THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 2016 RABI ALAWWAL 27, 1437 AH

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BAHRAIN BUSTS 'TERROR' CELL LINKED TO TEHRAN

Min Max 23° **High Tide**

11:03 & 21:19

03:33 & 15:37

Low Tide

DJIBOUTI CUTS IRAN TIES • QATAR RECALLS ENVOY • JORDAN SUMMONS AMBASSADOR

ASSEMBLY PANEL DEBATES REVISED ANTI-GRAFT LAW

DEAL ON E-CRIMES LAW By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly's legal and legislative affairs committee discussed yesterday a new law for the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Authority after its law was annulled by the constitutional court over procedural flaws. The panel's secretary MP Ahmad Al-Qudhaibi said the committee will vote on the new law on Sunday to be ready for an Assembly debate on Jan 12. He said the main amendment to the law is the inclusion of a definition on profiteering and granting the authority powers to search without a prior warrant from the public prosecution. The authority has also been empowered under the new law to follow up cases with investigation authorities.

After the constitutional court's decision last month, the government dissolved the Anti-Corruption Authority which was established about a year ago and assumed its duties in the past few months. But the government immediately prepared a new law to avoid the shortcomings in the previous law and sent it to the Assembly for approval. The law was scheduled to be debated on Dec 22, but the death during the session of MP Nabil Al-Fadhl forced the suspension of Assembly

Justice Minister Yaqoub Al-Sane said there are no differences between the government and MPs over the new draft law, adding the new law affirms the independence of the authority and that it follows the justice ministry in small administrative affairs only.

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AMIR RETURNS HOME



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (right) is welcomed at the airport by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah after he returned home from Morocco yesterday evening after a private visit. — KUNA

DUBAI: Bahrain said yesterday it had dismantled an Iranlinked "terror" cell that was planning attacks in the kingdom, amid a growing diplomatic crisis between Gulf Arab states and Tehran. The cell was allegedly linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guard and Lebanon's Tehran-backed Hezbollah militia and planning to carry out a "series of dangerous bombings" on the tiny Sunni-ruled kingdom, an interior ministry statement said. Members of the "secret terrorist organization" have been identified and many arrested, said the statement on the official BNA news agency, adding that others remain at large.

Among those arrested were 33-year-old twins Ali and Mohammed Fakhrawi identified as leaders of the group. The cell is allegedly linked to the little-known Al-Ashtar Brigades which has reportedly claimed responsibility for bombings in the Shiite-majority kingdom, including one outside a Sunni mosque in 2013. It is also linked to suspects involved a July 28 bombing that killed two policemen and wounded six others. Al-Ashtar Brigade, as well as Lebanese Shiite movement Hezbollah, are on Bahrain's list of "terrorist groups".

The twins have travelled to Iran on several occasions to obtain financial and logistical support, relying on their relations with "terrorist elements" that have strong ties with the Revolutionary Guard and Hezbollah, the statement said. Ali Fakhro and two other suspects also met in 2012 with Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah and his deputy who offered them "\$20,000 in support of their organization," Bahrain said. The tiny but strategic US ally has seen frequent unrest since a Shiite-led uprising erupted in 2011 demanding a constitutional monarchy. Bahrain frequently accuses Tehran of backing the unrest. Saudi Arabia accused Iran Saturday of sponsoring "terrorism" recalling Iran-linked cells that have been uncovered smuggling explosives and arms to Bahrain and Kuwait.

Iran warned Saudi Arabia yesterday to stop working against it as their diplomatic crisis intensified despite efforts to defuse a row that has raised fears of greater regional instability.

Continued on Page 13



PYONGYANG: This picture taken from North Korean TV yesterday shows North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un signing a document of a hydrogen bomb test. — AFP

N KOREA 'SUCCESSFULLY' **CONDUCTS H-BOMB TEST**

SEOUL: North Korea said yesterday it device. The television showed North had carried out a "successful" miniaturized hydrogen bomb test - a shock announcement that, if confirmed, would massively raise the stakes in the hermit state's bid to strengthen its nuclear arsenal. The announcement triggered swift international condemnation but also skepticism, with experts suggesting the apparent yield was far too low for a thermonuclear device. "The republic's first hydrogen bomb test has been successfully performed at 10:00 am (0130 GMT)," North Korean state television announced.

"We have now joined the rank of advanced nuclear states," it said, adding that the test was of a miniaturized

Korean leader Kim Jong-Un's signed order - dated Dec 15 - to go ahead with the test, with a handwritten exhortation to begin 2016 with the "thrilling sound of the first hydrogen bomb explosion".

South Korean President Park Geun-Hye condemned what she described as a "grave provocation" and called for a strong international response as the UN Security Council planned to hold an emergency meeting later yesterday. The North's main ally China voiced its strong opposition, while the White House said it was still studying the precise nature of the test and vowed to "respond appropriately".

Continued on Page 13

3,781 ARRESTED IN BNEID AL-GAR RAID



in brief

Gas leak at Ahmadi refinery injures worker

KUWAIT: A gas leak that occurred at a major refinery in Kuwait yesterday injured a worker but did not affect the plant's operations, state news agency KUNA reported. Workers were able to control the leak in the second line of a gas liquefaction plant in the Mina Al-Ahmadi refinery, Ali Abdullah, vice president for financial and administrative affairs at Kuwait National Petroleum Co, told KUNA. "The leak did not result in any ... material damage as the refinery and gas liquefaction plant's operations were not affected," Abdullah was quoted as saying, adding that the injured contractor was treated at the scene.

Netflix streaming TV now in 190 countries

LAS VEGAS: Netflix's streaming TV service is now operating in 190 countries, with the addition of 130 new markets, the company announced yesterday. "Today you are witnessing the birth of a new global Internet TV network," said co-founder and chief executive Reed Hastings at the Consumer Electronics Show. "With this launch, consumers around the world - from Singapore to St Petersburg, from San Francisco to Sao Paulo will be able to enjoy TV shows and movies simultaneously - no more waiting." While English is the main language for most of the new markets, Netflix said it has added support for Arabic and Korean, along with simplified and traditional Chinese to the 17 languages it now uses. Users can access Netflix through an app on a smart TV, a videogame console, a streaming player, a smartphone or a tablet.

KUWAIT: As part of its ongoing security campaign to arrest lawbreakers, the Ministry of Interior raided Bneid Al-Gar, where it arrested 3,781 persons, a press statement by the ministry said yesterday. A strong show of force was carried out by ministry personnel in the area to prevent lawbreakers from fleeing, said the statement. It stressed that all expat residents must carry with them at all times identification documents to avoid being arrested and potentially at some point being

deported. Furthermore, it urged businesses, citizens and residents to ensure that those whom they hire for work have valid residency permits and not hire anyone without residency documentation or with an expired one to avoid legal accountability. The Bneid Al-Gar raid also saw security personnel entering residences to check the documents of people living there.

For the past two weeks, the interior ministry has launched major crackdowns in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Industrial Ardiya, arresting thousands of residency violators. The current campaign is the second major crackdown on illegal expats and criminals since 2013, when thousands of people were summarily deported for residency violations and even traffic offenses. — Agencies



KUWAIT: Policemen check the documents of workers in their residence in Bneid Al-Gar yesterday. — KUNA

Embassy denies Ethiopian maids abused in Jahra jail



Tweets too short? Twitter mulling 10,000 characters



Why 'Creed' was Sylvester Stallone's toughest role



Amla quits as South Africa skipper after Test draw





KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Kuwait's Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran Majdi Al-Dhafiri. — KUNA



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Kuwait's Ambassador to Italy Sheikh Ali Al-Khaled Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

CROWN PRINCE RECEIVES ENVOYS TO IRAN, ITALY

ACTING SPEAKER MEETS ADVISORS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Kuwait's ambassadors to the Islamic Republic of Iran Majdi Al-Dhafiri, and to Italy Sheikh Ali Al-Khaled Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Earlier, His Highness received Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Advisors

In other news, Acting National Assembly Speaker Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi stressed National Assembly Speaker Marzoug Ali Al-Ghanem's keenness on development of the administrative and technical systems in the General Secretariat of the National Assembly. During his meeting with the consultants yesterday, Kharafi conveyed Ghanem's greetings and appreciation for

their efforts, proved through the constitutional and legal documents during the last period.

Ghanem praised the prominent role played by the Secretary-General of the National Assembly Allam Ali Al-Kandari; employing legal and constitutional expertise of the Secretariat for organizing the structure of the Technical Office, which includes legal and constitutional advisers in the Council. He pointed out that the constitutional views would enrich the debate through parliamentary comment

on the government projects and provides a careful study of various aspects in order to avoid mistakes.

Defense Minister

Separately, Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah met vesterday with Turkish Ambassador in Kuwait Murad Tameer on several issues of mutual interest. During the meeting, the ambassador delivered a letter to Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah from Turkish Defense Minister Ismet Yilmaz, the Defense Ministry's Moral **Guidance and Public Relations Department** said in a press statement. The Kuwaiti minister hailed deep relations between both friendly countries and stressed mutual willingness to promote and develop them, it added. Meanwhile, Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah met with Italian Ambassador in Kuwait Giuseppe Scognamiglio on a number of issues and matters that concern both sides. He lauded deep relations between both friendly nations, pointing to mutual willingness to bolster and develop bilateral cooperation. —KUNA

ENVOY HAILS KRCS' AID TO PALESTINIANS

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) has been instrumental in providing the Palestinian people with much-appreciated humanitarian aid over the years, a Palestinian official said yesterday. After meeting earlier today with KRCS Deputy Chairman Anwar Al-Hasawi, Palestine's Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboob told KUNA he discussed with Hasawi the possibility of KRCS providing a hospital in Al-Quds (occupied Jerusalem) with essentials for tending patients and training Palestinian journalists on personal safety tactics when reporting from crisis regions.

Ambassador Tahboob expressed appreciation for KRCS's efforts last month at brining humanitarian aid to Gaza Strip, saying it was timely and much soughtafter. Meanwhile, Hasawi noted KRCS's readiness to coordinate efforts with existing relief aid organizations in Palestine to avail the Palestinian people with the humanitarian aid they seek.

Syrian refugees

Meanwhile, Deputy Head of Delegation at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Lebanon Marco Succi commended KRCS' hard work in support of the Syrian refugees. The KRCS makes great efforts to provide the needs of Syrians in Lebanon, Succi told KUNA after a meeting with head of the KRCS volunteers' department Dr Musaed Al-Enezi. He said they appreciate the KRCS's work to alleviate refugees' sufferings, adding that they look forward to furthering bilateral cooperation to assist Syrian and Palestinian refugees in

In the meantime, regional media coordinator of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Salah Debaka lauded the rapid response of the KRCS to help the refugees. Since the eruption of the Syria crisis, the KRCS has been active offering assistance to thousands of refugees all over Lebanon, he told KUNA. He congratulated the KRCS on its 50th anniversary. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah leaves for Bahrain yesterday. — KUNA



KUWAIT: KRCS Deputy Chairman Anwar Al-Hasawi meets Palestine's Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboob. — KUNA

INFO MINISTER HEADS TO BAHRAIN FOR GCC EVENT

KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah headed yesterday to Bahrain to partake in the Manama 'GCC tourism capital for 2016' festivities. Sheikh Salman said

that Kuwait participation in the event was continuous cooperation. Sheikh Salman to show support to Bahrain's tourism sector. He noted that the festival was part of the GCC plan to support tourism in the region, stressing that developing the

affirmed that the GCC region was witnessing a number of cultural activities chiefly amongst them was the celebration of Kuwait as the capital of Islamic culture for tourism sector in the Gulf States required 2016. — KUNA

World Government Summit in Dubai to discuss innovative future solutions

DUBAI: More than 150 governments and international organizations will come together for the World Government Summit, organized by the UAE government in Dubai from February 8 to 10, 2016, to share knowledge and experiences in the efforts to improve government work and offer better services to humanity.

In a major transformation, as part of the Summit a number of global initiatives and research studies will be released throughout the year, highlighting the Summit's status as an organization that works constantly to find innovative solutions in government services.

Announcing the Summit, Mohammed Abdullah Al-Gergawi, Minister of Cabinet Affairs, and Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the World Government Summit, said: "The previous editions of the Summit have been successful in establishing a global platform for best practices in innovation for the development of government services. The new name of the Summit reflects the goal of expanding its role on the international level and strengthening partnerships with major global and regional organizations such as United Nations, Arab League, Gulf Cooperation Council, World Bank, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and World Economic Forum."

Gergawi said the World Government Summit has now transformed into the largest platform for the next generation of governments leaders, and aims to prepare for the future and improve the lives of nearly seven billion people by gathering the world under one umbrella.

Gergawi said: "The World Government Summit research and studies will cover several sectors, including future of education, future of economy, future of technology, future of health care, future of development, future of government work, sustainability and future of the environment, cities of the future, and future of human capital management in the labor market."

Creating knowledge

The World Government Summit will witness ten major changes. The first is the new the name and the logo, while the second change is the transformation of the Summit from a Forum to an organization that offers integrated knowledge services for more than 150 governments and global organizations with the goal of foreseeing future governments, creating knowledge and organizing events throughout the year.

Thirdly, the summit will answer tomorrow's questions by preparing for the future and proposing solutions to challenges. Fourthly, the Summit will issue government research and reports and launch global development indicators constantly throughout the year.

'Edge of Governments'

The fifth change will be visible in the nature of the sessions, with their duration and mechanisms enhanced to ensure better dialogue between speakers and the audience. The sixth change includes the development of a smart application and the website of the World Government Summit as knowledge platforms. The seventh change will be the introduction of a smart application to provide effective communication between the participants. The eighth change is the 'Edge of Governments' exhibition, aimed at enabling 15 governments to share their experiences and knowledge on applied disruptive innovations.

Successful projects

As the ninth change, an annual guest of the Summit will showcase various experiences, while the tenth change is the launch of a new annual award - World Government Summit Award - to honor the best minister in the world who has led a new and successful qualitative government project.

As in previous editions, the Summit this year will honor the winners of the third edition of the m-Government Award. Besides, a number of meetings will be organized on the sidelines of the Summit to discuss the implementation of sustainable development goals.

Vital sectors

The World Government Summit will discuss the latest topics of relevance to future technical applications. One of the sessions, hosted by Tim O'Reilly, founder of O'Reilly Media, will look at the future of government work and explore the new generation of smart government. Another topic related to cities of the future, will be discussed in a session titled, 'The future of road transportation', hosted by Jim Al-Khalili, professor of physics at the University of Surrey.

The future of the digital economy will attract much attention with discussions spread across multiple sessions, including one on 'Digital coins: The Future of Money'. A session on the future of innovation and ways to develop environments will be hosted by Christopher M. Schroeder, an entrepreneur, advisor and investor in interactive technologies and social communications.

Specialized reports

The World Government Summit will launch a number of reports in cooperation with knowledge partners, both during the Summit as well as throughout the year. These include reports on artificial intelligence, development of sciences and the future of governments in cooperation with The Economist. A survey will be launched on digital transformation of the government in collaboration with Deloitte. In addition, a report on the future of teaching methods will be released in cooperation with Oxford Analytica, while another report on the upcoming major innovations will be launched in collaboration with Harvard University.

The Summit will also set the stage for several other events, including the Museum of the Future, which will focus on the robotics and artificial intelligence sector.



Mohammed Al-Gergawi with partners of the World Government Summit.



ETHIOPIAN MAIDS JAILED IN JAHRA NOW HOME: EMBASSY

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The Ethiopian Embassy in Kuwait denied social media reports that some Ethiopian women were beaten and abused by police in a Jahra prison. "No, they were not beaten or abused by the police. Probably verbal tussles occurred, but they were not abused or mistreated," clarified Zenebe Kebede, Deputy Head of Mission and Minister Counselor at the Embassy of Ethiopia in Jabriya. "We immediately attended to the case when we received the reports from social media and concerned people. We visited the prison immediately, but found no harassment or abuse took place."

A cellphone video circulated on Facebook and Ethiopian websites in December, showing more than 10



Zenebe Kebede, Deputy Head of Mission and Minister Counselor at the Embassy of Ethiopia

women in a single cell, several of them lying on the floor, explaining their pitiful conditions in Amharic and claiming they were beaten and abused. "The room was probably small but they were transferred immediately to well-maintained deportation facilities," Kebede said.

Runaway maids

Reports said the women may have been imprisoned for up to a week before the video leaked last month. Kebede confirmed the women were detained at the Naeem prison in Jahra. "They were housemaids who had run away from their employers and had absconding cases filed against

them with the authorities. They were arrested by the police at a checkpoint. There are crackdowns going on in Kuwait against expats who are in violation of immigration policies, and these Ethiopians were among those people who were arrested. They were rounded up and taken by the police, and after a few days, they were transferred to the deportation facilities in Jleeb where they were treated fairly, and following deportation procedures, they were sent back home," Kebede explained.

"I call it an isolated case. They were treated fairly like any other violator and they were placed in the deportation center for a few days only. Now all of them are in Ethiopia. We are working with the police officials here with mutual respect and understanding of laws. We know they are very supportive when Ethiopians are detained and they let us know about it. We then process the necessary travel documents," he mentioned.

There are about 54,000 Ethiopians in Kuwait, 50,000 of them working as domestic workers. The Ethiopian government has banned sending domestic helpers abroad including the Middle East and Kuwait. "The ban, or suspension, is in place to address the issue of human trafficking. What we do now is that we negotiate with countries over the rights and obligations of both the employers and workers. If the agreement is clear, only then we send domestic workers abroad," Kebede noted.

No shelter

Unlike other domestic labor exporting countries like the Philippines and Sri Lanka, Ethiopia does not have its own shelter at the embassy. "We do not have a shelter because we have few runaways, and because they can be accommodated in the facilities run by the government. We try to help by negotiating with employers - for example if their salaries are not paid, we demand the employer to pay them and provide them with air tickets to return home," he

As part of its escalating "Kuwaitization" strategy, Kuwait has cracked down on undocumented migrant workers in recent years - authorities deported over 25,000 expats through the Talha deportation prison last year alone. Most deportees belonged to 10 nationalities, with Bangladeshis, Ethiopians, Sri Lankans and Indians topping the list. Authorities claim they try to expedite deportations to avoid overcrowding, as Talha prison can only accommodate 800 persons. The Ministry of Interior no longer depends exclusively on Kuwait Airways to secure departure tickets for deportees, but still often waits for sponsors or embassies to process documents and arrange travel





MP Majed Moussa

MPS ADAMANT IN 'PROTECTING CITIZENS RIGHTS' AGAINST SUBSIDY CUTS

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: MP Talal Al-Jallal reiterated his demands against overburdening citizens or deprive them of rights mentioned in the Kuwaiti constitution. "The government must put His Highness the Amir's words during the opening of the parliamentary term into practice," he said, noting that the recommendations made by the finance ministry on reducing subsidies were against the Amir's instructions. Expressing strong rejection to increasing fuel prices, Jallal instead welcomed any government effort to diversify sources of income instead of relying on oil as the state's sole source of national income and urged Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh to act accordingly. Meanwhile, MP Fares Al-Otaibi stressed that he was serious about filing a grilling to the finance minister the moment the government takes a 'step forward towards lifting subsidies.' He explained that his motion would include four main points - lifting of subsidies, privatization, the Capital Markets Authority and public funds squandering by the investment authori-

Otaibi added that the government was very late in cancelling the privileges given to ministers and senior officials such as vehicles. "Nevertheless, paying ministers and senior officials a KD 250 allowance in return is a waste of public funds," he remarked.

In other news, MP Majed Moussa

Marzouq Al-Ghanem's call to hold a closed-door session to discuss regional concerns and attacks on the Saudi embassy and consulate in Iran. "The Kuwaiti people have every right to know their representatives' attitudes in this matter, especially since the session will discuss the regional Iranian menace," he underlined.

In the meantime, the Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM) yesterday issued a statement condemning

joined lawmakers rejecting Speaker the Iranian attacks on the Saudi embassy and consulate in Iran. The statement stressed that those attacks come within a series of Iranian aggressions and expansions in the region and that Iran had been interfering in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and others countries along with Kuwait. "The recent arrest of an Iranian terrorist group and weapons and the arrest of a network of saboteurs and spies earlier are examples of such interference," ICM stressed, expressing full consolidation with Saudi Arabia.

KUWAIT WINS BEST RESEARCH ON DESERT PLANTS AWARD

DOHA: Dr Ali Mohammad Al-Dosari, a member of the Kuwaiti National Committee on Combating Desertification, has expressed his pride over winning an award on the best research on plants in GCC member states. Following the winners' honoring ceremony on Tuesday, Dosari, also a Kuwaiti researcher, said that the award encourages researchers in GCC countries to take part in similar competitions,

boost the concept of environment and raise awareness over its significance. He added that the encouragement of the political leadership, fronted by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as well as the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, contributed highly in obtaining the award. He noted that his research included 15 kinds of these plants. — KUNA

JUSTICE PALACE FIGHT HEARING SET FOR MARCH 7

FIVE ACQUITTED OF JOINING IS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

KUWAIT: The court of misdemeanors yesterday set a hearing on March 7 to review a case related to a fight between the sons of the late Sheikh Fahd Al-Ahmad and Lo'ai Al-Khorafi and Ibrahim Al-Kandari at the courts complex. Notably, the public prosecution office had referred sheikhs Athbi, Khaled and Dhari Al-Fahd to court for trading blows and insults with Khorafi and Kandari in the Palace of Justice while hearing the 'Fintas Group' case.

Citizens acquitted

The criminal court yesterday acquitted five citizens of charges of joining the Islamic State (IS) group. The five citizens had been facing charges of joining and illegally communicating with a banned organization.

Trafficker's case adjourned

A court yesterday adjourned a case filed against a former senior Ministry of Interior official, who is also a ruling family member, for trading in visas sold to some Egyptian expats along with some other businessmen and women pending summoning some of the defendants. Notably, the court had charged around 25 people of forgery and visa trafficking.

Firearm possession

The criminal court yesterday annulled a previous verdict sentencing a citizen in absentia to three years in jail with

labor over charges of possessing a firearm and shooting during a wedding in Jahra and acquitted him.

Fugitives caught

Capital governorate detectives arrested three expats wanted for financial claims, said security sources, noting that the first suspect, a Filipina, had been wanted over KD 1,332, the second, an Egyptian, had been wanted for KD 2,342 and the third was a Pakistani wanted over a debt of KD 1,468.

Man found dead

A citizen died at his ranch along Salmi highway, said security sources, noting that the man was not feeling well and an ambulance was dispatched to the ranch where paramedics tried to save him, but he had died before they arrived. The body was referred to forensics to decide on the cause of death, that initially appears to be natural.

Ministry reshuffle

Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah issued ministerial decisions appointing a number of senior officials. The decision included appointing Major General Farraj Al-Zobi as Mubarak Al-Kabeer security director, Major General Ali Madhi as deputy security director in Jahra, Brigadier Abdul Rahman Al-Suhail as director of the weapons detectives department and Colonel Waleed Musaed as

3 KG MARIJUANA BUSTED WITH PASSENGER

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: An Asian man was arrested at Kuwait International Airport with possession of marijuana which he admitted of attempting to smuggle into Kuwait. A total of three kilograms of the drug were found hidden in cases of nuts inside the suspect's luggage, said Suleiman Al-Fahad, Airport Customs Supervisor. The man, who faces capital punishment if convicted with drug trafficking, was referred to the proper authorities for further action.





KUWAIT: Director of Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) Lieutenant General Yousuf Al-Ansari received Deputy CEO of Petroleum Industries Company (PIC) Abdallah Suwailem and PIC Director of Safety and Vocational Health Eng Salem Al-Azmi. Both sides discussed matters of mutual concern. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun





In Brief

MINISTER, BUREAU **DISCUSS CELEBRATIONS**

KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah met on Tuesday with Assistant Undersecretary of the Amiri Diwan and Martyrs Bureau Chief Fatema Al-Amir to discuss planned activities marking national festivals. Sheikh Salman hailed the bureau's national role to remember the martyrs of Kuwait and their heroic deeds. — KUNA



KUWAIT PROPONENT OF FIGHTING CORRUPTION

RIYADH: Kuwait is totally committed to bolstering principles of transparency and fighting corruption in all its forms locally, regionally, and internationally, Zakariya Al-Ansari, assistant undersecretary for legal affairs at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Justice said. He made his statements following the conclusion of the second meeting for GCC officials in charge of monitoring corruption and safe-guarding transparency in government work. — KUNA



ENTERTAINMENT CITY'S SPRING BREAK TIMINGS

KUWAIT: The Touristic Enterprises Company (TEC) announced special working hours for the Entertainment City during the spring break. During the period from January 10, 2016 and January 21, 2016, the facility welcomes visitors from 1:00 pm to 10:00 pm every day, said Sager Al-Bader, Public Relations and Marketing Director at TEC. Female visitors have exclusive entrance on Mondays, Sager added.



Photo



KUWAIT: An aerial view showing the junction between the First Ring Road and the Essa bin Salman Al Khalifa Road, commonly known as the Fahaheel Expressway or 'Road number 30,' in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat.



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PIC ACHIEVES FINANCIAL SAVING OF \$188 MILLION

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Petrochemicals Industries Company (PIC) has realized financial saving at the value of more than \$188 million through successful implementation of projects, and completion of more than 533 Six Sigma ones, CEO Asaad Al-Saad announced yesterday. Saad made the remark in a PIC statement on the occasion of the 'Think-K' event sponsored, and attended by, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) CEO Nizar Al-Adsani.

The projects that contributed to such savings include financial enterprises to decrease spending or increase profits, in addition to others to realize social environmental responsibility. Others targeted reducing implementing operations periods, and curbing faults, Saad noted. He said that a large number of employees were trained to obtain the green and black belts of Six Sigma. Green belt



Asaad Al-Saad

holders totaled 128 employees, while black belt ones hit 28.

The PIC is willing to continue implementing Six Sigma and training 25 percent of its staff, besides enhancing cooperation with other similar companies operating in the field. The company desires to achieve a remarkable position by expanding in the field of high value petrochemicals, and enhancing integration with KPC

activities, both here and abroad, said PIC Vice Executive Chief for administrative and financial affairs in Saad Abu-Khousa. The company is planning to hit a distinguished position on the international scene of the industry, he

Meanwhile, Vice Executive Chief for aromatics Hadi Abul pointed to the various challenges facing the petrochemicals industry globally. The company's policy seeks to enhance development in at home and abroad, and as well as bolstering added value by further integration among oil projects, he said.

'Think-K' event organized by PIC, aims to focus attention on sharing the best practices and experiences in oil projects in line with the 2030 strategy of KPC and affiliated companies, as well as projects of health and environmental safety to achieve maximum benefit from the oil sector. — KUNA

OIL SUPPLIES REACH 97 MILLION BPD: REPORT

KUWAIT: Oil supplies last October reached 97 million barrels per day; however, that would not necessarily lead to any hike in the global crude price, according to a report released yesterday. The report by the Diplomatic Center for Strategic Studies said that any chance for a hike in the price will rely on OPEC's decision to lower down its production.

The report indicated that production from outside OPEC had increased the commercial reserves of crude oil to around three billion barrels in October 2015, adding that OPEC pumped in around 31.750 million barrels per day during the same month.

The report went on saying that the International Energy Agency (IEA) also predicted that oil prices will remain low in the upcoming five years due to the increase in supplies and decrease in demands on part of developed nations. By 2020, the forecasted price of oil will be at \$80 per barrel, predicted the report which added that the current prices might reach as low as \$20 per barrel. It also addressed forecasts for the prices in 2016-17, indicating that several speculative reports and researches pointed at the possibility of US crude reaching the prices of \$50 to 60 per barrel.



Despite the lackluster performance for the oil price in 2015, major oil exporters are planning to increase their production, said the center's report, adding that Kuwait recently allocated a sum of \$120 billion for the development of the energy sector in the upcoming five years with \$50 billion of that money

going towards Al-Zour refinery, a project aiming at producing clean fuel energy and petrochemical byproducts. The report also said that Kuwait was focusing on increasing oil production with the discovery of new oil reservoirs north of the country as part of its 2030 devel-

opment strategy. — KUNA



KUWAIT WELL POSITIONED DESPITE LOWER PRICES

'Year in Review 2015' by Oxford Business Group

By Oliver Cornock

KUWAIT: The need for economic diversification was underscored this past year as the Kuwaiti economy came under pressure from lower oil revenues.

However, the country remains well positioned to weather both lower prices and global volatility and continues to benefit from a healthy banking system, rising public spending on new infrastructure, and foreign direct investment (FDI) reforms aimed at improving investment inflows.

Falling forecast

In April 2015 the IMF World Economic Outlook Report projected Kuwait's economic growth would reach 1.7 percent in 2015 before rising to 1.8 percent in 2016. However, in its most recent World Economic Outlook, released in October, the organization revised its forecast slightly downward to 1.2 percent in 2015, but predicted growth would recover to 2.5 percent by next year.

The slowdown is largely attributed to falling oil prices. Still, the government continues to benefit from relatively high financial buffers, which are enabling increased public investment in infrastructure - a key factor expected to support non-oil growth in 2016 and beyond. Indeed, the IMF expects non-oil GDP growth to roughly double the pace of overall expansion over the medium term as the impact of recent investments takes effect.

Oil impact hits hard

Kuwait's fiscal position has deteriorated notably as a result of lower energy prices, declining from a surplus of 11.7 percent of GDP in 2013/14 to a deficit of 4.4 percent in 2014/15. After compulsory transfers to its sovereign Future Generations Fund, and excluding investment income, IMF projections indicate the country's overall fiscal balance narrowed from a 34.7 percent surplus in 2013/14 to 17.3 percent in 2014/15.

Despite promising developments in government spending cuts - including reductions in costly fuel, water and electricity subsidies, as well as travel and other allowances for government employees and payments to Kuwaiti nationals seeking medical treatment abroad - the country's current account surplus has continued to decline, largely as a result of remaining subsidies. The IMF predicts Kuwait's current account surplus will shrink from 31.2 percent of GDP in 2014 to 10.2 percent and 8.9 percent in 2015 and 2016, respectively, before recovering

to around 11.3 percent in 2017.

Capital markets slump, banks stay strong

Capital markets also faltered over the course of the year, with prices on the Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) dropping by 16 percent year-on-year as of the end of August, reflecting weakening demand in China, falling commodities prices and global volatility. Since the beginning of 2014 at least 24 of the KSE's 211 listed firms have announced plans to delist, with another five companies delisted by the authorities



due to inactivity and accumulated losses. According to bourse authorities, the total value of traded shares fell by 12 percent to KD2.45bn (\$8.06bn) during the first half of the year.

However, the state's well-regulated

banking sector has remained resilient, with the IMF reporting sector-wide capital adequacy of 16.9 percent, a 2.8 percent nonperforming-loan ratio, and a provisioning ratio of 172 percent as of the end of June

Construction, non-oil growth to lead in 2016

With the country's non-oil economy continuing to lead growth, the government released the latest five-year economic development plan in January. Although a detailed implementation strategy has yet to be released for the scheme, which will run through to 2020, the vision includes KD34.15bn (\$112.4bn) in infrastructure spending, improved economic diversification and regulatory reforms to attract investment and boost private sector participation in the economy - all of which could push Kuwait towards more robust economic growth in the coming year.

Construction spending is expected to continue its forward momentum in 2016. with investment firm Alpen Capital reporting in June that at \$123.6bn, the value of Kuwait's ongoing construction projects ranked third highest in the GCC in 2014. According to the report, the country's infrastructure sector was on track to grow by an estimated 15-20 percent in 2015 as a result of efforts to upgrade transport networks and deliver government-funded housing with a new metro system and 45,000 housing units laid out under the latest five-year

As of mid-October, some \$30bn worth of projects had been awarded year-to-date, according to MEED, compared to \$24bn in all of 2014, for a combined \$251bn worth of builds either planned or under way.

FDI reforms

Perhaps most promising for the nation's future economic growth, however, was the release in December 2014 of regulations clarifying the 2013 Direct Investment Law. The executive regulations, which are the final step in the law's implementation, include efforts to reduce red tape and lengthy procedures by establishing a onestop shop for licensing businesses. Five months after the announcement, US tech giant IBM announced it had received the first license to establish a 100 percent foreign-owned Kuwaiti company under the new law, suggesting the government's approach to attracting FDI is already paying dividends.

— Oliver Cornock is Managing Editor of Oxford Business Group





Recruiting a **Visits Officer and Team** Administrator

The British Embassy in Kuwait has a vacancy for a Visits Officer and Team Administrator who will be leading on organisation of inward visits to Kuwait of UK Ministers, VIPs and senior government officials.

Standard working hours are from 07:30 until 15:30 Sunday to Wednesday, and 07:30 until 13:30 on Thursdays. The successful candidate may also be required to work outside normal working hours occasionally.

