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DASMAN ATTACKER UNREPENTANT, HAD PLANNED ASSAULT

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Following up on the recent incident in which citizen Abdul Aziz Al-Shamlan deliberately ran over a group of policemen, killing one of them and injuring others, security sources said Shamlan was a member of the Islamic State terrorist group. They said his passport had been withdrawn from him and he was banned from travelling last year following an investigation at the state security department, as he was preparing to leave Kuwait to join IS in Syria.

The sources added that the suspect admitted to running over the policemen on purpose with the intention of killing them all. He added that he had planned for the operation a week earlier and that two days before the incident, he explored several checkpoints stationed along Gulf Road and selected the one near Dasman Palace because it was far from the crowds along the Gulf Road and he could easily make an escape.

The sources explained that Shamlan left his house after Asr prayers and drove by the spot several times to make sure the largest number of policemen had gathered there.

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KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem (right) and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh are seen during a meeting yesterday. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: A meeting between the government and the National Assembly's financial and economic affairs committee yesterday failed to reach a conclusive result over a plan to hike the prices of fuel and power, but MPs asked the government to exclude Kuwaitis from the hikes for a limited duration. The issue will not therefore be discussed during the Assembly's session tomorrow as more meetings and discussions are planned to finalize an agreement.

Head of the committee MP Faisal Al-Shaye said the government told the meeting it expects to save as much as KD 1.2 billion by rationalizing subsidies and raising prices of petrol and electricity. He said the government provided the committee with details about squandering of public funds and plans to save as much as 25 percent in some provisions of the state budget.

Shaye said three major development projects are planned in which citizens will own 50 percent, adding that a number of legislation need to be amended and the Assembly is waiting for the government to submit those amendments. He said a meeting will be held on Thursday to discuss a series of proposals by MPs to exclude Kuwaitis from the price hikes, adding the government informed the panel that squandering in electricity consumption is estimated at 30 percent and consumption categories have been proposed to cut wastage.

Shaye said MPs have not been supplied yet with detailed figures about the proposed cuts in subsidies and it is expected to arrive at the best model on Thursday.

Continued on Page 13



COLUMBIA, South Carolina: Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton greets supporters as she arrives to speak to supporters at her election night watch party for the South Carolina Democratic primary on Saturday. — AP

REPUBLICANS BRAWL, CLINTON SAILS TOWARD SUPER TUESDAY

COLUMBIA: Donald Trump and his rivals brawled on for the Republican presidential nomination yesterday as Hillary Clinton sailed toward "Super Tuesday," her White House hopes lofted by a blowout win in South Carolina. With just two days to go before the biggest showdown yet in the US presidential race, Clinton gained crucial momentum in the race for the Democratic nomination after crushing Bernie Sanders 74.5 to 28 percent.

"We got decimated," Sanders conceded in an interview on ABC's This Week show, acknowledging that the outpouring of African American support for Clinton exposed a costly weakness in his campaign. On the Republican side, Trump's trailing rivals desperately tried to raise doubts among voters about the frontrunner's ability to beat Clinton in November. Senator Ted Cruz suggested in an interview with ABC's "This Week" show that Mafia dealings could be hiding in Trump's tax returns, which the billion-

aire real estate developer has so far resisted releasing.

"There have been multiple media reports of Donald's dealings with the mob, the Mafia," Cruz said. "Maybe his tax returns will show that those business dealings are a lot more extensive than has been reported. We don't know," he added. "But the important point is ... in the general election, Hillary Clinton is going to shine a light on all of this. And Republican primary voters deserve to know."

Trump has said he will not release his tax returns because they are being audited by the Internal Revenue Service. "You can't tell anything from tax returns because you take deductions, massive deductions and lots of other things," he said on CNN's State of the Union Show. Cruz also chided Trump for failing to categorically reject endorsements from white supremacist David Duke. "Really sad.@realDonaldTrump you're better than this," Cruz tweeted.

Continued on Page 13

70 KILLED IN BAGHDAD BOMBINGS

INDIAN KILLS 14 RELATIVES, HANGS SELF

MUMBAI: A 35-year-old man killed 14 members of his family including six children with a butcher's knife before committing suicide in India, with police baffled yesterday about a motive for the attack. The grisly murders occurred after Hasnin Anwar Warekar and his extended family gathered late on Saturday at a home north of India's financial capital of Mumbai for a family function, police officers said.

"The attacker, Hasnin Anwar Warekar, hung himself after slitting the throats of all other family members including his parents," Gajanan Laxman Kabdule, a police spokesman in Thane, some 32 km from Mumbai, said. The sole survivor of the attack - Warekar's sister - was taken to hospital after neighbors heard her screaming for help after midnight and alerted police.

Neighbors were forced to open a window to rescue the woman after the assailant allegedly locked all escape routes from the house before carrying out the attacks, according to local media reports. "We still haven't been able to speak with the attacker's 21-year-old sister, the lone survivor of the attack, who is in deep trauma at a city hospital," Kabdule told AFP, adding she was in "a state of shock".

Warekar, who reportedly worked for a private firm in Mumbai, was able to carry out the attacks after lacing the food at the gathering with a sedative, according to several local media reports. But the Indian Express newspaper said he stabbed his victims after they went to bed, having all decided to spend the night at the house in Thane. "Prima facie evidence suggests that the accused bolted all the doors of the house and murdered his family while they were asleep with a knife that we found near his body," Ashutosh Dumbre, joint commissioner of Thane police, was quoted saying.

Continued on Page 13

BAGHDAD: A twin suicide bombing claimed by Islamic State killed 70 people in Baghdad yesterday in the deadliest attack inside the capital this year, as militants launched an assault on its western outskirts. Police sources said the suicide bombers were riding motorcycles and blew themselves up in a crowded mobile phone market in Sadr City, wounding more than 100 people in addition to the dead. A Reuters witness saw pools of blood on the ground with slippers, shoes and mobile phones at the site of the blasts, which was sealed off to prevent further attacks.

In a statement circulated online, Islamic State said it was responsible for the blasts: "Our swords will not cease to cut off the heads of the rejectionist polytheists, wherever they are," it said. Iraqi forces backed by airstrikes from a US-led coalition have driv-

en Islamic State back in the western Anbar province recently and are preparing for an offensive to retake the northern city of Mosul. But the militants are still able to strike outside territory they control, most recently on Thursday when two Islamic State suicide bombers killed 15 people at a mosque in the capital.

Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi said the attacks were in response to Islamic State's recent defeats: "This gang targeted civilians after it lost the initiative and its dregs fled the battlefield before our proud fighters," he said on his official Facebook page. At dawn yesterday, suicide bombers and gunmen attacked Iraqi security forces in Abu Ghraib, seizing positions in a grain silo and a cemetery, and killing at least 17 members of the security forces, officials said.

Continued on Page 13



BAGHDAD: Iraqis inspect the damage at the site of a bombing claimed by the Islamic State (IS) group near a market in the Sadr City area of the capital yesterday. — AP



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah separately received Chairman of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU) and National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, at Seif Palace yesterday. Ghanem presented the newly-elected MP Ali Abdullah Al-Khamis on the occasion of winning the by-elections in the third electoral constituency. The meetings also discussed the outcome of the first meeting of Arab Parliaments' Speakers, which was recently held in Cairo, Egypt. MP Faisal Fahad Al-Shaya accompanied Ghanem to the meetings. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



WASHINGTON: Kuwaiti Ambassador Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is pictured with families of American servicemen and service-women who lost their lives in Kuwait liberation war in 1991. — KUNA

ENVOY HOLDS LUNCHEON TO HONOR FAMILIES OF LIBERATION WAR VICTIMS

WASHINGTON: The Kuwaiti embassy in Washington held a luncheon to families of American servicemen and service-women who lost their lives in Kuwait liberation war in 1991. Speaking to the audience, Kuwaiti Ambassador Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said that the function, which is held every year in coincidence with the annual anniversary of the war, is meant to remind the new Kuwaiti generations of the sacrifices made by those American service members to defend international legitimacy and justice. He said that the Kuwaiti people are grateful to the American people and would never forget their sacrifices to defend their country. Kuwait would never let down families of those heroes, he vowed.

In statements to KUNA and Kuwait TV, Kuwait's Military Attache in Washington Rear Admiral Marzouq Al-Bader reiterated that the effective role played by the US military in liberating Kuwait would be remembered forever by the Kuwaiti people. All Kuwaitis knew well what the US had done to liberate Kuwait, Bader said. He added that the Kuwaiti-US relation was and would remain strong and distinguished. Bill Perry, a retired captain in the US Navy and father of a soldier who was killed in the war, said meanwhile that he was eager to partake in the annual event to honor families of war victims for 20 years in a row. He said that the event was an opportunity to show the strong bonds linking both the American and Kuwaiti peoples. —KUNA



Kuwaiti Ambassador Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah speaks to the audience.



GULF BANK CELEBRATES KUWAIT'S NATIONAL AND LIBERATION DAYS

SPECIAL SONG CREATED TO MARK THE EVENTS

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank proudly celebrated the occasions of Kuwait's National and Liberation Days, as well as the 10th Anniversary of the Ascension of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

To kick off the festivities, Gulf Bank lit up its headquarters in Mubarak Al Kabeer Street with the colors of Kuwait's flag. To add to the entertainment and the festive spirit, the bank distributed flowers and flags in the Mubarakiya area. Staff also commemorated the event by honoring Kuwait's flag with unique messages.

The Bank also created and released a special commemorative song, 'Ana Kuwaiti'. The song was the collaborative efforts of a team of young Kuwaitis, including singer Fahad Al-Salem, who works at Gulf Bank along with Mohamed Shreida - writer; Rakan - composer; Barak Al-Mutawa - distribution and mixing; and Adel Al-Farhan - Rhythm. As part of the 'Ana Kuwaiti' medley, the song also includes references to other memorable songs and Kuwaiti artists. The song can be downloaded for free from <http://www.e-gulfbank.com/national>.

KUWAIT DEVOTED TO ENHANCING AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION: ENVOY

CAIRO: Kuwait is committed to boosting Arab-African cooperation, Kuwait's ambassador to Ethiopia and permanent representative to the African Union Rashed Al-Hajri said during a meeting held yesterday in Cairo to prepare for the next Arab-African summit.

Representing the Arab side to the summit preparatory meeting, Ambassador Hajri praised the outcome of the last such summit, the third, held in Kuwait in 2013, for having fielded a distinctive initiative by His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah aimed at buttressing growth, development, and investment in Africa. The initiative, the ambassador explained, consisted of allocating one billion dollars for development in Africa, another billion dollars for investment and one million dollars annually for research studies to boost economic development in Africa in the name of the Kuwaiti philanthropist Abdulrahman Al-Sumait.

Representing Africa's side to today's fourth

Arab-African summit preparation meeting, Chadian envoy Amad Sekini acknowledged that the third Arab-African summit in Kuwait produced good results and that the African side was striving hard to put these results to use.

Even more so, the fourth summit will follow up the third summit's resolutions on fighting terrorism, funding agricultural development and food security, dealing with immigration and setting up a fund for timely response to natural disasters, said Arab League representative to today's preparatory meeting Zaid Al-Sabban.

The prep meeting will also select a motto for the summit and determine its core issue from two choices: funding economic growth and development or immigration, he said. Attending yesterday's meeting were representatives for the Arab side from Kuwait, Egypt, Mauritania and for the Africa side from Chad, Zimbabwe, Equatorial Guinea, and Ethiopia in addition to those from the Arab League and the African Union. — KUNA

EGYPT EYES CLOSER JUDICIAL TIES WITH KUWAIT: MINISTER

CAIRO: Egyptian Minister of Justice Ahmad Al-Zend said yesterday that his country is willing to promote and develop judicial and legal cooperative relations and coordination with the State of Kuwait. In pre-departure statements while flying to Kuwait for a visit that lasts for several days, the minister said Egypt is keen to bolster its judicial ties with Kuwait in light of the current level

of firm and close relations between both Arab nations. He said that during his stay in Kuwait he will sign a bilateral judicial and legal agreement with Kuwaiti Minister of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Yaqoub Al-Sane. The agreement will replace 1977 and 1995 deals that are pertinent to bilateral judicial cooperation, the Egyptian minister pointed out. —KUNA

DEPUTY SPEAKER URGES ARAB UNITY TO COMBAT TERRORISM

CAIRO: Kuwait's National Assembly Deputy Speaker Mubarak Al-Khuraiej called on Arab countries to unite so as to combat terrorism. He made the statement yesterday while concluding the meeting of Arab Parliament's Committee of Foreign and Political Affairs and National Security. During the meeting, all items on the agenda, including documents of Arab national security and challenges in the Arab world, were reviewed, he said.

Khureinej, also an Arab Parliament member, added that results of the meeting of Arab Parliaments' speakers recently held in Cairo were discussed by conferees. Arab Parliament will hold a session to discuss developments in the region, and topics pertaining to Arab security and combating terrorism, he noted. Arab unity can promote Arab countries' situations to address issues and challenges facing the region, he stressed. — KUNA



Deputy Speaker Mubarak Al-Khuraiej



KUWAIT: Ambassador of Brunei to Kuwait Pengiran Mustapha Aliuddin hosted a reception at Regency Hotel recently on the occasion of his country's 32nd National Day. Senior officials, diplomats and media personalities attended the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



In Brief

TRAINING ABROAD BANNED

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) yesterday issued a decision to suspend dispatching employees on training courses and programs abroad from all government establishments. The decision over the cost-cutting measure was published yesterday in Kuwait's official gazette 'Al-Kuwait Al-Youm' and stipulates a ban on sending any public sector employee for training abroad.



MODERATE WEATHER FORECASTED

KUWAIT: Winds will turn to this morning moderate northwesterly winds (12-35 km/h) with continuation of the high-pressure area leading to stability in the weather and a decrease in temperature to range between 11-13 degrees. Effects of the Sudan low-pressure seasonal system, which brought rain on Saturday were limited, acting director of the Kuwait Meteorological Department Samie Al-Othman said. Mild weather prevailed yesterday with moderate southeasterly winds between 12-35 km/h, while maximum temperature recorded yesterday ranged between 23-25 degrees, he added. —KUNA



INNOVATION INCREASES KNOWLEDGE

KUWAIT: Director of the Capital Educational Area Badriya Al-Khaldi stressed the need to support talented students, develop and promote the concept of innovation to increase their educational level. The schools' departments are working hard to discover and promote talents in students and lead them toward excellence, Khaldi said in a statement during the honoring of winners of a Holy Quran memorizing and recitation competition at Al-Maqdesi kindergarten yesterday. —KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A low-angle shot of Kuwait Towers. The Touristic Enterprises Company (TEC) announced last week the reopening of Kuwait's most famous landmark after the conclusion of a five-year-long maintenance operation. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KFH PARTICIPATES IN AL-QURAIN HOUSE OPENING TO IMMORTALIZE KUWAIT'S MARTYRS

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the Ministry of Information's celebrations represented by hoisting the Kuwaiti flag in Al-Qurain House as part of the country's national celebrations. The event was held in the presence of Minister of Information and State Minister for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

KFH's participation comes as part of its keenness to take part in the national occasions that represent a source of pride for Kuwait and its people.

KFH Public Relations team continued its efforts to ensure best media coverage of the event due to its importance in immortalizing the memory of Kuwaiti martyrs who fell in Al-Qurain House when defending their

country, in a story of heroism and bravery. Al-Qurain Martyrs museum was established in 1991 to honor 19 Kuwaiti youth who took shelter in the house of Al-Qurain while fighting back Iraqi forces occupying Kuwait at the time. The battle broke out in 1991 led to the death of 12 Kuwaiti youth who gave their souls to defend their homeland and nation.



KUWAIT: Minister of Information Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah is pictured with KFH's Public Relations team.

BLOOD BANK IMPLEMENTS WHO'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO COMBAT ZIKA

KUWAIT: Kuwait Central Blood Bank (KCBB) announced that a certain policy is being followed up to deal with Zika virus, in accordance with recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) and reports issued by US blood banks.

The policy depends on some criteria and awareness campaigns provided to donors and receivers at hospitals, Dr Reem Al-Radhwan, head of blood transfusion department said yesterday. She stressed that there is an approval of new measures to control the virus, urging donors who travelled to Mexico, the Caribbean islands, South America and Central America to donate after the passing of 28 days since they returned home. Radhwan noted that symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, conjunctivitis and headache. She said that all symptoms are not acute, indicating that the virus is rapidly spreading in the Western Hemisphere except for the US and Canada. The KCBB, which was founded in 1965, is the first one in the Middle East. It aims to save blood of donors to be used if necessary. — KUNA

KUWAIT'S DECIDES NOT TO HOST 23RD GULF CUP 'FINAL'

KUWAIT: Kuwait's decision of not being able to host the 23rd Gulf Cup is "final and irreversible," Deputy Director of Sports Affairs at the Public Authority for Sport (PAYS) Dr Humoud Fulaiteeh announced yesterday. The Cabinet had recently made the final decision not to hold the Gulf soccer games.

Fulaiteeh said in a press statement that the apology came after a decision made by the International Olympic Committee to suspend sports in Kuwait. He added that Kuwait was fully ready to host this regional sporting event; all facilities were properly equipped and a budget was made to cover the expense of this grand event, nonetheless, the suspension decision prevented it from happening. He expressed his aspiration that all efforts to be made to help sports thrive, once again, in the country. On October 19, the Cabinet approved Kuwait's decision to turn down hosting the 23rd Gulf Cup under the instructions of the Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, who made that call due to FIFA's decision to ban Kuwait from participating in international soccer activities. — KUNA

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GATEHOUSE GROUP BUYS 10 US HOTELS

KUWAIT: Gatehouse Financial Group announced yesterday it had completed the purchase of ten hotels with limited services in the United States at a cost of \$137 million. The properties are located throughout strategic submarkets of the Midwestern states of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota, said a statement by the Group, noting that this purchase comes after the Group had bought a Marriott Residence Inn Hotel in downtown Manhattan, New York in 2014. Fahad Boodai, the Kuwaiti Executive

Chairman of Gatehouse Financial Group said that the company continued to build on its excellent track record of real estate investments in the US and UK in partnership with best-in-class operators and investors in those countries. He thought the choice of selecting ten hotels in the Midwest was fortuitous as the region was poised to expand its potential for real estate investments. Gatehouse Group includes Gatehouse Bank and Gatehouse Capital and is headquartered in London. —KUNA

KUWAIT HOSTS GCC PAYMENT SYSTEMS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

KUWAIT: Kuwait hosts today the 48th meeting of Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) payment systems technical committee as part of cooperation and integration among GCC central banks and monetary agencies. The three-day event will tackle a number of vital issues including the follow-up of linking the payment systems project in the GCC countries, a press release from Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said yesterday.

This project represents an extreme importance in achieving the goals and strategies of central banks in the region in implementation of the settlement of financial transfers, both individual and commercial, among GCC states in a fast and secure way, which would positively impact on their peoples, it added. The project will also contribute to the

decrease in the cost of purchasing and selling operations through bank cards.

The committee's meeting will also discuss issues related to the GCC network and means to improve the services in order to facilitate the payment and purchasing operations for all ATM card holders in all GCC countries' markets.

It will also follow up on the latest developments in the information security and means to develop the security aspects related to exchange of information among GCC countries, taking into consideration the growing importance of such matter in the banking and financial field. CBK applauded the active role of central banks in GCC monetary institutions in order to develop and improve the GCC's economies to achieve prosperity and progress in GCC nations. —KUNA

AUTO MECHANICS AND TRAFFIC SYSTEMS COMPETITION KICKS OFF

KUWAIT: The 24th Auto Mechanics and Traffic Systems Competition kicks off today, in collaboration with the Ministries of Education and Interior. Khaled Al-Hassan, head of organizing committee, said yesterday the contest organized by the Kuwait Science Club is the oldest one, and will be held under the auspices of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The first contest was launched in 1987 with a participation of 80 male and

female students, he said, indicating that about 3,900 students took part in last year's event.

The contest's committees are ready for achieving the goal through educating students on traffic rules and other matters to help them get driving licenses when they want, he noted. Participants will be familiar with traffic signs, their indications, parts of car's engine, information pertaining to technical inspection of vehicles and others, he made clear. The event will run until April 7. —KUNA

KUWAIT'S CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE EARNED INT'L RESPECT: OFFICIAL

ROME: Chief of Kuwait's National Security Bureau Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Sabah stressed the importance of Kuwait's wise policy in Arab geopolitical stability, as well as its positive and constructive role in the region that gained it a wide international respect.

Sheikh Thamer made his remarks Saturday on the sidelines of his participation in the NATO Defense College Foundation's international conference, themed 'Arab Geopolitics in Turmoil', in the Italian capital with the participation of top figures, experts, and researchers in strategic, political, and security issues.

The conference highlighted Kuwait's balanced role in the region, he said, adding that the international respect and appreciation to Kuwait is a result of the country's wise policy, under the leadership of His Highness the Amir, which is based on providing constant help and assistance to those in need in the region.

Humanitarian stand

Sheikh Thamer also pointed out Kuwait's humanitarian stand towards the crises in Syria and Iraq through providing relief assistance and mobilizing international humanitarian aid to alleviate the suffering of the displaced in these countries, in addition to hosting three successful donor conferences for the Syrian people.

He also expressed his appreciation to the positive feedback he had received from the participants on his discussion during the conference, which addressed the causes and rea-

sons for geopolitical tensions in the region, such as the continued Israeli occupation to Palestinian territories, the major silence over Israel's violations of the international legitima-



Chief of Kuwait's National Security Bureau Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Sabah

cy, and Israeli continued violations of the UNSC Resolution 242 since the past five decades.

Israel's continuation to avoid international responsibilities, sabotage peace efforts, ignore the Arab Peace Initiative, escalate its settle-

ment activities, violate religious sanctities, and commit abusive crimes against the Palestinians feed radicalism in the region, said the Kuwaiti official.

"We need to go back to the Oslo Accord and activate the international legitimacy by implementing UNSC resolution 242," Sheikh Thamer said, adding that the time has come for the international community to bear its full responsibilities in order to reach a fair solution for the Palestinian cause, which will pave the way for establishing peace and stability in the region.

Refugees' issue

On the conference discussions regarding the refugees' issue, the Kuwaiti official indicated that Arab countries have been hosting hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees decades ago, whether in Lebanon, Syria, or Jordan and it is all due to the Israeli occupation of Palestine, calling on international sides to deal jointly with this issue in order to secure caring for these refugees; similar to the Kuwait's donor conferences for the Syrian people.

He also stressed the importance of holding such intellectual conferences by NATO Defense College Foundation, as part of the cooperation with countries of the region, noting that these conferences also pose a significant opportunity for exchanging different points of view and scientific discussion of strategic nature that help in crystallizing joint perceptions towards the desired solution in order to establish international stability and cooperation. —KUNA

KUWAIT TO LAUNCH GCC EARLY EPIDEMIC WARNING WEBSITE

KUWAIT: The Gulf early warning center against animal epidemics recommended the activation of its website in Kuwait, during its recent meeting, according to the Public Authority of Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR). The center is established in accordance with the decision of the GCC's agricultural cooperation committee to turn Kuwait into a headquarter for the early epidemic warning center, the authority said in a press release yesterday.

The meeting of the center's communication officers, included a presentation on measures to be taken in case of an animal epidemic outbreak in the GCC states. The meeting, headed by Kuwait, also included thorough information on the contents and system of the website to be launched. The statement added that the center is tasked with determining the epidemics in the warning list and include them to the website as a reference for the member states. —KUNA

'KUWAIT MAGAZINE' MARKS WORLD POETRY DAY

KUWAIT: The monthly edition of the literary periodical known as "Kuwait Magazine"-published locally in Kuwait, has just come out for the month of March, dealing in a great part with celebrating the World Poetry Day. The World Poetry Day is on 21 March, and was declared by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in 1999. The purpose of the day is to promote the reading, writing, publishing and teaching of poetry throughout the world.

This month's issue of the magazine acclaims the merits of poetry through a number of interviews with local poets. There are articles in it on the fragility of human relations in our time with one of them bemoaning the absence of true friendship and another harking back to the simpler life in old pre-oil-era Kuwait. Other articles deal with the ubiquity of social media, theater in Kuwait, art and Arabic movies worth seeing.

Book fair

In other news, Kuwait's pavilion at the 21st Muscat International Book Fair is attracting large numbers of visitors, according to the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters' (NCCAL) official Khalifa Al-Rabah. The council is presenting publications in different fields in the fair, Rabah said yesterday, adding that NCCAL is especially focusing on publishing cultural books. There are currently over 650 publishers from 27 Arab and foreign countries participating in the event, the official noted.

