied all accusations of disloyalty. She enjoys some public popularity in Zimbabwe, but faces a huge task to establish her new party in the country's tense political scene. "It is a Herculean task," political analyst Takura Zhangazha said. "The party will have to be phenomenally cre-

ative to mount a serious challenge for power.

"It must try to be different from not only ZANU-PF but also from mainstream opposition parties such as the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). "Fighting within ZANU-PF may help, but it will not be enough."

### Former Mugabe favorite

Mujuru, 60, was a guerrilla fighter during Zimbabwe's 1970s liberation war before rising to become vice president in 2004. A former ZANU-PF stalwart, she served in several cabinets under Mugabe and was seen for many years as his favoured choice of successor.

Her husband, Solomon Mujuru, died in a mysterious house fire in 2011. Mujuru signaled her intention to form a rival party last year by releasing a manifesto that opposed Mugabe's key policies including indigenization laws that compel foreign firms to cede majority stakes to locals. ZANU-PF has been riven by factional fights over Mugabe's succession although party figures have sought to downplay any splits. Mnangagwa is now viewed as the likely next president, with Grace Mugabe, 50, also a possible candidate. In the 2013 presidential election, Mugabe won 61 percent of the vote against 34.9 percent recorded by Morgan Tsvangirai of the MDC. Tsvangirai described the results as "a huge farce" after campaigning and voting were marred by intimidation, violence and fraud. Western groups were not allowed to send poll observers, but the United States dismissed the result as "not a credible expression of the will of Zimbabwean people." — AFP

## MILLION CHILDREN MALNOURISHED IN EASTERN, SOUTHERN AFRICA: UN

**JOHANNESBURG:** Nearly one million children across eastern and southern Africa are suffering from "severe acute malnutrition" after two years of drought and the strongest El Nino in 50 years, UNICEF said yesterday. Children in the region face worsening food and water shortages, with rising prices exacerbating the situation as families are forced to skip meals and sell belongings. "Severe acute malnutrition" is defined as extreme hunger, causing a very low weight-for-height ratio, visible wasting or fluid retention. "The El Nino weather phenomenon will wane, but the cost to children-many who were already living hand-to-mouth-will be felt for years to come," said UNICEF regional director Leila Gharagozloo-Pakkala.

"Governments are responding with available resources, but this is an unprecedented situation. Children's survival is dependent on action taken today." The agency is running humanitarian appeals calling for \$87 million for Ethiopia, \$26 million for Angola and \$15 million for Somalia.

Lesotho, Zimbabwe, and most of South Africa have declared drought emergencies, while in Ethiopia, the number of people in need of food assistance is expected to increase from 10 million to 18 million this year. Malawi is facing its worst food crisis in nine years, with 2.8 million people (more than 15 percent of the

population) at risk of hunger and "severe acute malnutrition" doubling in only two months.

"The statistics are staggering," said Megan Gilgan, UNICEF regional emergency advisor. "The situation is expected to worsen throughout this year and into 2017." Last month the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) said 14 million people across southern Africa faced going hungry after a prolonged drought wrecked harvests. The WFP said the cost of maize, also called corn, in Malawi was 73 percent higher than average. South Africa will import half its average maize crop after 2015 was declared the driest year in more than a century. In Ethiopia, 435,000 children were said to be in need of treatment for severe acute malnutrition. "We are dealing with a slow onset crisis affecting countries in different ways," Gilgan said. "The outlook is disturbing, with little or no rain falling in affected areas."

UNICEF said conditions were worse than the 2011 Horn of Africa food crisis that hit Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya and Uganda. Apart from hunger, the spread of diarrhea, cholera and typhoid has also been reported. Sparked by warming in sea surface temperatures in the equatorial Pacific, El Nino periodically wreaks havoc on world weather patterns, causing drought in some parts and floods in others. — AFP



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## INDIAN CHILD ACTIVISTS SLAM VATICAN FOR REVOKING BAN

**NEW DELHI:** Children's activists in India yesterday criticized the Vatican for revoking the suspension of a Catholic priest who was convicted by a US court of sexually abusing a minor. Indian priest Joseph Palanivel Jeyapaul, 61, was suspended by his local diocese in India five years ago after being accused of sexually abusing two girls during a posting to Minnesota.

He was later convicted of assaulting

one of them, a 16-year-old, and served time in jail. But the Vatican lifted his suspension in January following a recommendation by an Indian bishop. "The lifting of the suspension amounts to the Church condoning his actions," Ranjana Kumari, director of the Centre for Social Research, an NGO working on women's and girls' rights said.

The decision was "totally unacceptable," coming as the Vatican undertook

to root out sexual abuse by the Church, she said. Jeyapaul was accused of sexually abusing two girls while serving as a priest in Crookston Diocese in Minnesota between 2004 and 2005, but one victim dropped the charges against him.

The Diocese of Ooty in southern India's Tamil Nadu state suspended him in 2010 before he was arrested by Interpol in 2012 and extradited to the US to face trial. Following a plea deal, Roseau County dis-

trict court sentenced him to a year in jail but he was released and deported to India in June 2015 on account of time served while awaiting trial.

Sebastian Selvanathan, a spokesman for Ooty diocese, said that while the Vatican had lifted Jeyapaul's suspension, the priest would not return to service. "We have provided him accommodation but he will not have any active role in the Church," Selvanathan said.

The Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests, a US group, has urged the Church to warn the public about Jeyapaul's past and expressed concern over his presence in India. "We worry now about the safety of girls in India near Fr Jeyapaul," the group said on its website. Local police said they would collect more information on the disgraced priest but said he was not under watch. —AFP

## BEIJING DEPLOYS MISSILES ON DISPUTED SOUTH SEA ISLAND

### CHINA SAYS THEY HAVE RIGHT TO 'SELF-DEFENSE'

**BEIJING:** China has deployed surface-to-air missiles on a disputed island in the South China Sea, Taiwan said yesterday, as Beijing insisted it had a right to build "self-defense" systems in the strategic region. Taiwan's defense ministry confirmed the facility's existence after Fox News reported missile launchers had arrived on Woody Island, part of the Paracels chain, in the past week.

The report came as President Barack Obama called for "tangible steps" to reduce tensions in the

strategically vital area and has sent warships to sail close to the disputed islands to assert that right.

Analysts said the latest deployment could be an attempt to deter such freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs). Australian military aircraft also routinely overfly the area. Fox News said Tuesday that images showed two batteries of eight missile launchers and a radar system had arrived on Woody Island, the Paracels' main island.

"The defense ministry has learned of an air defense missile

has built on the islands," Wang said, "are consistent with the right to self-preservation and self-protection that China is entitled to under international law."

#### Raising tensions

China established the tiny city of Sansha on Woody Island in 2012 to administer a wide swath of waters and islands, creating an oddity that is by far the world's largest city by area but has a minuscule population of around 1,000 people. In 2014, the country

HQ-9 air defense system, with a range of about 200km (125 miles), according to reports. Experts said they could be used to target enemy aircraft, and Kevin Cheng, editor-in-chief of the Taipei-based Asia-Pacific Defense Magazine, told AFP: "The... HQ-9... could exacerbate the nerves of neighboring countries, particularly Vietnam."

"The military deployment could be seen to violate the US call for free navigation in the area and allow it more excuse to interfere in affairs there," he added. Rory Medcalf, an Asian security expert at the Australian National University, said: "If this was meant to be a signal to deter FONOPs, I doubt it will succeed." The Pentagon declined to confirm the Chinese missile deployment to AFP.

#### Growing control

The report on the missile batteries came as Obama and the 10 leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian National (ASEAN), including Vietnam, issued a joint statement calling for the "peaceful resolution" of the myriad competing claims over islands, atolls and reefs. The call followed a two-day summit in California where leaders voiced concern over Beijing's military build-up in the area.

"We discussed the need for tangible steps in the South China Sea to lower tensions," Obama said, calling for "a halt to further reclamation, new construction and militarization of disputed areas". In addition to the three Paracels claimants, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei have competing claims in the Spratlys.

Resentment still simmers in Vietnam over its territorial clashes with its giant neighbor, and yesterday it marked the 37th anniversary of a different border clash. During a visit to Washington last year, Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged not to militarize the Spratlys, though he made no mention of the Paracels, and Medcalf said the latest move violated "the spirit, if not the letter" of that assurance. The move, he said, "reinforces the view that China intends to exert growing control in these international waters." —AFP



**BEIJING: (FILES)** This file aerial view taken on July 27, 2012 shows part of the city of Sansha on the island of Yongxing, also known as Woody island in the disputed Parcel chain, which China now considers part of Hainan province. —AFP

region. Beijing has controlled all of the Paracels, which are also claimed by Hanoi and Taipei, since seizing several from South Vietnam in a brief, bloody battle towards the end of the Vietnam War.

But tensions in the sea-through which one-third of the world's oil passes—have mounted in recent months since China transformed contested reefs in the Spratly islands further south into artificial islands capable of supporting military facilities. Washington says the move threatens free passage in a

system deployed by the Chinese communists on Yongxing Island," a Taiwan defense ministry spokesman said. After meeting his Australian counterpart Julie Bishop, Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi described the reports as "an attempt by certain Western media to create news stories".

He did not explicitly deny the deployment, but urged more attention on "the lighthouses we have built on some of the islands and reefs in the South China Sea". "Self-defense facilities that China

added a military airstrip to the island, saying it would "greatly improve Chinese defense capabilities".

In the Spratlys, China has set up runways capable of accommodating military aircraft on its newly built islands, and is believed to have installed radar towers. The Fox News report was based on pictures from ImageSat International, which earlier this week released images said to show reclamation work in the Paracels.

The missiles appeared to be the



**NEW DELHI:** An Indian activist carries an Indian national flag next to a police barricade at a protest outside Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). —AFP

## LAWYERS CLASH WITH PROTESTERS IN INDIA OVER STUDENT'S ARREST

**NEW DELHI:** Dozens of lawyers, many with links to India's ruling nationalist party, yesterday attacked protesters who have been demanding the release of a university student leader arrested under colonial-era sedition laws.

The clashes began shortly before a court hearing for Kanhaiya Kumar, the president of the students' union at the country's premier Jawaharlal Nehru University. The left-leaning campus leader has been in prison since Friday over his participation in events where anti-India slogans were allegedly shouted.

Soon after the clashes began, a grimacing and cowering Kumar was escorted onto the court premises on foot by a few policemen. Several reports said he was punched and kicked as he was taken inside the courtroom.

About a dozen lawyers threw rocks at reporters and protesters. One of them grabbed the camera strap of an Associated Press photographer, bruising his hand and breaking his lens. At least one reporter also said that the lawyers beat him and broke his cellphone while the police watched.

The attacks and Kumar's arrest highlighted allegations of increasing intolerance in India since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party came to power in 2014. Kumar was arrested on a police complaint filed by a BJP-linked student faction over events where the anti-India shouts were alleged along with criticism of the 2013 secret hanging of a Kashmiri separatist convicted of an attack on Parliament.

The lawyers waved Indian flags and chanted slogans like "glory to Mother India" and "traitors leave India." Many of the lawyers seen on television footage yesterday had been involved in similar violence Monday when reporters and Kumar's supporters were beaten outside the court premises.

#### Political activism

The violence occurred despite the Supreme Court ordering the police to ensure security ahead of yesterday's hearing. Delhi Police chief BS Bassi said police were trying to identify those involved in the violence, but no arrests have been made despite several newspapers naming the lawyers and publishing their photographs prominently.

India's sedition laws were drafted by its British colonial rulers to suppress the country's freedom struggle, and the Supreme Court has said in recent years the laws should be invoked only when there is actual evidence of incitement to violence.

The trouble on the campus of the prestigious university, also known for students' political activism, followed a Feb 9 event marking the anniversary of Afzal Guru's execution. Some human rights activists and most Kashmiris in the Indian-controlled portion of the region believe he was not given a fair trial. The campus dispute escalated sharply when senior government ministers got involved. The home minister, Rajnath Singh, tweeted that anyone shouting anti-India slogans "will not be tolerated or spared," and Human Resource Minister Smriti Irani told reporters that "the nation can never tolerate an insult to Mother India." Since the arrest of Kumar, the student leader, last week, students and faculty have staged sporadic protests demanding his release and accusing the government of crushing all dissenting voices. Niamkoi, a PhD student who uses just one name, said the random police questioning of students left many feeling intimidated.

Indian newspapers have published scathing editorials about the government's disproportionate response to an event on the university campus. Political analyst Neeraj Chowdhury described the government response as, "using an AK-47 to swat a fly." "If you don't question assumptions in university how are new ideas going to come about?" —AP

## PACQUIAO FACES VOTE BOYCOTT FOR BIGOTED GAY COMMENTS

**MANILA:** Gay and lesbian groups have called on voters in the Philippines to boycott boxing icon Manny Pacquiao as he bids for a Senate seat, after he described gays as "worse than animals". An online petition is also underway asking global sportswear company Nike Inc to drop Pacquiao as an endorser. The petition on change.org has garnered more than 2,000 signatures so far.

Pacquiao, revered in the Philippines for winning world boxing titles in eight different weight classes during his 20-year career, sud-

denly fell from grace after a 30-second interview on local television about same-sex marriage, which he opposes.

"It's just common sense. Do you see any animals of the same sex mating? Animals are better off, they can distinguish between male and female," Pacquiao told TV5 on Monday. "Now if men are mating with men and women with women, then they are worse than animals," he said. This is not the first time Pacquiao, a sitting two-term congressman, had earned the ire of the lesbian, gay, bisexual

and transgender community for his comments on same-sex marriage. He also apologized for his remarks in 2012.

Same-sex marriage is not allowed in the Philippines where more than 80 percent of the 100 million population is Roman Catholic. The 37-year old congressman, among those favored to win a Senate seat at the May elections based on independent pollsters' surveys, apologized on Tuesday. Latest surveys showed him in 8th place for the race to win 12 vacant seats in the Senate.

#### 'Please forgive me'

"I'm sorry for hurting people by comparing homosexuals to animals. Please forgive me for those I've hurt," Pacquiao said in a video message on his Twitter account. He said he remained against same-sex marriage. That didn't stop a torrent of comments on social media lambasting Pacquiao and using the hashtags #NoToManny2016 #zerovoteformanly and #WorseThanAnimals. His Twitter followers dropped to around 11,000 yesterday from over 2 million, according to the online edition of Inquirer Radio.

"LGBT groups and individuals are saying he should not be voted into office... we are one of them," Danton Remoto, head of Philippine lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender group Ladlad, or Out, told Reuters by phone. While the former boxer's comments offended liberal Filipinos, they could have struck a chord with more conservative voters in the staunchly Catholic country. Local singer Aiza Seguerra, who married her actress-girlfriend partner in late 2014 in San Francisco, also called on voters to boycott Pacquiao. "You might've done our country proud but with your statement, you just showed the whole country why we shouldn't vote for you," Seguerra said on her Instagram. —Reuters



**MINDANAO:** This photo taken on February 16, 2016 shows schoolchildren watching as Philippine boxing icon Manny Pacquiao works out during a training session at a sports complex in General Santos. —AFP

## INDIA MEDIA MAGNATE CHARGED WITH MURDER

**MUMBAI:** One of India's leading media magnates has been formally charged with murder over the death of his stepdaughter, an investigating officer said yesterday, the latest development in a case gripping the country.

Peter Mukerjea, an ex-chief executive of media behemoth Star India, has also been charged with abduction, destruction of evidence and giving false information, an official with India's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said. "He has been charged with the same offences as the others," the official told AFP on condition of anonymity, referring to an earlier chargesheet filed against Mukerjea's wife and two others.

Wife Indrani Mukerjea is accused along with her driver and ex-husband of strangling Sheena Bora to death before dumping her body in a forest and setting it alight. Bora, 22, was Indrani's daughter from a previous relationship. She was murdered in April 2012 and her burnt body was discovered the following month in woods in the western state of Maharashtra, of which Mumbai is the capital. Indrani was arrested in August on suspicion of murdering the young woman, who was having an affair with Peter Mukerjea's son from an earlier marriage. Various motives have been put forward for the alleged crime, including a finan-

cial dispute over property dealings and a dislike of Bora's relationship with Peter Mukerjea's son, Rahul.

The CBI also arrested Peter Mukerjea in November and on Tuesday formally added him to the same chargesheet after several months of questioning, according to a statement on its website. Peter Mukerjea was chief executive of Fox-owned Star India from 1997 to 2007 before leaving to start his own television venture and is seen as one of India's most successful media magnates.

In November, the CBI formally charged Indrani, who is the prime accused, her driver Shyam Rai and former partner Sanjeev Khanna with murder, abduction and destruction of evidence among other offences. Peter Mukerjea was believed to be out of the country on the day of the murder but the CBI alleges he was actively involved in the conspiracy.

"Even when he was abroad he was in constant touch with Indrani," the unnamed official said. India's newspapers and TV news channels have been abuzz with details of the scandal since it first broke, with many carrying complex family trees illustrating who's who in the case. Mumbai police initially registered the case before the CBI, India's leading investigating agency, took it over in September. —AFP



## SISI HAILS EGYPT-KUWAIT TIES

Continued from Page 1

Sisi also stressed that Kuwait and Egypt have very strong relations and that Egypt would never hesitate to defend its sisterly GCC states in the event of direct threats. He also stressed that history will always say that Egypt moved swiftly whenever sisterly countries were under direct threat. "The Egyptian army belongs to all Arabs," he stressed, noting that his statement of 'as long as it takes to cover the distance' really reflects this concept.

Sisi also stressed that Egypt does not interfere in other Arab countries' affairs and that it respects peoples' wills, and is capable of stopping any attacks and respond to any direct assault or threat to it or against any brotherly state, and gave an example of Egypt's attitude towards the incidents in Libya where Egypt abstained from interfering in domestic Libyan affairs or taking advantage of the critical situation there to jeopardize Libyan people's interests.

"The only time Egypt launched a military attack was when terrorist organizations slaughtered 21 Egyptians on Libyan soil," he underlined, pointing out that Egypt takes all needed measures to ensure its capability to cope with regional changes and challenges despite its critical economic circumstances. He also referred to the efforts exerted by the Egyptian armed forces to update and develop its weaponry and equipment.

Sisi spoke about developments in the Arab world and pointed out that the invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was the first blow to Arab unity as well as the first breach of Arab national security. He said today we were paying the price of the Arab world's divisions. He also stressed the importance of supporting Arab states to regain security and stability as well as maintain their national bodies and institutions in order to revive their roles as effective Arab League member states.

The president also pointed out that the Arab nation's strength lies in its unity and solidarity and urged Arab countries to stop offending each other the way Egypt was offended and defamed by some Arab and regional countries and their media after the June 30 revolution. He stressed that Egypt acted responsibly then and avoided similar responses in order to avoid exchanging accusations over the media that would have only led to more divisions. "Islam, Arabism and love bonds amongst Arab states should be expressed by deeds and not only words," he underlined.

### Some excerpts from the interview:

**Q: Are you satisfied with GCC aid and investments in Egypt after the June 30 revolution, and in view of favors Egypt has been doing to the Arab world, is there any sort of negligence?**

**A:** The Egyptian people's needs are rapidly increasing now that the population has exceeded 90 million including 65 million below 40 years of age and 30 million below 18. There is no such thing as 'favors' amongst brothers. There is only love, reverence and appreciation. If Egypt had enough resources, it would have never hesitated to support all Arab brothers. But over the past years, Egypt has been through a difficult experience that resulted in several problems. However, after the June 30 revolution, Egyptians realized the importance of reasonable thinking and not to get carried away with people after making limited political and personal gains. The Egyptian people will manage to save Egypt from attempts of a certain bloc to kidnap it and change its national identity.

**Q: Over 50,000 Kuwaiti students are currently studying in Egypt. What can the Egyptian government do to solve the problems they might face?**

**A:** Egypt welcomes all Arab and foreign students and will never tolerate any systematic offences or abuse against them. As honorable guests, they receive utmost love and welcome from the Egyptian people and government. Some individual incidents may occur, though they are very decisively dealt with and fought. Egypt also hosts a large number of Arabs who live side by side with Egyptians and enjoy the same services.

**Q: Egyptian economic indicators have been improving. Yet, GCC and foreign investments have not increased and this reflects a need to review monetary policies and adopt new ideas. What do you recommend?**

**A:** Egypt has suffered from the consequences of two consecutive revolutions over the past few years, which led to sluggish performance in various institutions and deterioration in basic facilities such as electricity and natural gas. In addition, terrorism has been attacking various public facilities. However, efforts exerted over the past period contributed to overcoming power outages and providing enough natural gas supplies for factories to resume normal rates of productivity. The government also takes all needed legislative and procedural measures to improve services and public facilities in addition to providing suitable circumstances to attract Arab investments and encourage them to make use of the promising opportunities and projects Egypt offers them.

**Q: Are we about to witness a regional war?**

**A:** I hope not. Arab countries have to assess various situations and possible options. They have to unite and reinforce joint Arab Action.

**Q: What about the Syrian crisis?**

**A:** The Egyptian attitude towards the Syrian crisis has been always clear and steady. It is mainly built on not interfering in Syrian domestic affairs, respecting the Syrian people's will, fighting terrorists and insurgents and working out a political solution that would maintain Syria's safety and solidarity as well as pave the way for reconstruction efforts. This attitude reflects the steady Egyptian foreign policy that is keen on not interfering in other countries' domestic affairs except in case of direct threats to one of its brotherly countries.

The best proof that countries must only provide military assistance in cases of direct threats can be that of the participation of Kuwaiti troops in the 1973 war on both the Egyptian and Syrian fronts as well as Egyptian troops' participation in the second Gulf war. Egypt will never hesitate to send its troops to the Gulf, including dear Kuwait, once more to defend them from direct threats. I will immediately send Egyptian troops to help Kuwaiti brothers defend themselves and their country in case of any direct threat. The same applies to other GCC states. Protecting citizens' safety and security is not only a matter of nationalism. It is also a religious, patriotic and ethical duty because our religion rejects terrorizing people.

**Q: Can Egyptians in Kuwait anticipate some good news...**

**A:** Well, I can assure them that their country will remain safe and tell them that we are doing the best we can to develop it. Egypt looks forward to the contributions of Egyptians abroad to support this process of development and construction.

**Q: The speech you made in the parliament seemed like a roadmap towards achieving economic development. Is there a roadmap to revive tourism, especially as we visited Sharm el-Sheikh and explored the huge touristic potentials Egypt has? Why does not Egypt focus on attracting Arab tourists?**

**A:** We welcome all Arab tourists, especially since compared to other international touristic destinations, Egypt has the advantage of sharing the culture with other Arab countries, which is more relaxing for Arab tourists and makes them feel at home. The significance of the touristic sector to the Egyptian economy is obvious, as five million Egyptians work in this sector that used to make an annual income of \$14 billion before 2011. The government is already working on activating tourism, be it local, Arab or foreign. Egypt is keen on providing all possible means to make the best use of its outstanding location and endless monuments in addition to its moderate climate. Accordingly, all Arab tourists are welcome to spend their vacations in their second home country - Egypt. Egypt has also launched several campaigns to encourage Arab tourists to visit it.

**Q: What about Egypt's relations with Russia?**

**A:** Egypt has deep-rooted historic relations with Russia that have been outstanding in many fields including military cooperation. Generally speaking, Egypt follows a balanced foreign policy that is open to all countries worldwide and is based on mutual respect and achieving joint interests. Egypt has stable strategic relations with the US as well as European and Asian countries including China and Japan. — KUNA

## MPs SLAM REDUCTIONS IN OVERSEAS TREATMENT

### ABDALY CELL MEMBERS DENY CHARGES

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** Lawmakers yesterday intensified their opposition to government measures to reduce financial allocations for sending Kuwaiti patients abroad for medical treatment with some of them threatening to grill the health minister.

MP Awdah Al-Awdah said he waited to get an explanation from the government but that never came and it appears that the government no longer wants to cooperate with the assembly or wants confrontation with it. Awdah said that if there needs to be any cuts in spending, it should start with lawmakers and ministers and spare citizens, especially patients.

The Cabinet on Monday decided to cut financial allocations for Kuwaiti patients who are sent abroad for treatment. It said patients will be paid KD 50 per day in the United States and Europe and KD 30 to other countries. Those accompanying them will be paid nothing. The government will bear the expenses of the treatment.

MP Faisal Al-Kandari said he and a group of MPs will submit a motion to debate the government's decision to cut overseas treatment allocations during the next Assembly session on March 1. He said the debate is needed to stand against the government's unilateral decision to cut medical treatment abroad.

The lawmaker said it is unacceptable for the government to reduce the expenses to such lows and the new amounts are not sufficient to cover expenses in those countries in light of the high cost of living. He said the motion has been coordinated with a large number of

MPs who are opposed to the government's decision, adding that the austerity that the government wants will not be allowed to come at the expense of citizens.

MP Mohammad Al-Jabri said it is shameful that economic reforms should come at the expense of citizens' health and medical care, adding it is strange to cut allocations for medical treatment abroad when "we don't have the required medical care in the country". He urged the government to seek other solutions for reforms away from people's health.

Meanwhile, 23 Kuwaitis accused of joining Lebanese militia Hezbollah and spying for Iran yesterday denied the charges at the appeals court which began their trial. Three of the 26-member "Abdaly cell" are at large and were sentenced by the criminal court in absentia. They include the only Iranian national who was sentenced to death for allegedly recruiting the members for Hezbollah and arranging military training.

Of the 23 who attended the first appeals court hearing, one was sentenced to death, another to a life term while 17 were handed jail terms between two and 15 years. Four were acquitted. The case of the three at large will not be handled by the appeals court.

The defendants categorically denied that they joined Hezbollah or were part of a plot to launch attacks against Kuwait. They claimed they were tortured to extract false confessions. The leading figure who received death sentence said he collected the arms seized from him during the 1990-91 Iraqi invasion. The judge refused demands by defense lawyers to free the defendants on bail and order a medical examination. The next hearing was set for March 15.

## ANKARA BLAST KILLS 28

**ANKARA:** Twenty-eight people were killed and dozens wounded in Turkey's capital Ankara yesterday when a car laden with explosives detonated next to military buses near the armed forces' headquarters, parliament and other government buildings. The Turkish military condemned what it described as a terrorist attack on the buses as they waited at traffic lights in the administrative heart of the city.

A government spokesman said 28 people had been killed and 61 wounded in the blast, which took place near a busy intersection less than 500 m from parliament during the evening rush hour. Justice Minister Bekir Bozdag described the attack as an act of terrorism and told parliament, which was in session when the blast occurred, that the car had exploded on a part of the street lined on both sides by military vehicles.

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, who had been due to leave for meetings in Brussels later yesterday, cancelled the trip, an official in his office said. President Tayyip Erdogan postponed a planned visit to Azerbaijan. A senior Turkish security source said initial signs indicated that Kurdish militants from the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) were responsible. Separate security sources in the mainly Kurdish southeast, however, said they believed Islamic State militants may have been behind the bombing. There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

"I heard a huge explosion. There was smoke and a

really strong smell even though we were blocks away," a Reuters witness said. "We could immediately hear ambulance and police car sirens rushing to the scene." A health ministry official said the authorities were still trying to determine the number of dead and wounded, who had been taken to several hospitals in the area. Images on social media showed the wreckage of at least two buses and a car. The explosion, which came shortly after 6:30 pm (1630 GMT), sent a large plume of smoke above central Ankara.

Turkey, a NATO member, faces multiple security threats. It is part of a U.S.-led coalition fighting Islamic State in neighboring Syria and Iraq, and has been shelling Kurdish militia fighters in northern Syria in recent days. It has also been battling PKK militants in its own southeast where a 2-1/2 year ceasefire collapsed last July, plunging the region into its worst violence since the 1990s. The PKK, which has fought a three-decade insurgency for Kurdish autonomy, has frequently attacked military targets in the past, although it has largely focused its campaign on the mainly Kurdish southeast.

Yesterday's bombing comes after an attack in Ankara in October blamed on Islamic State, when two suicide bombers struck a rally of pro-Kurdish and labor activists outside the capital's main train station, killing more than 100 people. A suicide bombing in the historic heart of Istanbul in January, also blamed on Islamic State, killed 10 German tourists. — Reuters

## OIL WELL FIRE CONTAINED

Continued from Page 1

Azmi earlier said that thick gas seen being emitted at the site was "caused by putting out the blaze". He said "no reading of any H2S (hydrogen sulfide) gas leak from the incident" had been recorded at the oilfield. KUNA said that the Environmental Public Authority confirmed that the gas contained no hazardous elements. In a later statement, Azmi said the spill had not affected KOC's operations and production processes in Kuwait, a major oil producer and OPEC member. Kuwaiti media published photos of a fire it said was burning at the scene. The Al-Rai news service said pho-

tos of a large fire were circulating on social media.

Separately, Kuwait signed a deal to export 100,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd) with a major refiner, with a potential annual return of \$2 billion, KUNA reported yesterday. "The contract is one of the important strategic agreements that reinforces Kuwait's position as a main oil supplier in the Asian markets," Nabil Bouresli, managing director of international marketing at Kuwait Petroleum Corp (KPC) was quoted by KUNA as saying. Kuwait plans to raise its crude oil production by 150,000 bpd in the third quarter and aims to sign new export deals with European customers soon, Bouresli has said earlier this month. — Agencies

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## Focus

RUSSIA, TURKEY RUN  
RISK OF ESCALATION

By Maxim Popov and Olga Rotenberg

Turkey and Russia are already waging a proxy war in Syria as Istanbul backs rebels against Syrian government troops supported by Moscow. But the recent escalation in rhetoric has sharpened fears of a direct confrontation, analysts warn. The two major players in the Syrian conflict have historic enmities dating back to the 16th century with the first Russo-Turkish wars, and more recently the Crimean War between Russia and the Ottoman Empire backed by Britain and France, in the mid-19th century.

Russia's bombing campaign in Syria that began in September and the Turkish shelling of Kurdish positions in Syria have effectively created a separate sub-crisis within the geopolitical cluster bomb of the five-year-long war. This conflict is also being played out on the ground as rebel groups backed in particular by Turkey are attempting to contain the advance of Syrian troops supported by Moscow, which is also backing Turkey's sworn enemies the Syrian Kurds.

## 'Eve of Confrontation'

Currently the conflict between Moscow and Ankara is primarily a war of words. But analysts warn it could spiral into a real clash. "We are on the eve of such a confrontation. Not because anyone plans to attack anyone else. But when there are so many weapons and armies and intersecting interests, chance can play a major role," said Alexander Kononov of the Strategic Analysis Institute in Moscow. Ankara this week railed against Russia's bombing, threatening an "extremely decisive response" and calling strikes "vile, cruel and barbaric".

Moscow for its part has condemned Ankara's "provocative" shelling of Kurdish positions in the strategic northern Aleppo province, and on Tuesday said that Turkish security services are training militants from ex-Soviet countries that are then dispatched to Syria. Turkey has openly suggested it could launch a ground operation against the Islamic State group alongside its allies, particularly Saudi Arabia, which could lead to a direct confrontation with Russian forces.

## Kurdish Zone in Syria

Along with the fate of Assad, the question of the Kurds is one of the main obstacles to agreement between Turkey and Russia. Turkey wants to prevent the Kurds, who already control a large part of northern Syria, from establishing a permanent presence west of the Euphrates river and creating an autonomous zone on the Turkish border. The Syrian Kurds have benefited from the alliance with Russia and this month opened a representative office in Moscow. Asked about the risk of an escalation with Turkey Tuesday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said "he would rather not answer," adding that "our relations are in a deep crisis".

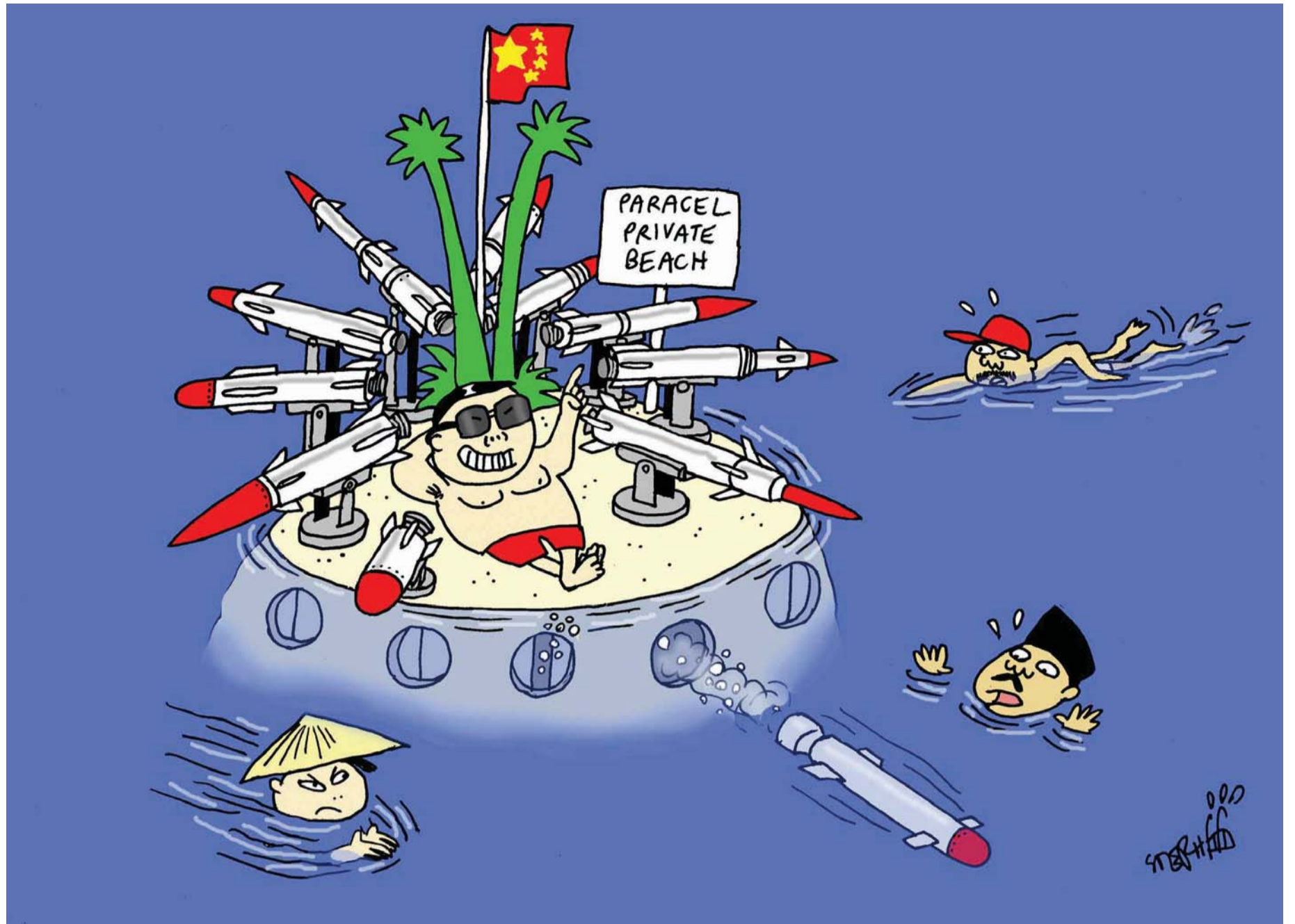
## Turkish 'Stab in Back'

The climate of confrontation has intensified since late November when Turkish F-16 fighters downed a Russian bomber plane which Ankara said strayed into its air space. Russia was swift to react to this "stab in the back" with economic sanctions followed by a beefing-up of its firepower in Syria, notably deploying its latest S-400 air defence systems. Meanwhile Putin accused his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan of involvement in illegal oil trading with Islamic State jihadists in Syria.

Before the conflict, Erdogan was often likened to Putin with both keeping a grip on power and using glories of past empires to boost patriotism while cracking down on rights. An escalation is possible if Turkey launches the ground operation, said independent military analyst Alexander Golts: "Russia will face the alternative to evacuate immediately and lose face or launch a ground operation".

This showdown has sparked concern in Washington and Brussels as Turkey is a NATO member and can rely on support of other members if there is an attack on its soil, making the current situation potentially explosive. "Even while expressing official support for Turkey, NATO will do all it can to restrain the Turks from any abrupt moves in Syria," Golts said. There is "a risk of the Syrian crisis transforming into a whole new one, a very dangerous level: direct military confrontation between the region's states," Nikolai Bordyuzha, the head of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation made up of Russia and former Soviet states told the Interfax news agency. "The consequences of such a turn of events are hard to predict." —AFP

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## ENCRYPTION DEBATE FORCED INTO COURTS

By Rob Lever

Apple's challenge of a court order to unlock an iPhone used by one of the San Bernardino killers opens up a new front in the long-running battle between technology companies and the government over encryption. The standoff brings the sensitive issue, which has been at a stalemate in Congress, into the courts, which could ultimately impose a decision with wide-ranging consequences. A California magistrate on Tuesday ordered Apple to provide "reasonable technical assistance" to the US Federal Bureau of Investigation to break into an iPhone used by one of the shooters in the deadly December rampage.

Apple quickly said it would fight the judge's order. Chief executive Tim Cook called it "an unprecedented step which threatens the security of our customers," and said the order "has implications far beyond the legal case at hand". Apple, Google and other technology firms in recent years have stepped up encryption - allowing only the customers to have "keys" to unlock their devices - claiming improved security and privacy is needed to maintain confidence in the digital world.

That drive for privacy has prompted sharp objections from law enforcement and intelligence officials, who claim that criminals and extremists are able to hide their illicit activities thanks to device encryption. "This is a clever move by the FBI to move from the legislative arena, where they were not winning, to the courts," said Joseph Hall, chief technologist at the Center for Democracy & Technology, a digital rights group. "They appear to be asking for Apple to produce a version of iOS that removes the glue to keep security working".

The order raised hackles among privacy advocates, which see the potential to unleash unbridled surveillance in the United States and elsewhere. "If the FBI can force Apple to hack into its customers' devices, then so too can every repressive regime in the rest of the world," said Alex Abdo of the American Civil Liberties Union.

"Apple deserves praise for standing up for its right to offer secure devices to all of its customers."

## Debate on 1789 Law

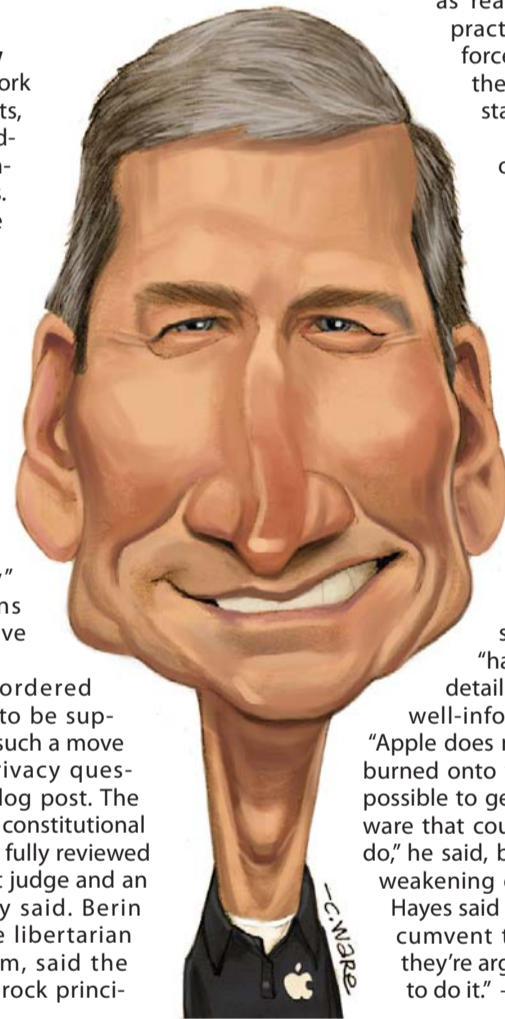
The case is likely to work its way through the courts, which will need to consider a number of both technical and legal questions. Interestingly, Magistrate Judge Sheri Pym's order is based on the 1789 All Writ Act, which lays out broad authority for the courts to help enforcement of the law. Legal scholar Jonathan Turley of the George Washington University said Pym "has gone far beyond what I consider the scope of her authority" and that her actions "appear almost legislative in nature".

"Congress has not ordered such back door access to be supplied by companies and such a move would raise difficult privacy questions," Turley said in a blog post. The order also "raises chilling constitutional questions that should be fully reviewed by a federal district court judge and an appellate court," Turley said. Berin Szoka, president of the libertarian think tank TechFreedom, said the order goes against "bedrock principles of law and privacy".

"If forcing Apple to hack its own devices qualifies as 'reasonable technical assistance,' there is no practical limit to what law enforcement could force private companies to do to compromise the security of their systems," Szoka said in a statement.

Darren Hayes, a Pace University professor of computer forensics, argued that Apple and other tech companies may have gone too far by using encryption that, in theory, makes it impossible for the firms to hand over evidence even if served with a legal warrant. "I think that the public, once they become more educated about what is happening, might change their stance about Apple," said Hayes, who has worked as a consultant to law enforcement. "This case is sensitive for the US public and I don't think it's particularly good public relations for Apple" to refuse to help the investigation, Hayes added.

A key question is whether Apple has the ability to provide the assistance sought by the FBI. CDT's Hall said that Apple "has never been forthcoming about the deep details of its system" but noted there is "a lot of well-informed speculation" about its encryption. "Apple does not have the keys to your device - they are burned onto your chip," Hall said. But he said it may be possible to get around that encryption. "They have software that could essentially do things that the keys can do," he said, but noted that it would probably require a weakening of the overall operating system's security. Hayes said that no one knows for sure if Apple can circumvent the encryption, but noted "the fact that they're arguing this makes me think they may be able to do it." —AFP



## INSTANT GRATIFICATION: FAST FASHION REVOLUTION

By Thomas Urbain

New York Fashion Week this season has put "click and buy" on the map, revolutionizing the antiquated global fashion calendar with clothes that now can be ordered straight from the catwalk. For more than 100 years, the world of high fashion has been divided up into four seasons - spring/summer, autumn/winter. Designers debut their collections at fashion week, fashion magazines write them up and go to print a few months before the clothes are available to buy in boutiques-six months after they first grace the runway.