The Embassy offers an attractive working environment and remuneration package for the role, including salary of KD.470 per month inclusive of all allowances. The successful candidate will be expected to start work as soon

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Please send the completed application form along with your resume and cover letter to kuwaitrecruitment@fco.gov.uk. The closing date for all applications is 16 January 2016.





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GROCER FOILS ROBBERY ATTEMPT

KUWAIT: A thief stormed a grocery store in Riggae and beat the grocer, but when he failed to steal anything, he escaped. The grocer filed a complaint at Andalus police station. A security source said an Indian man who works in the grocery store came to Andalus police station with a medical report stating that he sustained bruises and swelling in his left eye, and told them he was beaten by a man who stormed the grocery store in an attempt to steal. Detectives are working on the case.

Camp theft

Jahra detectives are looking for a camp guard who stole the contents of his sponsor's camp and power generator before escaping. A security source said a citizen went to Qashaniya police station and told them his Bangladeshi guard stole from the camp and disappeared.

Fight

A fight between a citizen and a bedoon in Maidan Hawally resulted in the bedoon sustaining a head injury. The injured man was taken to hospital while the other was taken to the police station.

Employee insulted

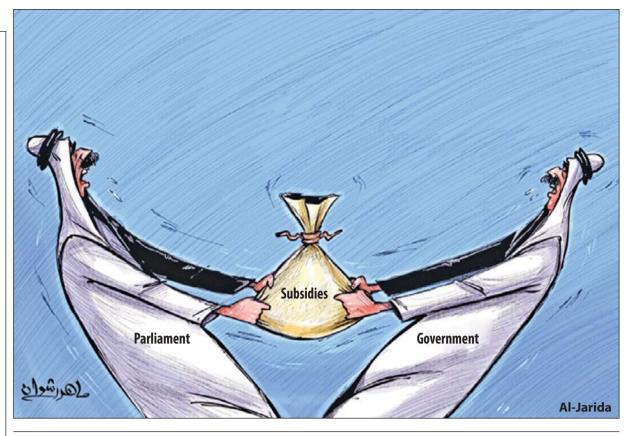
An employee of Al-Sabah health zone filed a complaint against a woman who insulted her over a transaction. A security source said the employee went to Shuwaikh police station and said a woman came in while she was at work, then when she asked her to bring certain documents, she got angry and insulted her in front of other employees. Police are investigating.

Cross-dresser caught

A bedoon man was taken to the criminal detectives department after being arrested in Sulaibiya wearing women's clothes and having an imported bottle of liquor, shabu and drug paraphernalia. Jahra police patrols noticed a car being driven erratically by a girl, and when they stopped it and approached the driver, they smelled liquor and spotted the bottle next to him.

Officer punished

Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah issued a decision transferring a director of a traffic department from his job to become an inspector at the supervision and inspection department as a disciplinary action following a complaint against him by employees, accusing him of processing traffic transactions for his family's company and giving them preference at the expense of others. Security sources said the complaint accused this officer, a colonel, of discriminating between employees contrary to legal and administrative rules and regulations. —Al-Rai



TSC JOINS HORECA AS GOLDEN SPONSOR

KUWAIT: In view of the growing number of major companies joining the Horeca Kuwait 2016 exhibition, The Sultan Center (TSC) announced its intention to join the event as a golden sponsor. In this regard, Bassam Zantout, TSC's Commercial and Operations Director said that TSC is one of the leading regional companies listed in Kuwait Stock Exchange with annual revenues of over \$1 billion. He added that the group business portfolio includes retail, restaurants, telecommunications, investments, information technology, real estate and security solutions.

Zantout also stressed that through its commitment to basic values, providing a multicultural environment and focusing on service quality, TSC is the prime shopping option for consumers in the GCC and Middle East regions with over 10,000 employees, 65 branches and 21 restaurants in Kuwait, Jordan, Lebanon, Bahrain and Oman. He added that TSC serves over 600,000 customers on a weekly basis, providing them with a variety of goods, foodstuff, fresh products, household appliances and equipment, electronics and sports.

Further, Zantoun said that Horeca Kuwait has become one of Kuwait's most important exhibitions, bringing hospitality and food industries experts from Kuwait and the Middle East together under one roof. "This opens the door for establishing future deals and partnerships and expanding cooperation with other companies," he underlined pointing, out that taking part in Horeca provides direct contact with seekers of quality products and

"TSC is keen on introducing its variety of products, especially those carrying the TSC brand and sold for suitable prices in addition to an integrated variety of needs that make TSC a complete shopping center saving customers' time and effort," Zantoun explained.

Notably, Horeca 2016 has attracted over 60 participants of the world's leading hospitality, food industries and hotel equipment companies, in addition to several travel agencies and offices. The event is organized by Leaders Group in collaboration with Hospitality Services Company. It takes place on January 18-20, 2016 at Badriya Ballroom in Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa, under auspices of Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud



Bassam Zantout

Al-Qabas

DROPPING THE DAESH CARD

By Abdelmohsen Jamal

ince the forceful interference by Russia in Syria and the continued air strikes on the terrorist sites, as well as the international acceptance of Security Council resolution number 2254, asks all countries around the world to take all the necessary steps to fight this new type of terror, which relies on the wrong religious dimension, which is facilitated by stray fatwas issued by some clergymen who have a wrong reading of Islamic figh.

Daesh is not a new understanding of Islam, but it is the result of a wrong reality that began hundreds of years ago and caused many tragedies for Muslims and others. Yet with the development of civilization, and the advent of modern state principles, democratic systems and Western influence, the activity of this extreme religious understanding diminished.

But it rose again after the fall of dictator Saddam Hussein's regime and the dismantling of the Iraqi army and escape of its senior leadership, who found the opportunity after the appearance of the Arab Spring, and having several Arab countries exposed to political chaos and international interference. They found their opportunity in cooperating with extreme religious sides and formed a new power and were harbored by some parties and found the so-called Islamic state in Iraq and Levant in cooperation with Al-Qaeda first, then split from it later.

Daesh became a suitable cradle for all those with extreme religious preferences, and benefited from the weak grips of Syria and Iraq, and controlled vast areas and cities in those two countries overnight, then declared its religious state and appointed a caliph, and asked all Muslims including their leaders to pledge allegiance to

This matter encouraged many of their supporters to go to Syria and Iraq to fight the "infidel" Muslims. Also, some of those who were naturalized in Western countries surfaced as they carried out terrorist operations in the countries that harbored them! All that made the West and East pay attention to this new danger, even when they benefited from it for some time to shake some Arab regimes, but after failing to do so, and when the danger reached Europe, and after the Russian interference on the side of the Syrian regime, everyone had to get that UN resolution to fight extreme religious organizations before control is lost and things reach grave consequences.

With the issuance of that resolution, and dropping the Daesh card and removing it from the international game, the countdown began for the end of "Khayal Maatah", as betting on it is over.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

BURGAN BANK SPONSORS WORLD WHEELCHAIR FENCING TITLEHOLDER TARIQ AL-QALLAF

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced that it is sponsoring Tariq Al Qallaf, Kuwait's world champion wheelchair fencer, for the second time on his journey to the USA Fencing Championship. The championship will take place in Louis, Missouri from 8 -11 January, 2016. The bank's sponsorship falls under its corporate social responsibility umbrella, to supporting Kuwait's world titleholders in reaching greater heights and raising the Kuwaiti flag at worldwide arenas.

Qallaf participated in more than 70 competitions across the region and the world over the past 30 years, bagging 29 gold medals. During his participation in the US Fencing Championship in October 2015, he won three gold medals along with the title of 'Best Fencing Champion'.

Qallaf is now well on his way to take part in the USA Fencing Championship for the second time, where he aims to retain his worldwide title and achieve 1st place. Burgan Bank's sponsorship of Qallaf springs from its belief that his talent has defied all odds and has led him to win



Hessa Al-Najadah, Senior PR Officer at Burgan Bank (right) with **Tareq Al-Qallaf**

top accolades at international championships.

The bank will continue sponsoring many more athletes in the future, as

part of the continued development of the bank's overall social responsibility framework that adds more value to the local community.

KIPCO RECOGNIZED FOR **NUKS-USA CONFERENCE SUPPORT**

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Projects Company (KIPCO) was recognized by the National Union for Kuwaiti Students - USA Branch (NUKS-USA) for its Platinum Sponsorship of the student body's 32nd conference. The conference was recently held in San Diego, California.

KIPCO's Vice Chairman (Executive), Faisal Al-Ayyar, received the student representatives and commended them on their efforts to provide support and assistance for close to 11,000 Kuwaitis studying in the United States.

KIPCO's Group Communications Director, Eman Al-Awadhi, said: 'Supporting Kuwait's young generation is at the heart of KIPCO's contributions to the society. We believe in the instrumental role that young people will play in the development of our country, and our participation in the NUKS-USA conference offers us the opportunity interact with tomorrow's leaders and to better understand their visions and aspirations for Kuwait and its future."



KIPCO's Vice Chairman (Executive) Faisal Al-Ayyar (right), receiving a commemorative plaque from NUKS President Fahad Al-Jadaan.

The student representatives expressed their appreciation for KIPCO's support of this event for the

fifth consecutive year. This year's conference was attended by around 3,500

BY-ELECTIONS ON FEB 20 OR MAR 5

KUWAIT: Well-informed ministerial sources said by-elections in the third electoral constituency to elect a lawmaker to fill in the position of late MP Nabil Al-Fadhl might be held on Feb 20 or Mar 5. The sources explained that candidates applying to run

in the elections would be allowed to register with the elections committee for 10 days starting on the day following the publication of the interior minister's decision in this regard, which includes Fridays and public holidays. —Al-Anbaa

OBJECTIONS DELAY RATIONALIZATION

KUWAIT: Official governmental sources said a report by Ernst & Young on lifting subsidies was referred for further study and consideration in view of the public and parliamentary rejection to increase fuel and services prices. iPrices have to be reconsidered, especially those of fuel,î stressed the sources. 'Some decisions on lifting subsidies require parliamentary approval, added the sources, noting that the entire matter

might probably be postponed until the new budget was approved by the parliament in April, when the finance ministry is expected to explain the measures it took to cut expenditure. 'The government wishes to share the responsibility of such a historic decision of lifting subsidies or maintaining current situations and accumulating deficits with lawmakers, the sources concluded. —Al-Anbaa

SCHOOL LIBRARY BOOKS TO BE REVIEWED

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Education's (MoE) assistant undersecretary for activities and educational development Faisal Al-Maqseed stressed that following the withdrawal of eight books from school libraries that had illicit photos and ideas, the ministry decided making field visits to various school libraries to review all books to remove any similar ones. Magseed added that he had received several complaints from educationalists and parents about books with illicit content and that he personally inspected the concerned

books and decided removing them from

Meanwhile, MoE decided cancelling the social studies book for grade 10 and using a new one that had already been prepared under the title 'Kuwait History', with more information about Kuwait instead of some of the topics deemed difficult by many students. Informed sources said that the new book was being currently printed to be distributed to high schools by the beginning of the next school year. —Al-Anbaa and Al-Jarida

COORDINATION WITH 3 GULF STATES TO REVEAL DUAL CITIZENS: SHEIKH MAZEN **KUWAIT:** Interior Ministry passed against him, was able to

Assistant Undersecretary for Nationality and Passports Affairs Major General Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah said uncovering forgeries of Kuwaiti nationality continues, adding that what had been exposed lately is just a small part of a larger crime. Jarrah said the sector he heads is determined to put an end to the manipulation of the nationality file, and said there is direct security cooperation with Gulf counterparts to identify dual citizens, and "this is going on currently with Saudi Arabia and will expand soon to Qatar and UAE".

He said Kuwait-Gulf cooperation to discover dual citizens contributes to a largest extent to preventing manipulation of Kuwaiti nationality, especially since one of the accused in the forgery of a nationality file who escaped from a sentence

hide because he has nationality of another country in a different name and continued entering and leaving Kuwait and continued with his criminal act.

Jarrah regretted that one of the suspects in this case worked at the nationality department, and also that the suspects were "Kuwaitis who found the Kuwait nationality cheap to a point that they added those who do not deserve the honor of getting it in their file, instead of their children, who are in other countries in exchange for a few dinars".

Parliamentary panel

He appreciated the parliamentary panel dealing with this issue, and pointed to the adoption by MP Abdullah Al-Turaiji of the issue in addition to other MPs. He said their defense of this national issue will have a



Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah

great effect on supporting the efforts of security departments.

When asked about the delay in revealing such files, especially that some issues go back to a few years through which the forgers who became Kuwaitis

benefited much more than what they paid to get the nationality and its advantages such as housing loans, housing care, marriage loan and student scholarships, Jarrah said the issue "is not as easy as some imagine, because it requires checking and follow up, in addition to prosecution warrants and assurances so that it will be possible to arrest a forger". He reminded of the report of Sheikh Thamer in checking the manipulation of nationality tests, which had many facts that prove that the issue is not transient and that there are many manipulators".

He said nationality manipulation is almost non-existent since the past two years due to a new plan that was made to investigate and monitor with its discovery systems, most important of which are DNA tests.—Al-Rai

Kuwait Times nternational

THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 2016

BANGLADESH UPHOLDS DEATH SENTENCE FOR ISLAMIST LEADER

Palestinian violence marked by an increased female role

Page 11



COLOGNE: In this Dec 31, 2015 picture, people gather at the Cologne main station. — AP

MERKEL UNDER FIRE AFTER NEW YEAR SEX ASSAULTS

VICTIMS BLAMED MEN OF 'ARAB OR NORTH AFRICAN' APPEARANCE

BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel came under mounting pressure yesterday over her welcoming stance toward migrants, which opponents have linked to a shocking rash of apparently coordinated sex attacks in Cologne on New Year's Eve.

Police in the western city said they have received more than 100 complaints by women reporting assaults ranging from groping to two rapes, allegedly committed in a large crowd of revelers during year-end festivities outside the city's main train station and its famed Gothic cathedral.

Victims blamed men of "Arab or North African" appearance, inflaming a heated public debate about Germany's ability to cope with the nearly 1.1 million asylum seekers the country took in last year. Authorities have said there is no concrete indication that the perpetrators were asylum seekers who arrived in last year's record influx. No arrests have been made.

However critics of Merkel's liberal refugee policy charged that the Cologne assaults proved she was playing with fire without a clear strategy to integrate the mainly Muslim newcomers who will settle in Germany. The right-wing populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, which hopes to gain seats in three regional elections in March, charged the attacks were "a result of unchecked immigration". Late Tuesday 200-300 people, according to police estimates, gathered in front of Cologne cathedral calling for more respect for women. One female demonstrator held a sign reading: "Mrs Merkel, what are you doing? This is scary".

'Countless weeping women'

"If asylum seekers or refugees carry out these kind of attacks... it will bring their stay in Germany to an abrupt end," warned Andreas Scheuer, general secretary of Merkel's Bavarian allies, the Christian Social Union, which has demanded she set a strict upper limit of 200,000 newcomers per year. Merkel was due to speak at a meeting of the CSU in Bavaria, just weeks after its leader Horst Seehofer gave her a humiliating dressing-down over her position on refugees at another party event.

Meanwhile in Brussels, EU Migration Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos hosted an emergency meeting of ministers from Sweden, Denmark and Germany amid concerns for the Schengen passport-free zone after Stockholm and Copenhagen this week tightened their

border controls due to the migrant crisis.

The two countries agreed to lift temporary border checks as soon as possible, but only after migrant flows decline. Merkel has urged a thorough investigation of the "repugnant" attacks in Cologne, which she said required "a tough response from the state". Witnesses said groups of 20-30 young, intoxicated men out of a crowd of about 1,000 people had surrounded victims, assaulted them and in several cases robbed them. A plain-clothes policewoman was reportedly among those attacked. Victims described terrifying scenes in the marauding mob. Steffi, 31, said she saw "countless weeping women" when she arrived at the station and was hit with a volley of sexist slurs shouted in German as she made her way through the crowd. "I saw a girl... who was crying, with ripped stockings, her skirt askewshe was just wrecked," she told the daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung.

"A young guy came out of the crowd and made vulgar comments. 'Can I help you? I know I can help you' he said with a strong accent and made obscene gestures with his hand. When she wanted to get away, he followed her. I told him to piss off." Authorities urged victims to file complaints after facing accusations of initially playing down the rampage. "We assume more people will come forward," said police Chief Wolfgang Albers, who yesterday dismissed calls for his resignation. The northern port city of Hamburg said it had received 53 reports of similar attacks at New Year's street parties.

'General suspicion'

Justice Minister Heiko Maas warned against scape goating refugees over the assaults, which he said appeared to be coordinated". "No one should exploit the attacks to smear refugees as a group," he told news agency DPA. Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere lashed out at Cologne police for failing to stop the assaults.

"The police cannot work in this way," de Maiziere told public TV channel ARD late Tuesday. "I am urgently demanding clarification." Faced with accusations of selfcensorship of the inflammatory case, which took four days to hit national media outlets, public broadcaster ZDF apologized for delays in reporting on the melee. "The news situation was clear enough," wrote deputy chief editor Elmar Thevessen on Facebook, calling it a "mistake" not to cover the incidents sooner.— AFP

SWEDEN, DENMARK AGREE TO LIFT BORDER CHECKS

BRUSSELS: Sweden and Denmark have agreed to lift temporary border checks as soon as possible but must first slow migrant flows, the EU said yesterday after emergency talks Europe's passport-free Schengen zone. EU Migration Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos called the meeting after Denmark this week slapped spot checks on its border with Germany, and Sweden imposed its own controls on travellers

"We agreed to keep (the measures) to a minimum and return to normal as soon as possible. This means the flows have to be slowed down," Avramopoulos said following the talks in Brussels with officials from Sweden, Denmark and Germany. "We all agreed that Schengen and free movement must be safeguarded," Avramopoulos added.

More than a million refugees and migrants arrived in Europe in 2015 — many of them fleeing the war in Syria-in the worst crisis of its kind to face the continent since World War II. The EU's cherished passport-free Schengen area has come

under huge strain, as many countries have reintroduced border controls to deal with the flow of migrants trying to reach wealthy Germany, Sweden and other countries from the main landing point in Greece.

Schengen rules mean checks can be reintroduced for up to six months. Swedish migration minister Morgan Johansson said the new checks "should not be put in place longer than we need". He said the controls were necessary because his country has taken in more asylum seekers per capita than any other EU nation — 160,000 asylum requests last year, including 26,000 unaccompanied minors, with 115,000 of them in the last four months. Danish immigration minister Inger Stoejberg said they were "monitoring the situation by the hour" but added that "in Denmark we don't wish to be the final destination for thousands and thousands of asylum seekers." German interior ministry official Ole Schroeder said part of the problem was that an EU scheme to relocate 160,000 refugees from frontline Greece and Italy to other member states was not working. — AFP



CHINESE GAY MAN SUES FOR RIGHT TO MARRY

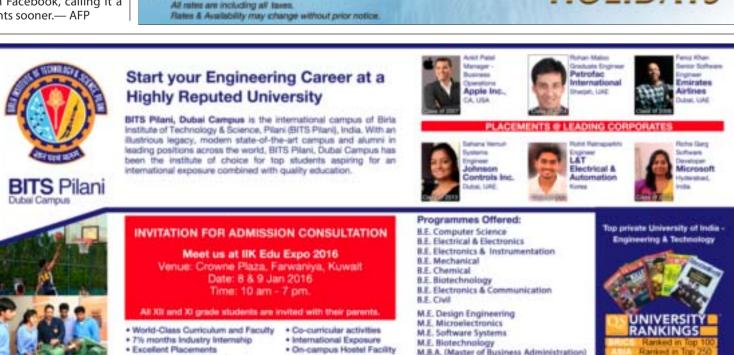
BEIJING: A court has accepted China's first same-sex marriage case, lodged by a gay man against a civil affairs bureau for denying him the right to marry, in a decision hailed as a step forward for gay rights. While homosexuality is not illegal in China, and large cities have thriving gay scenes, same-sex marriage is not legal and same-sex couples have no legal protections. Sun Wenlin, 26, told Reuters a court in Changsha, the capital of Hunan province, had accepted his lawsuit on Tuesday.

"I think from a legal point of view, we should be successful," Sun said. "Our marriage law says there is the freedom to marry and gender equality. These words can be applied to same-sex marriage." Sun said he had filed the lawsuit in December because he wanted to form a family unit with his 36-year-old

Sun said he had tried to register to marry his boyfriend at the Furong district civil affairs bureau in June but was rejected by an official who told him "marriage had to be between a man and woman".

Officials at the Furong district civil affairs bureau could not be reached for comment and a court official in Furong, where the case will be heard, said the court "will not comment on cases before they are heard".

China is becoming more tolerant of homosexuality, which until 2001 was listed as a mental disorder, but many gay people remain under heavy pressure to stay in the closet. Activists said the court's acceptance of the case was significant and would likely lead to more such cases. "In China, courts often reject politically sensitive cases, so the fact that the lawsuit is accepted signals some official willingness to address discrimination against LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) people, which is encouraging," said Maya Wang, a China researcher at New York-based group Human Rights Watch. —Reuters



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OMAN REGRETS 'UNACCEPTABLE' ANTI-SAUDI ATTACKS IN IRAN

MUSCAT: Oman yesterday said it regretted the "unacceptable" attacks on Saudi missions in Iran but did not announce any measures against the Islamic republic, after some Gulf nations downgraded diplomatic ties. The Omani reaction comes four days after protesters torched Riyadh's embassy

and its consulate in Iran over Saudi Arabia's execution of Sheikh Nimr Al-Nimr, a prominent Shiite cleric accused of fomenting sedition in the Sunni-ruled kingdom. The sultanate "expressed its deep regret" over the attacks, which it described as "unacceptable" in a foreign ministry statement

Oman stressed the "need to find new rules that prohibit any form of interference in the internal affairs of other countries." The sultanate is known for its historically strong ties with Iran but is also a member

published by the official ONA news of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), led by regional heavyweight Saudi Arabia. Media reports in Tehran said Oman's foreign minister was expected in the Iranian capital yesterday. The assaults on its missions prompted Riyadh on Sunday to break off diplomatic ties with

Iran and order its diplomats to leave the kingdom. Saudi allies Bahrain and Sudan have followed suit and the United Arab Emirates downgraded its ties with Tehran. Qatar, another GCC member, also "strongly condemned" the attacks, but like Oman it did not take any measures. —AFP

PALESTINIAN VIOLENCE MARKED BY AN INCREASED FEMALE ROLE

Brewing desperation of a younger generation

NABLUS, West Bank: When Palestinian youths began a wave of grassroots and often suicidal stabbing attacks against Israeli soldiers and civilians several months ago, it wasn't his three sons that Ramiz Hassoneh was worried about - it was his daughter.

Ignoring her father's warnings, 20year-old Maram took a kitchen knife to an Israeli military checkpoint on Dec 1 and was shot dead as she tried to attack the soldiers, according to the Israeli military. The deadly mission put her among some 20 young females who have been involved in attacks on Israelis in recent months - a new trend that has confounded both Palestinian families and Israeli security officials.

troubled by TV images showing the death of young Palestinians killed in attacks and clashes with Israel.

She had memorized the entire Quran and cited religious and nationalistic motives for her desire to strike at Israelis. Unlike her younger brothers, who busied themselves with daily life, her father said Maram was an independent thinker who couldn't be swayed from her convictions, even after serving six months in prison for another unsuccessful stabbing attempt on a soldier two years earlier.

'Sensitive to corruption'

"Girls are more sensitive to the occupation. They are more emotionpotato peelers.

At least 132 Palestinians have been killed, of whom 11 were women Israel has identified 91 of the Palestinians killed as attackers; the rest died in clashes with Israeli troops. Israel says the violence is the result of incitement by Palestinian leaders and on social media sites. The Palestinians say it stems from frustration over nearly 50 years of occupation, failed peace talks and continued Israeli settlement con-

In previous rounds of violence, women were expected to stay home while the boys fought. But women's increased presence online, where

Palestinian, mistaking him for an Israeli, with a pair of scissors near a popular Jerusalem marketplace. Security camera footage captured a police officer shooting one of them dead and wounding the other. Ibrahim Awwad, the father of 16-yearold Norhan, who was wounded, said he was shocked by their botched attack and could only speculate that they were driven by the daily life in the Qalandia refugee camp north of Jerusalem, where they often woke to the sounds of shootings.

"If I knew they were going to carry out an attack, I would have tied them up in the house," he said. "But everything was normal. There were no signs." Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said that because females didn't fit the typical profile of an attacker, they aroused little suspicion and had an easier time getting around Israeli checkpoints. That has now changed.

Hanan Ashrawi, the most senior female Palestinian official, said the surge in attacks reflects an overall more active political approach of the younger generation. She said that Israeli measures had provoked all Palestinians and that women feel "they are just as affected by this reality." Deeper religious devotion was also a factor, she added. Taha Qatanani said his 16-year-old daughter Ashraqat's greatest wish was to pray at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, and when he was unable to get her the necessary permits, she accused him of letting her down. Tensions at the site, the third-holiest in Islam, and rumors that Israel was trying to expand its presence there enraged her, Qatanani said.

On Nov 22, she pulled out a knife at the entrance to a West Bank military base when a settler driving by veered off the road and struck her with his car. A soldier then shot her dead. "As long as there is occupation there will be resistance," said Oatanani, who served several stints in Israeli prisons for his activity in the Islamic Jihad movement.

In the family living room on the outskirts of Nablus, there was a makeshift shrine to Ashragat featuring her image against a backdrop of Al-Agsa and a wooden carving in her honor with a bloodied knife piercing through a map of historic Palestine. "I would have much more relief if my son had done it," Qatanani said over tea, pointing to 18-year-old Yassin. "My masculine mentality says the man should do it. But I consider the girl doing it a much stronger message ... when it gets to the degree that a girl carries out an attack it means there is nothing else."—AP



TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, (right) and his Iraqi counterpart Ibrahim Al-Jafari depart after their joint press conference. —AP

FEARS OF MORE STRIFE AS IRAQ IN MIDDLE OF REGIONAL ROW

BAGHDAD: Sectarian attacks south of Baghdad have aroused local fears that an escalating row between the region's Sunni and Shiite powerhouses could plunge Iraq back into all-out civil conflict. Wedged between Saudi Arabia and Iran, Iraq is the only country to have borders with both of the feuding giants-but analysts say a return to the kind of communal bloodletting that raged a decade ago was unlikely.

On Monday, two Sunni mosques were bombed, a Sunni muezzin and a displaced Sunni man were killed in the Hilla and Iskandariyah areas south of the capital. The nature and location of the violence was reminiscent of some of the darkest moments of the civil war in Shiite-majority Iraq in 2006

Already tense relations between Iran's Shiite leadership and Sunni-ruled Gulf monarchies took a turn for the worse when Saudi Arabia executed a prominent Shiite cleric on Saturday. Sunni residents of those areas that are still mixed are particularly fearful that they could pay the price for the abrupt diplomatic flare-up between Iraq's neighbors.

Ali Hamza, a 27-year-old who lives near one of the two mosques destroyed this week, said "many families are beginning to fear a return of terror, as during the height of death squads and horrific communal violence that killed tens of thousands of people and displaced more than four million, reshaping the confessional map of a country in which up to 65 percent of the Muslim population is Shiite.

No group claimed Monday's attacks, and their link to the execution of Saudi cleric Nimr Al-Nimr is not proven, but the authorities moved quickly to call for calm. "Some people want to create the spark that will reignite war among Iraqis and we must stop them because such acts only serve the enemies of Iraq," said Mohammed Abdelfattah, a cleric from Hilla's Al Jazaer neighborhoods. As Iraq fights its war against the Islamic State group that took over swathes of the country in 2014, partners offering their support against the jihadists have already been jockeying for influence on its soil.

Too uneven for war

But analysts believe Iraq is unlikely to slide back into a full sectarian conflict. Michael Knights, of the Washington Institute, said that because Baghdad is strongly supported by the US, any Saudi attempt to wage proxy warfare in Iraq 'would be fighting the US by extension".

He saw Syria and Yemen as more likely battlegrounds for the Iranian-Saudi rivalry. Knights said that one of the main reasons preventing a repeat of the mid-2000s bloodshed was also that the war yielded a winner and that much of the cleansing had already

"There has been a lot of sectarian homogenisation of Iraq, reducing the social overlap between sectarian groups and making unrestrained sectarian cleansing less likely," he said. "Also the (Shiites) clearly won the civil war and the number of Sunnis willing to fight a losing battle is declining."

The rise of IS two years ago-and of the Shiite militias battling it-has all but suppressed any other form of Sunni power in Iraq, analysts said. Saudi Arabia's influence over Sunni tribes in the vast neighboring Iraqi province of Anbar has dwindled, said Kamel, Middle East and North director at Eurasia Group.

"Moreover, Baghdad has become a Shiite-dominated city, the Iraqi army is in a much better position in mixed Sunni-Shiite areas, and Shiite militias have been brutal, yet effective in preventing a mass Sunni uprising in Shiite areas," he said. Iraqi officials even say Baghdad-given its location and diverse foreign partners-could play a part in de-escalating the Iran-Saudi crisis.

According to the official Iranian news agency IRNA, Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari was due in Tehran yesterday for talks on the latest developments. According to media reports, his counterpart from Oman, which has often played a mediating role in the region, was expected in the Iranian capital at the same time. —AFP

NABLUS: Ramiz Hassoneh holds a photo of his daughter, Maram, in the West Bank city of Nablus. Maram, a top English student at An-Najah University and a devout Muslim, was shot and killed when she tried to stab Israeli soldiers at a West Bank checkpoint. —AP

role restricted to Palestinian men and boys, the current wave of violence under a large poster of his late has seen an unprecedented spike in daughter wearing a headscarf. "She few women who did engage in attacks in the past were typically underprivileged females seeking redemption after being rejected by their families, the attackers are now largely ideological, educated women from supportive homes.

Palestinians consider the trend to be a combination of rising Islamist zeal, the growing role of women in the conservative society and the brewing desperation of a younger generation with few prospects. In Maram's case, her family said she had a burning drive to resist the Israeli occupation somehow. A top English student at An-Najah University and a devout Muslim, Maram was deeply

While battling Israel was once a al about these things," said Hassoneh, sitting in his Nablus home believed that she would inspire the boys to do something ... She looked at me and said: 'When our men who sit in coffee shop see (a girl) killed, they will move." His wife, Hanan, sitting next to him with a gold necklace featuring Maram's image, said her sorrow was mixed with pride. "I'm happy she is a martyr, but I miss

her a lot," she said. Since the violence erupted in mid-September, 21 Israelis and an American Jew have been killed, mostly in stabbing attacks carried out by young Palestinians in their late teens or 20s. Many attackers were doomed to failure from the start, armed with only crude weapons such as knives, scissors and

most of the rallying cries to violence take place, and general advancement in society have emboldened many to partake in the "national struggle," said Jihad Harb, a Pales and commentator.

"Social media has opened a new horizon for the new generation. They interact and build their thoughts in a new way that gives girls the same chances of boys," he said. The Israeli military says that of 152 attacks recorded, 22 were by women. It attributed the rise to a new, bolder generation of Palestinian women that did not belong to the established military organizations and did not ask for anyone's permission to act.

Botched attack

One of the most notable incidents involved a pair of cousins, aged 16 and 14, who stabbed an elderly

DESPITE TENSIONS, RUSSIA'S 'SYRIA EXPRESS' SAILS ON

ISTANBUL: It's an occasional but regular sighting in Istanbul. Out of the mist on the Bosphorus that divides Europe and Asia looms the hulk of a Russian warship purposefully making its way to the Mediterranean. Most likely the ship is part of Moscow's so-called "Syria Express", a key supply line for naval deliveries from its Black Sea ports to military operations backing the regime of President Bashar Al-Assad in Syria.

Dozens of Russian warships, auxiliary naval cargo ships and sometimes even submarines have passed through the Bosphorus Strait, northbound and southbound. Every month since Russia stepped up operations inside Syria last year, according to maritime experts. But the sight of a Russian warship in Istanbul is striking given that Moscow and Ankara are experiencing their worst relations since the end of the Cold War after the shooting down of a Russian warplane by Turkish jets on the Syrian border on November 24.

The two countries back opposing sides in Syria's almost five-year civil war, with Russia the key supporter of the Damascus regime while Turkey argues that the ouster of Assad is essential to solving the

Analysts say that Turkey is bound by the 1936 Montreux Convention on the Dardanelles and Bosphorus, a treaty that gives Ankara full control over the two Straits while committing it to allowing the free passage of naval traffic from Black Sea littoral states. Under its terms, Turkey can only block Russian naval shipping if war is declared or if it feels under an imminent threat of war.