Meanwhile, official at a Kuwaiti publishing company 'Al-Masarat' Abdullah Al-Shamari said that the Muscat fair is considered as one of the top 10 book fairs in the Arab World, according to the Arab Publishers Association. He added that the fair, which kicked off on February 24, includes 40 events for culture, arts and literature. —KUNA

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Egypt probes football star for funding 'terror group'

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US' PASSION FOR GUNS INTACT AS SHOOTING TOLL RISES



BALA, Syria: Syrian rebel fighters from the Failaq al-Rahman brigade take a break as they hide inside a building on the frontline against regime forces in this rebel-controlled village in the eastern Ghouta region, on the outskirts of the capital Damascus, yesterday. —AFP

BLAME-TRADING TESTS FRAGILE SYRIA TRUCE

DAMASCUS: Key players in Syria's war traded accusations yesterday over violations of the first major ceasefire in the five-year conflict, but the truce remained largely intact on its second day. Aid groups hope to use the lull in fighting that has claimed 270,000 lives and displaced more than half the population to deliver desperately needed supplies. A successful truce would also create a more favorable backdrop for peace talks that collapsed in acrimony in early February as a Russia-backed regime offensive in northern Syria caused tens of thousands to flee.

The main opposition grouping Sunday described the ceasefire as "positive" but lodged a formal complaint with the United Nations and foreign governments about breaches on the first day. "We have violations here and there, but in general it is a lot better than before and people are comfortable," said Salem Al-Meslet, spokesman for the Saudi-backed High Negotiations Committee.

An HNC letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon accused the Syrian government and its allies of committing "24 violations with artillery shelling and five ground operations... in 26 areas held by the moderate opposition". The letter, signed by HNC head Riad Hijab, also attacked Russia for conducting "26 air strikes on areas falling within the ceasefire". Hijab said the breaches had killed 29 people and wounded dozens. The HNC has said it did not receive any maps outlining which areas were included in the ceasefire or documents explaining the monitoring mechanism. Syria's Al-Watan daily, which is close to the government, said on Sunday that those maps were

still being "kept secret". The ceasefire does not apply to territory held by the Islamic State jihadist group and Al-Qaeda affiliate Al-Nusra Front.

'Strange Silence'

Saudi Arabia, a staunch opponent of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, also accused Russia of flouting the ceasefire and targeting "moderate opposition" groups. "Things will become clearer in the coming days on whether the regime and Russia are serious or not about the ceasefire," Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Jubeir said. Russia, which has waged a five-month bombing campaign to support Assad, blamed "moderate" rebels, Turkey and jihadists for nine ceasefire violations. But "on the whole, the ceasefire regime in Syria is being implemented," Lieutenant General Sergei Kuralenko, head of Moscow's coordination centre in Syria, was quoted as saying by Russian news agencies.

In Damascus, dentistry student Mehdi Al-Ani spent yesterday at his university's cafe with friends. "Yesterday, we only heard two or three shells - but I pretended like I didn't hear anything. The ceasefire will continue, God willing," he said. In second city Aleppo, children strolled to school without hugging walls for fear of rocket attacks, an AFP correspondent said. "There's something strange in this silence. We used to go to sleep and wake up with the sound of raids and artillery," said Abu Omar, 45, who runs a bakery in rebel-held east Aleppo.

Britain-based monitor the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported air strikes - believed to be either Syrian or Russian - on seven villages in Hama and Aleppo provinces. It was unclear if

the raids hit areas covered by the ceasefire, which excludes territory held by IS, also known as ISIL, and Al-Nusra. According to Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman, only one of the villages, Kafr Hamra in Aleppo province, is controlled by Al-Nusra and the others are held by non-jihadist rebels.

'Positive Assessment'

As recriminations flew, Washington urged everyone to be patient. "Setbacks are inevitable," a senior US administration official said. "Even under the best of circumstances, we don't expect the violence to end immediately. In fact, we are certain that there will continue to be fighting, in part because of organisations like ISIL and Al-Nusra." A task force set up to monitor the deal described Saturday's first day as largely successful. "The United Nations, the United States and Russia have made a positive assessment of the first hours of the cessation of hostilities," a Western diplomat said after the International Syria Support Group met in Geneva. The UN reported "some incidents" in apparent violation of the truce, but "they have been defused," he said. UN envoy Staffan de Mistura aims to relaunch peace talks on March 7 if the ceasefire lasts and more aid is delivered. Israel, arch-foe of Assad's other key backer Tehran, welcomed the ceasefire but warned it would not accept Iranian "aggression" or the supply of advanced weapons to Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shiite militia supporting the regime. "It's important it remains clear any agreement in Syria must include an end to Iranian aggression aimed at Israel from Syria's territory," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said. —AFP

REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
PRESIDENT

Tirana, on February 25th 2016

Your Highness,

The celebration of the 55th anniversary of Independence Day and the 25th anniversary of the Liberation Day of the State of Kuwait provides me with the special opportunity and pleasure to extend to Your Highness and to the friendly people of Kuwait, also on behalf of the Albanian people, the warmest and friendliest wishes.

I would like to seize this opportunity on this joyous day of the State of Kuwait to express anew the deep gratitude for the unsparing support and assistance provided by Your Highness and the State of Kuwait to Albania and Albanians throughout the years. I am convinced that the excellent and friendly relations enjoyed by the two countries will be further developed and strengthened in the future.

Please accept, Your Highness, the expression of my highest consideration alongside the best wishes for your personal health and happiness and also those for the development and well-being of the friendly Kuwaiti people.

(signature)
Bujar Nishani

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CHINA MUZZLES 'CANNON'

BEIJING: Chinese authorities yesterday shut down the social media accounts of a tycoon nicknamed "The Cannon" after he criticized the ruling Communist Party's tightening grip on the media. The move by the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) against Ren Zhiqiang came just over a week after President Xi Jinping visited state media and ordered them to follow the party line more closely. The Internet regulator ordered the microblogging platforms of Sina and Tencent to shut down Ren's accounts "for spreading illegal information", state news agency Xinhua reported. "Cyberspace is not a lawless field and it should not be used to spread illegal information by anyone," said CAC spokesperson Jiang Jun. Ren's accounts were closed after netizens reported that he had regularly posted illegal information, "resulting in a vile influence", according to Jiang. The spokesperson, vowing intensified efforts to monitor online content, told celebrity microbloggers to "shoulder their due social responsibilities, and promote 'positive energy' actively". Last Monday state media blasted Ren, an outspoken property tycoon, for criticizing the party's tightening media grip and Xi's tour of official outlets.

Ren, nicknamed "the Cannon" for his provocative opinions and blunt defenses of economic inequality, was the target of twin columns in the state-affiliated news portal Qianlong for questioning on social media whether public money should be spent on party propaganda. "When did the people's government change into the party's government?" the commentary quoted Ren's since-deleted post as saying. —AFP

THREE STABBED, 13 ARRESTED AT KKK RALLY IN CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES: Three people were stabbed, one of them critically, and 13 others were arrested in California on Saturday when a Ku Klux Klan rally erupted into clashes with counter-protesters, witnesses and police said. Around midday, half a dozen members of the white hate group, whose ranks still number several thousand in the United States, arrived at the protest site in Anaheim, officials said. At that point the Klan members were "swarmed" by protesters, who attacked them with at least one wooden plank, witness Brian Levin told AFP.

Local police spokesman Sergeant Daron Wyatt said it appeared that "six KKK people arrived and were immediately attacked by counter-protesters, which led to a counter-protester being stabbed". The initial clash spawned several separate fights,

Wyatt added, noting that the three stabbing victims were all counter-protesters, while another two KKK members were stomped by the crowd. One of the victims, he said, was stabbed with the decorative end of a flagpole, according to The Orange County Register.

Of those arrested, six were KKK members and seven were from the rival demonstration, Wyatt said. All were men, except for one woman in each group. The counter-protesters "smashed the side window of the Klan SUV and the front windshield," said Levin, who heads the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University in San Bernardino. "At that point, the crowd got extremely violent." Some of the protesters started kicking a man wearing a shirt that read "Grand Dragon," said Levin, describing the KKK mem-

bers' wounds as ranging from minor to significant. "He was kicked when he was down" on the ground, he said.

MLK 'Wouldn't Approve'

Levin said he had attended the rally as an observer, but ended up standing in between the Klansmen and the crowd of angry protesters to try to stem the violence. "I helped two Klansmen get out of the way," said Levin as he headed to the police station to give his witness statement. "I told the crowd: Dr (Martin Luther) King wouldn't approve of this, please don't harm these men." After pushing a Klansman away from the crowd, Levin said he asked him: "How does it feel that your life was just saved by a Jewish man?" The man replied "thank you," according to Levin.

The city of Anaheim has a long history of KKK activity. In 1924, four of the five members voted to its City Council belonged to the Klan. Local media reported that KKK fliers had been distributed at various points over the past year or so on dozens of area lawns. "I've lived in Anaheim my whole life and I have never heard of anything like this," local resident Joe Castaneda told The Orange County Register after watching the fight break out.

The Klan, which was formed in 1865, had up to four million members in the 1920s, but its membership has dwindled to between 5,000 and 8,000 individuals today, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center. Although it has historically targeted blacks, the Klan has also launched attacks against Jews, immigrants, gays and lesbians. Until recently, it attacked Catholics as well.—AFP



ANAHEIM: Counter-protesters scuffle with a KKK member on the ground as he stabs an attacking protester during an anti-immigration rally at Pearson Park on Saturday.—AP



MILLINGTON, Tennessee: Kids display shirts in support of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump during a Trump rally at Millington Regional Jetport on Saturday.—AFP

RUBIO, CRUZ RELEASE TAXES, PILING PRESSURE ON TRUMP

MOGUL WON'T RELEASE RETURNS CURRENTLY

WASHINGTON: Republican presidential candidates Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz released tax returns for several years on Saturday in an effort to pressure billionaire frontrunner Donald Trump to follow suit. Rubio, whose financial decisions earlier in his life have come under scrutiny, paid \$78,917 in taxes on \$335,561 in gross income in 2014, along with his wife, Jeanette. Cruz paid \$389,124 in taxes on \$1.2 million income in 2014 along with his wife, Heidi, who is employed by Goldman Sachs and currently on leave from the bank.

Rubio and Cruz, both first-term US senators, trail Trump in national polls and are fighting to stop the political novice from locking up the Republican nomination for the Nov 8 election after big wins in South Carolina and Nevada. The real estate developer has said he will not release his returns until a routine audit has been completed. "If Donald is embarrassed about his tax returns, it's up to the voters to assess the facts. It's time to stop delaying and come clean with the American people," Cruz said in a statement.

Rubio released his last five years of federal returns on Saturday, while Cruz submitted four years. Rubio said Trump, who has promoted his success as a businessman as one of his key qualifications for the presidency, may not be as wealthy as he suggests. "I think part of it is he's not as rich as he says he is," Rubio said while campaigning in Georgia. Rubio and his wife have only one debt: The mortgage on their house, the campaign said, seeking to emphasize that the senator had moved past previous financial woes.

Rubio often refers to the nearly \$150,000 in student loan debt he incurred by the time he graduated from law school, paid off with proceeds made from his 2012 autobiography. He also faced questions for struggling for several months in 2008 to pay the mortgage on his \$384,000 South Florida home, despite a \$300,000 salary from his job at a Miami law firm. Rubio also drew scrutiny for liquidating a retirement account to cover expenses, such as home repairs and school fees. That was reflected in \$68,241 of income as part of his 2014 return.

During his 2010 bid for the US Senate, which followed his stint as a Florida state lawmaker from 2005-2006, Rubio had to defend his use of a Republican Party-issued American Express credit card for more than \$7,200 personal expenses, which he later paid back. Trump has accused Rubio of living beyond his means. Rubio's adjusted gross income in 2010 was \$183,826 in 2010. It spiked to \$929,439 in 2012, when his book "An American Son: A Memoir" was published.

"There is no doubt the Rubio family has come a long way from the days when their largest monthly expense was a check to (student loan provider) Sallie Mae and checks were sent in the mail to pay bills with the hope the payment did not arrive before the next paycheck was deposited into their account," Rubio's campaign said. Cruz's wealth, with \$1.2 million in combined income with his wife in 2014, placed them well above the \$423,000 threshold of the top 1 percent of earners in Texas, according to a 2015 Economic Policy Institute report.—Reuters

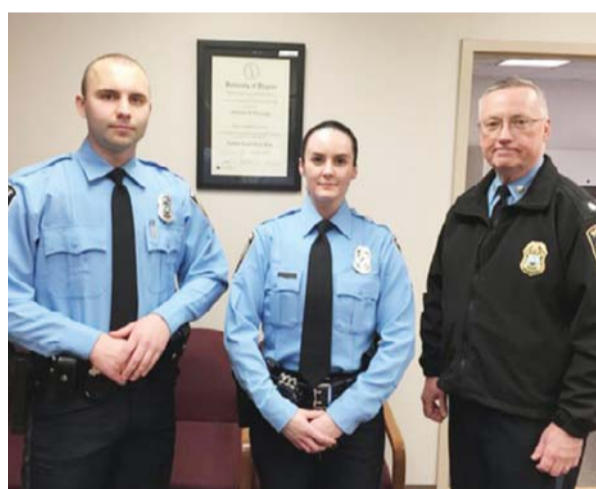
ROOKIE US POLICEWOMAN KILLED ON FIRST DAY ON JOB

WASHINGTON: A Virginia police officer was fatally shot during her first day on the job and two of her fellow officers were wounded when they responded to a domestic disturbance in a Washington, DC, suburb, authorities said yesterday. Ashley Guindon, a rookie officer on the Prince William County Police, was struck by gunfire later died of injuries sustained during the incident on Saturday evening, a day after she joined the force, the department said.

Guindon was a graduate of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida, where she earned a degree in aeronautics. She also served in the US Marine Corps Reserve and has family members in law enforcement, according to the county. According to media reports, she was a 2005 graduate of Merrimack High School in New Hampshire. Yesterday, the department posted a photograph of a black ribbon draped over a squad car in honor of Guindon. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God," the post said.

Local media showed a procession of squad cars and officers standing at attention outside of Inova Fairfax Hospital where Guindon and two other officers were brought after they were shot. On Friday, the department sent a message on Twitter that included a photo of Guindon and a fellow officer after they were sworn in, saying that she would be working her first shifts over the weekend, adding "Be safe!"

Guindon and two other unidentified officers were shot at a home they were called to in Lake Ridge, about 24 km southwest of Washington, DC, the county police depart-



(From left) Officer Steven Kendall, Officer Ashley Guindon and Lt Col Barry Bernard, deputy chief of the Prince William County Police Department are seen in this photo.—AP

ment said on its Twitter and Facebook pages. The department gave no details on the nature of the incident or the condition of the two other injured officers. A suspect was in custody, the department said.—Reuters

AMERICA'S PASSION FOR GUNS INTACT AS SHOOTING TOLL RISES

WASHINGTON: A rifle as new state symbol. A bill that lets young children use handguns under supervision. As mass shootings shatter lives, the fascination with firearms among many Americans shows little sign of fading. Over the past week, two gunmen killed at least nine people in unrelated rampages in Michigan and Kansas. Add to that the death in Indiana of a father who was accidentally shot by his six-year-old son who found a loaded revolver lying around and pulled the trigger. President Barack Obama - who offers his condolences to families of loved ones lost after each mass shooting - has decried the "routine" nature of reporting

about and responding to such tragedies. But faced with a Republican-controlled Congress unwilling to move forward on the matter, Obama - who made fighting gun violence his chief resolution for 2016 - is left with his wheels spinning.

In January, he shed tears as he announced limited measures to tackle the rampant violence that kills around 30,000 Americans each year and called on citizens to punish lawmakers who oppose more meaningful reforms. In the speech, Obama formally unveiled a handful of executive measures that will make it harder to buy and sell weapons, but which he admitted would not stop the scourge of mass shootings. And in a country where there are more guns than people, and with Republicans vying to take back the White House in November, it remains to be seen, what - if anything - will change.

Official State Rifle

Senators in Tennessee - in a near unanimous vote - designated a rifle that is said to be capable of destroying commercial aircraft as an official state symbol. The .50-caliber Barrett, manufactured in the southern state, joins a range of other Tennessee state symbols. These include the mockingbird as "official state bird" and the raccoon as "official wild animal". "These 'anti-materiel' sniping rifles can strike accurately from a distance of more than a mile", the Violence Policy Center, a non-profit organization that advocates for gun control said. "They can penetrate light armor, down helicopters, destroy commercial aircraft, and blast through rail cars and bulk storage tanks filled with explosive or toxic chemicals, all with potentially catastrophic effect."—AFP

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SWISS REJECT PROPOSAL TO EXPEL FOREIGN CRIMINALS

GENEVA: Swiss voters yesterday rejected a proposal to automatically deport foreign criminals for even minor offences, referendum results showed. The poll came at a time when many European countries are hardening their attitudes to migrants after more than a million arrived on the continent's shores last year. Under Swiss law, voters can change a law by popular ballot. To be passed it must be approved by a majority of cantons as well as a majority of electors.

According to the final results Sunday evening, the proposal to "automatically deport foreign criminals" was rejected by 58.9 percent of voters. In a referendum six years ago, more than half of Swiss voters backed strengthening rules to automatically expel foreign nationals convicted of violent or sexual crimes. The populist right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP) - which has accused parliament of dragging its feet on writing the text into law and watering it down when it did so last March - proposed tougher rules which were put to the people in Sunday's referendum.

Known for its virulent campaigns against immigration, the European Union and Islam, the SVP had called for "real deportation of criminal foreigners". But the initiative faced stiff opposition, including from the government, parliament and all the other major political parties, which said it circumvented fundamental rules of democracy.

Tough Rules

If passed, the proposal would have dramatically increased the number of offences that can get foreign nationals automatically kicked out of Switzerland, including misdemeanours usually punishable with short prison sentences or fines. It would also have removed a judge's right to refrain from deportation in cases where it would cause the foreign national "serious personal hardship". More than 50,000 people including hundreds of celebrities signed a petition against the proposal.

According to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, the number of people

who could have been expelled from the country under the proposed draft would have shot up from 500 to 10,200. SVP's campaign initially garnered strong support, but appeared to have lost steam among voters. Opponents had warned that if the text passed, people born to foreign parents in Switzerland risked being deported to countries they have never lived in, just for petty offences. "This initiative would have been contrary to the rule of law, as it would have muzzled the judges. That's why we mobilized in this campaign," said Cristina Gaggini, who leads a Swiss organization representing several businesses.

2010 Changes Sufficient

In the 2010 plebiscite, the Swiss agreed to automatically deport foreigners found guilty of murder, rape and other serious sexual offences, violent crimes like robbery, drug trafficking and abusing social aid. That proposal was approved by 52.9 percent of those voting. Parliament last year approved changes to the penal



BERN: Flavia Kleiner (center) member of the NGO committee against the enforcement initiative cheers after the clear rejection of the initiative by Swiss voters, in Bern, Switzerland yesterday. — AP

code, but also determined that judges should have the right to avoid automatic deportation in certain cases. The initiative

under scrutiny yesterday would have widened the list of offences that trigger automatic deportation. — AFP



WALES: Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron (left) speaks to employees during a question and answer session at GE Aviation in Cardiff, Wales. — AP

BRITAIN'S RULING CONSERVATIVES CALL FOR TRUCE IN EU CAMPAIGN

PARTY SPLIT OVER WHETHER UK SHOULD STAY IN EU

LONDON: Senior ministers called yesterday for a truce in a heated debate on Britain's membership of the European Union, saying the ruling Conservative Party must be civil if it wants to stay in power. The party is deeply split over whether Britain should vote to stay in the EU at a referendum on June 23, and several allies of Prime Minister David Cameron, who supports EU membership, are campaigning to leave the 28-member bloc.

Some lawmakers have criticized Cameron for accusing London Mayor Boris Johnson, a leading Conservative, of putting his own ambition above his beliefs by backing the "Out" campaign. They said the thinly veiled attack last week on Johnson, the most prominent party member in the "Out" camp, violated an unwritten rule that both sides respect each others' opinions.

"There are different opinions in the party. Everyone has to go out of their way to make sure that the debate within the Conservative Party is a constructive one, an amicable one and

one that doesn't involve attacks on each other," said Christopher Grayling, leader of the House of Commons (the lower house of parliament) who supports leaving the EU.

"And then from a Conservative point of view after the event we've really got to make sure that when the result comes in, we come together, we heal the party, we move beyond the discussions at the moment and we win in 2020," he told Sky News, referring to the year when the next parliamentary election is expected.

Squabbling

Cameron has allowed his party members to campaign according to their conscience, saying he cannot force lawmakers to back his campaign in support of EU membership at a referendum which will help shape the future of the bloc - Britain is the EU's second-largest economy and one of its two main military powers.

Many of Britain's leading businesses have said they want to remain in the European Union and the opposition Labour Party has said it will

campaign to stay in, overcoming the euroscepticism of its leader, veteran anti-war campaigner Jeremy Corbyn. Jonathan Ashworth, Labor's shadow minister without portfolio, said: "The squabbling amongst the Conservative Party says more about internal positioning ahead of a leadership contest than it does about what's in the long-term interests of the country."

Cameron has said he will not resign if Britain votes to leave the EU. But the Sunday Times newspaper quoted sources as saying that Conservative lawmakers would mount a leadership challenge against Cameron if he failed to halt so-called "blue-on-blue" attacks - Conservatives attacking Conservatives. Former Conservative leader Iain Duncan-Smith, secretary of state for work and pensions, called on his fellow Conservatives to respect each other. "The general view at the time and I think it should remain now is that don't play the person, play the ball," he told The Andrew Marr Show on the BBC. "We should take a deep breath ... This is about Britain, it's not about us." — Reuters

DEATH TOLL FROM RUSSIA'S MINING DISASTER HITS 36

MISSING PRESUMED DEAD

MOSCOW: The death toll in Russia's worst mining disaster in recent history climbed to 36 yesterday as officials said 26 missing workers could not have survived and another six, most of them rescuers, had been killed in a new explosion. On Thursday, four miners were killed when a methane explosion ripped through the Severnaya mine in Arctic Russia at a depth of 748 meters. "According to the expert technical council, 26 (missing) people who were in the mine had no chances of surviving," Tatyana Bushkova, a spokeswoman for the mine's operator Vorkutaugol said yesterday. "The rescue operation has been halted," she added in an emailed statement.

A fresh methane explosion at the mine in the small hours of yesterday killed five rescue workers and a miner, Anton Kovalishin, a spokesman for the emergencies ministry in the Komi region where the mine is located said. The pit is located in the city of Vorkuta in the Komi region, which used to host one of the most feared Soviet-era Gulag labor camps. Vorkutaugol is operated by Severstal, the Russian steelmaker controlled by billionaire Alexey Mordashov.

Authorities launched a massive search operation involving hundreds of rescue workers who had been trying to track down the missing despite almost zero visibility, smoke, gas-polluted air and rubble. Both the company and the authorities had until now refused to declare the missing dead even though rescuers appear to have failed to make contact with them over the past few days.

But the latest explosion forced officials to admit that no-one could have survived. "Unfortunately, we are forced to acknowledge that all the conditions at that section of

the mine would not allow a person to survive," Emergencies Minister Vladimir Puchkov said for his part in comments broadcast by LifeNews television channel. Bushkova said a fire was still burning at the mine and the company was considering whether to flood the pit or pump inert gas into it.

'Risk of new explosions'

Seventy-seven people were in the mine during the rescue operation when the latest explosion hit, the emergencies ministry said. Of these, 71 were rescued and brought to the surface. Eleven of them were injured. "According to experts, there is a high risk of new explosions," the ministry said. Sunday, Monday and Tuesday have been declared days of mourning in the region. Earlier this week President Vladimir Putin tasked the government with setting up a special panel to inquire into the accident. The Investigative Committee has opened a criminal probe into any violation of safety rules and dispatched investigators and forensic experts to the scene.

Mine accidents are fairly common in Russia and other former Soviet countries, where much of the infrastructure has not been modernized since the Communist era. The explosion at the Severnaya mine took place despite the fact that the company has over the past years invested heavily into safety, Vorkutaugol said. In 2010, 91 people - both miners and rescuers - died after a methane explosion at the Raspadskaya mine in the Siberian region of Kemerovo. In 2007, 110 people died at the Ulyanovskaya mine, also in Kemerovo, the country's worst mining accident since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. — AFP



VORKUTA: Photo shows mine rescuers at the Severnaya coal mine in Vorkuta, about 1,900 kilometers northeast of Moscow. — AP

CHAD LEADER FACES BIGGEST PROTESTS OF HIS LONG RULE

N'DJAMENA: The nationwide strikes which brought Chad's biggest cities to a halt this week over President Idriss Deby Itno's planned bid for re-election are some of the most significant protests of the hardliner's 26-year rule. The strike, which ran under the slogan "That's Enough", successfully locked down N'Djamena, leaving classrooms emptied and the capital's two big markets deserted in a protest mirrored in cities across the country. In the capital, people are still amazed by the sheer scale of the work stoppage during Wednesday's "dead city" operation, saying they can recall no demonstration as large against their hardline leader.

The stoppage was organized by a coalition of civil society organizations grouped under the name "Ca Suffit"-French for "that's enough". The morning to lunchtime shutdown "was total" in Chad's second-biggest city, Moundou, a resident said, who said not even the motorbike taxis were running. "The population has realized they can exercise their democratic rights," coalition spokesman Mahamat Nour Ibedou said, saying the protest was even observed in provincial towns. Many Chadians are fed up with entrenched poverty, especially since their country has begun to make money from oil exports.