But gone are the days when only magazine editors, socialites and the in-crowd grace a fashion show. The rise of Instagram, Snapchat, live feeds and bloggers now zaps images from the catwalk across the Internet in real time. That means that high-end clients no longer want to burn thousands of dollars on an outfit that has been plastered all over the Internet for six months. She's bored, she wants something new.

"The younger customer does not want to wait any longer, they want to see it and wear it that day or the next day. So we're going to change the rules," American designer Tommy Hilfiger told AFP at his Chelsea studios. In September, Hilfiger customers will be able to buy his collection straight from the catwalk in what he calls "click and buy." This season New York designer Rebecca Minkoff led the way, launching #SEEBUY-WEAR that offered 70 percent of the items featured in her runway show for immediate purchase.

While the vast majority of New York runway shows have focused on fall/winter 2016, Minkoff's collection was immediate - spring/summer 2016 - which provided the snow stops falling id just weeks around the corner. Others sticking a toe in the water are Tory Burch, Diane von Furstenberg and LaQuan Smith, who offered items from their collections for immediate sale. As with Hilfiger, British luxury label Burberry and Tom Ford are scheduled to follow suit in September.

## Difficult Challenge

The Council of Fashion Designers of America has hired consultants to suggest changes and is to release its findings in March, but already considers the current

model redundant and confusing. "We're entering a society where people to be able to click on what they see and buy it," said Marshal Cohen, a retail industry analyst at The NPD Group. "It is all about fast fashion, speed to market, convenience to the consumer."

But Cohen said it would be tough to enact change. "It's going to be a difficult challenge... because some of these people design these things a year and half, two years in advance. It takes eight months to make a pattern. They're going to have to learn how to speed it up." So great is the lag that high street giants can beat high-end designers to it. For example, Swedish fast fashion giants H&M can spot something on the runway, make a copy and have it in stores in two months, Cohen said.

"We think it will only accelerate over time," Minkoff told AFP. Until now the timetable has been "easy and safe and

comfortable," she said. "We like to take risks and we're not afraid of taking risks." The effect on sales remains to be seen but Uri Minkoff, CEO of his sister's label, said sales were up 10 percent from wholesale partners in the last month. "They're so excited. Right now, the stores can act on all this big press and excitement," he said.

But American designer Zac Posen expressed reservations about sustainability. "Fast fashion is gonna destroy the world, it's going to pollute the oceans," he told AFP backstage at his fashion show. In last few years, the amount of clothing being thrown out had tripled and quadrupled, he said. "It's great that there's accessible style items, but just like you saw... in the food industry, where we went into people understanding sustainability and sourcing of where things come, the same will happen in fashion," he said. —AFP

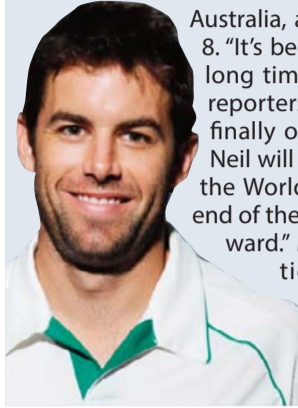


A model presents creations by Tommy Hilfiger during the New York Fashion Week on Feb 15, 2016 in New York. —AFP



## MCKENZIE JOINS SOUTH AFRICA AS BATTING COACH

**CAPE TOWN:** South Africa have appointed former player Neil McKenzie as batting coach until the end of next month's World Twenty20 in India. McKenzie, 40, retired as a player last month and has been roped in to help South African batting line-up that has looked fragile recently. He will work with the team in home Twenty20 series against England and Australia, as well as the World Twenty20 that starts on March 8. "It's been something that we have been trying to do for a long time," South Africa head coach Russell Domingo told reporters yesterday. "We have explored a few options and finally one guy has committed to us, we are ecstatic that Neil will be joining us. "He will work with us until the end of the World Cup. Things will be assessed from there, it's the end of the cricket season, and we will look at things going forward." McKenzie played 58 tests and 64 one-day international for South Africa, as well as 155 domestic Twenty20 games. South Africa take on England in the first Twenty20 of their two-match series in Cape Town on Friday. —Reuters



## UNRANKED THAI PLAYER GETS 18-MONTH BAN

**LONDON:** Unranked Thai player Jatuporn Nalampun has been suspended for 18 months and fined \$5,000 after being found guilty of betting on tennis matches and not cooperating with the investigation, the Tennis Integrity Unit (TIU) said. "The 22-year-old admitted to three breaches of... the (anti corruption) program, which prohibits betting on tennis matches, between July and November 2014," the TIU said in a statement yesterday. Jatuporn was suspended for six months and a fined \$5,000 for the betting offences but was then handed a concurrent 18-month ban after being "found guilty of a further charge of failing to cooperate with a TIU investigation." "The full and timely cooperation by participants in TIU investigations is of paramount importance in the efforts being made by the TIU to eliminate corruption in professional tennis," anti-corruption hearing officer Ian Mill said. Tennis is still reeling from widespread allegations of corruption in the sport and the independent review panel (IRP), which was launched last month, will take at least a year to complete its investigations. The IRP was established by the sport's governing bodies following media reports criticising the TIU for not adequately investigating some 16 players repeatedly flagged up over suspicions they had thrown matches in the past decade. —Reuters

## S AFRICA'S KRUGER SIGNS FOR SCARLETS

**LONDON:** South Africa prop Werner Kruger has signed a three-year contract with the Scarlets, the Welsh regional side announced yesterday. The 31-year-old tighthead will leave Super Rugby side the Bulls to join the Llanelli-based Scarlets ahead of the 2016/17 European season. Kruger, who won four Springbok caps from 2011-12, became the first Bulls player to make 100 appearances in both Super Rugby and the Currie Cup in August 2015. "Both me and my family are really looking forward to this next chapter at Parc y Scarlets," Kruger told the club's region's website. "I believe the time ahead will be a time for growth and learning." Kruger added: "We are especially looking forward to experiencing all that the Welsh have to offer, making a difference and playing great rugby." His signing was announced the day after Wales prop Rhodri Jones confirmed he was leaving the Scarlets for nearby Welsh rivals Ospreys. Scarlets head coach Wayne Pivac said: "He (Kruger) will further strengthen us at the set-piece and will bring vast experience having played both sides of the scrum. — AFP



## KOTC SHOOTING TOURNAMENT BEGINS TODAY

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Shooting Sports Club announced that the Kuwait Oil Tankers Company Shooting Tournament will start today at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex and will last until Saturday, February 20. The tournament will include the 10m air pistol and rifle, 50m prone rifle, 50m three position rifle, 50m free pistol and Olympic archery events, for men, women and juniors.



Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi

Secretary General of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi said KOTC is one of the tournaments Kuwait Shooting Sport Club is keen on organizing every year, and it shows the company's support of shooting and shooters. He thanked KOTC officials for their efforts on behalf of the president and board members. He said KSSC is looking forward for strong participation by our shooters, and for them to exert their best efforts to win.



## 'WE ARE EGYPT' SOCCER TOURNAMENT

**KUWAIT:** The first "We Are Egypt" soccer tournament between the Egyptian community youth with the participation of Kuwaitis, as the "Friends" team won the title as they defeated the "Dreams" team with the score of 3-1.

The tournament was held under the patronage of Public Authority for Sports,

and the closing ceremony was attended by Egyptian Embassy Advisor Mohammad Adel, deputizing for the ambassador.

The ceremony saw a friendly match between Ahli Club academy, and the Pharaohs Academy which ended with the score of 1-1.

Then a match was held between Egypt Stars against The Tournament Stars, which ended in Egypt Stars winning by the score of 4-3.

Egyptian Deputy Ambassador Mohammad Adel lauded the technical level of the tournament, and congratulated HH the Amir on the occasion of

National and Liberation Days.

He said that this is an excellent opportunity for Egyptians in Kuwait to meet, as we consider Kuwait our second home.

Former Egyptian Ahli club player Ahmad Nakhla said the tournament was a success and thanked the organizing committee members for their efforts.



## RETIRING PACQUIAO OPENS DOOR TO MAYWEATHER REMATCH

**GENERAL SANTOS:** Philippine boxing great Manny Pacquiao has opened the door to a lucrative rematch with Floyd Mayweather, telling AFP he still intends to retire after his next fight but that a comeback is possible. The 37-year-old announced in January that his upcoming bout against American Timothy Bradley would be his last so he could concentrate on Filipino politics. However, following a high-energy training session in his hometown of General Santos, Pacquiao said he was loving the sport as much as ever and he could not rule out fighting again.

"It's hard to say right now," Pacquiao, who has won world titles in an unprecedented eight weight divisions, told AFP in an interview when asked about retirement. "I made my decision already that after this fight I (will) retire. But I am not saying that, you know, boxing is closed to me. You never know." Pacquiao made the comments when asked if a chance to avenge his crushing loss to American nemesis Mayweather last year would lure him out of retirement. That fight shattered boxing revenue records, generating 4.5 million pay-per-view purchases and \$600 million in gross revenue. It capped a phenomenal rise for Pacquiao, whose journey from street kid to mega-rich athlete is a source of hope and inspiration for tens of millions of poor Filipinos.

Until this week, Pacquiao had insisted repeatedly that he was very happy to be giving up the sport to pursue politics and his goal of fighting poverty in the Philippines.

Pacquiao, a two-term congressman, is looking to win a Senate seat in May elections, and the official campaign is already underway. Pacquiao spoke at length on Tuesday about his political aspirations-including the prospect of becoming president.

And he repeated that, at this point, his intention was to retire from boxing after fighting Bradley for the third time in Las Vegas on April 9. But Pacquiao also indicated he wasn't sure his retirement would be permanent, twice using the term: "You never know."

### 'PLEASE FORGIVE ME'

He also insisted he remained as physically capable in the ring as a decade ago. "I don't feel different compared (with) when I was 27, 25," Pacquiao said. "I am still the same because I discipline myself. Even if I don't have a fight and I am not in training, I always exercise every day." Pacquiao aggravated a shoulder injury in the Mayweather bout and underwent surgery five days later. He said Tuesday his shoulder had recovered and he was in "100 percent" condition to take on Bradley.

After overseeing training on Monday, long-time American mentor Freddie Roach also said he suspected Pacquiao would be tempted back into the ring if he beats Bradley. "I'll go along with him right now because he is running for senator," Roach told AFP, when asked if he believed Pacquiao genuinely intended to retire. "But there's always that side of me that sees Senator Pacquiao (fight again). Because he likes that, he loves stuff like that," Roach said. Pacquiao is on track to win one of 12 Senate seats in the elections, according to recent surveys, with his sporting heroics largely responsible for his political popularity. However, success is not guaranteed.

Pacquiao has been heavily criticised by some in the Philippines for a dismal attendance record as a congressman that they argue highlights a lack of political conviction. Pacquiao, an evangelical Protestant, also apologised via social media on Tuesday after saying on the campaign trail that homosexuals were "worse than animals". "It's common sense. Do you see animals mating with the same sex? Animals are better because they can distinguish male from female," Pacquiao told television station TV5.

After a barrage of criticism, Pacquiao asked for forgiveness. "I'm sorry for comparing homosexuals to animals. Please forgive me for those I've hurt," Pacquiao said in a video post on Instagram. — AFP



## SAHARA'S FORCE INDIA STAKE LOOKS A HARD SELL

**LONDON/MUMBAI:** India's embattled Sahara conglomerate said it wants to sell its 42.5 percent stake in the Force India Formula One team to help release founder Subrata Roy from jail, but some motor racing insiders are sceptical about how easy it will be to find a buyer.

Sahara, which paid \$100 million for the shareholding in 2011, sought the Indian Supreme Court's permission this month to dispose of Force India and other assets to raise a combined 53 billion Indian rupees (\$778.38 million).

However, former Jordan, Jaguar and Red Bull marketing executive Mark Gallagher said such a sale would not be easy.

"I don't think anybody will pay 100 million pounds, euros or dollars for 42.5 percent of a mid-level F1 franchise," Gallagher told Reuters.

Others said it would be easier to dispose of the stake if the whole team - run by beer baron Vijay Mallya who also owns 42.5 percent - were up for sale because a buyer would want outright

control. With Formula One far less popular than cricket in India, and Mallya under pressure from lenders to meet loan repayment obligations linked to his grounded Kingfisher Airlines, the stake on its own could be a hard sell.

Lenders who are owed more than \$1 billion by Kingfisher have started putting up for sale some of the carrier's assets. Kingfisher has not flown since 2012 due to a lack of cash. "Unless you are just doing it for sponsorship, I imagine you would want control. And generally sponsors don't want to be shareholders," Finbarr O'Connell, administrator for the failed Caterham team, told Reuters.

A Sahara spokesman said in an emailed statement that there were "no talks with anybody at the moment" about selling the Formula One team stake.

Force India's Chief Operating Officer Otmar Szafnauer, asked whether Mallya's permission was needed for any potential sale by his co-owners, told Reuters he

did not know the details of Sahara's shareholder agreements.

### OWNERSHIP CHANGE

Formula One has only 11 teams and any change of ownership, particularly if it might bring more funding, is of major interest to fans.

Force India, the first and only Indian-registered team, have a loyal following - particularly in Mexico thanks to Mexican driver Sergio Perez.

Mallya, who brought Sahara into the British-based team after buying it in 2007, turned 60 in December and recently told India's Economic Times it was "time to slow down, semi-retire and enjoy life". He was not immediately available for comment on Sahara's request and his own F1 intentions. Bernie Ecclestone, the 85-year-old Formula One supremo who has known Mallya for decades, told Reuters he was "quite sure the last thing Vijay wants to do is to quit". That said, he added, every team has its price. "There's a lot of teams that if

somebody comes along with the right cheque, they would sell," said Ecclestone. "Not because they want to, but because commercially they probably think it would be the right thing to do."

### COLLATERAL PACKAGE

Mallya's Force India holding forms part of a package held as collateral by British-based drinks giant Diageo to underpin a \$135 million loan to Watson Ltd, one of his affiliated companies, Diageo said in an earnings press release last month.

The package also includes shares in United Breweries Ltd, a unit of Mallya's UB Group and India's largest brewer. Diageo acquired a stake in Mallya's United Spirits company in 2012 and later gained management control.

Dutch entrepreneur Michiel Mol owns the remaining 15 percent of the Force India team, which finished a best-ever fifth last year. The team can expect about \$75 million in annual prize money and revenue payments for the next

three years, according to informed sources.

Sahara needs to pay back 360 billion rupees (\$5.3 billion), raised from millions of small investors through the sale of bonds ruled by the Supreme Court to be illegal, before Roy can be released.

It also needs to show it has a plan to raise the money, giving the group time to seal deals and avert any court-imposed seizure and auctions.

The Indian Supreme Court on Feb. 2 asked markets regulator SEBI to state within two weeks whether it has any opposition to Sahara's proposal, according to court documents seen by Reuters. The case will next be heard in New Delhi on March 29.

Force India's 2015 budget, according to figures published by Britain's Autosport magazine, was about 110 million pounds (\$159.59 million).

Cash flow has been a problem in the past and the team were granted an advance on this season's championship money. —Reuters

## FOUR CITIES OPEN CAMPAIGN TO HOST 2024 OLYMPICS

**LAUSANNE:** Candidature files from Paris, Rome, Los Angeles and Budapest to host the 2024 Olympic Games, sport's most glittering event, were all delivered on schedule, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) confirmed yesterday.

The new Candidature Process encourages the cities to present projects which match their sports, economic, social and environmental long-term regional planning needs.

This is part of the 'Olympic 2020 agenda' which also insists on the use of existing facilities and provides flexibility for the venues to meet local sustainability and legacy needs.

A delighted IOC President Thomas Bach, confirming the four top drawer candidates, was clearly impressed with a first look at the bids on Wednesday and said he was looking forward to a fascinating competition. "Los Angeles, Rome, Budapest and Paris are all submitting projects fully in line with Olympic Agenda 2020," he said. "It is impressive to see how they have incorporated the Olympic project into the long-term development plans of their city, region and country. Coming from different starting points, for all four there is a clear focus on sustainable development, legacy and in particular how the facilities are going to be used after the Olympic Games.

The candidate files under the new procedure are delivered in three phases and the IOC will confirm (or not) the cities passing their criteria at that stage.

Wednesday's first instalment deals with global vision, Games concept and strategy. These will now be studied by IOC working groups who will deliver reports by June 2016.

Phase two propositions dealing with governance, legal matters and venue fund-

ing are due by 7 October 2016. And the final dossier on Games delivery, experience and venue legacy are not due until 3 February 2017.

### FOLLOW THE SUN

Los Angeles 2024 Olympic bid chiefs decided not to hold a launch ceremony instead kicking off their campaign by unveiling an official logo of an angel basking in rays of Californian sunshine on Tuesday as the city bids to stage the games for a third time after 1932 and 1984.

The logo is accompanied by an official slogan, urging people to "Follow the Sun" by supporting the Los Angeles bid.

Existing installations such as the Staples Center, the LA Coliseum, the Rose Bowl, and university stadiums will be used with athletes to be housed on the UCLA campus. The Hungarian capital Budapest has announced a modest budget of 2.4 billion euros (\$2.7 billion) to build their entire infrastructure.

No launch ceremony will take place in there after opponents, fearing spiralling costs and risks of corruption, tried to force a citizens referendum to block the bid, as was the case with Hamburg. Rome bid president Luca Di Montezemolo presided over a ceremony which was broadcast on state-owned television RAI.

With the Colosseum as their emblem and the city's major tourist attractions as venues, the Italian capital will build on its strengths and existing infrastructure.

Paris bid committee president Bernard Lapasset will confirm a budget of 3.2 billion euros for infrastructure, with existing stadiums, arenas and world recognized landmarks all on the bill.

The vote for the host city will take place on September 13, 2017 in Lima. —AFP



**HIGH POINT:** In this Sept 6, 2014, file photo, Coryn Rivera takes first place in the women's USA Cycling Professional Criterium National Championships in High Point, NC. Rivera is easily the most decorated cyclist in American history, the winner of an astounding 71 national championships. Her big goal for 2016 is qualifying for the Rio Olympics, then adding to her impressive collection of hardware. — AP

## AMERICAN CYCLIST CORYN RIVERA RIDING FAST TO RIO

**KANSAS CITY:** The sprightly girl aboard the hand-me-down bike had started to cry, tears trickling down her cheeks 50 miles into the longest ride of her life.

Coryn Rivera's father had ridden off ahead of her. She wasn't happy about getting left behind. "I still remember that," Wally Rivera said with a laugh, recalling the scene nearly 15 years later. "She was crying and crying because I didn't wait for her." These days, Coryn is the one everyone is trying to catch.

The dynamic sprinter has become arguably the most decorated cyclist in American history, the winner of an astounding 71 national championships. Her closets back home in Tustin, California, overflow with medals, trophies and other plaudits from triumphs stretching back more than a decade. She's also only 22 years old. And just getting started.

Rivera's big goal this year is qualifying for the Rio Olympics, then adding to her extraordinary collection of hardware on the rolling hills of coastal Brazil come August. "The Olympics is really an aura," she told The Associated Press. "To even attend the Olympics is one thing. To be an Olympic champion is one of the pinnacles of women's cycling."

The Olympics have always been an odd-ball event in cycling. Courses tend to favor sprinters or climbers, rarely giving everyone an equal shot, and the one-day nature of the road race means a rider having a particularly good day - or exceptionally bad day - can shake up the podium. As a result, the Grand Tours - the Giro d'Italia, Tour de France and Vuelta a Espana - along with certain classics and the world championships tend to be more revered among the world's best cyclists.

### CROWN JEWEL

But there is no Tour de France in women's cycling. Nor are there other major stage races so steeped in tradition. So the Olympics have become the sport's crown jewel.

"As a kid, every Summer and Winter Olympics, it's something I tuned into," Rivera said. "I can feel the passion and pride that people put into their work, and how they represent their country, and it's a feeling I would love to experience. It's historic. It's legendary." It's something even she thought was a long shot four years ago.

Rivera began riding when her father, a motocross racer-turned-laboratory scientist, put her on a tandem bike when she was 8 or 9. She quickly graduated to her own bike and began tagging along when Wally and his buddies hit the road. But it turned out she had a fierce competitive streak, and soon Rivera was blitzing her father and everyone else on those informal group rides. Eventually, Wally took her to the Redlands Bicycle Classic, the longest-running stage race in America. There was a public race and "she just crushed everybody," he recalled.

"Starting off, she had to race with older kids - 16-year-olds sometimes - and she was still just 9 or 10, and she kept winning races," Wally Rivera

said. Her ascent was about as rapid as her finishing sprint. Rivera quickly won national titles in her age group, then branched out into other disciplines and swept those. There were years she won nationals on the road, in the time trial and on the track, as well as titles in criteriums, mountain biking and cyclocross - a hybrid of off-road and road cycling.

Rivera captured the attention of USA Cycling, earned invitations to prestigious camps and landed a professional contract with her current team, UnitedHealthcare Pro Cycling.

"Right away, she was being successful. She's just one of the talented few," said Mike Tamayo, the US-based team's general manager and sporting director.

### REFOCUS

"The trick with a rider like Coryn is to make sure you're always feeding the beast," Tamayo said. "She needs success. Success breeds success. She keeps hitting those goals, it only makes her want more." Missing those goals drives her just as much, though.

At the world championships last fall in Richmond, Virginia, she found herself leading the breakaway with about a mile left, only to get swept up by the rest of the field before the finish. It was an impressive showing but a disap-

pointing result, and it stuck with Rivera when she took time off over the winter. She finished up her degree at Marian University in Indianapolis, recharged her batteries and began to refocus for her ride to Rio.

It started with a second-place finish in the San Luis Grand Prix in Argentina, then a victory in the opening stage of the Tour Femino de San Luis. After training camp in Florida, she raced in the Tour of Qatar and is now off to Europe for a campaign that Rivera hopes earns that Olympic bid.

There are four spots on the US team, and Megan Guarnier has already locked up one with her bronze medal at worlds. Two spots will go to time trial specialists, which leaves Rivera only one opportunity.

Winning one of the WorldTour events would virtually assure her of it. "We built a European campaign with the focus on giving her a chance to win the WorldTour races she can win," Tamayo said. "We built a team around her. We have the variables we controlled the best we can."

But cycling is an unpredictable sport, one slip-up leading to disaster. So while Rivera is focused on qualifying for Rio, she knows there will be plenty of chances to shine on the world stage. After all, she's 22 years old. And just getting started. — AP



**PARIS:** Officials and athletes pose on stage at the end of the official presentation of Paris as candidate for the 2024 Olympic summer games yesterday in Paris. The race to host the 2024 Olympic Games gets underway in earnest today with the four bid cities — Budapest, Los Angeles, Paris and Rome - presenting their initial candidature files to the International Olympic Committee (IOC). — AFP

## ROME COUNTING ON HISTORICAL BACKDROP FOR 2024 GAMES

**ROME:** With a backdrop including the Colosseum, St. Peter's Basilica and the Circus Maximus, Italian officials are hoping the "great beauty" of Rome is enough to secure them the 2024 Olympic Games. But at a glitzy and detailed presentation of their official candidacy in Rome yesterday, bid candidacy president Luca Di Montezemolo admitted that keeping a watchful eye on their spending budget would be among their priorities. "The building blocks of our project are total transparency, a 'low-cost' approach and bringing general improvement to the city," said Di Montezemolo. With the Colosseum as their emblem and the city's major tourist attractions as venues, Rome intends to build on its strengths and existing infrastructure to avoid, like its rivals, unnecessary and unpopular costs. Di Montezemolo, the former Ferrari chief, claims 70 percent of the facilities required to host events around Rome, which hosted the 1960 Games, are already in place.

In a bid to avoid constructing "white elephant" stadiums or venues, the construction of temporary venues is in the pipeline. "More than 70 percent of the sites are already available. If we had to organise the opening ceremony tomorrow, as well as the athletics and swimming events, we could," said Di Montezemolo.

The race to host the 2024 Olympics began in earnest Wednesday with the four bid cities-Budapest, Los Angeles, Paris and Rome-all presenting their initial candidature files to the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Rome believes the stunning backdrop of some of its famous historical sites offers competitors, spectators and millions of viewers around the globe the chance to take a unique trip back in time.

Athletes would step up to receive their medals in front of the Colosseum, the cycling road races would be held around the ancient sites of the Fori Imperiali and archery events would be held at the Baths of Caracalla. The marathon races would pass by St. Peter's Basilica, a synagogue and a mosque and the Circus Maximus-in antiquity, the venue that hosted brutal chariot races. A Rome Olympics would be held around three key centres: the Foro Italico, built in the 1920s and completed, notably the Stadio Olimpico, ahead of the 1960 Games, the Fiera di Roma and Tor Vergata, which would host the Olympic Village.

Di Montezemolo said their budget for permanent venues (principally the Olympic Village and the press centre), would rise to 2.1 bn (billion) euros.

"It's our plan to build temporary venues. We don't want to be left with any white elephants," he said. —AFP

## BOASSON HAGEN TAKES LEAD IN TOUR OF OMAN

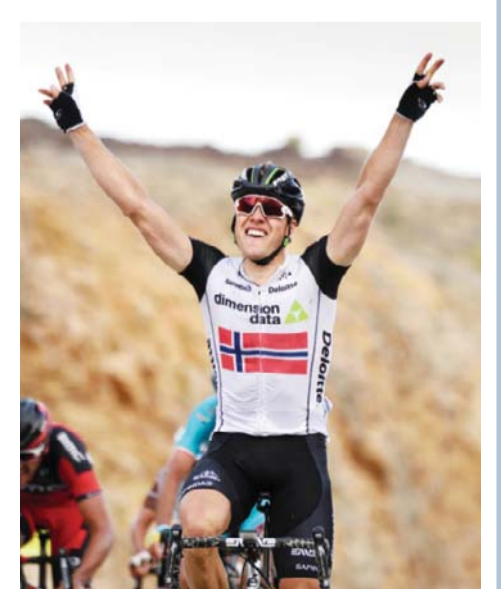
**QURIYAT:** Norwegian all-rounder Edvald Boasson Hagen won the second stage of the Tour of Oman yesterday, completing the 162km ride from Omantel Head Office to Quriyat in 4hrs 12mins.

He finished clear of GC contenders, Italy's Vincenzo Nibali and Greg Van Avermaet of Belgium after a tight sprint following an aggressive ascent of the day's 2.8km climb.

"I managed to attack and get involved in the final sprint, so it was perfect for me," said the 28-year-old former Sky man, who also seized the overall leader's red jersey.

"My team did really well leading on the climb." The climb saw overnight leader Bob Jungels dropped by 59sec while Australia's Richie Porte was also distanced and trails by over three minutes. After a consolidated 20km acceleration by the Astana and Dimension teams which smashed the peloton, Ireland's Dan Martin of Etixx was also left trailing by 1min 41sec. Boasson Hagen leads overall by four seconds from Nibali and six seconds from Van Avermaet.

Today's third stage covers 176.5km from Al Sawadi Beach to Nasseem Park and looks set to end in a bunch sprint. Friday's stage however looks cut out for the pure climbers such as Nibali or Frenchman Romain Bardet. —AFP



**MUSCAT:** Norwegian Edvald Boasson Hagen of Dimension Data team celebrates on the finish line as he wins the second stage of seventh cycling Tour of Oman between the Omantel Head on the outskirts of Muscat and Qurayyat yesterday. — AFP



## THE PREDICAMENT OF BEING AJINKYA RAHANE

**NEW DELHI:** With a "no-vacancy" sign plastered on India's top order and his utility in the middle questioned by his own captain, Ajinkya Rahane suddenly finds his consistency with the bat means very little.

The 27-year-old Mumbai batsman has forced his way into the final 15 for next month's World Twenty20 on home soil but is unlikely to play a major role in the hosts' bid for a second 20-over World title under Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

The left-right combination of Shikhar Dhawan and Rohit Sharma have locked up the opening slots, followed by batting mainstay Virat Kohli and limited overs specialist Suresh Raina.

An industrious accumulator in a lineup teeming with swashbuckling power-hitters, Rahane can only hope for a middle order slot but Dhoni, forthright as ever, has virtually dismissed the possibility. Dhoni insists Rahane, as evident from his consistent performance in the Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 competition, is at his best as an opener and lacks the muscle power to excel as a lower-order slogger.

"When both the openers perform well, it makes life slightly difficult for the skipper," the India captain told reporters on Tuesday. "Rahane, at the end of the day, is a fantastic player but you also have to consider the fact that in

Twenty20, he is somebody who has done really well when he is opening the batting.

"If you look at the team we have got for the Twenty20 World Cup, you find it difficult to find a place for him." An automatic selection in the test team, Rahane has a strike rate of 114 in T20 Internationals and is among the rare batsmen who can score freely and still not offend the purists with his shot-making.

Almost an anachronism in an exuberant group that wears its heart on its sleeve, the soft-spoken Rahane notched up six half-centuries in his last 10 one-day international knocks, floating from

one to seventh position in the batting order.

With India deciding to preserve Kohli for bigger things, Rahane batted at number three in this month's home T20 series against Sri Lanka and will almost invariably make way when the test skipper returns for the upcoming Asia Cup.

This is despite Rahane finishing last year's IPL as the second highest run-scorer, behind only Australia opener David Warner.

Dhoni rates Rahane among the top three Indian batsmen in IPL but is against tinkering with a well-settled batting lineup for the March 8-April tournament. —Reuters



Ajinkya Rahane

## OLYMPIAN TEN DEFENDS TITLE AT FOUR CONTINENTS

**TAIPEI:** Olympic medallist Denis Ten will face tough competition as the headline act at the Four Continents figure skating championships in Taipei this week, as he seeks to defend his crown.

Ten is looking to scoop his second Four Continents title after winning in Seoul last year.

The skater from Kazakhstan, who took an Olympic bronze at Sochi in 2014, will face three-time World Champion Patrick Chan of Canada and 2015 Skate America champion Max Aaron of the United States.

Current ISU Grand Prix Final bronze medallist Shoma Uno of Japan and defending Four Continents bronze medallist Yan Han of China will also line up for the men's title.

The women's event is also wide open after defending champion Polina Edmunds of the US withdrew due to injury. Last year's runner-up Satoko Miyahara of Japan—a reigning world silver medallist—will headline the field.

"It's my third time competing at the Four Continents. I have two silver medals so I want the first place. I practise very hard so I want to do my best at this competition," she told AFP.

Miyahara will face fellow Japanese skater Rika Hongo and 2014 Four Continents champion Kanako Murakami, as well as ISU Grand Prix finalist Gracie Gold of the US.

In the pairs, reigning World and Four

Continents champions Meagan Duhamel and Eric Radford of Canada are defending their title.

Among the medal contenders are World silver medallists Sui Wenjing and Han Cong of China—their compatriots Yu Xiaoyu and Jin Yang will also vie for the title, with American champions Tarah Kayne and Daniel O'Shea also hopeful.

In the ice dance event, defending champions Kaitlyn Weaver and Andrew Poje of Canada are eyeing their third title and come in confident after taking the ISU Grand Prix final earlier this season.

Other top competitors include newly crowned US champions Maia Shibutani and Alex Shibutani, and 2015 World and Four Continents silver medallists Madison Chock and Evan Bates, also from the United States.

More than 90 skaters representing 15 ISU members from around the world are competing at the event, which runs from Thursday to Sunday at Taiwan's Taipei Arena.

"We hope to promote skating in Taiwan by hosting the competition. With the world's top skaters coming (to Taiwan), local audiences can enjoy top quality performances without having to fly abroad while local skaters can have the opportunities to learn from them," said Eddy Wu, secretary-general of Chinese Taipei Skating Union. Tsao Chih-i and Amy Lin will represent Taiwan in the men's and women's events, respectively. —AFP



Juan Martin del Potro

## DEL POTRO MAKES WINNING RETURN AT DELRAY BEACH OPEN

**DELRAY BEACH:** Juan Martin del Potro thrust his arms into the air, blew a kiss skyward and began tossing his sweat-soaked wristbands into the crowd. This was one sweet victory for the Argentine. Del Potro beat American Denis Kudla 6-1, 6-4 in the first round of the Delray Beach Open on Tuesday in his first ATP match in 11 months following a left wrist injury.

Del Potro's win was a relief to tournament organizers after their top two seeds each had a quick exit. Kevin Anderson, the No. 1 seed and 2012 champion, was forced to retire from his match against Austin Krajicek due to a right shoulder injury. Hours later, second-seeded Bernard Tomic of Australia lost to American Rajeev Ram, 7-6 (3), 6-1.

The 27-year-old del Potro played just four matches last year and 10 in 2014. He has faced four surgeries — one on his right wrist and three on his left — since defeating Roger Federer in the 2009 US Open final.

Once ranked in the top 10, del Potro is down to No. 1,041. Against Kudla, he was surprisingly consistent, losing just 10 points on his serve in the match — five of them on double faults. Rather than pound his once potent two-handed backhand, del Potro employed a new-found one-handed slice shot.

Del Potro next plays today against Australian John-Patrick Smith. When asked about his opponent, a former All-American at the University of Tennessee, del Potro shrugged his shoulders and deadpanned, "I don't know him. For two years I was at home watching 'The Simpsons.'"

Anderson had just dropped the first set to the 103rd-ranked American in a 7-3 tiebreaker when he sauntered to the sideline, packed his racket bag, shook his opponent's hand and walked off the court. Anderson also pulled out of the first tournament of the year in Chennai and retired from his opening match at the Australian Open last month due to a left-knee injury.

Krajicek was one of seven Americans to advance to the second round. Donald Young, a finalist last year, moved on when Mikhail Kukushkin of Kazakhstan retired with a leg injury while trailing 7-6 (3), 3-0. Sixth-seeded Steve Johnson squeaked past Australian John Millman 6-3, 5-7, 7-6 (10-8), and Sam Querrey defeated Thiemo de Bakker 4-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Taylor Fritz, who reached the final in just his third ATP World Tour level tournament in Memphis last week, was clearly fatigued in a 6-3, 6-3 loss to fellow American Tim Smyczek. —AP



Rafael Nadal

## NADAL, FERRER AND THIEM ADVANCE AT RIO OPEN

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** After an hour-long delay for rain, Rafael Nadal advanced to the second round at the Rio Open with 6-1, 6-4 win over fellow Spaniard Pablo Carreno.

Nadal won gold in the Beijing Olympics in 2008 but missed the London Olympics with an injury. Despite being asked about it repeatedly, he's staying away from talking about the Rio's Olympics that open in six months.

"The Olympics is a very important event, a very special one, and I'm going to try my best when the Olympics arrive," Nadal said. "But for now I'm playing the ATP tournament in Rio. That's the most important thing for me." Also advancing Tuesday were No. 2 David Ferrer, who beat Nicolas Jarry of Chile 6-3, 7-6 (3), and No. 5 Dominic Thiem, who had a 6-3, 6-4 win over Pablo Andujar of Spain.

Not much will faze Thiem in this week's Rio Open. He beat Nadal — the king of clay — last week in the semifinals in Buenos Aires, and then won the event

for his fourth clay-court title.

"Both things gave me a lot of confidence, but after the match with Nadal I wanted to give everything to win the tournament," the 22-year-old Austrian said. "The win against Rafa would have been worth only half if I had lost the final."

No. 3 Jo-Wilfried Tsonga had his match rained out against Thiago Monteiro. They will play today. In first-round upsets, Federico Delbonis of Argentina beat sixth-seeded Jack Sock of the United States 7-5, 6-1 and Alexandr Dolgoplov upset No. 8 seed Thomaz Bellucci 6-7 (3), 7-5, 6-2.

On the women's side, top-seeded Teliana Pereira of Brazil lost 6-3, 7-5 to Petra Martic of Croatia, and second-seeded Johanna Larsson of Sweden defeated Lourdes Dominguez Lino of Spain 7-5, 6-4.

Pereira's early loss is a blow for the women's side of the combined WTA-ATP event on outdoor clay. She is only ranked No. 43 but gave local organizers a hometown favorite. —AP

## WILLETT KEEN TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM IN MALAYSIA

**KUALA LUMPUR:** England's Danny Willett seeks further fuel for his rapid rise in world golf at this week's inaugural Maybank Championship Malaysia, where he heads a field including past Major champions Louis Oosthuizen and Martin Kaymer.

Willett arrives in Kuala Lumpur on a tide of momentum following a win two weeks ago in the Dubai Desert Classic and a handful of other top-10 finishes in recent months.

The 28-year-old has soared from 47th a year ago to world number 13 and is the highest-ranked player in a Malaysian field that also features top-50 players Thongchai Jaidee and Kiradech Aphibarnrat of Thailand, and Englishmen Chris Wood and Matthew Fitzpatrick.

Willett showed his championship mettle by clinching a one-shot victory in Dubai with a tricky 15-foot putt on the final hole.

It was his fourth career win and lifted him from 19th in the world rankings to within striking distance of the top 10. Willett admitted he is still acclimating to his new status and that "expectations are obviously high after how well I've been playing recently."

"Winning does take a lot out of you, physically and mentally," he said. But he added that a week off at home in England had left him refreshed.

### 'RUNNING ON ADRENALINE'

"When you're running on adrenalin, you don't tend to feel the little niggles and the aches and pains that can build up. So it was

nice to have last week off to recover and recharge the batteries," he said.

The \$3 million tournament at the Royal Selangor Golf Club, co-sanctioned by the European and Asian Tours who are in ongoing talks over a proposed merger into a mega-tour, is the successor to the longtime Malaysian Open, which has been discontinued due to a sponsorship shift.

Both Oosthuizen, now the world number 21, and Kaymer, who is ranked 36, will be trying to bounce back after missing the cut in windy conditions in Dubai.

"I struggled with my ball flight (in Dubai) and when it's windy that's the last thing you want to happen," said Oosthuizen, of South Africa.

The early-year appearance in Malaysia typically offers a special challenge for Western golfers due to the humid conditions and jet lag, and Oosthuizen said Tuesday he was "struggling to stay awake."

But he added that it may be "a good omen", noting that he ended up winning the Malaysian Open in 2012 after rushing in following a playoff at the US Masters against eventual champion Bubba Watson.

Willett, Germany's Kaymer, and others from Europe also are keen to burnish their Ryder Cup credentials in the presence of European captain Darren Clarke of Northern Ireland, who also will be competing in Malaysia.

The \$3 million Maybank Championship Malaysia has a winner's purse of \$500,000 and is co-sanctioned by the Asian Tour and European Tour. —AFP



**DUBAI:** Ana Ivanovic from Serbia serves to Simona Halep from Romania during the third day of the Dubai Tennis Championships in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, yesterday. — AP



## UEFA OPENS DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS OVER PUTIN TRIBUTE

**MOSCOW:** UEFA has opened disciplinary proceedings against Lokomotiv Moscow midfielder Dmitri Tarasov for wearing a T-shirt praising Russian President Vladimir Putin after a Europa League match in Turkey.

The 28-year-old Tarasov removed his team jersey at the end of the game against Fenerbahce in Europe's second-tier club competition in Istanbul on Tuesday, revealing a picture of Putin and the words: "The most polite president".

Diplomatic relations between Russia and Turkey soured after a Russian war

plane was shot down by the Turkish Air Force last November.

"This is my president. I respect him and decided to show that I am ready to support him wherever I am. I wrote on this T-shirt everything that I wanted to say," Tarasov said after his side lost 2-0 in the first leg of the last-32 tie.

Lokomotiv described Tarasov's actions as "inexcusable" in a statement on their website (www.fclm.ru).

"Unfortunately, the club's staff were unable to prevent this incident as the footballer had not informed anyone of

his plans. What Dmitri did was inappropriate and damages the club's and his own reputation," the club said.

"Tarasov will be fined in accordance with his contract with Lokomotiv." Russian sports news agency R-Sport quoted a UEFA source as saying that Tarasov could be banned for a minimum of 10 matches and that Lokomotiv may also face sanctions.

Igor Lebedev, State Duma Deputy and member of the Russian Football Union's executive committee, criticized Tarasov.

"You can only say thank you for such a stupid gesture," Lebedev told R-Sport. "I respect him as a footballer but this kind of action is unforgivable for a person of this level. Patriotism is not shown on T-shirts or on pictures..."

"A 3-0 victory against Fenerbahce would have been the highest level of patriotism and Tarasov would have been carried out of the stadium by the fans back to Moscow," he added.

European soccer's governing body has taken a very serious stance against politically-motivated incidents at soccer

matches in the past. In July 2015, it fined Barcelona 30,000 euros (\$33,438) after their Champions League final victory over Juventus during which the club's supporters displayed banners with calls for Catalonia to gain independence from Spain. In 2013, UEFA fined Celtic 50,000 euros following a Champions League game against AC Milan at which the Glasgow club's fans unveiled a flag showing the image of Scottish national hero William Wallace and Irish Republican hunger striker Bobby Sands. —Reuters

## SPRING IN THE AIR AS MLB PITCHERS, CATCHERS REPORT

**CHICAGO:** The thaw from winter's teeth-chattering cold is underway, perhaps most noticeably for eager Chicago Cubs fans with this week's heartwarming arrival of pitchers and catchers at Major League Baseball spring training camps.

As Arizona Diamondback players report on Wednesday to Salt River Fields at Talking Stick, a half-hour drive from downtown Phoenix, the long-suffering Cubs are the unaccustomed, heavy 4-1 favorites to win the 2016 World Series.

Hope springs eternal with the beginning of spring training in Arizona and Florida, with all teams gearing up to start all level when Major League Baseball's marathon 162-game season opens in April.

For the Cubs and their fans, it seems like an eternity since they ruled the baseball world having not won a World Series since 1908.

With a roster full of young talent including sluggers Anthony Rizzo, Kris Bryant and Kyle Schwarber, and a pitching staff topped by Cy Young winner Jake Arrieta, the Cubs reached the NL Championship Series last year after posting the third best record in the majors.

Determined to snap the longest championship drought in North American professional sports, Cubs general manager Theo Epstein kept busy in the offseason, signing outfielder Jason Heyward and starter John Lackey from division-rival St. Louis and adding super-utility player Ben Zobrist.

Following the Cubs in preseason odds were the 2015 NL champion New York Mets and San Francisco Giants, both rated 8-1 choices to win the championship by online betting site Bovada.