"Since there is no declared war between these two countries it is not possible for Turkey to close the Straits to Russian warships," said Cem Devrim Yaylali, Istanbul-based Turkish naval expert and editor of the Bosphorus Naval News website. He said that even "in the worst days of the Cold War"-pitting NATO member Turkey against the Soviet Union-Ankara and Moscow both observed the treaty. Mikhail Voitenko, Russian maritime expert and editor of the Maritime Bulletin website, said that the supplies delivered via the Bosphorus were a "lifeline" for the Syria campaign. "Without the Syrian Express, the Syrian campaign would choke in days or weeks."

Disrupt Syria Express?

The ships come from Russia's Black Sea naval port or its Sevastapol base in Crimea, the Ukrainian peninsula annexed by Moscow in 2014 in a move opposed by much of the international community including Turkey. After entering the Black Sea mouth of the Bosphorus, they sail through the iconic waterway in full view, passing famous landmarks

December 4 with a MANPAD shoulder launched missile aimed at the shore. The Kilo-class Russian submarine Rostov na-Donu was also followed by a Turkish patrol vessel during its passage through the Bosphorus last month.

Almost all the naval traffic in the Bosphorus is Russian. However, the Arleigh Burke class US destroyer USS Ross made a passage in mid-



ISTANBUL: This file photo taken on September 26, 2015 shows a Turkish flag flying on a ferry as Russian warship the BSF Saratov 150 sails through the Bosphorus off Istanbul en route to the eastern Mediterranean sea. —AFP

like the Ottoman-era Dolmabahce and Topkapi Palaces.

They then sail across the Sea of Marmara before passing through the Dardanelles and turning south towards the Mediterranean coast of Syria and Russia's naval base at Tartus, its only such facility outside the ex-USSR. Their passage, however, has not been without tensions in recent weeks.

Turkey accused Russia of "provocation" when a soldier aboard the Tsezar Kunikov was spotted on

December, possibly in a show of NATO support to Turkey at the peak of the crisis with Moscow. After one of its planes was shot down just on the Syria border, Moscow has discouraged Russians from travelling to Turkey dealing a blow to the tourism industry and also imposed sanctions on selected goods. But it stopped short of using the full potential array of sanctions and analysts say Russia may be mindful that Turkey could still disrupt the transit of materials to Syria. —AFP

ERDOGAN ARCH FOE, POLICE CHIEFS GO ON TRIAL OVER GRAFT CLAIMS

ISTANBUL: A US-based Turkish preacher who has emerged as an arch-enemy of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan went on trial in absentia yesterday along with several former police chiefs charged over the corruption allegations that hit the Turkish leader in 2013.

Fethullah Gulen, a former ally of Erdogan turned chief foe, was not present at the start of the proceedings in Istanbul, with Washington failing to respond to Turkish requests for the cleric's extradition from his secluded compound in Pennsylvania.

Gulen is being tried along with dozens of former police officers; including the former head of Istanbul police Yakup Saygili and the city's ex-deputy criminal police chief Kazim Aksoy, both of whom are said to have ordered the graft probe. The pair have been held in detention since September 2014 and were both in court at the start of the trial.

A total of 69 people, including Gulen, are on trial, facing terms ranging from seven years to 330 years. The judge at Istanbul's main courthouse opened the proceedings by conducting a roll call of the defendants and the plaintiffs before lawyers began their statements, an AFP correspondent said.

Eight defendants, including Saygili and Aksoy, who had been remanded in custody were brought to the courthouse from the prison. Aside from Gulen, the other suspects had been released from custody pending trial. Two other suspects-Gulen aide Sinan Dursun and former deputy police chief Hamza Tosun-are at large and considered

'No concrete evidence'

The corruption allegations directly implicated some of Erdogan's inner circle, including his son Bilal. The government denied the claims, which it said came from Gulen and his acolytes in the judiciary and police. Erdogan, his son Bilal, son-in-law Berat Albayrak and Turkey's spy chief Hakan Fidan are among the plaintiffs in the case, along with four former ministers who lost their jobs over the corruption allegations.

The allegations, based on bugged conversations, enthralled Turkey like a soap opera. In one leaked tape, Erdogan allegedly told Bilal to dispose of some 30 million Euros in cash. Erdogan has dismissed the recordings as a "vile montage". The top suspects are charged with plotting to topple the Turkish government with the graft allegations, as well as membership of a "terrorist group".

"There is no concrete evidence that my client has been involved in any violence, not a single document," Gulen's lawyer Nurullah Albayrak said. "We have never seen such a murky investigation in the history of our country." The scandal was seen as one of the biggest challenges to the dominance of then Prime Minister Erdogan. He survived the allegations, however, and went on to become president in August 2014.

Investigations related to the allegations were closed and the authorities moved to expel Gulen supporters from the police and judiciary. Despite living outside of Turkey. Gulen built up huge influence in the country through allies in the police and judiciary, media and a vast network of cramming schools designed to make up for deficiencies in the state education system.

Ankara now accuses Gulen of running what it calls the Fethullahaci Terror Organisation/Parallel State Structure (FeTO/PDY) and seeking to overthrow the legitimate Turkish authorities. Gulen supporters decry the accusations as ridiculous, saying all he leads is a more informal group known as Hizmet (Service). —AFP

Kuwait Times____INTERNATIONAL

CRUZ DOWNPLAYS TRUMP RAISING CONCERNS OVER CANADIAN BIRTH

'PRECARIOUS ISSUE MANY PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT'

SIOUX CENTER: Ted Cruz tried to make a joke Tuesday out of Republican presidential rival Donald Trump raising questions about whether the Texas senator's birth in Canada could be a liability if he becomes the party's nominee. Trump told the Washington Post in an interview published Tuesday that Cruz's Canadian birthplace and his holding a double passport was a "very precarious" issue that "a lot of people are talking about."

Trump has ramped up his attacks on Cruz since the Texas senator sprinted ahead of the billionaire real estate mogul in some opinion surveys in lowa whose caucuses kick off the state-by-state nominating contests. Cruz, in response to questions about Trump's comments, said the best way to respond was to laugh it off and "move on to the issues that matter." He first reacted on Twitter, posting a link to a video from the 1970s television show "Happy Days" showing the character Fonzie water skiing over a shark. The moment, known as "jumping the shark," has come to refer to the use of a gimmick to halt the decline of a television show or other effort.

"What the American people are interested in is not bickering and back and forth," Cruz told reporters before a town hall in Sioux Center that drew hundreds of people. Cruz was concluding the second day of a six-day swing through lowa before the Feb 1 caucuses, while Trump was holding a rally in New Hampshire.

'Natural born citizen'

The US Constitution says only a "natural born Citizen" may be president. Legal scholars, however, generally agree the description covers foreign-born children of US parents. Cruz was born in Calgary, Alberta, in 1970 while his parents were working in the oil business there. His mother, Eleanor, is from Delaware, while his father, Rafael, is a Cuban who became a US citizen in 2005. Cruz has said that because his mother is a citizen by birth, he is also one. Under US law, anyone born to a US citizen is granted citizenship no matter where the birth takes place. Cruz renounced his Canadian citizenship in 2014, amid speculation he was preparing for a presi-



IOWA: Republican Presidential candidate Sen Ted Cruz, R-Texas, campaigns at Penny's Diner in Missouri Valley. — AP

dential run, less than a year after he released his birth certificate. But that didn't stop Trump from raising the issue Tuesday. "Republicans are going to have to ask themselves the question: 'Do we want a candidate who could be tied up in court for two years?' That'd be a big problem," Trump said in The Washington Post interview. "It'd be a very precarious one for Republicans because he'd be running and the courts may take a long time to make a decision. You don't want to be running and have that kind of thing over your head."

Trump was one of the loudest voices questioning whether President Obama was born in Kenya and thus not eligible to be US president. Obama is an American citizen born in Honolulu; his father was Kenyan, his mother American. Previous foreign-born Americans - notably Republicans John McCain and George Romney - have run for president with some mention, but no serious challenges, of their eligibility. The comments mark a reversal for Trump, who in September downplayed Cruz's birthplace in an interview with ABC. —AP

QUESTIONS ABOUT OBAMA'S EXECUTIVE PLAN ON GUNS

EFFECT ON GUN VIOLENCE COULD PROVE TO BE SMALL

plan to strengthen controls on guns in the US is meeting swift resistance from gun rights groups, Republicans and even a few Democrats who say it's up to Congress to enact new policies on firearms. Yet the overall effect on gun violence could prove to be relatively small. Some questions and answers about Obama's presidential actions on gun

What action is Obama taking?

Obama announced a 10-point plan to try to keep guns from people who shouldn't have them. The centerpiece is new federal guidance that seeks to clarify who is "in the business" of selling firearms and has to get a federal license.

Licensed dealers must run background checks on prospective buyers, but private sellers don't. Obama is aiming to narrow that loophole so that more firearms sold at gun shows, flea markets or online are subject to background checks. Other steps include 230 new examiners the FBI will hire to process background checks.

And Obama is directing federal agencies to research smart gun technology to reduce accidental shootings and asking Congress for \$500 million for mental health care. Further steps aim to better track lost guns and prevent

WASHINGTON: President Barack Obama's trusts or corporations from buying dangerous weapons without background checks.

Would this have stopped recent mass shootings?

Probably not. An Associated Press review shows that Obama's executive actions would have had no impact in keeping weapons from suspects in several of the deadliest incidents, including Newtown, Connecticut; San Bernardino, California; and Aurora, Colorado. The shooters in Newtown and San Bernardino, for example, used weapons purchased by other people.

Obama's actions could potentially reduce other gun deaths - especially suicides, which cause two-thirds of gun deaths. But it's unclear whether the steps will significantly curb unregulated gun sales. Millions of guns are sold annually in informal settings outside of gun shops, including many through private sales arranged online. The Óbama administration acknowledged it couldn't quantify how many gun sales would be newly subjected to background checks. Nor could it say how many currently unregistered gun sellers would have to obtain a license.

Why now?

Obama is running out of time. With barely a year left in his presidency, he has to act quickly to roll out new policies, especially if he

wants them to become ingrained and harder to rescind when the next president takes over. After the Newtown shooting, Obama in 2013 sought far-reaching, bipartisan legislation that went beyond background checks to ban certain assault-style weapons and cap the size of ammunition clips.

When the effort collapsed in the Senate, the White House said it was working to identify every legal step he could take on his own. But a more recent spate of gun-related atrocities, including in San Bernardino, California, spurred the administration to give the issue another look.

Can the president do this alone?

Obama says he can. Republicans and gun rights advocates say he can't. The White House says Obama is acting fully within his legal authority, by clarifying existing laws that Congress has already passed. It's an argument Obama has used before when opposition in Congress has led him to take sweeping executive action on immigration, climate change and other issues.

Still, Obama readily concedes the executive steps will be challenged in court. One likely option for opponents is to challenge Obama's authority to define what it means to be "engaged in the business" of selling guns, since that definition isn't laid out in the law. — AP



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INDIAN ARMY LAUNCHES SEARCH FOR SUSPICIOUS MEN NEAR BASE

NEW DELHI: The Indian army and police launched a search operation yesterday near Pathankot where a weekend attack on an air force base left seven soldiers dead, after villagers complained about two suspicious men in the area. The search was focused in Gurdaspur district in the northern state of Punjab, close to Pakistan border and

about 51 kilometers from Pathankot. "The local villagers informed us about two suspicious men in army fatigues close to the army cantonment area," Gurpreet Singh Toor, senior superintendent of Gurdaspur police said. "We have since launched a search operation along with the army in that area. We haven't yet come up with anything yet

but the search is still on," he added. Indian security agencies have been on a high alert since the attack over the weekend on the air base by six gunmen with suspected linked to the Pakistanbased militant group Jaish-e-Mohammed.

All the attackers were killed in the two days of gun battles. The attack-a installation outside disputed Kashmirthreatens to undermine improving relations with Pakistan.

It came just about a week after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid a surprise visit to Pakistan, the first by an Indian premier in 11 years. Modi on Tuesday urged his Pakistani counter-

rare targeting of an Indian military part to take "firm and immediate action" against those behind the attack, adding that New Delhi had passed on "specific and actionable information" about the incident. The Pathankot attack coincided with a 25-hour siege near an Indian consulate in Afghanistan that left at least one policeman dead and 11 others wounded. —AFP

VENEZUELA OPPOSITION TAKES CONGRESS, DEFIES PRESIDENT

Breaks govt's 17-year grip on legislature

CARACAS: Venezuela's opposition on Tuesday broke the government's 17-year grip on the legislature and vowed to force out President Nicolas Maduro despite failing for the time being to clinch its hoped-for "supermajority." The National Assembly swore in deputies to 163 of the 167 seats, with four lawmakers-three opposition and one pro-government-suspended pending a lawsuit over alleged electoral fraud.

stressed. "We are looking at a change in outlook, a change in the system, at changing what is bad, very bad-and soon will get worse." The provisional loss of its three deputies leaves the opposition with a still-powerful three-fifths majority, enabling it to remove cabinet ministers from their posts, among other powers.

But it removes, at least temporarily, some powers Maduro's opponents would have had with a staged a walkout from the opening session of the new assembly. They were outraged by opposition lawmakers' attempts to propose an amnesty for numerous politicians who the opposition says are political prisoners.

Crisis in oil state

The opposition MUD coalition has vowed change in the oil-rich, crisis-hit South American nation after 17 years of socialist rule. But

The Supreme Court last week upheld a request by Maduro to suspend the three opposition lawmakers. One pro-Maduro deputy targeted by the same fraud allegations was also suspended. The commission in charge of swearing in the new deputies, led by a government ally, declined to accept those four until the court case is resolved.

Maduro has vowed to defend the welfare programs of the socialist "revolution" launched by his late predecessor Hugo Chavez, who came to power in 1999. But voters punished him for the state of the economy, in the toughest challenge yet to his authority. Venezuela has the world's biggest known oil reserves but has suffered from a fall in the price of the crude on which its government relies. It is in deep recession, with citizens suffering shortages of basic goods and soaring inflation.

Fears of unrest

The tense political struggle has raised fears of fresh unrest after street violence sparked by antigovernment protests left 43 people dead in 2014. Maduro carried out further maneuvers to resist his opponents shortly before the new assembly was formed. He published a presidential decree that gives him the power to appoint the heads of Venezuela's Central Bank.

That snatches away the assembly's power to influence monetary policy, one of the key levers for change in the current economic crisis. Maduro also said he would try to get the assembly to support a new economic emergency plan, setting up yet another political

The US State Department expressed concern over the case of the suspended deputies, in a statement by its spokesman John Kirby on Tuesday. He called for political prisoners to be released. "We remain concerned by the controversy surrounding the seating of some elected representatives and call for a resolution of this dispute in a manner that is transparent and reflects the preferences of the Venezuelan voters," he said. —AFP



one year after, "1 an apres" the attacks on it, on a newsstand yesterday at a

CHARLIE HEBDO PUBLISHES SPECIAL EDITION ONE YEAR AFTER ATTACK

PARIS: French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo published a special edition yesterday on the eve of the anniversary of a jihadist attack that wiped out most of its staff, prompting protests from the Vatican over a cover lampooning God.

In typical Charlie Hebdo fashion, the special edition features a bloodstained, bearded Godfigure in sandals with a Kalashnikov slung over his shoulder under the headline: "One year on: the killer is still at large."The Vatican criticized the cover for failing to "acknowledge or to respect believers' faith in God, regardless of the religion."

"Behind the deceptive flag of uncompromising secularism, the weekly is forgetting once more what religious leaders of every faith unceasingly repeat... using God to justify hatredis a genuine blasphemy, as Pope Francis has said several times." The provocative cover is typical of the fiercely-secular publication whose drawings of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) drew the fury of Muslims around the world and inspired the bloody attack on its offices on January 7 last

Eight Charlie staff were gunned down by brothers Said and Cherif Kouachi as well as several others in and around the building in the assault, which kickstarted three days of terror in the French capital that would eventually leave 17 dead. The bloodshed stunned a nation that has become a prized target of jihadists and was again plunged into grief in November when 130 people were killed in coordinated attacks around Paris.

'Shake up people's ideas'

The attack on Charlie, as well as a Jewish supermarket and police, brought millions into the streets in protest and led to much soulsearching over the country's cherished secularism as well as societal issues such as integration.

"It was unthinkable that in France in the 21st century, journalists would be killed by religion," cartoonist Riss, who lost the use of his right arm in the attack, wrote in the editorial of the special edition. "We saw France as an island of secularism, where it was possible to tell jokes, draw, laugh, without worrying about dogma, fanat-

In an interview with AFP, he said that with the latest cover, which he drew, he "wanted to go above one religion or another." "It is the idea of God itself that we, at Charlie, contest. You need to shake up people's ideas or they stay stuck in their positions." The special edition devotes several pages to the topic of secularism, as well as reflections on the terrifying minutes when the Kouachi brothers burst into an editorial meeting spraying gunfire.

In one article on secularism, a cartoon depicts a masked gunman saying: "First kill those who do not pray, it will convince the others that God exists."In his editorial Riss, wrote that the team was keenly aware of the fact that since publishing images of the Prophet Mohammed, seen as forbidden by many Muslims, "many hoped someone would one day put us in our places."

The attack, claimed by Al-Qaeda's branch in the Arabian Peninsula, was not the first on the publication, which was firebombed in 2011. He said the Charlie team had often thought of death-albeit the economic kind-as the weekly constantly flirted with financial ruin with circulation hovering at 30,000. Ironically, the attack made it one of the best known publications in the world with the hashtag #JeSuisCharlie sweeping the Twitterverse and sales of 7.5 million copies the week after.

'Two idiots in balaclavas'

ing self-censorship in the wake of the attacks, working from ultra-secure offices in a top-secret location. When Riss pictured Aylan Kurdi, the Syrian toddler found dead on a Turkish beach this year, under a McDonald's sign in what was intended to be criticism of the consumer society, he was accused of racism.

The cartoonist said in his editorial he was often asked how he managed to continue after what had happened. "We want to beat the crap out of those who wanted us to die more than ever. "It is not two little idiots in balaclavas who are going to screw up our life's work. It is not they who will kill Charlie, it is Charlie who will see them die." However those killed are never far from the minds of the cartoonists. "I ask myself sometimes if I am making the newspaper they would have made. To me, they are no longer there but they are not gone." —AFP

CARACAS: A government supporter carries a painting of Venezuela's late President Hugo Chavez near Miraflores presidential palace. —AFP

the assembly, Henry Ramos Allup, ing the ability to put legislation to said his side soon would take steps to force Maduro from office. "Here assembly to draft a new constituand now, things will change," he tion. The opposition could use said. The head of the opposition group in congress, Julio Borges, vowed it would find "a method, a system to change the government through constitutional means." The speaker said the process would be worked out within six months.

"Change is not dependent on any time-frame," Ramos Allup

The new opposition speaker of two-thirds "supermajority", includa referendum and convene an those powers to seek to force Maduro from power before the end of his term in 2019. It was not immediately clear what path within the constitution they might use. But Maduro said he would defend Venezuela's democracy and stabili-

ty "with an iron fist." Lawmakers loyal to Maduro

Maduro still holds many of the cards under the presidential system. "The assembly can approve whatever laws it likes, but the president is the one who endorses them," said the assembly's outgoing speaker, Diosdado Cabello. "If there is any disagreement, the president can veto a law or refer to the Supreme Court."

The MUD won a supermajority of 112 seats in the assembly in elections on December 6, but Maduro has taken steps to curb its powers.

IVORY COAST GOVERNMENT RESIGNS

ABIDJAN: Ivory Coast's government resigned yesterday in a move President Alassane Ouattara said would bring more "efficiency" to the West African state just two months after he was re-elected. Prime at what was to have been the first cabinet ployment.

on October 25, Ouattara has said he wants to deepen national reconciliation and draw up a new constitution which he plans to put to a referendum. Other Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan presented aims include redistributing uneven his resignation and that of his government wealth and tackling high youth unem-



ABIDJAN: This file photo taken on September 17, 2015 shows Ivorian Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan speaking during the Africa Islamic Finance Forum. —AFP

meeting of the year in a move expected observers said was expected.

A new cabinet will be "put in place in the coming days-targeting greater cohesion and more efficiency of government action," Ouattara declared. He did not indicate whether he would retain Kablan Duncan, a 73-year-old economist, as premier or select a new head of government as he moulds a "new Ivory Coast" to draw a line under the turmoil engendered by the civil war in 2011.

'A new dynamic'

Following the vote, which observers hailed as generally smooth and peaceful, Ouattara himself indicated he wanted to see fresh faces in government, including more women in cabinet posts. But he praised Kablan Duncan's team, expressing gratitude for "your competence, your leadership and your action at the head of the government", and hailing the cabinet for its "good conduct" in state affairs.

Addressing the president, Kablan

Reelected for a second-five year term
Duncan explained that the decision to resign was motivated by Ouattara's desire to bring "greater efficiency" to the management of government affairs. "At the last 2015 cabinet meeting on December 23, you expressed your wish to inject a new dynamic into government action, undertaking a government reshuffle targeting greater efficiency in dealing with our fellow citizens' primary concerns," he said.

> "In view of this, and as you embark on your second term, I would like.. to present to you my resignation as prime minister," Kablan Duncan said. A respected member of Ivory Coast's Democratic Party (PDCI), which was founded in the 1940s by former president Henri Konan Bedie, Kablan Duncan, took over as prime minister in November 2012.

> He formed a broad team of figures drawn from the coalition which propelled Ouattara to power although several key posts were reserved for technocrats. Kablan Duncan replaced fellow PDCI member Jeannot Kouadio Ahoussou, a surprise casualty of disagreements which emerged within the coalition. Kouadio Ahoussou served as premier for eight months in 2012, replacing Guillaume Soro who served in the post for five years. Before becoming premier, Soro headed the Patriotic Movement rebel force which led a 2002 rebellion against former president Laurent Gbagbo, which triggered the first civil war. Soro is now head of the National Assembly.

Last year's poll took place without incident in Ivory Coast, a key West African economy and the world's prime cocoa producer, enabling the country to turn the page on a wave of bloodshed and violence which claimed some 3,000 lives in the wake of Ouattara's initial election triumph over Gbagbo in 2010. Now 74, Ouattara-a former high-flying economistwon a solid victory in the October elections, cementing Ivory Coast's return to stability after years of turbulence. —AFP

GAMBIA ORDERS FEMALE CIVIL SERVANTS TO COVER HAIR

BANJUL: Female civil servants in the West African country of Gambia, recently declared "an Islamic state" by its president, have been ordered to cover their hair at work, a leaked government memo showed.

According to a copy of the memorandum obtained by AFP, "all female staff within the government ministries, departments and agencies are no longer allowed to expose their hair during official working hours effective December 31, 2015. "Female staff members are urged to use head tie and neatly wrap their hair."

A senior official in the education ministry confirmed that the note had been circulated among government departments. The new rule comes hot on the heels of President Yahya Jammeh's categorization of the small predominantly Muslim country in mid-December as "an Islamic state". "Gambia's destiny is in the hands of the Almighty Allah... We will be an Islamic state that will respect the rights of the citizens," he said. At the time he warned against trying to impose a dress code on women. "I have not appointed anyone as an Islamic policeman. The way women dress is not your business," he said. An impoverished former British colony famed for its whitesand beaches, the Gambia has a population of nearly two million, 90 percent of whom are Muslim.

Of the remainder, eight percent are Christian and two percent are defined as having indigenous beliefs. Jammeh, 50, a military officer and former wrestler has ruled the country with an iron fist since he seized power in a coup in 1994. —AFP

SPLIT LABUR FIRES REBELS

LONDON: The role of an opposition should be to challenge the government, but Britain's Labur Party has begun the new year at war with itself as leader Jeremy Corbyn struggles to assert his authority over restive lawmakers.

The veteran left-winger was the surprise winner of Labur's leadership election last year, strongly supported by the party's membership but opposed by most Labur lawmakers. He has clashed with centrist Labur legislators over issues including his opposition to nuclear weapons and to British airstrikes on IS targets in Syria.

Early yesterday, Corbyn moved defense spokeswoman Maria Eagle, who opposed him on nuclear weapons, to another post, and fired two other members of his top team who had criticized him. Legislator Jonathan Reynolds later resigned as Labur's railway spokesman, saying he wanted to be able to speak out free of the constraints imposed on the party's official spokespeople. Corbyn's changes - dubbed a "revenge

reshuffle" in the press - were announced after two days of closed-door meetings, and were more limited than many had anticipated. Corbyn did not move foreign policy spokesman Hilary Benn, who publicly opposed his leader during a House of Commons debate on Syria airstrikes last month. While Corbyn opposed the strikes as "reckless," Benn argued Britain should play its part in defeating Islamic State group

More resignations could follow as Labur struggles to remain united. Corbyn has promised a new style of politics to re-energize a party that has lost two consecutive elections to Prime Minister David Cameron's Conservatives, most recently in May.—AFP

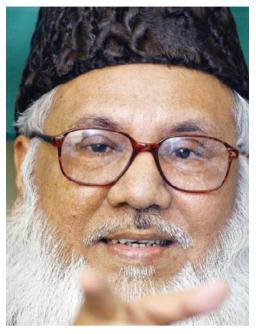
Kuwait Times____INTERNATIONAL

BANGLADESH UPHOLDS DEATH SENTENCE FOR ISLAMIST LEADER

'LONG AND PAINFUL WAIT FOR JUSTICE FOR THE FAMILIES'

DHAKA: Bangladesh's highest court yesterday upheld the death sentence for the leader of the country's largest Islamist party for crimes during its 1971 independence struggle, paving the way for his execution within months. The Supreme Court dismissed an appeal by Motiur Rahman Nizami, head of the Jamaat-e-Islami party, who was convicted of murder, rape and orchestrating the killing of top intellectuals when he was the leader of a ruthless militia during the conflict.

"The court upheld the death sentence in



Motiur Rahman Nizami

three out of four charges. We're very happy," cripple" the fledgling nation, they said. prosecutor Tureen Afroz told reporters. "Most importantly, the death penalty was upheld for the killings of the intellectuals." Nizami, 72, Jamaat's leader since 2000 and a minister in a former Islamist-allied government of 2001-2006, faces the gallows within months unless his case is reviewed by the same court or he is granted clemency by the president.

Three senior Jamaat officials and a key leader of the main opposition have been executed since December 2013 for war crimes, despite global criticism of their trials by a controversial war crimes tribunal. The court swiftly dismissed previous reviews of those four opposition leaders on death row, leading to their execution, the latest in November last year.

Hundreds of secular protesters who have been campaigning tirelessly for the trials of the Islamist leaders for their roles in the 1971 war burst into impromptu celebrations at a square in central Dhaka as the news of the court's decision came. "This verdict brings an end to the long and painful wait for justice for the families of the victims of the war," Imran Sarker, head of a secular group, said, showing a V-sign to reporters. "We now want his quick execution."

Prosecutors said Nizami was the leader of a student wing of Jamaat during the war and turned it into the Al-Badr pro-Pakistani militia, which killed top professors, writers, doctors and journalists in the most gruesome chapter of the conflict. Their bodies were found blindfolded with their hands tied and dumped in a marsh on the outskirts of the capital. The killing was carried out based on a hit-list he ordered and the aim was to "intellectually

'Terrible conflict'

Security was tight across the country after previous convictions of the Jamaat officials triggered the country's deadliest violence since independence with some 500 people killed, mainly in clashes between Islamists and police. "We've stepped up security. It is sufficient to prevent any violence," deputy police commissioner Maruf Hossain Sorder said ahead of the verdict.

Following the verdict, Jamaat called for a nationwide strike on Thursday, saying the charges against Nizami were "false, baseless and imaginary" and the case was "aimed at killing" him. "The government wants to steer the country towards terrible conflict in a planned way by killing Motiur Rahman Nizami in cold blood through its own fixed blueprint," the party said in a statement posted on its website, calling him an "internationally acclaimed Islamic scholar".

Jamaat said Nizami would now seek a review of the judgment. Defense lawyer Khandker Mahbub Hossain told reporters that they would decide their next course of action after consulting with him. Since it was established by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government in 2010, the war crimes court, called the International Crimes Tribunal, has sentenced more than a dozen opposition leaders for war crimes.

Rights groups have criticized the trials, saying they fall short of global standards and lack any international oversight. The secular government maintains the trials are needed to heal the wounds of the conflict, which it says left three million people dead. Independent researchers put the toll much lower. —AFP



DHAKA: Bangladeshi activists campaigning for capital punishment for war criminals celebrate outside the Supreme Court after a review petition of Jamaat-e-Islami party's senior leader Motiur Rahman Nizami's appeal against his death sentence was dismissed. —AP



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INDIA COURT CHALLENGES DELHI TO SHOW CAR BAN CUTS SMOG

NEW DELHI: An Indian court yesterday chal- India news agency. "You will have to think about transport minister Gopal Rai told news channels lenged the Delhi city government to prove that its restrictions on cars were improving air quality in the world's most polluted capital. The Delhi high court said a trial ban, that allows most private cars to use the roads only on alternate days, was causing inconvenience to the public due to inadequate public transport.

With pollution levels still running at 10 times the international safe limits, it ordered the government to submit data for January 1-7 by Friday so the impact of the ban could be assessed. The Delhi government launched the trial ban last Friday in an attempt to thin the toxic blanket of smog that has settled over the city.

"In these six days you must have collected data related to pollution level, we think it's sufficient for you," the bench of Judges G Rohini and Jayant Nath said, according to the Press Trust of the inconvenience caused to public at large," the judges said, responding to a handful of petitions against the scheme.

Air quality, which traditionally worsens in winter as the cooler air traps pollutants and people start lighting fires, remains poor despite the trial restrictions which are due to last 15 days. Environmentalists, however, say it would be unrealistic to expect a rapid improvement and attribute the smog to low winds and a fall in daytime temperatures. The Delhi government defended the scheme,

saying it had helped decongest the city's clogged roads and resulted in less pollution from cars. "We have increased the frequency of the metro, increased the number of buses, people are carpooling... all of Delhi has come together to support this campaign," the city's after the court order.

"Vehicular pollution, which is the most harmful of PM 2.5, has come down significantly in the interior part of Delhi," he said. PM2.5 refers to microscopic particles that penetrate deep into the lungs and are particularly harmful to health. India's state-run System of Air Quality Weather Forecasting and Research showed PM 2.5 concentrations at a "very unhealthy" 272 level yesterday and advised against going outside.

It recorded Delhi's PM 2.5 concentration hovering between "very poor" and "severe" levels since January 1, with Monday's reading spiking to 280, well above the World Health Organization safe limit of 25. A 2014 WHO survey of more than 1,600 cities ranked Delhi as the most polluted, partly because of the 8.5 million vehicles on its roads. —AFP



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UN HR CHIEF DEMANDS THAI ACTION ON DISAPPEARANCES

urged the Thai government yesterday to do more to determine the fates of 82 people listed as disappeared, including a prominent human rights lawyer missing for 12 years. "All of the families of those who have disappeared have the right to know the truth regarding the disappearance of their kin, as well as any progress and the results of investigations," Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said in a statement.

He voiced particular concern about the

lawyer who vanished in 2004 while he was defending suspected Islamic militants who had accused authorities of torturing them while in custody. Late last month, Thailand's Supreme Court upheld the 2011 acquittal of five police officers accused of involvement in his abduction and disap-

Zeid harshly criticized that decision, accusing the Supreme Court of missing "an opportunity to protect the rights of the vic-

GENEVA: The UN human rights chief case of Somchai Neelapaijit, a Muslim tims to truth, justice and redress in cases of involuntary and enforced disappearance."

> Somchai disappeared from the streets of Bangkok under the government of Thaksin Shinawatra during a surge in fighting between the army and Islamist militants in Thailand's deep south. Thaksin, who was eventually deposed in a military coup, was on record as saying the lawyer had been killed by at least four government officials, although his body has never

Five police officers eventually stood trial over the incident after eyewitnesses reported seeing Somchai bundled into a car on the night he vanished. But since Thailand does not recognize the crime of enforced disappearance, the court only considered charges of robbery and coercion, not for disappearing him or murder, the UN rights office said. Zeid called on the Thai government to criminalise enforced and voluntary disappearance, in line with international standards.