In recent weeks, Chad has been gripped by a wave of unrest with students taking to the street in fury over the gang rape of a girl in mid-February, allegedly by the sons of a government minister and three army gener-

als. The girl was allegedly kidnapped and gang-raped by five young men who then posted a video online showing the victim naked and in tears.

'The first time'

The protests began on February 15. Deby's regime banned demonstrations with the army enforcing the ban, firing on youths, with two students killed and a least five wounded in a week of protests, hospital staff and human rights activists said. The authorities also blocked access to Facebook and other social networks to crack down on the dissent, but the unprecedented city shutdown fired up talk in white-collar offices as well as in the working-class districts. "This is the first time in the history of this country that people unanimously respect an appeal from civil society," said Issa Moussa, who works at the ministry of territorial administration.

In a country where people are reluctant to speak out in public for fear of trouble with the police, Moussa was the only person who did not ask to remain anonymous. "People are unhappy and the success of this 'dead city' operation is also to be explained by the build-up of people's frustration over 25 years," said a civil servant in the justice ministry. "We respected the watchword because of the humiliation imposed on Zouhou's family," said a trader who joined the strike in N'Djamena's central market, referring to the girl who was allegedly raped. — AFP

ALBANIA NEWSREADERS STRIP DOWN - TO BOOST AUDIENCE

TIRANA: Faced with tough competition to win over audiences, an Albanian TV channel is taking a literal approach towards giving viewers the "naked" truth by employing almost-topless newsreaders. Wearing open jackets and nothing underneath, the young women reading the headlines on Zjarr TV are an unprecedented sight in the conservative Balkan country, where they first appeared on television and Internet screens last year. The channel's owner says audiences haven't stopped growing since. "In Albania, where the news is manipulated by political powers, the audience needed a medium that would present the information like it is-naked," Zjarr TV owner Ismet Drishti said.

"We don't sell sex, we reproduce the news as it is. It's both symbolic and good publicity," said Drishti, who plans to launch French and English language bulletins with "bare information" following the same model. For 24-year-old presenter Greta Hoxhaj, working in a state of near undress has proved to be a shortcut to glory. "I worked hard for five years in local television where I remained unnoticed," a cheerful and relaxed Hoxhaj said in the studio, while her face was made up for the cameras. "I regret nothing-

in the space of three months I became a star."

Every evening at 7.30 pm, Hoxhaj reads the news in a revealing and preferably pink jacket, but she was quick to point out that she dresses like other women of her age in everyday life. Her stripped down look "is only for

television, for information," said the presenter, who also studies law and psychology when she's not in the studio. Hoxhaj's newfound fame has landed her a job offer in Sydney as a presenter for a soon-to-launch Australian TV channel-paying 3,000 euros (\$3,280) a week, and requiring

her to present the news topless. "I have not decided yet, I'm still in discussions," said Hoxhaj.

Dismissing critics

Preceding her in the anchor job was Enki Braçaj, a 21-year-old student, whose bare bulletins went viral in the Balkans and made international headlines. Officially she left because she was unhappy with her salary, but according to her colleagues, she managed to land a job as a model at a fashion magazine. Zjarr TV is not the only place where female anchors have gone bare-in Venezuela, for example, a presenter on a news website stripped naked last year to toast her country's success in the Copa America football championships.

But in traditional Albania, home to a mostly Muslim population of about three million, the risqué presenting style has caused a stir on Facebook and other social media sites. "It's pathetic to have accepted such a thing just to be on screen," wrote one online critic, while another said the move was "outrageous" and "distastefully sexist". But Hoxhaj said she was not affected by such reactions, insisting: "I had the courage to do what I do and now I'm a star." — AFP



TIRANA: Presenter Greta Hoxhaj, 24 prepares prior her news edition on Zjarr TV (fire tv) in Tirana. — AFP

Assistant Operations Manager
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You will be responsible for achieving business's strategic objectives, coordinating with departments to achieve the strategic objectives - Marketing, Operations, Production Finance and IT, developing information systems for the efficient management of the business, maintaining quality and service standards, as well as, developing and maintaining written systems for each department.

Apply Now **JB3328438**

Finance Manager
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You will be responsible for developing Finance Department's strategic objectives and KPIs and ensuring all employees are working towards achievement of these objectives, as well as, managing the preparation of the budget forms, models and templates to be used by the departments in the budgeting process.

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Senior Sales Consultant - Bloomingdale's Kuwait
 Al Tayer - Kuwait

You will be responsible for working with a large portfolio of luxury brands, building and maintaining relationships with clients by delivering excellent customer service, identifying customer needs, as well as, offering advice and demonstrating high product knowledge.

Apply Now **JB50105282**

Financial Controller
 AccorHotels Middle East
 Kuwait

You will be responsible for short and long term planning and the daily operations of the department, developing and recommending the department's budget and objectives and managing within those approved plans, reporting financial results to the General Manager, corporate office and owners, as well as, establishing, coordinating and administrating all financial systems, internal controls, etc.

Apply Now **JB3454819**

Service Manager - Commercial Vehicles - Northern Gulf Trading Co. (K.S.C.C) - Kuwait

You will be responsible for promoting and monitoring service appointment system, planning, organizing and controlling service operation, monitoring customer satisfaction reports and trends and sharing this information, establishing service marketing strategies to target new business and fleet companies, as well as, monitoring quality control inspections.

Apply Now **JB3400012**

Artwork Finalizer - Graphic Designer
 Carat - Kuwait

You will be responsible for Arabic graphic designing/ finalizing, understanding layout, type and color, following and putting into action instructions from an ART Director, along with proficiency in InDesign, Photoshop and Illustrator, as well as, working under tight deadlines and producing final files for output with necessary specifications.

Apply Now **JB3454246**

Sales Support Supervisor
 Nestle Kuwait General Trading Co. - Kuwait

You will be responsible for collecting and analyzing data on customer demographics, preferences, needs, and buying habits to identify potential markets and factors affecting product demand, as well as, gathering data on competitors and analyzing their prices, sales, and method of marketing and distribution.

Apply Now **JB3454287**

Safety Officer
 Kirby
 Kuwait

You will be responsible for providing employees/ visitors with HSE induction, actively participating in tool box talks and leading HSE briefings/ internal training sessions, as well as, coordinating and advising production team in order to avoid the risk of occupational injuries, accidents, environmental incidents and property damage.

Apply Now **JB3451797**

Civil Works JV RAM Engineer
 Bechtel
 KSA

You will be responsible for the design, construction, train cars, signaling, electrification and integration of Lines 1 and 2 of the new Riyadh metro system, establishing and managing the detailed CWJV RAM Strategy and Management Plans and supporting processes, as well as, working in conjunction with the Consortium RAM Manager.

Apply Now **JB50105456**

Quality Systems Officer
 Aviation Australia Riyadh College - KSA

You will be responsible for reporting to the Quality Assurance Manager (QAM), supporting the implementing and maintaining various elements of AARC's Quality systems including change control, investigations, corrective & preventive action, internal audits etc, as well as, administering documentation system.

Apply Now **JB50105477**

Director - Project Finance & Infrastructure Advisory
 EY - KSA

You will be responsible for managing the engagement team in an efficient manner and handling demanding clients confidently and professionally, negotiating funding with financial institution, as well as, displaying strong presentation skills when presenting to external parties.

Apply Now **JB50105489**

Workshop Mechanical Engineer
 Al Khorayef Group - KSA

You will be responsible for inspecting vehicles for faults and diagnosing potential problems and customer complaints, delivering technical solutions for any diagnosed problem, performing preventive maintenance and repairs, as well as, carrying out vehicle inspections as necessary.

Apply Now **JB3455621**

Senior Estimation Engineer (Arabic Speaking)
 Bluesteel Industry FZC - UAE

You will be responsible for reviewing quantity take-offs, analysis, estimate, and studies for all items incorporated in the assigned scope, taking lead role in lump sum bids, reviewing drawings, specifications and all other construction documents, as well as, keeping senior management aware of design-related problems.

Apply Now **JB3455750**

Sales Executive - Printing & Packaging
 AJK International FZC - UAE

You will be responsible for identifying and developing new customers, generating repeat orders from the existing customers by regularly visiting them, negotiating for new orders with the existing customers, addressing and resolving any customer queries or complaints within stipulated time, as well as, preparing invoice & delivery note and submitting to customers.

Apply Now **JB3455749**

Production Planning Engineer II - Emirates
 UAE

You will be responsible for checking package estimation, post check analysis, end of check meetings, and in the dock for day to day delivery of the production plan in conjunction with the production team, as well as, constantly updating the plan based on actual progress and new findings as the check progresses.

Apply Now **JB50105442**

Senior Project Manager
 Huxley
 UAE

You will be responsible for deploying Operational Excellence Lean Six Sigma initiative across the organization as required, training and coaching employees in the OPEX and LSS methodology and meeting all ISO requirements to obtain and maintain certification, as well as, driving the OPEX culture throughout the organization.

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Employee Relation Executive
 Al Futtaim
 Qatar

You will be responsible for all HR Admin issues/queries, ensuring smooth coordination induction, managing probation process, employee appraisals, employee relations, on-boarding and off-boarding process, managing time and attendance system, accommodating issues and payroll reconciliation, as well as, engaging with employees and building strong relationship.

Apply Now **JB50105481**

Finance & Credit Advisor
 Manpower
 Qatar

You will be responsible for carrying out activities necessary to provide credit to customers with acceptable limits of risk to the company, negotiating simple financial transactions, preparing transactions for documentation and funding within limits of authority, as well as, assisting in administration of wholesale and retail customer "loan" covenant compliance reviews.

Apply Now **JB50105249**

Project Manager
 Propel Consult
 Qatar

You will be responsible managing and controlling contractors and subcontractors in conformance with the contract documents, drawings, and specifications, working knowledge with local and international specifications that may relate to the projects, monitoring the progress of works and carrying out updating, planning, and preparing progress reports.

Apply Now **JB50105277**

Marketing Manager
 Bluewaves
 Qatar

You will be responsible for managing the marketing efforts with a new American franchise brand in Qatar, implementing and coordinating all marketing strategies for the designated restaurant locations, assisting in the development of cooperative media plans based on national goals and objectives, as well as, leading co-op formation where/when necessary.

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INDIAN CINEMAS UNDER PRESSURE OVER HOMOPHOBIA MOVIE

NEW DELHI: Cinemas in the north Indian city of Aligarh were under mounting pressure yesterday to stop screening a movie set in the metropolis that tackles homophobia, following protests from right wing religious groups. The movie "Aligarh", which opened nationally last week, is based on a true story about a university professor suspended from his post after a television news crew filmed him having sex with a rickshaw puller.

Shrinivas Ramchandra Siras was

teaching at Aligarh Muslim University in 2010 when his private life made headline news in an undercover sting operation. He briefly fought to be reinstated, but was found dead in his apartment in suspicious circumstances two months later. The film has received favorable reviews and shines a rare spotlight on homosexuality in socially conservative India where gay sex is still illegal. But Aligarh mayor Shakuntala Bharti said the movie should be barred there for "tar-

ning" the city with homosexuality, sparking an outcry on social media from gay rights supporters.

"It is giving a bad name to the city. It is shameful and we don't support it," Bharti told reporters. Aligarh cinemas appeared to have scrapped plans to show the movie after street protests last week by fringe Muslim group the Millat Bedari Muhim Committee. "After this movie, people will obviously link the name of our glorious city, with a rich cul-

tural history, to homosexuality, so we obviously have an objection," the committee's secretary, Jasim Mohammad said. "After our objections and the support they have received, the cinemas are not showing the movie," Mohammad said.

The city's cinemas themselves could not be contacted for comment on Sunday. But the Indian Express newspaper said those initially running it had now cancelled screenings. The movie's direc-

tor, Hansal Mehta, expressed his disappointment on Twitter, saying "so Aligarh has killed Prof Siras again". Opposition Congress leader Manish Tewari, a former broadcasting minister, said "sad some bigots in #Aligarh not able to deal with movie Aligarh". Police initially suspected Siras committed suicide after traces of poison were detected in his body, but they later made several arrests, although no one was convicted and the case was ultimately dropped. — AFP



HONG KONG: Hong Kong activist Edward Leung (center) 24, one of the leaders of "localist" group Hong Kong Indigenous, shouts slogans as he campaigns next to his endorser, local lawmaker Raymond Wong (left), during the New Territories East by-election in Hong Kong yesterday. —AFP

ANTI-CHINA ACTIVIST FACING RIOT CHARGE STANDS IN POLL

BY-ELECTION HIGHLIGHTS CITY'S POLITICAL FAULTLINES

HONG KONG: A Hong Kong activist who seeks independence from China and has been charged over recent street battles with police stood for office yesterday in a by-election that highlights the city's political faultlines. Edward Leung, 24, one of the leaders of "localist" group Hong Kong Indigenous, is vying to become a legislator after a prominent pro-democracy politician stepped down. Student Leung is taking on six other contenders for the New Territories East seat, including candidates from pro-Beijing and pro-democracy camps.

He is not tipped to win but his candidacy will be a barometer of how much support the fledgling localist movement—fiercely opposed by Beijing—can garner at the ballot box.

Since massive rallies in 2014 calling for fully free leadership elections failed to win

concessions from Beijing, young protesters like Leung have become increasingly disillusioned with more established pro-democracy parties. Smaller groups have emerged under a "localist" banner, pushing for greater autonomy and even independence from China as fears over interference from Beijing grow.

Their frustrations spilled over into violence earlier this month when running battles with police left more than 100 injured. Leung is facing a rioting charge for his involvement. "Hongkongers are the masters of their own soil," he said yesterday. "I will defend Hong Kong people's interests and Hong Kong people's rights." Hong Kong is semi-autonomous after being handed back to China by Britain in 1997 and its freedoms are protected by a 50-year agreement. But there is growing concern those freedoms

are under threat as China seeks to stamp its authority on the territory.

The disappearance of five Hong Kong booksellers known for publishing titles critical of Beijing has exacerbated fears. Four of the men are now under official investigation on the mainland and the fifth has said he is "assisting" authorities. "I voted for him (Leung). We need to speak out about what's happening," said a 56-year-old engineer surnamed Cheung. "It's completely understandable that young people want change," Cheung said.

Others urged calm. "We should not be radical," said one 40-year-old voter surnamed Yeung. "Any problems should be dealt with peacefully and rationally." Observers say either Alvin Yeung of the established pro-democracy Civic Party or Holden Chow of the pro-Beijing Democratic

Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB) are most likely to win. Yeung criticized Leung's involvement in the street battles and defended the pro-democracy movement's peaceful track record.

"I understand people are not satisfied, but... we need principles and our bottom line is non-violence," Yeung said. The pro-Beijing camp casts democracy campaigners as a threat to stability and prosperity in the city. Beijing has dismissed localists as "separatists"—a label they do not shy away from. By mid-afternoon, 200,000 people had voted, with polls due to close later in the night and the result expected overnight. If Chow wins, the pro-democracy camp will still hold enough seats in parliament to block important bills, but will risk its ability to block other parliamentary decisions. — AFP

News

in brief

20 Indian fishermen arrested by Pakistan

KARACHI: Pakistan has arrested 20 Indian fishermen for violating the territorial waters of the country, its maritime security agency said yesterday. The Indian fishermen were arrested and brought to the Southern city of Karachi yesterday morning. Their boats were also seized. "We are preparing documents to produce all of them in court tomorrow," police official Fida Hussain said. Both Indian and Pakistani fishermen are frequently detained on the charge, as the two countries' borders are not clearly defined in the Arabian Sea and many fishing boats lack the technology needed to be certain of their precise location. Many are sent to jail before being handed over to the authorities in their homeland. "The court is likely to send them to jail for at least a year over the violation," Hussain said. The fishermen often languish in jail even after serving their term, as poor diplomatic ties between the two arch-rivals mean fulfilling official requirements can take a long time. Shakir Hussain, a senior prison official at Karachi's Landhi district jail, said more than 400 Indian fishermen were currently detained there.



Nepal's 'ice doctors' return to Everest after avalanche

KATHMANDU: Nepal's experienced "ice doctors" were preparing Sunday to return to Everest to ready the mountain for the upcoming climbing season, almost one year after a huge earthquake triggered a deadly avalanche. Eight of the mountaineers and their support teams were performing prayers at the bottom of Everest before leaving for base camp to fix routes through a treacherous icefall for climbers, a top official said. "Starting from 7th March, the expert team will continue opening expedition routes and fix ladders and ropes for the upcoming season," Nishan Shrestha, CEO of the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee, which manages the peak said. Nepal is hoping the April-May season will see climbers return to the world's highest peak, providing much-needed revenue to the impoverished country. Nepal has been hard hit by falling tourism following last April's earthquake which killed nearly 9,000 people. The quake triggered the April 25 avalanche which left 18 people dead at Everest base camp. It was the second in as many years after 16 Nepali guides lost their lives on the icefall in 2014, sparking a shutdown of the peak.

Afghan police suspected of aiding Taliban killed

LASHKAR GAH: A policeman was killed and a further 30 were detained in a joint operation between Afghan troops and US forces last week against police suspected of supporting Taliban insurgents in embattled Helmand province, Afghan officials said yesterday. Reports of fighting between police and soldiers add to the upheaval in the southern province, long a stronghold of the insurgency, where the military has abandoned several outposts. The NATO-led coalition and the Afghan government are trying to overhaul security forces and reverse insurgent gains there. The incident on Friday was in Sangin district, the scene of some of the heaviest fighting in Afghanistan's long war, Helmand police chief Abdul Rahman Sarjang said. "Army forces detained the police and took them to the military corps in Helmand," Sarjang said. "An investigation is ongoing." The acting Sangin district police chief, Mohammad Nabi, was among the detainees, Sarjang said. Nabi was acting in place of the district's official police chief, Mohammad Dawood, who is recovering from injuries.

YAZIDI GIRLS SEEK HEALING IN GERMANY AFTER IS 'HELL'

GENEVA: One eight-year-old was repeatedly sold and raped, while another girl set herself on fire to make herself less attractive to her jihadist captors. These are only two of the more than 1,400 horror stories German doctor Jan Ilhan Kizilhan has heard first-hand from Yazidi women and girls once enslaved by Islamic State jihadists in Iraq. "They have been through hell," he said in an interview in Geneva. Kizilhan heads a project that has brought 1,100 women and girls to Germany to help heal their deep physical and psychological wounds.

The project, run by German state Baden-Wuerttemberg, first began flying in the traumatized victims from northern Iraq last April, and brought the last group over earlier this month. It was in 2014 that authorities in Baden-Wuerttemberg decided to act. At the time, IS jihadists were making a lightning advance in northern Iraq, massacring Yazidis in their villages, forcing tens of thousands to flee and kidnapping thousands of girls and women to force them into sexual slavery.

'Genocide'

The United Nations has described the IS attack on the Yazidi minority as a possible genocide. "It is really an urgent situation," Kizilhan said, calling on other

countries and states to follow Baden-Wuerttemberg's example. The southwest German state budgeted 95 million euros (\$104 million) to the project and asked Kizilhan and his team to decide which of the victims could benefit most from the move. The doctor said another 1,200 Yazidi women and girls once held by IS would also benefit from similar programs elsewhere—as would the estimated 3,800 believed to remain in captivity, if they make it out.

He explained that the women who managed to escape from IS found themselves back in their deeply conservative communities in northern Iraq with little to no access to psychological help to work through the unspeakable horrors they had experienced. "These women really need specialized treatment. If we don't help them, who will?" he asked, speaking on the sidelines of an international conference of human rights defenders in Geneva. As Yazidis, who fol-

low a unique faith despised by IS, the women raped and sometimes left pregnant by the jihadists are seen by many in their community as a source of dishonor.

Those who are shunned become impoverished and risk falling into prostitution to support themselves, and a large number commit suicide, Kizilhan said. "Over the last year, I have documented more than 20 cases of suicide, but this is surely just the tip of the iceberg," he said, adding the actual number was likely closer to 150. Kizilhan shuddered as he recalled the case of one girl he had met in a refugee camp last August, who suffered burns to over 80 percent of her body. "She had no nose, no ears left," he said, adding that he was even more shocked when he learned what had happened to her.

IS fighters had held the girl and her sisters for weeks, raping and torturing them, before they escaped. Then one night sleeping in her tent in the refugee camp, the girl dreamt IS fighters were outside. In a panic she poured gasoline over herself and lit a match, hoping it would make her so ugly they would not rape her again. Kizilhan had that girl chartered out immediately for fear she might not survive. She remains in hospital in Germany after more than a dozen operations, and will still need 30 more types of skin and bone surgery. — AFP



GENEVA: German doctor Jan Ilhan Kizilhan poses for a photograph in Geneva. One eight-year-old was repeatedly sold and raped, while another girl set herself on fire to make herself less attractive to her jihadist captors. These are only two of the more than 1,400 horror stories heard by German doctor Jan Ilhan Kizilhan, who heads a project that has evacuated traumatized Yazidi women from northern Iraq to help heal their deep suffering. — AFP

CHINESE PASTOR, WIFE JAILED

BEIJING: A Chinese husband and wife who led a Christian congregation that opposed a government campaign to remove crosses atop churches have been given long prison sentences for illegal activities, including corruption and disturbing social order, state media said. A court in eastern Zhejiang province on Friday sentenced pastor Bao Guohua to 14 years in prison and his wife, Xing Wenxiang, to 12 years after concluding that they had illegally organized churchgoers to petition the government and disturb social order, according to the state-run Zhejiang Daily newspaper.

The couple also was accused of "tricking" members of its congregation into donating \$336,000 that was spent on cars and other personal purchases while pretending to lead an ascetic lifestyle, the newspaper said. The court sentenced 10 other church members to prison, the report said, without giving details.

For the past two years, Zhejiang's Christians, particularly in the coastal city of Wenzhou, home to a large Christian population, have been locked in a bitter dispute with local authorities who have removed hundreds of crosses from churches in the province, saying they violate building codes, or demolished churches altogether. Zhejiang's religious leaders, many of whom lead churches sanctioned by the government, say the attitudes of local authorities have turned sharply negative in recent years as the Christian population grew in number and influence.

Several well-known figures who have resisted the government campaign to remove crosses through legal challenges or public denunciations have been targeted with criminal prosecutions. The clash over the Zhejiang Christians' religious rights has been complicated by the fact that they have received help from overseas supporters at a time when the Chinese government is particularly sensitive to what it considers foreign meddling in domestic issues.

In the past year, China's government has relentlessly pursued and jailed human rights lawyers that have received training and funding from foreign sources. Zhang Kai, a Beijing-based Christian lawyer who was detained one day before he was due to meet a US envoy in August, was shown on television late Thursday night confessing to organizing illegal religious gatherings and undermining China's political system with backing from China Aid, a Texas-based group that has funded the churches' efforts to resist the cross removals.

China Aid said in a blog post Friday that the government action against Bao's church and other Christian leaders amounted to "religious persecution." Last month, provincial authorities opened a separate corruption probe into the prominent pastor Gu Yueze, who openly spoke out against the government's clampdown on Christian activity. With 10,000 members, Gu's Chongyi church is the largest Protestant congregation in the Chinese-speaking world. — AP



The Tungurahua volcano spews fumes and lava on Saturday in Huambalo, Ecuador, affecting neighboring areas with ash fall. — AFP

70 KILLED IN BAGHDAD BOMBINGS

Continued from Page 1

Security officials blamed Islamic State, and a news agency that supports the group said it had launched a "wide attack" in Abu Ghraib, 25 km from the centre of Baghdad and next to the international airport. Footage circulated online by the Amaq news agency appeared to show Islamic State fighters crouching behind dirt berms and launching the attack with automatic rifles, machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades. Reuters could not verify the video's authenticity. Security forces had mostly regained control by yesterday evening but officials said there were still clashes.

Baghdad-based security analyst Jasim Al-Bahadli said the assault suggested it was premature to declare that Islamic State was losing the initiative in Iraq. "Government forces must do a better job repelling attacks launched by Daesh. What happened today could be a setback for the security forces," he said, using an Arabic acronym for Islamic State.

Army and police sources said the militants had attacked from the nearby Islamic State-controlled areas of Garma and Fallujah, driving Humvees and pickup trucks fixed with machine guns. A curfew was imposed as a regiment of Iraq's elite counter-terrorism forces was mobilized to retake the silo in Abu Ghraib and prevent the militants approaching the nearby airport, security officials said.

Iraqi army helicopters bombarded Islamic State positions in the and Interior Ministry spokesman Brigadier General Saad Maan said at least 20 militants had been killed in the government's counter offensive. Fighters from the Hashid Shaabi, a coalition of mainly Iranian-backed militias, were mobilized to Abu Ghraib to reinforce regular government forces in the area, said Jawad Al-Tulaibawi, a local Hashid commander. Powerful cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr also called on fighters loyal to him to be on alert to protect Baghdad. Militias like Sadr's 'Peace Brigades' were seen as a bulwark against Islamic State's sweeping advance in 2014 which threatened Iraq's capital and its most sacred Shiite shrines. — Reuters

DASMAN ATTACKER UNREPENTANT...