The Los Angeles Dodgers and

Washington Nationals follow at 10-1, with the National League's leading teams all priced ahead of the top American League choices.

The Boston Red Sox, AL East cellar dwellers in 2015, signed free agent starter David Price, who last year helped Toronto reach the postseason for the first time since 1993, and added closer Craig Kimbrel to rate a 12-1 choice with the Blue Jays.

To offset the loss of Price, Toronto expect young starter Marcus Stroman to return from injury to pick up the slack and strong-armed young Aaron Sanchez might join him in the rotation.

Reigning MLB champions the Kansas City Royals did not make major additions but re-signed free agent outfielder Alex Gordon and brought in starter Ian Kennedy to compensate for the loss of Johnny Cueto, who signed a free agent deal with the Giants.

Kansas City were rated 16-1 choice to repeat, followed by the up-and-coming Houston Astros at 18-1 while the Yankees were a joint sixth pick at 22-1.

Among teams making offseason splashes were the Diamondbacks, who bolstered their rotation by signing free agent Zack Greinke away from the Los Angeles Dodgers and trading for Shelby Miller.

Two other AL Central clubs made bold moves in hopes of challenging the Royals. The Cubs' crosstown neighbors the White Sox beefed up their infield by dealing for second baseman Brett Lawrie and slugging third baseman Todd Frazier, while Detroit added starting pitcher Jordan Zimmermann and outfielder Justin Upton over the winter. —Reuters



**WASHINGTON:** Nick Shore #21 of the Los Angeles Kings moves the puck past Jason Chimera #25 of the Washington Capitals at Verizon Center yesterday6 in Washington. — AFP

## KUZNETSOV, BURAKOVSKY LEAD CAPS TO 3-1 COMEBACK WIN OVER KINGS

**WASHINGTON:** Evgeny Kuznetsov's tiebreaking goal with two minutes remaining off an assist from ex-Kings player Justin Williams, a score that withstood a coach's challenge for goalie interference, lifted the NHL-leading Washington Capitals to a 3-1 comeback victory over Los Angeles on Tuesday night. Kuznetsov's 16th goal, but first in a month, gave him 20 points in his past 14 games. Andre Burakovsky got a secondary assist on that score, after tying the game with 48.1 seconds left in the second period. Jason Chimera added an empty-netter with 8.6 seconds left. Anze Kopitar put Los Angeles ahead in the first period on a short-handed goal. Washington goalie Philipp Grubauer, getting a rare start in place of Braden Holtby, made 39 saves.

### SHARKS 4, LIGHTNING 2

Matt Nieto and Joel Ward both had a goal and an assist as the Sharks beat the Lightning. Joe Pavelski and Melker Karlsson also scored for the Sharks, who are 7-2-2 over their last 11 games. Martin Jones improved to 11-2-1 in his last 14 decisions after making 28 saves. The Lightning, losers in four of their last five games, got goals from Ryan Callahan and Cedric Paquette. Steven Stamkos was pointless in the Lightning's first game since general manager Steve Yzerman announced Monday that the team captain won't be moved before this month's trade deadline. Stamkos, who has a no-trade clause in his contract, is in the final year of a deal that pays him about \$5.5 million this season. He is eligible to become an unrestricted free agent in July.

### FLYERS 6, DEVILS 3

Wayne Simmonds and Nick Cousins scored 50 seconds apart in a four-goal third period and the Philadelphia Flyers got a big game from its special teams in posting a victory over New Jersey, snapping the Devils' three-game winning streak. Rookie defenseman Shayne Gostisbehere extended his point scoring streak to 13 games with a goal, Brayden Schenn had a goal and two assists and Claude Giroux added three assists as the Flyers won for the second time in seven games (2-3-2). Jakub Voracek and Ryan White also scored in the third period and Michal Neuvirth made 21 saves.

Tyler Kennedy, Jordin Tootoo and Kyle

Palmieri scored for the Devils.

Special teams were the difference. The Flyers killed 6 of 7 power plays and converted on 2 of 4 extra-man chances.

### BRUINS 2, BLUE JACKETS 1, OT

Loui Eriksson scored 33 seconds into overtime to lift the Bruins over the Blue Jackets. Torey Krug and David Krejci assisted on the goal, which helped the Bruins earned their seventh win in their past eight road games. Patrice Bergeron also scored for Boston and Tuukka Rask made 28 saves. Alexander Wennberg scored on a first-period penalty shot for the Blue Jackets. Joonas Korpi also made 28 saves for Columbus.

### HURRICANES 2, JETS 1

Jordan Staal and Riley Nash scored power-play goals, and the Hurricanes earned a victory over the Jets. The Hurricanes swept the season series. Carolina won 5-3 at Winnipeg on Feb 5. The win snapped Winnipeg's four-game road winning streak. The Jets had not lost on the road since Jan. 7 against Dallas. Winnipeg had won in its previous five trips to Raleigh.

Eddie Lack made 20 saves for Carolina, facing eight shots through the first 44 1/2 minutes. Carolina outshot Winnipeg 29-21, including 25-8 at one point early in the third

period. Ondrej Pavelec made 27 saves for Winnipeg. Carolina, 8-1-3 in its past 12 home games, killed off three first-period penalties and four overall to help Lack improve to 5-2 lifetime against Winnipeg.

### SENATORS 2, SABRES 1, SO

Bobby Ryan and Kyle Turris scored in the shootout and the Senators topped the Sabres, snapping Ottawa's three-game losing streak. Ryan Dzingel scored in the first period for the Senators, and Craig Anderson made 38 saves. Matt Moulson scored for the Sabres as Robin Lehner stopped 25 shots. Anderson made a huge save on Sabres rookie Jack Eichel with 15 seconds remaining in overtime to force the shootout.

### DUCKS 5, OILERS 3

Andrew Coglianone scored a short-handed empty-net goal to help the Ducks earn a victory over the Oilers. David Perron, Jakob Silfverberg, Hampus Lindholm and Corey Perry also scored for the Ducks, who have won three in a row and 10 of their past 12 games to move into second place in the Pacific Division, three points behind the rival LA Kings. Leon Draisaitl, Taylor Hall and Benoit Pouliot scored for the Oilers, who have lost five of their past six. —AP



**JUPITER:** St. Louis Cardinals infielder Matt Carpenter throws during spring training baseball practice yesterday, in Jupiter, Fla. Cardinals pitchers and catchers hold their first official workout today with position players following next week. — AP

## NHL Results/Standings

Ottawa 2, Buffalo 1 (SO); Tampa Bay 2, San Jose 4; Edmonton 3, Anaheim 5; St. Louis 2, Dallas 1 (OT); New Jersey 3, Philadelphia 6; Washington 3, Los Angeles 1; Carolina 2, Winnipeg 1; Columbus 1, Boston 2 (OT).

Eastern Conference						Western Conference							
Atlantic Division						Pacific Division							
W	L	OT	GF	GA	PTS								
Florida	33	18	6	160	134	72	Dallas	37	15	6	188	156	80
Boston	31	20	6	174	158	68	Chicago	37	18	5	170	139	79
Detroit	29	19	9	146	147	67	St. Louis	33	17	9	145	139	75
Tampa Bay	30	22	4	149	139	64	Nashville	26	21	10	151	152	62
Montreal	27	26	4	157	158	58	Colorado	29	26	4	158	164	62
Ottawa	26	26	6	165	182	58	Minnesota	24	22	10	140	142	58
Buffalo	23	28	7	137	162	53	Winnipeg	25	28	3	143	162	53
Toronto	20	26	9	134	163	49	Central Division						
Metropolitan Division						Los Angeles	33	20	3	154	134	69	
Washington	41	10	4	184	126	86	Anaheim	29	19	8	136	137	66
NY Rangers	32	18	6	163	143	70	San Jose	30	20	5	164	148	65
NY Islanders	30	19	6	161	141	66	Arizona	26	24	6	151	171	58
New Jersey	29	22	7	130	136	65	Vancouver	22	22	12	133	157	56
Pittsburgh	28	19	8	142	141	64	Calgary	25	27	3	150	168	53
Carolina	26	21	10	139	150	62	Edmonton	22	30	6	146	176	50
Philadelphia	25	21	10	137	151	60	Note: Overtime losses (OT) worth 1 pt and not included in loss column (L).						
Columbus	23	28	7	149	180	53							

## EX-NBA PLAYER'S PHILIPPINES LIFE BAN REDUCED

**MANILA:** Ex-NBA player Ivan Johnson has had his lifetime ban in the Philippines' professional league for a foul-mouthed outburst at an official reduced to one year after he made a personal apology, the league said yesterday.

Ex-Atlanta Hawk Johnson was banished mid-game on Saturday after he used "the f-word" in an argument with Philippine Basketball Association (PBA) commissioner Chito Narvasa.

But after a meeting with the player, who plays with the Talk 'N Text Tropang Texters team, Narvasa reduced the ban to one season, league spokesman

Willie Marcial told AFP. "He apologised, he explained to us... he is really different on the court. He wanted to show he is really a good man," Marcial said of the meeting, where he said Johnson brought along his wife and two children. "I really love my fans in the Philippines," Marcial quoted Johnson, 31, as saying.

The PBA also reduced Johnson's 250,000-peso fine (\$5,600) to 150,000 pesos, Marcial added. The 6ft 8in (2.03 metre) power forward, has had a chequered career, having been suspended for one game earlier this month for fighting with players of an opposing

team. He was also banned for life by the Korean Basketball League in 2010 for making an obscene gesture at a referee. And during an abbreviated 2011-2013 NBA career, he was fined for various altercations with fans and officials. Marcial said: "He (Johnson) knows if he does something again, he will really be finished in the Philippines."

In a post on Twitter, Johnson apologised to Narvasa, adding that "this lifetime ban is truly unfortunate and devastating to me being that I feel at home and most welcomed when playing here in the Philippines." Foreign imports are highly-valued in the bas-

ketball-crazy Philippines where they can play a dominant role in the highly-competitive PBA. But foreign players can find themselves under a microscope, where they may be penalised for any offence.

Ex-New York Knicks and Denver Nuggets player Renaldo Balkman was banned and fined by the PBA after he choked a teammate in 2013.

Last year, former NBA player Daniel Orton was fired by his own team after he criticised revered Philippines boxing champ Manny Pacquiao for embarking on a professional basketball career. —AFP



Ivan Johnson



## BAYERN'S GUARDIOLA SHORT AT THE BACK AS JUVE LOOM

**BERLIN:** Pep Guardiola acknowledges Bayern Munich has a height problem ahead of their key Champions League clash at Juventus as an injury crisis has left them short at the back-literally. While striker Robert Lewandowski is head and shoulders above his rivals, scoring twice in Sunday's 3-1 win at Augsburg, injuries meant Bayern fielded a back four with an average height of under five foot nine inches (1.75m). "Every team in the world is stronger in the header than we are. It's not an ideal situation," complained Guardiola ahead of next Tuesday's Champions League clash in Turin.

Guardiola has been stripped of centre-backs after Holger Badstuber fractured an ankle in training last Saturday, while Javi Martinez and Jerome Boateng are sidelined long-term by knee and groin injuries. Boateng has said he is on target to meet his goal of returning to training in April, "but I won't set a date to put myself under pressure", while Badstuber is now out of hospital after surgery, but is not expected to play again this season.

"It's a big shock for me, but I can promise everyone I will return," said Badstuber after suffering his fourth serious injury since December 2012. Medhi Benatia is returning from injury, while loan signing Serdar Tasci is lacking conditioning after joining from Spartak Moscow and was concussed in his first training session.

Without a single fit centre-back, Guardiola used Juan Bernat (1.72m) and Philipp Lahm (1.70m) as wing-backs against Augsburg with left-back David Alaba (1.80m) and defensive midfielder Joshua Kimmich (1.74m) paired up at centre-back. In attack, Bayern are scoring goals

for fun through two giants of the game. Lewandowski has 21 goals in 20 league games with 31 in all competitions, while Thomas Mueller has also hit 15 league goals in a total from 22. But Bayern's bosses are concerned about the height of Juve's key forwards Mario Mandzukic (1.87m), Alvaro Morata (1.90m) and Paulo Dybala (1.77m), especially from corners and set piece situations.

"Then we'll just have to stop them jumping higher," joked Bayern's director of sport Matthias Sammer. "They'll have to make their presence felt for crosses, but Philipp, Joshua or Juan are all incredibly savvy." Bayern are desperate to celebrate Guardiola's departure for Manchester City with silverware after exiting the Champions League at the semi-finals stage for the last two seasons under the Spaniard's steerage. But their injury situation could be a blessing in disguise as Guardiola's current back four are all fleet-footed and have their team-mates' trust. Mueller needs no convincing.

"They are all strong in the tackle, dedicated, fast and have everything you need, maybe except the size of a classic central defender," added the Germany forward.

Bayern host mid-table Darmstadt on Saturday, then Juventus on Tuesday, before two key away German league matches as they look to protect their eight-point lead at Wolfsburg, on February 27, and second-placed Borussia Dortmund on March 5.

"We need to show plenty of spirit," said Sammer. "We have to be able to prove we can live with playing there (at Wolfsburg and Dortmund). I'm sure the team will manage it." —AFP



**PARIS:** Paris Saint-Germain's Uruguayan forward Edinson Cavani (C) celebrates scoring the 2-1 next to (LtoR) Paris Saint-Germain's Italian midfielder Marco Verratti and Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian defender Marquinhos during the Champions League round of 16 first leg football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Chelsea FC. — AFP

## BLANC PRAISES MATCH-WINNER CAVANI, CHELSEA RETAIN HOPE

**PARIS:** Paris Saint-Germain coach Laurent Blanc heaped praise on Edinson Cavani after the Uruguayan played the role of super-sub to give his side a 2-1 win against Chelsea in their Champions League last 16, first leg.

Cavani replaced Lucas in the 74th minute of Tuesday's game at the Parc des Princes and four minutes later beat Thibaut Courtois with a first-time finish from an Angel Di Maria assist to ensure the French champions will take a lead to London for the second leg next month.

It was just his second goal of 2016 after a difficult spell which has seen the player signed for a French record transfer fee of 64 million euros (\$71 million; £50 million) from Napoli lose his place as a regular starter.

"Whoever got the second goal I would have been happy and I am happy for Edi. He's a boy who scores goals—we doubt his goal-scoring talents often and then he pops up and shows he can put the ball in the net at any time," said Blanc.

"He has gone through a very difficult time but I hope the fact he got the goal will be good for him and the team."

It looked like Chelsea would head back across the Channel the happier after Zlatan Ibrahimovic's free-kick opener was cancelled out

by the rarest of goals — a poacher's finish by John Obi Mikel right on the stroke of half-time.

Several fine saves by Courtois in the second half thwarted PSG for long spells until Cavani's winner, and now Chelsea will need to score at Stamford Bridge in the return on March 9 if they are to stand a chance of going through.

However, away goals have decided the meetings of these clubs in the last two seasons, with Chelsea advancing in the 2014 quarter-finals and Paris going through in the last 16 a year ago despite being held 1-1 at home in the first leg.

"The big regret for me is that we lost the goal just before half-time," said Blanc. "Maybe we need to ask UEFA if it's fair that away goals count double, but tonight we can be happy because we played the way we want to play."

"It is not a very big advantage but in terms of the football we played it's very satisfying."

### 'NOT DRAMATIC'

PSG kept up their impressive record this season, which now reads just one defeat in 40 matches in all competitions, with that loss coming away to Real Madrid.

In contrast, this was a first defeat for Chelsea in 13 matches since the sacking of Jose Mourinho in December, but their interim coach

Guus Hiddink remains upbeat about their chances in the return.

"Of course a defeat is never a good or nice feeling but you have to consider it's a two-leg game and scoring away is always important," said Hiddink, who came to Paris with a reorganised defence in the absence of injured captain John Terry. "We emphasised the importance of defensive organisation but we were dangerous too. Losing 2-1, of course we're still in the race."

"We could have been a little bit more lethal in the four or five counters we made but it is difficult to play them. I am never happy with a loss but it's not a dramatic loss."

The veteran Dutchman, who admitted Terry was a doubt for this weekend's FA Cup fifth-round tie against Manchester City, said it was still impossible to name a favourite to go through to the last eight.

"I think it's 50-50 still. Our opponents are a very strong team and that's why I think our performance was very good. "Everyone could see this PSG likes to play football. They are very smart and you must be very alert."

"If you have seen the second goal-this was a typical example of how we prepared them but you cannot do everything well. They have a nose for creating danger." —AFP

## BECKENBAUER FINED AND WARNED BY FIFA JUDGES

**GENEVA:** FIFA's ethics committee yesterday sanctioned German football legend Franz Beckenbauer with a warning and a light fine for failing to cooperate with a probe into the bidding for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups.

The investigation into the controversial decisions to award the two tournaments to Russia (2018) and Qatar (2022) culminated in the now famous 2014 report authored by former US prosecutor Michael Garcia, which FIFA has so far not released, citing procedural reasons.

Beckenbauer "failed to cooperate" with the investigation, "despite repeated requests for his assistance," an ethics committee statement said. The information sought from Beckenbauer included "requests to provide information during an in-person interview and in response to written questions presented in both English and German," the statement added.

FIFA judges issued a warning to Beckenbauer and fined him 7,000 Swiss francs (\$7,000, 6,350 euros). Beckenbauer, 70, served on the panel that chose the tournament hosts. In June 2014, he was suspended for 90 days for his alleged reluctance

to cooperate with the Garcia probe, but that suspension was lifted after two weeks.

In October, FIFA judges opened an investigation targeting Beckenbauer, a former FIFA executive committee member, but did not disclose the nature of the probe.

The German national led his country's successful bid for the 2006 World Cup, which has been engulfed by claims that a \$7.2 million payment to FIFA was used to purchase the votes of four members of FIFA's executive committee in 2000 — days before Germany's bid was narrowly approved.

The ethics committee, however, said its investigation of Beckenbauer "did not look into the matters related to the awarding of the 2006

FIFA World Cup to Germany."

The statement from the tribunal noted that Beckenbauer has "subsequently demonstrated a willingness to cooperate." Garcia quit FIFA after compiling his report, claiming that world football's governing body released an erroneous summary of his findings that sought to clear Russia and Qatar of wrongdoing. —AFP



Franz Beckenbauer

## KLOPP RELISHING RETURN TO GERMANY

**BERLIN:** Jurgen Klopp returns to Germany for the first time as Liverpool coach today hunting a Europa League win at Augsburg in his quest to quench the Reds' thirst for silverware.

Klopp returns to the sidelines at a Bundesliga ground for the first time since the 48-year-old quit Borussia Dortmund last season, then replaced Brendan Rodgers as Liverpool coach in October.

Fans have clamoured for tickets for the round of 32, first-leg clash at the WWK Arena in deepest Bavaria to see Liverpool, who are unbeaten in their six European games under Klopp and buoyed by Sunday's thrashing of Aston Villa.

Augsburg received 5,000 applications for just 2,000 away tickets for the Liverpool game, which will be a 26,160 sell-out, with the return leg at Anfield on February 25, just three days before the Reds play Manchester City in the League Cup final.

While he is looking forward to returning home, Klopp is focused on the job in hand. "During the draw, I wasn't thinking 'please let it be a German club'. At that point, I'd only been away for four months," he admitted.

"I'm looking forward to coming to Germany, but it's work and it's not as though

I've been waiting for it. (For Augsburg) Liverpool would have been an exciting enough draw, without a German coach (being involved).

"The stadium would have already been full."

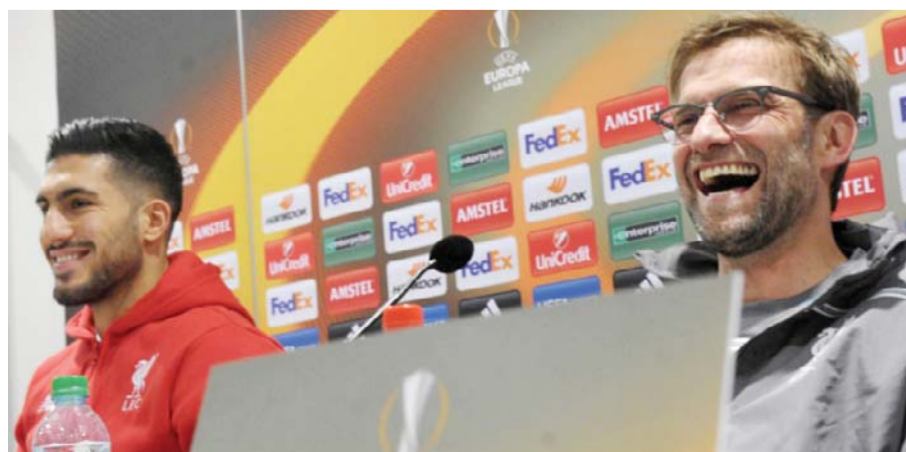
Liverpool arrive in Bavaria buoyed by their 6-0 drubbing of Villa which left them eighth in the Premier League. After a mid-season injury glut, Liverpool are getting back to a fully fit squad.

Daniel Sturridge, Philippe Coutinho and Divock Origi all played in the drubbing of Villa after recent injuries. Sturridge, who scored the opener at Villa Park, made his first start since early October, while it was Coutinho's first start since January 5.

Klopp is expected to name a strong side, as Liverpool do not have any games between the two legs after being knocked out of the FA Cup by West Ham earlier this month.

In the Bundesliga, Augsburg are 14th, just a point from the relegation places after Sunday's 3-1 defeat at home to runaway league leaders Bayern Munich.

After the League Cup, the Europa League presents Klopp with a second chance at silverware in his first season to bring some European glory back to Merseyside. —AFP



**AUGSBURG:** FC Liverpool's coach Jurgen Klopp and Emre Can attend a press conference on the eve of the Europa League round of 32 football match against FC Augsburg, yesterday at WWK-Arena in Augsburg. — AFP

## PSG'S LAVEZZI SIGNS FOR HEBEI CHINA FORTUNE CLUB

**BEIJING:** Paris Saint-Germain's Argentine forward Ezequiel Lavezzi has signed with Hebei China Fortune, his new club said yesterday, making the 30-year-old the latest European-based footballer drawn east by jaw-dropping sums.

Hebei described him as "the next Maradona" on a verified social media account. It did not disclose a transfer fee, but previous British press reports said Lavezzi would earn 23.5 million pounds (\$33.6 million) over two years. "His arrival will make the team's attack more incisive, we look forward to him showing off his brave spirit," the Chinese club added. Website transfermarkt, which tracks commercial developments in the sport, gave the transfer fee as 5.5 million euros (\$6.1 million). Chinese teams have been splashing their cash in Europe, as wealthy owners embrace President Xi Jinping's vision of the sleeping Asian giant becoming a new footballing heavyweight.

Hebei China Fortune are owned by a Beijing-based developer of industrial parks, founded by billionaire Wang Wenxue.

At the club, Lavezzi will join Ivorian striker Gervinho, who signed for 18 million euros in January, along with Cameroon captain and former Marseille centre-back Stephane Mbia.

Lavezzi joined PSG in 2012 for 30 million euros from Napoli, but has been used mainly as a substitute this season, with just three league starts. The current transfer window shuts on February 26 in China, and has already seen big-money moves by Brazilians Alex Teixeira and Ramires, along with Colombia's Jackson Martinez, to join the cash-flush China Super League. The Chinese transfer fee record has been smashed four times in the current transfer window, culminating in Jiangsu Suning paying Shakhtar Donetsk 50 million euros for Teixeira.

This week, China-based Australian footballer Tim Cahill—who later had his contract terminated by Shanghai Greenland Shenhua—said that many of the new arrivals were motivated by greed.

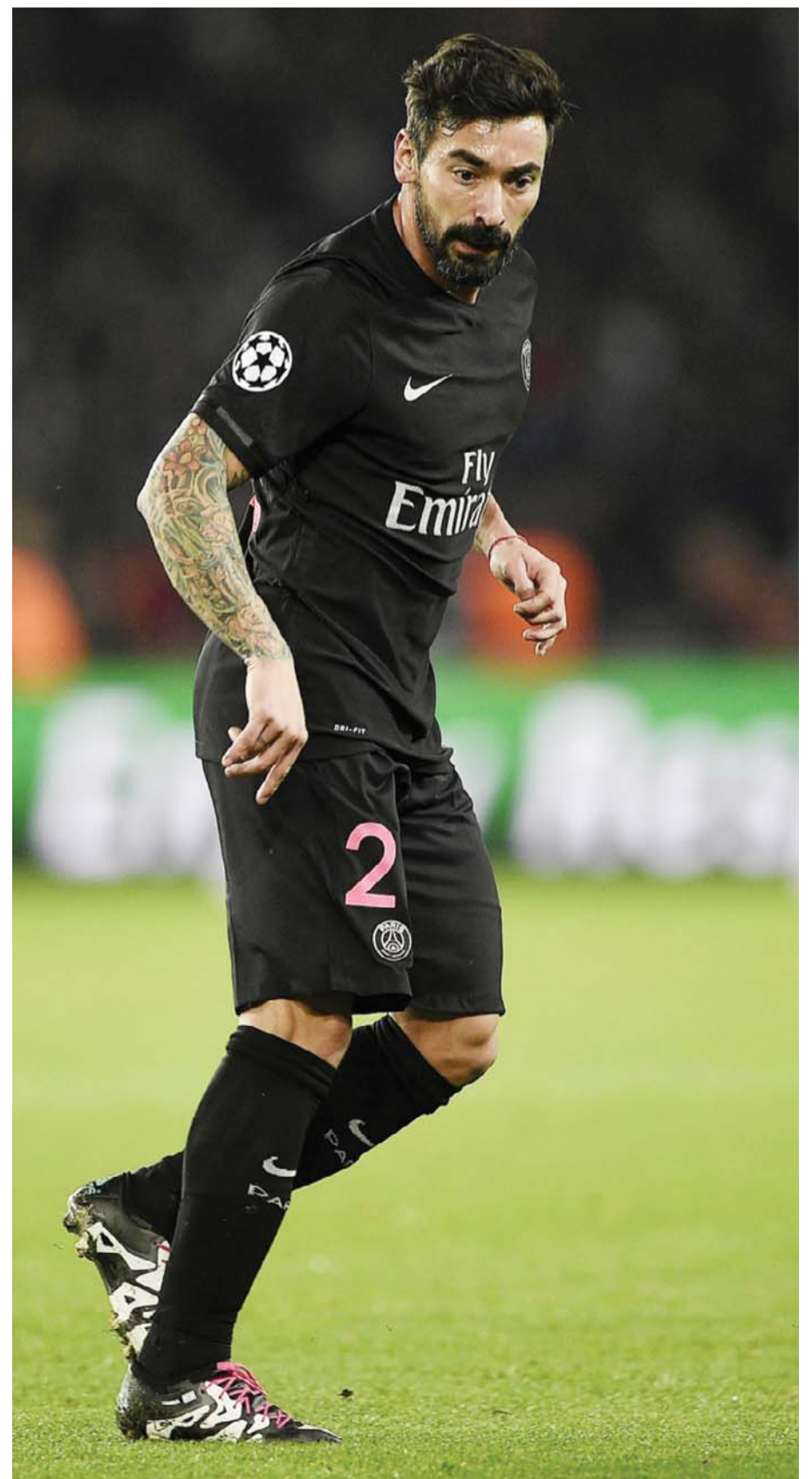
"You're turning down Liverpool, you're leaving Chelsea," Cahill told an Australian television station, referring to Teixeira and Ramires. "The choices that players are making are not about football like it was in my day, they're purely about personal gains and it depends what you want as an individual," he said.

"Is it going to help players? No. Is it going to be big for the country?"

Yes. China is pumping money into the beautiful game, hoping to build a national football culture to match its rising economic and military might.

Chinese businesses have invested huge sums in football since Xi declared

that hosting, qualifying for, and winning a World Cup were national goals—even though the country is currently ranked a lowly 93rd in the world by FIFA. — AFP



Ezequiel Lavezzi



# Sports

American cyclist  
Coryn Rivera riding  
fast road to Rio



Beckenbauer  
fined, warned  
by FIFA judges



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2016

NADAL, FERRER AND THIEM ADVANCE AT RIO OPEN Page 17



ROME: Real Madrid's French forward Karim Benzema vies with Roma's midfielder from Bosnia-Herzegovina Miralem Pjanic and Roma's defender from Greece Konstantinos Manolas (R) during the UEFA Champions League football match AS Roma vs Real Madrid yesterday at the Olympic stadium in Rome. — AFP

## RONALDO, JESE ON TARGET AS REAL BEAT ROMA

**ROME:** Cristiano Ronaldo hit his 89th Champions League goal while second-half substitute Jese added a late second as Real Madrid took a massive step towards the quarter-finals with a 2-0 win at Roma yesterday.

Real travelled to the Stadio Olimpico looking to exorcise painful memories of losing 2-1 twice in succession to the Giallorossi at this stage of the competition in 2008. After weathering a frustrating first half in which Roma failed to finish off a series of promising attacks, Ronaldo broke the deadlock on 57 minutes when he ran on to Marcelo's chip to beat Wojciech Szczesny with a shot that deflected off Alessandro Florenzi. It was the Portuguese forward's 12th goal in seven games this term.

To their credit, Roma dug deep to claim a share of the spoils and were unlucky not to earn a penalty when Florenzi came down under the studs-up challenge of Dani Carvajal. Even after that decision, the hosts battled

throughout a dominant late spell inspired by Egyptian winger Mohamed Salah, only to come up short.

It was inspiring stuff, but dozens of the 55,612 home crowd began leaving their seats five minutes from the finish when Jese flashed a shot across several defenders to beat Szczesny low at his far post.

The victory gives Real a huge advantage ahead of the return leg at the Santiago Bernabeu in three weeks time. Roma coach Luciano Spalletti had deployed a 4-3-1-2 formation which left no space for Bosnian striker Edin Dzeko, although he came on to replace Stephan El Shaarawy after he limped off in the second half.

Diego Perotti, signed in January from Genoa, was the driving force throughout, stealing possession, leading attacks and setting up Salah and El Shaarawy.

Real were restricted to a series of half-chances before the interval, the best of which came from Brazilian left-

back Marcelo when he volleyed Ronaldo's clever lob just wide of Szczesny's far post.

It took only seconds for Roma to threaten after the restart, Salah's pace taking him into the box but Real were able to clear. El Shaarawy did well to run on to a long ball but came off worse when goalkeeper Keylor Navas rushed out to clear. Ronaldo recovered quickly from a sore mouth suffered in a fair shoulder charge to stun the stadium into silence just before the hour.

Lucky to escape the offside call, the Portuguese ran on to Marcelo's lob, turned inside and unleashed a shot that came off Florenzi to leave Szczesny clutching at thin air. Ronaldo looked inspired and he sneaked behind Roma's defence and ran onto Karim Benzema's chip, but his delivery sailed across the goalmouth with no takers. Dzeko replaced El Shaarawy just after the hour and soon after fans were up out their seats when

Radja Nainggolan set up Salah, but the Egyptian could only toe-poke a weak shot at Navas while under pressure.

Salah then dispossessed Marcelo in midfield and his pace took him past Sergio Ramos to fire low across the area, but Raphael Varane produced a timely block.

Roma were keeping the pressure on and when Nainggolan set up Dzeko on the edge of the area, the Bosnian held off his markers to set up William Vainqueur for a 30-yard drive that sailed just wide.

Sighs of relief were heard around the stadium moments later when Ronaldo's header from a long cross on the right beat Szczesny only to sail past the far post.

But Roma were finally subdued four minutes from time when Jese used several players as a screen before sending an angled drive past Szczesny and into the far corner — AFP

## DRAXLER LEADS WOLFSBURG TO 3-2 WIN OVER GENT

**GENT:** Julian Draxler netted twice as Wolfsburg sealed a 3-2 win at Gent yesterday to leave the Germans on course for the Champions League quarter-finals.

The 22-year-old scored either side of the break in the last 16, first-leg clash, with Max Kruse also on target, but two late goals from Gent gave the Belgian champions some hope for the return leg on March 8 in Wolfsburg. Draxler was superb at the Ghelamco Arena, having also tormented Manchester United in Wolfsburg's 3-2 win in December in the final round of group matches which condemned Louis van Gaal's Red Devils to the Europa League.

Draxler's Germany team-mate Kruse added Wolfsburg's third on 60 minutes as the Gent defence capitulated and he nearly added a fourth just moments later by hitting the woodwork.

But Wolfsburg, last season's German Cup winners, lost their shape badly after Gent captain Sven Kums scored with 10 minutes to go before Kalifa Coulibaly added a second just before the final whistle.

The Germans were forced into a first-half change when right-back Sebastian Jung succumbed to a leg knock to make way for ex-Chelsea winger Andre Schuerle.

But persistent pressure from the away side had paid off just before that when Draxler created a superb opening goal.

He showed why Wolfsburg paid 35 million euros (\$39.4m) to sign him from Schalke last August by brilliantly turning Thomas Foket near the left touchline.

Draxler then sprinted away from the defence and played a neat one-two with Vieirinha before slotting the return pass into the bottom right-hand corner on 44 minutes.

Draxler doubled Wolfsburg's lead just after the break when he pounced on a mistake in the Gent defence. The 22-year-old snapped up a loose pass, played the ball between Stefan Mitrovic's legs and chipped Gent's onrushing goalkeeper Matz Sels on 54 minutes. His classy finish took the wind out of the hosts' sails, and Wolfsburg's third followed six minutes later when Christian Traesch's pin-point cross was met in the middle by Kruse, who fired home from close range.

The Wolfsburg striker hit the woodwork two minutes later as the Gent defence again left him in acres of space, but he mistimed his shot. Gent were surprise qualifiers from their group behind winners Zenit St Petersburg, knocking out Valencia and Lyon, and they



GENT: Wolfsburg's midfielder Maximilian Arnold (C) vies with Gent's Nigerian forward Moses Simon during the UEFA Champions League football match between Gent and Wolfsburg at Ghelamco Arena in Gent yesterday. — AFP

finally showed some fighting spirit in the closing stages. Kums gave his side hope by beating two defenders and curling his shot around Wolfsburg's Belgian goalkeeper Koen Casteels 10 minutes from time.

Wolfsburg's defence vanished and Coulibaly headed their second on 89 minutes when he got in front of centre-back Dante at a corner to give his side some reason to believe for the return. — AFP

## MESSI PASSES 300 LIGA GOALS AS BARCELONA EXTEND LEAD

**MADRID:** Lionel Messi moved past 300 La Liga goals as Barcelona moved six points clear at the top of the table with a 3-1 win at Sporting Gijon yesterday. The five-time World Player of the Year struck either side of Carlos Castro's well-worked equaliser in a three-goal burst in five first-half minutes.

Luis Suarez missed a second-half penalty days after famously converting Ronaldo's pass from a spot-kick against Celta Vigo, but made amends with a brilliant finish for Barca's third midway through the second half. Atletico Madrid are Barca's closest challengers with Real Madrid a further point adrift in third.

The match had been postponed due to Barcelona's commitments in the Club World Cup in December and, with a huge clash against fellow strugglers Real Betis to come on Saturday, Sporting boss and former Barca defender Abelardo Fernandez made nine changes to his side from the team that started Friday's 2-2 draw with Rayo Vallecano.

However, in a match dominated by the European champions, it was the hosts who had the first clear opening as Alex Menendez shot just wide from Barca loanee Alen Halilovic's through ball. Barca coach Luis Enrique also made five changes, but the star front three of Messi, Suarez and Neymar started after their incredible display in the 6-1 thrashing of Celta at the weekend.

Suarez had the first chance to extend his lead as the league's top scorer from Neymar's inch-perfect pass, but the

Uruguayan fired straight at Ivan Cuellar.

Messi broke the deadlock with a deadly accurate drive into the bottom corner from 25 yards to become the first player ever to bring up a triple century of La Liga goals.

### COUNTER-ATTACK

Yet, the lead only lasted two minutes as a brilliant counter-attack saw Pablo Perez pick out Menendez on the left and his low cross was swept home at the back post by Castro.

Barca promptly responded, though, as Suarez showed great strength to hold the ball up and then lay it off for Messi to fire into the roof of the net with the outside of his left foot. Luis Enrique's men should have put the game out of sight before half-time as Cuellar flew to his right to prevent Messi from scoring a first-half hat-trick before Neymar curled the rebound against the post.

Barca's demolition of Celta in the final half an hour on Sunday was lit up by Messi's decision to pass a penalty into Suarez's path to complete his hat-trick.

And the former Liverpool striker may have regretted not returning the favour as Cuellar dived to his right to save Suarez's spot-kick after the 'keeper had brought down Neymar.

Barca have now missed eight of their 16 penalties this season. However, Suarez made amends with a much harder opportunity 23 minutes from time when his left-footed effort curled in off the far post for his 40th goal of the season. — AFP





Gabon seeks riches in artisanal gold mining



SINGAPORE: USAF Boeing C-17 Globemaster III military transport aircraft on static display at the Singapore Airshow at the Changi exhibition centre in Singapore yesterday. Asia's largest aerospace and defense event is taking place from February 16 to 21. (Inset) MANILA: A Philippine Airlines airplane takes off from Manila's international airport. European plane-maker Airbus said yesterday it had won a \$1.85 billion deal for the purchase of six A350-900s by Philippine Airlines (PAL). — AFP

# AIRBUS, PAL SEAL \$1.85 BILLION DEAL

## PHILIPPINE AIRLINES TO PURCHASE OF SIX A350-900S

SINGAPORE: European plane-maker Airbus said yesterday it had won a \$1.85 billion deal for the purchase of six A350-900s by Philippine Airlines (PAL), flag-carrier of one of Asia's fastest growing economies. PAL also has the option to purchase an additional six of the aircraft, the two companies announced at the Singapore Airshow.

Separately, PAL also signed a \$600-million order with Rolls-Royce for Trent XWB engines to power the six A350s, the airline said in another statement. PAL president Jaime Bautista said the planes will be used for PAL's non-stop, long-haul flights from the Philippines to the United States, Canada and Europe. The Philippines' economic growth in the past six years under President Benigno

Aquino, who steps down in June, averaged 6.2 percent, one of the strongest performances in Asia, boosting travel demand.

The Philippines also relies on a diaspora of around 10 million Filipinos, or 10 percent of the population, many of them residing in the cities targeted by PAL. The airline plays a key transportation link for millions of Filipinos who work abroad, with a route network tracing the key destinations of the labor diaspora. "We are happy to announce that today we will commit to acquire six A350-900 series which will allow us... to fly non-stop from Manila to New York, allow us to increase our presence in the US, in San Francisco and Los Angeles, and also to Vancouver and Toronto," Bautista told a news conference.

"This aircraft will allow us to improve our operations to Europe, (it) will be used to fly from Manila to London." He added that the aircraft "will really support our mission of becoming a full service five-star airline in five years." Delivery of the aircraft will start in 2018. "The A350s range capability has been an important factor in our decision, enabling us to offer non-stop service on all our premium long-haul routes," Bautista said. The order is worth \$1.85 billion at list prices, although airlines usually get discounts on their purchases.

### Border Security business

Meanwhile, Airbus Group no longer plans to sell off its entire defense electronics unit and will instead dispose of just its radar and target recog-

ognition equipment business, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung reported yesterday. Citing a letter from management to the employees of Airbus Defense & Space (ADS), the paper said the Border Security business would be retained and operated by Airbus, while the remaining parts of the unit would be sold to an external bidder as planned. Management is citing various delays with its long-standing project partner in Saudi Arabia as a reason for backing out of the sale of the Border Security business, the paper added. Airbus also hopes to take advantage of new opportunities for border security presented by Europe's refugee crisis, the paper said. However this had not explicitly been mentioned in the letter to employees, the paper added, citing a manager. Airbus was not immediately available for

comment. Airbus, Europe's largest aerospace group, is currently selling several businesses to focus its defense division on warplanes, missiles, launchers and satellites.

The group had originally planned to pick a buyer for the defense electronics unit by the end of last year as part of its plan to dispose of assets with combined annual revenues of around 2 billion euros (\$2.2 billion). Airbus Group short-listed Carlyle and KKR for the defense electronics unit, after they put up significantly higher offers than rivals, three people familiar with the matter told Reuters in December.

The paper said the sale of the defense electronics unit had been accelerated by the separation of the Border Security business and should be sealed in coming weeks. — Agencies

## NIGERIA STRUGGLES AS BUHARI WRANGLES WITH BUDGET, NAIRA

LAGOS: When Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari finally swore in his cabinet in November, nearly six months after taking office, he hoped to shake off his nickname "Baba Go Slow". But troubling errors in the budget of Africa's largest economy and the continuing free fall of the naira on the black market have both Nigerians and investors worried that Buhari still isn't moving fast enough to address a deepening economic crisis. Since its peak in 2014, the global price of oil—which accounted for two-thirds of the Nigerian government's revenue—has plunged by 70 percent, decimating economic growth and the naira.

In response, Buhari announced a record 6 trillion-naira (\$30-billion, 27 billion-euro) budget promising to triple

investment to stimulate growth. Yet his budget proposal was pockmarked with mistakes, repetitions and, given the circumstances, extravagant demands. The errors include the same purchases for vehicles, computers and furniture that are duplicated 24 times, totaling 46.5 billion naira. This opens the door for graft, according to Oluseun Onigbinde, co-founder of BudgIT, a Nigerian transparency group. "It clearly showed there was foul play," said Onigbinde said. "Nigerians are in a crisis period with the price of oil dipping below 30 dollars, so there should be a budget in line with the mood of the time," he added. Buhari on Monday sacked the director-general of the budget office and appointed former banker Tijjani Abdullahi to take the

helm. Now there are serious revisions to be made before Buhari can sign off on the budget and inject Nigeria's sputtering economy with much-needed cash. It's a process likely to take months. "We need more speed on this thing," Onigbinde said, "he (Buhari) should have moved faster when he got into power."

### Policy paralysis

The budget confusion is yet another deterrent for investors already reluctant to invest in the country as a result of Buhari's monetary policies, which have caused a severe dollar shortage and the naira to hit unprecedented lows of 340 against the dollar on the black market. Nigeria has frozen the naira at 197-199 to the dollar for almost a year in a bid to protect the poor, while the government has banned a wide range of imports—including toothpicks and shovels—to conserve foreign exchange reserves.