"There is a lack of adequate legal and institutional framework for the victims and their families to seek justice in enforced disappearance cases in Thailand," he said. This is of particular concern, the UN rights office statement said, since "the issue of enforced disappearances in which state officials have been implicated remains a serious concern." Somchai's unsolved case is just one of 82 enforced disappearances recorded in Thailand by a group of UN experts since 1980, it pointed out. —AFP

HISTORIC SOUTH KOREA-JAPAN DEAL STUMBLES OVER STATUE

STRUGGLE OVER DIMINUTIVE BUT DAUNTING OBSTACLE

SEOUL: A landmark deal between South Korea and Japan to end a decades-old feud over wartime sex slaves is struggling to overcome a diminutive but daunting obstacle in the form of the small statue of a teenage girl. "I am here to defend the peace monument," 22-year-old

sation from Tokyo. Last week, Japan offered an apology and a one-billion yen (\$8.3 million) payment to the 46 surviving Korean comfort women under an agreement which both countries described as "final and irreversible". But the deal has triggered confusion over the fate of

it called Kishida's provocative

South Korea's foreign ministry has also stressed that because the statue was put up by civic groups, it has no right to order its removal. And the group that spearheaded the campaign to

embassy official to protest what percent of people opposed to the slightest relocation.

Tricky balancing act

Bong Young-Shik, a senior research fellow specializing in Japan at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies in Seoul, said the row placed the South Korean government in a tight spot, given the substantial political capital it has already expended on making the deal with Japan. "The issue of the wartime sex slaves is a highly emotive issue in Korea and the statue is its symbol," Bong said. "The public is infuriated by Japanese attempts to remove the statue, but even more outraged because it looks like the Korean government is collaborating," he added.

The bronze figure that has stared across the road at the Japanese embassy for the past four years was set up with public donations totaling 30 million won (\$25,000). An empty chair next to the young woman represents the victims who have died since the war, while a shadow engraved into the base of the statue is that of a frail old woman-reflecting the agony

that still haunts the survivors. The statue has proved to be an extremely potent and popular symbol, and is regularly wrapped in clothing with the passing seasons-such as a woolly hat and scarf in winter. More than two dozen similar monuments have been erected around South Korea, and another dozen or so abroad in the United States, Canada and elsewhere. Outside the Japanese embassy, Jung Woo-Ryung said she would keep guarding the

Jung belongs to a student organization that is one of a number of groups who have organized a rotating round-theclock vigil to keep the bronze where it is. "We are demanding that the issue be resolved by meeting the demands of the victims. I will continue to come here as long as the protest goes



SEOUL: Korean students stage a sit-in protest against a recent agreement between South Korea and Japan near a statue (right) of a teenage girl symbolizing former "comfort women" who served as sex slaves for Japanese soldiers during World War II, in front of the Japanese embassy. —AFP

declared, as she stood guard Tuesday beside the seated bronze figure that was erected on the pavement opposite the Japanese embassy in Seoul in

Depicting a young, barefoot woman, dressed in a traditional Korean hanbok dress and with her fists clasped tight in her lap, the statue is both a symbol of the suffering endured by socalled "comfort women" forced to work in Japanese military brothels during World War II, and of their struggle to extract a formal apology and compenwhich has now become a focus for South Korean activists who accuse the government of selling out to Tokyo.

A confused deal

Japan insists the agreement included a clear undertaking from South Korea to remove the statue, with Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida stating Monday that he understood it would be "relocated appropriately". But Seoul says it only promised to look into the possibility of moving the bronze and called in a senior Japanese

Jung Woo-Ryung defiantly the comfort woman statue, create and erect the bronze is adamant that it isn't going anywhere. The statue cannot be "a condition or means of any agreement," the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan said in a statement on its web-

"And the Korean government cannot mention anything about the removal or moving of the monument," it added. South Korean public sentiment about the overall agreement is evenly divided, but on the specific issue of the statue passions run high, with surveys showing up to 75

statue as long as necessary.

on," she said. —AFP

TAIWAN'S TSAI URGES ANSWERS ON HONG KONG BOOKSELLERS

TAIPEI: Taiwan's presidential frontrunner Tsai Ing-wen urged authorities in Hong Kong and Beijing yesterday to explain the disappearance of five Hong Kong booksellers feared detained by mainland Chinese authorities. The missing men all worked for the same Hong Kong-based publishing house known for books critical of the Chinese government,

in a case that has sparked anger in the city. Tsai's comments come the week before an

election in which she is tipped to unseat the Beijing-friendly ruling Kuomintang (KMT) party, raising questions over cross-strait relations. Tsai, who leads the Beijing-sceptic opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), has said she wants to preserve the "status quo" with China if she becomes president-but opponents say she would destabilise ties.

The DPP traditionally leans towards asserting independence, which has never formally



TAIPEI: Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party, DPP, presidential candidate Tsai Ingwen, (center in black) speaks to supporters at a temple in the Beitou area. —AP

been declared by Taiwan. "(I) hope that Hong Kong and Beijing authorities... will give a clear explanation," Tsai said yesterday at a campaign event in Taipei. "At the same time, (they) should implement concrete measures to ensure freedom of speech in Hong Kong," she said. "Taiwanese people care deeply about freedom of speech, because Taiwan after all went through a very difficult period to win our freedom of speech."

The island was ruled under martial law by KMT leader Chiang Kai-shek until 1987. Large-scale protest movements flared in both Hong Kong and Taiwan in 2014, with protesters angry at growing Chinese influence. Taiwan split from China in 1949 after a civil war on the mainland, but Beijing still considers it part of its territory awaiting unificationby force if necessary.

Hong Kong is semi-autonomous after it was handed back to China by Britain in 1997 and enjoys freedoms unseen on the mainland, but there are increasing fears those are under threat. The KMT's China-friendly policy has been a major source of criticism. But its presidential candidate Eric Chu also voiced

concern Tuesday about the disappearances. "The Hong Kong or Chinese authorities must provide a clear answer... as pursuit of democracy and freedom is a universal ideal," he said during a campaign event in southern Taiwan, according to the Apple Daily. China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi did not reply directly when asked Tuesday whether China had detained the booksellers, but said policy towards Hong Kong remained unchanged. —AFP



MANILA: Harry Roque, Emilia Mangilit, Isabelita Vinuya, Avelina Culala Four of the remaining 32 alleged WWII sex slaves clench their fists along with their legal counsel Harry Roque, (center) to demand compensation and apology from the Japanese Government during a news conference. —AP

FILIPINOS RAPED BY JAPANESE WWII TROOPS DEMAND COMPENSATION

MANILA: A group of elderly Filipino women raped by Japanese troops during World War Il called for compensation from Japan yesterday, following Tokyo's pledge of \$8.3 million for South Korean women forced into Japanese military-run brothels during the

The women's lawyers said they were also exploring the possibility of filing cases with United Nations bodies and holding Philippine President Benigno Aquino III liable for allegedly failing to support the case of the women against Japan.

Isabelita Vinuya, the 84-year-old president of Malaya Lolas - a group of Filipino women abducted and raped by Japanese troops in their village - urged the Philippine government to support their demand for justice from Japan. "We have appealed more than once or twice to our government to help us, support us before Japan so that we can be given justice for the sufferings we went through during World War II," Vinuya said at a news conference, adding that many of the women have died without seeing justice. Japan and South Korea announced last week that they had settled their decades-long standoff over wartime sex slaves, with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe apologizing and agreeing to contribute 1 billion yen (\$8.3 million) for a foundation to help support the victims. Historians say tens of thousands of women from around Asia were sent to front-line military brothels to provide sex to Japanese

'Is there a difference?'

"Is there a difference in the rape of a South Korean and a Filipino woman?" Harry Roque, the Filipino victims' lawyer, said at yesterday's news conference. "The answer is there should be none, because rape is a crime against women and is prohibited by international humanitarian law and is recognized as an international crime."

He noted that South Korea's Supreme Court had ordered the government to fight for the rights of the Korean victims, but that the Philippines' top court dismissed in 2010 a case filed by Vinuya and 70 other women urging the court to compel the government to press their claims against Japan. The Philippine court also denied an appeal filed by the women.

Vinuya said she was 13 when the Japanese troops raped women and children in her village of Mapaniqui in Pampanga province, around 60 kilometers (37 miles) north of Manila. The troops also razed homes and killed men in the village. Three other women at yesterday's news conference said they were teenagers when they were raped during the siege. Vinuya said that only 32 of more than 90 women from her victims' group are still alive. Only 70 of 174 from another such group, the Lila-Filipina, are alive, according to its head, Richilda Extremadura. Extremadura also called on Japan to compensate former sex slaves and rape victims from the Philippines and 11 other countries and urged President Aquino to initiate talks with Japan. —AP

INDONESIA TURNS TO CHINA AS **UIGHURS JOIN ISLAMIST JIHADIS**

JAKARTA: Indonesian authorities are working with their counterparts in China to stem a flow of ethnic Uighur militants seeking to join Islamist jihadists in the world's most populous Muslim country, Indonesia's counterterrorism chief said.

Saud Usman Nasution's comments come amid mounting concern in Indonesia about possible attacks by sympathisers of the Islamic State group and follows the arrest of 13 men across the island of Java, including a Muslim Uighur with a suicide-bomb vest.

The appearance among Indonesian militant networks of Uighurs, who come from the Xinjiang region in far-western China, is likely to add to Beijing's concerns that exiles will return to their homeland as experienced and trained jihadists. China says Islamist militants and separatists operate in energy-rich Xinjiang on the borders of central Asia, where violence has killed hundreds in recent years.

Culture and religion

Rights groups say much of the unrest can be traced back to frustration at controls over the Uighurs' culture and religion, and that most of those who leave are only fleeing repression not seeking to wage jihad. China denies repressing rights. Nasution, who heads the National Counter-Terrorism Agency, told Reuters in an interview on Tuesday that several Uighurs had responded to a call last year by Santoso, Indonesia's most high-profile backer of Islamic State, to join his band of fighters.

Islamic State and human trafficking networks helped them travel via Myanmar, Thailand and Malaysia to Santoso's hideout in an equatorial jungle of eastern Indonesia, he said. However, the would-be suicide bomber arrested on Dec. 23 was hiding in a house just outside the capital, Jakarta.

"We are cooperating with China and investigating evidence such as ATM cards and cellphones," Nasution said, adding that an Indonesian team went to China to interview members of the man's family, who would not confirm that they were related to him. There was no immediate comment from China's foreign ministry on whether Beijing is collaborating with Indonesia.

"As far as China is concerned, these people are running off, some of them taking part in jihad and planning to strike back," said Pan Zhiping, a terrorism expert at the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences. "Of course we must stop them. I believe, in terms of jointly guarding against extremism, it is necessary that we cooperate."

Bilveer Singh of the Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore said the direct involvement of Chinese Uighurs in Southeast Asian militancy added "an external dimension to the existing home-grown terrorist threat". "It could also complicate ties with a rising China, which may want to play a bigger counter-terrorism role in the region," Singh said in a Eurasia Review article.

'Serious concern for China'

Indonesia's security forces have given Santoso, who styles himself as the commander of the Islamic State army in Indonesia, until Jan. 9 to surrender along with his force of about 40 men on the far-flung island of Sulawesi. However, security analysts believe a larger threat is emerging across the populous island of Java as networks of support for Islamic State grow.

Indonesia has been largely successful in disrupting domestic militant cells since the bombing of two nightclubs on the resort island of Bali in 2002, and sporadic attacks have been mainly targeted at the police. The government is now worried that the influence of Islamic State, whose fighters hold swathes of territory in Syria and Iraq, could bring a return of jihadi violence and strikes against foreigners and soft targets.—Reuters





Bulgarians plunge into the icy winter water of a lake in Sofia to catch a cross during Epiphany Day celebrations yesterday. — AFP

BAHRAIN BUSTS 'TERROR' CELL LINKED TO TEHRAN

Continued from Page 1

Tensions widened between Saudi Arabia and Iran after protesters torched the kingdom's diplomatic missions in the Islamic republic following the Saturday execution of Shiite cleric Nimr Al-Nimr. Riyadh cut ties with Tehran in response and was joined by some of its Sunni Arab allies including Bahrain and Sudan. The United Arab Emirates also downgraded relations with Iran and Kuwait recalled its ambassador.

Djibouti, the tiny Horn of Africa nation and ally of Saudi Arabia, said yesterday that it too had broken diplomatic ties with Tehran. "Djibouti cut its diplomatic ties with Iran out of solidarity with Saudi Arabia," Foreign Minister Mahamoud Ali Youssouf told Reuters in a text message.

Jordan summoned Iran's ambassador to protest the attacks on Saudi missions. Amman expressed its "strong condemnation" of Saturday's attacks by protesters on the Saudi embassy in Tehran and its consulate in Iran's second city Mashhad, a foreign ministry spokesman told official news agency Petra. "The attacks on the Saudi embassy and consulate constitute a flagrant violation of international conventions," the spokesman said.

Late yesterday, Qatar recalled its ambassador to Iran. "The ministry summoned this morning Qatar's ambassador to Tehran against the backdrop of attacks on the embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Tehran," QNA quoted Khalid Ibrahim Abdulrahman Al-Hamar, the director of the Asian Affairs Department, as saying. Qatar's foreign ministry called the embassy attack a "violation of international charters and norms that ensure the security and protection of diplomatic missions and their members".

Staff at Iran's embassy in Riyadh and its consulate in Jeddah flew home yesterday, Saudi state news agency SPA reported. Iran's state broadcaster IRIB said a plane carrying 54 Iranian diplomats and their families had landed at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport. As its diplomats arrived home, Shiitedominated Iran fired the latest verbal salvo in a dispute that has seen Riyadh and some Sunni Arab allies cut diplomatic

oest ت

ties with Tehran. At a press conference in the capital, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Riyadh must end prolonged efforts to confront Iran.

Citing longstanding differences that became a full-blown split after Saudi Arabia executed Shiite cleric and activist Nimr Al-Nimr, Zarif said the Sunni-ruled kingdom had sought systematically to inflict damage. "For the past two-and-a-half years, Saudi Arabia has opposed Iran's diplomacy," he said at the press conference with Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari. "Saudi Arabia has moved against our efforts and, unfortunately, they opposed the nuclear agreement," Zarif said, also accusing Riyadh of "taking measures against the Iranian people" through its efforts to keep oil prices low. "This trend of creating tension must stop. We need to stand united... and stop those who are adding fuel to the fire," he added.

The spike in tensions comes after Iran last year secured a historic nuclear deal with world powers led by the United States, causing major concern in longtime US ally Riyadh. That deal, when finally implemented, will end sanctions on Iran's oil and gas industry and could see the Islamic republic challenge Saudi Arabia's role as the Middle East's dominant energy and economic power. The dispute has raised fears of an increase in sectarian tensions in the Middle East that could derail efforts to resolve pressing issues including the wars in Syria and Yemen.

Zarif reiterated that the embassy's ransacking had no official blessing. "All Iranian officials condemn it," he said. Jaafari, who was to also hold talks with Rouhani, said Iraq was seeking a potential diplomatic role to help resolve the crisis and echoed the concerns about sectarianism. "I have spoken to the foreign ministers of some of the Arab countries to reduce the consequences of this issue and prevent enemies from dragging the region into a war that can have no winners," Jaafari said. Shiite-majority Iraq has close ties with Tehran. About 2,000 members and supporters of powerful Iraqi Shiite militias demonstrated in Baghdad yesterday against Nimr's execution. — Agencies

N KOREA 'SUCCESSFULLY' CONDUCTS H-BOMB...

Continued from Page 1

A hydrogen, or thermonuclear, bomb uses fusion in a chain reaction that results in a far more powerful explosion than the fission blast generated by uranium or plutonium alone. Last month Kim suggested Pyongyang had already developed such a device. That claim was questioned by international experts at the time and there was continued skepticism over yesterday's test announcement, which took the international community by surprise.

"The seismic data that's been received indicates that the explosion is probably significantly below what one would expect from an H-bomb test," said Australian nuclear policy and arms control specialist Crispin Rovere. The test, which came just two days before Kim Jong-Un's birthday, was initially detected as a 5.1-magnitude tremor at the North's main Punggye-ri nuclear test site in the northeast of the country. The weapons yield was initially estimated at between six and nine kilotons similar to the North's last nuclear test in 2013. The first US hydrogen bomb test in 1952 had a yield of 10 megatons.

Bruce Bennett, a senior defence analyst with the Rand Corporation, said if it was an H-bomb that was tested, then the detonation clearly failed - at least the fusion stage. "If it were a real H-bomb, the Richter scale reading should have been about a hundred times more powerful," Bennett told AFP. South Korea's defence ministry also told reporters it doubted yester-

day's explosion was thermonuclear in nature. There were expressions of concern but no public panic on the streets of Seoul, where people have become largely inured to North Korea's provocations over the years.

Most experts had assumed Pyongyang was years from developing a hydrogen bomb, while assessments were divided on how far it had gone in developing a miniaturized warhead to fit on a ballistic missile. Whatever the nature of the device, it was North Korea's fourth nuclear test and marked a striking act of defiance in the face of warnings from enemies and allies alike that Pyongyang would pay a steep price for moving forward with its nuclear weapons program.

The North's official news agency was unrepentant. US "imperialists" had escalated the situation on the Korean peninsula to the brink of war, defying the North's calls for a peace treaty, it said. "The more frantic the hostile forces get in their moves to isolate and stifle the DPRK (North Korea), the stronger its nuclear deterrent will grow, bringing them to deathbed repentance."

The three previous tests in 2006, 2009 and 2013 triggered waves of UN sanctions. Their failure to prevent a fourth detonation will put the Security Council under intense pressure to take more drastic action this time around. It throws down a particular challenge to US President Barack Obama, who, during a visit to South Korea in 2014, vowed sanctions with "more bite" if Pyongyang went ahead with another test. — AFP

ASSEMBLY PANEL DEBATES REVISED ANTI-GRAFT...

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, the head of the Assembly's educational and guidance committee MP Awdah Al-Awdah said yesterday the committee held an informal meeting with Information Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah and ministry advisors to review the final text of the electronic crimes law. He said the two sides were in agreement over the amendments made by the committee on the government-sponsored bill and that

it will be sent to the Assembly for debate and approval. Awdah said he believes the Assembly will approve the law in two rounds after discussions with the government. The law applies to electronic websites and news bulletins which do not come under the existing press law.

Also, four lawmakers submitted a proposal calling on the government to give priority of employment to children of Kuwaiti women married to foreigners immediately after Kuwaiti citizens.



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Kuwait 1 (the New str.)
 Kuwait 2 (Panasonic Tower)
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 Farwaniya (Behind police Station)
 Fahaheel (Opp. General Parking)
 Jahra (Opp. Main Co-op.)
 Airport (Departure Hall)

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Focus

AFGHAN TALEBAN SEEK LEVERAGE IN WINTER SURGE

By Issam Ahmed

he Afghan Taleban have launched an unprecedented winter surge that points to a desire for an upper hand in peace talks, analysts say, while some suggest rogue Pakistani elements may be bolstering the effort to derail overtures by Islamabad to India. Taleban fighting normally quiets down in winter months with the insurgents resting ahead of an annual spring offensive, but this year has seen a series of fierce attacks - many focused on Kabul in recent weeks, including three in the capital since Friday. Some say the ongoing fighting is a bid by Taleban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour to consolidate his position ahead of four-way talks between Afghanistan, Pakistan, the US and China slated for next week, a precursor to a revived peace dialogue between Kabul and the insurgents.

Ahmed Rashid, a leading expert on the Afghan Taleban, said Mansour was tightening his grip on power through the high-profile attacks, after a shootout between rival insurgent commanders in Pakistan in December left him wounded. "We've never had such a winter offensive before from the Taleban. That winter is going to roll into a continuous spring-summer offensive," he told AFP. "That is looking very dangerous. Mansour is consolidating his position. If he's seen as a military success they will remain loyal to him. "Military success also de-legitimises the anti-Mansour faction that is emerging," he said, referring to the recent formation of a splinter group challenging his rule.

"The insurgents are trying to show to the world that they have presence in the country and get more concession in the peace talks," said Dawlat Waziri, a defence ministry spokesman. But Pakistan - seen as one of the few countries with influence over the insurgents - is also playing a role, regional analysts said. "The Taleban do not have the authority to decide on peace talks, they are controlled by others," said Zalmay Wardak, a Kabul-based military analyst, referring to Pakistan.

Three in the Bed

In recent years Pakistan has officially re-oriented its Afghan policy, disavowing the use of surrogate fighters such as the Taleban to achieve its foreign policy goals in Afghanistan, where it is seen as fighting a proxy war with India. Islamabad and Delhi recently agreed to relaunch peace talks and Indian premier Narendra Modi made a surprise visit to Pakistan in December, the first by an Indian prime minister in 11 years, immediately after his first tour of Kabul.

But two spectacular attacks on Indian interests since the weekend - a 25-hour siege on India's mission in the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif that ended Monday, and a bloody weekend assault on an air base in India - could signal the desire of elements within the powerful Pakistani military to scupper peace efforts between the two countries, one analyst suggested to AFP.

Observers in Pakistan believe it is nearly impossible that the prime minister would have been allowed to hold a breakthrough meeting with his Indian counterpart last month without the consent of the army, widely understood to dictate foreign and security policy. But Khadim Hussain, a political analyst based in the Pakistani city of Peshawar, said the attack on the air base along with a Taleban surge in Afghanistan indicated that elements of the Pakistani military were not on board with the negotiations. "The attack in India and the surge in attacks in Afghanistan could be seen as a joint strategy," he told AFP, clarifying that it was unclear whether such decisions were sanctioned at the highest levels. "It's not spur of the moment. It's planned, conscious, and the immediate result is they would like to derail the peace process," he said.

Arif Rafiq, a Pakistan analyst at Middle East Institute added: "While it's plausible that the militants responsible for these attacks receive direction from elements in the Pakistani military, it's also quite possible that they are acting on their own, attempting to secure a veto power over the process of Indo-Pak normalization."

There were other signs of the army's displeasure with the India-Pakistan initiative: Twitter accounts associated with the powerful Inter Services Intelligence slammed Modi's visit, while one nightly news anchor said he had been asked by intelligence officials to express pessimism on his show. The regional tug-of-war between Islamabad, Delhi and Kabul will continue to fuel the Taleban's 15-year-long insurgency, suggested Rashid.

In September of last year, the Kabul government briefly lost control of northern Kunduz, a stinging psychological blow to Afghan forces after years of training by Western forces which spent tens of billions of dollars to improve their capacity. According to Rashid, the Taleban could have more ambitious goals. "What do the Taleban want? Do they want a city or province so they can install a government in exile, as it were? That is also a possibility - everything is open and talks are very unlikely until Pakistan is prepared to stop some of the supplies and persuade Mansour to talk." — AFP

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EXPERTS SKEPTICAL OVER N KOREA H-BOMB CLAIM

By Hwang Sung-Hee

uclear experts cast doubt yesterday on North Korea's claimed first successful test of a miniaturized hydrogen bomb, saying the detected seismic activity suggested a less powerful device. The announcement followed hints last month by leader Kim Jong-Un that Pyongyang had already developed a hydrogen, or thermonuclear, bomb - a claim greeted with skepticism by experts at the time. Crispin Rovere, an Australia-based nuclear policy and arms control specialist, said the 5.1 magnitude tremor detected at the North's Punggye-ri nuclear test site was too small to support Pyongyang's claim.

"The seismic data that's been received indicates that the explosion is probably significantly below what one would expect from an H-bomb test," Rovere told AFP. "So initially it seems to be that they've successfully conducted a nuclear test but unsuccessfully completed the second-stage hydrogen explosion," Rovere said. The test came just two days before Kim Jong-Un's birthday. Analysts said the North's leader had been looking for a major achievement to highlight at a rare ruling party congress scheduled for May - the first gathering of its kind for 35 years.

"I don't think it was a hydrogen bomb test. The explosion had to be larger if it was a hydrogen bomb test," said Choi Kang, vice president of the Seoul-based Asan Institute for Policy Studies. "I think they are disguising it as a hydrogen test because Kim Jong-un mentioned it before," Choi said. A thermonuclear bomb uses fusion in a chain reaction that results in a far more powerful explosion than the fission blast generated by uranium or plutonium alone.

The North has made many unverifiable claims about its nuclear weapons strength, including the ability to strike the US mainland, which most experts dismiss - at least for now. In September, however, the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security had raised a red flag over what appeared to be a new "hot cell" facility under construction at the North's main Yongbyon nuclear complex.

Radiation Fears

Analysts at the think tank said satellite images suggested it could be an isotope separation facility capable of producing tritium - a key component in the design of thermonuclear weapons. Bruce Bennett, a senior defence analyst with the Rand Corporation, was also unconvinced by the H-bomb test claim. "If it were a real H-bomb, the Richter Scale reading should have been about a hundred times more powerful than what we saw, which would have been in the range of seven or so," he told AFP. Bennett assessed yesterday's explosion as in the 10-15 kiloton range, just less than the Hiroshima blast in 1945. He said the fusion element of the explosion may have failed entirely, or the fission element did not operate correctly. But Bennett said the

increasing power of the blasts heightened the prospect of triggering an earthquake and the release of radiation from the underground test site, a source of great concern to Chinese people across the border.

Asked about next steps, Bennett said: "We have to be concerned because he has this separate party congress that he's planning to do in May, which is a huge political deal. And he's done a test now which most people and most experts in the world will say didn't work. Is he going to be forced before May to do another test to demonstrate that they can get it to work? And that's the ultimate instability."

South Korea's National Intelligence Service, which briefed lawmakers after the North's announcement, also said it was unlikely to have been a hydrogen bomb. A member of the parliamentary intelligence committee who attended the briefing said the NIS had seen no tell-tale signs of an explosion powerful enough to be attributed to an H-bomb. The North's first two nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009 were of plutonium devices, while the third in 2013 was believed - though not confirmed - to have used uranium as its fissile material.

Seong Chai-Ki, senior research fellow at the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses, said yesterday's was more likely a boosted fission test - generally seen as a precursor to a full H-bomb detonation. "There has been speculation that North Korea would first test its boosted fission weapon rather than going directly to a hydrogen bomb test," Seong said. — AFP

DANGEROUS POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS DIVISIONS EXPOSED

By John Kemp

audi Arabia's execution of Shiite cleric Sheikh Nimr Al-Nimr has exposed the dangerous political, religious and socio-economic fault lines which run through the kingdom and the Gulf. News of the execution sparked some unrest among Shiite communities in Saudi Arabia's oil-rich Eastern Province and in neighboring Bahrain as well as in southern Iraq. Iran's supreme leader effectively called for the overthrow of the Saudi monarchy, drawing a furious response from the Saudi government, which accused the Islamic Republic of interfering in the kingdom's internal affairs.

Iranian protesters stormed the Saudi embassy in Tehran, and Saudi Arabia responded by breaking off diplomatic relations and encouraging allied Sunni governments to do the same. Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United Nations told reporters on Monday "we are not natural born enemies of Iran". But restoring diplomatic relations would only be possible if Iran were to "cease and desist from interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, including our own".

The rivalry between the two big powers in the Gulf is often simplified to a contest between a conservative Sunni monarchy and a revolutionary Shi'ite republic; the reality is more complicated and worrying. Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province lies at the dangerous intersection of great power rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia, sectarian conflict between Sunni and Shi'ite, social and economic grievances, and the world's largest oil reserves.

Fault Lines

Researchers at Columbia University have put together an outstanding collection of maps illustrating the cultural, religious, tribal and linguistic divisions across the Gulf region. They show Shiite majority areas stretching in an arc up through Iran, across southern Iraq and down along the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia into Bahrain, with a further output in the highlands of northern Yemen.

Iran has taken a special interest in the Shiite communities in all these countries; and in some cases the government in Tehran, especially the Revolutionary Guards and other hardline elements, have tried to export their influence and encouraged unrest. But it is also clear that many of these Shiite communities have strong local grievances and much of the unrest has local roots rather than simply being stirred up by Iran.

Shiite communities in Iraq, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia have all suffered discrimination and marginalization at the hands of Sunni-dominated governments and societies over the last century. What adds to the destabilizing cocktail is that areas that are home to many Shiite communities are also where most of the region's oil and gas fields and remaining reserves are. Southern Shiite-dominated Iraq contains far more oil and gas than the Sunni-majority areas in the centre of the country.

And in Saudi Arabia, Eastern Province is where almost all the country's oil and gas reserves are to be found. Conditions in the Eastern Province remain relatively opaque because access and reporting are controlled by the Saudi government, which also strongly discourages international discussion about

political risks affecting the kingdom. The potential for serious unrest is one of those low probability, high consequence risks that are difficult to estimate properly but which should not be ignored.

Unrest remains a tail risk rather than a central risk. It is much more likely the Eastern Province will remain peaceful, and much less likely that it will see social upheaval. No one will make money betting on political instability in Saudi Arabia or unrest in the oilfields because the probability in any given year is low. The risk of unrest could be as low as 5 percent or even 1 percent but that is not the same as zero. The same could have been said about the risk of upheaval in Egypt or Tunisia before 2011. The risks are real enough that they are perceived as a serious danger by the Saudi government, which continues to maintain a heavy security presence in the area, and they help explain why the confrontation between Riyadh and Tehran is so bitter and so personal.

Complex Kingdom

In most parts of the Middle East, national boundaries do not correspond to religious, cultural, linguistic or tribal divisions, and Saudi Arabia is no exception. The kingdom is an amalgamation of the conservative central region (Najd) with the western coast (Hijaz) and the eastern oases along the Gulf coast (Al-Hasa), all of which were separately administered until comparatively recently

King Abdulaziz, ruler of the Najd, conquered Al-Hasa in 1913 from the disintegrating Ottoman Empire, and added the Hijaz in 1924/25, finally unifying the country in 1932. But there are still major cultural and religious differences between the regions and even within them. Much of the ruling political and religious elite is drawn from the Najd, which is also identified with the austere Wahhabi form of Islam.

Hijaz was the home of more liberal interpretations of Islam while the majority of the population in Al-Hasa followed Shiite forms of Islam. As part of an effort at nation-building, conservative religious views from the Najd have been imposed on other parts of the country. According to the US government's Commission on International Religious Freedom, the modern Saudi state "privileges its own interpretation of Sunni Islam over all other interpretations" and "restricts most forms of public religious expression inconsistent with its particular interpretation of Sunni Islam".

One result is a long history of tension between Sunnis, especially those following a strict Wahhabi interpretation, and the Shiite communities in Al-Hasa, now renamed the Eastern Province. "Authorities continue to repress and discriminate against dissident clerics and members of the Shia community" the Commission on International Religious Freedom wrote in its latest annual report.

"The Shia community also faces discrimination in education, employment, the military, political representation, and the judiciary" the Commission concluded. The Saudi government denies any discrimination. Recent reports have noted progress towards ending official discrimination, but how much unofficial discrimination remains is unclear because the Saudi government strongly discourages research. As recently as

2012, the Commission found: "There are no Shi'a ministers in the government, only 5 of the 150-member Shura (Consultative Council) are Shi'a Muslims, and there are very few Shia Muslim leaders in high-level government positions, particularly in the security agencies." In predominantly Sunni Muslim areas of the country outside the Eastern Province, Shia and Ismaili Muslims face harassment, arrest and detention," it concluded ("International Religious Freedom Report 2012").

Violent Protests

Sectarian tensions between Sunnis and Shi'ites have periodically resulted in unrest in the Eastern Province - including two major labour strikes against the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) in 1953 and 1956, a full-scale uprising in 1979/80, and demonstrations in 2011.

The 1953 and 1956 strikes "were sparked by grievances over low wages, poor working and living conditions, and racism," according to historian Toby Jones of Rutgers University ("Desert Kingdom: How Oil and Water Forged Modern Saudi Arabia", 2010). "From the beginning, Aramco was acutely aware of compatibility issues between Sunni and Shite Muslims," the company's former chief executive Frank Jungers wrote in his memoir ("The Caravan Goes On: How Aramco and Saudi Arabia Grew Up Together" 2013).

"The Shiites were definitely in the minority nationally but made up the majority in the Eastern Province and tended to live in separate areas. The company was careful as a matter of policy not to allow this religious difference to become a factor in the training or evaluation of an employee," Jungers explained.

Aramco worked hard to professionalize its labor force, but the fact Jungers mentioned religious differences so prominently underscores the potential for tension. In 1979, protests erupted in Qatif and a number of other Shiite areas of the Eastern Province, as well as in neighboring Bahrain, and became violent following confrontations with the security forces. The unrest, which had a strong sectarian element, came only a few months after the shah was violently overthrown and the Islamic Revolution brought to power Ayatollah Ruhollah

Khomenei in Iran.

The new government in Tehran sought to export its revolutionary ideology and openly encouraged Shi'ite communities in neighboring Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia to revolt against their Sunni rulers. Khomenei's government broadcast its revolutionary message by beaming a powerful radio signal directly into the Eastern Province. "There is little doubt that the Iranian Revolution helped galvanize politics and energize dissent among Shiites in neighboring countries," according to Jones. "The revolution helped explain both the timing and some of the forces that encouraged Saudis to take to the streets."