Continued from Page 1

He added that the national celebrations had caused him a great deal of embarrassment with radical and terrorist clerics abroad, who kept needling him about it, which

made him decide to spoil the ceremonies. Shamlan also confessed to planning to flee the country after committing the crime. He kept repeating that he had wished all the policemen at the checkpoint had died. "If I can go back in time, I would do it again more precisely," he allegedly said.

INDIAN KILLS 14 RELATIVES, HANGS SELF

Continued from Page 1

Kabdule said he could not confirm whether the victims had been sedated, saying investigators were awaiting medical test results. Footage showed men carrying bodies wrapped in sheets from the house to a waiting ambulance, as crowds and police gathered outside the white-walled home. Kabdule said details of the attack "are still sketchy" along with the motive. Warekar's extended family - three sisters, their children and his parents - were among those who apparently had gotten together for dinner, Kabdule said. Warekar's wife and

two young daughters were also in the house and were among those killed.

According to the Press Trust of India news agency, a property dispute was behind the killings, but Dumbre said initial investigations have so far found no trigger for such an "extreme step". "In our inquiry so far, no one has yet been able to give the reason for this," Dumbre told the ABP news channel. "He worked with a private company in Mumbai. There were no known financial troubles or disputes and now we are hoping that the lone survivor can tell us something about the trigger," he said. — Agencies

LAWMAKERS WANT CITIZENS EXCLUDED FROM...

Continued from Page 1

Another meeting will be held on Sunday to study detailed figures about spending and revenues in the budget, privatization projects and private public partnership projects and their effects on the budget, he said.

Shaye said that a proposal to compensate citizens for petrol price hikes through coupons based on a monthly consumption of 220 liters per citizen holding a driving license was made by MPs and not the government. The lawmaker said the government wants to reduce administrative expenditures in the budget by 25 percent. He said the committee will work to complete the report on the issue before April 1.

Finance Minister and acting oil minister Anas Al-Saleh said after the meeting that the government's vision for reforms is based on six main principles which include financial reforms, redrawing the state role in national economy, strengthening the role of the private sector, citizens' ownership of projects, reforming the labor market and Civil Service Commission and administrative and legislative reforms. He said to implement this vision, the government has 40 programs, 23 of them short-term.

The minister said the meeting discussed the government's proposal to rationalize subsidies for petrol and MPs proposed that such subsidies should be given to a section of citizens and the government will consider this proposal. The meeting also discussed a study submitted by the ministry of electricity on consumption categories and the discussion will be completed on Thursday, the minister said.

MP Mohammad Tana said the government presented several scenarios on the planned hikes but MPs demanded more information and explanations over the issue. He said the government said it wants to sell low-grade petrol for 90 fils a liter, high-grade premium petrol for 119 fils a liter and ultra-grade fuel for 127 fils a liter, adding this was one of the several scenarios it presented.

Last week, MP Shaye said the government told MPs it wanted to sell petrol for 85, 105 and 165 fils a liter for the three grades respectively. Tana said a number of scenarios were presented based on the movements in the price of oil. MP Saud Al-Hurajji said the government has so far presented a number of proposals and MPs rejected all of them and asked the government to submit better proposals.

Meanwhile, MPs yesterday issued threats that they would grill Commerce and Industry Minister Yousef Al-Ali and Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Subaih. MP Ahmad Al-Qudhaibi said his grilling against the commerce minister is ready and he is waiting for the minister to sign on the allocation of industrial land in violation of the law to submit the grilling request. He claimed that the minister returned some of the land that was withdrawn because of violations after unilaterally changing some rules in a politically-motivated move to appease some of his supporters.

MP Tana meanwhile threatened he would grill the social affairs minister if she does not stop what he called a process of privatizing cooperative societies, which is totally against the law. MP Hurajji also supported his colleague by saying that if the minister does not stop the process, she will be grilled.

REPUBLICANS BRAWL, CLINTON SAILS TOWARD...

Continued from Page 1

Asked about the endorsement on CNN, Trump said he knew nothing about it. "You wouldn't want me to condemn a group that I know nothing about. I'd have to look," he said. At a news conference Friday, Trump appeared surprised by the endorsement. "David Duke endorsed me? I disavow," he said, without elaborating.

Polls show Trump, who picked up a key endorsement from New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, leading the Republican pack in most of the 11 Super Tuesday contests, but trailing Cruz in his home state of Texas, a top Super Tuesday prize with 155 delegates. The conventional wisdom is that Trump's rivals - Cruz, Senator Marco Rubio of Florida and Ohio Governor John Kasich - must at least win their own states to remain in the running. Cruz will be the first to face that test, as Florida and Ohio vote later.

"There is no doubt that if Donald steamrolls through Super Tuesday, wins everywhere with big margins, that he may well be unstoppable," Cruz said on CBS's Face the Nation. Kasich predicted that Trump would probably win all the Super Tuesday contests, but the governor said he intended to hang on in hopes Cruz and Rubio are knocked out first. Retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson also has vowed to remain in the race, but support for his candidacy has fizzled.

With the stakes nearing a make-or-break point, Trump, Cruz and Rubio have viciously attacked each other with taunts, accusations and angry tweets that have given the Republican race a distinctly Darwinian flavor. "Frankly, we're going to look back on this time and we're all going to shake our heads and say, did we

really degrade the process of picking the leader of the free world?" said Kasich, who has generally refrained from joining the free-for-all. While the Republicans were hitting all the political talk shows yesterday, Hillary Clinton was quietly savoring her victory in South Carolina. It was the former secretary of state's first decisive win of the campaign, after a nail-biter victory in Iowa, a thumping loss to Sanders in New Hampshire and then a five-point win in Nevada. Exit polls in South Carolina showed African-Americans - who represented 61 percent of all Democratic voters in the primary - backed Clinton by a stunning 86 percent, more than had supported Obama eight years prior.

Clinton, who now leads in the national delegate count, assiduously courted black voters, partly by praising Obama and promising to build on his legacy. South Carolina marked a "great test" for the coming votes in other southern states and showed that Clinton "can get a broad base of support of all demographics," her communications director Jennifer Palmieri told reporters, as the candidate shook hands and posed for selfies with supporters in Columbus, South Carolina Saturday night. "We are going to compete for every vote in every state. We are not taking anything, and we are not taking anyone, for granted," Clinton said. She also looked beyond her battle with Sanders, tweaking Trump, whose campaign slogan is "Make America Great Again". "Despite what you hear, we don't need to make America great again. America has never stopped being great," she said, reading off a teleprompter. The 11 states that hold Democratic nominating contests Tuesday will send a whopping 18 percent of the delegates to July's nominating convention in Philadelphia. — AFP



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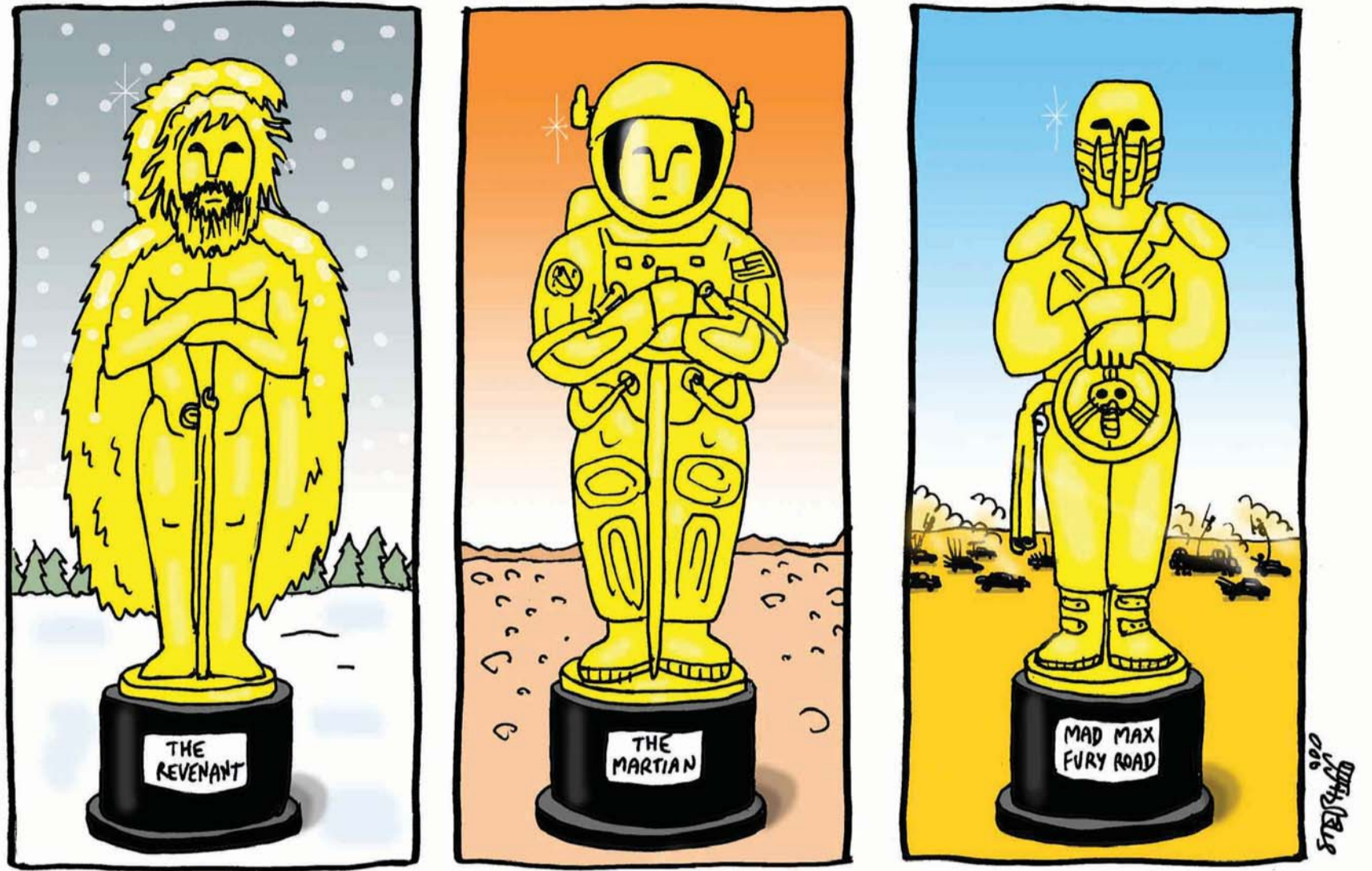
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ACADEMY AWARDS 2016



APPLE-FBI CASE HAS WIDE IMPLICATIONS

By Rob Lever

Apple and the US government are squaring off in an epic legal battle with wide-ranging implications for how technology firms must work with law enforcement. The iPhone maker is being asked to provide "reasonable assistance" to the investigation of the last year's deadly San Bernardino attacks by disabling security preventing the FBI from accessing the encrypted handset of one of the shooters. The highly charged case has created a sharp divide among those who say that users of devices like smartphones should be able to keep information private through encryption, and others who claim legitimate law enforcement investigations should take precedence when courts approve.

Apple is challenging the California court order, saying the type of cooperation sought would undermine basic principles of data security and open new vulnerabilities for all its users. The government is asking for the creation of software that doesn't exist, an abuse of the law and violation of the company's constitutional rights, Apple says. It adds that creating a weaker "government OS" would undermine the encryption Apple and others have been introducing, and ultimately leak out to hackers and foreign governments.

"Apple wants to maintain the trust relationship with its customers, they feel deeply and firmly this is something that has to exist, and that no government should have access to this data," said John Dickson of the Texas-based Denim Group, which manages security and encryption for its cus-

tomers. "I anticipate there will be a technical response from Apple, so that it will be nearly impossible for them to be compelled to do anything."

Julian Sanchez of the libertarian Cato Institute says in a blog post the case is "a fight over the future of high-tech surveillance, the trust infrastructure undergirding the global software ecosystem, and how far technology companies and software developers can be conscripted as unwilling suppliers of hacking tools for governments."

Life, Death and Encryption

Some say Apple's position is based on a core principle about security of its users' data. "Lack of privacy can be a matter of life and death or imprisonment," said Jon Hanour, chief executive of California startup USMobile, which makes an application for encrypted mobile messaging. "Apostasy results in a death in Saudi Arabia. Homosexual acts send people to prison in Pakistan. And in many countries, adultery is punishable by lashing and stoning."

But critics say Apple is simply providing an easy way for criminals and others to operate in the shadows. Allowing Apple to refuse would "thwart the public interest in a full and complete investigation of a horrific act of terrorism," the Justice Department argued in its court motion. New York County District Attorney Cy Vance, who has complained that encrypted phones have frustrated many investigations, said Apple and other makers of encryption should not be able to help skirt law enforcement.

"Apple and Google have created the first warrant-proof consumer products in American history, and the result is that crimes are going unsolved and victims are being left beyond the protection of the law," he said in a statement. Apple argues that being forced to comply would set a dangerous precedent allowing broad access to law enforcement. "Once the floodgates open, they cannot be closed, and the device security that Apple has worked so tirelessly to achieve will be unbound," Apple argued.

But James Lewis, a former US official who is now a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said there is nothing unusual about the case. "The court decided this was a reasonable request," Lewis told AFP. "The privacy people say it will set a precedent and it will be the end of life on this planet, and it's not true." Computer forensics researcher Jonathan Zdziarski said complying would be more complex than it appears. In a blog post, he notes that Apple would need to develop a tool to produce "reproducible, predictable results," which "must be forensically sound and not change anything on the target." Additionally, he said that Apple "must be prepared to defend their tool and methodology in court... What FBI has requested will inevitably force Apple's methods out into the open."

The China Question

Apple backers say weakening encryption will work against American interests by compromising security for users living under repressive regimes. "Authoritarian regimes around the world are sal-

vating at the prospect of the FBI winning this order," Nate Cardozo of the Electronic Frontier Foundation told PBS. "If Apple creates the master key that the FBI has demanded that they create, governments around the world are going to be demanding the same access."

But Apple's critics say the company may already assist the Chinese government with modifications of the iPhone for that market and cloud computing center hosted in China. Stewart Baker, a former Homeland Security official who is now in law practice in Washington, said Apple's lack of transparency in China raises questions. "Maybe you can explain why a secret encryption system that everyone suspects of having a real back door is good enough for Apple's customers in China?" Baker says in a blog post.

Snowden Impact

Some analysts say the conflict stems from revelations about widespread government surveillance by former intelligence contractor Edward Snowden. "The Snowden disclosures revealed that many government agencies conduct extensive surveillance on citizens, which arguably not only undermines our privacy but compromise our entire information security infrastructure," says Rahul Telang, professor of information systems at Carnegie Mellon University. Telang said it is a difficult issue to resolve but that he sees the privacy argument as likely to win. "Now that we know about government snooping, there is a trust issue," he said. "Once we give you backdoor access, where will it stop?" —AFP

FRANKFURT SEEKS TO WIN OVER FINTECH WHIZ KIDS

By Benoit Toussaint

As Germany's banking capital, Frankfurt has long established itself as one of Europe's leading financial hubs. But the city, which has a rather staid and strait-laced image, is now vying with hipper and trendier centres around Europe to woo financial start-ups known as FinTechs which want to revolutionize the way the world of money does business.

FinTechs use computer and Internet technology to develop innovative financial services and applications. They include such companies as online trader Money.Net and the automated investment service Betterment in the United States and the business financing company FundingCircle and money transfer service TransferWise in Britain.

"When people talk about start-ups, cities such as Berlin and London immediately spring to mind. But Frankfurt is also starting to have a very dynamic Internet scene of its own," said Tarek Al-Wazir, economy minister for the regional state of Hesse, where Frankfurt is situated. The western German city on the banks of the river Main likes to style itself as "Mainhattan" with its dense cluster of glittering glass and steel skyscrapers.

And its financial pedigree is certainly not in question. It is home to Germany's mightiest financial institutions, such as Deutsche Bank and Commerzbank; stock market operator Deutsche Boerse which is again trying to merge with the London Stock Exchange; and, of course, the European Central Bank. But it has now set its sights on fostering financial start-ups, an area where "we want to advance very rapidly," Wazir told AFP. Last week, Deutsche Boerse unveiled its own FinTech initiative, offering fully equipped premises to new companies and start-ups from April onwards. The initiative would "contribute to the emergence of a lively and diverse ecosystem in Frankfurt containing various start-up centres operated by financial market players with different focuses and profiles, who can give each other various impulses," said minister Wazir. The city's ambition is to "become the largest and most important" site for FinTechs and "we're off to a good start," Wazir said. Financial start-ups are more innovative and more agile than traditional banks and are constantly seeking out important new perspectives on the financial sector.

'Microcosm'

According to a study by consultants LSP Digital, investment in FinTechs has doubled in Germany since 2012. Nevertheless, "a FinTech sector doesn't spring up overnight. Infrastructures are needed, as well as a microcosm of people who can share know-how, collaborate and inspire each other," said Oliver Vins, founder and chief of Vaamo. The Frankfurt-based start-up was launched in 2013, incubated by the city's university and now employs around 20 people.

In Vins' cramped office in the Gallus quarter of the city, a computer sits alongside a wall covered in multi-coloured post-its and a table soccer game. Vaamo enables customers to design their own personally-tailored savings plans via a few clicks and a short list of questions. As Germany's financial capital and the biggest financial services hub in continental Europe, Frankfurt is proud of its slick, cosmopolitan image and its imposing skyline of skyscrapers. But rents are sky high and the armies of bankers in their uniform of black suits and briefcases can seem a little staid and off-putting to the creative whizzkids of the start-up sector.

Coming Late to the Game

At the same time, "one of Frankfurt's strengths is the presence of a large number of financial companies" which can act as investor, partner and customer for FinTechs, said Peter Barkow,

head of Barkow Consulting. But Udo Steffens, director of the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management, feels the city is joining rather late in the game. "In the past, Frankfurt was cut off from the innovation trend and very little was happening" in the city, he said. "In the financial sector, the creation of value is moving increasingly towards the new Internet players. It is important to anticipate structural trends," Steffens said.

In June 2015, only 11 FinTechs were based in Frankfurt, out of a total of 139 in the whole of Germany, according to data compiled by LSP Digital. Unsurprisingly, Berlin, with its comparatively low rents and alternative culture, was home to 49 FinTechs. Munich hosted 18 and Hamburg 14. But it is a ranking that can change. "It's good that there are initiatives at a political level. With the right infrastructure, things can be made more attractive than in the past," said Vaamo's Vins. —AFP



This file photo taken on Sept 20, 2012 shows the city skyline with bank high-rise buildings in Frankfurt. —AFP

Kuwait Times
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

Editor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24835619
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Focus

DOLBY PLAYS TO EYES
AS WELL AS EARS WITH
NEW TECHNOLOGIES

By Sophie Estienne

At the entrance of Dolby headquarters in San Francisco, a ribbon of television screens plays synchronized videos that change in time to sound effects. The display mirrors Dolby's recent efforts to move beyond sound enhancement to improve what people see when they watch films. Several of the movies up for Oscars on Sunday in Los Angeles were made with Dolby Vision, which has become an industry standard for image quality in movies.

Best picture nominees "The Martian" and "The Revenant," as well as Pixar's animated film "Inside Out" used the technology. "We're predominately known and associated with audio, but we spent the last decade working on imaging," Dolby director of content and creative relations Stuart Bowling told AFP. Since the company launched its Dolby Vision in 2014, an array of television makers and major Hollywood studios have adopted the technology, which produces wider ranges of color and contrast.

Even though the number of pixels that can be captured in films has exploded, "we found something was missing everywhere: contrast," Bowling said. "Adding more contrast makes a significant impact on the image; it looks sharper, more vibrant, more color-saturated and then almost 3D," he added. The difference becomes clear watching two high-definition televisions side-by-side. With Dolby Vision, details jump out in a "Lego" movie scene showing car headlights, or during an explosion in "Man of Steel," while they are crushed or blurred in the standard version of the films.

Industry Standard

Dolby Laboratories was founded half a century ago by its namesake, Ray Dolby who set out to develop technology for fuller, cleaner, crisper sound. One of the company's early creations was noise reduction technology that made its cinema debut in the 1971 film "A Clockwork Orange". Dolby went on to become a de facto standard for audio quality in films, music, theaters and consumer electronics. Now with its new Dolby Vision technology, it is setting the bar for image quality as well.

To make sure images come out well in theaters, Dolby uses a special projector with lasers rather than traditional xenon light bulbs to increase brightness. This results in intense, nearly fluorescent reds, blues and greens in such films as "Inside Out". Dolby Vision imbues movies with "much brighter brights and much darker darks," according to chief marketing officer Bob Borchers. "It allows you to do things impossible before," such as deep black in space scenes from the latest "Star Wars" film, Borchers said.

Dolby Cinema works with theaters on everything from acoustics and interior design to Vision projection gear. It also sets up its Atmos speaker systems which assign sounds to precise locations in a room, creating a real-life effect. Theater screens in Europe and the United States have been equipped with Dolby Cinema, and the technology is heading for theaters in China through a partnership with the country's Wanda Cinema Line. Dolby has even begun to offer its services for corporate meetings with a product called Voice, which builds upon technology that it designed for the movies. Voice creates the effect of different people on a call speaking from different places in a room and eliminates background noises.

Dolby revenue was essentially flat at \$967 million during its last fiscal year, which ended in September, but the company expects its conference and cinema businesses to add \$20 million to its revenue this fiscal year. Barrington Research analyst James Goss referred to Vision, Atmos and Voice as "potential stepping stones to returning to meaningful top-line growth". —AFP

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KUWAIT: Adnan Al-Ibrahim, Obaid Al-Osaimi, Duaij Al-Otaibi and Misfer Al-Ghurba pictured during the press conference. — Photos by Sherif Ismail

5TH ANNUAL GRAND PRIX TO KICK OFF MARCH 1ST

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Engineer Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi said His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Fifth Annual Grand Prix will start March 1st and will continue until March 8th, at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Ranges, with a large participation from Kuwait, Arab and International Shooting Federations.

Eng Al-Otaibi who held a news conference on the tournament Saturday evening said that 31 countries will participate - with a total of 350 shooters and officials. The championship will be in the Skeet, Trap and Double Trap for men and women. "Olympic Champions, shooters from GCC, Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, Palestine, Lebanon and other Arab countries, as well as Europe who will participate in this special Grand Prix as it bears the name HH the Amir, does not spare anything in support of sports. If it was not for the support of the political leadership of HH the Amir, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Hamad, the achievements made by Kuwait Shooting would not have been," he added.

Preparations for the Kuwait Shooting Sport Board of Directors began early. Subcommittees were formed and roles distributed to all, who worked hard for



Duaij Al-Otaibi

the Grand Prix. Eng Al-Otaibi said that international rules will be followed in this tournament - revealing that they have decided to double the prize money for the shooters who break the world record as an encouragement for all shooters who are participating.

He spoke in detail about the crises Kuwait Sports is facing - thanking the Information Minister, State Minister for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah for his continued support. The press conference was also attended by KSSF and ASF Secretary General Obaid Al-Osaimi, Assistant Secretary General Eng Misfer Al-Ghurba and Assistant Treasurer Adnan Al-Ibrahim.

SOUTH AFRICA'S OOSTHUIZEN WINS PERTH INTERNATIONAL

PERTH: South Africa's Louis Oosthuizen hung on for a one-shot victory and his first win for more than two years, in the European and Asian Tour co-sanctioned Perth International at Lake Karrinyup yesterday. A one-under 71 was enough to get the world number 21 home on 16-under 272 over Frenchman Alexander Levy after a closing round containing three birdies and two bogeys.

The 2010 British Open champion led by three shots heading into the final round, but briefly lost the lead to Australian Jason Scrivener. However, birdies at the seventh and eighth holes steadied Oosthuizen as Scrivener fell away with consecutive bogeys on the ninth and 10th. Oosthuizen had a three-putt bogey at the final hole as he won his first tournament in Australia and his first since the Volvo Golf Championship in 2014.

"It's great to be back in the winning circle," Oosthuizen said. "I always say it's great to be nervous with three holes to go in a tournament because it means you're up there somewhere-you've a chance of winning it." That's what we do all the hard work for, to try to get into that position.

Levy fired the equal-lowest round of the day, a six-under 66, to fall just short of forcing a playoff with 15-under. Scrivener holed a 60-foot putt at the last to finish outright third at 14 under. Another Frenchman Gregory Bourdy, who only made the weekend cut by one stroke, finished tied for fourth place with American Peter Uihlein at 13 under after closing rounds of 65 and 66.