The policy has been criticized by international investors, who say pegging the currency and restricting imports is futile and only serves to suffocate growth. Recent pressure from the International Monetary Fund to devalue the currency appears to have been rebuffed by Buhari, who declared last month "I won't kill the naira" and promised the country's economy will "stabilize soon". "Investors aren't confident because there isn't a clear path forward," Rand Merchant Bank Africa analyst Nema Ramkhelawan-Bhana said. "As long as those budget delays are happening it means that the central bank is going to have to do the heavy lifting for the economy," she said, speaking from Johannesburg. "The worst case scenario is policy paralysis, particularly what we've been seeing with the central bank and foreign exchange policy." — AFP



IBADAN: The by-products of cassava and Nigeria's staple foods fufu and eba are displayed during the launch of African Cassava Agronomy Initiative at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), in Ibadan in southwest Nigeria. Cassava, a basic food in Nigeria, is a good example of the problems faced by the first oil producer in Africa when falling prices of black gold dries the state coffers in foreign currency. — AFP

## AUB PROFITS RISE 12.9% TO KD 77.7M IN 2015

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (Kuwait) announced operating profits from core businesses of the bank rose to KD 77.7 million in 2015, up from KD 68.8 million in 2014, an increase of 12.9 percent over the same period. The bank reported net profits of KD 42.8 million compared with KD 47 million in 2014 following a onetime extra precautionary provision impact of KD 8 million and other necessary provisions to mitigate the impacts of market volatility witnessed subsequent to the sharp decline in global Oil prices during 2015.

The bank's return on average equity (ROAE) recorded 12.70 percent at the end of 2015 which is the highest rate in the Kuwaiti market while recording a return on average assets (ROAA) of 1.2 percent, also one of the highest ratios recorded by Kuwaiti banks. The earnings per share (EPS) recorded 30.2 Kuwaiti fils per share as of Dec 31, 2015. This reflects the strengths of the financial position of the Bank and its capability to generate sustainable revenues from its core businesses while maintaining solid funding resources.

Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf, Chairman of Ahli United Bank (Kuwait), commented that, "With the grace of Allah, the bank achieved solid results in its Key Performance Indicators during the year. The total assets of the bank increased from KD 3,597 million to KD 3,904 million as of 31 December, 2015 driven primarily by the increase in the financing receivables by KD 200 million to reach KD 2,680 million."

The chairman also indicated that customers' confidence has supported the growth in deposits which increased by 8.4 percent, from KD 2,454 million to reach KD 2,661 million at the end of 2015. Under Basel-III Accord, the capital adequacy ratio reached 15.51 percent at the end of 2015 which is higher than the regulatory requirement of 12.5 percent. He stressed that these results are the outcome of the



Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf  
Chairman of Ahli United Bank

balanced approach and prudent risk management policies.

Based on the bank's results, the board of directors has proposed to the annual general assembly a distribution of cash dividend of 5 percent (5 fils per share) and bonus shares of 10 percent (10 shares for every 100 shares) subject to the regulatory authorities' and annual general meeting approvals.



The chairman added that the returns realized by Ahli United Bank (Kuwait) in investment deposits during 2015 surpassed their peers in the market and represented one of the highest returns in Kuwait, whereby the bank's business results for 2015 showed that profit distribution rates on Kuwaiti Dinar annual investment deposits reached 2.11 percent p.a., return on Kuwaiti dinar investment deposits for the six-month reached 1.60

percent p.a. and the return on Kuwaiti Dinar saving investment accounts reached 1.55 percent p.a.

Ahli United Bank (Kuwait) provides an advantage to depositors as profits are distributed on a quarterly basis in accordance with the Bank's interim results announced. The profits distributed are made available to all depositors to withdraw or reinvest.

The Bank re-affirmed its prominent position in the Islamic banking business by winning the award for the Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait in 2015 for the third consecutive year from a global specialized magazine "The Banker", confirming the Bank's ability to render distinctive banking services and products.

Ahli United Bank has been selected among the most secure and safest Islamic banks in Kuwait and among the top 50 safest banks worldwide by "Global Finance" based on evaluating its long-term foreign currency ratings granted by the international rating agencies.

The Bank achieved the following rating by international credit rating agencies. "Fitch" affirmed the Bank's credit strength on the Long-Term and Short-Term to 'A+' and 'F1' respectively with a stable Outlook. "Moody's" affirmed 'A2' global local currency (GLC) deposit rating with a stable Outlook. "Capital Intelligence" has affirmed the Bank's Long-Term Foreign Currency (FC) and Short-Term FC Rating to 'A+' and 'A2' respectively with a stable Outlook. These ratings underscore Ahli United Bank Kuwait's sound financial position and the strength in its ability to maintain a rising profitability trend. In concluding his statement, Mudhaf extended his thanks and appreciation to the Central Bank of Kuwait for providing valuable guidance to the bank, to the bank's board of directors, customers, shareholders, management and all staff members for their confidence and support.



# BEIJING PROMISES ECONOMIC STABILITY AMID UNCERTAINTY

## COMMERCE MINISTRY DOWNPLAYS RISK OF CAPITAL FLIGHT

**BEIJING:** Chinese policymakers emerged from the Lunar New Year hiatus with one collective message for nervous investors at home and abroad - Beijing will put a floor under the slowing economy, keep its currency steady and ensure employment remains stable even as bloated industries undergo restructuring. The string of assurances comes ahead of two high-profile political events for China: a meeting of G20 finance chiefs in Shanghai later this month and next month's annual gathering of China's legislature - where the next five-year economic development plan will be finalized.

A rout in Chinese stocks last summer and its unexpected devaluation of the yuan in August have rattled global markets, raising concerns about the health of the world's second-largest economy and Beijing's ability to steer it simultaneously through both a protracted slowdown and radical restructuring. "China's economic fundamentals have not changed," Zhao Chenxin, a spokesman for the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the country's top economic planner, told reporters in Beijing on Wednesday. "The economy will maintain a medium- to high-rate growth."

"China's status as the world's largest holder of foreign exchange reserves has not changed, the large-scale trade surplus has not changed and the steady progress in the yuan internationalization has not changed," Zhao said. Still, gross domestic product expanded 6.9 percent in 2015, the slowest in a quarter of a century, and economists see a further cooling this year even if the government expands its year-long stimulus campaign. "We think growth could be 6.7-6.8 percent this year," said Xu Gao, chief economist of China Everbright Securities in Beijing.

"The risk of a hard landing is not big. The risk of a hard landing may come from improper government policies. If policies are right, the risk of a hard landing is very small."

The NDRC plans to allocate 400 billion yuan (\$61.3 billion) to fund local governments' infrastructure projects, a local branch of the economic planner said in a statement before the long Lunar New Year break. The economic planner said yesterday that it had okayed 54.1 billion yuan of investments in

flight, and said there is no basis for continued depreciation of the yuan, a scenario that has been one factor behind a massive sell-off in global markets early this year. Still, global markets and China's major trading partners remain nervous about its foreign exchange policy. The central bank has stunned investors twice in six months - in August and early this year - by allowing sudden, sharp drops in the value of the yuan against the U.S. dollar, only to intervene quick-

and sharp devaluation, most economists and currency strategists expect the yuan will remain under pressure and capital outflows will continue until the economy shows some signs of leveling out.

### Stable jobs?

"After the Lunar New Year, the cabinet and government ministries have all sent out positive signals," said Xu at China Everbright Securities. "For the economy, there is still lots of room for the government to step up investment. 2016 is the first year of the 13th five-year plan (2016-2020) and the government will ensure growth of at least 6.5 percent this year." NDRC's Zhao also said China has the ability and confidence to maintain stable employment levels, even as the government moves to curb overcapacity in the coal and steel sectors to squeeze out so-called "zombie firms." The government will take steps to resolve factory overcapacity but will try to reduce the number of layoffs, he said.

China's plan to cut its steel production capacity by 100-150 million tons will lead to the loss of up to 400,000 jobs, the official Xinhua news agency reported last month. And while most private economists agree the economy does not appear to be in danger of sharp deterioration at present, most are sticking to forecasts of a gradual and bumpy slowdown. "We expect the economy to continue to slow and corporate balance sheets to worsen," Tao Wang, Hong Kong-based China economist at UBS, wrote in a report on Monday. "However, we see the risk of an immediate systematic financial crisis as very small, due to high domestic saving and ample banking liquidity, extensive government ownership of banks and many debtors, and capital controls." —Reuters



**BEIJING:** An investor checks stock prices on a smartphone in a securities company in Beijing yesterday. —AFP

January - following approval of 2.52 trillion yuan worth of projects in 2015 - to help support growth. The announcement followed measures announced by the central bank on Tuesday to support China's industries. Data also showed banks doled out a record 2.51 trillion yuan of new loans in January, far more than markets had expected and suggesting Beijing is keeping monetary policy loose.

Separately, a spokesman for the commerce ministry on Wednesday downplayed the risk of capital

ly and forcefully afterwards to steady it.

It burned through a record amount of foreign reserves in 2015 as it sold dollars and bought yuan to support the currency and deter speculators betting on further declines. The yuan is expected to be among the key topics of discussion at the meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors from the Group of 20 economies in Shanghai at the end of this month. While Beijing's latest assurances of stability may have tempered fears of an imminent

## TAIWAN SIGNALS GLOOM WITH LOWERED FORECAST

**TAIPEI:** Taiwan's economy is looking at another gloomy year ahead as the government yesterday cut growth forecasts in the face of subdued international demand for exports. The growth prediction for 2016 has been slashed from 2.32 percent to 1.47 percent after a worse-than-expected 2015 saw the island sink into recession at the end of the year. "This year's global economic growth rate will be slightly higher than last year's, but growth momentum will remain slow as in recent years," the Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics said in a statement.

The pessimistic forecast comes the day after Taiwan's finance ministry said shipments for January had slumped 13 percent year-on-year in the longest consecutive period of decline since 2009. Among the hardest-hit areas is electronics - the biggest category of exports for Taiwan, traditionally a technology manufacturing hub. A number of leading Taiwanese firms such as Foxconn and TSMC are among Apple's suppliers. Last year saw Taiwan's shipments fall by a tenth compared to the previous year. Exports in 2016 are expected to contract another 2.78 percent, the statistics bureau said yesterday, as rising homegrown tech brands and hardware manufacturers in China put pressure on Taiwan's industries. The island's steel, petrochemical, and mechanical exports also face stiff competition from China. Official figures released yesterday revised down 2015 full-year economic growth from 0.85 percent to 0.75 percent. The government late last year sought to boost consumer spending through the other key economic indicator-through a stimulus package that lasts until the end of this month. But the consumer subsidies appear to have had limited impact as the 2016 domestic consumption growth forecast was also lowered for the year to 1.36 percent. —AFP

## JAPAN'S AUTOMAKER UNIONS' PAY DEMANDS CHALLENGE ABENOMICS

**TOKYO:** Japan's automaker labor unions are reducing their demands for pay rises for the next fiscal year from amounts sought the previous year, a move that could hamper the Abe government's efforts to stoke demand and defeat deflation. The annual "shunto" wage talks are seen as crucial for the ultimate success of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's aim to generate virtuous growth led by higher incomes and business investment. The unions' modest demand underscores Abe's struggle in pulling Japan out of two decades of deflation and stagnation, with the global stock market rout and yen gains since the start of this year giving firms a perfect excuse to forgo wage hikes.

The labor union of auto giant Toyota Motor Corp, which sets the tone for annual wage talks across Japan, is seeking a 3,000 yen (\$26.31) increase in monthly base pay, half of what was sought last year. Labor unions of other car makers followed suit - despite record profits Toyota and some others expect in this business year to March. This is the straight third year in which automaker unions have demanded wage rises, having secured increases in the previous two years. The wage talks wrap up at other major firms in leading industries in mid-March, when companies' management will make their formal responses.

"Taking into account slowing inflation

and uncertainty over the economic outlook, we can't demand bigger rises in base salary just because our company logs record profits," Toyota union's spokesman Yasuyuki Takaki said. "We should seek higher bonuses when short-term profits rise, rather than base salary, which cannot be unwound in times of a business downturn." The sticky deflationary mindset of labor unions are what the Bank of Japan is trying to eradicate with its aggressive money printing and last month's decision to adopt negative interest rates to spur growth.

Leading blue-chip companies had consented to Abe's calls to raise wages since he returned to power in late 2012, agreeing to an average wage hike of 2.19 percent in 2014 and a 2.38 percent raise last year - a 17-year high. In a sign that momentum is fading, Japan's biggest business lobby, Keidanren, has said wage hikes don't necessarily have to take the form of a hike in base salary - toning down from the more explicit requests it had made until last year. "Labor unions have not shaken off their deflationary mindset," said Hisashi Yamada, chief economist at Japan Research Institute. "If labor unions of top firms lower base pay demand, that may make it harder for small firms to raise wages. If base pay stops rising, that could pave the way for return of deflation." —Reuters

### National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report

At 02:00 PM Previous Day

Global Stock Indices						
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %	
Dow Jones	15,973.84	16,196.41	222.57	▲	1.39	-7.05
NASDAQ	4,337.60	4,436.00	98.40	▲	2.27	-11.41
SBP 500	1,864.78	1,895.58	30.80	▲	1.65	-7.28
Financial Times	5,862.17	5,955.52	93.35	▲	1.59	-4.59
DAX	9,135.11	9,303.91	168.80	▲	1.85	-13.40
CAC 40	4,110.66	4,192.83	82.17	▲	2.00	-9.58
Swiss	7,813.79	7,906.67	92.88	▲	1.19	-10.34
Nikkei 225	16,054.43	15,836.36	-218.07	▼	-1.36	-16.80
Topix	1,297.01	1,282.40	-14.61	▼	-1.13	-17.12
Hang Seng	19,122.08	18,924.57	-197.51	▼	-1.03	-13.64
Straits Times	2,644.58	2,613.79	-30.79	▼	-1.16	-9.33

MENA Stock Indices						
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %	
Kuwait	5,134.96	5,146.28	11.32	▲	0.22	-9.35
Saudi Arabia	5,739.98	5,794.52	54.54	▲	0.95	-16.95
Dubai	3,064.84	3,057.21	-7.63	▼	-0.25	-2.73
Abu Dhabi	4,140.22	4,148.63	8.41	▲	0.20	-3.88
Bahrain	1,169.21	1,167.81	-1.40	▼	-0.12	-3.84
Qatar	9,873.13	9,814.52	-58.61	▼	-0.59	-5.33
Oman	5,380.03	5,360.74	-19.29	▼	-0.36	-0.48
Lebanon	1,151.12	1,153.09	1.97	▲	0.17	-1.57
Jordan	2,129.22	2,123.70	-5.52	▼	-0.26	-0.33
Egypt	5,894.60	5,944.90	50.30	▲	0.85	-15.86
Morocco	9,162.19	9,144.82	-17.37	▼	-0.19	2.65
Tunisia	5,336.16	5,313.22	-22.94	▼	-0.43	5.83

Global Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	US Dollar	Euro	Sterling Pound	Swiss Franc	Japanese Yen	Australian Dollar
Kuwaiti Dinar		12.4351	3.3289	2.9882	2.3297	3.2966	379.53	4.6675
Saudi Riyal	0.08042		0.2677	0.2403	0.1873	0.2651	30.52	0.3754
US Dollar	0.30040	3.7355		0.8977	0.6998	0.9903	114.01	1.4021
Euro	0.33465	4.1613	1.1140		0.7796	1.1034	127.02	1.5628
Sterling Pound	0.42924	5.3377	1.4289	1.2827		1.4157	162.93	2.0049
Swiss Franc	0.30334	3.7721	1.0098	0.9063	0.7064		115.15	1.4159
Japanese Yen	0.00263	0.0328	0.0088	0.0079	0.0061	0.0087		0.0123
Australian Dollar	0.21425	2.6642	0.7132	0.6399	0.4988	0.7063	81.31	

MENA Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	US Dollar	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatari Riyal	Omani Riyal	Emirates Dirham	Egyptian Pound
US Dollar		0.30040	3.7355	0.3742	3.6265	0.3832	3.6576	7.7201
Kuwaiti Dinar	3.3289		12.4351	1.2457	12.0722	1.2755	12.1758	25.6994
Saudi Riyal	0.2677	0.08042		0.1002	0.9708	0.1026	0.9791	2.0667
Bahraini Dinar	2.6724	0.80278	9.9826		9.6913	1.0239	9.7745	20.6309
Qatari Riyal	0.2757	0.08283	1.0301	0.1032		0.1057	1.0086	2.1288
Omani Riyal	2.6099	0.78403	9.7494	0.9766	9.4650		9.5461	20.1490
Emirates Dirham	0.2734	0.08213	1.0213	0.1023	0.9915	0.1048		2.1107
Egyptian Pound	0.1295	0.03891	0.4839	0.0485	0.4697	0.0496	0.4738	

Global Interest Rates					
Currency	1-Week	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year
Kuwaiti Dinar	0.00	1.19	1.44	1.63	1.94
US Dollar	0.39	0.42	0.61	0.86	1.13
Euro	-0.27	-0.25	-0.20	-0.12	-0.01
Sterling Pound	0.48	0.50	0.59	0.73	0.99
Swiss Franc	-0.81	-0.79	-0.77	-0.72	-0.64
Australian Dollar	2.10	2.17	2.05	2.00	1.92
Canadian Dollar	0.00	0.85	0.85	0.94	1.00

Global Bond Yields				
Country	2-Year	5-Year	10-Year	30-Year
United States	0.71	1.22	1.78	2.65
Europe	-0.53	-0.31	0.25	0.97
United Kingdom	0.35	0.79	1.45	2.33

Commodities						
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %	
Kuwait Oil	27.42	26.57	-0.85	▼	-3.10	-4.85
Brent	30.65	31.26	0.61	▲	1.99	-22.64
West Texas	29.10	29.00	-0.10	▼	-0.34	-27.59
Gold	1199.96	1203.16	3.20	▲	0.27	11.56
Silver	15.23	15.24	0.02	▲	0.12	9.03

## EXCHANGE RATES

### AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
<b>ASIAN COUNTRIES</b>		
Japanese Yen	2.635	
Indian Rupees	4.394	
Pakistani Rupees	2.862	
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.084	
Nepali Rupees	2.732	
Singapore Dollar	213.920	
Hongkong Dollar	38.477	
Bangladesh Taka	3.818	
Philippine Peso	6.296	
Thai Baht	8.424	
<b>GCC COUNTRIES</b>		
Saudi Riyal	79.963	
Qatari Riyal	82.369	
Omani Riyal	778.846	
Bahraini Dinar	796.330	
UAE Dirham	81.640	
<b>ARAB COUNTRIES</b>		
Egyptian Pound - Cash	36.050	
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	38.340	
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.399	
Tunisian Dinar	149.480	
Jordanian Dinar	422.620	
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	1.998	
Syrian Lira	2.137	
Morocco Dirham	31.219	
<b>EUROPEAN &amp; AMERICAN COUNTRIES</b>		
US Dollar Transfer	299.700	
Euro	336.260	
Sterling Pound	430.070	
Canadian dollar	217.020	
Turkish lira	100.570	
Swiss Franc	305.500	
Australian Dollar	213.990	
US Dollar Buying	298.500	

	GOLD
20 Gram	243.060
10 Gram	124.450
5 Gram	63.070

### UAE EXCHANGE CENTRE WLL

CURRENCIES	TELEX TRANSFER PER 1000
Australian Dollar	201.91
Canadian Dollar	219.82
Swiss Franc	306.95
Euro	336.85
US Dollar	299.90
Sterling Pound	431.04
Japanese Yen	2.67
Bangladesh Taka	3.817
Indian Rupee	4.375
Sri Lankan Rupee	2.083
Nepali Rupee	2.732
Pakistani Rupee	2.860
UAE Dirhams	0.08161
Bahraini Dinar	0.7970
Egyptian Pound	0.03819
Jordanian Dinar	0.4265
Omani Riyal	0.7788
Qatari Riyal	0.08269
Saudi Riyal	0.07994

### DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	299.950
Canadian Dollar	219.785
Sterling Pound	433.535
Euro	335.480
Swiss Franc	297.260
Bahrain Dinar	793.510
UAE Dirhams	81.905
Qatari Riyals	83.115

Saudi Riyals	80.665
Jordanian Dinar	422.535
Egyptian Pound	38.195
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.086
Indian Rupees	4.390
Pakistani Rupees	2.859
Bangladesh Taka	3.810
Philippines Peso	6.3608
Cyprus pound	571.300
Japanese Yen	3.605
Syrian Pound	2.360
Nepalese Rupees	3.740
Malaysian Ringgit	72.865
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.425
Thai Bhat	9.380
Turkish Lira	101.840

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
<b>Europe</b>		
British Pound	0.421540	0.430540
Czech Korune	0.004371	0.016371
Danish Krone	0.040754	0.045754
Euro	0.328953	0.336653
Norwegian Krone	0.030726	0.035926
Romanian Leu	0.085969	0.085969
Slovakia	0.008881	0.018881
Swedish Krona	0.031243	0.036243
Swiss Franc	0.296815	



# IRAN RESISTS CURBS ON OIL OUTPUT

**ANKARA:** Iran said yesterday it would resist any plan to restrain its oil output as fellow OPEC ministers tried to persuade the country to join the first global oil pact in 15 years. Talks in Tehran between Iranian oil minister Bijan Zanganeh and his counterparts from Iraq, Qatar and Venezuela began yesterday. Iran is the major obstacle to the first joint OPEC and non-OPEC deal since 2001, having pledged to increase output sharply to regain market share lost during years of sanctions.

The meeting in the Iranian capital followed a deal reached on Tuesday by OPEC deal Saudi Arabia and non-OPEC Russia, the world's top two producers and exporters, to freeze production at January levels if other big oil nations agree to join. OPEC Gulf producers - Qatar, Kuwait and the UAE - as well as Venezuela said they would join the pact, aimed at tackling a growing oversupply and helping prices recover from their lowest in over a decade. "Asking Iran to freeze its oil production level is illogical ... when Iran was under sanctions, some countries raised their output and they caused the drop in oil prices." Iran's OPEC envoy, Mehdi Asali, was quoted as saying by the Shargh daily newspaper yesterday.

"How can they expect Iran to cooperate now and pay the price?" he said. "We have repeatedly said that Iran will

increase its crude output until reaching the pre-sanctions production level." The freeze plan has so far failed to push up oil prices, due to concerns Iran would not participate and that a deal would do little to ease the global glut as it would still allow Russia and Saudi Arabia to keep pumping at near record levels. Venezuelan Oil Minister Eulogio Del Pino, Iraqi Oil Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi and Qatari Energy Minister Mohammad bin Saleh Al-Sada sat down with Zanganeh at 3 pm.

The sanctions, imposed over Iran's nuclear program, were lifted last month after an agreement with world powers, allowing Tehran to resume selling oil freely in international markets. Iran exported around 2.5 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude before 2012, but sanctions cut that to around 1.1 million bpd. Tehran has pledged to raise supply by around 1 million bpd in the next 6-12 months.

#### Special terms

This would only add to the global glut, which has been fuelled by US shale output and a decision by Saudi Arabia to pump at full capacity to drive higher-cost producers out of the market. The world is already producing more than 1 million bpd than it consumes, with oil stockpiles at record levels. As a result, prices fell below \$30 per barrel in

January from as high as \$115 in mid-2014, hammering the finances of Russia, Saudi Arabia and other producers.

Brent oil futures rose 3 percent yesterday after losing as much as 4 percent the day before. "A freeze is not the same as a cut, and somewhat disingenuously, keeping crude production at January levels actually implies higher-than-expected annual output ... and so can hardly tackle the current market oversupply," JBC Energy said in a note. Two non-Iranian sources close to the OPEC discussions told Reuters on Tuesday that Iran might be offered special terms as part of an output freeze deal. "Iran is returning to the market and needs to be given a special chance, but it also needs to make some calculations," said one source.

The sources did not elaborate on the special terms, which could be anything from setting limited production increases to linking future output rises to a recovery in oil prices. But Tehran-based oil analyst Reza Zandi said it would be difficult to persuade Tehran to agree to any restraints as there was a broad consensus among senior Iranian officials to increase production to pre-sanctions levels. "Freezing the output is against Iran's national and economic interests, Zanganeh cannot accept it," he said. "The establishment has decided so."

Olivier Jakob from Petromatrix consultancy said that if Saudi Arabia were to freeze output at January levels, the kingdom would need to cut exports by 0.5 million bpd in the summer months, when it burns more oil for power generation at home. "The production freeze can therefore be seen as an unofficial

way for Saudi Arabia to make some room for the restart of the Iranian exports," he said. The last global deal in 2001 saw Saudi Arabia persuade Mexico, Norway and Russia to contribute to production cuts, although Moscow did not follow through and raised exports instead. —Reuters



**TOKYO:** People look at an electronic stock board showing Japan's Nikkei 225 at a securities firm in Tokyo. —AP



**ALMERIA:** Farm workers gather to take part in a demonstration against low prices of their fruits and vegetables in Almeria. —AFP

## DISCONTENT BREWS IN GREENHOUSES OF THE 'EUROPE'S VEGETABLE GARDEN'

**ALMERIA:** In a vast sea of plastic greenhouses in southeastern Spain, dubbed "Europe's vegetable garden", discontent is growing among farmers who complain large supermarket chains do not pay enough and farm workers who live in poverty. Since the 1980s, one of the largest concentrations of greenhouses in the world has developed on a coastal plain near the city of Almeria, spanning over 30,000 hectares in a "sea of plastic" seen from space.

The region is so dry and barren that it was used to film dozens of "spaghetti western" films in the 1960s but with the advent of hydroponic systems that drip-feed fertilisers into grow-bags it now produces several tonnes of fruits and vegetables annually. After decades of rapid development, though, export growth has stalled and growing numbers of people question the viability of this agricultural model. "We produce over 65 percent of the tomatoes, 80 percent of the cucumbers and 94 percent of the eggplants sold in Europe," said Francisco Vargas, the head of the ASAJA young farmers' association.

"But look at the prices we are paid. They are below production costs." He blames a war between large retailers who try to hold on to clients by offering the lowest possible prices. "Multinationals are strangling us," said Miguel Rubio, 60, who struggles to make ends meet with the produce he grows on four hectares of land in the "sea of plastic". He said farmers were forced to boost output because of the low prices paid by chains to try to make more money, which in turn creates bigger surpluses and pushes prices down even further. "The system makes no sense," said Rubio.

#### 'Last link in chain'

Antonio Fernandez, meanwhile, talked with pride of the "sweet taste" of the red peppers he produces that are exported to northern Europe, and the progress made in recent years to reduce the use of pesticides. "But the price of everything increases—plastic sheets, seeds, power—except the price paid by supermarkets for produce," he said as water drip-dropped in the background from his automatic irrigation system. Over 1,000 farmers protested in Almeria on February 4 to demand a "fair" price for their fruits and vegetables and allow them to work "with dignity".

But with profit margins squeezed, some farms have started exploiting staff that work in the greenhouses,

mainly legal and illegal immigrants from Africa and Eastern Europe who toil as day workers, said University of Almeria anthropologist Francisco Checa. At night, they stream out of the greenhouses on their bikes, back to the packed, basic homes they share with other workers. "I work 25 days a month but on my pay slip only 10 days are recorded," said Adama, a 34-year-old from Mali who has worked in the greenhouses since 2008. He said he was owed two months wages but was reluctant to complain—even though he has legal status in Spain—out of fear that his bosses would fire his colleagues who are in the country illegally. Most bosses do not pay farm workers overtime and they ignore a collective labour agreement that sets wages for day workers at 46 euros (\$51) for eight hours of work, Checa said. The provincial branch of the SAT workers' union receives daily complaints from farm laborers, many of whom live in two shanty towns located near the greenhouses.

#### 'One-off cases'

Tensions between Spanish residents and migrant workers boiled over in the region in 2000 after a Spanish woman was stabbed to death, sparking clashes in the farming town of El Ejido. "Conditions of pure exploitation of immigrants have since worsened," said Spitou Mendy, the spokesman for SAT in the province of Almeria. Mohamed, a 32-year-old Moroccan who studied economics before crossing illegally into Spain, lives in a shack made of wood and plastic with other farm workers in one of the shanty towns near the greenhouses. "I earn 35 euros for eight hours of work, but others only get 30 euros," he said.

Farmers and officials, however, say cases of abuse are not the norm. "These are one-off cases, not at all the general situation of the 60,000 greenhouse workers," said Jose Antonio Aliaga, chief of agricultural services in Almeria for the regional government. Fernandez, the farmer who exports red peppers, said "it is not fair to say that all farmers here are seen as slave drivers." The Romanian couple he employees describe him as a model boss who pays them a monthly salary of 800 euros for five days a week of work and provides them with free accommodation in a house with a garden. But for the anthropologist Checa, it is all due to the slim margins earned by farmers. "Growers can only put pressure on the last link in the chain," he said. —AFP

## SLUMBERING PAKISTANI STEEL GIANT SHOWS WHY SELL-OFFS ARE STALLED

### MILLS' PLIGHT HIGHLIGHTS PAKISTAN PRIVATIZATION STRUGGLES

**KARACHI:** Once the producer of almost half the country's steel needs, state-owned Pakistan Steel Mills' (PSM) cavernous factory buildings on the outskirts of Karachi stand eerily still. A 4.5 km-long conveyor belt that once carried coal from the nearby port is idle and blast furnaces rest silent. Birds build nests in Soviet-era equipment and stray dogs nap outside abandoned plants.

The company is for sale, but the government cannot find a buyer as it struggles to get privatizations back on track after a series of setbacks. A glance at PSM's finances may explain why. The company has \$3.5 billion in debt and accumulated losses, loses \$5 million a week and has not produced steel at its 19,000-acre facility since June last year. That was when the national gas company cut power supplies, demanding payment of bills of over \$340 million. Like many Pakistani industrial firms, political meddling and competition from cheaper Chinese imports left PSM vulnerable.

They also undermine Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's promise to the International Monetary Fund to privatize PSM by March, in return for a \$6.7 billion national bailout loan agreed in 2013. More than 14,000 jobs are at risk, while the Pakistani economy needs industrial growth to provide employment for a growing population. "Nine billion rupees (\$86 million) are immediately needed to see the company through to June," company CEO Zaheer Ahmed Khan told Reuters at its sprawling premises. "It's really sad, it's a national asset. We are a nuclear power but what does it say that we can't operate a small steel mill?"

#### Privatization pains

The government has injected \$2 billion into PSM since a failed sell-off in 2006, but cannot invest more capital, Privatization Commission Chairman Mohammad Zubair said. "The best option is to privatize so that private sector buyers inject capital to upgrade the plant and machinery, buy raw material and so

on," he said. PSM is one of several firms Pakistan wants to sell to revive loss-making entities that cost the government \$5 billion a year.

But it has struggled to restructure bleeding companies, including PSM and Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), and get them in shape for potential buyers. This month, Pakistan shelved plans to privatize power supply companies, and officials said Islamabad told the IMF it would not meet deadlines to sell PIA or PSM. While the loss-making firms are a drain on Pakistan's resources - around an eighth of the govern-

ment's fiscal revenues last year - few fear Pakistan will slide into economic crisis. The IMF has continued to release installments of its 2013 bailout package despite missed targets, and Pakistan is exploring other sources of support, like ally China which plans to invest \$46 billion in a new economic corridor.

#### Back in the USSR

Designed and funded by the Soviet Union in the 1970s, PSM was once the pride of the nation, showcasing a rapidly industrializing Pakistan with the means to pro-

ducers turned to cheaper Chinese products.

International buyers show little interest. Officials close to the government's privatization agenda said suitors offered barely \$100 million for PSM against an expected \$900 million. "You have the land and ... infrastructure but it doesn't have the machinery," said Arif Habib, a businessman whose conglomerate bid for the company a decade ago but would not touch it now. With no takers, the federal government wants the cash-strapped provincial government in Sindh to take over. A

group of Sindh officials visited the site this year, the CEO said. They left with financial feasibility documents but never called back. Zubair, the privatization chairman, said if the Sindh government refused to take over, he would re-start the privatization process.

#### Unpaid, still working

Privatization would be contentious: this month, protests against the sale of PIA turned violent. PSM employees, half of whom live on the site in a residential complex complete with hospital and



**ISLAMABAD:** A vendor helps a customer at a fruit and vegetable market on the outskirts of Islamabad, Pakistan yesterday. —AP

ment's fiscal revenues last year - few fear Pakistan will slide into economic crisis. The IMF has continued to release installments of its 2013 bailout package despite missed targets, and Pakistan is exploring other sources of support, like ally China which plans to invest \$46 billion in a new economic corridor.

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cricket stadium, haven't been paid for five months. But pride and few alternatives mean most spend their days at the plant, repairing and chatting. At sunset, the remaining 7,000 workers pile into buses for homes in Karachi, a teeming port city over an hour away. Mohammad Taqi, who has worked at the plant for 38 years, still turns up every day. "I've spent so many years here that I just pray that it will start working again," Taqi said, next to silent, towering blast furnaces. "This place used to be alive. I just want things to be the same again." —Reuters

## GERMAN POWER GIANT RWE SUSPENDS DIVIDEND PAYOUTS AFTER ANNUAL LOSS

**FRANKFURT:** RWE, Germany's second-biggest power supplier, said yesterday it will partially suspend dividend payouts after running up a loss in 2015 as a result of collapsing wholesale prices and weak profitability in the conventional power generation. The announcement sent RWE shares into a nosedive on the Frankfurt stock exchange, where they were the biggest losers, plunging 10.6 percent to an intraday low of 10.55 euros in a generally firmer market.

Germany's power suppliers have been hit in recent years by government plans to eliminate nuclear power by the next decade and champion a so-called "energy transition" away from fossil fuels such as coal towards renewable energy sources such as the wind and the sun. Power utilities have complained that the cost of having to close down their nuclear power plants and the heavy subsidies afforded to renewable energy have pushed them deeply into the red. RWE said in a statement it booked a net loss of 200 million euros (\$223 million) in 2015 compared with net profit of 1.7 billion euros a year earlier.

The loss was due to a writedown of 2.1 billion euros on its power plants in Germany and Britain, RWE explained. "The continued collapse of wholesale electricity prices came to bear, leading to an erosion of power plant margins," RWE said in a statement. "The prospects in the conventional power generation business have worsened further." Adjusted for one-off effects, net profit amounted to 1.1 billion euros, at the lower end of forecasts, and underlying or operating profit totaled 3.89 billion euros, RWE said. In the wake of the "unusually weak" bottom-line earnings, the management board "has decided to propose ... a suspension of the dividend payment to holders of common shares for fiscal 2015," RWE said.

Holders of preferred shares would still receive a payout of 0.13 euros per share. "The backdrop is the recent dramatic deterioration of the earnings prospects of conventional power generation," RWE said. "In light of the current economic prospects of conventional power generation, we reached a decision concerning the dividend today that did not come

easily to us. We know that we might disappoint many shareholders. However, it is necessary in order to strengthen our company," said chief executive Peter Terium.

#### Profits down this year

Looking ahead to the current year, RWE said it is penciling in adjusted net profit of 500-700 million euros. "This represents a considerable decline compared to 2015," the group said. "Besides the erosion of margins in conventional power generation, the absence of the positive special items recorded last year also comes to bear," it said. RWE vowed to "tackle the operating and technical problems in the UK supply business with resolve, but anticipates burdens in this area again in 2016." Net debt and headcount at group level were "unlikely to change significantly compared to 2015," it said. In December, RWE announced plans to spin off its renewables, grids and retail operations and take the unit public. Bigger rival E.ON is similarly splitting its conventional and renewable energies operations into separate entities. —AFP



# ASIA SHARES RUN OUT OF STEAM

## NIKKEI SLIPS AFTER JUMPING ALMOST 8%

**SYDNEY:** Asian shares slipped yesterday after two sessions of solid gains, while oil prices swung higher as the market reconsidered the chances of a meaningful deal to restrict supply later in the year. The mood was still skittish when China set a slightly lower guidance rate for its yuan, the yen and safe-haven bonds got an instant boost. As investors realized this was not some message from Beijing on devaluation, the moves quickly reversed. European shares are

expected to extend their rally, however, with spread betters calling for a rise of 0.6 percent in Britain's FTSE and gains of 0.5 percent each in Germany's DAX and France's CAC 40.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan lost 0.6 percent, reversing early gains of 0.4 percent, as its bear market rally petering out after a 3 percent rise over the previous two sessions. The Shanghai Composite Index slid 0.3 percent and South Korea 0.1 per-

cent. Japan's Nikkei fell 1.7 percent, but is still up more than 5 percent on the week. "The rally itself has been extraordinary but very thin and the failure of the yen to continue on the fairly steady path of weakening we've seen in the past couple of days has been reflected as nervousness in the Nikkei," said Stefan Worrall, director of Japan equity sales at Credit Suisse.

"It's been a very volatile two weeks and nerves are still frayed despite the fact that we're

off the bottom of those extreme sessions we saw last week." E-Mini futures for the S&P 500 also slipped 0.1 percent in Asia after Wall Street appeared to have broken its negative feedback loop with oil. The Dow ended Tuesday with gains of 1.39 percent, while the S&P 500 added 1.65 percent and the Nasdaq 2.27 percent. A survey of global fund managers found they had become so cautious they were holding more cash than at any time since late 2001, an "unambiguous buy" signal according to Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

### Mood swings

In commodity markets, oil was whipped after top exporters, Russia and Saudi Arabia, agreed to freeze output levels but said the deal was contingent on other producers joining in. After falling sharply at first, prices recouped some ground early yesterday. Brent added 37 cents to \$32.55, while US crude was up 20 cents at \$29.24 a barrel. "Albeit mostly symbolic, it is one of the first clear acknowledgements by the oil heavyweights that all is not entirely well in the current price environment," wrote Helima Croft, global head of commodity strategy at RBC Capital Markets.

"Additionally it signals a potential will-

ingness to be more proactive later in the year. It puts the ball back in the court of those who would not or could not comply." Markets now await minutes of the Federal Reserve's last meeting to judge the balance of opinion among policymakers on the prospect of further rate hikes. Boston Fed President Eric Rosengren certainly sounded in no hurry to tighten. Speaking late on Tuesday, Rosengren said the Fed would need to ratchet down economic forecasts it made in December because of the uncertain global outlook.