In 2011, there were again violent protests in the Eastern Province and Bahrain as part of the wider Arab Spring, again mostly involving Shiite communities, which were put down by the security services. Following Nimr's execution, hundreds of protesters marched through Qatif on Saturday, according to eyewitness reports. — Reuters



O'DONOVAN BANNED EIGHT WEEKS FOR HEAD-BUTT

SYDNEY: Irish striker Roy O'Donovan was slapped with an eight-week ban yesterday for head-butting, one of the longest suspensions ever handed out by Australia's A-League. The 30-year-old, who plays for Central Coast

Mariners, was cited for his attack on Wellington Phoenix player Manny Muscat over the New Year period. Only former Mariners goalkeeper Danny Vukovic has received a bigger suspension in the A-League with a nine-month ban for striking a referee in 2008. O'Donovan pleaded guilty to violent conduct. Muscat was earlier banned for two matches for his part in the confrontation. The Mariners said they were "extremely disappointed" and may appeal against the decision. "The dispari-

ty in sanctions issued for this match highlights the flaws in the system," club chief executive Shaun Mielekamp said. "The media circus around the incident has a high impact on the result and we will look at our avenues for appeal." O'Donovan is in his first season with the Mariners after stints with Sunderland, Coventry City, Blackpool and Northampton Town in England. —AFP

MADRID MAD TO APPOINT ZIDANE

BERLIN: Real Madrid's decision to appoint Zinedine Zidane as their new coach has been described as "madness" by former Bayern Munich boss Ottmar Hitzfeld in an interview with Swiss daily Blick. "For him (Zidane) it is like winning the lottery jackpot. It is madness," said the 66-year-old Hitzfeld, who ended a stellar coaching career after taking Switzerland to the 2014 World Cup. Hitzfeld added that the former France great "is only living off his illustrious name as a player." Zidane's only previous experience as a coach is his 18 months at the helm of Real Madrid's second team, Castilla, in the regional third tier of Spanish football. "Zidane has proved nothing as a coach and he is now in charge of the biggest stars in the world. It is an incredibly difficult task although I hope it goes well for him," said Hitzfeld. Pep Guardiola was appointed Barcelona coach despite his only prior experience being leading Barca's B team to promotion from the Spanish fourth tier. For Hitzfeld, who won the Champions League as coach of both Borussia Dortmund and Bayern, a great player does not always make a great coach because "it also depends on his natural authority night after the sacking of Rafael Benitez. —AFP

LIVERPOOL SIGN SERBIAN GRUJIC

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool completed a deal for Red Star Belgrade's 19year-old Serbian midfielder Marko Grujic yesterday in Juergen Klopp's first signing since he took over as manager in October. Grujic, who has played for Serbia at under-21 level and was a member of the under-20 squad that won the World Cup in 2015, will return to Red Star on loan to the end of the season. The Premier League club did not disclose a transfer fee but British media reported it to be about 5.1 million pounds (\$7.5 million) with the player said to be contracted to the club until 2020. He has scored five goals in 21 league appearances for Red Star this season. "We're very pleased because Marko is a big talent and we've seen him a lot of times," Klopp told the club's website (www.liverpoolfc.com). "When I came here, our scouts showed me some footage of a very skilled player from Red Star



TERMAS DE RIO HONDO AND JUJUY: Peugeot's French driver Sebastien Loeb and co-driver Daniel Elena from Monaco, compete in the Stage 3 of the 2016 Dakar Rally between Termas de Rio Hondo and Jujuy, Argentina, on Tuesday.— AFP

Loeb fires broadside with second stage win

SAN SALVADOR DE JUJUY: Sebastien Loeb's sensational Dakar Rally debut continued on Tuesday when he topped the podium for the second time in two days with victory in the third stage of the gruelling two-week rally-raid.

France's nine-time world rally champion, driving a Peugeot, clocked 2hr 9min 39sec over 190km between the Argentinian towns of Termas de Rio Hondo and San Salvador de Jujuy to consolidate his place atop the overall stand-

ings. Mini-driving defending champion Nasser al-Attiyah of Qatar sits in fifth place overall, 6min 50sec adrift of Loeb, and just behind the Mini of Finland's Mikko Hirvonen, Loeb's former WRC rival who is also making his race debut.

"It seems that the times will be very close between the drivers," said the 41-year-old Loeb, adding that the desert stages would be a real test. "I pushed hard and I had a good stage with no mistakes. Everything is ok at the moment." Loeb, who has been racing in the World Touring Car Championship since effectively retiring from WRC rallying after the last of his nine consecutive world titles in 2012, added: "For the moment, for sure, I'm enjoying it. It has been two good days for me.

"The car is going very well. I have a good feeling with the car. It's performing well so at the moment I'm enjoying it," said the Frenchman, who spent his illustrious WRC

career at the wheel of a Citroen. "At the moment we are on tracks... so I've got a good feeling on this type of road. But when we go to the desert it will be different, with long and hot stages. That is something that I don't know very well, so we will see.

"We will continue for the moment and I'll try to do my best and we'll see where we are in a few days," said Loeb, accompanied by long-time co-driver and fellow rally-raid novice Daniel Elena. Argentina's Kevin Benavides, on a Honda, won the motorcycle section of the stage, shortened because of bad weather, after the initial winner Joan Barreda Bort was handed a one-minute penalty for speeding.

That bumped the Spanish Honda rider down to fifth on the stage, with Portugal's Paulo Goncalves (Honda) and Frenchman Antoine Meo (KTM) moving up to second and third respectively.—AFP

HIRSCHER BEATS KRISTOFFERSEN TO WIN WORLD CUP SLALOM

SANTA CATERINA VALFURVA: Marcel Hirscher earned his 36th career win on the World Cup circuit yesterday, edging Norwegian rival Henrik Kristoffersen by 0.21 seconds in a men's slalom. The four-time overall champion from Austria was third after the opening leg but posted the fastest second-run time to finish in 1 minute, 54.54 seconds.

Meanwhile, Therese Johaug beat Ingvild Flugstad Oestberg in the women's 10-kilometer mass start to cut her Norwegian teammate's lead in the Tour de Ski to just 12.2 seconds yesterday.

Norwegians completed the top four, with Johaug winning in 26 minutes, 37.6 seconds - 9.9 seconds ahead of Oestberg. Heidi Weng was 19.7 behind in third. Weng is 2:33.1 behind Oestberg in the Tour de Ski standings.

ish to win the men's 15-kilometer race. Poltoranin finished in 35 minutes, 35.9 seconds, one-tenth of a second ahead of Cologna, who was 0.6 seconds ahead of Italy's Francesco de Fabiani.

After five of eight races in the Tour de Ski, Norway's Martin Johnsrud Sundby still leads compatriot Petter Northug Jr.

It was the third time in three slaloms this season that Hirscher and Kristoffersen shared the top-two spots - though the first time with the Austrian on top. "It's super cool," Hirscher said about his rivalry with the 21-year-old Norwegian. "It gives me new motivation, new strength. Also in training I try to make another step forward."

Kristoffersen still led Hirscher by 0.07 toward the end of his final run but had a costly mistake in the last few gates before the finish. "That is ski racing. But one mistake is OK," the Norwegian said. "I am satisfied It was a good run. I heard Marcel was

incredibly fast in the lower section."

Kristoffersen was reluctant to speculate about a duel with Hirscher for this year's World Cup slalom title, which the Austrian won the past three seasons. "It's still a long way until (the final races in) St. Moritz," he said. "Now I think Marcel is the best, and I am close helpind him."

am close behind him."

Kristoffersen remained in the lead of the discipline standings with 280 points, 20 clear of Hirscher. Aleksander Khoroshilov of Russia is third with 114 points. Eyeing his second victory after winning in Schladming a year ago, Khoroshilov led Hirscher by 0.10 after the opening run.

AMAZING JOB

However, he was already half a second behind the Austrian at the first split of his second run and finally came third, 0.32 off the winning time.



SANTA CATERINA: From left, second placed Henrik Kristoffersen of Norway, winner Marcel Hirscher of Austria, and third placed Alexander Khoroshilov of Russia celebrate on the podium of an alpine ski, men's World Cup slalom, in Santa Caterina, Italy, yesterday. — AP



OBERSTDORF: Norwegian Therese Johaug celebrates during the winner ceremony of the ladies 10 kilometer classic competition of the "Tour de Ski" Cross Country World Cup yesterday in Oberstdorf, southern Germany. — AFP

in the second run," Hirscher said. "Henrik and Aleksander did an amazing job as well so it was pretty close as it's been all season so far"

Hirscher matched retired Benjamin Raich's total of 36 World Cup wins. They are runners-up to Austrian record holder Hermann Maier, who won 54 times. It also was the Austrian's 17th slalom win, which put him third on the all-time list. Only Ingemar Stenmark of Sweden (40) and Alberto Tomba of Italy (35) had more wins

in the discipline.

"It is nice. I am skiing a couple of years more so we will see at the end how far I can (go in) the rankings," Hirscher said.

"Anyway, records are only for retired athletes, who are sitting in their seat and drinking a glass of red wine."

Hirscher went top of the overall standings again, leading Aksel Lund Svindal of Norway by 85 points. Svindal doesn't compete in slaloms.

World slalom champion Jean-Baptiste Grange of France finished 2.60 behind Hirscher in 18th. David Chodounsky, who was third in the discipline standings before the race, failed to finish his first run while none of his five American teammates managed to qualify for the final run either. The race was moved from Zagreb because of a lack of snow. It was the first in a series of five slaloms within three

This weekend, a giant slalom and a slalom will be contested in Adelboden, with further slaloms to follow in Wengen, Kitzbuehel and Schladming. ——AP



US SKI JUMPER FAIRALL RETURNS TO SCENE OF CRASH A YEAR LATER

Nick Fairall is sitting on top of the 140meter Paul Asserleitner Schanze in Bischofshofen, Austria, staring down for a silent moment. Just like he did a year ago. This time, however, the American doesn't speed down the hill and fly. Instead, he rolls back his wheelchair and takes the lift down. On Tuesday, Fairall returned to the venue where a bad crash in qualifying for the final stop of the 2015 Four Hills Tour severely hurt his spine. The main damage was a fractured and dislocated vertebra, which triggered paralysis in his legs.

Slowly but steadily recovering, the 26-year-old Andover, New Hampshire, native is still hoping to return to ski jumping one day.

"Being here now is bittersweet, but it is the environment that I love," he said at jumping since I was six years old. It's such an amazing sport. It's a sport that I want to return to. Even today, I wanted to jump again so badly."

Visiting Bischofshofen and the ski flying world championships in nearby Tauplitz next week enables Fairall to personally thank "our ski jumping community that has been absolutely outstanding" in financially supporting his rehabilitation. "So many people have come out of the woodwork; people I don't even know, fellow jumpers, colleagues, fans of the sport," he said while fighting tears. "I am so grateful, I can't say it in words. I am super excited to be back here, to be able to thank everybody." Fairall remembers every detail of that day he crashed. Just two hours beforehand, he had a similar crash during trial jumping,

aged only his skis.

In qualifying, he landed a routine jump of 123 meters, but leaned forward too much, lost balance, and fell awkwardly head-first.

"The moment I hit the ground, I just stuck," he said. "I kind of knew I was going to fall ... I tried to fight the fall but unfortunately the radius pulled me in, and I hit the ground pretty hard. The moment I hit the ground, I knew I hurt

INTERNAL BLEEDING

Fairall fractured two ribs, punctured his right lung, bruised a kidney, and had mild internal bleeding. The main issue, however, was the dislocated vertebrae.Immediate surgery stabilized him, and he spent nearly four weeks in

BISCHOFSHOFEN: Olympic ski jumper a news conference. "I have been ski though he avoided injuries and dam- an Austrian clinic before flying home and starting a two-month rehab at the Kessler Institute in New Jersey. "Each day I am making progress, little by little," he wrote on his Facebook page in June. "I now have more feeling in my legs and some movement in my thighs. My recovery is an ongoing process and each day I continue to work towards my goal of ski jumping again."

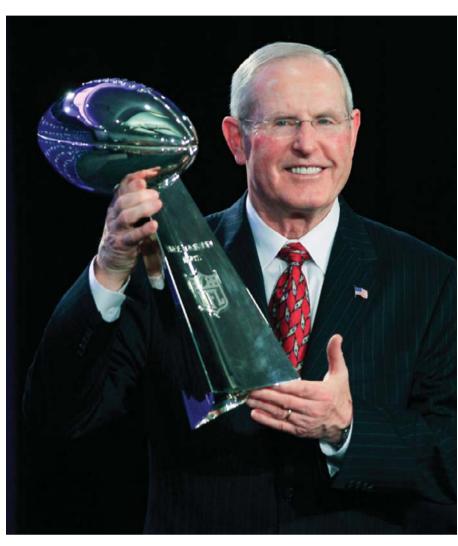
The following month, Fairall posted a video of him taking his first steps with crutches. In December, he went back on snow on adapted skis for the first time. "I've been working exhaustingly on my rehab," he said. "But in the meantime, I still spent time to make sure I was enjoying life, seeing my friends, seeing my teammates, seeing all the people that I love in my life."

Fairall has competed in 13 World

Cups since his debut at the traditional New Year's event at Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, in 2009. Later that month he won a competition on the lower-ranked FIS Cup circuit in Eisenerz, Austria.

A year before the crash, Fairall won the American trials to qualify for the Sochi Olympics, where he placed 35th on the individual large hill.

"Now, in this difficult time of my life, where I had to make a ton of changes, I am using the same mental skills I used during that preparation for success," he said. Fairall said he's planning to get his pilot's license and to write a book about his recovery. And his dream of returning as a ski jumper wasn't over yet. "It will always remain a goal of mine," he said. "I will make whatever improvements I can to reach that goal."—AP



INDIANAPOLIS: New York Giants head coach Tom Coughlin hold up the Vince Lombardi Trophy during a news conference after NFL football's Super Bowl XLVI in Indianapolis. Tom Coughlin, who returned the Giants to NFL prominence by winning two Super Bowls, resigned Monday, after missing the playoffs for the fourth consecutive year. — AP

IN GIANTS' FAREWELL, COUGHLIN SAYS MAY NOT BE DONE COACHING

EAST RUTHERFORD: Tom Coughlin didn't fade away in his goodbye to the New York Giants. The 69-year-old, who led the Giants to two Super Bowls in a 12-year tenure, was Tom Coughlin to the end.

In an emotional and poignant farewell Tuesday, Coughlin talked about things that mattered to him: values, relationships, character, loyalty, team, family and love. "I can tell you right now it has become the source of drive for me, is that when our players, whether they're in their career, after their career, when they come back to me and they say: 'Coach, I love you,' " Coughlin said. "They follow that up by saying they've become better men, better husbands, better fathers, better friends because of their experience having been a New York Giant."

Speaking a day after stepping down as coach after four straight seasons out of the playoffs, Coughlin called the Giants' job a dream come true for a youngster from a small town in upstate New York. He nearly broke into tears thanking his wife, Judy, for being his quarterback through the ride.

Coughlin surprised no one in saying his coaching career may not be over. He still has that competitive fire. It showed in his goodbye, which began with a litany of people he had to thank. Coughlin sounded as if he were addressing a congregation during his 18 minutes on stage, stressing the values of winning the right way, building character and preparing players for life after

"I don't know if I'm any different," Coughlin said. "I've changed and I've grown and I've developed and I've learned. You better do that or you're dead. So I've done that. I'm better for it. I'm better for the experiences that I've had. I'm better for the people that I've had a chance to coach and be with. I'm better for that."

Winning two Super Bowls was his legacy with one of the NFL's founding franchises, but he said what he will remember most will be relationships developed over the past 12 years. It showed in the audience in front of him. Eli Manning and fellow current Giants Victor Cruz, Rashad Jennings, Zak DeOssie and Mark Herzlich sat in front of him, along with former players Shaun O'Hara, Rich Seubert and Chris Snee, his son-in-law.

"Winning, losing, playing hard, playing well, doing it for each other, winning the right way; winning the right way is a very, very important thing to me and all of our coaches," Coughlin said. "That's what motivates and inspires us. Championships are won by teams who love one another, who love and respect one another, who play for and support one another."

Giants co-owner John Mara lauded Coughlin as everything the organization could have wanted from the man who replaced Jim Fassel in 2004. He added that Coughlin was offered a job within the organization

"He's a Hall of Fame coach, a Hall of Fame person. He leaves big shoes to fill," Mara said. While there is no timetable to find a new coach, Mara wants to find the right man sooner than later with five other teams (Browns, 49ers, Dolphins, Eagles and Titans) looking for new men to lead their

Mara and Reese will do the initial interviews. Current offensive coordinator Ben McAdoo and defensive leader Steve Spagnuolo will be interviewed. —AP

BONDS, CLEMENS LIKELY TO GET BOOST FROM HALL VOTE CHANGES

NEW YORK: Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens and other tainted stars of the Steroids Era appear likely to get a boost in Hall of Fame balloting, but not enough to enter Cooperstown this year.

Ken Griffey Jr. seems assured of election on the first try yesterday, possibly with a record vote of close to 100 percent. Mike Piazza, Jeff Bagwell and Tim Raines also were strong candidates to gain the 75 percent needed for baseball's highest honor.

Following the elimination of about 100 retired baseball writers from the electorate, Bonds and Clemens were on track for a 5-10 percentage point increase. After drawing about 37 percent of the ballots last year, they were in the 48 percent range this year according to www.bbhoftracker.com which tabulated public votes adding to more than one-third of the total.

Last July, the Hall's board of directors cut eligible voters from approximately 575 to roughly 475 by purging writers who had not been covering the game for more than a decade. Previously, the electorate included people who had been active members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America for 10 consecutive years at any

"We have a somewhat different electorate," John Thorn, Major League Baseball's official historian, said Tuesday. "I think possibly the current electorate was not content to keep kicking the PED crowd down into a hole and leaving the Hall of Fame with a crater in its plaque room."

Marc Maturo, a reporter covering New York baseball for Gannett in the 1970s and '80s, was among those who lost voting rights. He said he would have voted for Bonds, Clemens, Griffey and Raines.

"The whole process I think was done too quickly, wasn't given enough thought," he said. Now a writer for the weekly Rockland County Times, Maturo pointed out players who received one or two votes in recent years, such as Armando Benitez, Aaron Boone, Bret Boone, Darin Erstad, Kenny Rogers, J.T. Snow and B.J. Surhoff.

FRIENDSHIP VOTES

"They call these courtesy votes or friendship votes," he said, "That should eliminate you. They're not Hall of Famers by anyone's imagination. But people vote for them. To me, that's wrong." A 13-time All-Star who is sixth with 630 homers, Griffey was a lock to be inducted at Cooperstown on July 24. The former Cincinnati and Seattle star appeared on all 166 ballots counted by bbhoftracker and could challenge the record of 98.84 percent set by Tom Seaver when he was picked by 425 of 430 voters in 1992.

Piazza was at about 87 percent in his fourth appearance after falling short by 28 votes last year, when Randy Johnson, Pedro Martinez, John Smoltz and Craig Biggio became the first quartet elected by the BBWAA in one year since 1955

Bagwell was third at 80 percent in his sixth appearance, followed by Raines at 78 percent in his ninth. Last year, the actual percentage was about 5 percent under the pre-announcement figure on the vote-tracker.

Bonds, the only seven-time MVP, and Clemens, the only seven-time Cy Young Award winner, are both making their fourth appearance and are eligible for up to six more years. Reliever Trevor Hoffman, on the ballot for the first time, was at 62 percent on the vote-tracker and seemed likely to fall short.

Mark McGwire, one of the first big stars to admit using steroids, was at 13 percent in his final ballot appearance nearly half his peak of 23.6 percent in 2008. Alan Trammell, also on for the last time, was at 47 percent. Sammy Sosa was at 8 percent in his fourth attempt.

Following the board's decision not to accept the BBWAA's recommendation that voters be allowed to select up to 12 candidates rather than 10, next year's ballot could force more tough decisions. Manny Ramirez, Ivan Rodriguez, Vladimir Guerrero and Magglio Ordonez are eligible for the first time. — AP



Barry Bonds



HOUSTON: File photo, Houston Astros pitcher Roger Clemens (22) grits his teeth after New York Mets' Mike Piazza, right, fouled off a pitch during the second inning of a baseball game in Houston. Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens and other tainted stars of the Steroids Era appear likely to get a boost in Hall of Fame balloting, but not enough to enter Cooperstown this year. —AP

ZIMMERMAN, HOWARD SUE AL JAZEERA OVER DOPING REPORT

WASHINGTON: The Washington Nationals' Ryan Zimmerman and Philadelphia Phillies' Ryan Howard sued the Al Jazeera America television network for defamation on Tuesday over a report that the Major League Baseball players used a performance-enhancing

The two suits, filed in US District Court in Washington, accuse the network of libel and invasion of privacy. They are seeking punitive and other damages as well as a court order that Al Jazeera retract false and defamatory statements, according to the court fil-

Al Jazeera reported on Dec. 27 that Zimmerman and Howard, both first basemen, along with some National

Football League players, had received supplies of Delta-2, a banned hormone supplement.

Al Jazeera did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Major League Baseball has said it would investigate the allegations. The source for the story, Charles Sly, also told an Al Jazeera undercover reporter that he had supplied Denver Broncos quarterback Peyton Manning with human growth hormones to recover from neck surgery in 2011. Manning has denied the allegations. Sly has recanted his comments, saying the network recorded him without his knowledge or consent. The suit also names reporter Deborah Davies and her assistant, Liam James Collins, both Britons. — Reuters

RACISM EXISTS IN SPORT OF BOXING: MAYWEATHER

LOS ANGELES: Floyd Mayweather says "racism still exists in the sport of boxing" and he cited UFC champion Ronda Rousey's name in an attempt to bolster his argument.

Mayweather also mentioned unified WBA, IBF, WBC and IBO champ Gennady Golovkin and former Olympic gold medallist Andre Ward but added the problem isn't limited to just the men's side of the sweet science.

Mayweather compared Rousey to former pro boxer Laila Ali who retired with a perfect 24-0 record and is black.

'You look at things like this, Ronda Rousey, you know, I think she fought somewhere like 11 or 12 fights. Laila Ali went undefeated and was dominating too," Mayweather said in an interview Wednesday with FightHype.com.

"After Ronda Rousey fought I think nine, 10, 11 fights, it didn't even take that long, she got all types of endorsements, movies, and everything. Laila Ali did the same thing in better fashion.

'Ronda Rousey, she's a good looking woman when she put it on. Laila Ali is a drop-dead gorgeous woman. I mean a naturally beautiful woman and can kick ass, but you never heard them (the media) saying when she had I think somewhere around 10, 11, 12 fights that she was the baddest woman to ever fight on the

Mayweather took issue with the ranking system and how it relates to super middleweight

boxer Ward and Japanese WBC bantamweight champ Shinsuke Yamanaka. "I can't believe they [Ring Magazine] got

Andre Ward ranked No. 4 in the pound-forpound list," Mayweather said. "Without Andre Ward losing a fight, he has to be No. 2. I mean, he wins his fights not in good fashion, but in great fashion, and they have him at No. 4? "They got some guy ranked No. 9, I don't real-

ly know his full name, so I don't want to be disrespectful. But they got a Japanese guy ranked No. 9. They got Andre Ward No. 4, and this guy that's ranked No. 9, we don't even know who he is. "I truly believe that racism still exists in the sport of boxing. Asked in the interview to back up his claim,

Mayweather said, "You gotta really look at things like this, when Bernard Hopkins was a middleweight trying to fight Oscar De La Hoya, Shane Mosley, and Felix Trinidad, they [the media] said he was calling out smaller guys.

"When the guy Triple G (Golovkin) does it, they don't say shit. Once again, I'm not racist; I'm just saying racism still exists."

Mayweather has been accused of using racist remarks in the past once saying he would make Manny Pacquiao "make me a sushi roll and cook me some rice."

He also claimed in a tweet that NBA player Jeremy Lin was getting all the attention "because he's Asian." — AFP

BRIT BROADY PREVAILS AFTER RACQUET ROW IN AUCKLAND

AUCKLAND: A fired up Naomi Broady let her racquet do the talking as she stormed back to beat Jelena Ostapenko in an illtempered Auckland Classic clash marred by an on-court row after the Briton called for the Latvian to be disqualified.

Tensions boiled over in the second set of the low key second round clash when, after a winner by Broady, the 18-year-old Ostapenko's racquet came out of her hand, bounced off the blue hard court and against the back wall towards the ball boy.

"She threw the racquet and hit the ball boy, no way was that accidental," the 25year-old Broady complained to the umpire. Play was delayed as the umpire and ball boy had a conversation. The umpire opted for a code violation over a disqualification after the Latvian wildcard argued the racquet slipped from her hand but a clearly upset Broady called for another official to adjudicate.

"I asked for the tournament referee to come down onto the court to give his opinion," Broady was quoted as saying by local media.

"But as he isn't the chair umpire, he goes by what the chair umpire says and his opinion was that it had slipped from her hand, as Jelena had said, so it was just a code violation and move onto the next point."

Broady, who knocked out former world number one Ana Ivanovic in the first round on Tuesday, settled quicker to take the tiebreak and force a deciding set but she looked down and out as she trailed 5-1 in

But the British qualifier saved a second match point as she stormed back to prevail 4-6 7-6(4) 7-5, helped by 21 aces, and book a spot in the quarter-finals where she will face American fifth seed Sloane Stephens.

Both players shook hands at the end of the contest but bad blood remained with Broady clearly angry about the incident and repeating her accusation that Ostapenko intentionally threw her racquet in the second set.

The umpire attempted to quell the trouble as the players continued their verbal volleys. "Jelena commented that my behaviour was terrible," Broady said. "Which I thought was a bit out of order, considering the events that had gone on in the match. I don't think I did anything disrespectful to her, or anyone else on the court. "So I'm not really sure where that came from, but tensions were high, adrenalin was going. We had a bit of a confrontation, but she's going to be a fantastic player and I'm sure we'll both learn from any mistakes we made today and move forwards." — Reuters

AZARENKA ADVANCES TO Q-FINALS AT BRISBANE

BRISBANE: After two injury-interrupted seasons, Victoria Azarenka is emerging from the shadows of some highly-ranked rivals who have either withdrawn from Australian Open warmup events or lost in the early rounds.

The two-time Australian Open champion reached the quarterfinals of the Brisbane International - a tournament she won in 2009 - with a 6-3, 6-2 win over Ysaline Bonaventure.

Bonaventure, a lucky loser from qualifying, was cast into the second round on Wednesday as a replacement for top-seeded Simona Halep, who had a bye before withdrawing from a scheduled secondround match with Azarenka because of an Achilles tendon problem.

The No. 2-ranked Halep withdrew within an hour of defending champion Maria Sharapova pulling out of the tournament with a left forearm injury. Top-ranked Serena Williams withdrew from the Hopman Cup in Perth after skipping her first match and retiring in the second set of the U.S. team's second against Australia Gold because of inflammation in her left

Venus Williams and Ana Ivanovic - the top two seeded players at the ASB Classic in Auckland, New Zealand - were beaten in the first round.

Azarenka conceded an early service break against Bonaventure and had seven double-faults in the first set, but otherwise dominated after converting her fifth breakpoint chance in a fourth game that lasted more than 17 minutes and went to deuce

Azarenka who dropped to a year-end No. 22 ranking in December after being restricted to just 23 events across 2014 and '15, is working her way back into form.

"I definitely missed playing since I haven't in a while," she said. As for the broader issue of injuries, she said: "I'm just going to try to take care of myself right now, and hopefully everybody will be

Andrea Petkovic had a 7-5, 6-4 win over Ekaterina Makarova to move into a quarterfinal against U.S. qualifier Samantha Crawford, who had an upset 7-5, 7-5 win over seventh-seeded Belinda Bencic.

Petkovic, who has struggled in the past with serious injuries, attributed the high attrition rate in January to the extra work players are putting into the conditioning over the off-season.

"If I know them well, the top players, they still will be in good shape when it comes to the Australian Open," Petkovic

NISHIKORI UNTROUBLED

In the men's draw, second-seeded Kei Nishikori opened with a 6-3, 6-4 win over Mikhail Kukushkin to move into the quarterfinals against seventh-seeded Bernard Tomic, a 7-6 (6), 4-6, 7-6 (4) winner over Radek Stepanek.

Third-seeded Marin Cilic beat Chung Hyeon 7-5, 7-6 (3), and No. 8 Dominic Thiem had a 6-3, 6-2 win against Denis Kudla to advance.

At the Hopman Cup mixed teams event in Perth, Western Australia, Germany leveled its record at 1-1 with a 2-1 win over France, which lost for the second time.

Alexander Zverev gave Germany a 1-0 lead with a 6-2, 6-2 win over Kenny De Schepper, but Caroline Garcia beat Sabine Lisicki 6-2, 7-6 (5) to send the match to a mixed doubles decider, which the German pair won 6-4, 6-7 (6), 10-6.

In a night match, Andy Murray lost to Australia Green's Nick Kyrgios. Heather Watson was playing Daria Gavrilova in a bid to keep Britain alive.

In New Zealand, third-seeded Caroline Wozniacki resisted the fate of other seeded players at the tournament with a 6-0, 6-2 win against Christina McHale and No. 5 Sloane Stephens beat Carina Witthoeft 3-6, 6-1, 6-3.



BRISBANE: Victoria Azarenka of Belarus hits a return against Ysaline Bonaventure of Belgium during their women's singles match on the fourth day of the Brisbane International tennis tournament vesterday. — AFP



DALLAS: Dallas Mavericks guard Deron Williams (8) shoots a 3-pointer in the final second of the second overtime in an NBA basketball game against the Sacramento Kings on Tuesday, in Dallas. The Mavericks won 117-116.— AP

MAVS WIN IN 2 OTS, MAKE IT 22 STRAIGHT AT HOME OVER KINGS

DALLAS: Deron Williams hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer in the second overtime, and the Dallas Mavericks beat Sacramento 117-116 Tuesday night for their 22nd consecutive home victory over the Kings. Williams took an inbounds pass from Devin Harris with 2.3 seconds left, pump faked to get Rudy Gay to fly by him in the left corner and the ball went in after the buzzer sounded. Dirk Nowitzki hit an earlier 3 as the Mavericks scored the last eight points after falling behind 116-109 with 1:20 left in the second overtime. DeMarcus Cousins scored 35 for his third straight 30-point game for the Kings, including a buzzer-beating layup for a 98-all tie at the end of regulation. Former Dallas guard Rajon Rondo was out with back spasms in his first visit since an acrimonious split after an illfated half-season with the Mavericks. The Kings haven't won a regular-season game in Dallas since Feb. 27, 2003. Sacramento did win a game in Dallas during a five-game playoff series victory over the Mavericks in 2004.

BULLS 117, BUCKS 106

Jimmy Butler had 32 points and a seasonhigh 10 assists to lead Chicago over Milwaukee for its season-best fifth straight win. Pau Gasol scored 26 points with 11 rebounds, and Taj Gibson added 11 points and 14 boards as the Bulls led the entire way. Derrick Rose returned to the Bulls after missing three straight games with a sore right hamstring. He showed no effects of the injury and finished with 16 points. Khris Middleton scored 26 for Milwaukee, and Michael Carter-Williams had 20 points and 12 assists.

KNICKS 107, HAWKS 101 Arron Afflalo and Carmelo Anthony both scored 23 points, and New York almost lost a 16point lead before holding off Atlanta to give the Knicks their second win over the Hawks in three days. The Knicks led by 16 in the third quarter but saw the lead reduced to two points in the final minute before Jose Calderon scored on a drive with 18 seconds remaining. Kristaps Porzingis had 17 points and 11 rebounds for New York. Anthony finished with 11 rebounds and seven assists. Paul Millsap led Atlanta with 19 points.

WARRIORS 109, LAKERS 88 Klay Thompson scored 22 of his 36 points in

Eastern Conference

the first quarter and Stephen Curry added 17 before sitting out the fourth to rest his ailing leg in Golden State's victory over the Los Angeles Lakers. Kobe Bryant sat out his third straight game with a sore right shoulder for the Lakers, whose three-game winning streak ended in Golden State's 33rd win in 35 games. Curry stayed in the game after taking a blow on his left leg in the third period, but briefly limped with obvious frustration on his face. The reigning MVP missed two games with a bruised lower left leg last week before returning for Golden State's last two games. Curry went to the locker room before the fourth. — AP

Western Conference

NBA Results/Standings

Atlanta 101, New York 107; LA Lakers 88, Golden State 109; Dallas 117, Sacramento 116 (OT); Chicago 117, Milwaukee 106.