A third Frenchman Romain Wattel finished with a par 72 for 12 under and outright sixth. Oosthuizen's 13th career triumph and eighth on the European Tour continues a successful history of South Africans at Lake Karrinyup tournaments, with Ernie Els (2002) and Retief Goosen (2003) claiming Johnnie Walker Classic wins at the course. Oosthuizen was the highest-ranked golfer at the Perth International. He was runner-up at the 2012 Augusta Masters, losing at the second play-off hole to American Bubba Watson, and also lost in a play off at last year's British Open. Oosthuizen said he would use his Perth victory to give him momentum heading into this week's WGC Cadillac Championship in Miami. — AFP

KEFLEZIGHI SETS SIGHTS FOR RIO MARATHON AT AGE 41

BOSTON: Meb Keflezighi has run past his humble beginnings, his marathon opponents and his advanced age as he reaches distances only he can see. When the Rio Olympics are held in August, Keflezighi, who turns 41 in May, will be the oldest United States Olympic marathon runner in history. It could be the latest chapter in a career that is finally nearing the finish line. Keflezighi says the 2013 US Half Marathon Championship was supposed to be his swan song. "The marathon is a prestigious event, but a brutal one," he told Reuters in a recent interview.

"As you get older the physical part (is the hardest). My parents always look forward to me being able to retire." Yet Keflezighi keeps pushing forward, adding to a legacy that sets him apart. The Eritrean-born American distance runner is an Olympic silver medalist (2004) and winner of the New York City Marathon (2009) and Boston Marathon (2014). The Boston triumph, Keflezighi says, was the crowning achievement of his career. He was the first American in 31 years to pull off the feat and it came one year after the infamous Boston bombings.

Keflezighi is a mix of gentle spirit and take-no-prisoners competitor. He reflected both sides in finishing second at the US Olympic marathon trial earlier this month in Los Angeles, where he earned his way back for a fourth Olympic appearance. During the race, Keflezighi

exchanged tense words with eventual winner Galen Rupp, accusing Rupp of running on his heels. At the post-race press conference, however, Keflezighi was moved to tears by complimentary words from peers that included Rupp.

"Once I don't have racing shoes on I have nothing to be competitive about," Keflezighi said while promoting Krave, a healthy jerky product he endorses. "I just want to see the positive in people. If someone beats me I congratulate them." Keflezighi's humility perhaps comes from being one of 10 children. He moved to the US when he was just 12 and says he rose before dawn each morning to learn English before his school day started. So when Keflezighi suffered a hip fracture at the 2008 Olympic marathon trial, which he finished in excruciating pain in eighth place, and considered looking for a real job as he waited for the injury to heal, it was merely a speed bump to negotiate.

So too was being without an endorsement deal for most of 2011. Three more marathons would give Keflezighi 26 in total, the approximate number of miles in a marathon and the figure Keflezighi says he has chosen to end his competitive career on. "Twenty-six is the perfect number to stop at," said Keflezighi, who wants to give his three young daughters a chance to see him in more races. He knows "the end is close" but for him it always seems just around the corner, without ever actually arriving. — Reuters



FLORIDA: Sergio Garcia, of Spain, hits out from a bunker on the 18th hole during the third round of the Honda Classic golf tournament on Saturday, Feb 27, 2016, in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. —AP

SCOTT, GARCIA TIED AT HONDA CLASSIC

PALM BEACH GARDENS: One bad swing by Adam Scott led to two balls in the water on the same hole Saturday in the Honda Classic. Even with a quadruple bogey, he managed to be satisfied with a 4-under 66 and a share of the lead with Sergio Garcia. A bizarre and breezy afternoon ended at PGA National with two players whose fortunes changed mightily in the final hour. Scott looked better than ever, 7 under through 14 holes and only once having to save par. He was three shots ahead going to the tee on the par-3 15th, and it was starting to look like a runaway.

Some 20 minutes later, he was one shot behind Garcia. "Pretty costly," Scott said. "But fortunately, I had a couple shots to spare. Hopefully, it won't cost me too big in the grand scheme of things." Garcia lost the lead with a bogey from the bunker on the 17th, and caught Scott with a short birdie on the 18th for a 67. They were at 9-under 201. Blayne Barber had a 69 and was four shots behind. Scott and Garcia were quick to point out that Sunday might not be the two-man race, and there was plenty of evidence to back them up.

Rickie Fowler had a one-shot lead going into the third round and was the first player at the Honda Classic to go bogey-free through the opening 36 holes. And then on Saturday, he couldn't make a birdie. Fowler made bogey

on the easiest hole at PGA National, the par-5 third, and wound up with a 74 to fall five shots behind. Nothing went right for Jimmy Walker, starting with the first tee. Playing alongside Fowler, he was introduced as "Jimmy Fowler." Walker had the lead with his birdie on the third hole. He didn't make another birdie until the 18th hole, and that was to break 80.

Walker wound up 11 shots out of the lead. "Who can tell me that the guys that are 4 under are not going to go and play like Adam did today?" Garcia said. "We'll see how the day goes. And then if it becomes a two-horse race on the last three or four holes, I'll welcome that. But I will expect some of the guys behind to shoot a good number and make it tough for all of us." Thanks to one swing by Scott, those guys at least have a chance. Justin Thomas opened with three straight birdies and had to settle for a 68, putting him at 4-under 206 with Fowler. Graeme McDowell had a 67 and was six shots behind at 207 along with Scott Brown and Vijay Singh (68). Singh made a double bogey on the 15th hole without hitting in the water, hitting in the bunker or hitting in the rough. His problem was the golf ball hit the putter four times from 20 feet. Still, nothing was more shocking than Scott on the 15th. The former Masters champion with one of the prettiest swings in golf was flawless. He didn't miss a green

through 13 holes. He ran off four straight birdies to close out the back nine, starting with a 50-footer on No 6, the toughest hole of the day. He stretched his lead to three shots. Get through the final four holes, and he might have made it easy on himself. And then his 6-iron soared into the wind, and everything changed. Scott went to the front of the circular drop zone and was stunned to see it bounce over the back of the green and tumble into the water. After checking to see if he could play out of the water - he couldn't - he went back to the drop zone for a third try and hit it 10 feet from the hole. He missed that for a 7, and Garcia's long two-putt par gave the Spaniard the lead.

Scott's most important holes were the next two. He pulled his tee shot left, cleared the water from the rough and got up-and-down for par. "The par there was very important at the time, because it's really stopping a severe bleed after 15," he said. And then he hit 6-iron to 10 feet on the 17th for birdie, regaining the lead when Garcia made bogey. Scott didn't seem overly bothered by the quadruple bogey, mainly because of the 17 other holes he played so well. "I did a lot of things really well today, so it's exactly the round I needed," he said. "I need to put one more together tomorrow. It's going to be an exciting day for me." — AP

VONN GETS WORLD CUP BOOST DESPITE INJURY

SOLDEU: Lindsey Vonn defied injury to grab some valuable World Cup points in a super-combined at Soldeu, Andorra yesterday. The 31-year-old American sustained a hairline fracture of her left knee 24 hours earlier when she fell heavily in a super-G race. There were initial fears that her season could be over, but, after waking up and feeling better, Vonn took to the slopes and clocked a fastest 57.04secs in a shortened speed leg of the combined.

She was back in action for the slalom later in the afternoon and while she was unable to take the 77th World Cup win of her career, she still

did enough to place 13th, giving her 20 points. Her great rival for what would be a fifth overall World Cup title and first since 2012, Lara Gut of Switzerland, came away empty-handed after she straddled a gate halfway down the course. "Drained my knee a few times and it's feeling a little better. Going to go up on the hill and see how it feels. Wish me luck!" the American speed queen said on her Facebook stage early yesterday.

The first run was then delayed for two and a half hours due to poor weather conditions. Vonn has a history of knee injuries sustained in compe-

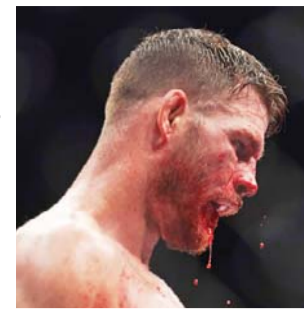
tion, and there were fears her season could have been over when she fell heavily in Saturday's super-G race and needed to be stretched off the piste. But after X-rays showed that the injury was a hairline fracture in her left knee and not ligament damage, Vonn said that she was determined to compete in yesterday's super-combined. Vonn ended the day with an increased lead over Gut, having 1235 points, 28 points more than her Swiss rival. The race was won by Canadian Marie-Michèle Gagnon with Switzerland's Wendy Holdener second and Anne-Sophie Barthet of France third. —AFP



SOLDEU: Lindsey Vonn, of the United States speeds down the course during an alpine ski, women's World Cup, combined race, in Soldeu, Andorra yesterday. — AP

Sports

Bisping beats Silva at UFC Fight Night



Sabbir hits 80 as Bangladesh stun Sri Lanka



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BLATTER WARNS INFANTINO OF FIFA BACKSTABBERS Page 18



LONDON: Manchester City's Belgian defender Vincent Kompany (center) holds up the League Cup surrounded by his team-mates during the presentation after Manchester City won the penalty shoot-out to win the English League Cup final football match between Liverpool and Manchester City at Wembley Stadium yesterday. — AFP

MAN CITY GRAB LEAGUE CUP CROWN

LONDON: Willy Caballero proved an unlikely hero with three penalty saves as Manchester City beat Liverpool 3-1 in a Wembley Stadium shootout yesterday to win the English League Cup. The game finished 1-1 following extra time, Philippe Coutinho equalizing for Liverpool in the 83rd minute after Fernandinho had put City ahead early in the second half, and Caballero took centre-stage in the shootout.

The 34-year-old Argentine, who deputizes for Joe Hart in cup competitions, saved penalties from Lucas Leiva, Coutinho and substitute Adam Lallana and although Fernandinho hit the post with his spot-kick, Yaya Toure stroked home the decisive penalty to give City victory. It was City's second League Cup triumph in three seasons, and fourth in total, and ensures that manager Manuel Pellegrini will sign off with at least one trophy before handing over the reins to Pep Guardiola. His Liverpool

counterpart Jurgen Klopp, meanwhile, met with disappointment in his first attempt to win a trophy following his appointment as the successor to Brendan Rodgers in October. Liverpool, who lost Mamadou Sakho to a first-half head injury, have gone four years without a trophy since winning the last of their eight League Cups in 2012, raising the stakes yet further ahead of their Europa League clash with arch rivals Manchester United.

Klopp's chief selection dilemma was at centre-back and with Martin Skrtel and Dejan Lovren not yet fit after injury and illness respectively, he elected to keep faith with midfielder Lucas alongside Sakho. But Sakho hurt himself in an early clash of heads with team-mate Emre Can and looked wobbly as Sergio Aguero slipped past him to curl in a shot that Simon Mignolet brilliantly touched onto the left-hand post. The French international left the fray moments later, with Kolo Toure entering the

fray, but had to be convinced of the need for his withdrawal by Klopp and flung a water bottle to the ground in disgust as he crossed the touchline before burying his head beneath his jacket on the bench.

Sterling misses

Fernandinho was playing wide on the right for City, as he had in the mid-week Champions League win at Dynamo Kiev, and four minutes into the second half he provided the breakthrough. Aguero waited for him to make an overlapping run and the Brazilian duly obliged before drilling in a shot that seemed to go straight through Mignolet. It was the latest in a succession of blunders by the Belgium international and replays of the goal on the big screens drew groans from the Liverpool end. Two City old boys almost combined to forge an equalizer, James Milner shooting wide from Daniel Sturridge's

through-ball, before Raheem Sterling—roundly booed by fans of his former club—squandered a gilt-edged chance to make it 2-0 by shooting wide from David Silva's pass.

He also miscued from an Aguero cut-back and they were to prove costly misses as, with seven minutes to go, Liverpool leveled. Sturridge played a low cross into the box from the right and although Lallana contrived to hit the post from close range, Coutinho followed in to side-foot home. It was Liverpool's first shot on target. Mignolet partly redeemed himself by sharply saving from Fernandinho and with Yaya Toure twice thwarted at a late corner, the game went to extra time. The Belgian also excelled himself in the extra period, jutting out his left hand to save from Aguero, before Caballero repelled a header from substitute Divock Origi at the other end. It was the first save he had had to make, but there were three more to come. — AFP

ROSE BOOSTS SPURS' EPL TITLE CHARGE



LONDON: Tottenham remain hot on the heels of Leicester in the Premier League title race after Danny Rose's late winner capped a dramatic fightback in yesterday's vital 2-1 victory against Swansea. Mauricio Pochettino's side were in danger of losing ground on the leaders when Alberto Paloschi gave struggling Swansea a shock lead at White Hart Lane with his first goal since his January move from Chievo. But Nacer Chadli came off the bench to equalise in the 70th minute and Rose sealed the comeback seven minutes later when the defender bagged his first goal since May.

Tottenham have now won their last six league matches and sit in second place, just two points behind Leicester, as their fans start to dream of a first English top-flight title since 1961. Making the day even sweeter for Tottenham, their bitter rivals Arsenal were beaten at Manchester United and are now three points behind them ahead of next Saturday's crucial north London derby. Swansea, who are only three points above the relegation zone, had an early chance when Paloschi crossed low to the edge of the six-yard box, where Gylfi Sigurdsson fired powerfully towards goal, only to be denied by a superb tip over from Hugo Lloris.

Tottenham striker Harry Kane, wearing a mask to protect his broken nose, should have opened the scoring moments later, yet Swansea goalkeeper Lukasz Fabianski was equal to his close-range effort from a Christian Eriksen cross. Those early misses came back to haunt Tottenham in the 19th minute as Swansea snatched the lead. A

short corner gave Angel Rangel the chance to shoot from distance and the Swansea defender's effort took a deflection off the heels of Jack Cork and fell perfectly for Italian forward Paloschi to lash into the roof of the net. Tottenham's response was emphatic as they laid siege to the visitors' goal.

Eriksen tested Fabianski with a dipping free-kick, then Kane had a low drive turned away by the former Arsenal keeper. Son Heung-min should have equalised before the interval but the South Korean forward, clean through with just Fabianski to beat, could only produce a tame shot that was easily saved. Paloschi had an opportunity from Andre Ayew's pass, with only Toby Alderweireld's block denying him a second goal.

Just after, Rose's low cross looked certain to be converted by Eric Dier, but his shot was brilliantly pushed away by Fabianski. Tottenham had played four games in the last two weeks, while Swansea had been inactive, and their prospects were hardly enhanced by the foot injury that England midfielder Dele Alli appeared to suffer in the pre-match warm-up. Alli had played on but was well below his best as Tottenham laboured to breach Fabianski's goal. The Swansea stopper denied Eriksen with a good stop early in the second half and reached up to palm away Kane's long-range effort.

Eriksen was narrowly off target with another free-kick and Dier also failed to hit the mark as Tottenham swarmed forward. The relentless pressure paid off in the 70th minute when Kyle Walker fired goalwards and substitute Chadli was in the right place to divert the ball past Fabianski at last. Eriksen saw a 30-yard rocket kept out by Fabianski, but Tottenham were too dynamic to be denied and the winner arrived in the 77th minute. A corner was only half cleared and fell to left-back Rose, who took a touch before smashing his shot under Fabianski to spark wild celebrations. — AFP



MANCHESTER: A combination of pictures shows Manchester United's Dutch manager Louis van Gaal (left) having words with fourth official Mike Dean on the touchline before falling over on the floor and Van Gaal falling over (center) and Van Gaal getting up during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Arsenal at Old Trafford in Manchester in north west England yesterday. — AFP

UNITED STUN ARSENAL



MANCHESTER: Teenage forward Marcus Rashford's dream start to life at Manchester United continued yesterday as he scored two goals in his team's 3-2 victory over Arsenal at Old Trafford. The win represented Louis van Gaal's third victory, in three competitions, over the past six days, but more significantly, damaged Arsene Wenger's hopes of winning Arsenal's first league title in 12 years. The 18-year-old forward, who scored twice in the mid-week Europa League victory over FC Midtjylland, was on the mark again in an astonishing first half in which he beat Petr Cech on two occasions.

To make his impact all the more stunning, the goals came within three minutes of each other as United delivered a serious blow to Wenger's aim of narrowing the five-point advantage that leaders Leicester City held before kick-off. After 29 minutes, Ander Herrera started a move with a telling tackle on Theo Walcott, sparking a counter-attack that ended with Guillermo Varela crossing from the right and Gabriel hacking a poor clearance directly to Rashford. The teenager did the rest with a composed finish from a dozen yards, the first shot of his Premier League career resulting in his first goal.

Arsenal's poor defending was badly exposed in that attack and worse was to follow from the next serious foray into their territory with Varela again influential, making an important header that kept the ball in play. Jesse Lingard received the ball and picked out Rashford, who had again slipped his marker Gabriel, and the youngster planted a perfect header past the diving Cech. Wenger looked stunned on the

Arsenal bench, a mood reflected by his players, although his side were able to pull an important goal back before the interval, predictably through the former United striker Danny Welbeck. Mesut Ozil was the architect with an inch-perfect free-kick from midway inside the United half and Welbeck, who eluded his marker Marcos Rojo too easily, guided a header past David de Gea from 10 yards.

The goals were the highlight of a thrilling first half in which Nacho Monreal should have given the visitors the lead after just seven minutes when he chased Ozil's through-ball into the area and was denied well by De Gea. Rashford won a free-kick inches outside the area after a trip by Gabriel, with Memphis Depay's low set-piece being well held by Cech, while Alexis Sanchez replied for Arsenal with a snapshot that flew narrowly wide. The entertainment continued after the restart as United sought to continue a remarkable run of close to 250 Premier League home games in which they have led at half-time and not lost. — AFP

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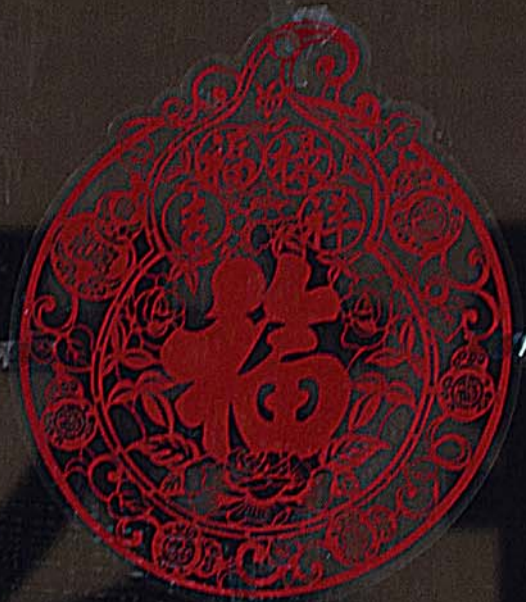
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位于票面正面中部。垂直票面观察，数字以金色为主；平视观察，数字以绿色为主。随着观察角度的改变，数字颜色在金色与绿色之间交替变化，并可见到一条亮光带上下滚动。



BEIJING: A woman speaks on her phone near a display highlighting the new Chinese bank notes at a bank in Beijing. The Chinese economy is littered with companies that can't pay their bills and survive only with financial help from the government. —AP

CHINA MUST MOVE TO MARKET-ORIENTED YUAN RATE: US MORE YAWNS THAN YUAN IN CHINA'S LATE-NIGHT FOREX TRADE

BEIJING: US Treasury Secretary Jack Lew said yesterday that it was critical for China to continue moving toward a more market-oriented exchange rate and clearly communicate its actions to the market.

Lew made the remarks during a meeting with Chinese Vice Premier Wang Yang in Beijing, following a G20 finance ministers' summit in Shanghai. Earlier this month, Lew reiterated to Wang the importance of transitioning to a market-determined exchange rate in an orderly and transparent way. Lew also urged Beijing to clearly communicate its exchange rate policies and actions to financial markets. The world's top economies declared on Saturday after the meeting that they need to look beyond ultra-low interest rates and printing money to shake the global economy out of its torpor, while renewing their focus on structural reform to spark activity.

FOREX TRADING

In the fast-paced, high-risk world of foreign exchange trading, where trillions of dollars change hands every day, there's a quiet corner of the yuan market where traders can get some shut-eye, despite China's efforts to elevate its currency to the top table. The People's Bank of China (PBOC) extended the yuan's trading hours to 11:30 pm in January to overlap with European hours after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) decided it would admit the yuan into its Special Drawing Rights (SDR) basket by next October, a key step on the way to becoming an international reserve currency. But there is a yawning disconnect between the currency's new status and the level of interest in the after-hours market.

"It can be really boring and lonely sometimes," said one night trader at a bank. He said he kept an eye out for rare incoming orders

but spent most of his time watching online videos to alleviate the boredom of being stuck on his own until bedtime. Other night traders who spoke to Reuters said they processed around five orders in the last three hours, which has led some banks not to bother staffing the shift. "One key problem is there is no corporate demand," said a trader at a major European bank in Shanghai. "Few companies feel the urgency to follow global market movements closely."

Because of China's capital controls and central bank efforts to curb exchange rate volatility, there is little speculation in the domestic market, traders say.

Some state-owned banks are trading in the evening sessions on behalf of the central bank to keep the yuan steady, according to a trader at a Chinese commercial bank in Shanghai.

"Every time when the evening rate

appeared to go out of hand, you could sense the signs that state-owned banks are intervening in the market on behalf of the PBOC," he said. Yuan/dollar quotes in the late session rarely stray more than 50 pips from the rate at 4:30 pm, regardless of what happens to the yuan traded in offshore markets, traders said. And trading between the yuan and other currencies such as the yen and euro, is nearly non-existent in the night session, they added.

WIDER ACCESS, SLIM PICKINGS

The relatively steady exchange rate means many corporates don't bother to hedge their foreign exchange positions during the late session because the rate tends to stay put.

"The market still behaves like it closes at 4:30 pm," said a dealer at another European bank, adding that his bank recently decided its night trader would end his shift at 9:30 p.m.

There is also a dearth of overseas investors in the Chinese market, despite Beijing's efforts to widen access for foreigners, partly to satisfy the IMF that the yuan was eligible for its SDR basket.

In November, China allowed the first batch of foreign central banks, sovereign wealth funds and international financial institutions to register to enter the market.

"Right now it's only a trial to meet the IMF standards," said a trader at another Chinese commercial bank in Shanghai. "We have to wait for more policies from the government to encourage market participation, such as introducing brokers and individuals to encourage competition."

A trader from a third European bank said: "I believe when the new SDR basket takes effect late this year, the evening trading may pick up, along with more reforms on the way." —Reuters

POST-DIESELGATE, VOLKSWAGEN RETOOLS ITSELF FOR FASTER RIDE

BERLIN: The biggest engineering feat on display when Volkswagen unveils its new concept car on tomorrow will be the team developing it: a post-Dieselgate management system crafted to operate faster, cheaper and with a lighter grip on the wheel. Last year's scandal over falsified diesel emissions tests caused a cull of top managers at Europe's biggest automaker and brought a promise to overhaul the corporate culture.

But the most meaningful management change taking place was already under way when the scandal broke: aimed less at preventing misdeeds than at improving profit margins, which had fallen behind competitors under an inefficient hierarchy.

Its concept for the Geneva car show will be the first vehicle the Volkswagen brand develops under a new, decentralized system designed to emulate rival BMW, which has a track record of quickly and efficiently getting new cars to market. VW will present the concept version of an entry-level sport-utility vehicle (SUV) in Geneva on Tuesday, three sources at the company said, and will develop the road version more rapidly under the new streamlined process.

Analysts following the company say it could lift margins at the core brand as the parent grapples with the costs of its scandal. The move is pioneered by brand chief Herbert Diess who previously oversaw R&D while an executive at BMW, where an agile structure has long allowed expert teams to run vehicle development without interference from top management. —Reuters

NEW PROTESTS HIT FRANCE'S FARM SHOW

PARIS: French farmers dumped flour over the stand of a leading meat producer at the country's annual farm show yesterday, a day after they heckled President Francois Hollande as he arrived at the event. The farmers' anger has boiled over after months of protests over a crisis in the agricultural sector sparked by collapsing beef, pork and milk sales and augmented by a price war with wholesalers. The upset, which has seen farmers leave their fields and animals to block roads with their tractors and dump manure outside government offices, has also cast a pall on the country's biggest celebration of its agricultural wealth. On Saturday, farmers tore down the agriculture ministry's pavilion, resulting in the arrest of five members of the main farmers' union FNSEA.

And despite calls for calm, the protests continued when a group of farmers attacked a stand owned by one of France's biggest agri-businesses. The farmers blasted the stand of the meat brand Charal with fire extinguishers before dumping about 30 kilograms (70 pounds) of flour on it.

Charal is owned by the agribusiness giant Bigard, which has a turnover of 4.3 billion euros (\$4.7 billion) and a payroll of 14,000. Last year during negotiations with farmers the group refused to fix a minimum buying price.

"For every hundred euros it gets (for its meat), Bigard pays only eight to the producer," one of the farmers said, while handing out fake 100 euro notes. "Our job has a cost."

"When you pay between 17 and 20 euros per kilo (\$8.5 and \$9 per pound) for meat, you should know that we are only getting two and a half to three euros," said Pierre Vaugarny, secretary general of the National Bovine Federation, using a handheld loudspeaker.

In a statement Charal said it "understands the

farmers' difficulties, which are related to structural and short-term problems that can only be solved in a collective manner." A nine-day event held in vast exhibition grounds in southwestern Paris, the farm show is one of the most popular dates in the capital's calendar, with an expected turnout of 700,000 people this year.