Doubts about the pace of any further hikes kept the US dollar restrained at 96.720 against a basket of currencies. It slipped against the yen to 113.73 yen, though it has support around 113.60. The euro also gained 0.2 percent to \$1.1165. The big loser was sterling, which has struggled so far in 2016 because of worries the UK might leave the euro-zone. Traders said UK markets face a pivotal week ahead of a two-day summit starting on Thursday at which Prime Minister David Cameron will try to persuade other leaders to support a deal to keep Britain in the European Union. Sterling was stuck at \$1.4290, having shed 1 percent against the dollar on Tuesday. — Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report							Global						
Wednesday 17 February 2016													
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low		Volume	Value (KWD)	Number of Trades				
Price Index	▲ 11.32	5,146.28	5,134.96	5,149.01	5,123.97		128,908,791	7,659,570	3,059				
Weighted Index	▼ -0.93	352.11	353.04	353.29	351.11								
KXS 15	▼ -4.73	831.30	836.03	837.30	828.66								

Trades							Trades								
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change	Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
MARIN	114	104	1810	195	3	114	▲ 10.0	SOKOUK	32.0	31.0	1288250	40,628	35	31.0	▲ 0.0
IKARUS	81	79	14,500	1,149	9	80	▲ 0.5	KRE	46.5	46.0	611,380	28,168	16	46.5	▲ 0.5
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	320	▲ 0.0	URC	93	91	290,278	26,796	10	92	▼ -2.0
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	600	▲ 0.0	NRE	90	88	159,550	14,185	10	90	▲ 1.0
ENERGYH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	32.0	▲ 0.0	SRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	340	▲ 0.0
GPI	45.5	45.5	142,000	6,461	7	45.5	▼ -2.5	TAM	580	530	9,500	5,300	8	580	▲ 0.0
ABAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	116	▲ 0.0	AREEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	138	▲ 0.0
Oil & Gas			158,310	7,805	19	748.35	▲ 2.84	MASSALEH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	59	▲ 0.0
KFOUC	210	210	2,934	616	1	210	▲ 0.0	ARABREC	28.0	25.5	2,241,420	59,816	73	27.0	▲ 1.5
BPOC	460	460	19,475	8,959	1	460	▼ -5.0	ERESCO	53	52	316,550	16,869	16	52	▼ -1.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	610	▲ 0.0	MABANEE	880	860	915,993	798,347	56	870	▲ 10.0
ALQURAIN	174	168	114,949	19,670	13	174	▲ 4.0	INJAZZAT	80	80	12,476	998	3	80	▼ -5.0
Basic Materials			137,358	29,245	15	887.98	▲ 4.24	INVESTORS	20.0	19.5	8,294,866	164,667	114	20.0	▲ 1.0
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	365	▲ 0.0	IRC	24.0	23.5	52,554	1,235	5	23.5	▲ 0.0
REFRI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	320	▲ 0.0	ALTUJARIA	77	76	662,405	60,706	33	76	▲ 0.0
CABLE	345	345	480	166	1	345	▲ 0.0	SANAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	45.0	▲ 0.0
SHIP	148	142	4,040	594	6	146	▲ 2.0	AAYANRE	64	63	670,000	42,260	22	63	▲ 0.0
PCEM	1,040	1,020	147,452	150,748	18	1,020	▲ 0.0	AQAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	75	▲ 0.0
PAPER	420	420	37,450	15,729	2	420	▲ 10.0	ALAQARIA	20.5	18.5	160,502	3,136	9	20.0	▲ 0.0
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	57	▲ 0.0	MAZAYA	106	106	57,000	6,044	3	106	▲ 0.0
ACICO	275	270	4,800	1,257	7	275	▼ -15.0	ADNC	21.0	18.5	24,767,596	488,282	215	20.5	▲ 1.5
GGMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	470	▲ 0.0	THEMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	80	▲ 0.0
HCC	132	132	3,721	491	2	132	▲ 0.0	TUARA	39.5	39.0	45	2	39.5	▲ 0.0	
KPAK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	340	▲ 0.0	TAAMEER	22.0	20.0	121,750	2,448	6	21.0	▼ -1.0
KBMMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	▲ 0.0	ARKAN	94	94	500	47	1	94	▲ 0.0
HOCBM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	228	▲ 0.0	ARGAN	178	174	21,051	3,697	4	178	▲ 2.0
EQUIPMENT	52	50	774,350	39,213	23	52	▲ 1.0	ABYAR	24.5	23.5	81,500	1,932	6	24.5	▲ 1.0
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	99	▲ 0.0	MUNSHAAT	47.5	47.0	386,060	17,330	9	47.5	▲ 0.5
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	102	▲ 0.0	FIRSTDUBAI	38.5	37.5	358,538	13,620	15	38.5	▲ 0.5
SALBOKH	64	63	221,450	13,963	14	63	▲ 0.0	KBT	38.0	37.0	1,936,146	72,324	47	37.0	▲ 0.0
AGLTY	430	425	228,776	97,235	15	430	▲ 0.0	REAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	188	▲ 0.0
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	202	▲ 0.0	MENA	19.5	19.0	340,140	6,524	12	19.0	▲ 0.0
CLEANING	38.0	37.0	11,000	417	4	37.0	▼ -1.5	ALMUDON	27.5	27.0	210,000	5,722	8	27.0	▲ 0.0
CITYGROUP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	475	▲ 0.0	MARAKEZ	34.5	34.5	400	14	1	34.5	▲ 0.0
KGL	40.0	40.0	238,300	9,572	12	40.0	▼ -1.0	REMAL	31.5	30.0	50,550	1,517	3	30.0	▼ -0.5
KPCP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	210	▲ 0.0	MASHAER	96	96	6,651	673	2	96	▲ 0.0
HUMANISOFT	850	850	500	425	3	850	▼ -50.0	Real Estate			44,003,651	1,873,049	744	830.44	▲ 2.68
NAFAIS	136	136	21,145	2,876	1	136	▲ 16.0	KINV	89	88	23,000	2,025	3	88	▲ 2.0
SAFWAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	300	▲ 0.0	FACIL	170	168	77,950	13,154	5	170	▲ 0.0
GFC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	31.0	▲ 0.0	IFA	24.0	23.5	1,254,157	29,474	46	24.0	▲ 0.5
MAYADEEN	18.0	17.5	415,260	7,332	15	18.0	▲ 0.5	NINV	79	77	1,523,920	118,596	35	77	▼ -1.0
CGC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	790	▲ 0.0	KPROJ	550	550	15,250	8,388	2	550	▲ 0.0
MTCC	72	70	2,175,945	153,627	58	70	▼ -2.0	COAST	33.0	31.5	172,000	5,555	10	33.0	▲ 1.5
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	600	▲ 0.0	SECH	30.5	29.5	5,568,614	169,190	65	30.5	▲ 0.5
ALAFCO	180	180	652,330	117,419	24	180	▲ 0.0	SGC	85	85	50,283	4,274	3	85	▲ 0.0
MUBARRAD	60	58	2,371,109	138,538	69	60	▲ 2.0	ARZAN	33.0	32.5	53,750	1,747	5	32.5	▼ -0.5
LOGISTICS	56	55	119,229	6,597	9	55	▼ -1.0	MARKAZ	84	84	1,000	84	1	84	▲ 0.0
SCEM	84	84	1,500	126	1	84	▲ 1.0	KMEFIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	28.0	▲ 0.0
QCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	76	▲ 0.0	ALAMAN	56	56	163,439	9,153	4	56	▲ 0.0
QCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	70	▲ 0.0	ALOLA	44.0	42.0	50,010	2,110	3	44.0	▲ 1.0
FCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	73	▲ 0.0	ALMAL	32.5	31.5	1,813,626	57,922	52	32.0	▲ 1.0
RKWC	99	95	8,000	773	5	95	▲ 0.0	GIH	21.0	20.0	624,808	12,616	27	21.0	▲ 1.0
SPEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	88	▲ 0.0	AAYAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	41.5	▲ 0.0
Industrials			7,437,637	757,087	289	971.00	▼ -1.08	BAYANINV	32.0	30.5	1,352,164	42,455	29	31.5	▲ 1.0
KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	204	▲ 0.0	OSOUL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	31.0	▲ 0.0
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	62	▲ 0.0	KPIC	30.0	29.5	83,527	2,506	13	30.0	▼ -0.5
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	102	▲ 0.0	KAMCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	108	▲ 0.0
CATTL	128	128	500	64	1	128	▲ 2.0	NIH	45.0	44.0	176,304	7,773	12	45.0	▼ -1.5
DANAH	72	70	230,708	16,167	8	70	▲ 0.0	JSKAN	25.0	25.0	649,660	16,242	15	25.0	▲ 0.0
POULT	192	192	1,000	192	1	192	▲ 2.0	MADAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	20.5	▲ 0.0
FOOD	2,320	2,280	6,689	15,452	4	2,280	▼ -60.0	ALDEERA	25.5	25.5	50,139	1,279	2	25.5	▼ -0.5
Consumer Goods			238,897	31,875	14	1053.99	▼ -10.67	ALSALAM	31.5	29.5	6,472,236	197,547	129	30.5	▲ 0.5
MHC	210	210	500	105	1	210	▲ 10	EKTTITAB	28.0	26.0	4,867,650	133,163	85	27.5	▲ 1.5
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	▲ 0.0	ALMADINA	30.0	27.5	16,478,475	480,472	219	30.0	▲ 2.5
YIACO	178	160	349,982	62,294	27	178	▲ 10	NOOR	44.5	44.5	20,000	890	1	44.5	



## LOST IN TRANSLATION: WAL-MART STUMBLES HARD IN BRAZIL

**CAMPO GRANDE:** When Wal-Mart Stores Inc first expanded into Brazil's midwestern farm-belt city of Campo Grande seven years ago, the economy was booming and executives were eager to open stores even in sub-prime locations on one-way streets heading out of town. It didn't last. At the end of December, the US retailer closed both of its Maxxi brand cash-and-carry stores in Campo Grande as part of a restructuring that shuttered 60 locations across Brazil, including some Supercenters.

Shoppers said the stores could not compete on assortment, price or location. "It was never clear who Maxxi was for. It wasn't cheap enough for the poor. But there was no appeal for the middle class," said Ordecy Gossler, 40, a public accountant filling his cart with cleaning supplies and toilet paper at Atacadão, a rival chain run by France's Carrefour. "When they announced in December that both Maxxis were closing, no one in my office knew where they were."

Today, Wal-Mart has just one Supercenter left in this city of 850,000 people, whose demographic of thrifty shoppers had once seemed suited to the world's largest retailer. It shuttered the city's other one at the end of the year, as traffic dwindled in the shopping mall it was meant to anchor. The retreat from Campo Grande is emblematic of Wal-Mart's broader issues in Brazil, a once-red-hot destination for foreign retailers and other companies that has turned stone cold. And the lackluster performance in Latin America's largest econo-

my shows how tactics that helped Wal-Mart build success in the US sometimes get badly lost in translation overseas.

International results have been anemic, despite \$22 billion in capital investment over the past five years. Wal-Mart last year generated a 4.5 percent operating profit margin from international markets, well below the 7.4 percent return posted from the US. Seeking higher returns, Wal-Mart CEO Doug McMillon in October announced a strategic review of the company's global assets. Some securities analysts have speculated Wal-Mart could exit Brazil, as well as other markets in Latin America where it is already closing an additional 55 stores. The pullback in Brazil also has some worrying echoes of previous Wal-Mart debacles overseas, including South Korea and Germany, two markets it abandoned in 2006.

### Labor problems

Brazil in particular has been dogged by poor locations, inefficient operations, labor troubles and uncompetitive prices — with some of the problems baked in during an aggressive, decade-long growth surge, according to interviews with a dozen former and current Wal-Mart executives, as well as analysts, shoppers and store employees. Wal-Mart would not comment on financial results from Brazil ahead of the company's quarterly earnings on Feb. 18. People familiar with the numbers told Reuters that Wal-Mart has posted operating losses in Brazil for each of the past seven

years. Jo Newbould, a spokeswoman for the retailer, said the store closures were part of its efforts to "actively manage" its global assets and that it has been working to lower costs in Brazil. David Cheesewright, head of Wal-Mart's international operations, said in an interview that it has no plans to quit Brazil. He pointed to the company's decision to invest in completing an integration of legacy computer systems into the wider Wal-Mart platform as evidence of a commitment to the market. "That's not the act of someone who is packing up the firm for other purposes," he said. Cheesewright expressed optimism about a turnaround. "It's a market that has always been high on potential, but has been a roller-coaster ride in terms of its performance," he said. "It happens to be on a downturn at the moment, and I'm sure it will do what it always has done, which is improve."

### Runaway growth

Wal-Mart first entered Brazil in 1995 and grew in measured steps for nearly a decade. That changed in 2004-2005, when it spent about \$1 billion to buy two retailers, Bompreco SA Supermercados do Nordeste and Sonae Distribuicao Brasil S. The deals expanded Wal-Mart's operations into the northeast and south of Brazil, and marked the beginning of a spending spree aimed at building a national footprint. With the takeovers came an array of brands: Wal-Mart currently operates under nine different store banners in Brazil.

At the height of the expansion, former Wal-Mart executives said, a land rush mentality took hold. Brazil's thriving economy in those years convinced executives the biggest risk lay in moving too slowly. In response, they approved new store sites based on increasingly rosy forecasts of future sales. "Most executives didn't have the voice to say, 'Don't open this store; let's not approve more stores,'" a former finance executive recalled. "Why not? Because Brazil was the new country. We needed to put investment in before others do." In a six-year stretch through the fiscal year ending January 2013, Wal-Mart doubled its locations, reaching nearly 560 at its peak. The rapid expansion strained Wal-Mart's logistics-traditionally one of its strong points in the US but a drag on performance in Brazil.

In some cases, delivery trucks drove days to reach distant stores from centrally located warehouses. Executives from headquarters bickered with those running some kinds of stores about who should bear the distribution costs, the former finance executive said. Amid the focus on growth, executives never fully integrated the legacy information systems from Bompreco and Sonae. Disruptions in communication between headquarters and the many different store types allowed inefficiencies to take root. Buyers, for instance, found themselves using three laptops, one each for the two legacy systems and another for the Wal-Mart platform, people familiar with the matter said.—Reuters

## News

In brief

### British unemployment holds at ten-year low

**LONDON:** Britain's unemployment rate remains at its lowest level in a decade, official data showed yesterday. Unemployment stood at 5.1 percent in the three months to December, unchanged from the three months to November, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement. That was the lowest rate, or proportion of the workforce that are unemployed, since October 2005. The jobless total meanwhile sank 172,000 to 1.69 million people in the final quarter of last year compared with a year earlier. The ONS added that more than 31.4 million people are in work, which is the highest level since records began in 1971. Average weekly wages, including bonuses, rose by 1.9 percent in the year to December, down 0.2 percentage points from the previous month. "December's UK labor data continued to paint a mixed picture," said ING economist James Smith. "On the one hand, the unemployment rate remained at 5.1 percent, which ... continues to signal that the labor market remains tight. "More importantly though, wages pressures continue to remain subdued."

### 'Bad bank' deal could be option for some nations

**FRANKFURT:** A state-backed "bad bank" that would take over non-performing loans from a country's banks, as has been agreed for Italy, could also be an option for other countries, the head of Europe's new banking resolution authority said yesterday. "Italy has come up with a construction for a bad bank that uses a market solution without state aid," the head of the Single Resolution Board, Elke Koenig, told the business daily Handelsblatt in an interview. "But Italy isn't alone with this problem. In other countries, too, a large amount of non-performing loans has also amassed," Koenig said. The solution reached in Italy "could also be suitable for many other countries," she added, pointing out that "Germany has also had good experience" with such a solution. Last month, the European Union and Italy reached agreement on creating a guarantee vehicle to help Italian banks sell bad loans. Rome had spent more than a year thrashing out a solution with Brussels, having to ensure that any deal would not contravene EU rules on state aid.

### BAE chooses Mahindra for Indian gun assembly plant

**NEW DELHI:** BAE Systems said yesterday it had chosen Indian conglomerate Mahindra Group to build a plant for the assembly of its M777 Ultra Lightweight Howitzer artillery guns that it wants to sell to India. India and the United States, where BAE manufactures the weapons, are in advanced-stage talks for the sale of 145 M777s in a deal expected to be worth more than \$700 million. New Delhi is trying to replenish its range of artillery weapons after years of delays in ordering new equipment for depleted supplies. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has vowed to upgrade the country's military hardware, but wants deals with foreign companies to include the setting up of factories and plants in India to boost local industry, and the transfer of technology. Under the proposal, Mahindra will run an assembly, integration and testing facility for the 145 Howitzers, BAE said in a statement.

### Bahrain lifts bond re-tap to \$750 m

**DUBAI:** Bahrain has upsized and launched a \$750 million, two-part bond re-opening, at the tighter end of its previous guidance, a document from lead arrangers showed. The kingdom increased its borrowing size by \$250 million on the back of strong demand with the order book topping \$1.35 billion, it said in a document released late on Tuesday. The finances of the small energy exporter, with less generous oil and financial reserves than its neighbors, have been hard hit by the drop in oil prices. A re-tap at start of the year is seen as a positive for Bahrain, as it will potentially save the kingdom from paying much higher interest rates. Increased debt issuance this year by other Gulf governments and companies may squeeze liquidity, in addition to the risk of another US interest rate rise. Bahrain launched its re-tap on Tuesday, split between five-and 10-year portions, at 5.70 percent and 7.40 percent respectively. Previous guidance was 5.70-5.80 percent and 7.40-7.50 percent. Initial price thoughts were set on Tuesday at the 5.875 percent area for the five-year tranche and the 7.5 percent area for the 10-year tranche.

## NISSAN TO ASSEMBLE CARS IN MYANMAR

**YANGON:** Japanese auto giant Nissan will start assembling cars in Myanmar for the first time this year, the company said yesterday, as it expands its presence in one of Asia's final economic frontiers. Foreign companies have piled into the Southeast Asian nation since reforms began in 2011, eager to tap into a 51.5 million-strong pool of potential customers. Nissan said production will start in a factory run with a Malaysian partner, Tan Chong Motor Group, before eventually moving to a new facility in Bago, 80 kilometers northeast of the commercial hub Yangon.

The Japanese company announced its plan to build the largest automobile manufacturing site in Myanmar three years ago. Two hundred employees will receive training in Malaysia for a Myanmar assembly line that aims to turn out 10,000 units, according to a Nissan statement. It was not immediately clear if all the vehicles would be destined for the domestic market or whether some were intended for export. "Nissan is pleased to have the opportunity to be part of new motoring growth in Myanmar," said company vice-president Toru Hasegawa.

Huge import taxes and international sanctions aimed at the previous regime meant vehicles were too expensive for most people, but recent changes have seen a sharp increase in demand for four wheels. Evidence of the former pariah state's exploding car market lies on its once-sleepy streets, which are now choked with cars. Nissan began selling cars in Myanmar in 2013, two years after a stream of political and economic reforms saw Western sanctions lifted, opening the impoverished country up to trade and foreign investment following nearly five decades of military rule.

Investors are hoping that Myanmar's economy keeps growing under a new government set to be formed by Aung San Suu Kyi's pro-democracy party next month. The carmaker's Myanmar expansion comes after the company reported weakening demand last week in Thailand and Indonesia—its two major Southeast Asian manufacturing hubs. But the company's profits still surged last year following strong North American sales and signs of a pick up in China. Japan's Suzuki already produces in Myanmar while US giant Ford Motor has opened a showroom in Yangon.—AFP



**YANGON:** Shipping containers stacked up at the port area along Yangon river. Recent World Bank's projections placed Myanmar as the world's fourth fastest growing economy. — AFP



**MAYIBOUTH:** Gold leaves obtained from panning are shown in the middle of the equatorial forest in Mayibouth, north east Gabon. — AFP

## GABON SEEKS RICHES IN ARTISANAL GOLD MINING

### GABON - HOME TO WEALTH OF MINERAL RICHES

**MAYIBOUTH:** In the remote wilderness of the Belinga mountains in northeast Gabon, men with shovels in hand dig from morning to night, filling wheelbarrows with soil laced with what they are looking for: gold. The clearing in the equatorial forest is covered with dozens of holes, some four meters deep. "We arrive around seven in the morning, and finish at 6:00 pm... the production isn't that good," says Aboubakar Coulibaly, a Malian with muscular arms who moves around 200 wheelbarrows full of the gold-bearing soil per day.

On good days, his team finds around nine or 10 grams of gold. The production may be small but now Gabon's government requires that these men panning for gold must sell what they find to the west African state—a situation the artisanal gold miners don't like especially in the face of growing competition from Chinese mining companies. William M'bouma employs five or six workers for around 10,000 CFA francs (15 euros) per day. "We don't have a choice, it's hard but we make do," says the 31-year-old Gabonese, who came back to his native village after taking his chances in vain in the capital Libreville.

In the city like in the countryside,

"there are no companies which can train or hire young people. If you don't want to stay with nothing to do, you have to find things to do like gold panning," he says, as youth unemployment stands at more than 30 percent. But in 2014 the government decided to address the "anarchy" of the situation of the artisanal gold diggers and launched a system for buying and collecting their small-size production.

The stated objective was to have "better visibility and control of the activity," explains Wesbert Moussounda, director of the Gabonese branch for gold collection, a subsidiary of the Societe Equatoriale des Mines (SEM) charged with developing Gabon's mineral resources. Last year, the CGCO collected 55 kilograms of gold, a modest amount considering that around 10,000 people work in gold panning nationwide, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in Gabon. The state's management of this gold production "will improve living conditions for our people" with the development of "small mines better organized and semi-automated," says Moussounda.

### Question of survival'

But the gold panners faced with the

government's demand for their production say they are the losers in this deal. "Before we got around 20,000 CFA francs per gram but now since they (the government officials) came, it's fallen to 17,000," says Simon Pierre Matamaya, chief of the camp 6 village. He says officials blame the price on market conditions, "but we don't know". An ounce of gold on the commodities market currently sells for around \$1,200 per ounce.

"This isn't a business, it's a question of survival," Matamaya adds, pointing to the makeshift shelters in the camp, with no water, no electricity, and families sleeping on the ground. Gold mining began in Gabon in the 1940s during the French colonial era and gold panning today takes place at the old sites. But a few months ago, excavators cleared out a new large section of the forest. The Gabon mining firm SEM, which hopes to discover new reserves of gold, has signed a partnership with the Chinese company Myanning to explore the area. Gabon is home to a wealth of mineral riches including manganese, iron, uranium and diamonds that have yet to be exploited and are attracting more and more Chinese companies, already involved in oil, wood and public works.—AFP

## NISSAN STAFF HONORED FOR THEIR 'EXCELLENCE'

**DUBAI:** As part of its ongoing strategy to offer the best customer care services, Nissan has awarded its top sales force and service technicians from across the region at its Regional Skills Contest event held at the Armani hotel in Dubai. The Japanese auto maker invests heavily in customer care and focuses on providing the highest standards of sales and after-sales service.

Speaking at the ceremony, Samir Cherfan

reaffirmed Nissan's commitment to customer service: "At Nissan, we believe customer experience excellence is top priority. Globally, Nissan's objective in this area is to be the best and in this region we have also aligned ourselves with this goal. It is not simply about satisfying a customer with a particular service or purchase, it is about delivering an overall outstanding customer experience." The Nissan Regional Skills Contest, now in its

19 year, honors those members of staff that have shown exemplary performance over the course of the year. The Regional Skills Contest comprises four competitions for Technicians, Service Advisors, Sales and Parts with the objective of realizing their capabilities and then advancing their skills.

The awards span every aspect of the business - from knowledge of Nissan genuine parts to service advice to sales acumen to

technical expertise. Samir Cherfan paid tribute to the winners: "We acknowledge each entrant's efforts in the skills contest and congratulate those who won in their respective categories. The contest is part of our major investment in customer care. By investing in our employees and the company, our customers are constantly rewarded by the consistent professionalism of our staff." The oldest and most coveted category is Nissan Service Technical Excellence Competency Award (NISAC), now in its 19th year. This year, the accolade was awarded to Uchita Bandara.

"I am so grateful to have received such a coveted award, especially when it's judged by my colleagues and peers within the company," says Uchita Bandara. At the end of the day, the best reward for me is doing my job to the best of my ability and to the satisfaction of the customer." The first place under the Nissan Service Advisor Excellency Competency Award (NISAC) category was won by Sajeiv Thomas and the winner of the Nissan Sales Executive Excellence Competency Award (NISEC) category went to Mohamed Dayane. In addition, Mohammed Ansari was presented with the first place for the Nissan Parts Executive Excellence Competency Award (NIPAC). The Best Performing NSC award was given to Arabian Automobiles Co.



### Boeing, Okay Airways sign \$1.3 billion deal

**SINGAPORE:** Boeing said yesterday it has won a commitment from China's Okay Airways to buy 12 aircraft from the 737 family in a deal worth \$1.3 billion. The deal is subject to the approval of the Chinese government and will be posted on Boeing's list of orders once the green light is given, the US aircraft maker said at the Singapore Airshow. Okay Airways, a privately owned airline with headquarters in Beijing, committed to buy eight 737 MAX 8s, three 737 MAX 9s and one next generation 737-900 extended range version. The Chinese carrier also has the option to order another eight 737 MAX 8s, Boeing said. "We greatly value the ties we have built over the years with Boeing," said Okay Airways chairman Wang Shusheng. He said the additional orders "will modernize our fleet and ensure we operate the most efficient fleet well into the future". The order is a boost to the 737 MAX 9, which has been outsold by the A321 neo, its rival narrow body aircraft made by Europe's Airbus. According to an analysis by industry publication Flightglobal before yesterday's announcement, airlines have ordered 224 737 MAX 9s compared with 1,111 A321neos.





## MERCEDES-AMG GLE 63: EFFICIENCY MEETS PERFORMANCE

**KUWAIT:** Following the successful launch of the GLE 400 last October, AR Albisher & Z Alkazemi, the authorized General Distributor of Mercedes-Benz in Kuwait are pleased to announce the arrival of the latest GLE family member in Kuwait, the all-new Mercedes-AMG GLE 63. Updated name, extended model range and even more power, the new Mercedes-AMG GLE 63 4MATIC is more attractive than ever.

Following the introduction of the new nomenclature, the evolution of the successful Mercedes-Benz ML 63 AMG is now called the Mercedes-AMG GLE 63. The AMG 5.5-litre twin-turbo V8 engine is even more powerful than before: in addition to the basic variant developing 410 kW (557 hp), there is also the highly sporty S-Model to choose from, which is rated at 430 kW (585 hp). The chassis was completely revised to deliver even better driving dynamics and agility.

The new DYNAMIC SELECT transmission modes promise maximum individuality. For the hallmark AMG Driving Performance, the throttle response of the engine and the shift times of the transmission are now on a new, even sportier level. The power SUV also has a more dynamic look than before, which is underscored by the characteristic AMG family face featuring A-wing and twin-blade radiator grille.

"The new GLE 63 is a true AMG performance car and its arrival in Kuwait has been much anticipated. From its luxurious interior furnishings to its sports car agility and versatile off-road capability, this model demonstrates undisputed on-road dominance," said Michael Ruelle, Chief Executive Officer, AR Albisher & Z Alkazemi. Whether it be technology, design or equipment - the new Mercedes-AMG GLE 63 fascinates in many facets while offering maximum driving performance. The unique driving experience and superior product quality are tangible in every detail. The successful balance between high comfort, sportiness and breathtaking performance produces pure emotion. Authentic driving dynamics are characterized by the agile throttle response, short shift times and - a trademark typical of AMG - the distinctive engine sound.

The strong heart of the new GLE 63, the AMG 5.5-litre V8 biturbo engine, is now even more powerful. The increase by 24 kW (32 hp) to 410 kW (557 hp) delivers significantly improved performance, with the GLE 63 accelerating from 0 to 100 km/h in 4.3 seconds (ML 63 AMG: 4.8 seconds). The power output of the S-Model has increased by a further 20 kW (28 hp) to 430 kW (585 hp) to allow acceleration from 0 to 100 km/h in 4.2 seconds.

Despite the increased power output and improved acceleration, fuel consumption remains at the level of the previous model. The AMG 5.5-litre V8 biturbo engine thus demonstrates its high efficiency. The different output and torque of the two engine variants are the result of a higher maximum boost pressure. The S-Model features an additional integral charge-air cooler in the left-hand wheel housing. Both models benefit from the favorable aerodynamic positioning of the engine oil cooler in the front section.

Regardless of which output the customer chooses,

the 8-cylinder engine, which is assembled according to the philosophy of "one man, one engine", can be visually upgraded if desired with a carbon-fibre engine cover. The engine badge bearing the engine technician's signature is a typical AMG hallmark of utmost precision and production quality.

### One hallmark AMG feature

As is customary for an AMG model, the GLE 63 also has a unique sound. The V8 engine sounds different depending on the DYNAMIC SELECT transmission mode that has been selected: restrained in COMFORT mode or roaring and distinctive with SPORT+. Here the driver experiences every gearshift in a more emotional way as the momentary retardation of ignition and injection under full throttle speeds up gear shifting and is also audible behind the wheel. The double-declutching function when downshifting and the "exhaust rumbling" in overrun mode make the hairs on the back of the neck stand up when in the cockpit and evoke the sound of a DTM touring car.

### Dynamic Select

Superior high everyday practicality and perfect traction, sports-car agility and spontaneous throttle response - the new Mercedes-AMG GLE 63 guarantees its driver an exclusive driving experience without parallel. The new DYNAMIC SELECT transmission modes are a major factor in this as well by enabling tremendous variance in driving dynamics. The five transmission modes of Slippery, Individual, Comfort, Sport and Sport+, which the driver selects using a rotary control on the centre console, deliver tailor-made driving dynamics. Throttle response, gear-change strategy, ESP(r) thresholds, steering power assist or the characteristic of the continuous damper adjustment exclusive to AMG: the system networks all the control systems to generate a wide variety of distinct driving experiences. "Individual" mode allows the driver to configure their own personal set-up, consisting of engine characteristics, gear-change strategy and damper tuning.

### AMG SPEEDSHIFT PLUS 7G-TRONIC

The AMG SPEEDSHIFT PLUS 7G-TRONIC adapts with lightning speed to the respective DYNAMIC SELECT transmission mode. Relaxed cruising in "Comfort" mode is accompanied by extremely smooth gear shifting, while a sportier driving style in the AMG-exclusive Sport+ mode is characterized by fast shift speeds and emotive gear changes to deliver the kind of driving performance typical of the brand. The convincing result is that Sport+ allows even greater longitudinal and transverse dynamics for more intense driving pleasure behind the wheel. By pressing the M button in the centre console, the driver can shift between the seven gears using just the steering wheel gearshift paddles and can fully savor the tremendous tractive power from the high-torque V8 biturbo engine.

Dynamically minded drivers also benefit from the temporary M mode, which combines the performance of manual gear changes with automatic upshifts

and downshifts. After the driver has shifted up or down manually using a shift paddle, the transmission independently reverts to automatic shift mode after a set period of time.

### Comfort mode

With DYNAMIC SELECT, the COMFORT mode has an integrated sailing function. It helps to further lower fuel consumption: when the driver releases the accelerator in a speed range from 60 to 160 km/h, the engine is disengaged from the drive system. The electronics reduce the engine speed to idle level, and the driving resistance is reduced by the compression and frictional forces of the engine in overrun mode. The "sailing" function is indicated in the AMG instrument cluster by an icon depicting a stylised sailing yacht. The ECO start/stop function is also available in the COMFORT transmission mode, switching off the engine at traffic lights and helping to save fuel. To consistently guarantee a high level of comfort and minimal vibration, the seven-speed automatic transmission is equipped with a dual-turbine torsional damper with speed-sensitive centrifugal pendulum.

For AMG Performance 4MATIC permanent all-wheel drive, Mercedes-AMG uses a specially designed transfer case. This exclusive solution splits the torque in a ratio of 40:60 between the front and rear axles to provide higher agility about the vertical axis of the vehicle. The pay-off for the driver is to make cornering even more dynamic. The AMG RIDE CONTROL sports suspension with AIRMATIC package comprises more than just air suspension with automatic level control. The new GLE 63 also comes with special spring struts, which have been refined with ADS Plus continuously variable damping characteristics, a solution exclusive to AMG.

ACTIVE CURVE SYSTEM roll stabilization is part of the standard equipment for this model. This system employs active anti-roll bars on the front and rear axles to reduce the body's roll angle during cornering. The reduced roll angle and outstanding cornering properties make for enhanced transverse dynamics and driving pleasure. At the same time, the system provides increased driving stability and therefore safety, especially at higher speeds. Roll stabilization, infinitely variable damping and suspension adapt automatically to the prevailing driving situation to offer both optimum ride comfort and maximum stability. The damping system changes its priorities depending on the preselected DYNAMIC SELECT mode.

"Comfort" mode offers maximum ride and suspension comfort. "Sport" mode firms up the shock absorbers and reduces the vehicle height by 15 millimeters. In "Sport+" mode, the GLE 63 gives an even firmer ride - with the emphasis on maximum possible transverse dynamics. In addition, the air suspension lowers the body by a further 10 millimeters. The fully load-bearing air suspension system is speed-sensitive. The current operating conditions are detected via the steering angle sensor, four level sensors, three body sensors, the driving speed as well as the positions of the brake pedal and accelerator. The

control unit uses these signals for lightning-fast and infinitely variable adjustment of the current damping force for each individual wheel.

### AMG-specific axles

The axles, too, have undergone AMG-specific optimization in the interests of high precision and agile handling. The newly developed elastokinematics on the double-wishbone front suspension and the larger stabilizer on the multi-link rear axle produce the typical AMG direct driving experience with spontaneous reactions and distinct response characteristics. The Sports Direct-Steer system too has been fundamentally revised and adapted to the driving dynamics of the performance SUV. The moderate variable steering ratio makes for significantly improved agility, while high-speed driving safety is maintained. Dependent on the vehicle speed and DYNAMIC SELECT mode, the variable power assistance adapts perfectly to the driving situation.

Extremely short stopping distances and high stability also when the driver adopts a highly dynamic driving style - these are the strengths of the AMG high-performance braking system. The standard equipment includes all-round ventilated and perforated brake discs measuring 390 x 36 millimetres (front) and 345 x 26 millimetres (rear) as well as silver-painted brake callipers with white AMG lettering. The more powerful GLE 63 S can be identified by its red brake callipers with black AMG lettering.

### Powerful sportiness

Performance and perfection revealed: the design of the new Mercedes-AMG GLE 63 fascinates with its exclusivity, powerful sportiness and dominance. From now on, the GLE 63 also sports the distinctive "A-wing" in the front apron, which is characteristic for the AMG design philosophy. The design of the radiator grille with the silver chrome twin-blade louvre, the integral AMG lettering and the central Mercedes star are distinguishing features of current AMG Performance vehicles.

The new design goes hand in hand with fascinating technology: the A-wing in the form of a stylised "A" is three-dimensional, painted in the colour of the vehicle and features a trim strip in silver chrome. It serves as an air guide for the three diamond lattice air openings. The external black flaps ensure an optimal flow of air onto the cooling modules. At the lower end of the front apron, the front splitter in the colour of the vehicle helps to reduce lift. Three-dimensional LED High Performance headlamps are fitted as standard. Two dynamic powerdome on the bonnet emphasize the sculptural design idiom of the GLE 63.

### Dominant, muscular

The performance SUV also impresses with its dominance when viewed from the side. AMG-specific, flared wheel arches in the vehicle color provide space for the large wheels. As standard, tyres of size 265/45 R 20 are fitted on 9 x 20 AMG multi-spoke alloy wheels painted titanium grey with a high-sheen finish. Optionally, the GLE 63 can be upgraded in

terms of looks and driving dynamics with tyres in size 295/35 R 21. The 10 x 21 cross-spoke light-alloy wheels are available in two variants: painted in titanium grey with a high-sheen finish or painted in matt black with a high-sheen rim flange. A typical AMG distinguishing feature is the "V8 BITURBO" lettering on the front wing. As an alternative to the side sill panels, side running boards in an aluminum look with anti-slip rubber studs are optionally available.

The GLE 63 also impresses from the rear with its muscular and athletic look: The black diffuser insert in the rear apron with black trim strip in the shape of the front A-wing represents typical motor racing design. The special exhaust system with two chrome-plated twin tailpipes and "AMG" lettering underscores the sportiness and exclusivity. Above the new LED tail lights are the model badges "AMG" (on the left) and "GLE 63" (on the right).

### Interior design

In the interior too, the new GLE 63 demonstrates what makes a true AMG Performance vehicle: exquisite materials, first-class workmanship and maximum precision. Design and equipment underscore the sportily exclusive high-end positioning. Aluminum trim with longitudinal grain in the black ARTICO man-made leather instrument panel set shiny attractive highlights. Animated graphics on the semi-integrated central display visualise the individual DYNAMIC SELECT transmission modes. The centre console houses the COMAND controller, to the right of which is the DYNAMIC SELECT rotary control for the various transmission modes. Located above is the M button for the manual transmission mode, with the button for manual damper adjustment found on its left.

Perforated nappa leather sports seats with special upholstery layout and topstitching as well as AMG badges make for an exclusive look and feel. Thanks to their specific upholstery with greater contouring and higher side bolsters at the front, the sports seats offer excellent lateral support. This is further complemented by the 3-spoke Performance steering wheel: the steering-wheel rim, with flattened bottom section, in black nappa leather with perforated grip area assists a sporty driving style. Silver aluminum shift paddles with "UP" and "DOWN" lettering and precise pressure point act as an invitation to manual gear changing.

### Informative, sporty design

Two tube-shaped round dials with silver chrome surrounds and the central 11.4 cm (4.4-inch) multi-function display provide the driver with comprehensive information. The typical AMG equipment scope includes sporty dials in carbon-fibre look with 320-km/h speedometer scale, AMG lettering and red pointers, as well as the main menu including RACE TIMER, manual gear indicator and AMG start-up screen. Optimal infotainment and a brilliant sound are guaranteed by the Audio 20 CD system with eight loudspeakers. The Mercedes-AMG GLE 63 & GLE 63 S are available at AR Albisher and Z Alkazemi's AMG performance center in Kuwait.

## TURKISH AIRLINES CELEBRATES DELIVERY OF ITS 300TH AIRCRAFT

**DUBAI:** Taking its place as one of the world's major airlines, Turkish Airlines continues to grow its fleet in order to meet the needs of its ever-growing network and expanding customer base. Turkish Airlines also wishes to serve its customers with Europe's youngest and most modern fleet. That process continues as the airline adds its 300th aircraft. The addition of the 300th plane was celebrated with a ceremony that was held at Ataturk International Airport in the new hangar of Turkish Technic Inc.

The ceremony included the participation of Turkish Airlines' Board Chairman, M Ilker Ayçi, Turkish Airlines' CEO, Dr Temel Kotil, Airbus' Regional Sales Director/Middle East and Europe, Douglas Anderson, and Airbus' Contracts Director, David Bonnel as well as a large number of business partners and media representatives. In his address, Turkish Airlines Board Chairman M Ilker Ayçi noted that Turkish Airlines has set great targets to take measured steps towards becoming the world's leading airline.

Indicating that Turkish Airlines has also acted as a "diplomatic" pioneer due to the far-reaching flight network, Ayçi said, "As Turkish Airlines, we are at the top among the fastest growing airlines worldwide. Established in 1933 with a fleet of five aircraft, Turkish Airlines today is a 4-star airline with a fleet of 300 (passenger and cargo) aircraft flying to 284 destinations worldwide - 235 international and 49 domestic. Turkish Airlines received its 100th aircraft in August 2006, 73 years after its establishment. Nearly seven years later, in March 2013, its fleet reached 200 aircraft.

With 300 aircraft in our fleet today, we are the world's 13th largest airline in terms of fleet size", and with 39 new aircraft to be added by the end of this year, Turkish Airlines will be even more prominent at the international level with its young fleet." He also added that, "We are determined that Turkish Airlines will have the strongest base in international aviation with its highly-qualified workforce and its young, modern fleet. We have made huge efforts to reach that objective as a big family work-

ing together. The 300th airplane is one symbol of our determination to reach the vision and objectives that we've set."

Douglas Anderson, Senior Sales Director of Airbus commented: "We would like to congratulate Turkish Airlines on the milestone of increasing its fleet to 300 aircraft and we would like to express our gratitude for their confidence in Airbus aircraft. Ten years ago Turkish Airlines was operating with only 7 wide-body aircraft and today they have more than 70. We are honored to be a partner in their growth and look forward to be a part of their growing fleet in the coming years." The aircraft was then handed over to Turkish Airlines. Powered by CF6-80E1 engines, the A330-300 is the first aircraft to be equipped with galleys from TCI -Turkish Cabin Interiors- and economy class seats from TSI -Turkish Seat Industries- all manufactured in Turkey. The new aircraft will be deployed on existing medium and long-haul routes from the Turkish Airlines Istanbul hub, adding more capacity to enhance the airline's growth strategy. Airbus has a long-standing relationship with Turkish Airlines dating back to 1984 when it added the first A310. Today the carrier operates 159 Airbus aircraft including 53 A330 variants.

Airbus is well positioned to meet the demand for Turkish Airlines' ambitious growth strategy with its eco-efficient, modern family of aircraft. Turkish aerospace companies benefit from this growth through long-term industrial partnerships with Airbus. The A330 family includes freighters, VIP, and military transport/tanker variants, and has now attracted more than 1,600 orders. Over 1,200 A330 aircraft are flying with more than 100 operators worldwide. Having an operational reliability of 99.4 percent, the A330 is one of the world's most efficient aircraft with best-in-class operating economics. The A330 belongs to the successful group of Airbus Widebody aircraft, which consists of the A330, A350 XWB and A380, uniquely spanning the 250 to over 500 seat market segment.



## ISYS GROUP REBRANDS AS ONE GLOBAL

**KUWAIT:** For more than 10 years, the Kuwaiti-based company responsible for launching electronic payment services in the Middle East, Africa, Europe and America operated by the name of Isys. Today, the international company is rebranding under the name One Global and preparing to launch several new product lines.

"Recent political events, as well as the continuous revolution that creates constant change in the telecommunications, information technology, and mobile financial industries, motivated our senior management to rebrand the business," explained Mohammed Al-Rashidi, founder and CEO. "We want to be recognized as Global, society driven instead of local technology company, while at the same time operate our business under a name that meets our customers' expectations and allows us to focus on aligning the company with a strategy for marketing vertical products."

Currently, One Global's showcase product, Payit, has become a very popular application for electronic payments. The company provides sales and support services from 15 offices located across the Middle East, Africa, Europe and America. "We will soon introduce a new line of technologically-advanced products under the One Global brand, thus impacting several new markets including travel, health, entertainment, and other sectors," said Al-Rashidi. One Global also intends to open offices in 10 new markets in the next three years.

"In a short period of time," continued Al-Rashidi, a graduate of Computer Engineering College, University of Kuwait "we're about to see unprecedented demand for digital transactions, and One Global is now positioned to take advantage of the boom in several niches." Developing a new brand name required the company's senior management to select

a name that "embodied the company's desire for expansion, while also preserving the company's previous 10-year commitment as a leading provider in digital financial solutions," explained Al-Rashidi. "These criteria led to an ambitious strategy, which we titled 'One', and on this basis we opted to associate this new brand name with our operational vision as well as our plans for expansion," he explained.

Senior management expects One Global to continue to be "the window for the cash payments revolution in Kuwait and worldwide," and the company promises to expand that window to include new niche markets. Al-Rashidi revealed that One Global will offer an impressive array of services and products to businesses and consumers. He said, "We believe our new name will resonate positively with our customers, who will benefit from the products and services that the company will provide in the next stage."

One Global will continue to provide state-of-the-art communication technology. "On the one hand," Al-Rashidi elaborated, "the company will focus on observing market needs, and on the other hand keep pace with the rapidly developing technical applications that will serve our clients." The new vertical products are being developed in conjunction with in-depth analytical studies to best determine the nature of the evolution of the electronic payments market.

### About One Global

With headquarters in Kuwait, the company exists under the umbrella of the International Authority of Financial Electronic Systems. It is also licensed by a number of central banks in the region, including the Central Bank of Sudan, and the Central Bank of Bahrain, to provide Electronic payment services.



## 'WORLD'S CHEAPEST SMARTPHONE' TO BE LAUNCHED IN INDIA

**NEW DELHI:** A little-known Indian company will launch a smartphone believed to be the cheapest in the world, targeting a market already dominated by low-cost handsets.

Set to be priced at under 500 rupees (\$7.30), domestic handset maker Ringing Bells' Freedom 251 smartphone is about one percent of the price of the latest Apple iPhone. Ringing Bells was set up in September 2015 and began selling mobile phones via its website a few weeks ago under its Bell brand, a spokeswoman said. "This is our flagship model and we think it will bring a revolution in the industry," she told AFP. Ringing Bells currently imports parts from overseas

and assembles them in India but plans to make its phones domestically within a year, the spokeswoman said.

Cheap smartphone handsets, many of them Chinese-made, are readily available in the Indian market but domestic competitors are making inroads, with models selling for less than \$20. India is the world's second-largest mobile market and notched up its billionth mobile phone subscriber in October, according to the country's telecoms regulator.

But in poorer Indian states such as Bihar, "teledensity"—the penetration of telephone connections for every hundred people—is as low as 54 percent, with a stark urban-rural divide. — AFP



**SAN FRANCISCO:** Leap Motion co-founder David Holz at the San Francisco startup's headquarters demonstrates finger tracking technology February 9 that lets people use natural hand movements to interact with virtual worlds. — AFP

## COVERTLY, ISRAEL PREPARES TO FIGHT BOYCOTT ACTIVISTS ONLINE

**TEL AVIV:** Israel is using its world-leading expertise in cyber security to take on the growing threat of the global pro-Palestinian movement to boycott Israel. The Israeli government recently allotted nearly \$26 million in this year's budget to combat what it sees as worldwide efforts to "delegitimize" the Jewish state's right to exist. Some of the funds are earmarked for Israeli tech companies, many of them headed by former military intelligence officers, for digital initiatives aimed at gathering intelligence on activist groups and countering their efforts.