	Atlanti	c Divisio	on			Northwe	est Divis	ion		
	w	L	PCT	GB	Oklahoma City	24	11	.686	_	
Toronto	21	15	.583	_	Utah	15	18	.455	8	
Boston	19	15	.559	1	Portland	15	22	.405	10	
New York	17	19	.472	4	Denver	12	23	.343	12	
Brooklyn	10	24	.294	10	Minnesota	12	23	.343	12	
Philadelphia	4	33	.108	17.5		Pacific	Divisio	n		
	Centra	l Divisio	on		Golden State	33	2	.943	_	
Cleveland	23	9	.719	_	LA Clippers	22	13	.629	11	
Chicago	21	12	.636	2.5						
Indiana	19	15	.559	5	Sacramento	14	21	.400	19	
Detroit	19	16	.543	5.5	Phoenix	12	25	.324	22	
Milwaukee	14	23	.378	11.5	LA Lakers	8	28	.222	25.5	
	Southea	st Divis	ion			Southw	est Divis	ion		
Miami	21	13	.618	_	San Antonio	30	6	.833	_	
Atlanta	21	15	.583	1	Dallas	20	15	.571	9.5	
Orlando	19	16	.543	2.5	Memphis	19	17	.528	11	
Charlotte	17	17	.500	4	Houston	17	19	.472	13	
Washington	15	17	.469	5	New Orleans	11	22	.333	17.5	

DJOKOVIC EASES INTO QATAR **QUARTER-FINALS**

DOHA: Novak Djokovic breezed through to the quarter-finals of the Qatar Open yesterday, losing just four games in a comprehensive defeat of Spain's Fernando

The World Number one triumphed 6-2, 6-2, in one hour nine minutes. It matched the score of his first round victory against Dustin Brown and means the Serb has spent just two hours on court in the first two rounds. "Both of the matches went very well," said the Serb immediately afterwards, adding he had put in a "very solid performance" yesterday.

Ominously for his rivals, Djokovic looked already to be getting back to his dominant form of 2015. In warmer temperatures experienced in Doha than in the rest of the week-around 20 degrees Celsius (68 Fahrenheit) — Djokovic controlled the match from the very beginning.

He first broke Verdasco's serve in the fourth game to 15 and was rarely troubled after that. The Serb squandered another break point just two games later but eventually closed out the set on Verdasco's serve to go one up in just 31 minutes.

Verdasco, the world number 49 who had beaten Djokovic four times in their 11 previous meetings, offered some resistance in the second set but only enough to delay the inevitable. The Spaniard, who may have been feeling the effects of his first round victory less than 24 hours before, missed two break opportunities in the second set and was made to pay.

Djokovic, was watched on by coach Boris Becker, the first winner of the Qatar Open back in 1993.

It is not yet known who Djokovic's third round opponent will be, but it was at that stage last year that he crashed out of the Qatar Open, losing to Croatia's Ivo

Rafael Nadal plays his second round match later vesterday, against Robin Haase of the Netherlands. Earlier Jeremy Chardy won an all-French clash beating compatriot Paul-Henri Mathieu6-2, 6-4. — AFP



DOHA: Novak Djokovic of Serbia celebrates after winning against Spain's Fernando Verdasco during their tennis match in the Qatar Open tournament yesterday, in Doha. — AFP

CRICKETER'S SEXISM STORM WORSENS WITH NEW ALLEGATIONS



Chris Gayle

SYDNEY: The storm surrounding star cricketer Chris Gayle over an attempt to flirt with an Australian presenter on live TV intensified yesterday as new allegations about his behaviour towards women emerged.

More female journalists aired complaints against the West Indian after he was fined US\$7,000 on Tuesday for his approach to Network Ten reporter Mel McLaughlin. Gayle apologised and tried to brush off the exchange with McLaughlin as a harmless joke.

His team, the Melbourne Renegades, played down calls for sterner action and said their star signing would play again in the Big Bash League on Saturday. But Fox Sports reporter Neroli Meadows branded the Jamaican a "creep". "He does this constantly," she told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. "He's a creep, he has creepy behaviour." She said Gayle came on to her during a 2011 interview saying, "Sorry, I was totally distracted by your pretty face-could you repeat the question?" Nine News reporter Yvonne Sampson said Gayle had also asked her on a date after watching her carry out an interview. "I had a notification via Twitter that Chris Gayle would like to take me out to dinner," she said.

"I'd never met him. I think Chris Gayle

is a known womaniser, and that's a really awful word, but that's what he is." McLaughlin found herself being asked out for a drink after Gayle blasted 41 runs off 15 balls late Monday.

Gayle said he was happy to be interviewed "just to see your eyes for the first time". "Don't blush, baby," the Jamaican added, before saying, "Sorry!" and breaking into a big laugh. Cricket Australia chief James Sutherland said no one should have to face such comments, which were "completely out of line" and "inappropriate". Renegades CEO Stuart Coventry offered a formal apology but described it as "a one-off scenario... a cultural indifference... done in jest". He dismissed a more lurid allegation against Gayle reported in the media on Wednesday as "opportunistic".

The opener was apologetic on Tuesday, but insisted the on-air flirt had been blown out of proportion. "There wasn't anything meant to be disrespectful or offensive to Mel," Gayle said. "If she felt that way, I'm really sorry for that. "There wasn't any harm meant in that particular way... It was a simple joke. The game was going on. Entertainment, things get out of proportion." McLaughlin accepted the apology, saying it was time to move on. — AFP

RARE DOUBLE WASHOUT **BLIGHTS SYDNEY TEST**

SYDNEY: A second consecutive day's play was washed out Wednesday consigning the third Australia-West Indies Test to an unwelcome postscript in Australian cricket.

Play was abandoned at lunch on the rain-sodden fourth day at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) amid forecasts the downpour would continue for the rest of

The stands were near empty for a second day with only a handful of diehard fans hoping to see some cricket in the 50,000capacity SCG and four security guards under umbrellas standing around the covered pitch area. The weather has now claimed the third and fourth days of the forlorn Sydney Test, making a draw

It is only the fifth time in Australia that two consecutive days of play have been lost to rain, and the first time in almost 26 years. The rain-hit Test joins Australia's matches against South Africa at the Gabba in Brisbane in 1931-32, India at the SCG 1947-48, England at the SCG in 1954-55 and Pakistan at the SCG 1989-90.

Australia have already won the series and retained the Frank Worrell Trophy after huge wins in the Hobart and Melbourne Tests. Only 86.2 overs have been bowled so far in the final Test with the West Indies remaining at 248 for seven since Monday. Denesh Ramdin was on 30 with Kemar Roach yet to score. The SCG has recorded more than 100mm (4in) of rain since the Test began on Sunday. — AFP

JAGR, PANTHERS BEAT SABRES FOR TEAM-RECORD 10TH STRAIGHT WIN

BUFFALO: Jaromir Jagr scored his team-leading 14th goal, and the Florida Panthers extended their franchise-record winning streak to 10 games with a 5-1 win over the Buffalo Sabres on Tuesday night. Derek MacKenzie, Jonathan Huberdeau, Brandon Pirri and Corban Knight also scored for Atlantic Division-leading Florida in the opener of a season-high six-game road trip. Roberto Luongo made 31 saves to improve his career record against Buffalo to 18-7. Ryan O'Reilly scored for the Sabres, who have lost five straight games in regulation and fell to 0-4-1 in their last five home games.

BLACKHAWKS 3, PENGUINS 2

Artemi Panarin beat Marc-Andre Fleury 3:47 into overtime to lift Chicago past Pittsburgh. Panarin finished with two goals, including the winner off a feed from Patrick Kane as Chicago fended off resilient Pittsburgh, which rallied from a 2-0 deficit in the third period behind goals from Sidney Crosby and Kris Letang. Jonathan Toews got his 14th goal of the season for Chicago. Kane finished with two assists to boost his point total to an NHL-best 59. Corey Crawford made 34 saves for the Blackhawks, who have won four straight. Crosby scored his 12th of the season and sixth in six games to start Pittsburgh's comeback. Letang added his fourth with a shot from the point with 2:50 to play to force overtime. Fleury stopped 27 shots in the first game of a home-and-home with the defending Stanley Cup champions.

CAPITALS 3, BRUINS 2

Evgeny Kuznetsov had a goal and an assist and the Washington beat Boston to end a season-high two-game skid. Andre Burakovsky and Marcus Johansson also scored for the Capitals, who beat the Bruins for the fourth straight time and moved into the NHL lead with 61 points. Braden Holtby faced only 14 shots through the first two periods and finished with 29 saves for Washington. Capitals captain Alex Ovechkin had just two shots and remained at 496 career goals. Patrice Bergeron had a goal and assist and Loui Eriksson also scored for Boston. Tuukka Rask made 26 saves.

RANGERS 6, STARS 2

Derek Stepan scored two goals and Ricky Nash had three assists to lead the Rangers past Western Conference-leading Dallas. Jayson Megna had a goal and an assist, Kevin Klein had two assists and Keith Yandle, Derick Brassard and Viktor Stalberg added goals for the Rangers, who improved to 22-14-4. Henrik Lundqvist stopped 22 of 24 shots. John Klingberg and Antoine Roussel scored for Dallas, which fell to 28-10-4. Antti Niemi made 23 saves. The Stars lost their second straight in regulation and finished their three-game trip to the New York area 0-2-1 against New Jersey, the Islanders and Rangers while getting outscored 15-9.

WILD 4, BLUE JACKETS 2

Zach Parise scored his fourth career hat trick and second this season to lead Minnesota past last-place Columbus. Parise's empty-net goal with 57 seconds left gave Minnesota a 3-1 lead. Nick Foligno cut the deficit to one 41 seconds later, a goal that was challenged by the Wild but upheld. Mikael Granlund won the ensuing faceoff and scored into Columbus' empty net again 2 seconds later. The two goals 2 seconds apart tied an NHL record. Granlund also had two assists, as did Ryan Suter. Wild forward Mikko Koivu went hard into the boards after a shove by David Savard and was taken to the hospital. There was no immediate update on his status. Cam Atkinson scored for the Blue Jackets.

FLYERS 4, CANADIENSD 3

Brayden Schenn had a goal and two assists to help Philadelphia beat Montreal to snap a three-game losing streak. Wayne Simmonds, Shayne Gostisbehere and Sean Couturier also scored for the Flyers. Brendan Gallagher, Daniel Carr and Alex Galchenyuk netted goals for the Canadiens, who capped an eight-game road stretch 2-6. The Canadiens will return home on Wednesday night New Jersey for their first game at the Bell Centre since Dec. 17. Montreal has lost 12 of 15 overall.

FLAMES 3, LIGHTNING 1

Matt Stajan and David Jones gave Calgary the lead, and Karri Ramo stopped 30 shots to lead the Flames. Lance Bouma added an empty-netter with just under a minute left and Mark Giordano had two assists to help the Flames move past Anaheim and into third place in the Pacific Division. Ramo, coming off a 26-save shutout against Colorado on Saturday night, extended his scoreless streak to a personal-best 152 minutes, 55 seconds before Tampa Bay's Steven Stamkos found the back of the net with 1:39 left in the third period. Ben Bishop made 21 saves for the Lightning.

JETS 4, PREDATORS 1

Drew Stafford scored a pair of powerplay goals to lead Winnipeg past Nashville. Ben Chiarot and Alexander Burmistrov also scored and Connor Hellebuyck made 43 saves for the Jets. Hellebuyck turned aside 17 shots in the first, 12 in the second and 14 in the third. Colin Wilson had the lone goal for Nashville, which has lost three of four. Winnipeg scored the only goal of the first, when Stafford connected on the power play at 10:43. —AP



PITTSBURGH: Nick Bonino #13 of the Pittsburgh Penguins is tripped by Phillip Danault #24 of the Chicago Blackhawks during the game at Consol Energy Center on Tuesday in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. — AFP



CAPE TOWN: England's batsman Benjamin Stokes (C) plays a shot before getting caught out during day 5 of the second Test match between England and South Africa at Newlands stadium yesterday in Cape Town. — AFP

ENGLAND HOLD ON FOR DRAW AS WEATHER HAS FINAL SAY

CAPE TOWN: Poor weather brought a limp end to a compelling second test as England survived a final day onslaught from South Africa to draw the match and keep up their 1-0 lead in the

England were 159 for six in their second innings, with Jonny Bairstow (30) and Moeen Ali (10) unbeaten, before drizzle and bad light halted play soon after tea yesterday. South Africa's quick bowlers made inroads in the morning to offer the likelihood of a remarkable come-frombehind victory after England had dominated the opening two days to amass 629 for six declared in their first innings.

South Africa clawed back over the next two days, keeping England in the field on hot, energy-sapping days as they slowly regained a foothold and eventually declared just two runs short of the visitors' total.

A four-wicket burst before lunch yesterday suddenly offered the tantalising possibility of a result and two more in the second session brought South Africa even closer to scuttling out England before chasing down a modest target. But dogged resistance from Bairstow and Ali, in an unbroken 43-run partnership, and the gloomy weather dashed South Africa's hopes of pulling off a remarkable victory. England started the day on 16-0 in their second innings, with a lead of 18 runs, but captain Alastair Cook was strangled down the leg side and caught by wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock off Kagiso Rabada's bowling with just the eighth ball of the morning. He went for eight with England having added a single to their overnight total.

REPRIEVE

Alex Hales (5) was then snagged by a brilliant diving one-handed catch from Chris Morris at slip to give Morne Morkel a deserved wicket after some fiery bowling. Joe Root was caught in the slips by AB de Villiers off Morkel on 17 but television replays showed the bowler had stepped over the line.

But England's top-ranked batsman failed to

capitalise on the reprieve and scored 12 more runs before being bowled by Morris to leave England on 55-3. Nick Compton (15) fell 10 minutes before lunch after playing straight to Faf du Plessis at short mid-wicket as he became the first of three victims for Dane Piedt.

After the interval, the off spinner dismissed Ben Stokes, caught at deep square leg for 26, and James Taylor, who got a nasty bounce up onto his gloves and was caught by Temba Bavuma at short leg for 27.

The third test will be at the Wanderers in Johannesburg from Jan. 14-18. England won the first test in Durban by 241 runs. —Reuters

SCOREBOARD

CAPE TOWN: Final scores on the fifth and final day of the second Test between South Africa and England at Newlands yesterday:

27

England, first innings, 629-6 dec South Africa, first innings, 627-7 dec **England, second innings** (overnight 16-0)

A. Cook c De Kock b Rabada A. Hales c Morris b Morkel N. Compton c Du Plessis b Piedt

J. Root b Morris J. Taylor c Bavuma b Piedt B. Stokes c Morkel b Piedt

J. Bairstow not out

M. Ali not out Extras (lb4, nb5) Total (6 wkts, 65 overs) 159 Fall of wickets: 1-17 (Cook), 2-19 (Hales), 3-55 (Root), 4-85 (Compton), 5-115 (Stokes), 6-116 15 (Taylor) Bowling: Morkel 16-7-26-1 (3nb), Rabada 13-2-29

57-1 (2nb), Morris 12-4-24-1, Piedt 18-8-38-3, Elgar 6-2-10-0

26 Result: Match drawn.

AMLA QUITS AS S AFRICA CAPTAIN

CAPE TOWN: Hashim Amla said yesterday he was stepping aside as South Africa's cricket test captain with immediate effect, a day after a double century rescued his country from possible defeat in the second test against England.

The 32-year-old made the surprise announcement just minutes after the test at Newlands ended in a draw and after Amla had led a fight back to haul his team from a precarious position.

AB de Villiers will take over as captain for the last two tests against England. "Naturally this decision is not an easy one but the more I think about it the more I believe I can be of greater value to the Proteas as a fully focused batsman and senior player at this time or rebuilding our team," he told reporters on Wednesday.

"I am deeply grateful and privileged to have been the test captain and I wish to thank Cricket South Africa for the honour of captaining my country. It was enjoyable and indeed a great learning experience.

"I kind of felt someone else could do a better job. I made my decision two weeks before the first test against England," Amla added. The Durban-born batsman, who made his debut against India in 2004, is a veteran of 90-tests and has scored over 7,000 runs in the longest format of the sport.

"We respect Hashim's decision and the manner in which he thought about it and then communicated with me," Cricket South Africa chief executive officer Haroon Lorgat said.

"He still has a huge role to play in shaping the success of our team without the need for a leadership title. He is just that type of a person and we are very fortunate to have him in our stable." — Reuters



South African captain Hashim Amla.

'WE'LL SHOOT OURSELVES' IF ENGLAND FAIL AT EUROS: DYKE

chairman Greg Dyke declared "We'll all shoot ourselves" if Roy Hodgson's team fall at the group stage of Euro 2016.

England face Wales, Russia and Slovakia in the tournament in France from June 10, haunted by the memory of the 2014 World Cup where they were eliminated at the group phase for the first time since 1958. Dyke stood by

LONDON: England Football Association manager Hodgson after the debacle in Brazil, but said a repeat this year would mean heads would roll.

"I think we'll all shoot ourselves if we don't get out of the group," Dyke said. "We've got to get out of that group. If we don't, that really is bad news for English football."

The 68-year-old former BBC directorgeneral was speaking on Tuesday night in London at the launch of a year of celebrations to commemorate the 50th anniversary of England's 1966 World Cup success. "The FA is the richest FA in the world, the most income. The FA has to take some of the blame," Dyke said. "We should have won a tournament in the last 50 years. We haven't. But we will win in the next 50 years, hopefully long before." England failed to win a match in

Brazil but they bounced back to record victories in all 10 of their Euro 2016 qualifiers.

Dyke also announced he will decide in the next few days whether to stand for re-election as FA chairman this summer. His three-year term ends in July, but he would be allowed to serve one year of a new term before exceeding the job's age limit of 70. "We will sort that out in the next few days whether I decide to stand again for another year," Dyke said.

Dyke was joined by England World Cup-winning heroes Geoff Hurst, Gordon Banks, Martin Peters and George Cohen at the event in Kensington's Royal Garden Hotel, where the draw for the 1966 finals was made 50 years ago. —AFP

SORIANO AT THE DOUBLE AS SAMP EDGE GENOA IN THRILLER

MILAN: Roberto Soriano struck twice as visitors Sampdoria edged Genoa 3-2 in a thrilling city derby on Tuesday that was delayed on two occasions due to fans throwing smoke flares. Genoa had won only one of the previous six editions of the 'Derby della Lanterna' and Gian Piero Gasperini's men were again left second best at the clubs' shared Luigi Ferraris ground as Sampdoria held on amid an exciting finale.

Sampdoria only claimed their first win under new coach Vincenzo Montella prior to the festive break, but the visitors fully deserved their 2-0 lead at the interval thanks to Soriano's opener and Eder's 39thminute strike. Soriano struck again just after the break, but Sampdoria were lucky to claim all three points after Leonardo Pavoletti twice reduced arrears late in the second half to claim his first brace in Serie A and inspire the hosts to a grandstand fin-

The win moved Sampdoria up to 11th place ahead of the remaining midweek fixtures on Wednesday, while Genoa remain in 17th, just one point above the drop

"It's always good to win, even winning like this," Montella told Sky Sport. "They suffered more than us and we should focus on the good points of tonight without forgetting we have to work on the little mistakes we made. "But we totally deserved

Gasperini's men have now lost five on the trot, prompting speculation about his future.

He said: "This season we have to think about staying up. After five straight defeats, it's obvious that has to be our focus. "We made some glaring mistakes tonight which made it difficult to get back into the match,

W D

Fiorentina

Inter Milan

Juventus

AS Roma

Sassuolo

Atalanta

Napoli

Fiorentina 3; Sassuolo 2, Frosinone 2; Udinese 2, Atalanta Bergamo 1

4 36

6 24

17 10 5 2 31 13 35

L F A Pts

3 23 11 36

4 31 14 36

3 35 21 33

3 22 17 28

6 23 22 27 7 3 8 20 21 24

22

16 38

but we never gave up."

Veteran striker Antonio Cassano, making a rare start for the visitors, played a role in all three of Sampdoria's goals. The former Italy international's through ball was deflected into Soriano's path, and the latter smashed a low volley past Mattia Perin for an 18th-minute lead.

Cassano was involved again when Carlos Carbonero won back possession in his own half to power down the right. Carbonero's cutback was poorly cleared and fell to Eder, who sidestepped his marker to slot the ball inside Perin's near post.

Genoa's woes deepened only four minutes after the restart, Cassano providing an assist for Soriano that the forward swept easily into the net to claim his second, prompting the ire of the home fans. The fixture had already been delayed by several minutes before kick-off because of the poor visibility caused by smoke flares, and Soriano's second prompted Genoa fans to throw several flares onto the pitch, prompting the intervention of firemen.

Yet the incident appeared to fire up the hosts, who launched a rousing comeback only to be denied a share of the points at the death. Pavoletti reduced the arrears in the 69th minute when he rose above the Samp defence to fire a header into the net, and moments later Darko Lazovic saw his low drive inch just wide of the post.

Pavoletti grabbed his second nine minutes from time when he headed into an empty net from a yard out after Emiliano Viviano mistimed his attempted interception after rushing out of his goal.

Genoa spurned several chances for a late leveller, Viviano blocking Serge Gakpe and Pavoletti before palming the ball off the line when a shot ricocheted dangerously in front of goal. —AFP

7 3

6 5

18 7 1 10 20 24 22

18 5 3 10 18 29 18

4 4 10 17

0 8 10 12 30 8

8 17 25 24

7 24 21 23

6 21 20 22

26 16

7 27 28 23



STOKE ON TRENT: Liverpool's Jordon Ibe scores past Stoke City's goalkeeper Jack Butland during the first leg of the English League Cup semifinal soccer match between Stoke City and Liverpool at the Britannia Stadium, Stoke on Trent, England, Tuesday. — AP

ADVANTAGE LIVERPOOL AS IBE DOWNS STOKE IN LEAGUE CUP

LONDON: Jordon Ibe came off the bench to drive home the winner as Liverpool took a big step towards reaching the League Cup final with a 1-0 victory at Stoke City in the first leg of their last-four tie on Tuesday. Ibe was summoned into the action early and the winger fired home leftfooted in the first half as Juergen Klopp's side grabbed a narrow but potentially priceless advantage ahead of the return leg on Jan. 26.

Liverpool's hopes of a record-extending ninth League Cup title were given a stern examination in the second half as Stoke piled forward in search of an equaliser. However, a makeshift defence featuring Lucas Leiva and Kolo Toure stood firm. The prize on offer is a place in the final against Manchester City or Everton who play the first leg of their semi-final at Goodison

was tempered by yet more injury woe as Philippe Coutinho and Dejan Lovren succumbed to hamstring problems in a high-paced first half, while Toure was limping at the finish.

"It's a strange feeling," Liverpool's German coach told Sky Sports. "I'm proud as it was a perfect reaction from the last game (a 2-0 defeat to West Ham United). "But of course we have two bad injuries and that's why I'm not lucky tonight." The eight-times winners were sharp and incisive as they pinned Stoke back in the early stages although they again looked to be lacking a killer instinct in front of goal. It was substitute Ibe who broke the deadlock for the visitors, putting the finishing touch to a swift counter attack after 37 minutes.

Adam Lallana beat the offside trap down the Park on Wednesday. Klopp's delight at victory right flank and squared for Joe Allen, whose the side netting. — Reuters

scuffed shot fell into the path of Ibe who controlled the ball neatly before dispatching his leftfooted shot low into the net.

Liverpool's Roberto Firmino was denied by a last-ditch tackle from Ryan Shawcross, but Stoke did finish the half with their best two chances as Marko Arnautovic headed wide and former Liverpool fullback Glen Johnson drew a good save from Simon Mignolet.

Stoke brought on striker Jonathan Walters for the second half and piled men forward but created few chances from a sustained period of pressure, until the substitute pulled an effort wide in stoppage time.

At the other end, Liverpool had penalty appeals turned down when Allen and Nathaniel Clyne were barged over in the box, while Ibe hit

ALI BLASTS 'IRRESPONSIBLE' **BLATTER AND PLATINI**

Italy Serie A results/standings

AC Milan 0, Bologna 1; Chievo Verona 3, AS Roma 3; Juventus 3, Verona 0; Lazio 0, Carpi 0; Palermo 1,

Udinese

Torino

Bologna

Palermo

Genoa

Verona

Chievo Verona18

18

16

18

LONDON: Sepp Blatter and Michel Platini business executives face US charges over were "totally irresponsible" to agree a payment that has brought ignominy to world football, according to Prince Ali bin Al Hussein, who hopes to take over FIFA next month.

The Jordanian crown prince said the global governing body would be heading for a new "catastrophe" if it doesn't elect the right candidate to succeed Blatter in the vote on February 26.



Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein

Eight year bans against Blatter and Platini have left the pair in disgrace and fighting to save their names. Prince Ali said however there was no way they could avoid trouble over a two million Swiss francs (\$2 million/1.8 million euro) payment approved by Blatter to Platini in 2011. The two football leaders said the payment was for work carried out by Platini for FIFA between 1999 and 2002. Prince Ali said it was the sort of dark practice that had to be rooted out.

"In this day and age, to have an oral agreement is totally irresponsible," he said. "You have to be open, it has to be accountable. That's just a normal way of doing business."

The prince, a former FIFA vice-president, lost to Blatter in an election on May 30 but is standing again as corruption scandals-including the Platini payment-cripple football's gov-

Thirty-nine football officials and sports

more than \$200 million of bribes for television and marketing deals.

Prince Ali faces opposition from former FIFA official Jerome Champagne, UEFA general secretary Gianni Infantino, South African tycoon Tokyo Sexwale and Asian Football Confederation president Sheikh Salman Bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa. But he insists that he is the right man to clean up FIFA.

FIFA FACING VOTE 'CATASTROPHE'

"It would be a catastrophe for the organisation if things do not go on the right way," he told reporters in London after unveiling a new manifesto. "Having talked to national associations across the world, they recognise that this is an incredibly important moment for the future of the organisation. "Everybody recognises that this is the last chance to get it right. We don't want the situation where one year or two years down the line, more scandals come out.

"But I'm determined that we save FIFA and do it from within. There are a lot of good people around the world who want a good, strong and solid FIFA, and I'm one of them."

Prince Ali's revised 23-page manifesto includes a limit of two, four-year terms for the president and full publication of the report by former US prosecutor Michael Garcia into bidding for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups. He also wants to make FIFA's multi-billion dollar accounts public and end the practice of "awarding commercial contracts without bids or via a secretive process", as well as expanding the World Cup from 2026. The prince said the World Cup bidding process has to be cleaned up after the shadow cast over the 2018 and 2022 tournaments. He wants FIFA to hold a public vote, rather than the secret ballots in 2010 that awarded the 2018 tournament to Russia and the 2022 event to Qatar. Prince Ali savs members should not be allowed to visit candidate countries prior to the vote. Prince Ali received 73 of the 209 votes from FIFA's member associations in last year's election, which Blatter won before announcing he would step down four days later. He would not disclose how many votes he has been promised this time. But he said he had "broad support from all the different regions in the world". Prince Ali is president of the Jordan Football Association, which pits him against AFC chief Salman, who is from Bahrain.— AFP



EMPOLI: Inter Milan's forward from Argentina Mauro Icardi (C white) fights the ball with Empoli's defender from Argentina Leandro Paredes during their Italian Serie A football match Empoli vs Juventus, yesterday at Empoli's "Carlo Castellani" comunal stadium. — AFP

ATHLETIC BILBAO EDGE CUP THRILLER WITH VILLARREAL

BARCELONA: Second half goals from Inaki Williams, Aritz Aduriz and Aymeric Laporte saw Athletic Bilbao come from behind to beat high-flying Villarreal 3-2 in the first leg of their King's Cup last 16 clash yesterday.

A confident Villarreal had won their previous five matches and went ahead through Leo Baptistao and Samu Garcia but Bilbao

came back fighting after the break. Baptistao slotted home clinically following

a good team move after 16 minutes and Samu Castillejo then sent a defence splitting pass for Garcia, who rounded keeper lago Herrerin and knocked the ball into an empty

Williams led the comeback with a 53rd minute strike, after being set up by Benat Etxebarria, and then found Aduriz to score

from the centre of the penalty area. Laporte completed the turnaround by

converting a Benat free-kick from a tight angle after 80 minutes. A poor second half for Villarreal also saw the dismissal of Mario Gaspar with three minutes to go. Holders Barcelona face city rivals Espanyol later while La Liga leaders Atletico Madrid have a derby against Rayo Vallecano. Real Madrid were disqualified from the cup for fielding an ineligible player against Cadiz in the last round. — Reuters

Hirscher wins **World Cup slalom**



Amla quits as S Africa captain



THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 2016

ALI BLASTS 'IRRESPONSIBLE' BLATTER AND PLATINI

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TURIN: Juventus' Alvaro Morata, center, jumps for the ball during a Serie A soccer match between Juventus and Verona at the Juventus stadium, in Turin, Italy, yesterday. — AP

UVENTUS CONTINUE RESURGENCE, FIORENTINA GO TOP

ROME: Champions Juventus continued their resurgence by beating Hellas Verona 3-0 at home yesterday for an eighth successive Serie A victory as Fiorentina provisionally went top of the table with a 3-1 win at Palermo. Juventus, who took one point from their opening three matches and were 11 behind the leaders on Oct. 31, are now third on 36 points after goals from Paulo Dybala, Leonardo Bonucci and Simone Zaza earned them a comfortable win.

Chasing a fifth consecutive Italian title, Juve are two points behind Fiorentina, who were helped to victory by two goals from Josip Ilicic, and level with Inter Milan, who can return to the summit with a win at Empoli later yesterday. AS Roma's stuttering season

continued when they twice let a lead slip to draw 3-3 at Chievo, leaving them fifth on 33 points and increasing the pressure on coach Rudi Garcia.

Roma, who took the lead when teenage striker Sadig Umar scored for the second game running in his first league start, have won one of their last nine games in all competitions and recently exited the Italian Cup to second-tier Spezia. Bologna's Emanuele Giaccherini scored in the 82nd minute to secure a surprise 1-0 win at AC Milan, while Frosinone and Sassuolo drew 2-2, Udinese defeated Atalanta 2-1 and Lazio's clash with Carpi finished goalless.

With Serie A returning from its winter break, Juventus continued where they left off in December. The Turin side took the lead when Dybala scored his ninth league goal of the season, curling a fine free kick into the corner of the net in the eighth minute after Samuel Souprayen had brought down Stephan Lichtsteiner. Dybala was decisive again when his superb free kick was met emphatically by Bonucci in the 45th minute and Paul Pogba set up Zaza with eight minutes remaining to leave winless Verona bottom on eight points.

Roma's Umar had found the net as they ended a seven-game winless run against Genoa before the winter break and struck again in the seventh minute against Chievo. Alessandro Florenzi added a second 30 minutes later, but Chievo drew level with goals from Alberto Paloschi and Dario Dainelli.

Roma's lago Falque made it 3-2 with a low strike in the 71st minute, but the home side equalised again when goalline technology showed that Simone Pepe's effort had crossed the line.

Fiorentina's Ilicic opened the scoring against Palermo in the 13th minute by knocking the ball between Edoardo Goldaniga's legs and finishing beneath Stefano Sorrentino. The midfielder added a sublime second in the 42nd minute, making space on the edge of the box before slamming home a curling effort. Alberto Gilardino halved the deficit in the 77th minute, but Jakub Blaszczykowski added a late third. — Reuters

FORMER CHELSEA DOCTOR CARNEIRO ATTENDS TRIBUNAL

LONDON: Former Chelsea team doctor Eva Carneiro attended a tribunal hearing yesterday regarding her constructive dismissal case against the club.

Wearing a long, grey coat and holding hands with her husband, Carneiro made no comment to the media as she arrived for the hearing flanked by her legal team in Croydon, south London.

The preliminary hearing at London South Employment Tribunal is being held in private before an employment judge and will outline the timetable for the

Carneiro, 42, left Chelsea in September after being removed from first-team duties by manager Jose Mourinho, who was sacked by the Premier League champions last

Mourinho had rebuked her and physiotherapist Jon Fearn for running onto the pitch to treat Eden Hazard during his side's 2-2 draw with Swansea City on the season's opening day, which temporarily left Chelsea with nine men. Mourinho called Carneiro and Fearn "impulsive and naive", but the Premier League Doctors' Group said failure to treat Hazard would have been a breach

of their care of duty.

Yesterday's hearing will also address witness statements and the disclosure of documents from each side, as well as any legal disputes that may exist between them over procedural matters.

Reports suggest a date for a full hearing could be fixed for June, but the parties may agree to a settlement before the case is heard. Carneiro is also believed to have tabled a separate legal claim against Mourinho for alleged victimisation and discrimination. Mourinho was cleared by the Football Association of making discriminatory remarks to Carneiro.