PARIS: A farmer leads a cow during at the "Salon de l'Agriculture" (Agriculture Fair) in Paris yesterday. —AFP

UAE CUTS MARCH GASOLINE PRICES, RAISES DIESEL

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates will reduce domestic prices for gasoline in March while raising them for diesel, the ministry of energy said yesterday.

The price of a litre of octane 95 gasoline will fall to 1.36 dirhams (37 US cents) from 1.47 dirhams at the start of next month, the ministry said via Twitter. It cited lower demand for gasoline at this time of the year as well as movements in international gasoline prices and higher supply.

The domestic diesel price will rise to 1.40 dirhams from 1.37 dirhams. Last July, the UAE said it was shifting from a system of fixed, subsidized fuel prices to adjusting prices monthly in response to global trends. It did not reveal details of its new formula nor say whether subsidies would be removed entirely, but announced that fuel prices would be "based on the average global prices with the addition of operating costs". —Reuters



The new-generation Mercedes-Benz A-Class

Mercedes AMG A 45 4MATIC, world's most powerful mid-sized sports model

KUWAIT: The new-generation Mercedes-Benz A-Class has arrived in Kuwait, and will be available at A R Albisher & Z Alkazeem Co's Showroom. Reconciling the conflicting aims of sporty performance and enhanced comfort, Mercedes Benz has increased the range of available engines with an A 250 that produces a peak output of 155 kW (211 hp) and maximum torque of 350 Nm.

With its dramatic design in the style of the successful MERCEDES AMG PETRONAS Formula 1 team, the special "Motorsport Edition" model will particularly appeal to racing fans. The MercedesAMG A 45 4MATIC also benefits from the model update. With a peak output of 280 kW (381 hp) and maximum torque of 475 Nm, the entry-level model from Mercedes-AMG is the world's most powerful mid-sized sports model. The revised gear ratios, aerodynamic fine-tuning and the new DYNAMIC SELECT driving modes raise overall performance to a higher level, underlining the claim to leadership in this market segment.

"The A-Class has been a favourite compact-drive since it was first launched, and this new generation model is set to enjoy even more appeal. Its attractive exterior is complemented by a solid, fun and astonishingly quiet performance, with a myriad of technological options that will enthuse and delight both drivers and passengers. We encourage our Mercedes-Benz aficionados to visit our showroom and see the A-Class on display to understand just how much this dynamic vehicle offers," said Michael Ruelle, CEO, A.R.Albisher & Z.Alkazeem Co.

The chassis: comfort at the touch of a button
With DYNAMIC SELECT the vehicle characteristics can be adjusted in seconds at the touch of a button to the four driving modes "Comfort", "Sport", "Eco" and "Individual". DYNAMIC SELECT allows a particularly broad range of setting options in combination with the new suspension with adaptive damping (optional extra). In this

case the driver is able to modify the vehicle's damping characteristics using the DYNAMIC SELECT Switch. There is a choice between Comfort mode with comfortable damping characteristics and Sport mode for a sporty and more taut damper set-up. A proportional valve is actuated electronically at each shock absorber to control the oil flow and therefore the damping characteristics.

The design: dynamically curved surfaces and a fresh ambience.

Striking lines, dynamically curved surfaces and coupe-like window lines characterise the exterior of the A-Class, following the design philosophy of sensual purity. With a diamond grille, new LED high performance headlamps (optional extra) and newly designed tail lamps with dual tailpipe trim integrated flush into the bumper,

the new generation emphasises the sportiness and dynamics of the successful mid-sized class model series. Apart from their distinctive look, the LED High Performance headlamps (standard for Mercedes-AMG A 45 4MATIC) offer additional safety at night thanks to their wide beam pattern, a light which has a colour similar to daylight and low energy consumption. On unlocking the vehicle, the driver is welcomed by the "coming home" function with its unusual light show. Ambient lighting, available on request, creates a unique and pleasant atmosphere inside the vehicle with twelve different colours which can be dimmed in five stages.

New colours and materials, as well as new finishes for the trim in the dashboard, ensure a fresh ambience. The A-Class is available in a fresh new "on-trend" colour elbaite green metallic.

New features include sahara beige / black leather in the Exclusive package and a new seat design with red or green highlights in the Style line.

The powertrain: engine range expanded further

The Mercedes-AMG A 45 4MATIC also benefits from the model update. With a maximum output of 280 kW (381 hp) and a peak torque of 475 Nm, the entry-level model from Mercedes-AMG is the world's most powerful mid-sized sports model. This power pack delivers a dynamic performance that is unrivalled: it accelerates from rest to 100 km/h in just 4.2 seconds. This means that the new Mercedes AMG A 45 takes 0.4 seconds less for this exercise than its predecessor.

Reassuring Safety

With numerous driving assistance systems

from the drowsiness detection system ATTENTION ASSIST to DISTRONIC PLUS distance control, the A-Class is able to give its driver comprehensive support and protection. For example, the standard COLLISION PREVENTION ASSIST PLUS extends the functions of the previous COLLISION PREVENTION ASSIST (radar supported proximity warning and braking assistance by Adaptive Brake Assist) with autonomous partial braking to reduce the risk of rear-end collisions.

The drowsiness detection system ATTENTION ASSIST (standard) has been similarly upgraded: operating within an extended speed range (60 - 200 km/h), it now uses a five-stage bar display to visualise the driver's current attention level.

The new generation Mercedes-Benz A-Class will be on display and available at A R Albisher & Z Alkazeem Co's Shuwaikh showroom.



ZAIN ACQUIRES STRATEGIC STAKE IN MOBILITY PROVIDER AND CONSULTANCY FIRM FOO

LEBANON-BASED DIGITAL PLAYER TO FAST-TRACK ZAIN'S SERVICES

BARCELONA/KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces a strategic investment in FOO, a

successful Lebanon-based entity offering a full spectrum of innovative end-to-end mobility related services including digital strategic consultancy, user interface and

experience (UI- UX) design, app and web development solutions, digital marketing and incubation of startups.

Zain's partnership with FOO builds on the establishment of the Zain Digital Frontier and Innovation (ZDFI) business unit, which is charged with launching Zain into the digital space with the view to growing the company through innovative business streams that add to Zain's customer service offerings. ZDFI focuses on the areas of innovation; digital services; corporate venturing; and smart cities.

The partnership was announced at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona at a signing ceremony attended by Zain Group Chairman Asaad Al-Banwan, Zain Group CEO Scott Gegenheimer, FOO Managing Partners Elie Nasr and Ghady Rayess, and senior executives from both Zain and FOO.

Commenting on the strategic stake in FOO, Zain Group CEO, Scott Gegenheimer said, "FOO is one of Lebanon's technology success stories and this strategic investment will fast-track and enhance Zain's delivery of innovative digital services to customers and enterprises."

Gegenheimer continued, "We believe in technology unlocking the potential of and

transforming the way people live their lives and conduct their business. Given the coming together of the Internet of Things and the power of robust data applications, Zain plans to capitalize on its relationship with FOO."

Elie Nasr, Managing Partner of FOO commented, "Our vision is to become the leader in digital innovation and become our client's innovation partner. We believe the partnership with Zain will help us reach this goal. As a renowned mobile operator, Zain has proven itself to be a leading innovator in its own right, and we are sure there will be plenty of opportunities for us to leverage each other's experience in the future."

Zain is a leading telecommunications operator across the Middle East and Africa providing mobile voice and data services to over 45.6 million active customers as of 31 December, 2015. With a commercial presence in 8 countries, Zain operates in: Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and South Sudan. In Lebanon, the Group manages 'touch' on behalf of the government. In Morocco, Zain has a 15.5 percent stake in 'INWI', through a joint venture.

HARD TO FIND BREAD IN SHORTAGE-STRIKEN VENEZUELA

CARACAS: At a popular east Caracas bakery, customers can buy Spanish olive oil, Italian tomato sauce and even American chocolates. But bread? Forget it. Cardboard signs on the door warning of "No bread" have become increasingly common at Venezuelan bakeries.

Venezuela gets 96 percent of its foreign currency from oil exports, and as crude prices have plunged, so have the country's imports-among them wheat. The leftist government of President Nicolas Maduro has tightly controlled access to hard currency, and this has affected imports ranging from medicine to toilet paper. Now it is seriously affecting imports of wheat, which Venezuela does not grow.

Add to this the soaring inflation rate — 181 percent in 2015, the world's highest-and you see why customers are mainly interested in buying basic food items such as bread.

The few bakeries that can still get a hold of a 50-kilogram (110-pound) sack of flour to make bread limit their sales to just two "canillas"-thin half-baguettes-per person three times a day.

Customers line up for bread in the morning, at noon and in the evening. "Our ovens are off," baker Freddy Vilet told AFP. His store has crackers, sausages and ham for sale, but no bread. He doesn't even have hamburger or hot dog bread. Rosa Perez, who manages a bakery in the tony Chacao district, said that her store is working at about 30 percent capacity. "With the little flour that we have, we make cachitos (bread filled with ham and cheese) and pizzas. We sell them at a higher price and that helps compensate our losses," she said.

Wheat mills closed

Venezuela appears to have reached a critical point in its flour shortage. "We are truly worried about the wheat mills being paralyzed," Federation of Flour Workers chief Juan Crespo said. Five of Venezuela's 12 wheat mills, which employ some 12,000 people, have closed, Crespo said. The remaining mills employ another 8,000 people. An industrialist who requested anonymity said there is currently "only enough wheat for the next 12 days."

He said he was happy that the government is looking into making more hard currency available and possibly approving new shipments. The government is sending state-bought consumables "so that industries do not close down, but the lack of foreign currency will impact the food inventories," he said. The government recently announced that 170,000 tons of wheat would arrive in March, enough to cover demand for one month and guarantee inventory for another 30 days.

Who to blame?

After visiting four bakeries in a quest to buy two "canillas," an angry 71-year-old Francesco Angelastro declared that buying bread has become an "ordeal." In Catia, west of Caracas, the 4F bakery-a reference to the late ex-president Hugo Chavez's February 4, 1992 attempted coup-sells state-subsidized bread. But customers complain that the prices have just gone up, and are closer to prices found in privately-run bakeries. For Luis Rondon, 86, who has been in a bread line for two hours in his quest to buy two loaves of rustic bread, the culprits are the rich businessmen. He blames President Nicolas Maduro for the scarcity and rising prices "for not setting the businessmen straight." — AFP



GE GETS SUBPOENA OVER SUBPRIME MORTGAGE BUSINESS

NEW YORK: General Electric says the US Department of Justice has subpoenaed the company as part of an industrywide investigation into subprime mortgage lending prior to the housing bust.

According to a filing the industrial conglomerate made Friday, federal prosecutors are examining potential violations by GE's WMC mortgage lending business from 2005 to 2007. The company says it received the subpoenas in January and will cooperate with the investigation, which it says is "at an early stage."

WMC specialized in making loans to consumers with less-than-perfect credit scores. GE sold the business in 2007 after the collapse of the US housing market.

In the last year, Fairfield, Connecticut-based GE has been focusing on selling off most of its finance and lending operations to refocus on its industrial businesses. — AP



PARIS: People visit the "Salon de l'Agriculture" (Agriculture Fair) in Paris yesterday. — AFP

AFTER G20 STALEMATE, FOCUS TURNS TO SIGNS OF GROWTH

GLOBAL ECONOMY WEEK AHEAD

LONDON: Investors worried about the risk of a new global recession are hoping that data over the coming week will show that some momentum remains in the world economy, eight years into its slow recovery from the financial crisis.

Central banks in Europe and Japan may inject a little more stimulus into their

economies later in March. But the Federal Reserve and the Bank of England look likely to sit tight for now, meaning hopes for a period of calm in the world's volatile financial markets lie largely with the indicators.

"It seems economic data will have to bear the burden of stabilizing sentiment," economists at Barclays said in a note to clients on Friday. A first reading of inflation in February for the euro zone on Monday will help shape expectations of how much further below zero the European Central Bank is likely to push its deposit rate the following week.

Eurozone inflation picked up in January but is expected to have fallen back to zero in February, according to a Reuters poll of economists. If there is also a weakening of the monthly purchasing manager indexes for Germany and other leading euro zone countries, the ECB may consider increasing its bond-buying program as well as cutting rates on March 10.

"There is a growing chance that the ECB will do more at its March meeting than simply lowering its deposit rate," Ralph Solven, an economist at Commerzbank, said. US pay-

rolls figures on Friday may help ease fears about the world's biggest economy, which appeared to stumble soon after the Federal Reserve felt confident enough to hike interest rates for the first time in nearly a decade in December.

Solid US job growth and pay growth are seen as the best antidote to the upheaval in global financial markets which has hurt confidence and even raised questions about whether the United States was heading back into recession. Markets have turned calmer in recent days, helped by stronger-than-expected US inflation figures. But the impact of plunging share prices has shaken the confidence of many households and businesses in rich countries.

Economists at Citi have cut their forecast for global economic growth this year to 2.5 percent from 2.7 percent due to slowing activity in developed economies. They said growth could come in below 2 percent equivalent to a global recession- because of the chance of weaker growth among emerging economies. Bank of England Governor Mark Carney said on Friday that the global economy risked becoming "trapped in a low growth, low inflation, low interest rate equilibrium."

Political risks are also on the rise. Businessman Donald Trump could

extend his lead as the front-runner to be the Republican contender for the US presidency on Tuesday when voters in 11 US states choose among the candidates. The idea of Trump in the White House is a worrying one for some investors who balk at his populist, unpredictable style.

Politics is becoming a factor in Britain, too. With a referendum now set for June 23 on its membership of the European Union, sterling has touched seven-year lows against the US dollar. A decision to leave the EU could hurt growth more in Europe as well as Britain, economists say.

Most opinion polls have shown the two campaigns running neck and neck although one published on Friday gave the "out" campaign a four percentage-point lead. More polls are likely in the coming days. Economists at SocGen said they saw the possibility of a so-called Brexit as their top risk for the global economy, topping the chance of a severe economic slowdown in China.

"We would classify a UK exit from the EU as a powerful geopolitical shock, a negative shock," Italian Finance Minister Pier Carlo Padoa-Schioppa said at the G20 meetings in Shanghai on Saturday, echoing the concerns of other policymakers. — Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report

Wednesday 28 February 2016

Summary table with columns: Index, Change, Closing, Last Closing, High, Low. Rows: Price Index, Weighted Index, KXS 15.

Summary table with columns: Volume, Value (KWD), Number of Trades. Rows: Volume, Value (KWD), Number of Trades.

Table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows: MARIN, IKARUS, IPG, NAPESCO, ENERGY, GPI, ABAR.

Table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows: SOKOUK, KRE, URC, NRE, SRE, TAM, MASALEH, ARABREC, ERESCO, MABANEE, INJAZZAT, INVESTORS, IRC, ALTIJARIA, SANAM, AAYANRE, AQAR, ALAQARIA, MAZAYA, ANDC, THEMAR, TIJARA, TAAMEER, ARKAN, ARGAN, ABYAR, MUNSABAT, FIRSDUBAI, KBT, REAM, MENA, ALMUDDON, MARAKEZ, REMAL, MASHAER.

Table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows: Oil & Gas, KFOUC, BPCC, ALKOUT, ALQURAIN, Basic Materials.

Table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows: Real Estate.

Table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows: KCEM, REFRI, CABLE, SHIP, PCHEM, PAPER, MRC, ACICO, GCMC, HCC, KPAK, KBMMK, NICBM, EQUIPMENT, NCCI, GYPSUM, SALBOOKH, AGLTY, EDU, CLEANING, CITYGROUP, KGL, KPCP, HUMANSOFT, NAFAS, SAFWAN, GFC, MAYADEEN, CGC, MTCC, UPAC, ALAFCO, MUBARRAD, LOGISTICS, SCEM, GCEM, QCEM, FCHEM, RKWC, SPEC, Industrials.

Table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows: KINV, FACIL, IFA, NINV, KPROJ, COAST, SECH, SGC, ARZAN, MARKAZ, KMEFIC, ALAMAN, ALOLA, ALMAL, GIH, AAYAN, BAYANINV, OSOUL, KFIC, KAMCO, NIH, ISKAN, MADAR, ALDEERA, ALSALAM, EKTITAB, ALMADINA, NOOR, TAMINV, EXCH, TAIBA, KSHC, STRATEGIA, ASIYA, GNAHC, AMWAL, ALIMTIAZ, MANAZEL, BINH, NIHD, SENERGY, AGHC, KPCC, TAHSSILAT, JEERANH, EKHHOLDING, GFH, INOVEST, Financial Services, Investment Instruments.

Table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows: KSH, NSH, PAPCO, CATTI, DANAH, PULTE, FOOD, Consumer Goods.

Table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows: Technology.

Table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows: MHC, ATC, YIACO, Health Care.

Table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows: Parallel Market.

Table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows: KCIN, KHOT, SULTAN, CABLETV, EYAS, OFAHR, OULAFUEL, MUNTAAZAHAT, JAZEERA, SOOR, FUTUREKID, ALNAWADI, ALRAI, ZIMAH, UFIG, KOUTFOOD, Mezzan, Consumer Services.

Table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows: ASC, OSOS, FUTURE, HAYATCOMM, Technology.

Table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows: ZAIN, OOREDOO, HITSTELEC, VIVA, Telecommunications.

Table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows: BAREEQ, AFAQ, ALSHAMEL, SAFRE, AUJAWAN, MASAKEN, DALQAN, ALEID, MIDAN, FLEX, THURAYA, KCLINIC, AMAR, Parallel Market.

Table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows: KINS, GINS, AINS, WINS, KUWAITRE, FTI, WETHAQ, BKIKWT, Insurance.

Table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows: Parallel Market.

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report



Table with columns: Index, Previous Close, Last Price, Change, Daily Performance, Yearly Performance. Rows: Dow Jones, NASDAQ, S&P 500, Financial Times, DAX, CAC 40, Nikkei 225, Topix, Hang Seng, Straits Times.

Table with columns: Index, Previous Close, Last Price, Change, Daily Performance, Yearly Performance. Rows: Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, MENA Stock Indices.

Table with columns: Currency, Kuwaiti Dinar, Saudi Riyal, US Dollar, Euro, Sterling Pound, Swiss Franc, Japanese Yen, Australian Dollar. Rows: Kuwait Dinar, Saudi Riyal, US Dollar, Euro, Sterling Pound, Swiss Franc, Japanese Yen, Australian Dollar. Global Currencies Exchange Rate.

Table with columns: Currency, US Dollar, Kuwaiti Dinar, Saudi Riyal, Bahraini Dinar, Qatari Riyal, Omani Riyal, Emirates Dirham, Egyptian Pound. Rows: US Dollar, Kuwaiti Dinar, Saudi Riyal, Bahraini Dinar, Qatari Riyal, Omani Riyal, Emirates Dirham, Egyptian Pound. MENA Currencies Exchange Rate.

Table with columns: Currency, 1-Week, 1-Month, 3-Month, 6-Month, 1-Year. Rows: Kuwaiti Dinar, US Dollar, Euro, Sterling Pound, Swiss Franc, Australian Dollar, Canadian Dollar. Global Interest Rates.

Table with columns: Country, 2-Year, 5-Year, 10-Year, 30-Year. Rows: United States, Europe, United Kingdom. Global Bond Yields.

Table with columns: Index, Previous Close, Last Price, Change, Daily Performance, Yearly Performance. Rows: Kuwait Oil, Brent, West Texas, Gold, Silver. Commodities.

For more information, call Global Investment House on 1 80 42 42, www.globalinv.net

Source: National Bank of Kuwait



AL-QURAIN AUTOMOTIVE TRADING CO UNVEILS FUTURISTIC XC90 GALA NATIONAL DAY AND LIBERATION DAY EVENT

KUWAIT: The official agent of Volvo Cars in Kuwait, Al-Qurain Automotive Trading Company, held a special gala event in celebration of the National and Liberation Days at its showroom in Shuwaikh on Sunday, February 21, 2016.

The event, aimed at providing the customers a memorable occasion, saw the unveiling of the latest rollout from the stables of the Swedish car manufacturer - the brand new XC90. The main highlight of the event was a scintillating performance com-

customers of bringing the latest and best solutions suitable to the regional needs.

The XC90, Hanan added, is a fulfilment of that promise, "which has a variety of features designed to give customers a new and a more enhanced driving experience."

Manager of Volvo Automobiles, Kuwait, Thamer Ahmed Al-Ayoub, delivered the welcome speech, followed by an enlightening talk by the company CEO, Ahmed Abdul Aziz Al Ali Al-Motawaa, about the brand and its vision for 2020. His emphasis on acci-



hp electric motor joins the party in plug-in hybrid models. There's room for seven in the handsomely appointed interior, with deeply comfortable seats as well as Sensus, Volvo's new infotainment system, which combine state-of-the-art information and entertainment. A built-in hotspot ensures that XC90 is always connected.

The guests were entertained with fun activities, giveaways, surprise gifts and a live music band. However, the overall theme remained loyal to the patriotic occasion. The



memorating Kuwait's National and Liberation Days that had the guests in awe.

The master of the ceremony and Marketing Manager of Volvo cars in Kuwait, Hanan Abdulrahman Al-Motawaa, added charm to the show with her fluent and graceful presentation. She welcomed the guests and thanked the Volvo team for "organizing such a wonderful event." She also thanked the Kuwait market for the support and trust given to the brand, and she reiterated the company's promise to the

dent- and fatality-free roads in future was deeply inspiring.

Moreover guests were taken through the various features of the XC90 by explaining why the specimen truly belongs to the future. The XC90 is a handsome, square-jawed Swede providing more efficiency and safety than its rivals while adding a dose of Scandinavian flair. Its 2.0-liter four-cylinder uses turbocharging and supercharging to create 316 hp and drives all four wheels through an eight-speed automatic. An 80-



event was organized by Eventique KW, an event-management team run by young Kuwaiti ladies. This team was particularly chosen to organize the event for their love of cars and their belief in the brand.

The event attracted many young Kuwaiti women, who gathered to be part of the project titled, I Own My Choice, run by Eventique KW with the aim of encouraging the younger generation from all walks of life to get involved in community building exercises.

TAKHEEM PARTICIPATES IN INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT CONFERENCE IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: As part of a push to increase its cooperation with similar regional and international entities, Sharjah International Commercial Arbitration Centre, "Tahkeem", recently participated in the Conference for Arbitration in International Investment, held in Kuwait from 17-18 February 2016. Organized by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Justice, the General Authority of Endowments and Islamic Affairs and in cooperation with the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the event was held under the patronage of HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Hamad Mubarak Al Sabah.

The conference was attended by many official entities and international organisations, including the UN Commission on International Trade Law, and the Arab Administrative Development Organisation (ARADO) from the League of Arab States.

As part of the conference program, the Director of Tahkeem, Ahmed Alechlah, presented a paper in which he described the organization's role in the reinforcement of a stable investment environment, in Sharjah. This was highlighted as being achieved by offering flexible, easy to use, efficient services, for the resolution of commercial disputes. According to Alechlah, Tahkeem's procedures are modelled on and operated to the highest international legal standards. Alechlah also highlighted Tahkeem's mission, which is the dissemination of a commercial arbitration culture among the various economic sectors in the emirate. The rules it has adopted are based on "absolute impartiality, accuracy, flexibility, professionalism, as well as quick settlement of all disputes."

On the sidelines of the conference, Alechlah added: "At Tahkeem we are eager to raise awareness of Sharjah's arbitration systems and practices among law practitioners and business professionals - at a local, regional and international level. The importance of these conferences is such that we can foster a spirit of cooperation with like-minded entities in order to achieve our objectives of developing practical solutions for all challenges facing the arbitration sector." "These conferences are an ideal platform for Tahkeem to promote its outstanding services and for meeting an elite group of international experts and consultants in this field. It is also a great opportunity for us to share information about the latest procedures, laws and regulations," Alechlah added.

Through its participation in the conference, Tahkeem sought to boost its collaboration with governments and private agencies so as to reinforce Sharjah's position as a pioneering centre for the attraction of foreign direct investment (FDI) into the emirate.

Discussion areas at the conference included topics such as: international agreements for arbitration of investment disputes in Washington DC, Geneva, at the European Convention, Riyadh, and the Arab Convention; the extent of the agreements' success in attaining their goals; the procedural aspect of arbitration of investment disputes; issues that interfere in the enforcement of arbitration rulings; the enforceable law for arbitration of international investment disputes; and the role of national judiciaries in the control and implementation of rulings.

JOYALUKKAS MAKES A SPARKLING ENTRY INTO KUKATPALLY WITH ITS NEW SHOWROOM

KUKATPALLY: The global giant Joyalukkas Jewellery opened its new showroom in Kukatpally on 27th February, 2016. This is as part of their mega expansion plan they have planned for this financial year "This financial year we are committing ourselves to rapid expansion across India, GCC and a couple of new countries. This complements my vision to make the brand accessible and available to every jewellery lover in the world," said Joy Alukkas, Chairman & MD, Joyalukkas Group.