"I want to create a community of fighters," said Sima Vaknin-Gil, the director general of Israel's Ministry for Strategic Affairs and Public Diplomacy, to Israeli tech developers at a forum last month dedicated to the topic.

Initiatives are largely being kept covert. Participants at the invite-only forum, held on the sidelines of a cyber technology conference, repeatedly stood up to remind people that journalists were in the room. Among the government officials involved in the efforts are some of Israel's top secret-keepers, including Sima Shine, a former top official in the Mossad spy agency, and Vaknin-Gil, who recently retired as the chief military censor responsible for gag orders on state secrets.

Israel has established itself as a world leader in cyber technology innovation, fueled by graduates of prestigious and secretive military and security intelligence units. These units are widely thought to be behind some of the world's most advanced cyber-attacks, including the Stuxnet virus that attacked Iran's nuclear energy equipment last decade.

Each year, these units churn out a talent pool of Israelis who translate their skills to the corporate world. Now Israel is looking to harness their technological prowess for the fight to protect Israel's international image.

Vaknin-Gil said her ministry is encouraging initiatives to expose the funding and curb the activities of anti-Israel activists, as well as campaigns to "flood the Internet" with content that puts a positive face on Israel. She said some of these actions will not be publicly identified with the government, but that the ministry will not fund unethical or illegal digital initiatives.

### GLOBAL NETWORK

Established about 10 years ago, the pro-Palestinian "BDS" campaign is a coalition of organizations that advocate boycotts, divestment and sanctions against Israel. Inspired by the anti-apartheid movement, BDS organizers say they are using nonviolent means to promote the Palestinian struggle for independence.

The movement has grown into a global network of thousands of volunteers, from campus activists to church groups to liberal Jews disillusioned by Israeli policies. They lobby corporations, artists and academic institutions to sever ties with Israel.

The movement has made inroads. US and British academic unions have endorsed boycotts, student governments at universities have made divestment proposals, and some famous musicians have refused to perform in Israel. The BDS movement also claims responsibility for pressuring some large companies to stop or modify operations in Israel. In its latest push, it has urged top Hollywood actors to reject a government-paid trip to Israel being offered to leading Oscar nominees.

Omar Barghouti, co-founder of the BDS movement, said "quite a few web pages" that BDS websites linked to have mysteri-

ously disappeared from the Internet. "We assume Israel's cyber sabotage is ongoing, but we are quite pleased that its detrimental impact on the global BDS movement has been dismal so far," he said.

Israel says the movement is rooted in anti-Semitism and seeks not to change Israeli policies, but ultimately to put an end to the Jewish state. Many online activists driving anti-Israeli campaigns on social media are tech-savvy, second- and third-generation Muslims in Europe and the US who have grievances against the West and also lead online campaigns against European and US governments, said Elad Ratson, who tracks the issue for Israel's Foreign Ministry and spoke at last month's cybersecurity forum.

He said they often create code that allows activists to blast thousands of messages from social media accounts—creating the illusion that many protesters are sharing the same anti-Israel or anti-West message online.

Israeli officials lobby Facebook to remove pages it says incite violence against Israelis, and there has been talk of advancing legislation to restrict Facebook in Israel. A Facebook representative met with Strategic Affairs Minister Gilad Erdan in Israel last week about the matter.

### PROMOTING TERRORIST ACTS

Ratson said social media giants are beginning to close inciting users' accounts. Twitter said in a statement this month that since mid-2015, it has closed more than 125,000 accounts that were "threatening or promoting terrorist acts, primarily related to ISIS," the Islamic State group. But he said Islamist activists are simply moving to "Darknet" sites not visible on the open internet.

Some Israeli tech companies are starting to build sly algorithms to restrict these online activists' circle of influence on the "Darknet," so activists think their message is reaching others when in fact it is being contained, Ratson said.

Other Israeli companies work on forensic intelligence gathering, such as detecting digital or semantic signatures buried in activists' coding so they are able to track and restrict their online activity.

Firewall Israel, a non-profit initiative sponsored by the Reut Institute, an Israeli think tank, is building an online platform to help pro-Israel activists around the world communicate about anti-Israel activism in their communities. At a recent event the initiative held at Campus Tel Aviv, a Google-sponsored event space for entrepreneurs, an Israeli web expert taught young activists how to mine the internet for BDS activities.

"Delegitimizers are engaged in a Disneyland of hate," Igal Ram of Firewall Israel told seminar participants. "We want to act against the people who run the Disneyland ... and the useful idiots who help."

Inspiration, an Israeli intelligence analysis company founded by Ronen Cohen and Haim Pinto, former military intelligence officers, launched a technological initiative some months ago to collect intelligence on BDS organizations in Europe, particularly Scandinavian countries, the US, and South America, Cohen said. He said the initiative aims to dismantle the infrastructure of groups he said were responsible for incitement and anti-Semitism against Israel. He declined to give specifics.

"It's no different than an operation, which you sometimes read about in the newspaper, in Syria or Lebanon," Cohen said. "It's the kind of thing that, if you want to do it in the future ... you can't work in the open." — AP

## DICE SUMMIT A CHANCE FOR GAME CREATORS TO RECHARGE, REFLECT

**LAS VEGAS:** For elite members of the video game industry, the D.I.C.E. Summit isn't merely a chance to schmooze at the poker table or on the golf course in Las Vegas. It's also an opportunity to address issues and innovations, ranging from gender diversity to virtual reality.

"It's really about people in the industry taking a break from what they're working on and re-engaging in this medium they're so passionate about," said Martin Rae, president of the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences, which organizes the D.I.C.E. Summit.

While the 15th annual gathering officially started on Tuesday with poker, golf and "Magic: The Gathering" tournaments, the serious business begins Wednesday morning, when the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences Foundation will unveil a new initiative to promote gender diversity in the gaming industry.

According to the Electronic Software Association trade group, about 44 percent of gamers are women, but only about 18 percent of game developers surveyed at last year's Game Developers Conference were female.

"We want to focus on helping women receive an education in games and get them integrated into the industry," said Rae. "Once they're engrained in the culture, game design will naturally move in new directions."

Unlike other gaming industry gatherings, such as the Electronic Entertainment Expo, the D.I.C.E. Summit - which stands for design, innovate, communicate and entertain - is more business-minded and features a guest list that's intentionally kept small. For this year's summit, organizers expect about 700 attendees at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center.

"I'm really looking forward to what conversations we'll be having because last year, everyone was talking about mobile and user-acquisition spending," said Min Kim, co-founder of Nexon America and the interactive academy's chairman. "I'm done with that. I'm looking forward to people talking about games like 'Hearthstone' and how that became so successful. It's not just marketing."

### MAGIC TRICK

The conference invited such gaming industry veterans as "Civilization" creator Sid Meier, "Fallout" creative director Todd Howard, Electronic Arts chief creative officer Richard Hilleman and "Rise of the Tomb Raider" writer Rhianna Pratchett to present talks.

Randy Pitchford, the president and CEO of "Borderlands" publisher Gearbox Software, will be joined by magician Penn Jillette for a session Wednesday on the intersection of illusion and

interactivity. The talk will conclude with the pair performing a magic trick that moves from the real world into virtual reality.

"Metal Gear Solid" creator Hideo Kojima and "Pacific Rim" filmmaker Guillermo del Toro will appear on stage together Thursday for the first time since their top-secret collaboration "Silent Hills" was canceled by publisher Konami.

"Kojima-san is being inducted into our hall of fame this year, and it was his idea to have del Toro on stage with him," said Rae. "We don't know where the conversation will go, but we thought it would be fascinating, and the audience would love it." For the first time, much of the summit's mingling will take place behind closed doors in afternoon roundtable sessions where attendees will have an opportunity to freely discuss issues affecting the gaming industry, such as online betting. The new format was adapted from the European version of the D.I.C.E. Summit.

"I think most of us are interested in looking ahead," said Ted Price, president and CEO of "Ratchet & Clank" developer Insomniac Games and the interactive academy's vice chairman. "I think that's why we want to participate in the roundtables. When you're face to face with experts from all corners of the industry, it's incredibly valuable to gain insight into what might be coming." — AP

## APPLE REJECTS 'DANGEROUS' ORDER TO HACK US SHOOTER'S IPHONE

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Apple has rejected a judge's order to help the FBI break into an iPhone used by one of the San Bernardino shooters, warning it was "too dangerous" to create such a backdoor to the smartphones.

US magistrate Judge Sheri Pym ordered Apple on Tuesday to provide "reasonable technical assistance" to the FBI, including disabling an auto-erase feature after too many unsuccessful attempts are made to unlock the iPhone 5C.

Federal prosecutors had filed a motion requesting Apple's help after the FBI failed to crack the phone's code two months into the investigation into the December rampage. Syed Farook, a US citizen, and his Pakistani wife Tashfeen Malik gunned down 14 people at an office party in San Bernardino, California, before they were killed in a shootout with police.

But Apple said it would fight the judge's order, firing the latest shot in a growing debate over encryption pitting the government against tech companies. "The United States government has demanded that Apple take an unprecedented step which threatens the security of our customers," Apple chief executive Tim Cook said in a statement on the company's website. "We oppose this order, which has implications far beyond the legal case at hand." Cook said it was too risky to provide the requested software because it could allow ill-intentioned individuals to unlock any iPhone and raises major privacy concerns. "The US government has asked us for something we simply do not have, and something we consider too dangerous to create. They have asked us to build a backdoor to the iPhone," Apple said.

"In the wrong hands, this software—which does not exist today—would have the potential to unlock any iPhone in someone's physical possession. While the government may argue that its use would be limited to this case, there is no way to guarantee such control,"



**SAN BERNARDINO:** In this April 30, 2015, file photo, Apple CEO Tim Cook responds to a question during a news conference at IBM Watson headquarters, in New York. Cook said his company will resist a federal magistrate's order to hack its own users in connection with the investigation of the San Bernardino, California, shootings. — AP

he said, adding that Apple has cooperated with the FBI thus far. By disabling the security features, the FBI would be able to attempt as many different password combinations as needed before gaining access to the phone. It was the property of the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health, which employed Farook, and the authority had agreed to the search of the phone.

### 'CHILLING'

Pym ordered Apple to provide software that would only run on the device in question, or any other technological means to access its data.

But Apple said it was impossible to create such a tool that could only be used once, on one phone. "Once created, the technique could be used over and over again, on any number of devices," Apple said. "In the physical world, it would be the equivalent of a master key, capable of opening hundreds of millions of locks—from restaurants and banks to stores and homes. No reasonable person would find that acceptable."

The US government is concerned that commercially-available encryption benefits criminals.

Tech companies, intent on securing the trust of consumers after government spying revelations made by Edward Snowden, have been reluctant to be seen as helping authorities spy on users.

"We can find no precedent for an American company being forced to expose its customers to a greater risk of attack," Apple said.

"The implications of the government's demands are chilling." "If the government can use the All Writs Act to make it easier to unlock your iPhone, it would have the power to reach into anyone's device to capture their data."

Cook warned that if Apple complied with the order, the government could demand surveillance software to intercept, access health and financial data, track users' location or access a phone's microphone or camera without the user's knowledge. "We are challenging the FBI's demands with the deepest respect for American democracy and a love of our country," Cook added. US Attorney Eileen Decker had earlier called the order "another step—a potentially important step—in the process of learning everything we possibly can about the attack in San Bernardino."

FBI Director James Comey revealed last week that investigators had not been able to crack open the phone two months into the investigation. "It affects our counterterrorism work," he said. — AFP

## PATIENT WEARS 3-D GLASSES DURING BRAIN SURGERY

**PARIS:** In a world first, a patient in France undergoing brain surgery while conscious wore virtual reality glasses as doctors removed a cancerous tumour, the chief surgeon told AFP Tuesday. "In creating a completely artificial world for the patient, we could map certain zones and connections of his brain related to functions that we could not, up to now, easily test on the operating table," Philippe Menei, a neurosurgeon at Angers hospital in western France, told AFP. The operation was performed on January 27, and the patient was recovering well, he said.

Taking a scalpel to the brain while a patient is conscious has been a common practice for more than a decade. Doing so allows doctors to determine, during an operation, whether and how vital functions such as speech, vision and movement are affected. Patients cannot feel the probing of their brain tissue, and do not experience pain.

But using three-dimensional, virtual reality opens up a whole new range of possibilities, Menei said. "By totally controlling what the patient sees and hears, we can put him in situations that allow us to do tests on certain (neural) connections that were not possible before," he said.

In this case, it was crucial to protect the patient's vision because he had already lost sight in one eye

due to an illness. During the operation, the medical team created a neutral virtual environment with no single point of focus. "In this empty void, we could control the space and make luminous objects

appear in the patient's peripheral vision," Menei said. Three weeks after the operation, the patient's vision was intact despite the removal of an aggressive tumour in a region controlling sight. — AFP



**ANGERS, MAINE-ET-LOIRE:** A handout picture released by the Angers university hospital shows a patient wearing virtual reality glasses on Tuesday during his brain operation at a university hospital in Angers, western France. — AFP



**ROUBAIX:** Henri Klabi, CEO of French Internet Service Provider OVH delivers a speech after the inauguration of the group's new campus, on February 15 in Roubaix. — AFP



## BIG-BRAINED MAMMALS MORE LIKELY TO FACE EXTINCTION

**PARIS:** Mammals with large brains tend to be smarter but they also face a greater chance today of going extinct, according to a study published yesterday. Scientists have long known that having oodles of grey matter comes at a certain cost. Supplying a big brain with blood, for example, requires a lot of energy. But even if there isn't a direct correlation between size and intelligence humans don't have the biggest brains in the animal kingdom, even in proportion to their body size—a bigger bundle of neurons is usually seen as a plus. Mammals with a capacious cranium also

tend to live longer, say scientists. A professor at Stanford University, Eric Abelson, suspected there might be a link between larger brains and the risk of extinction. To test his hypothesis, he examined museum samples from more than 1,650 animals from 160 different species in the Americas.

Abelson measured the skulls and body sizes of creatures as small as rodents and as big as buffalos, but did not include aquatic animals. The next step was to check their status on the global endangered species list maintained by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The so-called Red List classification is broken down into half-a-dozen levels of extinction threat. Abelson also examined a second data set of more than 600 species of animals across the globe. To his surprise, he found a clear pattern: animals with larger brains were more at risk of going the way of the dodo and the dino.

### Body size

In the Americas, the link was especially strong for mammals with a big brain relative to body size. "This likely represents a case of 'endangerment filtering,'" he

explained in the study. "Species in North America have gone through a period where large-bodied species had suffered large population losses."

These animals are now either extinct or protected with rebounding populations, and thus not in either case-considered endangered, he added.

The findings come at a time when scientists believe Earth is entering a "mass extinction event," only the sixth in the last half-billion years.

The most recent occurred 65 million years ago, and wiped out non-avian

dinosaurs. The current die-off is a result of changes set in motion by human activity and climate change, with life in the oceans particularly affected.

According to the IUCN, coral reefs—home to over a quarter of all marine species—could disappear by 2050. About 41 percent of amphibians and 26 of mammal species are currently facing the prospect of disappearing entirely. Abelson said further research into the correlation between brain and body size could give scientists new tools to predict extinction rates. — AFP

## DOCTORS: UPSURGE IN PARALYSIS CONDITION ACCOMPANIES ZIKA

**CUCUTA, Colombia:** The doctor taps Zulay Balza's knees with a hammer and she doesn't feel a thing. She can't squeeze his outstretched fingers or shut her eyelids. Her face is partially paralyzed. "The weakness started in my legs and climbed upward. The face was last. After three days, I couldn't walk," said Balza, 49. "My legs felt like rags."

Balza is a patient at the public University Hospital in Cucuta, at the epicenter of the Colombian outbreak of the mosquito-borne Zika virus. Only Brazil has more cases. Two weeks ago, she came under assault by Guillain-Barre (gee-YOHN-bah-RAY), a rare and sometimes fatal affliction that is the Western world's most common cause of general paralysis. Alarm over the Zika epidemic spreading across the Americas has been chiefly over birth defects, but frontline physicians believe a surge in Guillain-Barre cases may also be related.

The World Health Organization says Guillain-Barre cases are on the rise in Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Suriname and Venezuela, all hit hard by Zika, though a link remains unproven. The auto-immune disorder historically strikes only one or two people in 100,000. About one in 20 of those cases ends in death in the developed world, and it is frightful.

"I thought my body was going to explode," said Balza, sitting on her hospital bed and apparently over the worst. Guillain-Barre attacks skeletal muscular nerves as if they were a foreign enemy. Fine motor skills rapidly erode, arms and legs tingle and weaken to numbness. Patients lose their balance, their speech. In rare cases, they require ventilators to stay alive.

### 'Epidemiological association'

The syndrome typically strikes after a bacterial or viral infection, such as influenza, HIV or dengue, though its cause can't always be determined. Dr Jairo Lizarazo, the neurologist treating Balza, has seen cases increase more than tenfold since December - 30 cases in all - in this muggy city bordering Venezuela. Like Balza, many patients never showed the characteristic symptoms of Zika - fever, rashes, joint pain and conjunctivitis. Four in five don't.

He's convinced the virus boosts susceptibility to Guillain-Barre. "It's an epidemiological association," said Lizarazo. "We don't know exactly how it works. But it's there, for sure. Associated cases confirmed or suspected based on clinical evidence number in the hundreds. Guillain-Barre cases believed to be linked to the virus have killed three people in recent weeks in Colombia and health officials have attributed another three Guillain-Barre deaths in Venezuela to suspected Zika infections.

WHO said Zika has been confirmed present in apparently just one Guillain-Barre death, in the northwestern Venezuelan state of Zulia in January. Dr Maria Lucia Brito Ferreira, chief neurologist at Hospital da Restauracao in Recife, Brazil, said she hopes to get laboratory confirmation this month that nine Guillain-Barre deaths recorded there in the past year were Zika-related. Cases of Guillain-Barre in Colombia - about 450 annually before Zika struck - were

up nearly threefold in the past month and a half. El Salvador has reported 118 cases since November, nearly as many as previously seen in a year. "The only explanation is the Zika virus," said Deputy Health Minister Eduardo Espinoza.

Dr Osvaldo Nascimento, a leading Rio neurologist, estimates Brazilian cases of Guillain-Barre are up fivefold. Reporting is not compulsory, so the government's partial figure of 1,868 cases requiring hospitalization last year is a sketchy parameter.

An upsurge in Guillain-Barre was documented in 2013 during a major Zika outbreak in French Polynesia, with a study finding cases up twentyfold. WHO said all 42 cases recorded in the Pacific archipelago tested positive for Zika as well as dengue fever, which is also currently present in Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil and other Zika-affected countries.

Antibodies for the dengue and chikungunya viruses, which are far more debilitating than Zika, are often being found in infected patients. That is making establishing a direct Zika-Guillain-Barre link more complicated. Like Zika, both viruses are transmitted by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito and could also trigger Guillain-Barre, experts say.

Under normal circumstances, eight in 10 patients nearly fully recover from Guillain-Barre, though it sometimes takes months. Data on Guillain-Barre is scant in most of the developing world. Of 18 countries participating in a clinical study launched by Dutch physicians in 2012, only two are in Latin America: Mexico and Argentina. Brazil just joined.

### Lack of funding

Across the region, investigators were simply unable to get government funding to participate, said Dr Ken Gorson, a Tufts University neurologist and president-elect of an international foundation that combats Guillain-Barre. Poorer countries were ill-prepared to manage the crisis. Colombia's National Health Institute is overwhelmed with a weeks-long backlog in completing tests for Zika.

The three Guillain-Barre deaths that the country's Health Ministry attributed to Zika on Feb. 5 have not yet been confirmed by laboratory tests, said spokesman Ricardo Amortegui. Nor have the three deaths in the Venezuelan state of Lara announced last week.

One Guillain-Barre fatality in Colombia suspected of being linked to Zika was a 51-year-old man from the Caribbean island of San Andres who died in November, said Rita Almanza, epidemiology chief in Medellin. The others were a 45-year-old man and a 41-year-old woman flown from Turbo on the Caribbean coast who died in Medellin in February.

Guillain-Barre grabbed hold of Nancy Pino in neighboring Venezuela with devastating effect. The 68-year retired school administrator developed fever, rashes and muscle pain while celebrating Christmas with her family in the hot lowland state of Anzoategui. She recovered quickly. Days later, her hands and feet started to go numb. Her tongue felt like it was asleep. She stopped eating. —AP



CUCUTA: A photo of aedes aegypti mosquitoes in a mosquito cage at a laboratory. — AP

## UN: STOPPING ZIKA MAY REQUIRE GENETICALLY MODIFIED INSECTS

### CONTROVERSIAL METHODS MAY BE A NECESSARY

**GENEVA:** The World Health Organization says it may be necessary to use controversial methods like genetically modified mosquitoes to wipe out the insects that are spreading the Zika virus across the Americas.

The virus has been linked to a spike in babies born with abnormally small heads, or microcephaly, in Brazil and French Polynesia. The UN health agency has declared Zika a global emergency, even though there is no definitive proof it is causing the birth defects. WHO said its advisory group has recommended further field trials of genetically modified mosquitoes, which have previously been tested in small trials in countries including the Cayman Islands and Malaysia.

"Given the magnitude of the Zika crisis, WHO encourages affected countries ... to boost the use of both old and new approaches to mosquito control as the most immediate line of defense," WHO said in a statement. WHO says at least 34 countries have been hit by the virus in the current crisis, mostly in Latin America.

Meanwhile, the European Union on Tuesday pledged 10 million Euros (\$11.2 million) to fund research on the mosquito and the Zika virus in Brazil - the epicenter of the outbreak. The pledge came as Brazilian Health Minister Marcelo Castro met with representatives of 24 European nations in the Brazilian capital, Brasilia. Next week, WHO chief Dr. Margaret Chan will also travel to Brazil to discuss Zika and microcephaly with Castro

and other officials, agency spokeswoman Fadela Chaib said on Tuesday.

### 'Ability to adapt'

WHO said previous experiments that released sterile insects have been used by other UN agencies to control agricultural pests. The agency described the *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes that spread Zika - as well as other diseases including dengue and yellow fever - as an "aggressive" mosquito that uses "sneak attacks" to bite people, noting that the mosquito has shown "a remarkable ability to adapt."

Last month, British biotech firm Oxitec said tests in Brazil in 2015 showed that genetically altered sterile male mosquitoes succeeded in reducing a type of disease-spreading mosquito larvae by 82 percent in one neighborhood in the city of Piracicaba. The genetically modified males don't spread disease because only female mosquitoes bite. Environmentalists have previously criticized the genetically modified approach, saying wiping out an entire population of insects could have unforeseen knock-on effects on the ecosystem.

Some experts agreed it might be worth using genetically tweaked mosquitoes given the speed of Zika but were unsure of the eventual consequences. "The way this is done wouldn't leave lots of mutant mosquitoes in the countryside," said Jimmy Whitworth, an infectious diseases expert at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He said the Zika mosquitoes are an

imported species that were accidentally brought to the Americas hundreds of years ago, and was optimistic their eradication wouldn't damage the environment.

However, he said such a move would be unprecedented and it would be impossible to know what the impact might be before releasing the insects into the wild. "You would hope that the ecology would just return to how it was before this mosquito arrived," he said. "But there's no way of knowing that for sure."

Last week, a group of doctors in Argentina, Physicians in the Crop-Sprayed Towns, suggested the jump in microcephaly cases may not be caused by Zika, but by Pyriproxyfen, a larvicide used in drinking water that aims to prevent mosquito larvae from developing into adulthood. The group said the larvicide has been used since 2014 in Brazil in several areas with a reported rise in babies with birth defects. Spokeswoman Chaib said scientists at WHO and elsewhere had rejected any such link.

"They have reviewed all the scientific literature linked to this pesticide in particular and found the same conclusion: That there is no scientific evidence that can link this pesticide in particular to the cases of microcephaly," she said. Brazil's government has repeatedly said pesticides were not connected to microcephaly, and has noted many cases of microcephaly in areas where Pyriproxyfen was not used. The government also noted that WHO had approved use of the chemical. — AP



CUCUTA: Zulay Balza fails to close her eyes as neurologist Jairo Lizarazo tests her facial muscles at the Erasmo Meoz Hospital. — AP

## TRANSGENDER BATHROOM BILL SENT TO DAKOTA GOVERNOR

**PIERRE:** South Dakota would be the first state in the US to approve a law requiring transgender students to use bathrooms and locker rooms that correspond to their sex at birth if the governor signs a bill passed Tuesday by the state Senate.

The Senate voted 20-15 to send the bill to Republican Gov. Dennis Daugaard, who initially responded positively to the measure but said last week he'd need to study it more before making a decision. Advocates say the bill is meant to protect the privacy of students, but opponents say it discriminates against vulnerable adolescents.

Under the plan, schools would have to provide a "reasonable accommodation" for transgender students, such as a single-occupancy bathroom or the "controlled use" of a staff-designated restroom, locker room or shower room. Republican Sen David Omdahl urged other legislators Tuesday to support the bill to "preserve the innocence of our young people."

The American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota and Human Rights Campaign

have been vocal in their opposition to the measure and have called on Daugaard to veto the legislation. "History has never looked kindly upon those who attack the basic civil rights of their fellow Americans, and history will not treat kindly those who support this discriminatory measure," Chad Griffin, the president of the LGBT-rights organization Human Rights Campaign, said in a statement Tuesday. Transgender advocates have also criticized comments made by some lawmakers, including Omdahl, about transgender people.

"I'm sorry if you're so twisted you don't know who you are," Omdahl said at a recent event when asked about the bill. "I'm telling you right now, it's about protecting the kids, and I don't even understand where our society is these days." Several states have looked at addressing gender and public facilities in the past several years. But South Dakota would be the first state in the nation to put such a measure into law, said Joellen Kralik, a research analyst at the National Conference of State Legislatures. —AP

## MENOPAUSE REMAINS AN EVOLUTIONARY PUZZLE

**PARIS:** Menopause in women and females from a few other "higher" species is probably a fluke of nature rather than evolution at work, according to a study published yesterday. Biologists have long puzzled over why women lose the capacity to reproduce during roughly the last third of their lives.

Another, less polite, way scientists frame the question is this: why do females from a handful of species—including killer whales—continue to live well beyond the age when they can bear offspring? "Menopause is an evolutionary paradox," said Hazel Nichols, a biologist at Liverpool John Moores University and lead author of the study.

"An early end to reproduction seems contrary to the laws of natural selection, where passing on genes to the next generation is the main purpose of life." In most mammals, she pointed out, females reproduce until a ripe old age. Evolutionary biologists have put forward competing explanations for this extended "post-reproductive lifespan," or PRLS.

The "grandmother hypothesis" suggests women outlive their fertility in order to help raise grandchildren, thereby strengthening the likelihood that their own genes will survive. In this scenario, "grandmothers... encouraging their sons to have more children" are driven by a biological imperative, Nichols told AFP. Even among orcas, scientists have shown that females remain with their male offspring, and probably teach them hunting techniques and where to apply them.

### Evolutionary tinkering

Another theory says that menopause does not, in fact, confer any advantage in the Darwinian struggle to pass on genes from one generation to the next, but is just an accident resulting in a "mismatch" in the ageing process. "Different parts of the body are likely to age at different rates, in the same way that some part of a car wear out before others," Nichols said.

In this argument, modern medicine and nutrition has helped outpace the evolutionary process, extending human life beyond its "natural" limits. To find out who might be right, Nichols and colleagues examined data from 26 different mammal species, including three tribal or historical human populations.

In each case, they tested for the effects of lifespan, group size, and the tendency of post-menopause females to stay within either a male- or female-dominated group. What they found is that neither school of thought could adequately explain the menopause puzzle, but that when combined, a coherent picture began to emerge.

"Post-reproductive lifespan appears to arise by chance," Nichols said by email. "But then evolutionary 'tinkering' comes into play to extend PRLS in species that benefit from females caring for their sons and grandchildren." Among orcas the bond is so strong that "many killer whale sons die in the year after their mother's death," she said. The findings were published in *Biology Letters*, a journal of Britain's Royal Society. — AFP

## URBANIZATION LEADS TO CHANGE IN TYPE OF BACTERIA AT HOME

**WASHINGTON:** Whether it's a jungle hut or a high-rise apartment, your home is covered in bacteria, and new research from the Amazon suggests city dwellers might want to open a window. Scientists traveled from remote villages in Peru to a large Brazilian city to begin tracking the effects of urbanization on the diversity of bacteria in people's homes. It's a small first step in a larger quest - understanding how different environmental bugs help shape what's called our microbiome, the trillions of bacteria that share our bodies and play a critical role in our health.

"Very little is known about the microbes of the built environment," microbiologist Maria Gloria Dominguez-Bello of New York University, who led the pilot study, said at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Her team found that as people living in the Amazon rainforest become more urbanized, the kinds of bacteria in their homes change from the bugs mostly found in nature to those that typically live on people, she reported Friday.

In fact, in city dwellings, the researchers could tell just by the microbial fingerprints of the walls that "this is a kitchen or this is a bathroom or this is a living room. That's amazing," Dominguez-Bello said. As she puts it, "the walls talk." Everyone carries a customized set of microbes on the skin, in the nose and in the gut, a microbial zoo that starts forming at birth and help with such things as digestion and immune development. What influences the balance of good bugs and bad varies depending on such things as your diet, if you were born vaginally or by C-section, and antibiotics.

Environmental exposures play a role, too. The hygiene hypothesis, for example, suggests asthma and allergies are on the rise in Western populations because of a lack of early contact with once-common bugs, one reason why tots who grow up on farms or around animals tend to have fewer of those immune-related ailments.

Increasingly, scientists also are investigating where we spend a lot of time - indoor spaces, especially our homes. To track the effects of urbanization, Dominguez-Bello's team analyzed the microbial communities of 10 houses and their inhabitants from each of three Peruvian locations - a village of hunter-gatherers, a slightly more modern rural village and Iquitos, a medium-sized city not accessible by roads - and the contemporary Brazilian city of Manaus. — AP



### THREE GRAVITATIONAL WAVE PROJECTS UNVEILED IN CHINA

**BEIJING:** Chinese scientists have unveiled three separate projects to investigate gravitational waves, state media said yesterday, days after earthshaking US discoveries that confirmed Einstein's century-old predictions.

Space officials said such research would give China—which has an ambitious, military-run, multi-billion-dollar space program that Beijing sees as symbolizing the country's progress—an opportunity to become a "world leader" in the field.

Gravitational waves are direct evidence of ripples in the fabric of space-time, and their first-ever observation was announced by US scientists last week. The Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) rolled out a proposal for a space-based gravitational wave detection project, the official Xinhua news agency reported. The proposed Taiji program, named after the "supreme ultimate" of Chinese philosophy symbolized by the yin-yang sign, would send satellites of its own into orbit or share equipment with the European Space Agency's eLISA initiative. Separately, Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou also proposed to launch satellites into space, while the Institute

of High Energy Physics at CAS suggested a land-based scheme in Tibet.

All three projects have yet to obtain government approval, state media said. But Chinese physicist Hu Wenrui told the People's Daily newspaper, the official mouthpiece of the Communist party: "If we launch our own satellites, we will have a chance to be a world leader" in gravitational wave research. Success "depends on the decision-makers' resolution and the country's investment", he added.

On a verified social media account the Chinese Academy of Science said: "If we can participate in these sorts of extremely precise technological projects then in a short time it will give a huge boost to our country's manufacturing industries."

Last week, scientists with the US-based Large Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) said they had detected waves resulting from the collision of two black holes 1.3 billion years ago. The executive director of the laboratory hailed the discovery as being comparable to Galileo's use of the telescope four centuries ago to open the era of modern astronomy. — AFP



**PAPUA NEW GUINEA:** An undated handout photo released on February 16, 2016, shows a new species of freshwater turtle discovered in Papua New Guinea, researchers from the University of Canberra said. — AFP

### NEW TURTLE SPECIES FOUND IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

**SYDNEY:** A new species of freshwater turtle has been discovered in Papua New Guinea, one of a group which would have been present for the full geological formation of its main Pacific island, researchers said.

Mountainous and tropical Papua New Guinea is known for its rich biological diversity, but much of its remote areas are relatively unexplored. The new turtle is one of three distantly-related species—Euseya novaeguineae, Euseya schultzei and the new Euseya rhodini—found across New Guinea Island, according to a recent study published in international journal Zootaxa. The eastern part of New Guinea island is PNG while the western side is Indonesia. "The three species evolved from a common ancestor between 17 and 19 million years ago," lead author Arthur Georges from the University of

Canberra said Tuesday.

"These ages are quite remarkable and came as a surprise, because it means these turtles have together seen the full geological development of the island of New Guinea. "The other species of freshwater turtle appear to have arrived after New Guinea had formed much as we see it today," he added. The newly-discovered turtle species is part of the Cheloniidae family of side-neck turtles which are restricted to South America and Australia, along with PNG, Timor and Rote in Indonesia. It was identified as a new species distinct from its distant relatives from genetic and other data and found to be distributed across much of the island, south of the central ranges. Georges said it was "a very pretty turtle" and that one of its distinguishing features was its reddish coloration. — AFP

### JAPAN LAUNCHES SATELLITE TO STUDY BLACK HOLES

**TOKYO:** Japan successfully launched a jointly developed space observation satellite yesterday tasked with studying mysterious black holes, the country's space agency said. The ASTRO-H satellite, developed in collaboration between the agency, NASA and other groups, is set to orbit at an altitude of about 580 kilometers and observe X-rays emanating mainly from black holes and galaxy clusters. The satellite was carried out by the country's mainstay H-IIA rocket, which soared towards the heavens from the Tanegashima Space Center in southern Japan

under mostly clear late afternoon skies. The broadcast was nationally televised and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said the satellite separated from the rocket with no difficulty.

Black holes have never been directly observed, but the announcement on the first detection of gravitational waves earlier this month indirectly added to the evidence that black holes do actually exist. The Japanese rocket, which was initially scheduled for liftoff last Friday but was postponed due to bad weather, was launched at 5:45 pm (0845 GMT). — AFP



**LONDON:** Britain's Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, (3rd R) is pictured as she guest-edits the British edition of news website The Huffington Post at Kensington Palace. — AFP

### KATE MIDDLETON TACKLES CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AS HUFFPO EDITOR

**LONDON:** Prince William's wife Kate guest-edited the British edition of news website The Huffington Post yesterday to help raise awareness of the "devastating" issue of children's mental health. The mother-of-two launched a new global initiative, "Young Minds Matter", as she took over the site, writing: "For too long we have been embarrassed to admit when our children need emotional or psychiatric help."

Kate said that she and William, the second in line to the British throne, "would not hesitate to seek help" for their children, adding

that they hoped "to encourage George and Charlotte to speak about their feelings". The Duchess of Cambridge became involved with children's charities shortly after her 2011 wedding, work that has touched on issues such as addiction and family breakdown.

"I often heard some heart-breaking stories about lives that had been torn apart, with devastating impacts for all involved, particularly children," the 34-year-old wrote. "What I did not expect was to see that time and time again, the issues that led people to addiction

and destructive decision making seemed to almost always stem from unresolved childhood challenges," she added.

The Huffington Post published data showing that one in three parents worry that they will look like a bad mother or father if their child has a mental health problem. She called it "a privilege" to guest-edit the site, vowing to tackle the "taboo" of mental health problems and "to celebrate the amazing work being done to improve and understand the mental health of young children". — AFP

### WEBTEB GETS 5 MILLION VISITORS MONTHLY, 800K APP DOWNLOADS

**DUBAI:** It is no secret that the Internet has become the main source of information for users from across the world. With an increasing number of Arab Internet users, and an ever-growing reliance on the Webto retrieve vital information about different medical, cultural and social topics, the need for a comprehensive and integrated platform dedicated to addressing medical and lifestyle concerns has become imperative.

WebTeB was thus established to be the leading comprehensive online Arabic encyclopedia that focuses on health and medical issues, providing legally licensed content including licenses from some of the world's leading health ministries and medical institutions, reputable US and European universities and hospitals, and the World Health Organization (WHO). Over time, it has become a trusted provider of health information for Arabic speakers across the globe.

Founded by Dr Mahmoud Kaiyal, a physician who practiced family medicine for more than 9 years, the website currently attracts about 5 million users per month, while more

than 800,000 downloads have been registered on the website's mobile apps. The interests of the site's visitors mainly lie in medical articles that give health tips for leading a healthy lifestyle.

The WebTeB application on the smartphone was intended to complement the success of the website and to provide further information for users. The smartphone application allows users to reach content and information instantly, interact with medical information, and receive tips about various diseases. The application has an interactive symptom diagnosis service developed by Harvard University to help patients understand the symptoms they are experiencing and to diagnose and treat common diseases. Additionally, theTeBBabySectionis designed to deal with pregnancy and parenthood and help mothers-to-be follow up on their cases at the touch of a button, under the supervision of specialists and consultants. WebTeB also provides information about Arab doctors and medical centres, their specialties, and how to contact them. Dr Mahmoud Kaiyal, Founder

and CEO of WebTeB, said: "To keep up with the current technological trends and the increasing reliance on the Internet as a main source of information, we at WebTeB have created an integrated platform for communication between regular users and healthcare providers that may serve the healthcare needs of Arab citizens."

He added: "We are looking forward to boosting the status of the website and the smartphone application to serve as the main online references of information and healthcare tips for Arabic-speaking Internet and smartphone users, in order to help raise health awareness in the Arab community."

In 2014, WebTeB won the HH Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Informatics Award for the best mobile app and 3rd best website in Arabic, having competed with 20,000 apps from all over the world. Last year (2015), it was recognized as the most influential social media channel for health issues by HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.

CLINIC PAGE

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The Ambassador of the Democratic People Republic of Korea So Chang Sik hosted a reception on the occasion of the 74th birthday of the great leader Kim Jong Il at the embassy. Higher officials and media persons attend the event. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



The International Women's Group (IWG) hosted a meeting to discuss preparations for the 'Textiles of the Islamic World Show' which is organized next month in cooperation with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL).

## TOP TEN FINALISTS FOR \$1 MILLION GLOBAL TEACHER PRIZE 2016 ANNOUNCED

Now in its second year, and widely referred to as the Nobel Prize for teaching, the \$1 million award is the largest prize of its kind.

The Global Teacher Prize was set up to recognize one exceptional teacher who has made an outstanding contribution to the profession as well as to shine a spotlight on the important role teachers play in society. By unearthing thousands of stories of heroes that have transformed young people's lives, the prize hopes to bring to life the exceptional work of millions of teachers all over the world.

The top ten finalists for the Global Teacher Prize 2016 are:

Aqeela Asifi, who teaches children at the Kot Chandana refugee camp, Punjab, Pakistan Ayub Mohamud, a business studies teacher at Eastleigh High School in Nairobi, Kenya Colin Hegarty, from Preston Manor School, a comprehensive in Wembley, North West London, UK Hanan Al Hroub, from Samiha Khalil High School, Al-Bireh, Palestine Joe Fatheree from Effingham High School, Effingham, Illinois, USA

Kazuya Takahashi, a teacher at the Kogakuin University Junior and Senior High School, Tokyo, Japan Maarit Rossi, a maths teacher at Kartanonranta School, Finland Michael Soskil from Wallenpaupack

South Elementary School, Newfoundland, Pennsylvania, USA

Richard Johnson, a science teacher at Rostrata Primary School, Perth, Western Australia Robin Chaurasiya, from Kranti School, Mumbai, India The top ten have been narrowed down from 8,000 nominations and applications from 148 countries from around the world. By highlighting their stories the Varkey Foundation hopes that the public will be able to join in passionate debates about the importance of teachers. The winner will be announced at the Global Education and Skills Forum in Dubai on Sunday 13 March 2016.

### Talented teachers

Sunny Varkey, founder of the Varkey Foundation, said: "I want to congratulate all the top ten finalists for being selected from such a huge number of talented and dedicated teachers. I hope their stories will inspire those looking to enter the teaching profession and also shine a powerful spotlight on the incredible work teachers do throughout the world every day."

"The thousands of nominations and applications we received from every corner of the planet is testimony to the achievements of teachers and the enormous impact they have on all of our lives."

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, said: "I count my teachers as among the most influential people in my life. Teachers are entrusted with nurturing the potential of the young and helping them blossom as productive and responsible members of society. It is hard to underestimate their value."

"I applaud the launch of the Global Teacher Prize, which recognises their worth. The award is in line with my Global Education First Initiative, launched in 2012, which aims to give momentum to the worldwide movement to put every child in school, improve the quality of learning and foster global citizenship."

### Great partner

Bill Gates, Co-Chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, said: "We were so excited by the plans to launch the Global Teacher Prize. I also want to recognize the leadership of Sunny Varkey, Founder of GEMS Education, who had the idea for this prize and is a great partner for our Foundation."

Academy Award winning actor Kevin Spacey, who sits on the Global Teacher Prize Academy that chooses the final winner, said: "When I was

starting out, I was inspired by an older, more experienced actor, who told me that he thought I ought to go into acting professionally. That's the kind of mentoring and personal support that every young person needs to realise their potential."

"It is the kind of encouragement and guidance that good teachers give to their pupils every day. And that is why I support the Varkey GEMS Foundation's Global Teacher Prize. However much we achieve in life, we all began learning the basics from a teacher in a classroom. Those that teach - devoting their talents and time to nurturing the talents of others - deserve to be respected and celebrated."

### Developing methods

After winning the Global Teacher Prize 2015, Nancie Atwell, a teacher from Maine, USA, said: "I am honored and proud to receive the Global Teacher Prize. I love my teaching life - the intellectual, social, and personal challenges of working with young people and the satisfaction of devel-

oping methods that transform their lives and give them perspective on the lives of others. I am grateful to the Varkey Foundation for shining a light on teaching as a powerful profession, one of fulfilment, creativity, and lasting worth."

The winner will then be chosen from ten finalists by a Global Teacher Prize Academy. All ten finalists will be invited to Dubai for the Award ceremony at the Global Education and Skills Forum (GESF) in March this year where the winner will be announced live. Middlesbrough Teacher Richard Spencer, who became a top ten finalist for the Global Teacher Prize 2015, said:

"The experience of reaching the Top Ten was incredible. Highlights included meeting world leaders; TV, radio, magazine and newspaper interviews; meeting the other finalists, and finding out more about their contributions to the teaching profession; and receiving numerous requests to speak at conferences and run workshops."