But she complained that she had not been asked by the FA to make a statement about what had happened. "I was surprised to learn that the FA was allegedly investigating the incident of August 8 (the date of the Swansea game) via the press," Carneiro said. "I was at no stage requested by the FA to make a statement.

"I wonder whether this might be the only formal investigation in this country where the evidence of the individuals involved in the incident was not considered relevant." — AFP



LONDON: Former English Premier League Chelsea soccer team doctor Eva Carneiro with her husband Jason De Carteret arrives for an unfair dismissal hearing in south London, yesterday. — AP

NEGREDO HAT-TRICK AS Valencia beat Granada

VALENCIA: Striker Alvaro Negredo scored a hat-trick, including two second half penalties, as Valencia thrashed Granada 4-0 in the first home leg of their King's Cup last 16 clash yesterday.

Negredo has been given a new lease of life under coach Gary Neville and the win was a confidence boost for Valencia who have yet to pick up a victory in La Liga under the former Manchester United and England player.

He robbed the ball off Diego Mainz and stroked it into the corner past keeper Ivan Kelava after seven minutes. Santi Mina laid the second on a plate for Rodrigo Moreno and then Mina was fouled by Uche Agbo with Negredo scoring the subsequent penalty after 62 minutes.

Negredo, the former Manchester City player who has had appendicitis and was frozen out by former-coach Nuno Espirito Santo, scored his third from the spot in the 83rd after he himself was fouled by Matheus Doria.

Second half goals from Inaki Williams, Aritz Aduriz and Aymeric Laporte earlier saw Athletic Bilbao come from behind to beat high-flying Villarreal 3-2. A confident Villarreal had won their previous five matches and went ahead through Leo Baptistao and Samu Garcia but Bilbao came back fighting after the break.

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A poor second half for Villarreal also saw the dismissal of Mario Gaspar with three minutes to go. Holders Barcelona face city rivals Espanyol later while La Liga leaders Atletico Madrid have a derby against Rayo Vallecano. Real Madrid were disqualified from the cup for fielding an ineligible player against Cadiz in the last round. — Reuters

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FITBIT 'SMART FITNESS WATCH' DISAPPOINTS MARKET

Saudi cuts crude price to **Europe, hikes it for Asia**

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Ahli United Bank announces Grand Hassad Prize winner

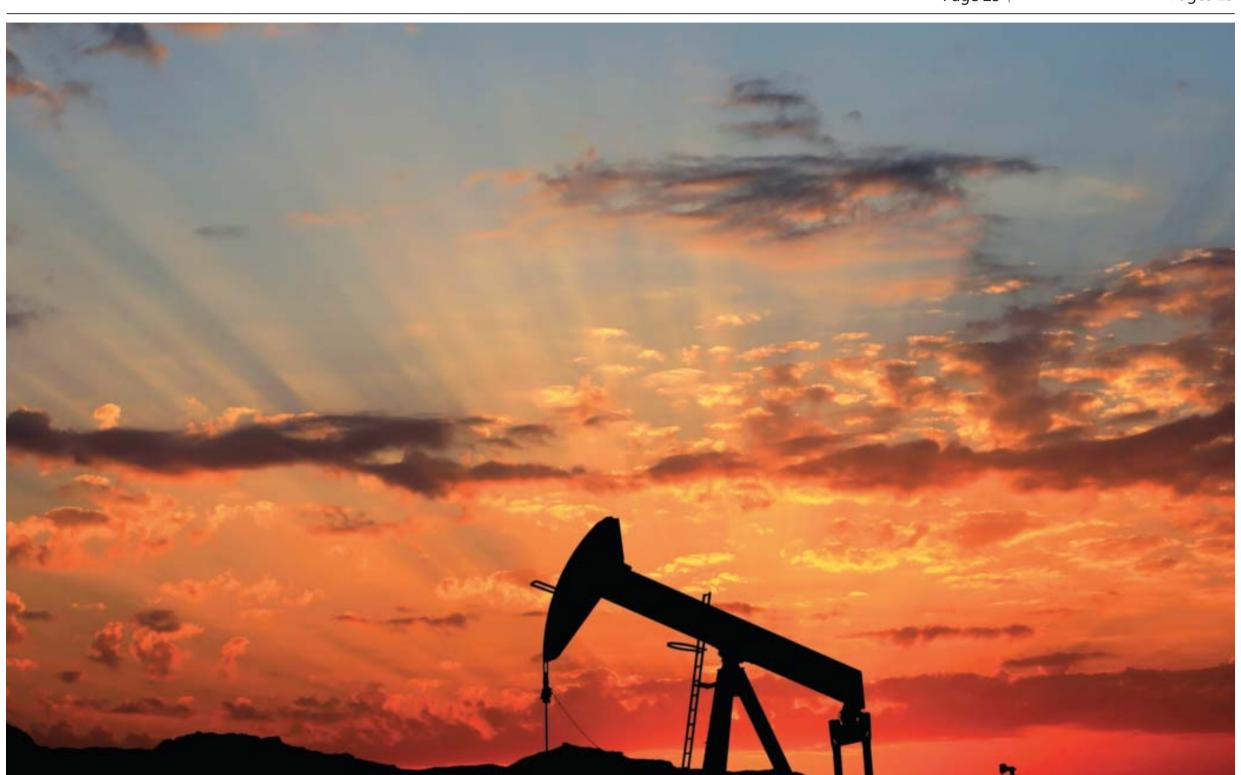
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Why I can't buy Minion toys with Chinese yuan

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SAKHIR: The sun sets behind an oil pump in the desert oil fields of Sakhir, Bahrain. Oil futures spiked briefly after Saudi Arabia cuts diplomatic ties with Iran, a development that could be seen as a threat to oil supplies. Investors quickly discount ed those fears, however. — AP

IRAN TRYING TO AVOID OIL PRICE WAR

Tehran pledges to moderate exports

NEW DELHI: Iran wants to avoid an oil price war with rival producers and only gradually lift exports once sanctions against it are lifted, a senior official said, in what would be a major shift away from planning to ship as much fuel as soon as possible. Iran, which has some of the world's biggest petroleum reserves, has repeatedly urged fellow members within the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to make room for a supply jump from the Islamic Republic, pledging to ramp up exports as soon as sanctions on its oil industry are lifted under a nuclear deal with world powers.

A move to limit export growth would be a major shift in Iran's policies in an environment when most OPEC and non-OPEC producers are fighting for market share despite a growing global oil glut, which has already cut crude prices by two-thirds since 2014, hurting energy firms and oil exporting nations. "We don't want to start a sort of a price war," Mohsen Qamsari, director general for international affairs of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), told Reuters by telephone. "We will be more subtle in our approach and may gradually increase output," Qamsari said. "I have to say that there is no room to push prices down any further,

Iran would be prepared to moderate a rise in its shipments but said Iran would not offer fur-

ther discounts to lure customers. Currently, Iran offers 90-day credit, free

given the level where they are." He did not give any detail on how much

shipping and some discounts on crude prices to buyers in India. The more cautious words from Iran come a week after relations with its main Middle East rival and top oil exporter Saudi Arabia broke down over the execution of a prominent Shiite cleric who

was revered in Iran. A more moderate re-entry into markets would suit Saudi Arabia and other Middle East OPEC members who are already locked into an aggressive fight for market share. On Tuesday, Saudi Arabia signaled that the new rift would not affect talks on the Syria civil war. Iran's most senior oil official, oil minister Bijan Zanganeh, said last weekend Iran would not seek to distort the markets but will make sure it regains its market share. Beyond only gradually lifting it exports, Qamsari said Iran wanted to invest into refining capacity to use its crude, but did not give details.

Ballooning oversupply

Iranian crude oil exports have fallen to around 1 million barrels per day (bpd), down from a peak of almost 3 million bpd in 2011, before western sanctions against Tehran started, Iran previously said it planned to raise oil output by 500,000 bpd post-sanctions, and by another 500,000 bpd shortly after that. Even a gradual increase in its exports would come at a time of a global glut, with producers around the world pumping hundreds of thousands of barrels of crude every day in excess

Oil prices are near 11-year lows below \$37 per barrel and some analysts like Goldman Sachs say prices may tumble as low as \$20 a barrel as supplies keeps rising. To sell additional barrels but avoid adding to ballooning oversupply, NIOC is looking at buying stakes in existing and new refineries overseas, Qamsari said, without specifying countries or companies. Using its crude in refineries instead of selling it into the market unprocessed would be similar move to other Gulf producers such as Saudi Arabia, although Iran's challenge would be to raise financing as its existing overseas oil sale revenues are frozen as part of the sanctions. Refiners in India, Iran's second biggest oil client after China, owe almost \$6 billion to Tehran. Qamsari said Indian refiners including Reliance Industries, which has halted imports of Iranian oil because of the sanctions, were interested in taking higher volumes from NIOC. Indian refiners were interested in buying West Karun grade, a blend of oil from 4-5 reservoirs, he said. Sanctions have crippled Iran's economy and forced it to resort to gasoline imports, and Qamsari said Tehran hoped to halt gasoline imports within a year, post sanctions. — Reuters

SAUDI TO SAVE \$7 BILLION FROM ENERGY REFORMS

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia is expected to save \$7 billion a year after it introduced unprecedented energy price rises in a bid to offset the low cost of oil, a report said yesterday. Jadwa Investment said direct savings from the kingdom's price hike on diesel are estimated at \$2.75 billion (2.56 billion euros), and gasoline levies are expected to save an additional \$2.5 billion. The rest of the savings will come from price rises on natural gas, fuel oil and propane, it added. The total cost of energy subsidies in the world's top oil exporter was estimated at \$61 billion last year. Indirect costs include the impact on the environment, road accidents and overconsumption because of cheap prices.

Saudi Arabia posted a record budget deficit of \$98 billion in 2015, 15 percent of GDP, and is projecting a shortfall of \$87 billion this year. It posted an \$18 billion deficit in 2014. Last month, the OPEC heavyweight raised the price of gasoline, diesel, crude oil, ethane, natural gas, fuel oil and electricity by up to 80 percent. The Fitch ratings agency said yesterday that Saudi Arabia's 2016 budget contained significant reforms and followed key expenditure restraints during the second half of 2015.

"The lower-than-expected 2015 deficit mainly reflects measures to contain spending introduced during the year-including greater scrutiny" of capital spending, Fitch said. The International Monetary Fund and other agencies had forecast the Saudi budget deficit last year to be as much as \$130 billion.

Saudi Arabia normally overspends its budget projections. Fitch said last year saw the lowest overspend since 1999 at just 13.4 percent, compared with a 10-year average of 24 percent.

"Without the one-off cost of royal decrees after the accession of King Salman and additional military and security spending... spending would have been almost on budget," the agency said.

Revenues in 2015 dropped to \$162 billion, the lowest since the global financial crisis in 2009, due to a massive \$123 billion fall in oil revenues. The contribution of oil income to revenues dropped to just 73 percent in 2015, from an average of 90 percent in the past decade. To finance the budget, the Saudi government withdrew from its huge fiscal reserves and issued bonds on the domestic market. Reserves dropped from \$732 billion at the end of 2014 to \$632 billion in November. The kingdom is estimated to have issued domestic bonds worth around \$30 billion since July, raising public debt to \$38 billion, or 5.8 percent of GDP, Jadwa said. — AFP

VOLKSWAGEN LAUNCHES 'SMART' ELECTRIC REVAMP OF MINIVAN

LAS VEGAS: Meet the revamped Volkswagen Kombi. Once a hippie favorite, the minivan has been transformed into an electric, connected vehicle of the future. BUDD-e, unveiled late Tuesday in Las Vegas, is "a new concept for long-distance electric vehicles," explained VW brand chief Herbert Diess on the eve of the official opening of the Consumer Electronics Show. The electric minivan is rather modern but clearly a nod to that symbol of the hippie movement of the 60s and 70s-and idol of surfers and families-known as the Kombi or Bulli.

Volkswagen officially stopped production of the microbus about two years ago. The new version is filled with technology that makes it "intelligent" and "social," with a new electronic interface that is both intuitive and interactive. "Door handles are so 2016," Diess proclaimed, as he noted how the model responds to verbal commands or gestures. BUDD-e can also communicate with connected devices at home.

So you can check from the comfort of your van if there's enough beer left in the fridge before inviting friends over to watch a soccer match or to see who's come knocking at your door to let them in or ward them off. It's also based on the future modular production platform for VW electric vehicles, with a more efficient battery that is located under the floor. It charges up to 80 percent in just 30 minutes and can travel up to 373 miles (600 kilometers) on a full charge-equivalent to today's



NEVADA: Attendees look at Volkswagen's BUDD-e, a long distance electric vehicle, displayed during a press event at CES 2016 at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas on January 5, 2016 in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

average car running on a full tank. Although it's just a prototype for now, "BUDD-e could be a reality by the end of the decade," Diess said.

'Smartphone on wheels'

The auto group also presented a second electric prototype, the e-Golf touch, which is due to hit the market within a year, according to VW's Volkmar Tanneberger. He called it a "smartphone on wheels," with verbal com-

mands and gestures replacing buttons, which has a new generation of infotainment systems and is compatible with almost any smartphone, and can also be charged wirelessly. You can also use a smartwatch to unlock the car, turn on the heat or air conditioning from a distance while the vehicle is still charging, or receiving notifications when someone else-say a teen-is driving the car and is driving too fast or exiting a predefined zone. —AFP



SAUDI CUTS CRUDE PRICE TO EUROPE, HIKES IT FOR ASIA

OPEC HEAVYWEIGHT FIGHTS FOR MARKET SHARE

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has cut the February price kingdom also slightly cut the price of some of its export oil to Europe as the OPEC heavyweight continues to fight for market share amid a huge glut on the market. The Saudi move comes as arch-rival Iran, a fellow OPEC member, prepares to resume oil exports to Europe when sanctions are lifted following its nuclear deal with world powers last year.

It also comes amid a mounting crisis between Riyadh and Tehran, which has seen Saudi Arabia cut diplomatic ties with Iran after weekend attacks on its missions in the Islamic republic. The

export grades to the United States and Middle East, but raised the prices of all export grades to Asia. A statement issued by national oil conglomerate Aramco said the price of Arab Light crude for the northwest European market was cut by \$0.60 a barrel from January to \$4.85 a barrel below the benchmark price. Prices of other grades were also cut by 40 to 50 cents a barrel, the statement said.

Europe was a traditional market for Iranian oil before international sanctions were slapped on the Islamic republic in 2012 over its nuclear program. The price of Arab Light crude for Asia was raised by 60 cents a barrel, but remained 80 cents below the benchmark price, the statement said. The prices of all grades to Asia were increased by \$0.70 to \$1 a barrel. Brent oil prices tumbled yesterday below \$35 for the first time in 11 years, plagued by the abundant oversupply and the row between Iran and Saudi Arabia. At about 1030 GMT, European benchmark Brent North Sea crude oil for February delivery sank to \$34.83 per barrel-the lowest level since July 1, 2004. —AFP



LULU MOVES AHEAD WITH BAHRAIN EXPANSION PLANS

LULU GROUP OPENS 5TH HYPERMARKET IN JUFFAIR

KUWAIT: Middle East retail major LULU Group which is on a vast expansion mode opened its 5th Hypermarket in the Kingdom of Bahrain at Juffair. The 120th Lulu Hypermarket of the group was inaugurated by HE Shaikh Khaled bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister of Bahrain in the presence of HE Zayed Al Zayani, Minister of Industry & Commerce, HE Jameel Humaidan, Labor Minister, HE ShaikhKhalifa Bin Daij Al Khalifa, President of Crown Prince Court, HE Shaikh Ahmed Khalifa Al Khalifa, Crown Prince Court, and other senior Govt officials and various ambassadors at Juffair Mall

Prominent dignitaries present during the inauguration included H.E Alok Kumar Sinha, Indian Ambassador, HE William Roebuck, US Ambassador, HE Simon Martin CMG, UK ambassador and other prominent industry & business leaders. Speaking to media after the inauguration, Yusuffali MA, Chairman of LULU Group said "the success of Lulu Hypermarket in Bahrain, since it opened its doors here in 2007 has been due to the leaders and the people of the country. I take this opportunity to thank His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, HRH Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister and HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and First Deputy Premier for their transformative leadership and the Government for its transparency, accessibility and effectiveness."





"Lulu Hypermarket has built its brand on the quality promise and we are very happy that the people

SELL

of Bahrain have responded so warmly to the range of products, the cost-effectiveness and top quality of

Lulu. Bahrainis have excellent people skills and have been the backbone of our business growth. We are proud of their participation in our multi-cultural employee force" he

The new 120,000 sq. ft. Lulu hypermarket will serve the residents of Juffair, Hoora, Gudaibiya, Adliya and Umm Al Hassam areas with its widest range of products from all over the world. As always Lulu hypermarket provides the widest range of quality and value-formoney products all under one roof. It has separate sections for fresh fruits and vegetables, meat and poultry, dairy products, ready-to-eat products and a state-of-the-art live bakery and Hot Foods kitchen. The product mix in Lulu Juffair will also include a wide selection of premium UK and US goods, including special products air-flown for freshness.

"As announced earlier, we are fully committed to our BD 100 million investment plans for Bahrain and our sixth hypermarket will open soon at Galleria Mall, Ahli Club, Zinj" added Yusuffali. Speaking about the group's stress on providing training and employment opportunity to the educated Bahraini youth, Yusuffali said "we have always believed that its our duty to nurture the local talent and currently there are more than 1100 Bahrainis who work with us not only here but in other GCC countries also. Our goal is to provide employment to another 500 people with the opening of our new proj-

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report At 02:00 PM Previous Day

Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Chan	ge	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance
Dow Jones	17,148.94	17,158.66	9.72	A	0.06	-1.53
NASDAQ	4,903.10	4,891.40	-11.70	•	-0.24	-2.32
S&P 500	2,012.66	2,016.71	4.05		0.20	-1.38
Financial Times	6,137.24	6,040.32	-96.92	•	-1.58	-3.24
DAX	10,310.10	10,131.19	-178.91	•	-1.74	-5.70
CAC 40	4,537.63	4,462.17	-75.46	•	-1.66	-3.77
Swiss	8,701.46	8,598.08	-103.38	•	-1.19	-2.49
Nikkei 225	18,374.00	18,191.32	-182.68	•	-0.99	-4.43
Topix	1,504.71	1,488.84	-15.87	•	-1.05	-3.78
Hang Seng	21,188.72	20,980.81	-207.91	•	-0.98	-4.26
Straits Times	2,834.23	2,804.27	-29.96	•	-1.06	-2.72

Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Chan	ge	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Kuwait	5,564.15	5,563.97	-0.18	•	0.00	-0.92
Saudi Arabia	6,743.16	6,555.70	-187.46	•	-2.78	-2.44
Dubai	3,078.73	3,071.62	-7.11	•	-0.23	-2.29
Abu Dhabi	4,283.55	4,269.94	-13.61	•	-0.32	-0.55
Bahrain	1,210.03	1,209.75	-0.28	•	-0.02	-0.48
Qatar	9,959.67	10,070.89	111.22		1.12	-4.50
Oman	5,417.09	5,390.52	-26.57	•	-0.49	0.20
Lebanon	1,145.43	1,145.43	0.00	- 2	0.00	-2.06
Jordan	2,113.12	2,114.00	0.88	•	0.04	-1.09
Egypt	7,021.42	6,929.97	-91.45	•	-1.30	0.22
Morocco	8,837.81	8,841.34	3.53	•	0.04	-0.98
Tunisia	5,141.03	5,160.66	19.63	A	0.38	1.96

Currency	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	US Dollar	Euro	Sterling Pound	Swiss Franc	Japanese Yen	Australian Dollar
Kuwait Dinar	134	12.2370	3.2733	3.0455	2.2328	3.3018	387.17	4.6240
Saudi Riyal	0.08172		0.2675	0.2489	0.1825	0.2698	31.64	0.3779
US Dollar	0.30550	3.7384		0.9304	0.6821	1.0087	118.28	1.4126
Euro	0.32835	4.0180	1.0748	1755	0.7331	1.0845	127.15	1.5202
Sterling Pound	0.44786	5.4805	1.4660	1.3641		1.4795	173.42	2.0728
Swiss Franc	0.30287	3.7062	0.9914	0.9221	0.6759		117.27	1.4004
Japanese Yen	0.00258	0.0316	0.0085	0.0079	0.0058	0.0085		0.0119
Australian Dollar	0.21626	2.6464	0.7079	0.6578	0.4824	0.7141	83.73	

Currency	US Dollar	Kuwaiti Dollar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatari Riyal	Omani Riyal	Emirates Dirham	Egyptian Pound
US Dollar		0.30550	3.7384	0.3741	3.6263	0.3831	3.6572	7.7201
Kuwaiti Dinar	3.2733	100	12.2370	1.2245	11.8700	1.2541	11.9712	25.2704
Saudi Riyal	0.2675	0.08172		0.1001	0.9700	0.1025	0.9783	2.0651
Bahraini Dinar	2.6732	0.81667	9.9936	74-18	9.6939	1.0242	9.7765	20.6376
Qatari Riyal	0.2758	0.08425	1.0309	0.1032		0.1057	1.0085	2.1289
Omani Riyal	2.6101	0.79740	9.7578	0.9764	9.4652		9.5458	20.1506
Emirates Dirham	0.2734	0.08353	1.0222	0.1023	0.9916	0.1048		2.1109
Egyptian Pound	0.1295	0.03957	0.4842	0.0485	0.4697	0.0496	0.4737	15 15-5

Currency	1-Week	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year
Kuwaiti Dinar	0.00	1.19	1.44	1.63	1.94
US Dollar	0.38	0.42	0.61	0.85	1.17
Euro	-0.26	-0.21	-0.12	-0.03	0.05
Sterling Pound	0.48	0.50	0.58	0.75	1.06
Swiss Franc	-0.82	-0.79	-0.75	-0.68	-0.60
Australian Dollar	2.05	2.08	2.04	2.01	1.98
Canadian Dollar	0.00	0.88	0.87	0.96	1.02

5-Year

10-Year

2.18

30-Year

2.94

Europe	-0.39	-0.14	0.4	9	1.	.34
United Kingdom	0.53	1.20	1.8	2	2.	.54
		Commodit	ies			
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Char	nge	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Kuwait Oil	28.57	26.98	-1.59	*	-5.57	-0.63
Brent	36.55	35.28	-1.27	*	-3.47	-2.85
West Texas	36.02	35.92	-0.10	•	-0.28	-3.08
Gold	1077.26	1085.65	8.39	A	0.78	1.48
Silver	13.96	14.02	0.05	A	0.39	0.79

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-l	Muzaini Exchange Co.
Υ	BUY ASIAN COUNTRIES

CURRENC

Yemen Riyal/for 1000

Tunisian Dinar

2.573 Japanese Yen 4.570 Indian Rupees 2.908 Pakistani Rupees Srilankan Rupees 2.121 Nepali Rupees Singapore Dollar 213.445 Hongkong Dollar 39.323 Bangladesh Taka 3.883 Philippine Peso 6.489 Thai Baht 8.435 **GCC COUNTRIES** Saudi Riyal 81.323 Qatari Riyal Omani Riyal Bahraini Dinar 809.984 **UAE Dirham** 83.029 **ARAB COUNTRIES** Egyptian Pound - Cash 39.300 Egyptian Pound - Transfer 38.993

Jordanian Dinar 429.689 Lebanese Lira/for 1000 2.173 Morocco Dirham 30.944

1.423

149.41

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES US Dollar Transfe 304.800 329.488 Sterling Pound 448.513 Canadian dollar 217.869 Turkish lira 101.674 Swiss Franc 303.736 Australian Dollar 218.389 **US Dollar Buying** 303.600

GOLD 20 Gram 216.710 10 Gram 111.050 5 Gram 56.210

UAE EXCHANGE CENTRE WLL

213.03 Australian Dollar 223.33 Canadian Dollar Swiss Franc 308.51 333.77 Euro **US** Dollar 304.65 Sterling Pound 451.93 Japanese Yen 2.57 Bangladesh Taka 3.884 4.577 Indian Rupee Nepali Rupee 2.862 Pakistani Rupee **UAE Dirhams** 0.08290 0.8096 0.03881 **Egyptian Pound** Jordanian Dinar 0.4333 Omani Riyal 0.7911 Qatari Riyal 0.08400 Saudi Riyal 0.08120

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

GCC COUNTRIES US Dollar 304.850 220.900 Canadian Dollar Sterling Pound 449,420 331.525 Euro Swiss Frank 306.125 Bahrain Dinar 806.500 **UAE Dirhams** 83.240 Qatari Riyals

Saudi Riyals 81.970 429.440 **Egyptian Pound** 38.821 Sri Lankan Rupees 4.582 Indian Rupees Pakistani Rupees 2.904 Bangladesh Taka 3.878 Philippines Pesso 6.458 Cyprus pound 580.645 Japanese Yen 3.550 Syrian Pound 2.380 Nepalese Rupees 3.860 Malaysian Ringgi 71.015 Chinese Yuan Renminbi 47.105 Thai Bhat 9.410 Turkish Lira 103.155

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

Country

2-Year

0.99

COUNTRY **SELL CASH SELLDRAFT** Europe 0.450402 **British Pound** 0.441402 Czech Korune 0.004204 0.016204 0.040146 0.045146 Danish Krone 0.324002 0.332002 Euro 0.030281 0.035481 Norwegian Krone 0.087378 0.087378 Romanian Leu 0.009109 0.019109 Slovakia 0.031795 Swedish Krona 0.036795 0.297354 0.307554 Swiss Franc Turkish Lira 0.098813 0.109113 **Australasia** 0.222460 Australian Dollar 0.210960 New Zealand Dollar 0.198737 0.208237 America Canadian Dollar 0.213476 0.221976 **US Dollars** 0.300500 0.30500

0.301000 0.305000 **US Dollars Mint** Asia Bangladesh Taka 0.003481 0.004081 0.048682 0.045182 Chinese Yuan Hong Kong Dollar 0.037200 0.039950 0.004213 0.004603 Indian Rupee Indonesian Rupiah 0.000018 0.000024 0.002472 0.002652 Japanese Yen Kenvan Shilling 0.003166 0.003166 0.000247 0.000262 Korean Won Malavsian Ringgit 0.066674 0.072674 0.002888 0.003058 Nepalese Rupee Pakistan Rupee 0.002642 0.002922 Philippine Peso 0.006395 0.006675 0.000068 0.000074 Sierra Leone Singapore Dollar 0.210698 0.216698 South African Rand 0.013601 0.022101 Sri Lankan Rupee 0.001751 0.002331 0.009165 0.009345 Taiwan Thai Baht 0.008124 0.008674

Arab Bahraini Dinar 0.801067 0.809067 0.037708 **Egyptian Pound** 0.034582 0.000084 0.000086 Iranian Rival 0.000201 0.000261 Iragi Dinar 0.425626 Jordanian Dinai 0.433126 1.000000 1.000000 Kuwaiti Dinar Lebanese Pound 0.000153 0.000253 0.021580 0.045580 Moroccan Dirhams 0.001260 Nigerian Naira 0.001895 0.784748 0.790428 Omani Rival 0.082955 0.084168 Oatar Rival Saudi Rival 0.080340 0.081290 Syrian Pound 0.001291 0.001511 0.146950 Tunisian Dinar 0.154950 0.098813 Turkish Lira 0.109113 0.081950 **UAE Dirhams** 0.083099 0.001377 0.001457 Yemeni Rival

US AUTO SALES SCORE NEW HIGH

CHICAGO: US auto sales touched a new high in 2015 as easy credit, hot new vehicles and strong consumer confidence pushed sales slightly above the record set

in 2000, industry data showed Tuesday. Some 17.47 million vehicles were sold in the United States last year, nearly 70,000 more than the record set 15 years earlier,



FLORIDA: A 2015 Chevrolet Silverado 2500 4WD LTZ Crew Cab pickup truck is on display at Miami Lakes AutoMall in Miami Lakes, Fla. Automakers reported December and full-year sales on Tuesday, Jan 5, 2016.—AP

according to Autodata. Sales were up six percent from the 16.52 million vehicles registered in 2014.

The boom comes after sales collapsed to lows not seen in decades in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis which knocked General Motors and Chrysler into bankruptcy. That downturn accelerated muchneeded restructuring at the Detroit Three carmakers, which began racking in record profits when the economy improved and sales started climbing again.

The good times are expected to keep on rolling in 2016. "The US economy continues to expand and the most important factors that drive demand for new vehicles are in place, so we expect to see a second consecutive year of record industry sales in 2016," said Mustafa Mohatarem, GM's chief economist. "The single most important pieces are the ongoing gains in employment and the growth in personal income. When you add in lower energy prices, it's easy to see why consumer spending is strong." Total industry sales rose nine percent in December, to 1.64 million vehicles, according to Autodata. The results come days before carmakers are set to reveal a host of new products at the Detroit auto show, where the mood is expected to be exuberant.

"It's truly remarkable that the auto industry is finishing off its best year ever just six years after the depths of the Great Recession," said Jessica Caldwell, an analyst with the automotive website Edmunds.com. While easy credit terms and low gas prices are making it easier for consumers to buy or lease new cars, Caldwell said the attractiveness of product offerings is sealing the deal. "If you're buying a new car today, you're getting a safer, more fuel-efficient and more technologically packed vehicle than ever before," she said in a statement. "Automakers are doing a great job giving the people what they want in a new car."

VW sales hit by scandal

Nearly every major carmaker shared in the gains. But embattled German automaker Volkswagen bucked the trend as sales were hit by a massive pollution-cheating scandal. VW sales fell nine percent to 30,956 in December and were down five percent in 2015 at 349,400 vehicles. The results were nonetheless better than the 25 percent drop registered in November after VW stopped selling diesel-engine vehicles shown to have been equipped for years with software that intentionally subverted clean-air regulations.

"As we look towards 2016, we are committed to rebuilding trust in the brand and would like to thank our customers and dealers for their continued patience and loyalty," said Mark McNabb, chief operating officer for Volkswagen of America. GM sales rose six percent in December to 290,230 vehicles while total 2015 sales for the largest US automaker were up five percent at 3.1 million vehicles. Ford sales were up eight percent in December at 239,242 and rose five percent in 2015 to 2.6 million vehicles. Fiat Chrysler sales jumped 13 percent in December to 217,527 while 2015 sales were up seven percent at 2.2 million vehicles.

Toyota sales increased 11 percent in December to 238,350 and were up five percent in 2015 at 2.5 million. Both of the Japanese automaker's brands-Toyota and Lexus-posted record-breaking December sales while its Corolla, RAV4 and Highlander vehicles smashed records for the year. "2015 was a standout year for the auto industry," Bill Fay, general manager for the Toyota division, said in a statement. Honda sales rose 10 percent in December to 150,893 and were up three percent for the year at 1.5 million. Nissan posted an eight percent gain in December at 139,300 while its 2015 sales rose seven percent to 1.4 million.—AFP

News

in brief

Saudi Electricity signs \$1.4 billion 3-yr loan with banks

DUBAI: Saudi Electricity Co (SEC), the Gulf's largest utility firm, said yesterday it had signed an agreement for a \$1.4 billion loan with seven international banks to be used as a back-up credit facility. The facility has a lifespan of three years and was provided by Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Mizuho Bank, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, HSBC, JP Morgan, Credit Agricole and Deutsche Bank. On Dec 16, SEC said it signed an agreement for a reserve credit facility worth up to 2.5 billion riyals (\$666.1 million) with National Commercial Bank and Samba Financial Group. The transaction announced yesterday brings the company's total revolving facilities to a value of 7.75 billion riyals, the statement added.

Euro-zone economy set for robust year

LONDON: The 19-country euro-zone's economy is poised for a year of "robust expansion" following its best quarterly performance in 4 1/2 years, a closely watched survey indicated yesterday. Financial information company Markit said its purchasing managers' index - a measure of activity across the manufacturing and services sectors - rose to a four-month high of 54.3 points in December from 54.2 the previous month. That monthly growth rounded off the best quarterly performance since the middle of 2011, according to Markit. "The euro-zone economy starts 2016 on a solid footing and well placed to enjoy a year of robust expansion," Markit's chief economist Chris Williamson said. Despite the findings, Williamson said the euro-zone economy is still not running on all cylinders. Overall growth in 2015 is only expected to be around 1.5 percent and France, Europe's second-largest economy, continues to lag. In December, France barely grew at all - its PMI survey reading was 50.1, just ahead of the 50 threshold that marks expansion and contraction. "Germany, Italy, Spain and Ireland are all enjoying strong expansions, but France is showing signs of stalling once again," he said.