Joyalukkas Jewellery is also scheduled to expand its footprint in Karnataka with new showroom launches in Hassan and Davangere in the month of March. The brand which is one of the world's largest jewellery retail chains is a part of a multi-billion dollar global conglomerate, which has varied business interests.

The Joyalukkas Group's business interests include Jewellery, Money Exchange, Fashion & Silks, Luxury Air Charter, Malls and Realty.

The world's largest jewellery retail chain has presence in Singapore, London, UAE, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman & India and will soon open in 2 new countries. The jewellery retailer currently has a customer base of over 10 million customers worldwide and offers over 1 million choices in all types of jewellery at each of its showroom.

"Our plan for Joyalukkas Jewellery in this financial year (2015-2016) includes strengthening our presence across various parts of India and opening our showrooms in cities and towns that we feel is ready for the Joyalukkas experience said Mr. Joy Alukkas, Chairman & MD, Joyalukkas Group. The



showrooms will feature over One Million dazzling collections and exquisite designs in gold, diamond, precious stones, platinum and pearl. The collections will be a mix of traditional, ethno contemporary and international designs that have won hearts of customers around the world.

Other than this 'Trust' is an integral part of the Joyalukkas offer which is managed through ensuring assurance and peace of mind to customers on their jewellery purchase. The retail chain manages this through

strict adherence to quality and internationally accepted standards eg. 100 percent IGI certified diamonds, BIS Hallmark gold jewellery and PGI certified platinum jewellery etc. Joyalukkas, is also the first and only ISO 14001-2006 & ISO 9001-2008 certified jewellery retail chain.

"My vision for our jewellery business is to 'ornament the world' and we will manage this by offering customers the best mix of Price, Choice, Convenience and Service" added Joy Alukkas. Other unique feature of

Joyalukkas Jewellery includes consumer friendly value added schemes like 'Advanced Purchase schemes, Joyalukkas Golden Rewards Card, 100 percent buy back guarantee and more.

This international jewellery retail chain is also one of few retail chains to be recognised with many awards and accolades for its exceptional standards in jewellery retailing. Joyalukkas has also been awarded the prestigious 'Superbrand' status 5 years in a row in the UAE.

BURGAN BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF YAWMI ACCOUNT

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the lucky winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners for the daily draws took home a cash-prize of KD 5,000 each, and they are:

1. Mazen Esam Hawwa
2. Mohammad Faraj Alsayed Khalaf
3. Alsheikha - Nawal Mohamad Al-Sabah
4. Ahmad Hussain Ali Hashem

To further add to the anticipation of Yawmi account customers, Burgan Bank now offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, entitling one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months.

The Yawmi Account now offers Daily and quarterly Draws, the Quarterly Draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for 2 months prior to draw date.

Additionally, every KD 10 in the account, will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances to becoming a winner. The more customers deposit, the higher the chances they

receive of winning.

For more information on opening a Yawmi account or about the new quarterly draw, customers are urged to visit their nearest Burgan Bank branch and receive all the details, or simply call the bank's Call Center at 1804080 where customer service representatives will be delighted to assist with any questions on the Yawmi account or any of the bank's products and services.



ROYALE HAYAT HOSPITAL WINS FIRST PLACE

SERVICE HERO AWARD FOR SIXTH YEAR IN A ROW IN HEALTHCARE CATEGORY

By Faten Omar

Royale Hayat Hospital was named first in the healthcare category for the sixth year in a row by Service Hero. Service Hero is the Arab world's only 100 percent consumer-driven customer satisfaction index. Their voting platform empowers consumers to rate the service quality of places they have visited and tried their services. "We are proud once again of Royale Hayat's dedicated physicians, staff and management who work hard to provide the best medical care and services to its customers. When we started, quality of service was one of our major points," said Dr Hamid Ghaderi, Deputy Medical Director.



Dr Hamid Ghaderi, Deputy Medical Director, Royale Hayat Hospital, Kuwait. —Photos by Joseph Shagra

Ghaderi is also an anesthesia, intensive care and pain management consultant and member of a German board. "Improving services is a challenge, and the Service Hero award is the proof that we are on the right track. We have established a system to monitor customer happiness and improving services for them. We are oriented towards the customer, taking ideas and suggestions from our customers to satisfy their needs," he told Kuwait Times.

Ghaderi said Royale Hayat Hospital is one of the first hospitals

in Kuwait and in the region to combine hospital and hotel services. "We are trying to compete with hospitals and hotels in providing hotel services like choosing rooms and a high-class ambiance, along with medical services," he said.

Royale Hayat Hospital started as a maternity hospital but it has added new specialties. Ghaderi told Kuwait Times that the hospital has special packages for deliveries. "We give the patient the option to choose his or her room and doctors. Once a patient is admitted, he/she will get an iPad with all services and applications. If a patient is planning to

undergo surgery, she/he can choose the doctor and check out on his/her qualifications or they can choose doctors from outside the hospital who have a medical license with Royale Hayat," he said.

"Royale Hayat Hospital has a high-class intensive care unit to monitor newborn babies. The anesthesia service is very excellent and Royale Hayat hospital is one of the first hospitals that provides patient with epidural anesthesia and that's one of the main points of why a lot of external doctors bring patients here," Ghaderi said. About the medical staff, Ghaderi said that the hospital has a good combination of Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti staff from various countries (Europe, North America and Arab countries), doctors who have experience in different specialties and they choose the best of the best to make the hospital highly qualified to attract patients and good doctors as well.

To keep updated with the latest technology and medical improvement, Royale Hayat Hospital visits medical conferences inside and outside Kuwait, has an internal education program, monthly department meetings, educational sessions, with every session reported to the management, educational events



with international visitors, and visits to Germany every year to keep updated with the latest medical products to improve services. He added that Royale Hayat Hospital has a good surgery department, dental, family medicine, ENT (ear, nose and throat) department and a well-known plastic surgery center. It recently hired a new neurologist

and endocrine specialist. The hospital also started in 2015 a smaller branch of Royale Hayat in Mahboula as a non-surgery cosmetic, dental and general clinic.

Since launching in 2006, Royale Hayat has promised and delivered the safest, most modern and highest quality of medical care and services to the Kuwaiti society in an environ-

ment of compassion, comfort and care. Royale Hayat achieved this by redefining and setting global benchmarks in hospitality and through providing a culture of continuous learning, innovation and excellence in healthcare, and will always be thankful to the team of doctors, nurses, and staff who are a great part of this continuous success.



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KUWAIT KERALA ISLAHI CENTER LAUNCHES QURAN EXPO

The Press Information Secretary of the Indian Embassy, AK Shrivastava, inaugurated the Quran Expo, a three-day event aimed at spreading awareness about the message of the Quran and its miraculous nature, at the Kuwait Abbasiya Pakistan School on Friday. The event was organized by Kuwait Kerala Islahi Center (KKIC) under the aegis of the Ministry of Awqaf, and attended by the Undersecretary of Ministry of Awqaf, Sheikh

Farid Al Imadi, in addition to other prominent members from the Indian community. In his address the Press Secretary said that all religions teach peace, and that the misdeeds of a small fringe who indulge in extreme acts of violence in the name of religion do not represent its pure teachings. Sheikh Farid Al Imadi, who inaugurated a seminar entitled 'Quran, a Great Miracle,' said the contributions made by the Indian com-

munity for centuries in the cause of Islam are truly remarkable. The undersecretary hailed the efforts of the Indian diaspora throughout the world and particularly those of the scholars from the subcontinent "whose efforts have helped further the knowledge about Islam." Further, Sheikh Al Imadi lauded the efforts of KKIC and expressed his in-depth support for the organization on behalf of the Ministry of Awqaf.

The Malaysian Ambassador to Kuwait, Ahmed Abdul Ghani, who was the chief guest at the seminar, for his part emphasized the importance of the seminar by underlining the need to learn the Quran, "to discover the valuable solutions it puts forth to all of humanity's problems." The event also witnessed the awarding ceremony for the class toppers at the KKIC-run Madrasa (religious schools) and the winners of the WhatsApp Quran Contest.

A special seminar hosted by KKIC President, PN Abdul Latif Madani, was attended by prominent members of the Indian community. A journal published by KKIC was launched at the event with the Director of Jamiya Al Hind, Faisal Moulavi, presenting a copy to the renowned orator, Abdul Malik Salafi. Former State President of MSM, Twalahat Salahi and CP Abdul Aziz also spoke during the expo.



ICSK KHAITAN CONDUCTS SHUBHECHHA SAMAROH

In an emotionally amplified atmosphere the students, staff and management of the Indian Community School Kuwait, Khaitan branch, bid adieu to the 10th standard students of 2016 batch at a grand function held at the school campus.

A number of events were organized to mark this nostalgic moment which would go down the memory lane of the outgoing students. In the welcome speech, KG Shirath, Principal of ICSK Khaitan, welcomed the guests and the gathering. An amazing Mohiniyattam performance was presented by Anitta Rose of class X which enthralled the spectators. Special recognition awards were given out to the students who made their Alma matter proud in various fields. In a nostalgic speech Master Mohammad Mishal and Ms Mariam Paul recollected their school time and

stressed on the importance of life in shaping one's destiny. In his Presidential address, Honorary Secretary to the Board of Trustees Vijay Karayil remarked that self-motivation is the only key to success.

Earlier in the morning, Mr. Crawford Wilson D'Souza, a renowned mind-trainer and life coach had conducted a workshop for students on the topic 'Score More'. Parent representative to the Board of Trustees Nizar KV and other dignitaries presented mementos to the outgoing students of class 10.

The program concluded with the corridor of blessings where all students received infinite blessings from teachers and parents. An emotional song "showers of blessings we need" that was sung by the choir on the occasion was deeply touching.



JABER AL-ALI SCHOOL CELEBRATES DIRECTOR'S RETURN

Director of Jaber Al-Ali Secondary School, of Mubarak Al-Kabeer educational Area, Khaled Al-Sager, his deputy, Fadhel Ghadanfar, the school's administrative and teaching staff all recently celebrated the return of deputy director, Mohammed Al-Hudhainah after a long medical trip to the US. They are all thankful to Almighty Allah for Al-Hudhainah's recovery and wish him a long happy and healthy life. Congratulations and welcome back, Bo Talal.



JAPANESE EMBASSY CONDUCTS CULTURAL WORKSHOPS

The Embassy of Japan in Kuwait organized Japanese cultural workshops in cooperation with DAI, and Yarmouk Cultural Center. The workshops took place on Wednesday February 17, 2016 at Al-Yarmouk Cultural Center. The workshops involved were tea ceremony, origami and Japanese calligraphy. All the workshops were presented by Japanese specialists. More than 200 guests were present and took part in the event. The participants were given the chance to experience the beauty of the Japanese culture in a sweet friendly atmosphere.



KUWAIT CELEBRATES THE BAND OF THE ROYAL REGIMENT OF SCOTLAND

In recognition of the Amir's 10th year since accession, as well as 55 years of Independence and 25 years since Liberation by coalition forces, the Band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland visited Kuwait from 17 - 27 February 2016 to perform musical program to celebrate this unique period of time. The Band is a part of the United Kingdom's 51 Brigade, which is twinned with the GCC countries to provide training and support. It is therefore with great pleasure that the British Embassy Defense Section in conjunction with the UK Ministry of Defense has been able to organize the visit and celebrate the Kuwait/Britain bilateral relationship.

During their visit to Kuwait, the Band

will play at numerous venues including: The British School Kuwait, the British Embassy, The Avenues, Al-Shaheed Park, the Mubarak Al-Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College and one or two other surprise venues.

The Band's History

In 2006 the Band of The Royal Regiment of Scotland was established to supersede the Lowland and Highland bands of The Scottish Division. The role of the band is to support the Army and the State and Ceremonial occasions that occur in Scotland's capital city and beyond. These engagements include Garden Parties for the Royal Family, state banquets and Guards of Honor at Holyrood Palace,

Edinburgh and Stirling Castles and Balmoral.

In addition to concert and marching band, through the diverse skills of its musicians, the band are able to provide a wide range of musical variety encompassing pop and soul ensembles, folk and ceilidh groups, fanfare trumpets and various chamber ensembles. All members of the band are full-time musicians but are also trained as soldiers: in 2003, many members of the band served their country in Iraq, working in support of 33 and 202 Field Hospitals. More recently in 2011 the band served in Afghanistan entertaining the troops over the Christmas period. They are conducted today by their Director of Music, Captain Tony Williams.



AL-DAWLI PRESENTED GIFTS TO THE ELDERLY CARE HOME TO CELEBRATE THE NATIONAL DAYS WITH THE ELDERERS

On the occasion of the National and Liberations Days, delegates from the Communications Unit at Kuwait International Bank (KIB) paid a visit to the elderly care home and distributed gifts among them aiming to bring joy to their hearts. "It brings great pleasure to the bank's staff to visit the elderly care home and share with them the joy of the National Days", said Fahad Al-Sarhan, the Team Leader - Corporate Communications at KIB. He also praised the great effort of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor in providing the social and medical care to the elderly

who also valued the services that are provided to them.

Al-Sarhan concluded by affirming Al-Dawli's continuous strive to connect with the different social and humanitarian organizations in Kuwait, as part of its leading social responsibility program. He also stressed on the bank's strong stand as a caring Islamic Institution that aims at instilling concepts and understandings of Islam by strengthening bonds amongst community members and spreading joy at various occasions, which was achieved during their visit to the elderly care home.



WHAT'S ON - SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

All photos submitted for What's On should be minimum 200dpi. Articles must be in plain text and should include name and phone numbers. Articles and photos that fail to meet these requirements will not be published.

Please send them to news@kuwaittimes.net



WE ALL DREAM IN GOLD: THE OSCARS AIRS LIVE AND EXCLUSIVELY ON OSN

With just one day to go, the countdown for the most celebrated and prestigious awards of the year has begun. Stay tuned to OSN, the region's leading pay-TV network, to see all of the live action from the star-studded 88th Academy Awards ceremony at the same time as the US.

Organised under the theme 'We All Dream in Gold,' and hosted by comedian, Chris Rock, viewers will be in for a treat as OSN, the home of blockbuster movies and series, telecasts the ceremony live and exclusively across the region on OSN Movies Premiere HD and streams on OSN Play on February 29 at 4.30am (KSA time), and the repeat at 8pm (KSA time) on the same day.

OSN subscribers will be treated to daily screenings of Hollywood's finest with a line-up of previous Oscar winners such as Birdman, The Theory of Everything, Interstellar and more, all airing on OSN this month. Film fans can also get up close to all the excitement from the red carpet live on E! as this year's nominees and A-list stars show off their glamorous attire and stop for interviews with renowned TV presenter Giuliana Rancic.

With fierce competition put up by blockbuster movies such as, The Revenant, The Martian, Star Wars: The Force Awakens, Mad Max: Fury Road, Joy and Steve Jobs this year's Oscars is set to make for golden viewing. Tune in to the live airing to watch the festivities and the grand Oscar ceremony only on OSN.



Muse will headline Glastonbury 2016

The British rockers - consisting of Matt Bellamy, Chris Wolstenholme and Dominic Howard - will play the Friday night of the festival in Somerset, England, later this year. Muse - who announced the news on their Twitter page - will now become the first band to headline all three nights of the prestigious music festival, as they previously topped the bill on Sunday in 2004 and Saturday in 2010. They join Coldplay who will perform on the main stage on closing night, making them the first act to top

the bill at the festival four times. And Emily Eavis - who organizes the event with her father Michael Eavis - recently revealed that all three headliners are British. She said: "We've got three brilliant British bands headlining the festival." While she did not confirm Saturday's act, Emily revealed she is extremely excited that Chris Martin and Coldplay are returning to Worthy Farm and admits it feels like a homecoming to have them play again. She told BANG Showbiz: "Glastonbury is like their homecoming they've

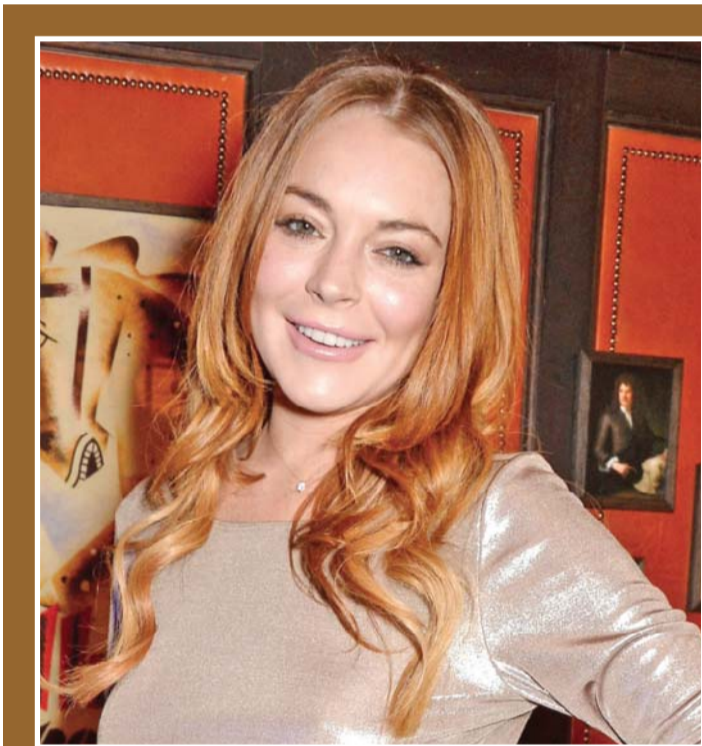
been all over the world they've the Super Bowl and now they're coming back to the West Country. "It's mean a lot for us to have them back, we've always had immense pride in seeing them go off around the world and become so big. They started at Glastonbury in the new band tent in 1999 and then they headlined the Pyramid Stage two years later off two albums which is pretty impressive. It's been an incredible journey and for them to come back here for a fourth time I think is amazing."

Larson was told she was 'not pretty enough'



The Oscar-nominated star has revealed she spent years attending casting calls in revealing outfits in a bid to attract the attention of ultra-critical directors, many of whom claimed her appearance was not suitable for their movie. The 26-year-old beauty, who stars in 'Room', said: "The best thing about winning awards for 'Room' is that I got to burn my denim mini-skirt." "If I see other actresses I'm always asking, 'When did you burn your denim mini-skirt?'" "When we all auditioned together we had the pumps, we had the tank top, we had the push-up bra and we had the denim mini-skirt for those particular auditions." "From the time I got breasts until this moment, I can't tell you how many times I would

go in to audition and they'd be like, 'Can you come back sexier?' "And you can't believe that that's a real thing that someone's saying to you. Like, 'We love what you're doing, you can totally play Adam Sandler's girlfriend at 18 years old, perfect, perfect, age not a problem - but you need to come back and sex it up.'" Brie said the other actresses she has encountered at casting calls all suffered the same fate. She told The Sun on Sunday newspaper: "I was told all the other ones too, like, 'You're too tall, you're not funny enough, you're not pretty enough, you're too pretty, you're not this, you're too much of that.' You just feel weird." "And you're sitting in a waiting room with 20 other girls who are also wearing the denim mini-skirt."



Lohan has transformed her life after finding love

The 'Mean Girls' actress is said to be "in a great place again" since falling in love with Egor Tarabasov, 22, and the pair are reportedly "getting serious" after enjoying a series of romantic getaways over recent months. A source revealed: "Lindsay has obviously had some issues in the past, and probably been attracted to the wrong sort of guys, but this is different. She is really happy and a lot of that comes down to meeting Egor." Despite his youth, the insider claimed Egor is a healthy influence on Lindsay, 29. The source told the Sunday Mirror newspaper: "He's a bit younger than she is, but he's a very smart businessman. He's much more mature than his age suggests, and he's a good influence." "Obviously she's done the older guy thing and that hasn't ended well, so it's great to see her with a smile on her face again." Egor is said to be an ideal partner for Lindsay, who has battled drug and alcohol problems in the past. Her friend said: "Lindsay and Egor are spending all their time together. He is massively keen. He is a perfect boyfriend and - as he is quite wealthy - pays for quite a lot of stuff like meals out and trips away. He has been travelling the world with her, and posting loads of pictures of their trips online."

Kylie says she is too young to get married



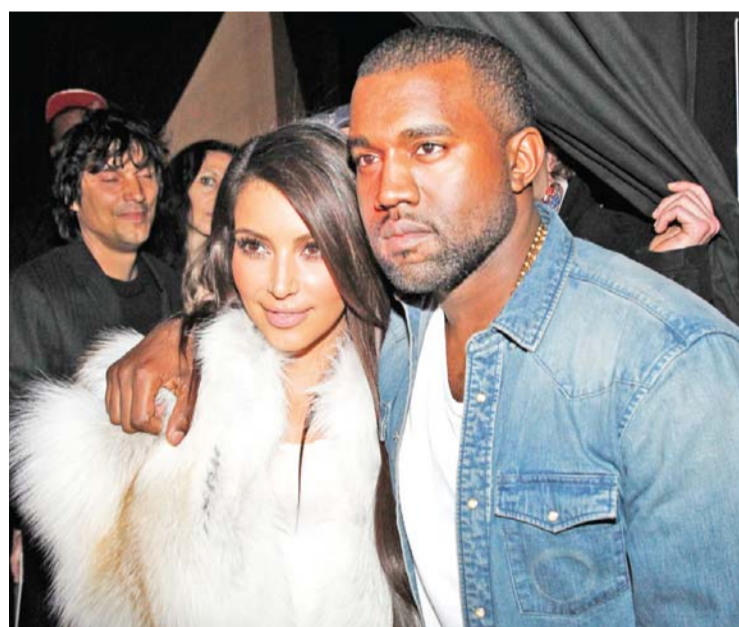
The 18-year-old reality TV star is dating 26-year-old rapper Tyga and although the pair are constantly the subject of wedding and pregnancy rumors, Kylie insisted that she is still "a baby". She said: "I'm not pregnant and I'm not married. Cause you're slacking... I'm just kidding." "Because I'm an infant child and I don't want to be married or have a baby right now!" When Tyga protested that Kylie was "just a young woman that's very focused," she replied: "No, I'm a baby." Meanwhile, it was recently claimed that Tyga - who has a son King Cairo, three, with his ex Blac Chyna - wants Kylie to get his name tattooed on her finger. A source said: "Tyga wants Kylie to tattoo 'TYGA' around her wedding finger. "Where he comes from, that's the ultimate sign of love and commitment. He's already shown Kylie that he's ready and that he's down for her with his tattoo of her name. Now, he wants her to do the same."

Tomlinson 'definitely' wants more children



The One Direction hunk is enjoying being a father to baby Freddie Reign - who was born last month - and can already see himself expanding his family in future. Asked how he is finding fatherhood, he said: "It's great, I'm enjoying it a lot and I'd definitely like more kids but not just yet." Though little Freddie's first words are some way off, the 24-year-old singer - who is co-parenting the baby with his former lover Briana Jungwirth - already knows what he wants to hear first. Asked what he hopes the tot's first word will be, he said: "It's a tough question because the immaturity is just pushing through there... but 'dad'!" And the 'Drag Me Down' hitmaker is a

hands-on dad who has no problem getting to grips with stinky nappies. He said: "Have I changed a nappy? I'd actually probably changed about a hundred nappies before Freddie because I used to help out with my sister so I have changed his nappy, thank you!" This week's BRIT Awards in London marked the first time Louis had been away from his Los Angeles-based little boy and he admitted he was missing his son. Speaking to Capital FM at the MasterCard-sponsored event, he said: "I'm still getting used to it. It's my first time away from him so I miss him, obviously, but it's cool. I do get Father's Day now."



Kim defends Kanye West's recent outbursts

The reality TV star took to her website, KimKardashianWest.com, to slam those who have criticised the rapper for his outlandish tweets, in which he has blasted stars including Wiz Khalifa, Taylor Swift and Amber Rose, and praised his new record as "the greatest album of all time". In a blog post entitled 'Currently', Kim wrote: "LOVING My Husband. HATING That people don't get that Kanye will stand up against the whole world for his creativity and art. LISTENING TO 'I Love Kanye.' WEARING Yeezy Season 3 samples I took from the show. "WANTING Everyone to be as honest as Kanye. WATCHING Kanye shoot his new video. READING Kanye's tweets

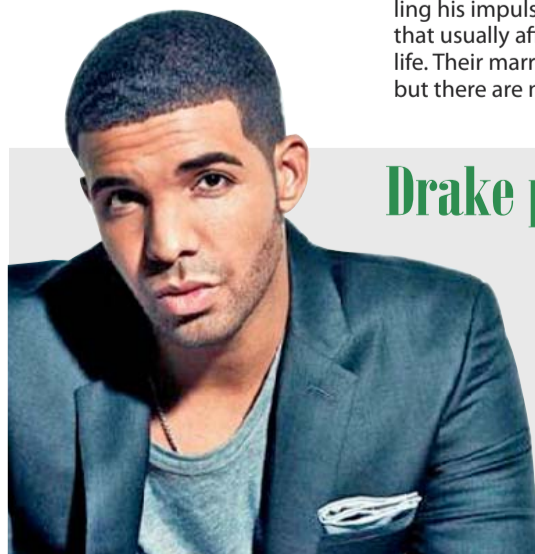
(sic)." Meanwhile, it was recently claimed that Kanye's outbursts have no effect on his family life with Kim and their two children, North, two and Saint, two months. A source said: "It's been a rough week for Kim. She has lots of support from her family though. Everyone knows that Kanye, once in a while, goes on public rants and they are all very understanding that it's exhausting for Kim. It's like a tick that he has. "When he starts his rants, it's very difficult for him to stop. When he starts venting, it's like he needs to get it all out. Kanye might seem mentally unstable at times, but there has never been any concern for Kim, or the kids. Kanye just has a problem controlling his impulses. It's not anything that usually affects their everyday life. Their marriage is not perfect, but there are no plans to split."