## TIES CENTER HOSTS STRESS RELIEF LECTURE

The TIES Center cordially invites all those interested to the sequel of a lecture about Stress Relief on Tuesday, February 23 at 7 pm.

In this lecture, we will focus on the significance of building a positive attitude, reasons behind overreacting, the power of the subconscious mind, and how to feed it with positive messages. We will also examine the negative effects of victimization and judging yourself and others.

You will be introduced to some techniques that - if employed properly and efficiently - will help you identify and dismiss stress triggers and evade, or at least mitigate, stress. You will learn how and when to have fun. Although the lecture is based on academic research, it will also be given an Islamic flavor. The attendees will be asked to perform some exercises that will prove the possibility of driving stress from their lives. A short video will be played at the end of the lecture.

For more information, please call 25231015/6 or log onto: [www.tiescenter.net](http://www.tiescenter.net) or e-mail: [info@tiescenter.net](mailto:info@tiescenter.net)



On the occasion of celebrating the first anniversary of granting His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah the title of 'Humanitarian Leader' and naming Kuwait as a 'Humanity Center,' writer Abdullah Abbas Bowair recently presented a copy of his latest books titled 'HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Humanity Leader' in both English and Arabic to the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDG's resident representative Zaneb Ben Jelloun. Bowair also presented Ben Jelloun a copy of the book dedicated to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon.





## 'KHANEEN' HOSTS LUNCHEON IN HONOR OF JOURNALISTS

In an upscale atmosphere filled with Kuwaiti tradition and originality, the Mohammed Nasser Al-Hajiri and Sons Company hosted a lunch in honor of journalists

and media professionals in the Kuwaiti Restaurant 'Khaneen' in Levels Complex, Al-Mahboula. 'Khaneen' is a Traditional and delicious Kuwaiti cuisine with the highest

standards of hospitality. The audience was greeted by some officials of the group, in addition to the marketing team who celebrated with the guests the occasion of the

National Day. Mohammed Nasser Al-Hajiri and sons Company is a leading company in food and management of restaurants and cafés in the State of Kuwait.



A special premier for 'Habib Al-Ardh' (Lover of the Land) took place at the Layla Gallery Theater in Salmiya recently on the occasion of National Holidays. Sheikha Intisar Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Chairperson of the Lulua Productions, the company that produced the movie, as well as the cast and prominent media figures were among those in attendance. The movie, which discusses the life of martyr Fayeqr Abduljalil, will be played at Cinemascope theaters around Kuwait starting from today until February 24, 2016. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

### Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa



#### Friday

##### Garden Café / The Amazing Friday

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa: Fridays just got better with The Amazing Friday Brunch at the Garden Café! International cuisine all in one day and one place. For more information please

#### Every day

##### Salt / Lobster Nights

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa: Pick your lobster and have it cooked your way. Join us every day throughout the month of February for a special seafood treat from 7:00 pm to 12:00 pm.

#### Tuesday

##### Garden Café / Indian Nights

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa:

Spice up the month with the Indian Nights at Garden Café Restaurant every Tuesday throughout the month of February from 7:00 pm to 11:30 pm.

#### Wednesday

##### Mint / Chill N Grill

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa: Try the entire Jumeirah restaurants' offerings under open sky, including Italian, Mexican and Oriental cuisines. In addition, renowned steaks from Pepper Steakhouse, seafood from Salt international restaurant and Oriental specials from Arabesque are also available to satisfy your appetite. Join us every Wednesday from 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm. Live music entertainment.





- 01:05 The Birdcage
03:10 Lords Of Dogtown
04:50 Music Of The Heart
06:55 Robinson Crusoe
08:25 Death Rides A Horse
10:20 Adventures Of Hercules
11:50 Duplex
13:20 The Beautiful Country
15:20 Eight Men Out
17:20 Jakob The Liar
19:15 Groundhog Day
21:00 Breaking Bad
22:00 The Birdcage



- 00:50 River Monsters
01:45 Swamp Brothers
02:15 Swamp Brothers
02:40 Dog Rescuers
03:35 Tanked
04:25 Africa's Outsiders
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 Africa's Outsiders
18:25 River Monsters
19:20 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
20:15 Tanked
21:10 Cheetah: Race To Rule
22:05 Treehouse Masters
23:00 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
23:55 Gator Boys



- 00:20 Eastenders
00:50 Call The Midwife
01:45 Call The Midwife
02:40 Ripper Street
03:30 Doctors
04:00 Eastenders
04:30 Startlings
05:15 Startlings
06:00 The Cafe
06:25 The Cafe
06:50 Doctors
07:20 Eastenders
07:50 Stella
08:40 Call The Midwife
09:25 Doctor Who
10:15 Doctors
10:45 Eastenders
11:15 Death In Paradise
12:10 Stella
13:00 Call The Midwife
13:45 Doctor Who
14:35 Doctors
15:05 Eastenders
15:35 Stella
16:25 Dickensian
17:10 Doctor Who
18:00 Doctors
18:30 Eastenders
19:05 Death In Paradise
20:00 Holly City
21:00 Stella
21:45 Ripper Street
22:45 Death In Paradise
23:40 Doctors
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Bloomberg TELEVISION

- 00:00 What'd You Miss?
01:00 Charlie Rose
02:00 First Up With Angie Lau
03:00 First Up With Angie Lau
04:00 Trending Business
05:00 Trending Business
06:00 Asia Edge
07:00 Bloomberg West
08:00 Charlie Rose
09:00 Countdown
10:00 Countdown
10:30 On The Move
11:00 On The Move
12:00 The Pulse
13:00 Bloomberg Surveillance
15:00 Bloomberg Go
18:00 Bloomberg Markets
19:00 Bloomberg Markets: European Close
20:00 Bloomberg Markets
23:00 Bloomberg Markets



- 00:00 News Update
00:30 Dialogue
01:00 News Update
01:15 China 24
02:00 The Heat
02:30 News Update
03:00 Global Business
04:00 News Update
05:00 News Update
06:30 Dialogue
07:00 News Hour
08:00 Global Business
09:00 News Update
10:30 Sports Soene
11:00 Global Business
12:00 News Update
12:30 Culture Express
13:00 Africa Live
14:00 News Update
14:30 Dialogue
15:00 News Update
15:15 China 24
16:00 News Update
16:15 Global Business
17:00 News Update
17:15 World InSight
18:00 Asia Today
18:30 Culture Express

- 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 Frenemies
09:00 Private Crimes
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 Frenemies
16:00 Private Crimes
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 Frenemies
22:30 Private Crimes
23:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover



- 00:20 Fast N' Loud
01:10 Mythbusters
02:00 The Weapon Hunter
02:50 Big Giant Swords
03:40 Storage Hunters
04:05 The Liquidator
04:30 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop Edition
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 Edition
09:45 How It's Made: Dream Cars
10:10 How Do They Do It?
10:35 Mythbusters
11:25 The Weapon Hunter
12:15 Big Giant Swords
13:00 Storage Hunters
13:30 The Liquidator
13:55 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop Edition
14:20 Flying Wild Alaska
15:10 Kings Of Crash
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 Deception With Keith Barry
20:10 The Liquidator
20:35 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop Edition
21:00 What On Earth?
21:50 Unearthed
22:40 Kings Of The Wild
23:30 Kings Of Crash



- 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 Soemed: 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 Jones
13:50 The Will
14:40 I Almost Got Away With It
15:05 California Investigator
15:05 Dr G: Medical Examiner
15:55 Fatal Encounters
16:45 On The Case With Paula Zahn
17:35 Murder Shift
18:25 I Almost Got Away With It
19:15 The Will

Kristen Bell, Sigourney Weaver, Jamie Lee Curtis, Odette Yustman, Betty White

What doesn't kill you... is going to marry your brother.

You Again



YOU AGAIN ON OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 17:31 Unchained Reaction
18:18 Mythbusters
19:05 Weir 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
23:00 Mega Builders
23:45 Space Pioneer

- 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

- 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 The Pioneer Woman
18:30 The Pioneer Woman
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



- 00:40 Solved
01:30 Codes And Conspiracies
02:20 America: Facts vs. Fiction
02:45 America: Facts vs. Fiction
03:05 Dinosaurs: Return To Life
03:50 Solved
04:35 Extreme Engineering
05:20 Deadliest Catch
06:05 Bizarre Foods
06:50 Alps From Above
07:35 Origins
08:00 Deadliest Catch
08:50 Commander In Chief
09:40 Alps From Above
10:30 Bizarre Foods
11:20 Extreme Engineering
12:10 Deadliest Catch
13:00 Treasures Of The Royal Captain
13:50 Bizarre Foods
14:40 Extreme Engineering
15:30 Codes And Conspiracies
16:20 100 Miles From Nowhere
17:10 Deadliest Catch
18:00 Dinosaurs: Return To Life
18:50 Bizarre Foods
19:40 Codes And Conspiracies
20:30 American Guns
21:20 Prehistoric Elephant
22:10 Extreme Engineering
23:00 American Guns
23:50 Prehistoric Elephant



- 00:00 Violetta
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Hank Zipzer
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:30 Violetta
03:15 The Hive
03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
04:10 Hank Zipzer
04:35 Binny And The Ghost
05:00 Violetta
05:45 The Hive
05:50 Mouk
06:00 Lolirock
06:25 Sofia The First
06:50 Gravity Falls
07:15 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
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 Fish Hooks
13:10 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 Violetta
17:00 The Next Step
17:25 Liv And Maddie
17:50 Jessie
18:15 Austin & Ally
18:40 I Didn't Do It
19:05 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
19:30 Violetta
20:20 The Next Step
20:45 Good Luck Charlie
21:10 Good Luck Charlie

- 00:05 Henry Hugglemonster
00:20 Calimero
00:35 Zou
00:50 Loopdidoo
01:05 Art Attack
01:30 Henry Hugglemonster
01:45 Calimero
02:00 Zou
02:15 Loopdidoo
02:30 Art Attack
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
03:05 Calimero
03:20 Zou
03:30 Loopdidoo
03:45 Art Attack
04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
04:20 Calimero
04:35 Zou
04:45 Loopdidoo
05:00 Art Attack
05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
05:35 Calimero
05:50 Zou
06:00 Loopdidoo
06:15 Art Attack
06:35 Henry Hugglemonster
06:50 Calimero
07:00 Zou
07:20 Loopdidoo
07:35 Art Attack
08:00 Calimero
08:10 Zou
08:25 Loopdidoo
08:40 Miles From Tomorrow
08:55 Sofia The First
09:30 Goldie & Bear
10:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
10:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
10:35 Doc McStuffins
11:00 Sofia The First
11:30 Goldie & Bear
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 Goldie & Bear
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
18:00 Gummi Bears
18:40 Goldie & Bear
19:05 Miles From Tomorrow
19:30 Sofia The First
19:55 Doc McStuffins
20:10 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
20:35 Miles From Tomorrow
21:00 Goldie & Bear
21:30 Sofia The First
22:00 Jungle Cubs
22:25 Aladdin
22:50 Gummi Bears
23:20 Lilo And Stitch
23:45 Cars Toons
23:50 Zou



- 00:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
00:55 The Grace Helbig Show
01:25 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
02:20 Fashion Police
03:15 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
04:10 E! Entertainment Special
05:05 Pop Innovators
06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
07:50 Style Star
08:20 Beyond Candid With Giuliana
09:15 Giuliana & Bill
10:15 Giuliana & Bill
11:10 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
11:35 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
12:05 WAGS
13:05 WAGS
14:05 Botched
15:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
16:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
17:00 Fashion Bloggers
17:30 Fashion Bloggers
18:00 E! News
19:00 Fashion Police
20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
21:00 Dash Dolls
22:00 E! News
23:00 WAGS



- 00:00 Chicago Fire
01:00 Quantico
02:00 Rosewood
03:00 Allegiance
04:00 Good Morning America
06:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
07:00 Backstrom
08:00 The Player
09:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
10:00 Quantico
11:00 Backstrom
12:00 Coronation Street
12:30 Coronation Street
13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
14:00 The Player
15:00 Live Good Morning America
17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
18:00 The Player



- 00:10 Street Food Around The World

- 00:35 Street Food Around The World
01:00 Bangkok Airport
01:50 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
02:15 Eat Street
02:40 Eat Street
03:05 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
03:55 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
04:20 Miguel's Feasts
04:45 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
05:10 Street Food Around The World
05:35 Dream Cruises
06:25 A Marriage Of Flavours
06:50 Bangkok Airport
07:40 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
08:05 Eat Street
08:30 Eat Street
08:55 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
09:45 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
10:10 Miguel's Feasts
10:35 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
10:50 Street Food Around The World
11:25 Dream Cruises
12:15 A Marriage Of Flavours
12:40 Cradle Of Mandopp
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 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
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 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
20:50 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
21:15 Street Food Around The World
21:40 Dream Cruises



- 00:30 Weird Loners
01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
01:30 Brickleberry
02:00 Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll
02:30 Big Time In Hollywood Fl
03:00 New Girl
03:30 Playing House
04:00 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
05:30 Modern Family
06:00 \$#! My Dad Says
06:30 Community
07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:30 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
08:30 Crisela
09:00 New Girl
09:30 The Last Man On Earth
10:00 Hot In Cleveland
10:30 Community
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
12:00 \$#! My Dad Says
12:30 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
13:00 Crisela
13:30 Community
14:00 Playing House
14:30 The Last Man On Earth
15:00 Hot In Cleveland
15:30 Weird Loners
16:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
16:30 \$#! My Dad Says
17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
18:00 New Girl
18:30 Playing House
19:00 Kevin From Work
19:35 Hot In Cleveland
20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
21:00 Weird Loners
21:30 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
22:00 Web Therapy
22:30 Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll



- 01:00 Inch'allah
02:45 Jack Strong
05:00 Lost Christmas
07:00 The Alamo
09:30 Secret Window
11:30 Lost Christmas
13:30 Jack Strong
15:45 The Mirror Has Two Faces
17:45 Secret Window
19:30 True Colors
21:30 Calvary
23:30 Bessie



- 01:00 13 Eerie
03:00 Trigger Point
05:00 Sophia Grace And Rosie's Royal Adventure
06:45 Transcendence
09:00 The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel
11:15 The Mark
13:00 JLA: Adventures: Trapped In Time
14:15 Salinger
16:30 The Fault In Our Stars
18:45 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part I
21:00 Out Of The Dark
23:00 The Necessary Death Of Charlie Countryman



- 01:00 Asian Tour Highlights
02:00 PGA Tour Highlights
03:00 PGA European Tour Highlights
04:00 Trans World Sport
05:00 Golfing World
06:00 Live PGA European Tour
08:00 Inside The PGA Tour
08:30 European Tour Weekly
09:00 Golfing World
10:00 Live PGA European Tour
13:00 Inside The PGA Tour
13:30 Live Welsh Open Snooker
20:00 Golfing World
21:00 LPGA Tour Highlights
22:00 Live Welsh Open Snooker



- 00:00 Super League
02:00 Welsh Open Snooker
05:00 NFL All-Star Match
07:00 Golfing World
08:00 WWE Afterburn
09:00 This Week In WWE
09:30 Gillette World Sport
10:00 AFL Premiership Highlights
11:00 Live AFL NAB Challenge
14:00 Porsche GT3 Cup Middle East
14:30 HSBC World Rugby Sevens Highlights
15:00 HSBC World Rugby Sevens Highlights
15:30 V8 Supercars Bathurst
18:30 Mobil 1 The Grid
19:00 WWE NXT
20:00 WWE Smackdown
22:00 Europro Tour



- 02:30 Trans World Sport
03:30 HSBC World Rugby Sevens Highlights
04:00 Asian Tour Highlights
05:00 The World Sailing Show
05:30 Inside Sailing
06:00 World Pool Masters
07:00 Welsh Open Snooker
10:00 Europro Tour
12:00 The Weber Cup
13:00 LPGA Tour Highlights
14:00 The World Sailing Show
14:30 Inside Sailing
15:00 Asian Tour Highlights
16:00 HSBC World Rugby Sevens Highlights
16:30 World Rugby
17:00 LPGA Tour Highlights
18:00 The Weber Cup
19:00 Europro Tour
21:00 Trans World Sport
22:00 Live Premier League Darts



- 01:00 FIA Asia Cup Championship
01:30 Aquabike World Championship
02:00 Mobil 1 The Grid
02:30 Extreme Sailing Highlights
03:00 Mass Participation U.K
03:30 F1 H2O World Championship Highlights
04:00 Triathlon UK
04:30 UIM XCATS Power Boat World Series
05:00 TCR International Series
05:30 TCR International Series
06:00 Aquabike World Championship
06:30 Mobil 1 The Grid
07:00 Pro Kabaddi
08:00 Mobil 1 The Grid
08:30 World Match Racing Tour Highlights
09:00 The World's Strongest Man
10:00 FIA Asia Cup Championship
10:30 F1H Vantage
11:00 WWE Vintage
12:00 NHL
14:00 This Week In WWE
14:30 WWE Raw
17:20 Live Pro Kabaddi
18:30 Live Pro Kabaddi
20:00 NHL
22:00 WWE NXT



PREDATOR ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 10:15 Doctors
10:45 Eastenders
11:15 Death In Paradise
12:10 Stella
13:00 Call The Midwife
13:45 Doctor Who
14:35 Doctors
15:05 Eastenders
15:35 Stella
16:25 Dickensian
17:10 Doctor Who
18:00 Doctors
18:30 Eastenders
19:05 Death In Paradise
20:00 Holly City
21:00 Stella
21:45 Ripper Street
22:45 Death In Paradise
23:40 Doctors

- 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



- 01:00 The Edge
01:30 Tech Transformers: Davos Compilation
02:00 U.S. Squawk Alley
03:00 Asia Squawk Box
04:29 Asia Street Signs
05:16 Fast Money: Half Time Report
06:00 Capital Connection
09:00 Squawk Box Europe
12:00 Europe Street Signs
13:00 Worldwide Exchange
14:00 U.S. Squawk Box
17:00 Squawk On The Street
19:00 U.S. Squawk Alley
20:00 Fast Money: Half Time Report
21:00 U.S. Power Lunch



- 00:00 The Haunting Of...
01:00 The Ghost Inside My Child
02:00 My Haunted House

- 20:05 Deadly Affairs
20:55 True Crime With Aphrodite
21:45 Jones
21:45 California Investigator
22:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
22:35 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
23:00 Deadly Affairs
23:50 Swamp Murders



- 00:35 Weir Or What?
01:20 How It's Made
01:44 How It's Made
02:08 Invent It Rich
02:55 Space Pioneer
03:42 Mythbusters
04:29 Weir Or What?
05:16 Invent It Rich
06:03 Space Pioneer
06:50 Prototype This
07:37 How Do They Do It?
08:00 How Do They Do It?
08:23 Weir Or What?
09:08 Mythbusters
09:53 Prototype This
10:38 How It's Made
11:00 How It's Made
11:23 Food Factory
11:45 Food Factory
12:08 Space Pioneer
12:53 Prototype This
13:38 Weir Or What?
14:23 How It's Made
14:46 How It's Made
15:10 Mythbusters
15:57 Food Factory
16:20 Food Factory
16:44 Space Pioneer



- 00:20 Eastenders
00:50 Call The Midwife
01:45 Call The Midwife
02:40 Ripper Street
03:30 Doctors
04:00 Eastenders
04:30 Startlings
05:15 Startlings
06:00 The Cafe
06:25 The Cafe
06:50 Doctors
07:20 Eastenders
07:50 Stella
08:40 Call The Midwife
09:25 Doctor Who
10:15 Doctors
10:45 Eastenders
11:15 Death In Paradise



# CLASSIFIEDS

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## KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (18/02/2016 TO 24/02/2016)

Program	Time
<b>SHARQIA-1</b>	
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	11:45 AM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	1:45 PM
THE FINEST HOURS	3:45 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	6:15 PM
THE FINEST HOURS	8:15 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	10:45 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	12:45 AM
<b>SHARQIA-2</b>	
HAIL, CAESARI	12:45 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	2:45 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	4:45 PM
SHAKET DABOUS	6:45 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	8:30 PM
SHAKET DABOUS	10:30 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	12:15 AM
<b>SHARQIA-3</b>	
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	1:00 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	3:15 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	5:30 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	7:30 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	9:45 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	12:05 AM
<b>MUHALAB-1</b>	
HAIL, CAESARI	11:45 AM
HAIL, CAESARI	1:45 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	3:45 PM
SYNCHRONICITY	5:45 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	7:45 PM
SYNCHRONICITY	9:45 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	11:45 PM
<b>MUHALAB-2</b>	
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	12:15 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	2:45 PM
FITTOOR - Hindi	5:00 PM
KRISHNASHITAMI - Telugu	5:00 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	8:00 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	10:30 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	12:45 AM
<b>MUHALAB-3</b>	
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	12:30 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	2:30 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	4:30 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	6:30 PM
SHAKET DABOUS	8:30 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	10:15 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	12:15 AM
<b>FANAR-1</b>	
HAIL, CAESARI	12:30 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	2:30 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	4:30 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	6:30 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	8:30 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	10:30 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	12:30 AM
<b>FANAR-2</b>	
SYNCHRONICITY	11:30 AM

SYNCHRONICITY	1:30 PM
SYNCHRONICITY	3:30 PM
SYNCHRONICITY	5:45 PM
THE FINEST HOURS	7:45 PM
SYNCHRONICITY	10:15 PM
SYNCHRONICITY	12:15 AM
<b>FANAR-3</b>	
THE FINEST HOURS	11:30 AM
FITTOOR - Hindi	2:00 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: HE ROAD CHIP	4:45 PM
FITTOOR - Hindi	6:45 PM
THE FINEST HOURS	9:30 PM
THE FINEST HOURS	12:05 AM
<b>FANAR-4</b>	
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	1:00 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	3:00 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	5:00 PM
SHAKET DABOUS	7:00 PM
SHAKET DABOUS	9:00 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	10:45 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	12:45 AM
<b>FANAR-5</b>	
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	12:30 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	2:45 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	5:00 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	7:15 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	9:30 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	11:45 PM
<b>MARINA-1</b>	
HAIL, CAESARI	11:45 AM
HAIL, CAESARI	1:45 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	3:45 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	5:45 PM
SYNCHRONICITY	7:45 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	9:45 PM
SYNCHRONICITY	11:45 PM
<b>MARINA-2</b>	
THE FINEST HOURS	12:45 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	3:15 PM
THE FINEST HOURS	5:30 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	8:00 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	10:15 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	12:30 AM
<b>MARINA-3</b>	
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	12:15 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	2:15 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	4:15 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	6:15 PM
SHAKET DABOUS	8:15 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	10:00 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	12:05 AM
<b>AVENUES-1</b>	
JANE GOT A GUN	1:15 PM
FITTOOR - Hindi	3:30 PM
BROOKLYN	6:15 PM
FITTOOR - Hindi	8:30 PM
JANE GOT A GUN	11:30 PM

<b>AVENUES-2</b>	
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: HE ROAD CHIP	1:00 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: HE ROAD CHIP	3:15 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: HE ROAD CHIP	5:30 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: HE ROAD CHIP	7:45 PM
VERY BIG SHOT	10:00 PM
THE REVENANT	12:15 AM
<b>AVENUES-3</b>	
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	11:45 AM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	2:00 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	4:30 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	7:00 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	9:30 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	12:05 AM
<b>AVENUES-4</b>	
HAIL, CAESARI	12:45 PM
FITTOOR - Hindi	3:00 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	6:00 PM
Special Show "ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP"	6:00 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	8:15 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	10:30 PM
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET	1:00 AM
<b>360° 1</b>	
THE FINEST HOURS	12:00 PM
THE FINEST HOURS	2:30 PM
THE FINEST HOURS	5:00 PM
THE FINEST HOURS	7:30 PM
THE FINEST HOURS	10:00 PM
THE FINEST HOURS	12:30 AM
<b>360° 2</b>	
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	11:45 AM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	2:00 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	4:15 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	6:30 PM
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP	8:45 PM
THE REVENANT	11:00 PM
<b>360° 3</b>	
SHAKET DABOUS	11:30 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
<b>AL-KOUT.1</b>	
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	12:15 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	2:30 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	4:30 PM
SHAKET DABOUS	6:30 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	8:30 PM
SHAKET DABOUS	10:30 PM
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	12:15 AM
<b>AL-KOUT.2</b>	
HAIL, CAESARI	12:00 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	2:00 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	4:00 PM
HAIL, CAESARI	6:00 PM

**REQUIRED**

For ladies beauty salon in Jabriya, nail technicians professional in manicure, pedicure, gel, acrylic and overall nail care with 18 Visa

Call or whatsapp 99360003

**ACCOMMODATION**

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**CHANGE OF NAME**

**I, Ghallester Valera De Jesus**, Passport No. EC2905146. Petition for correction. Place of birth Adan Hospital, Kuwait GHAL LESTER to GHALLESTER. (C 5132) 14-2-2016

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**EMERGENCY 112**

Prayer timings

Fajr: 05:05  
Shorook: 06:25  
Duh: 12:02  
Asr: 15:14  
Maghrib: 17:39  
Isha: 18:57

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page ([www.kuwait-airport.com.kw](http://www.kuwait-airport.com.kw))

In case you are not travelling, your proper cancellation of bookings will help other passengers to use seats

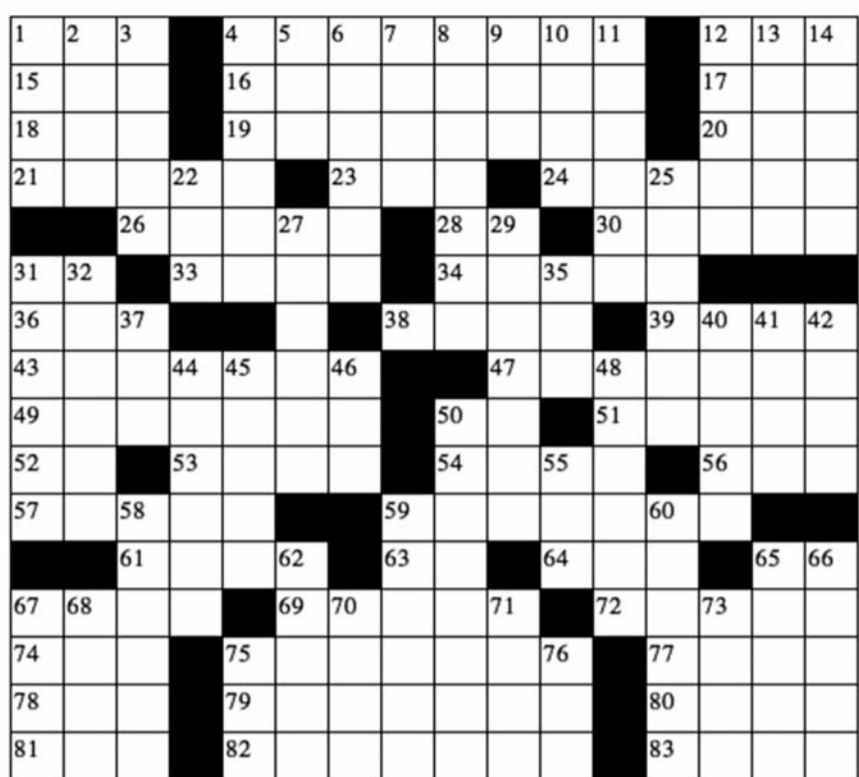


Airlines	Ft	Route	Time
MSC	415	Sohag	00:05
KLM	411	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:20
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55
RJA	642	Amman	01:05
THY	772	Istanbul	01:05
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30
DLH	635	Doha	01:35
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:45
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30
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	382	Delhi	08:00
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
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50
JZR	241	Amman	12:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
THY	766	Istanbul	13:45
KNE	460	Riyadh	13:50
FDB	057	Dubai	14:10
QTR	1078	Doha	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
QTR	1072	Doha	16:10
JZR	779	Jeddah	16:10
JZR	535	Cairo	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
KAC	502	Beirut	18:00
UAE	875	Dubai	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	154	Istanbul	19:45
KAC	674	Dubai	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	20:55
QTR	1088	Doha	21:00
MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
ALK	229	Colombo	21:25
UAE	859	Dubai	21:40
GFA	219	Bahrain	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	071	Dubai	23:45
THY	764	Istanbul	23:50
JAI	574	Mumbai	23:55
MSC	403	Asyut	23:55



CROSSWORD 1172



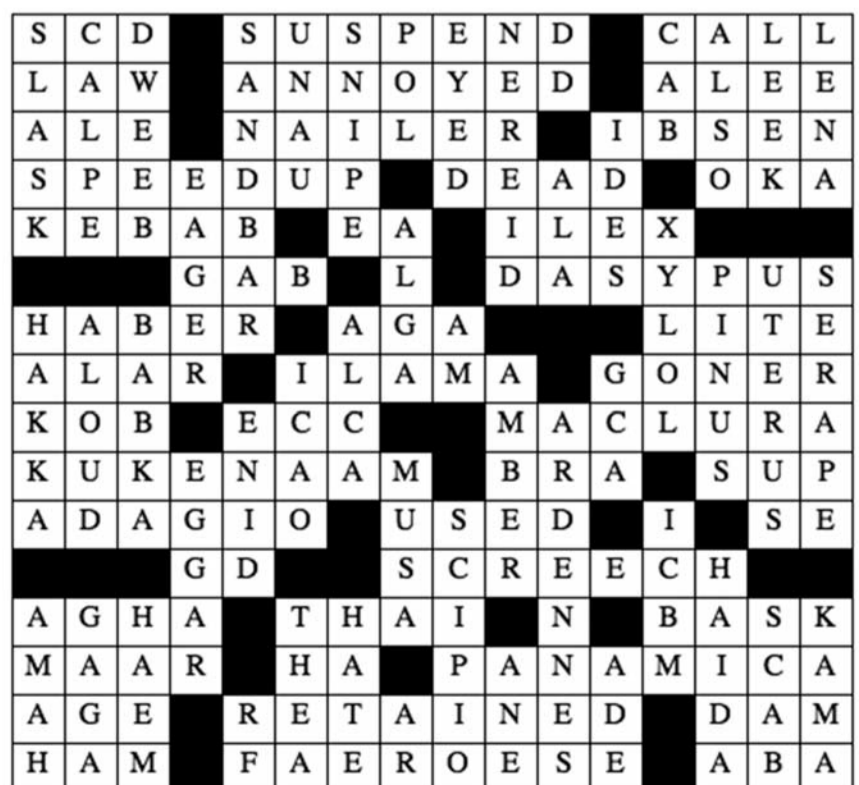
ACROSS

1. Nonresinous wood of a fir tree.
4. Type genus of the Desmodontidae.
12. An anxiety disorder characterized by chronic free-floating anxiety and such symptoms as tension or sweating or trembling of light-headedness or irritability etc that has lasted for more than six months.
15. Fiddler crabs.
16. Dose too heavily.
17. Relating to or containing the azo radical.
18. British dominion over India (1757-1947).
19. Arctic deer with large antlers in both sexes.
20. (Sumerian) Sun god.
21. A large number or amount.
23. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
24. Move with or as if with a tremor.
26. An area of sand sloping down to the water of a sea or lake.
28. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
30. Any plant of the genus Erica.
31. A long-playing phonograph record.
33. (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
34. The sacred city of Lamaism.
36. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
38. Divulge information or secrets.
39. The men who man a ship or aircraft.
43. A member of an Indian people formerly living along the Gulf coast of Louisiana and Texas.
47. Untanned hide especially of cattle.
49. A canvas or leather bag for carrying game (especially birds) killed by a hunter.
51. An iconic mental representation.
52. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
53. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
54. Scottish writer of rustic verse (1770-1835).
56. (Brit) A tough youth of 1950's and 1960's wearing Edwardian style clothes.
57. A bar or bars of rolled steel making a track along which vehicles can roll.
61. The sediment from fermentation of an alcoholic beverage.
63. A public promotion of some product or service.
64. The cry made by sheep.
67. (Norse mythology) One of the Aesir known for his beauty and skill with bow and skis.
69. A score in baseball made by a runner touching all four bases safely.
72. Industrial city of Belarus southeast of Minsk.
74. God of war and sky.
77. A very young child (birth to 1 year) who has not yet begun to walk or talk.
78. An anticipated outcome that is intended or that guides your planned actions.
79. Nonfictional prose forming an independent part of a publication.
80. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
81. Step on it.
82. Destroyed in an accident.
83. A small cake leavened with yeast.

DOWN

1. Form into a cylinder by rolling.
2. The United Nations agency concerned with civil aviation.
3. The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
4. Belonging to or on or near the back or upper surface of an animal or organ or part.
5. (Old Testament) Adam's wife in Judeo-Christian mythology.
6. A wave on the surface of a lake or landlocked bay.
7. The template for protein synthesis.
8. A person with an unusual or odd personality.
9. Mature female of mammals of which the male is called 'buck'.
10. Employed in accomplishing something.
11. Similar things placed in order or happening one after another.
12. Spanish architect who was a leading exponent of art nouveau in Europe (1852-1926).
13. A member of the Nahuatl people who established an empire in Mexico that was overthrown by Cortes in 1519.
14. Sorghums of dry regions of Asia and North Africa.
22. A young woman making her debut into society.
25. A unit of apothecary weight equal to an eighth of an ounce or to 60 grains.
27. A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
29. French neurologist who tried to use hypnotism to cure hysteria (1825-1893).
32. The basic unit of money in Macao.
35. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
37. The most common computer memory which can be used by programs to perform necessary tasks while the computer is on.
40. A long noosed rope used to catch animals.
41. At or constituting a border or edge.
42. Any plant that crowds out cultivated plants.
44. German astronomer who first stated laws of planetary motion (1571-1630).
45. Lower in esteem.
46. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
48. Send a signal by waving a flag or a light according to a certain code.
50. Weedy Eurasian plant often a pest in grain fields.
55. Light informal conversation for social occasions.
58. Make lighter or brighter.
59. Derived from or containing calcium or lime.
60. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
62. Rock star and drummer for the Beatles (born in 1940).
65. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
66. Fleshy spore-bearing inner mass of e.g. a puffball or stinkhorn.
68. Being three more than fifty.
70. (prefix) In front of or before in space.
71. Period extending from Dec. 24 to Jan. 6.
73. A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
75. (used especially of commodities) In the natural unprocessed condition.
76. Having any of numerous bright or strong colors reminiscent of the color of blood or cherries or tomatoes or rubies.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your mind is wide open and insisting to be fed! This is a great day to study and learn new things, as well as to assess your own position. Others' points of view will be clear, as will be yours to them. This is a good day to begin a business project or trip. Your ability to communicate your true feelings to friends and family is also accentuated. This period marks an excellent time to be with loved ones, whether at work or at play. This is likewise a most favorable time to go on a family outing or engage in some type of social activity with friends. Being outdoors is most stimulating now. It is not a wildly romantic time, but one where small-scale endeavors will meet with success. Incredibly romantic feelings are fostered in you, intensifying love relationships.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your drive to accomplish is high and your ideas are catchy and ready to apply to the necessary work of this day. You give your best effort and you know that much can be accomplished. Your communicative abilities are emphasized. This is an excellent time to sway others to your cause through speeches or clever arguments. Be careful, though, of taking it to the extreme in trying to find a logical reason for every event that occurs, especially the actions of co-workers. Companionship with others is most rewarding. Everything is coming up roses and optimism rules the day. Life is for living and you cannot wait to partake of all those new and rewarding experiences that are waiting to charm you. Do not go overboard, but have fun.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You are supersensitive today and that can be rewarding or damaging. If you focus on others, your understanding will enable you to fit into any group. This ability is helpful in any job. Save the decisions that require clear logic for another day. It is, however, a favorable aspect for financial dealings. Your social life should blossom now-perhaps including a new love interest. Avoid the extravagance and self-indulgence that accompanies this time. Discoveries, investigative work and financial investments show good results. If you have a mate, it could be bells and whistles in the romantic area of your life this evening. If you are unattached, you may find someone new and fascinating to spend your leisure time with this winter.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Today you may be slowed enough to be realistic about your abilities and expectations for success. Balancing your time and commitments may be difficult, but necessary if you wish to keep everything running smoothly. Your nature will most likely be focused for now, as you take a serious attitude to just about all aspects of your life. In the workplace, much can be accomplished. You have what it takes to tackle any problem involved with your profession. This afternoon is for people gatherings! You crave to socialize and you make new friends easily. Others in turn are attracted to you and this can bring all sorts of good things into your life, including, perhaps, a new love interest. Objects of art and beauty are especially admired.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Modernization, reform and principle are your paths to growth and gain now. New, futuristic ideas are part of this, but it's much more than that: putting them into practice is essential. A break from the way things were accomplished in the past is not good enough just now-you are willing to try new methods or new ideas. Emotional beginnings, a fresh start, perhaps the establishment of new habit patterns will set the tone for quite some time to come! Being appreciated and admired for your gifts and talents are powerful needs. Taking chances can bring big rewards. Your birth sign is taking a turn toward high energy. Creative endeavors are where you are headed during your time away from work. No obstacle slows your progress.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Almost any subject or activity is possible in the workplace today. There could be some confusion or misunderstandings if you are not carefully listening. For now... Take notes and be as positive as you can. This is a fast moving time that will not stay for long. If there is any project that seems to be difficult, a good plan of action will emerge soon. Later today you may find yourself walking away from people that seem to have no guidance or focus. Cultural or academic pursuits provide excellent stress relief for you this evening. You enjoy challenges and can become quite involved when the challenges broaden your knowledge. Music is likely to play a more important role for you just now-you may decide to join a choir.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You have good energies today-most anything you set out to do can be successful. Be aware of working too long without a break. You may be trying to work faster and it may be better to just work effectively. Make a point to take your regular breaks and do some brisk walking up and down the stairs for stress relief. This is a time when many projects will end-especially large ones. You should resist selling short, however, just to finish work quickly. Away from work this afternoon, you will find yourself motivated to help a young person. This may take the form of teaching or perhaps discovering a child's talent. You will find that this experience can be quite pleasant and fun. Doing just about anything with friends or family later this evening is fun.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This is a good day for making plans-your mind is clear. You may find yourself presented with several different options to get where you need to go, whether this means a project or a trip. Before obligating yourself, take the time to process the difference. This is a great time to be with others and to work together. You are able to maintain control within your group. It seems you may be in a contest or at least, tempted to be in a contest. Your group will progress the most. Those around you are watching your successful rise to fame and they encourage you. Before today, you may have wondered if you would ever get the credit for your work. You are successful and you feel generous toward your loved ones. This will reflect back on you.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Your heart is as big as all outdoors-not only for those close to you emotionally, but for the public as well. Your nerves are calm and your sense of humor is intact-ready to help customers or others. Your happy-go-lucky mood continues this afternoon and generally marks a great day in which all relationships are exalted. Projects you have worked on for many months could reach an end at this time. Be sure to check if these activities produced the results you expected. Besides being creative and affectionate, you are very sociable and magnetic to the opposite sex. There is a desire for outdoor, physical activity this afternoon-depending on the weather, you will probably find a partner to play squash or some other similar activity at the gym.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

What would life be without a few challenges now and then hopefully, you have done your homework and can reassure others of the validity of your position. If your ideas are a little shaky then it may be time to reassess what you want for the results. You can achieve the best results as you write out the desired outcome. You are determined to succeed. This day is certainly a beneficial and enlightening one-making you aware of new concepts and ideals. Someone may offer you a new position within your job or a new job in a new location. This is worth the time to consider. If wildlife or photography is your hobby, consider including this hobby into your upcoming weekend. Perhaps a short trip to the country can be planned.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Many surprises are just around the corner. You may be pleased to find others pitch in to help or cooperate with your work efforts. Much of your secret in being organized is to make lists. There could be a window in time that opens this day, making insights possible. Your inventive ways find new technical paths to follow and uncover and put to good use. There are plenty of experiments or projects to keep you busy all day long. This afternoon you may set these projects aside since you are not in the mood for unraveling difficult professional puzzles. You appreciate all who are in your life and your thoughts turn to friends, family and celebration! You reserve some time for celebrating! You and others have cameras all focused.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Tremendous mental inspiration is available to you, which may lead to some deep breaths and lots of note taking. If you channel this mental drive, you can be very influential. Change your thinking, listen to your words. The tendency to over think can make you miss an important clue to finding the best results. You have a constant influence over others and fortunately, these others respect your opinion. Careful however, opinions can be ignored if others do not ask for it first. While shopping this afternoon or evening, major purchases that could increase in value would be a good bet today: antiques. Spend time with good friends this evening; this is not the best time to spend time alone. Friends and loved ones give you good feedback tonight.

WORD SEARCH

Dogs

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 44 letters spell an Ogden Nash quotation.

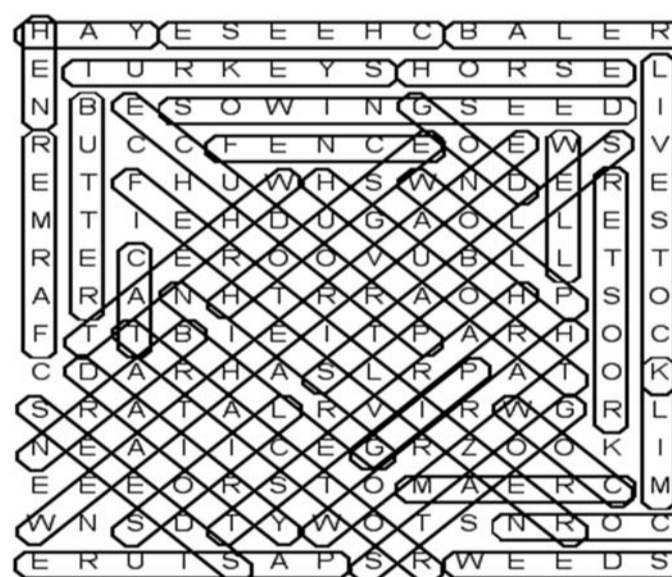


- |                |                 |               |           |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| BASSET HOUND   | DACHSHUND       | MASTIFF       | SAMOYED   |
| BEAGLE         | DALMATIAN       | PEKINGESE     | SCHNAUZER |
| BLOODHOUND     | DEERHOUND       | PINSCHER      | SETTER    |
| BOXER          | DINGO           | POINTER       | SHAR PEI  |
| BULLDOG        | GERMAN SHEPHERD | POMERANIAN    | SHEEPDOG  |
| CHIHUAHUA      | GREAT DANE      | PUG           | SPITZ     |
| CHOW CHOW      | GREYHOUND       | PUG           | TERRIER   |
| COCKER SPANIEL | HUSKY           | RETRIEVER     | WHIPPET   |
| COLLIE         | LHASA APSO      | ROTTWEILER    |           |
| CORGI          | MALAMUTE        | SAINT BERNARD |           |

Yesterday Solution

Farm

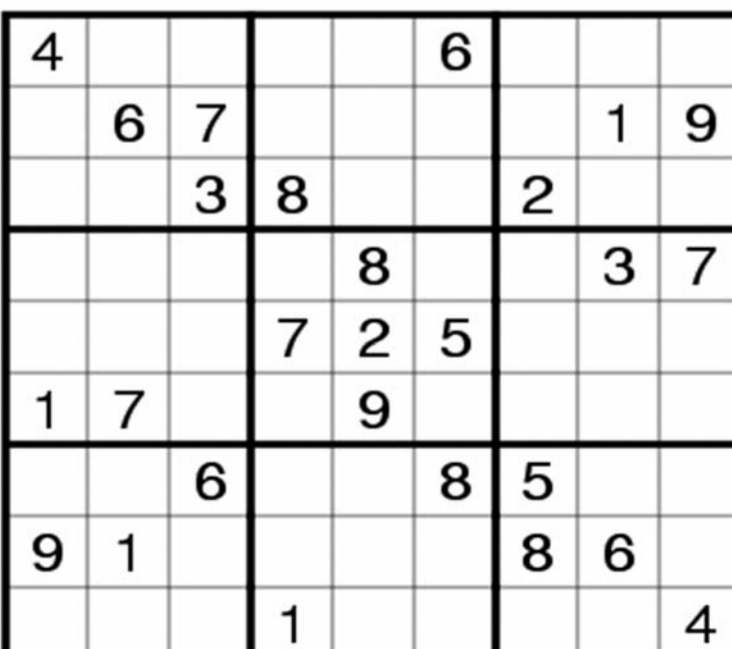
This is the solution to the puzzle located [here](#).



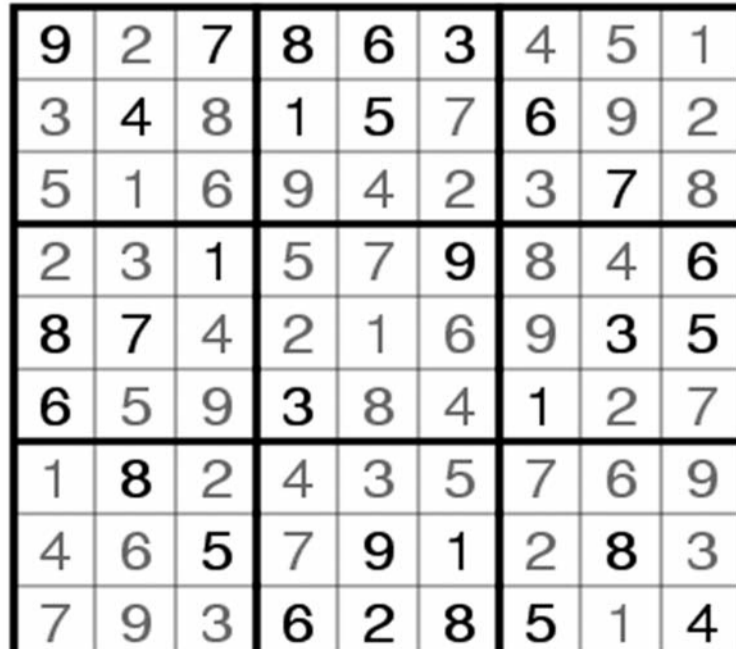
- |        |            |           |             |
|--------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| BALER  | FARMER     | HOUSE     | SOWING SEED |
| BARN   | FENCE      | LIVESTOCK | STABLES     |
| BUTTER | FERTILIZER | MILK      | TRACTOR     |
| CAT    | GOATS      | PASTURE   | TROUGH      |
| CHEESE | GRAIN      | PIG       | TURKEYS     |
| CORN   | HARROW     | PLOW      | WEATHERVANE |
| COW    | HARVEST    | PRODUCE   | WEEDS       |
| CREAM  | HAY        | ROOSTER   | WELL        |
| DAIRY  | HEN        | SEEDS     | WHEAT       |
| DOG    | HORSE      | SOIL      |             |

The hidden message is: CHICKENS

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



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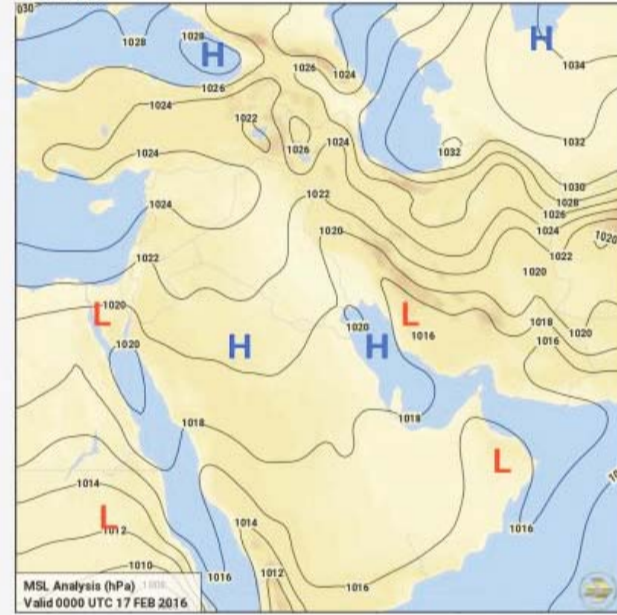
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 17/02/2016-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 27 °C

By Day : Warm with light to moderate north westerly to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h  
By Night : Cool with variable wind changing to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 06 - 22 km/h

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Expected Weather	warm	warm + high clouds	warm	warm
Min Temp °C	10	11	12	12
Max Temp °C	28	28	29	29
Wind Direction	north westerly to light variable	variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly	south easterly	variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly
Wind Speed km/h	06 - 26	12 - 32	15 - 38	12 - 35

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
KUWAIT CITY	15		27
KUWAIT AIRPORT	09		27
ABDALLY	10		27
BUBYAN	11		26
JAHRA	13		27
FAILAKA ISLAND	12		25
SALMIYAH	16		24
AHMADI	16		23
JAL ALIYAH	10		26
QAROH ISLAND	17		19
UMM AL-MARADEM	17		21
NUWAISIB	13		27
WAFRA	13		26
MANAGISH	10		26
SALMY	10		25
MUTRIBA	09		27

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	27
Min Temp (°C)	10
Max Rel Hum (%)	68
Min Rel Hum (%)	21
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	53 NW
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm
Sunrise	06:25
Sunset	17:39

Prayer Times

Fajr	05:05
Sunrise	06:25
Zuhr	12:02
Asr	15:14
Sunset	17:39
Isha	18:56



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	Plastic Surgeons
Dr. Abidallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaizeem	22639920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Paediatricians	Endocrinologist
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarroof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr. Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abidallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdallateef 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	24555050 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		



# Modern 'Indiana Jones' on mission to save antiquities

A technology-wielding archeologist billed as a real-world "Indiana Jones" called Tuesday for an online platform that entices just about anyone to help find undiscovered treasures and defend archeological wonders. Sarah Parcak envisions a 21st century army of citizen scientists to battle the looting and destruction of the world's antiquities. And now, thanks to winning this year's coveted TED Prize, her wish may just come true. "We are at a tipping point with our cultural heritage," Parcak told reporters. "We are losing the battle against looters. If we don't do something in the next couple of years, it will be gone."

The TED Prize provides a million dollars to kickstart a big vision and opens a door to call on the nonprofit organization's innovative, influential and ingenious community of "tedsters" for help. Parcak wants people around the world to become explorers, detecting antiquities looting faster than currently possible and pointing archeologists to promising spots on the planet. "The only way we are going to be able to get ahead of the looters and protect sites is to engage the world and make them part of what we do as archeologists," Parcak said.

Her exploration includes a game with digital "cards" that people can quickly flip through to scrutinize satellite imagery for tombs, pyramids, looting "pits" and other points of potential interest to archeologists. Only tiny sections of imagery will be shown, along with broad loca-

tion data such as what country is involved. "The last thing we want is for looters to log-in and help find sites to loot," Parcak said. "The most exciting part is, it will be a game." Parcak condemned destruction of antiquities by the likes of violent extremists from the Islamic State group and saw looting done by the desperately poor as "heartbreaking."

### Digital digs

Archeologists will follow up on sites pinpointed by the "crowd," paving the way for protection from governments or law enforcement agencies. Virtual explorers will visit digs using social media tools such as Periscope, Instagram and Google+. "The world is going to get to engage with archeology in a way that has not been done before at this scale," Parcak said. Her team is consulting with citizen scientists and game experts on the project. "We don't know what getting people excited about discovery will do," Parcak said.

"We know this will allow the world to become archeological activists as well as discoverers." Enlisting people in countries around the world is vital in the fight against intentional destruction of antiquities and looting that is "spiraling out of control," she maintained. "We can't stop the looting, and we can't change the mindset of people like ISIL, but we can become advocates to stem the antiquities trade," Parcak said. She hopes to roll the platform out this year. "Sarah is the ultimate 21st century explorer," said TED Prize direc-



TED Prize director Anna Verghese (left) joins 'real-world Indiana Jones' (right) to unveil a wish that is part of the award won by Parcak, February 16, 2016 during the TED Conference in Vancouver, Canada. — AFP

tor Anna Verghese. "We find ourselves at a critical moment in time when we can empower and ignite an army of citizen scientists to find, share and protect our heritage."

### Spying the past from space

Parcak was introduced to aerial photography through her grandfather's use of it in forestry

work. She was studying Egyptology at Yale when she began exploring the potential for using more modern tools to apply her grandfather's approach to archeology. Parcak was pursuing an advanced degree at Cambridge University when she created a technique for processing infrared imagery from satellites that helped her detect undiscovered archeological sites in Egypt.

She has since turned to mapping looting. Her work has caused some to refer to Parcak as a real-world version of the Indiana Jones character made famous in films starring Harrison Ford. Parcak is a professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, where she founded the Laboratory for Global Observation. She has won attention for her work satellite mapping Egypt and uncovering hidden pyramids, tombs and settlements.

The annual TED Prize has grown from \$100,000 to a million dollars since it was first awarded in the year 2005, to U2 band leader Bono and his vision of fighting poverty and disease. The TED community includes scientists, celebrities, politicians, artists, and entrepreneurs. Since its inception in 1984, the gathering has grown into a global forum for "ideas worth spreading." TED has won a worldwide following for trademark "talks" during which accomplished speakers deliver thought-sparking presentations. Videos of talks are available for free online at ted.com. — AFP



Models walk the runway wearing Oscar De La Renta Fall 2016 during New York Fashion Week at Prince George Ballroom in New York City. — AP/AFP photos

## NY Fashion Week: De la Renta, Rodarte, Vera Wang

The Associated Press is all over New York Fashion Week, from the runway designs to the celebrity-filled front rows. Here are some recent highlights:

### A little leather, at Oscar De La Renta

Longtime devotees of Oscar de la Renta were in for a little surprise at the label's runway show Tuesday evening: a leather dress, in a cool shade of raspberry. What? Leather dresses at de la Renta? Peter Copping, only about a year into his job as

the late fashion icon's hand-picked successor, was trying something different. "It was something new to put into an Oscar de la Renta show," Copping said in a backstage interview. "I think the silhouettes felt very Oscar in some ways, fitted through the waist and then going into a bell skirt. But the material took it somewhere else."

Change is important - but in small steps, the designer said. "I'm very respectful of the legacy of the house but you have to challenge it as well, it can't just stand still," Copping said. "You

need to move forward. But it's very important to do it gradually, step by step." Copping was also going for a juxtaposition of old and new. And when we say old, we mean 18th-century old. He went searching through a historical archive of fabrics in upstate New York. "I was really looking at old 18th-century fabrics like tapestries," he said. "Then we brought them back and scanned them into the computer, played with the scale, changed the colors ... and then found some interesting fabric bases, to add some modern touches."

Speaking of modern, Copping said he was also influenced by the contemporary artist Jeff Koons, who displayed his famous balloon animals at the Chateau de Versailles in 2008. That's the sort of contrast Copping was looking for with a shiny silver sequined bodice paired with a traditional timeless skirt, for example. And that leather dress? It was paired with a brocade "Antoinette" pump. How's that for mixing old and new?



Models walk the runway at the Coach fashion show held at Pier 76 during Fall 2016 New York Fashion Week.

### Coach goes for a makeover

Coach is scrapping its Middle American image. The leather goods brand, which celebrates its 75th anniversary this year, grabbed the fashion crowd's attention Tuesday with its luxury collection called Coach 1941. It marked the second runway show for the high-end line, which made its debut in stores this month. This time, its executive creative director Stuart Vevers reimagined Americana looks, for example mixing team sport uniforms with feminine touches like ruffles. There were over-

sized varsity jackets paired with floral dresses or ruffled blouses. The collection also highlighted lots of shearing coats or vests shown with leather or floral skirts. There were all types of handbags from shoulder strap versions to satchels.

"What really appealed to me was the idea of this juxtaposition between something quite tough and then a softness," said Vevers, interviewed backstage. "There is a certain nostalgia about a varsity jacket and these very nostalgic dresses with the frills, very feminine." Vevers acknowledged it's not

easy to reinvent a label. "Changing someone's perception of a brand is a feat," he said, but he added: "People have a fun nostalgic place for Coach." Among the front-row guests was Riley Keough, actress and granddaughter of Elvis Presley. "I love what he's doing with Coach. It's very much my vibe," said Keough, wearing a floral-printed dress from Coach 1941's spring collection. "It's a lot cooler now, and younger."



Fashion



Rodarte channels 'The Godfather'

When Kate and Laura Mulleavy of Rodarte dream up an idea for a collection, they don't, as some designers do, make picture boards and map out exactly how they're going to reference the idea in each garment. "It's not specific references, really just a feeling," says Kate Mulleavy. "We tend to be fairly abstract." For their new collection, which they showed Tuesday in a Chelsea gallery space, the designing sisters said they were inspired while visiting San Francisco to do a season based loosely on "The Godfather" movies.

"We were in this cafe that we used to go to and we remembered hearing that (Francis Ford) Coppola had written some of 'The Godfather' in the cafe. And we just had this idea that it would be interesting to do a collection inspired by that film, and at the same time about my experience of San Francisco, references like art nouveau, old posters from film noir, things like that." As is often with the Mulleavys, the garments were heavy on lace, hugely intricate embroidery, and lots of mixing of fabrics. Colors were mostly black, white, and red (perhaps for blood?) There was a bride in all white with a delicate veil, too. That, Kate Mulleavy acknowledged, was indeed a specific "Godfather" reference.

Rodarte collections often touch heavily on themes of nature, and that was present here also. Long fur jackets, with horizontal stripes of bold color - one of them combined white, brown, red and yellow - were meant to echo moth wings, Mulleavy said. "You know when you look at moths you're like, 'How can they come in so many amazing different colors?'"

she said. "So we kind of just played with that." A number of the embroideries were based on birds and butterflies, as well, and jewelry focused heavily on flowers. Among the front-row guests was actress Kirsten Dunst, who is working with the Mulleavys on an upcoming dramatic film written and directed by the sisters, called "Woodstock."



Fashion from the Rodarte Fall-Winter 2016 collection is modeled.



Vera Wang offers strength and dreamy beauty

In color and long, lithe structure, Vera Wang went for equal parts all-business armor and a 1920s dream, though armor might be too strong a word. While looking to encourage a woman's strength, she said in a backstage interview it was the chest protection of fencers that she had on her mind in creating some of her tough new coats, jackets and long skirts. The soothing colors of Modigliani paintings moved her as well, in mustard, olive and plum, among other shades, as did the elongated shapes in the sculpture of Alberto Giacometti. "It sort of started actually with fencing," she said. "I always loved the discipline and I loved the precision and the elegance and the line and the silhouette of fencers."

Wang was after such proportions in looks like a nude tulle column gown with a bib neck and panels of metallic sequins and crystals. And she was hoping to evoke a dream state looking back to the '20s and '30s in a backless camisole in a plum floral print and maxi robes of olive floral silk. She carried the olives, soft gray and char-treuse into fur jackets with a patchwork effect. "I really want to convey sort of otherworldly feeling, but the very gutsy, very strong woman," she said. "They are striding. They're cool. They're young. They're hip. They're not hiding themselves." Hiding in plain sight on Wang's front row was a pink-haired Kylie Jenner, huge sunglasses in place. — AP

The Vera Wang Fall 2016 collection is modeled.



# Cole's family outraged over 'Disrespectful' Grammys tribute

Natalie Cole's family is not happy with the 58th Grammy Awards' tribute to the late singer-songwriter. The awards show paid homage to Cole, who died of congestive heart failure on Dec 31, 2015, with a video clip of the R&B singer performing a virtual duet of "Unforgettable" with her father, renowned jazz pianist Nat King Cole. As David Bowie, BB King, Lemmy Kilmister and Glenn Frey, who all died in 2015, were celebrated with honorary musical performances during the awards ceremony, Cole's family members considered the brief video tribute insufficient.

"Words cannot express the outrage and utter disappointment at the disrespectful tribute, or lack thereof, to a legendary artist such as our sister," Cole's sisters, Timolin and Casey, told ET. Added Cole's son Robert Adam Yancy: "Here is a woman who has been in the business for four decades, had 21 Grammy nominations and won nine Grammys. She deserves more than (to be a part of) a minute-and-a-half tribute. It was shameful the way they minimized her legacy. We will find solace in her legacy as well as her endless fans around the world."

Cole was known for hits including "This Will Be," "I Live

for Your Love" and "Unforgettable." She also dabbled in acting in her later years, landing guest appearances on TV series including "Touched by an Angel," "I'll Fly Away," "Grey's Anatomy" and "Law & Order: SVU." Fans as well as other artists and entertainment figures including Toni Braxton, Holly Robinson Peete and Lee Daniels also took note of Cole's brief Grammys tribute, resorting to social media to voice their disappointment. — Reuters



In a Wednesday, June 26, 2013 file photo, Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Natalie Cole poses for a portrait in promotion of her new album 'Natalie Cole en Espanol' in New York. — AP



(From left) German actress Martina Gedeck, German actress Lea van Acken and German actor Ulrich Noethen pose upon arrival for the Premiere screening of the film 'Diary of Anne Frank' presented during the 66th Berlinale Film Festival in Berlin on February 16, 2016. — AFP

## Anne Frank filmmakers hope movie warms mood on refugees

Germany's first feature-length biopic of Anne Frank premiered this week in Berlin, with the film about persecution against the teenage Jewish diarist carrying added meaning as Europe grapples with its biggest post-war refugee crisis. "Persecution, expulsion, displacement and destruction are issues that we just can't shake off," said Fred Breinersdorfer, who wrote the script for "Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank" (The Diary of Anne Frank). "If our film about the fate of a persecuted and destroyed Jewish family can contribute to a more positive attitude towards refugees, then we can all be proud," he said about the family, most of whose members died in Nazi concentration camps.

Attitudes are split in Europe over a record refugee influx, with mostly eastern EU nations wanting asylum seekers kept out while others are adopting a more welcoming attitude, including Germany which took in over one million asylum seekers last year. The film tells the story of the diarist, played by 16-year-old Lea van Acken, and her family, as they are forced to leave Germany to seek refuge in the Netherlands after Hitler's rise in power. But the Nazis swept into the Netherlands in 1940, and the Franks were finally forced to go into hiding in 1942, when Anne's sister Margot received official notice to report to a work camp.

In her diary, Anne chronicled her life in hiding until August 1944, when her family was betrayed. Speaking after the premiere during the youth showcase of the Berlin film festival, co-producer Walid Nakschbandi said he hoped the movie would spark a discussion in the current context of Europe's refugee influx. "If you start today to talk about her fate, about sincerity and ... to speak about the sentence 'He who saves one life, saves the whole world'; then, as makers of the film, we would have achieved a lot," he told the mostly teenage audience.

### 'Normal life stolen'

Anne's diary was first published in Dutch in 1947 by her father Otto, the only one in her family who survived. More than 30 million copies have been sold, and numerous adaptations of the book have been made, including in theatre, television series and film. But

the Anne Frank Fonds, which hold the rights to the written work, said it was time for another major film production. "We thought it would be really important to have a movie in a contemporary language, and in the German language as well because the family lived 400 years in Germany," said Yves Kugelmann, member of the foundation's board, adding that it gave the crew access to archives containing 100,000 documents, objects and photographs.

Using the material, the film team was able to piece together a picture of the Frank's family life, and director Hans Steinbichler said each scene in the film "had a source." What was crucial to him was to portray Anne Frank as the girl next door. "For me it was important to remove Anne Frank from this so-called throne, this sacrosanct status... because that was the only way to carry the message that what was stolen from her was a very normal life," said Steinbichler. In the adaptation, Anne Frank, cooped up in a secret annex, is in the throes of adolescence. She has fights with her mother and falls in love with Peter van Daan, whose family had joined the Franks as hideaways.

Van Acken told Bild daily she sought to reread Anne Frank's diary closely in a bid to get into the role, and even "started to write letters to Anne, in which I told her some things about me." The young actress was sporting short hair at the premiere after her long locks were shorn in one of the closing scenes of the film depicting Anne's arrival at the Auschwitz death camp. The diarist died of typhus in Bergen-Belsen in 1945. The biopic was not without controversy, after it emerged that the Anne Frank Fonds had written to Steinbichler to complain about his concurrent plan to make a film about Nazi propaganda filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl. "We just don't think Leni Riefenstahl and Anne Frank should be mentioned on the same page," Kugelmann told AFP, adding however that Steinbichler had said he would drop the Riefenstahl project. — AFP

## Winslet says playing a Brit 'would be ultimate challenge'

Having put on an array of foreign accents in her award-winning career, British actress Kate Winslet says she really wants to play an English character, adding it would be "the ultimate challenge." The "Titanic" star has pretended to be American, Australian, Polish-Armenian and in her latest film, crime thriller "Triple 9", a Russian-Israeli mafia boss. "My M.O. (modus operandi) is just keep doing the unexpected. Although I do also keep trying to play an English person but that just doesn't keep happening for me at the moment," Winslet told Reuters in an interview.

"That would be the ultimate challenge and then I'd have no dialect coach at all. No one to have my back and I would be all by myself and probably more terrified than ever before. Wouldn't that be novel?" Winslet plays the bejewelled and designer-clad Irina Vlaslov in action-packed "Triple 9" about corrupt police and the criminal underworld-a role she said "felt very out of my comfort zone." "I don't know anyone like this woman. I didn't like her. I didn't empathize with her. I wanted that challenge of playing a character who really felt like a character," she said.

Winslet is in the running for an Academy Award for her portrayal in "Steve Jobs" of the late Apple co-founder's colleague Joanna Hoffman. She won an Oscar for "The Reader," an Emmy Award for "Mildred Pierce," a Best Spoken Word Album For Children Grammy for "Listen to the Storyteller," meaning she is just missing a Tony Award to complete the "EGOT" acronym of all four major entertainment honors.

Asked if going to Broadway was next, Winslet said: "Well I suppose it probably is now. And that's more because of my 12-year-old son Joe, who ... is just obsessed with records." "So since he has learnt about this 'EGOT' thing, he's like, 'Mum you've gotta do it.'" Winslet has backed her "Titanic" co-star Leonardo DiCaprio to win the best actor Oscar this year for "The Revenant." Both have been honored this awards season, reuniting on the red carpet, much to the delight of "Titanic" fans, something that surprised Winslet. "It's crazy but it's wonderful how people still get such a kick out of the ("Titanic" characters) Jack and Rose combo." — Reuters



Kate Winslet, left, and Michael Fassbender pose for photographers upon arrival at the BAFTA 2016 film awards at the Royal Opera House in London, Sunday. — AP

## In 'The Witch,' a haunting prequel to Salem

Set under gray Puritan skies in a deathly autumn, "The Witch" is a slow-burning 1600s horror thriller so bone-dry it would only take a match for the whole movie to go up in flames. "A New England folktale" is how the opening titles describe writer-director Robert Eggers' impressively rigorous feature debut. The film doesn't just take place in early 17th century America, but it has effectively summoned the nightmares and superstitions of the era, much of which Eggers faithfully reproduced from various historical sources.

The subject here is less witches as some supernatural fright than the Puritan psychology that dreamed them. Do not expect broomsticks. A family, led by a prideful patriarch, William (Ralph Ineson, terrific), is banished from the plantation after his stubborn refusal to accept common law as above his own, superior piety. "I would be glad of it," he seethes when threatened with expulsion.

### Child vanishes

Our images of the settlement are fleeting. The eldest of the five children, Thomasin (Anya Taylor-Joy, in a breakout performance) peers backward as the wooden gates close behind them as they ride out. The picture is drained of color and the score (by Mark Korven) is eerie and discordant: trouble waits outside the gates. After setting up a scrappy existence in the wilderness, misfortunes mount. The crops die and when Thomasin takes the newborn out near the for-

est, the child vanishes. That night, after frantic searching, an image flickers of a witch-like figure floating toward a full moon. A spell of mysterious source seems to have settled over the family that spookily manifests in various farm animals: a rabbit in the woods, a bloody chick in an egg. Eventually, a goat and a crow get in on the act. A suitably creepy set of toddler twins is here, too. As things get steadily worse and demons seem literally at the door, the faith of the family is tested. Suspicions begin falling on Thomasin, a fair, pale-white girl whose growth into womanhood is drawing the curious gaze of her younger brother, Caleb (Harvey Scrimshaw). Could she be a witch?



This photo provided by courtesy of A24 shows Anya Taylor-Joy, left, as Thomasin, and Harvey Scrimshaw as Caleb in a scene from the film, 'The Witch.' — AP

### Live deliciously

The spell is cast over the viewer, too, as the authentically resurrected world of "The Witch" transports to a time of suffocating fear, born out of a harsh new land and hardened religious fervor. Taking place decades before the Salem witch trials, "The Witch" is a kind of horror chamber piece, a stripped-bare prequel to the forces that propel Arthur Miller's "The Crucible" and Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter." The characters speak in the formal diction of the period - lots of "thees" and such. It's a kind of time travel, for those looking for a far grimmer trip to colonial America than New England tourist attractions afford. It is, to say the least, not a barrel of laughs.

But what makes "The Witch" more than a mere museum reclamation project is Taylor-Joy. The movie is in many ways seen through Thomasin, who stands apart from her devote family. Wide-eyed and rebellious, she more resembles a girl of today. Whether she is, in fact, a witch remains in suspense. But we witness how Puritan paranoia and misogyny turns a pretty young woman like Thomasin into a fearsome seductress in the eyes of her family. When the combustible "The Witch" finally lets itself ablaze, the brutal and surprisingly sober finale is also - and more thrillingly - Thomasin's awakening. Drawn by the lure to break free of her upbringing, to "live deliciously," she turns out to be something scarier than the Puritans could fathom: a teenager. — AP



Polish director Andrzej Zulawski and his then wife French actress Sophie Marceau (left) arrive on May 11, 1988 at the Festival de Cannes, southern France. — AFP

## Polish film director Andrzej Zulawski dies at 75

Polish art-house film director Andrzej Zulawski died yesterday aged 75 after a long battle with cancer, according to the Polish Filmmakers Association. I can confirm his death," a source at the association told AFP of the actor, writer and director of several French films. He was "a very original artist, sometimes controversial but always true to himself," association president Jacek Bromski told Polish broadcaster Polsat.

Zulawski's son Xawery, also a director, wrote on Facebook on Tuesday that Zulawski was "terminally ill with cancer and undergoing intensive therapy in hospital" in Poland. "It's really hard for me to write these words, but it's especially important now that his last film ("Cosmos",

2015) is starting its own life." Born in occupied Poland in 1940, Zulawski left for Paris at the age of five with his parents and later studied at the Sorbonne. He is survived by three children, including a son with French actress and ex-partner Sophie Marceau. They separated in 2001.

"It's a huge loss for Polish and world cinema," film critic Janusz Wroblewski told AFP. "His films are considered cinema classics, but at the time they were avant-garde," he said of the director of "The Third Part of the Night" (1971) and "The Devil" (1972). "He was provocative, breaking many Polish stereotypes and introducing eroticism in his films." — AFP

## Amazon natives turn film stars in Colombia Oscar hope

Nilbio Torres had never been to the cinema before and had never heard of the Oscars, until he acted in a film that got nominated for one. The 30-year-old father of four from the Amazon jungle is one of the indigenous Colombian stars of "Embrace of the Serpent," up for the Best Foreign Language Film award at the Oscars on February 28. The third film by Colombian director Ciro Guerra, it is based on the true story of an expedition into the Amazon in the early 20th century by a German ethnologist and a US biologist. But unlike previous tales about European adventures in the South American jungle, this one is told from the viewpoint of the indigenous peoples, who speak in their native languages. "It was hard to get into character," Torres told AFP, struggling to express himself in Spanish. "I had to show it like it was real." Torres, of the Cubeo ethnic group, plays the part of the shaman Karamakate, last survivor of his village, as a young man. Antonio Bolivar, himself one of the last surviving members of the Uitoto ethnic group, plays the character when he is older. The locals call him Grandpa Antonio.

### Acting lessons

Nilbio works in the jungle growing yucca and bananas at a plantation he gets to each day by canoe. The hard physical work has given him the kind of body Hollywood actors work on in the gym. When the film crew came to his part of the jungle, he thought of trying to get a job as an assistant on the shoot to earn some extra cash. Instead, the filmmakers offered him a role. They sent him to acting classes in the capital Bogota-the first time he had ever traveled by plane. He did not know much about films, but the filmmakers discovered he had a knack for memorizing his lines and a strong presence in front of the camera. Another indigenous actor, Miguel Ramos, 27,

plays the part of the German explorer's assistant.

He is glad that the filmmakers chose to use actors speaking the indigenous Tikuna, Uitoto and Cubeo languages. "A lot of people tell me: 'Thank you for representing us. We feel proud of you,'" he said. But the film also prompted painful reflections for indigenous people. Their ancestors were massacred by colonial traders who plundered their land for rubber. "Sometimes I would talk with Grandpa Antonio and we would fall silent because we felt sad to be reliving that history in the film," he said. "But then you start to reflect that this can allow us to make our lives and communities stronger. This film lets us keep breathing."

### Colombia's 'unknown universe'

The rubber trade transformed the Amazon, says Ignacio Prieto, an anthropologist who advised the film director. "There was a massacre of 60,000 Uitotos. Indigenous communities fled to Brazil and Peru," he said. Many trees were cut down and natives have turned to mining or growing coca leaves for which drug dealers pay well. Many of them try to shut themselves off from the outside, said Prieto. Ramos is an exception. He has moved to Bogota and is studying to be a sports teacher. At the university, people ask him whether indigenous people still wear loincloths. "That makes me think that a lot of people do not know the Amazon," he said with a smile. "Embrace of the Serpent" could change that. "The Amazon is an unknown universe for Colombians," said Prieto. "Now the country has realized that this place is here and it belongs to them too." — AFP



Nilbio Torres (left) and Miguel Ramos (right), part of the cast of Oscars-nominated Colombian movie 'El Abrazo de la Serpiente' (Embrace of the Serpent), gesture as they speak during an interview with AFP in Bogota. — AFP





Handler Valerie Nunes-Atkinson sits beside German shorthaired pointer named CJ after he won 'Best in Show' of the 140th Annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show at Madison Square Garden in New York. — AFP photos



A German Short Haired Pointer performs on the second day of the 140th annual Westminster Kennel Club dog show.

# Regal German Shorthaired Pointer wins Westminster show



A Komondor is seen in the judging ring.

The Westminster Dog show went elegant for its 140th installment late Tuesday, picking a German Shorthaired Pointer as its best in show over shaggier options. California Journey, nicknamed CJ, won out over six other finalists to nab one of the most prestigious crowns in dogdom. Among the runners-up were fan favorites Magic, a bright-eyed German Shepherd, and the lumbering Annabelle, a Bulldog that drew especially emphatic cheers from the crowd.

The fuzziest finalist was Mr Charlie, a horizontal mass of grey and black wagging fur, while the toy entry, Panda, a Shih Tzu, drew the broadest laughs with an ill-timed shake of the hips that required a speedy coif-adjustment. In the end, Best in Show judge Richard Meen, a Toronto psychiatrist with more than 50 years in the purebred dog world, picked the stately CJ over the motley crew of elite canines.

"Just a beautiful dog," Meen said afterwards at a news conference with CJ and his breeder, who described the dog's coat as "white-ticked and liver" colored. The breed is also known for its redwood-colored visage and a colt-like physique, traits clearly in evidence as CJ sat calmly. Meen saw in CJ the embodiment of the pointer's core mission of hunting. "This dog never stopped looking," Meen said. "He floated around the ring beautifully." CJ's expression was "alert, bright, not easily distracted." CJ is the third German Shorthaired Pointer to win Westminster and a descendant of the other two champs, including his grandmother "Carlee," who won in 2005, said his co-breeder, co-owner and handler, Valerie Nunes-Atkinson.

The three-year-old CJ only began showing six months ago, but Nunes-Atkinson sensed immediately he was a natural. "When he was born, he was an old soul," she said. "Six weeks old, we knew there was something special." Nunes-Atkinson is a second-generation breeder and grew up with champion dogs, describing her evolution as initially trepidatious around the champions before coming to accept



them as dogs. "In the ring, he's very serious," she said of CJ. "At home, he's silly. He rips around our property with his best-friend, Ramona," a whippet. "He gets into messes." Winning Westminster "is something I've dreamed of since I was 10 years old," she said, adding that she was in a state of "disbelief." — AFP

A man carries his dog through the grooming area.



A Lowchen pose during an event.



A Maltese is seen in the competition area.



An Italian Waterdog, a new breed this year, waits in the grooming area.



Two Bichons pose during an event.



The Samoyed wins the working group on the second day of the 140th annual Westminster Kennel Club dog show.



A Dogue de Bordeaux rests in the competition area.



A Cocker Spaniel gets groomed in the benching area.



An owner gives his Malamute a kiss in the grooming area.



A Pembroke Welsh Corgi runs the agility course.



A Parson Russell Terrier runs the agility course.



A Papillon runs the agility course.



A Bergamasco Sheepdog



Regal German Shorthaired Pointer wins Westminster show

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Artists dressed in red and holding fans parade on February 13, 2016 in coastal city of Nice, southeastern France during the 132nd Nice Carnival. The carnival strats February 13 until 28 February 2016, and this year's theme celebrates the 'King of Medias'. — AFP

## Love, rage, silence: Secret lives of Afghanistan's female poets

With her kohl-rimmed eyes cast down, Nadia lilt through a folk couplet before a secret assembly of women poets on a forbidden subject that often gets people killed in Afghanistan-love. "Like a candle I burn all night, separated from my lover," the 20-year-old intones in Pashto. "I melt and fade like hot wax." The young university student is part of Mirman Baheer, a women's literary society that holds secret gatherings in Kandahar city, the spiritual birthplace of the famously misogynistic Taliban. Her ode to love is a landay, two-line Pashtun folk poems that have become a symbol of cultural rebellion for women and an outlet for incendiary issues, from child brides to honor killings.

They are more commonly about romantic love-sometimes overlapping with sex, marriage and heartache-in a tightly gender-segregated society where any public display of it is seen as a shocking breach of tradition.

"Who will marry a woman who indulges in love poetry?" said Nadia, quoting her mother who forbade her from joining the poetry club. "People instantly judge: 'She writes about love, she must be a woman of loose morals.'" News of the meetings has spread by word of mouth, but mobile phones are increasingly used to organize the clandestine gatherings.

Single women and housewives swaddled in brightly coloured headscarves come together in a basement room for the poetry reading, some of them risking punishment or even death if discovered. A few were accompanied by their little sisters to help fabricate convincing alibis when they return home. And for those too afraid to defy their families, Mirman Baheer offers a hotline service for women to call clandestinely and leave their landays, which are read out during weekly sessions.

### 'Killed for celebrating love'

The underground gathering offers a glimpse into the hidden world of Afghan women flouting patriarchal mores in the country's conflict-torn Pashtun heartland. "Landays, with the power of their grief, love, rage, defy any facile notion of a Pashtun woman as a mute ghost beneath a blue burqa," said Eliza Griswold, author of "I am the Beggar of the World: Landays from Contemporary Afghanistan". "Thousands of years old, these remarkable folk poems provide outsiders a means to explore the inner world of a culture that can be hard to access." Nearly 15 years since the Taliban Islamist regime was ousted from power in a US-led invasion, Afghanistan has witnessed a sea change in women's rights, with female lawmakers and even pilots now commonplace.

But gender parity remains a distant dream amid pervasive conservative attitudes that still deride women as "Naqis-ul-aqal" (having a weaker intellect than men) and deem that a female voice should be forbidden in public spaces. "Morality protectors in Afghan society believe that male honor can be protected only by locking away women where nobody can see or hear them," said poet and writer Waheed Warasta.

"Women who dare to step out to recite poetry do so at the risk of being labeled as prostitutes." In 2010, a teenage poet known by her nickname Zarmina set herself on fire after a violent altercation with her brothers who caught her reading a love poem over the phone and presumed there was a boy on the other end of the line. A resident of Gereshk district in the Taliban insurgency-ravaged province of Helmand, Zarmina was a regular caller to Mirman Baheer's poetry helpline and later died of her burns in hospital. She is glorified within the club as a "poet martyr". "We live in a country where people get killed for celebrating

love," said Pakeza Arzo, a Kabul-based coordinator at Mirman Baheer, who transcribes landays from anonymous callers.

### 'Antidote to heartbreak'

The club's weekly gatherings in Kabul are held openly and attract elite university professors, lawmakers and journalists, but its meetings in conservative areas such as Kandahar and Helmand are held under a tight veil of secrecy. Mobile phones can provide a lifeline. Arzo said some rural women who have no freedom to step out of their homes break down over the phone, their poems giving vent to a torrent of anguish.

"Landays reflect their struggles and work like an antidote to heartbreak," Arzo said. One caller, who calls in regularly, left this landay: "When my husband took a second wife, I burned / I no longer care about the flames of hell." Another bemoaned the stoning of a young woman accused of adultery. "For whose sin am I sacrificed to tradition / My biggest crime is that I am a woman." And one caller from Khost province bordering Pakistan was unabashedly bold, her landay laced with contempt for the prevalent machismo culture. "You demand a kiss by force / Night will give way to dawn, but you shall not have my lips." For many, going out of their homes to buy mobile phone credit is akin to traversing a minefield. They are fearful of getting caught and some call from a different number every time. And it usually ends with a familiar pattern: after a while, the calls abruptly stop, Arzo said. "This sudden silence can only mean two things: either the poet has been killed or married off." — AFP



A photo shows the recently discovered sheets of music notes by Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Italian composer Antonio Salieri 'Per la Ricuperata Salute di Offelia' for the libretto by Italian poet Lorenzo Da Ponte. — AFP

## Newfound Mozart-Salieri cantata premieres after 200-year silence

Lost for over 200 years, a cantata co-written by classical maestros Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Antonio Salieri rang out in public for the first time Tuesday, shedding new light on their reputed intense rivalry. The Italian composer was allegedly so jealous of the Austrian prodigy that he once tried to poison him—a claim rejected by experts as the collaboration was performed in Prague. "The part composed by Mozart is, shall we say, more ingenious and dramatic, while the other two verses are more lyrical," musician Lukas Vendl told reporters after playing the four-minute composition on a harpsichord.

"But it's impossible to deduce from it who was a better composer." The cantata from 1785 is "key to a new understanding of the relationship between Mozart and Salieri," according to Timo Jouko Herrmann, the German musicologist and composer who found the work. Herrmann said it suggests the men were "colleagues who worked together" rather than rivals and undermines a legend suggesting Salieri may have played a role in Mozart's untimely death at 36 in 1791. Titled "Per la ricuperata salute di Offelia" (To Ophelia's health) the cantata was jointly composed by Mozart, Salieri and an unknown musician named Cornetti.

It accompanies a libretto by Italian poet Lorenzo Da Ponte and is dedicated to popular English soprano Nancy Storace (1765-1817), who returned to the stage after losing her voice for a spell. The score lay unidentified in the Czech Museum of Music since the 1950s but Herrmann was finally able to attribute it to the two composers thanks to access to new information on the Internet, according to a museum statement. Scores of the cantata had been distributed at the time

by a Viennese merchant, Artaria and Comp. The Prague copy is the only one to have survived.

### False portrayal

The discovery is especially interesting in light of a legend discounted by historians: Salieri was said to have fatally poisoned Mozart out of jealousy over the Austrian wunderkind's talent. First appearing in Alexander Pushkin's 19th-century poetic drama "Mozart and Salieri," the rumour was later featured in the play and 1984 film "Amadeus", which historians say grossly exaggerated Salieri's rivalry with Mozart. "We all know the film 'Amadeus'. Salieri is mischaracterized in it," said Ulrich Leisinger from the International Mozarteum Foundation in Salzburg.

"He didn't poison Mozart. The two composers regularly met up and collaborated in Vienna." The film was shot in the Czech capital, where Mozart spent considerable time in the 18th century as it was then part of the Austrian Empire. Prague played host to the premiere of his celebrated opera Don Giovanni in October 1787, which later had a lukewarm reception in the empire's capital Vienna. Mozart debuted another opera, The Clemency of Titus, in Prague in 1791. This year marks the 260th anniversary of Mozart's birth and the 225th anniversary of his death. "As far as I know, it's the only piece jointly written by Mozart and Salieri," said Herrmann. "But who knows: in a treasure house like this, anything can happen," he said of Prague's music museum. — AFP



Afghan women reading love poems at a poetry club in Kandahar. — AFP photos



Afghan woman Nadia, 20, reading love poems at a poetry club in Kandahar.