Garner and Affleck were separated months before divorce



It was claimed that Ben and Christine Ouzounian, who had been hired to care for the couple's children Violet, 10, Seraphina, seven, and Sam, four, had a fling last year leading to his split from Jennifer but she has insisted that Christine had nothing to do with the end of their marriage. She told Vanity Fair: "Let me just tell you something. We had been separated for months before I ever heard about the nanny. She had nothing to do with our decision to divorce. She was not a part of the equation." However, she added: "Bad judgment? Yes. It's not great for your kids for [a nanny] to disappear from their lives. I have had to have conversations [with my children] about the meaning of scandal." Despite their split, Jennifer called Ben "the love of my life" but insisted they will not be reconciling. She said: "I didn't

marry a movie star; I married him. And I would go back and remake that decision. I ran down the beach to him, and I would again. "You can't have these three babies and so much of what we had. He's the love of my life. What am I going to say about that? He's the most brilliant person in any room, the most charismatic, the most generous. "When his sun shines on you, you feel it. But when the sun is shining elsewhere, it's cold. He can cast quite a shadow." "The main thing is these kids - and we're completely in line with what we hope for them. Sure, I lost a dream of dancing with my husband at my daughter's wedding. But you should see their faces when he walks through the door. And if you see your kids love someone so purely and wholly, then you're going to be friends with that person."



Drake partied for 36-hours nonstop after the BRIT Awards

The 29-year-old rapper made a surprise appearance at the glamorous ceremony held at the O2 Arena earlier this week when he took to the stage to perform 'Work' with Rihanna. But, despite working up a sweat at the event, the hunk showed no signs of slowing down afterwards as he danced the night away at his multi-millionaire pal Sayed Bukhari's exclusive bash, costing £150,000, at Mayfair's Tramp club. A source exclusively to BANG Showbiz: "Both parties were amazing, the best of everything was laid on and the whole club was booked exclusively for

Drake on Wednesday and Thursday night. "It was a really special couple of evenings for Drake and his friends to let their hair down and relax after the BRITs performance. Drake was really blown away by his friend Sayed's generosity." The Canadian hunk and his entourage relished the moment as they knocked back vintage champagne - including Louis Roederer Cristal Rose 2000, Dom Perignon Rose 1998 and bespoke cocktails - and devoured an extravagant sit down meal, which consisted of; Iranian beluga caviar, seared tuna, Sesame Tataki, and beef Carpaccio.

'Fifty Shades' dishonored at Razzie awards

Erotic drama "Fifty Shades of Grey" triumphed Saturday at Hollywood's hall of shame, the annual Razzies anti-awards show. The steamy romance—described as a "warped, disturbingly abusive adult fairy tale" by movie website The Film Stage—took the Golden Raspberry Award for joint worst picture alongside superhero flick "Fantastic Four."



Dakota Johnson and Jamie Dornan pose for photographers at the UK Premiere of Fifty Shades of Grey, at a central London cinema. — AP

The big screen adaptation of EL James' sexually explicit novel also took home worst screenplay, worst actor for Jamie Dornan, worst actress for Dakota Johnson, and worst screen combo for the pair. "Fantastic Four," which ran "Fifty Shades" closest to top the roll of dishonor, also bagged worst director for Josh Trank and worst remake, rip-off or sequel.

The superhero flop was rated at nine percent on the Rotten Tomatoes movie ranking website, where it is described as "dull and downbeat," and a "woefully misguided," humorless adaption of the comic. In the 36th annual Razzies, hosted at the Palace Theater in downtown Los Angeles, the worst supporting actress was won by Kaley Cuoco for "Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Road Chip."

Eddie Redmayne—an Oscar nominee for best actor for the "Danish Girl"—was named worst supporting actor for his bizarre turn in "Jupiter Ascending" as Emperor Balem Abrasax. The Razzies were created in 1980 as an antidote to Hollywood's star-studded, back-slapping annual awards season, which climaxes on Sunday with the 88th Oscars. "The \$4.97 gold spray-painted Razzie Award is handed out to otherwise great talent who should know better than to associate their name with sub-par projects," the awards show says on its Twitter bio. All but one of the Razzie categories are chosen by the 800 or so members of the Golden Raspberry Award Foundation, who earn voting rights by paying a \$40 membership fee, with a \$25 annual renewal. Nominees very rarely attend the Razzies. Sandra Bullock turned up to accept worst actress in 2010 for "All About Steve," a day before winning best actress Oscar for "The Blind Side." — AFP



Bicycles at French custom-made bicycles Maison Tamboite.

French family recycles hand-made bikes as luxury niche

Once forced out of business by mass production, a family firm in Paris has found a new lease of life, once again hand-crafting bicycles as a luxury must-have. Maison Tamboite, founded in 1912, had an A-list clientele including the likes of Marlene Dietrich, Maurice Chevalier, Edith Piaf and Josephine Baker in its heyday.

"My grandfather didn't brag about his customers," said Frederic Jastrzebski. "It was by flipping through his order books and his diary... that we found mentions of these people." It was an uncle who closed down the company in the 1980s when bicycles began being mass-produced and could be found even in supermarkets, Jastrzebski said.

After working in finance for two decades, Jastrzebski was turning 50 in late 2014 when he persuaded his brother-and their wives—to revive the brand with the same sincere, artisanal workmanship, the same quest for authenticity and perfection. In the new workshop near the Bastille in eastern Paris, Jastrzebski has kept the old wooden drawers from the original shop on the other side of town.

He also has the original tools, an old catalogue and the counter on which his great-grandfather built bicycles. Production has begun, with the Jastrzebskis peddling their two-wheeled creations as an "urban aesthetic" for the well-heeled. Gleaming but not bling, the bicycles are virtual works of art, their metal frames contrasting with the honey-toned oak from Italy's Lake Como region used in the wheel rims and the mud guards.

'All models are numbered'

Hand-burnished leather is everywhere: used for the seat of course, but also on the handlebar, the pedals and the lock—as well as the



Frederic Jastrzebski co-head of French custom-made bicycles Maison Tamboite poses in Maison Tamboite atelier-showroom in Paris. — AFP photos

optional satchel. They sell for an impressive 11,000 Euros (\$12,000), with the electric version priced at 15,500 Euros. Each bicycle takes three months to make, custom fitted on the basis of no fewer than 15 measurements.

"The time justifies the price," Jastrzebski said. "Like a watch, a piece of jewelry, a handbag or an artwork, (the bicycle) will take its place as a luxury accessory that generates real emotion," he added. Craftsman Hugo Canivenc, the workshop's only employee, said: "It's work similar to making jewelry, requiring the same meticulous-

ness." The frame alone can take a month to make before the glam embellishments are added, the 24-year-old noted.

Asked about the wisdom of leaving a Tamboite bicycle on a public street, even with a sturdy lock, Jastrzebski said: "All of our models are numbered and traceable."

And let's also remember that it's the most basic bicycle models that are stolen the most. Besides, the bikes make excellent decoration in an entrance hall, "or even your living room," he suggested. — AFP

Philippines hits out at Madonna over flag stunt

The Philippines criticized Madonna yesterday for disrespecting its flag during a concert in Manila, and said it would call on organizers of future events to avoid similar incidents.

Photos from one of her two concerts last week published in local media showed the 57-year-old American mega-star draped in the Philippine flag.



Madonna

While press reports said the audience roared its approval at the music icon, who was in the country as part of her global "Rebel Heart" tour, Filipino authorities were less amused. "Our flag law is strict as we want to instill respect for the Philippine

flag," presidential spokesman Herminio Coloma said in a statement. "This should be made clear to organizers and performers in concerts so that there will be no repetition of the incident."

Coloma said in an earlier statement to AFP that the government was "keen" on banning the Queen of Pop from performing in the Philippines because of the controversy. However Coloma later said the government did not want to ban her, and that the initial statement that it did was based on a wrong interpretation of comments by another presidential aide.

A 1998 law prescribes a one-year jail term, as well as a token fine, for wearing the Philippine flag "in whole or in part as a costume or uniform." The flag flap was the second controversy provoked by Madonna's visit to the devoutly Catholic Asian nation.

A Catholic bishop last week called on the faithful to stay away from Madonna's sexually charged concerts, which often encompass religious themes, calling them the devil's work. "Pinoys (Filipinos) and all God-loving people should avoid sin and occasions of sin," Archbishop Ramon Arguelles said in a statement posted on the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' official website. —AFP

Hollywood screenwriters face their own 'OscarsSoWhite' drama

Screenwriter Alyson Fouse was working on a sequel for the "Bring It On" movie franchise when the studio asked for changes. "They wanted the black girl to be more ghetto, for want of a better word," Fouse recalled. "I said that's fine, we're doing a cheerleader comedy so stereotypes are what's funny. But I want the other side of that, too. I want a girl who's not ghetto."

The African-American writer was able to create a black teen from a posh private school, a rare victory in an industry that makes scant room for those of color or their perspective. "OscarsSoWhite," the hashtag protest over this year's all-white slate of nominees, is applicable to the original and adapted screenplay categories as well (with "Inside Out" writer Ronnie del Carmen an exception).

"There just isn't a lot of diversity within the core of people who are coming up with stories and developing characters," said Darnell Hunt, director of the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. Hunt also has charted writers' employment for a decade for the Writers Guild of America.

West, and sees "very little progress. To the extent there has been progress, it tends to be in front of the camera and very little behind the camera."

Colorization of America

That's despite the growing colorization of America, with the transition to a non-white majority predicted within three decades. The expanding TV universe has been more agile in adjusting to the demographic change than movies, with ethnic and gender diversity in shows ranging from CW's "Jane the Virgin" to Netflix's "Orange is the New Black," and awards have followed.

The film academy adopted voting changes that may, in the future, prevent the omission of actors such as Idris Alba, who won a SAG award for "Beasts of No Nation," and Michael B. Jordan, overlooked for "Creed," while Sylvester

Stallone earned a supporting actor bid for reviving his Rocky character.

But Oscar-worthy roles start with writers and directors, said Kenya Barris, the creator and executive producer of ABC's groundbreaking African-American family comedy, "black-ish." Barris, who is black, works with a writing staff that's majority non-white and half female.

"The moment we make improvements behind the camera, we'll have more opportunities to step up and have real swings at being

noticed - not just for being black, but for being excellent. Not just for being gay, but for being excellent. Not just for being a woman, but being excellent," Barris said.

Diversity yields studio rewards, too. Movies with casts evenly split between white and non-white actors are more profitable, according to a new Bunche Center study that cites "Lucy," the Morgan Freeman-Scarlett Johansson sci-fi drama that grossed \$400 million-plus worldwide, as an example. "This is

not affirmative action. More people would buy tickets if you featured people who look like us or reflect modern society," said Daniel Mayeda, co-chair of the Asian Pacific American Media Coalition.

Mayeda's group is part of an umbrella organization, the Multi-Ethnic Media Coalition, that in 2000 called on TV networks to boost minority hiring in all areas and has seen measurable results. This month, the coalition asked major studios including Sony, Warner

Bros. and Disney to match that effort, including tracking minority employment and investing in "pipeline" programs leading to jobs.

'Business as usual'

The writers' guild has its own program to bring women and minority members to the industry's attention, said Tery Lopez, the guild's diversity director. But they fight a "business as usual" attitude that keeps decision-makers returning to the same pool of white male writers, said guild spokesman Neal Sacharow.

"If folks feel they have a successful formula, they will continue to work it," he said. Alan Yang is an example of what happens when talent, without regard to ethnicity, gets a shot. He started out writing for "South Park" and then moved to a staff job on NBC's "Parks and Recreation," his salary initially defrayed by a network diversity program. There he became friends with cast member Aziz Ansari, and the two went on to create and produce "Master of None," the critically applauded Netflix comedy starring Ansari.

The result? A show that goes beyond tokenism - the old-school version of diversity that made do with a black judge or doctor in the background - and includes a variety of layered characters. "I want the representation of everyone whose stories haven't been told as much to be as accurate, as personal, and as truthful as possible," Yang said. "Some of the stories on 'Master of None' would frankly be very different if they were told by older white guys - no offense to older white guys, many of whom are amazing talents."

Janis Hirsch, a white screenwriter whose credits include the black-oriented sitcoms "My Wife and Kids" and "Eve," has no quarrel with that view. "I can come up with a story, because telling family stories, or single girl stories, there's a certain universality to all of them. But as far as the specifics go, I take a back seat," Hirsch said. "I listen to the black writers. I don't presume to know. How can I?" — AP



In this Feb 5, 2016 file photo, Marsai Martin, from left, Yara Shahidi, creator Kenya Barris, at microphone, Tracee Ellis Ross and Anthony Anderson accept the award for outstanding comedy series for "Black-ish" at the 47th NAACP Image Awards in Pasadena. — AP



(L-R) Actor Brian d'Arcy James, actor Michael Keaton, actor Michael Cyril Creighton, actor Rachel McAdams, casting director Kenny Barden, writer/director Tom McCarthy, actor Mark Ruffalo, actor Jamey Sheridan, actor Liev Schreiber, actor Paul Guilfoyle, and actor Neil Huff accept the Robert Altman Award for "Spotlight" onstage during the 2016 Film Independent Spirit Awards. — AFP

'Spotlight' tops a richly diverse Spirit Awards



Brie Larson accepts the award for best female lead for "Room".



Director Marielle Heller (C) accepts the Best First Feature award for 'The Diary of a Teenage Girl'.



Mya Taylor accepts the award for best supporting female for "Tangerine".

The 31st Independent Film Spirit Awards provided a clear rebuke to the less diverse Oscars, bestowing awards on "Beasts of No Nation" co-stars Idris Elba and Abraham Attah and "Tangerine" star Mya Taylor, making her the first transgender actress to win at the annual awards.

The newsroom drama "Spotlight" was the big winner at the Spirits on Saturday, the day before it's to compete for best picture at the Academy Awards. Tom McCarthy's film about the Boston Globe investigation into sex abuse by Catholic priests won a leading four awards, including best picture, best director for McCarthy, best screenplay and the Robert Altman award for ensemble.

But this year's Spirit Awards, an annual dressed-down ocean side indie antidote to the Oscars, was most remarkable for its more diverse nominees and winners. Neither Elba, Attah nor Taylor was even nominated for Oscars. Each drew hearty applause. "There is very beautiful transgender talent," said Taylor, who won best supporting actress for playing a Los Angeles sex worker in the iPhone-shot "Tangerine." "You better get out there and put it in your movie."

Considerable overlap

In recent years, the Spirits have overlapped considerably with the Oscars, including the last two top winners: "Birdman" and "12 Years a Slave." But this year, the Spirits - which honor films made for \$20 million or less - widely deviated from their stuffer crosstown counterparts. "Spotlight" was the only best picture nomi-



Laszlo Nemes accepts the award for best international film for "Son of Saul".

nee up for the Spirits' top award; the bigger budget

Oscar favorites it's vying with, "The Revenant" and "The Big Short," didn't qualify. And while the Oscars have been beset by criticism for a second straight year of all-white acting nominees, the Spirits boasted five nonwhite nominees out of 20 - and three of them won.

"I'm so much prouder of being a producer than my performance," Elba said backstage about the Netflix release. "As a producer you face a lot of doors being closed in your face and in this case we did have a hard time making it but we got there in the end." Elba brought Attah up on stage to share in

his award for best supporting actor, but Attah later won one of all his own. The young Ghanaian, who hadn't acted before director Cary Fukunaga cast him in "Beasts of No Nation," beamed before a standing ovation. McKinnon ("Saturday Night Live") and comedian Kumail Nanjiani hosted the ceremony, which was broadcast live on IFC. In their opening remarks, Nanjiani introduced themselves as a Pakistani American and a gay woman, "or to Hollywood, a straight woman and her IT guy."

The only Oscar acting favorite, Brie Larson, added another win for her performance in the captive drama "Room." Emma Donoghue, the novelist-turned-screen-

writer, also won for best adapted screenplay for the film.

Studios need to step up

The foreign language favorite from Hungary, Laszlo Nemes' Holocaust drama "Son of Saul" took best international film. And the documentary front-runner, the Indonesian genocide film "Look of Silence" won best documentary. Without the competition of "The Revenant" or "The Big Short," the wins for "Spotlight" likely don't suggest any better fortunes for the film at the Oscars. But McCarthy took the opportunity to celebrate the movie's distinction as an independent film, released by indie distributor Open Road. "Quite honestly, we need studios like this who are going to step up when the other studios won't," said McCarthy, with several of the reporters the films is based on in the crowd. He also shared in best screenplay with his co-writer, Josh Singer. The irreverent and breezy Spirit Awards, held in a tent on the Santa Monica beach, stood apart from the Oscars in other ways, too. Director Marielle Heller, who won best first feature for the coming-of-age tale "Diary of a Teenage Girl," marked her territory in a speech that noted the onrush of interest from bigger productions for the movie's breakout star, Bel Powley. "I call dibs," Heller said of her actress.

At the Spirit Awards, indie-hood can be a badge of honor. In Saturday's ceremony, none could top writer-director Trey Edward Shults, who won the John Cassavetes Award for first feature made for under \$500,000 for his "Krisha." "What can I say," said Shults. "We made this film in nine days at my mom's house and it stars my aunt." — AP

Spirit Awards 2016 complete winners list

- Best Feature:** Spotlight
- Best Director:** Tom McCarthy, Spotlight
- Best Screenplay:** Josh Singer, Spotlight
- Best First Feature:** The Diary of a Teenage Girl
- Best First Screenplay:** Emma Donoghue, Room
- Best Male Lead:** Abraham Attah, Beasts of No Nation
- Best Female Lead:** Brie Larson, Room
- Best Supporting Male:** Idris Elba, Beasts of No Nation
- Best Supporting Female:** Mya Taylor, Tangerine
- Best Documentary:** The Look of Silence
- Best International Film:** Son of Saul
- Best Cinematography:** Carol
- Best Editing:** Spotlight



Ed Lachman poses in the press room with his award for best cinematography in "Carol".



Abraham Attah poses in the press room with his award for best male lead for his role in "Beasts of No Nation".



Tom McCarthy, left, and Josh Singer accept the award for best screenplay for "Spotlight".



Actresses Cate Blanchett (left) and Rooney Mara speak onstage.



Actor Mark Ruffalo accepts the Robert Altman Award for 'Spotlight'.

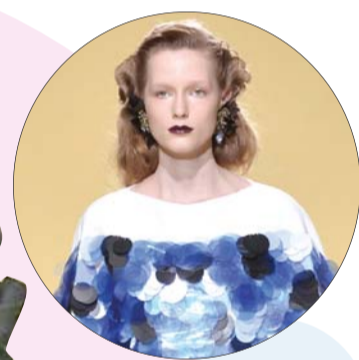


Idris Elba speaks at the Film Independent Spirit Awards.



MILAN

FASHION WEEK



Models present the creations of fashion house Marni as part of the Women Autumn/Winter 2016 Milan Fashion Week. — AP/AFP photos



A man rides his bicycle in a park in Peshawar, Pakistan. — AP

From street food to fine dining in Lagos

An ambitious restaurant in Lagos is setting out to elevate Nigerian street food staples to fine dining, tapping into a growing hunger in the city for upscale West African food. Classic West African dishes, passed down from mother to daughter for generations and served today in busy street-side canteens, are revisited in "Nok By Alara" by Pierre Thiam, a Senegalese pioneer of African cuisine. Thiam's menu scours the continent for inspiration, combining ancestral know-how with elements of popular cuisine. The result, a fragrant lobster "pepe"—Nigerian pidgin English for pepper soup, savory sweet potato and plantain pancakes and

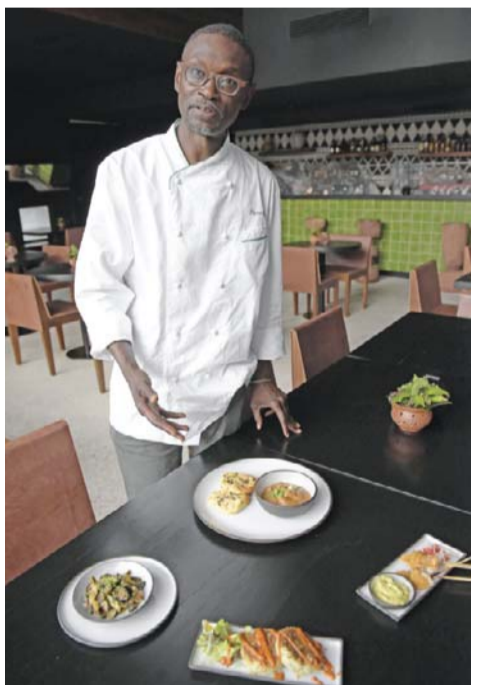
childhood." It's not just the taste that has people hooked. At last, hearty West African food, usually visually bland, is plated with a discerning eye. "This food that you grew up with is presented in a way that you would not expect," food blogger Nosa Oyegun said. "There's that real fine dining with Nigerian food, which we had never seen anywhere, that's really fascinating."

Chemistry to cooking

Oyegun and Folayemi Augusto, better known as "Nosa and Folly," run an influential food blog "Eat. Drink. Lagos," where they review restaurants across the city. Both in their 30s, they are among several thousand "repats"—people who have returned to Nigeria after studying overseas—living in Lagos.

The well-travelled returnees want Nigerian food but with the same level of service they experienced abroad. Since Oyegun came back to Lagos in 2013, many restaurants have opened catering to the emerging middle class in Nigeria. But amid the barrage of pizza shops and burger joints, few restaurants have tried to capitalize on local cuisine. It's a taboo Thiam finds ludicrous.

"Across the continent, there is a plethora of ingredients that are nutritious and full of flavor," said Thiam, a tall, loquacious man wearing brown metal glasses and a white chef's shirt embroidered with his name. "And then we have techniques to be developed. Today we talk about fermentation but we have known about it for thousands of years," he said.



Senegalese pioneer of African cuisine Pierre Thiam speaks about his food at Nok By Alara, a restaurant in Victoria Island district of Lagos. — AFP photos



Picture shows special African cuisine dishes prepared by Pierre Thiam.

hibiscus tarts. "Coming to a country that isn't your own and presenting a cuisine that aims to be inspired by this region is a tricky endeavor," Thiam said. "I was expecting to meet some resistance," he said, but was "pleasantly surprised" at the positive reaction. "People are so happy to have these flavors from



Cheff Ozoh Sokoh prepares food as daughter Jedidiah (left) carries food to server clients in "Strangers" restaurant.



Snail food prepared by Pierre Thiam.

A chemist by training, Thiam said he didn't think he could turn his passion for cooking into a full-time job. He thought cooking was for women—until he left his native Senegal to work in New York and climbed the ranks from bus boy to chef. Two restaurants and two books later, Thiam can claim he introduced a Western audience to African cuisine—and hopes to accomplish a similar feat in Lagos.

Samosa snails

As Thiam works to establish his restaurant, which opened its doors only in December, other young chefs are joining the growing Nigerian gourmet food movement. On a Saturday in February, 12 guests gathered for a lunch club hosted by Stranger, a trendy hybrid store selling food, art and clothing that boasts an impressive collection of Japanese whisky and a careful selection of African coffees.

"Moving back here made me very excited just to have access to all these resources," said Imoteda, a 29-year-old recent graduate of the Cordon Bleu culinary and hospitality school in Britain. "But the thing about Nigerians is that we eat for sustenance, we don't bother to make the food beautiful, you know we just toss it on a plate," she said with a laugh. Yvette Dimiri, who returned to Nigeria a year ago to work in the oil industry, agrees.

Despite loving Nigerian food, Dimiri admits it can get heavy at times. "Most of the food here is full of oil. And it's mostly carb-based. We used to be farmers and we used to walk for kilometers, which is not the case anymore." In the kitchen, Ozoh Sokoh pre-

pares snail samosas and chicken with green curry and "scent leaves," a Nigerian plant that resembles the Japanese herb shiso.

During the week, Ozoh works as a geologist for Shell. But in the evenings and on weekends she's known as "Kitchen Butterfly" and cooks delicious food for private clients. Her dream, like Thiam, is to introduce a more refined kind of Nigerian food. "I would love us in Nigeria to move from eating because we're hungry, to celebrating Nigerian flavors, textures, colors," she said. "My dream would be to go to a Nigerian restaurant in Paris, maybe not with three Michelin stars yet, but to see people wowed, interested, curious about it." — AFP



Senegalese pioneer of African cuisine Pierre Thiam speaks about his book on African cuisine. — AFP photos