Malaysia Airlines does U-turn on suitcase ban

KUALA LUMPUR: Less than 24 hours after telling Europe-bound passengers they were not allowed to take check-in baggage because of "unseasonably strong headwinds", Malaysian Airlines did a sudden U-turn yesterday. The troubled carrier, whose MH370 flight went missing in 2014 on its way to Beijing and has still not been found, had said it was limiting baggage to reduce weight. It cited concerns about its planes being able to carry enough fuel as they had to fly a longer and different route due to its own "risk assessment" and handle strong headwinds "in excess of 200 knots". The airline did not specify what the risk specifically was. Economy class passengers flying from Kuala Lumpur to London, Paris and Amsterdam would only be allowed to take one small piece of hand luggage with them, the company announced on Tuesday. Those in business class could carry two. Suitcases could be checked in on other flights, but would arrive much later than their owners, the company had said. The move was blasted as "ludicrous" and "strange" by industry analysts. But in a sudden about-face on Wednesday, Malaysia Airlines ditched its baggage rules and said passengers could carry the normal amount of luggage.

China sets yuan currency level near five-year low

SHANGHAI: China's central bank yesterday set the value of the yuan currency against the US dollar at its lowest since April 2011, according to the national foreign exchange market, raising worries over the health of the world's second-largest economy. The People's Bank of China (PBoC) set the daily reference rate at 6.5314 to \$1.0 yesterday, down by 0.22 percent from the previous day, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. It was its weakest for nearly five years. The move marked the seventh session the PBoC has weakened the yuan, reviving concerns over a shock devaluation of the currency in August, when it guided the unit down nearly five percent in a week. "Market forces are exerting strong pressure on the yuan to depreciate against the US dollar," senior international economist for PNC Financial Services Group, Bill Adams, said in a research note yesterday. "Chinese economic growth is weak, Chinese foreign trade is contracting, the PBoC has cut interest rates six times since November 2014, US interest rates are rising and capital is flowing out of China," he said. At 4:30 pm (0830 GMT), the onshore yuan was quoted at 6.5575 to \$1.0, down 0.58 percent from the same time on Tuesday.



DENPASAR: Tuna fish are loaded onto a truck at Benoa harbour in Denpasar on Bali island yesterday. Indonesian President Joko Widodo has unveiled a series of stimulus measures to lift slowing growth in South-East Asia's top economy and shore up the country's plunging currency. —AFP

BRITAIN SERVICES GROWTH SLOWS, POINTING TO A SOFT END TO 2015

EU vote, spending cuts and higher rates are 2016 risks

LONDON: Growth in Britain's dominant services industry slowed slightly in December, suggesting the economy expanded only modestly ahead of a new year in which it faces significant risks, a closely watched survey showed yesterday. British economic growth slid to its joint-weakest in nearly three years in the three months to September, and financial data company Markit said its December survey of purchasing managers pointed to only a marginally faster expansion in late 2015.

The Markit/CIPS UK services purchasing managers' index edged down to 55.5 last month from 55.9 in November, broadly in line with economists' forecasts in a Reuters poll, while a broader composite measure dipped to a threemonth low. Markit lowered its estimate of fourth-quarter GDP growth to 0.5 percent from 0.6 percent a month ago, which compares with a sub-par 0.4 percent recorded in the

third quarter of 2015. "The relapse in the services PMI adds to evidence showing the recovery lost further momentum towards the end of 2015," Pantheon Macroeconomics chief UK economist Samuel Tombs said. Financial markets showed little reaction to the news, which left Britain still in a better position than most of its euro zone peers. Despite recent downward revisions to its growth numbers for 2015, Britain is expected to have headed the pack of major economies. But it has relied heavily on the services industry for growth, frustrating hopes for a more balanced recovery.

"The services sector remained the key driver of the UK's economic upturn ... (but) a rosy outlook is by no means assured," Markit's chief UK economist Chris Williamson said. A solid measure of new business was offset by the weakest pace of job creation in the sector since July, while long-term expectations for business activity among firms were the low-

est since 2013. Williamson said factors such as government spending cuts, a potential interest rate hike, uncertainty about the global economy and the prospect of a referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union posed "significant downside risks" to economic growth this year.

The Bank of England is expected to raise interest rates in the second quarter of 2016, according to a Reuters poll of economists. But with inflation close to zero and earnings growth sluggish, it may find this difficult and financial markets only price in a move around the end of the year. Input prices and prices charged rose marginally in December, the PMI survey showed, but were both below long-run averages. Separate figures from the British Retail Consortium, also released on Wednesday, showed shop prices in December were 2.0 percent lower than a year earlier, almost matching November's joint-record 2.1 percent decline. —Reuters

US MANUFACTURING SLOWDOWN STOKES FEARS ABOUT OIL DEMAND

LONDON: Growing signs of weakness in the US economy are helping keep oil prices under pressure even as tensions escalate across North Africa and the Middle East. US manufacturers reported business activity contracted for the second month running in December, according to the Institute of Supply Management (ISM). The ISM's composite manufacturing index was below 50 in both November and December 2015 for the first time since

The Institute contacts around 300 purchasing managers each month to enquire about changes at their firms in production, new orders, employment, inventories and the speed of supplier deliveries. The results are used to produce the purchasing managers' index. In the past, index readings below 50 have generally been

November 2012 and before that July 2009.

associated with a contraction in manufacturing activity (http://tmsnrt.rs/1Rhzgry). The index is strongly cyclical and not every slowdown heralds an economic recession (not least because manufacturing now accounts for less than 15 percent of GDP).

But US manufacturers have reported slowing growth since the middle of 2015 which turned into an outright contraction towards the end of the year. The drop in the index is consistent with other indicators pointing to a pronounced slowdown in manufacturing activity in the second half of 2015. Freight movements by road, rail, barge and pipeline have been flat for the past year, ending five years of strong growth, according to the US Bureau of Transportation Statistics (http://tmsnrt.rs/1R6Wct7). —Reuters



VIRGINIA: A car pulls up to a Shell Gas Station in Woodbridge, Virginia. Oil prices fell further January 5 as the crude supply glut overshadowed a diplomatic row between key producers Saudi Arabia and Iran as fuel prices in the US have fallen below \$2 per gallon.—AFP

STOCKS HIT BY CHINA WORRIES, NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR TEST

MSCI WORLD SHARE INDEX DOWN FOR 5TH DAY AS ASIA. EUROPE SLIDES

LONDON: World stocks fell for a fifth day yesterday as China fuelled fears about its economy by allowing the yuan to weaken further and a nuclear test by North Korea added to a growing list of geopolitical worries. European markets followed Asia into the red, with Britain's FTSE, Germany's DAX and France's CAC all 0.7 percent lower in early trading, to leave MSCI's 46-country All World index down 0.3 percent.

Souring sentiment toward riskier assets in turn lifted safe-havens such as the Japanese yen, US Treasuries, German Bunds and gold, while the pressure was firmly back on oil as both Brent and WTI fell \$2 to near \$35.50 a barrel. "The moves in yuan have been very interesting," Societe Generale FX strategist

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Alvin Tan said. "The CNH (offshore yuan) is down 2 percent since New Year's Eve ... if they allow this to continue this has very serious repercussions for global markets." ic data to digest, too, with a PMI survey showing services sector activity expanded at its slowest rate in 17 months in December. State Chinese media meanwhile reported that a

Traders and economists fear the yuan's depreciation may mean the world's second-biggest economy is even weaker than had been expected and that it could trigger another wave of competitive devaluations around Asia and in other key economies. The People's Bank of China surprised yesterday by setting the yuan's official midpoint rate at its weakest level in 4-1/2 years at 6.5314 per dollar. That triggered further selling in the 'offshore' yuan, which slumped to 6.6956 per dollar, its lowest since trading began in 2010.

ollar, its lowest since trading began in 2010. There was more gloomy Chinese economing services sector activity expanded at its slowest rate in 17 months in December. State Chinese media meanwhile reported that a selling ban on major shareholders brought in to help arrest a market crash last summer would remain in place until the government publishes new rules on such disposals. That helped drive China's blue chip shares sharply higher, with the CSI300 index closing up 1.75 percent and the Shanghai Composite finishing 2.3 percent better off.

They were among very few risers, however, as North Korea's announcement that it had successfully conducted a test of a hydrogen nuclear device added to geopolitical worries stirred by a row between Saudi

Arabia and Iran. South Korea's KOSPI and the won both fell and Japan's Nikkei extended losses to close down 1 percent. In Europe, a 2.5 percent fall in mining and natural resource stocks left the FTSEurofirst 300 0.7 percent lower at 1,400. Another PMI showed growth in Britain's dominant services sector slowed slightly in December, suggesting one of Europe's best performing economies over the last couple of years expanded only modestly in the final part of 2015.

Oil pressure

The mood was similarly cautious in currency and bond markets, with the yuan's accelerated fall dragging down other emerging currencies like the Malaysian ringgit and Thai baht. The dollar touched a near three-month low of 118.35 yen while euro slid to a ninemonth trough of 127.465 yen and dipped to \$1.0720 as a top European Central Bank policymaker reiterated its willingness to keep printing money. That

also helped push yields on German 10year Bunds to their lowest since the ECB's last meeting in December, which delivered less in terms of policy stimulus then most traders had been expecting. The 10-year US Treasury yield fell by about 3 basis points to 2.22 percent.

"European government bond markets are enjoying a (balanced) environment, with sliding inflation expectations augmenting the lingering emerging market concerns," Commerzbank rate strategist Michael Leister said. Adding to the riskoff mood, crude oil prices hit new 11year lows as the face-off between Saudi Arabia and Iran over Riyadh's execution of a Shiite cleric was seen extinguishing any chance of major producers cooperating to cut production. Global benchmark Brent crude was trading at \$35.75 a barrel at 0930 GMT, down 67 cents or 1.9 percent from the previous day's settlement and the lowest since 2004. US crude futures were down 46 cents at \$35.51 per barrel after slipping 79 cents on Tuesday. — Reuters



SINGAPORE: A vessel docks along the bay at the container terminal port in Singapore yesterday. Singapore's trade-dependent economy grew by an estimated 2.1 percent in 2015, its worst performance since the 2009 recession, as global demand for Asian exports slumped, official data showed on January 4. — AFP

OIL HITS 11-YEAR LOW

LONDON: Oil prices hit their lowest in over 11 years yesterday, as the row between Saudi Arabia and Iran was seen making any cooperation between major exporters to cut output even more unlikely. Evidence of slowing economic growth in China and India has fuelled fears that even strong demand elsewhere may not be enough to mop up the excess crude that has resulted from near-record production over the last year.

The furor over Saudi Arabia's execution of a Shiite cleric has stripped nearly 8 percent off the price of oil in the last three trading days alone and has killed speculation that OPEC members might agree on production cuts to lift prices. "There are rising stockpiles and the tension between Iran and Saudi Arabia make any deal on production unlikely," said Michael Hewson, head of strategy at CMC Markets.

Benchmark Brent crude futures were at \$35.07 a barrel at 1120 GMT, down \$1.35 on the day, and at their lowest since early July 2004, having staged their largest one-day drop in percentage terms in nearly five weeks. US crude futures were down 88 cents at \$35.09 a barrel after already slipping 79 cents the previous day. Oil has slumped from above \$115 in June 2014 as shale oil from the United States has flooded the market, while falling prices have prompted some producers to pump even harder to compensate for lower

revenues and to keep market share. Adding to this oversupply, Iranian oil exports are widely expected to increase in 2016 as Western sanctions against Tehran for its alleged nuclear weapons program are likely to be lifted. "Shale production and increasing capacity from countries like Russia who need to protect revenue combined with expectations of further Iranian supply mean actual production as well as expectations of future production are rising," Hewson said. Still, a senior Iranian oil official said the country could moderate oil export increases once the sanctions are lifted to avoid putting prices under further pressure. Also feeding into broad market

weakness, a survey showed that China's services sector expanded at its slowest pace in 17 months in December, following on from weak factory data on Monday which also knocked markets globally. The People's Bank of China set a weaker midpoint for the yuan, prompting concerns that the economy of the world's largest energy consumer could be in worse shape than believed. In the United States, concerns over mounting oil stock levels persisted, with crude inventories likely to have risen by 439,000 barrels last week, according to a Reuters poll of eight analysts. The US **Energy Information Administration** (EIA) will publish its closely watched weekly data at 1530 GMT. — Reuters

GOLD EXTENDS GAINS

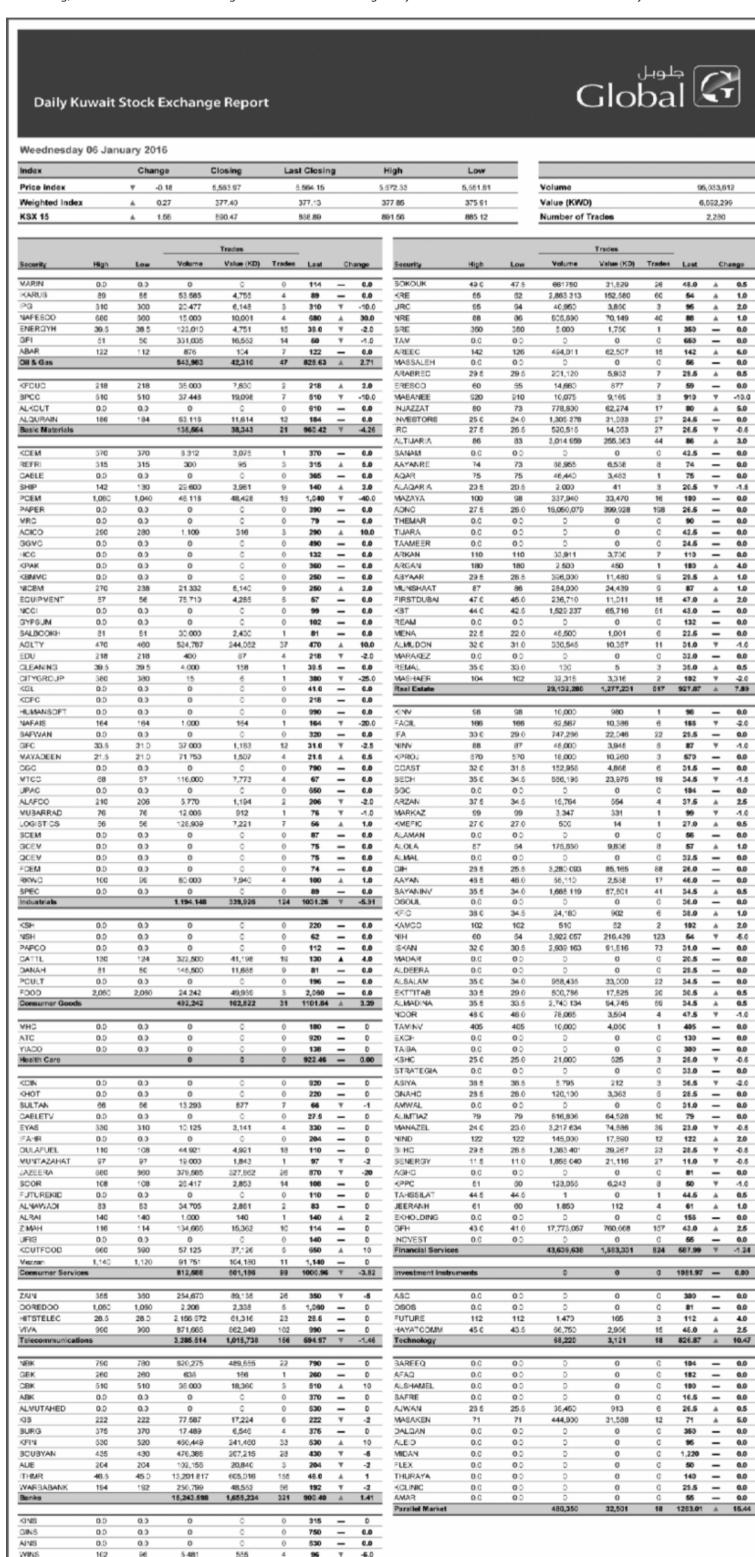
LONDON: Gold hit a four-week high yesterday, extending gains for a third session, as persistent concerns over the Chinese economy battered stock markets, while tensions simmered in the Korean peninsula and the Middle East. The metal is closing in on key chart levels, including the December high at \$1,088.70. A push above \$1,088 would indicate that gold may have bottomed out for now after twice rebounding from the \$1,045 area in December, technical analysts said. Spot gold was up 0.6 percent at \$1,083.76 an ounce at 1047 GMT, while US gold futures for February delivery were up \$5.10 an ounce at \$1,083.50. Earlier it reached its highest since Dec 7 at \$1,085.60.

"Some risk aversion prompting safe haven flows has helped gold to stabilize and now test resistance," Societe Generale analyst Robin Bhar said. "Physical demand has been pretty strong at the lower levels." "As we go higher, we could see some of that physical demand beginning to slow. Now we need investors to jump back in and look to hedge some of the uncertainties over global growth, over China, with positioning in gold." World stocks fell for a fifth day yesterday as China fuelled fears about its economy by allowing the yuan

to weaken further, and a nuclear test by North Korea added to a growing list of political worries.

North Korea said it successfully tested a miniaturized hydrogen nuclear device yesterday, setting off alarm bells in Japan and South Korea. Relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran collapsed over the weekend after the Kingdom's execution of a Shiite cleric, a prominent critic of Saudi policy, set off a storm of protests in Tehran. "The metals are likely to continue to take direction from moves in equities, developments in China, US dollar swings and to a lesser extent geopolitical factors in the short term," MKS said in a note yesterday.

Traders will examine the minutes of the Federal Reserve's last meeting when they are released later for clues about the US central bank's plans for interest rate hikes. Gold fell 10 percent last year on fears higher US rates would lift the opportunity cost of holding non-yielding bullion. The Fed raised rates for the first time in nearly a decade last month and is expected to hike rates further this year. Silver was up 0.3 percent at \$13.98 an ounce, while platinum was down 0.3 percent at \$883.75 an ounce and palladium was down 1.4 percent at \$529.40 an ounce. — Reuters



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FITBIT 'SMART FITNESS WATCH' DISAPPOINTS MARKET

"smart fitness watch," aiming to get into the growing smartwatch segment with upgraded fitness tracking features. But the company's share price plunged amid disappointment over its prospects for keeping pace with rivals like Apple Watch. The



NEVADA: Casio President and COO Kazuhiro Kashio displays Casio's new smart watch WSD-F10 that was announced during a press event for CES 2016 at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center on January 5, 2016 in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

LAS VEGAS: Fitbit yesterday unveiled its company, which leads the wearable tech market with its wrist-worn trackers but is being challenged by the rise of smartwatches from Apple and others, said its \$199 Fitbit Blaze watch was available for pre-order and would be in retail stores globally in the coming months.

Speaking at an unveiling ahead of the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, Fitbit chief executive and co-founder James Park said the new device "strikes a balance between fitness and style." The Blaze contains a module that can be linked with smartphones running Apple, Android or Windows systems and removed to snap into different bands for workouts, the office or nights on the town, Park said.

It will also allow for notifications of calls, text and calendar alerts, and can control music playing from a phone. It also features a high-resolution color display and a battery that can last up to five days. "It puts fitness first and has the right set of features that don't overwhelm the user," he told the news conference. Fitbit led the global market for wearable tech devices in the third quarter with a 22.2 percent market share and unit sales of 4.7 million, according to research firm IDC. But many analysts expect Apple to take the lead in the sector with its new smartwatch that connects to iPhones and also has fitness-tracking features.



NEVADA: The new FitBit Blaze is seen at a press conference on CES Press Day in Las Vegas, Nevada ahead of the CES 2016 Consumer Electronics Show. Fitbit on January 5 unveiled its 'smart fitness watch,' aiming to get into the growing smartwatch segment with upgraded fitness tracking features. — AFP

Not enough

Fitbit shares plunged 18 percent on apparent disappointment the company fell short in its strategy of countering Apple and other rivals. Also weighing on Fitbit was a launch by Under Armour of a suite of connected fitness devices. Sterne Agee analyst Rob Cihra said the new watch is "not likely enough" to boost Fitbit against

its rivals. The analyst said in a research note the new smartwatch appears to be a "fashionable (Fitbit) Charge fitness band" which "offers a much smaller fraction of the functionality (of rivals), as a not-so-smart watch with limited apps platform play."

"We see the company still needing to prove it can build out a sustainable software and services platform that goes

beyond simply selling devices," the analyst said. IDC analyst Ramon Llamas said Fitbit shares may have been unfairly punished by the news. Llamas said that it appears that "a modular smartwatch does not appeal to a lot of people" but that Fitbit still has the opportunity to improve its offerings and expand its large user base. "I think (Blaze) is unfairly being compared to Apple Watch," he said. "But there are still a lot of oars in the ocean to pull Fitbit forward." Under Armour meanwhile announced its "Connected Fitness product portfolio" which may grab market share from Fitbit.

The Baltimore-based group announced its UA Band designed to be worn all-day, every day to track daily activity, workouts and sleep, a compact heart rate monitor which can measure workout intensity and a connected scale that enables weight and body fat percentage readings. "For 20 years, Under Armour has changed the way athletes dress and now we will change the way athletes live," said Kevin Plank, founder and CEO, in a statement.

"We are taking connected Fitness to another level. With the HealthBox suite of products being introduced, athletes will be empowered with the information to make better decisions and ultimately enrich their lives in a way that's never been done before." — AFP

GROUP HOPES TO JUMPSTART MOMENTUM FOR TRADE PACT

WASHINGTON: Leading business groups, often at odds with President Barack Obama, are looking to give momentum to one of his top priorities before he leaves office: approval of a trade pact linking 12 nations along the Pacific Rim that make up 40 percent of the world economy.

The Business Roundtable, made up of chief executive officers from large US companies, endorsed the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement on Tuesday. A trade group representing manufacturers did the same Monday.

Their influence could make supporters in Congress more eager to take the agreement up in an election year. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell recently urged Obama to hold off on sending the agreement to Congress before the elections, warning that it didn't have the votes. John Engler, president of the Business Roundtable and a former Republican governor of Michigan, said his organization is hoping Congress will approve the pact before its August recess. "The hope is to send the signal now that we're getting pretty comfortable with the agreement, and let's get ready to give it serious consideration," Engler told the Associated Press.

The trade agreement took more than five years to stitch together. Participating nations would reduce or eliminate thousands of tariffs that apply to foreign-made goods. The agreement also rolls back regulatory requirements, such as the need to establish an office in a particular country or partner with a local entity, in order to access their markets. Several presidential candidates in both parties as well as members of Congress have panned the Trans-Pacific Partnership since agreement on the deal's terms was announced in October. Donald Trump said it's a "terrible deal." Democrat Hillary Clinton

said "it didn't meet my standards." That's led to questions about whether Congress would pass the trade pact, even though lawmakers just last year passed legislation designed to speed TPP's passage without the threat of amendments or filibuster. Support from business groups could ease some lawmaker's concerns about the political environment.

The trade group representing manufacturers came out with its endorsement Monday. The group has frequently clashed with the Obama administration over new environmental regulations and recently sued to stop stricter limits on smog-causing pollution.

"This is an organization that typically does not endorse priorities of the Obama administration, but I think is a clear example of how even Democrats and Republicans can agree that the Trans-Pacific Partnership would do good and important things for the US economy," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said on Tuesday Labor unions have come out overwhelmingly against the trade agreement, saying it will drive wages down, and it's clear that for Obama to get a legacy-setting victory, he'll have to rely on the GOP to push the legislation to victory. Engler said he's confident that the pact would end up getting more votes than the fast-track legislation that passed last year.

Engler said not all members of the Business Roundtable supported TPP, but there was broad consensus. "We cannot have a robust economy if the goal is to make things here and sell it to ourselves," Engler said. Earnest said the endorsements demonstrate political momentum on a key adminis-

"I think we are realistic that there is some deeply entrenched opposition in the Democratic Party to these kinds of measures, but there is bipartisan support for them in the Congress, and we're looking forward to making that case," Earnest said. — AP



LAS VEGAS: Sphero's BB-8 technical prototype with Force Band is displayed during a press event for CES 2016 at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nevada. Sphero partnered with Lucasfilm to build the app-enabled toy from the droid character in the film 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens.' — AFP

Why I can't buy Minion TOYS WITH CHINESE YUAN

UK IMPORTERS' EXPERIENCE JARS WITH YUAN'S EMERGENCE

BASILDON: British businessman Tony Brown is ready to pay in Chinese yuan for the cuddly toys and other funfair stall prizes he buys from a handful of Chinese factories. But they just don't want it. He thought using the local currency for the purchases, worth several million pounds every month, would be a selling point with his Asian partners, a sign of good faith and presumably easier to do. They would rather have dollars.

This is a familiar experience for hundreds of small and medium-sized British companies which deal with Chinese factories and firms. It also jars with the big headlines over the past year proclaiming the emergence of the yuan as a major currency, and London as its main international trading hub. "We have tried but there is no appetite," says Brown, who has 19 years of experience in working closely with Chinese suppliers. Flows among some of the major banks and speculative financial investors have surged, and the yuan is an increasingly heavily used trading currency in Asia. But its visibility in the day-to-day economy in the West is next to nil.

Some of the thousands of British managers who regularly deal with China say this is due to the difficulty of changing established practices, the Chinese firms' need for dollars to pay off debt and other international dues and a lack of faith in the current value of the yuan, now in the throes of its second major devaluation since last August. "Historically they desperately wanted dollars and it has just continued. We've had discussions about paying in local currency. But they just have limited exposure in yuan so they would rather have dollars," said Brown.

If you've played fairground or funfair stall games over the past few years in Britain, the chances are your prize has been imported by his company, Whitehouse Leisure, based in the town of Basildon just outside London. The biggest seller in the past year has been fluffy Minion toys, made famous by the kids' movie "Despicable Me" and distributed to points ranging from the Legoland theme park to small mobile funfairs that set up around Britain.

It's good business and Whitehouse Leisure is a leading client of AFEX, among the biggest in a group of London-based currency brokers specialising in dealing for companies whose needs aren't quite large enough to get the premium rates and services that banks offer top corporates. AFEX sales director James Collins says that of the 150 corporate clients on his books, none is doing any major business in yuan due to Chinese reluctance. "We've offered it, and lots of people have looked at it, but there has just been no take-up from the other side," he says.

Surge

tionalize the yuan in the past year, regarding this as a crucial element of its future place in the global economic and financial hierarchy. Data from banking network Swift show the yuan, also known as the renminbi or RMB, is now the fifth most-used currency for international payments.

The big bank-to-bank trading platforms report a surge in its usage that often makes it among a handful of their most traded currencies. A decade of huge dollar earnings for Chinese companies, however, allied to ultra-low US interest rates since 2008, has reinforced the greenback's day-to-day usage in investment and trade.

The International Monetary Fund's admission last year of the yuan into its benchmark currency basket should soon mean the Chinese unit makes up closer to 10 percent of global central bank reserves. However, even after two years of substantial growth, the yuan is worth just 2 percent of all international payments compared with 52 percent for the dollar, and it is used for less than 0.5 percent of trade in goods and services. Chinese companies still hold around \$1 trillion of short-term debt in US currency and are repaying it, and the interest, in billions of dollars monthly. Much of that money comes in to offshore accounts and never lands in China.

Another AFEX client, Bob Latham, pays around \$100,000 every month for the reinforced composite and glazing materials he buys from Chinese factories to sell on to clients in the West. "We did offer to pay the factories in RMB. It's in our interest to make it as easy as possible for them to sell to us, so that we're the easiest route to market," he says. "But it all tended to get a little bit crazy. They have foreign

bank accounts and that's where they handle all their foreign sales. So when we tried to pay in yuan they changed it into US dollars, and then they transfer it from US dollars back into RMB. So we couldn't see any logic or benefit."

Rate play

All of that is hard to square with the flood of corporate promotion of the yuan, chiefly by banks such as HSBC, Standard Chartered, Citi and others for whom it is a rare growing market at a time when trading operations and profits have been slashed. The Swift numbers point to a disparity between Asia and the rest of the world. The yuan is used, for example, for about 7 percent of payments between Japan and China, compared with the 2 percent global figure.

Still, the yuan offers better returns than dollars, compensating for higher conversion costs due to the wider gap between buy and sell rates. Bankers say trade in the yuan in London has boomed in the past six months and that bigger corporate clients have been paying in the currency for over a year. "We're doing a lot of it now," says Tobias Davis, who sells hedging and options products to bigger corporates for Western Union in London.

"Especially on forwards and options there's a lot of benefit in settling direct in yuan. Interest rates are above 4 percent so while you're holding the position you get that interest rate carry. That offsets the marginally wider spreads you will get on the yuan compared to the dollar." —Reuters

STANDARD CHARTERED AMONG BANKS IN CHINA'S FOREX BAN

SHANGHAI: Standard Chartered is among three lenders that China's central bank last week suspended from conducting some foreign exchange business until the end of March, two sources with direct knowledge said yesterday. Reuters reported on Dec 30 that China's central bank had suspended Deutsche Bank and two other lenders from conducting some of their foreign exchange business, China's latest bid to stem capital fleeing the country in the face of a weakening yuan.

The notices sent to banks did not give a reason for the suspension, but the sources for that story said their banks might have been targeted due to the large scale of their cross-border forex businesses. One of the sources for the involvement of Standard Chartered, which is currently in the middle of a global restructuring, said the

bank has asked the People's Bank of China to shorten the suspension.

A spokesman for Standard Chartered declined to comment. When contacted by Reuters last week, Deutsche Bank declined to comment. China's central bank did not respond to requests for comment.

Standard Chartered made \$720 million from foreign exchange trading globally in the first half of 2015, according to its half-year financial statement, equivalent to 8.5 percent of the lender's total operating income. Chinese authorities are starting to police the nation's foreign exchange market in a way currency traders have rarely seen before, levying penalty payments for aggressive trading and prompting some banks to turn down business. — Reuters



York Stock Exchange. — AP

TURKISH LIRA SLIPS TO 3.0 PER DOLLAR

three-month low against the dollar yesterday as fears about China's stalling economy and North Korea's nuclear test shook investors already concerned about the independence of Turkey's monetary policy. The lira broke through the symbolic threshold of 3.0 against the dollar for the first time since early October, and weakened as far as 3.0145 before edging back to 3.0085 at 0928 GMT.

The main BIST 100 share index fell 0.25 percent in early trading. The benchmark 10-year government bond yield rose to 11.27 percent from a spot close of 11.07 percent on Tuesday. Global pressures on emerging currencies added to domestic concerns about political interference in monetary policy and political uncertainties which pushed the lira 20 percent lower against the US currency last year.

Pressure on the lira resumed on Dec. 23 when Turkey's central bank shocked markets by failing to hike interest rates despite stubbornly high inflation. That prompted fresh fears that President Tayyip Erdogan's

ISTANBUL: The Turkish lira weakened to a antipathy to high rates was influencing central bank policy. The lira was also hit by the Chinese yuan's grim start to 2016. Asian markets fell on Wednesday after the People's Bank of China allowed the currency to weaken further, fuelling concerns that the world's second-biggest economy could be even weaker than thought.

As Iran and Saudi Arabia continued a face-off over Riyadh's execution of a Shiite cleric, North Korea's announcement that it carried out its first successful test of a hydrogen bomb further heightened geopolitical tensions. Turkish stocks have also suffered in recent months, with the BIST 30 the sixth worst performer in a basket of emerging markets in the last year to date, down 4.39 percent. On Tuesday, the central bank said tax hikes introduced at the beginning of the year on tobacco and alcohol would add a further 0.7 percentage points to inflation. Monday's inflation data showed consumer prices rose 8.81 percent year-on-year in December, above forecasts and significantly higher than the central bank's 5 percent target. — Reuters

China has pressed ahead with efforts to interna-

MENA MARKETS END 2015 IN RED OVER DECLINE IN OIL PRICES

Markaz Monthly Market Research Report

KUWAIT: Kuwait Financial Centre 'Markaz' recently released its Monthly Market Research report. In this report, Markaz examines and analyzes the performance of equity markets in the MENA region as well as the global equity markets for the month of December. Most MENA markets ended in red during the month of December 2015, with Saudi Arabia (-4.5%) declining the most, followed by Kuwait price (-3.2%) and weighted (-2.9%) indices.

Decline in oil price by over 16% during the month and declaration of deficit laden budgets has led to the regional market response. Saudi markets fell the most slipping on oil and after the release of its 2016 budget, which forecasted a cut in spending and a deficit of \$87bn. Speculation about other possible measures including possible subsidy and tax reforms, also weighed in on the markets.

For the year 2015, Egypt declined 24%, due to faltering reforms and forex shortage, while Tadawul's TASI index declined 17%. All MENA indices ended in red for the year 2015, with most witnessing double digit declines. Oil price fall, regional and global political developments, the recent Fed hike, and Euro-zone woes were the much spoken themes for the year. S&P GCC declined 2.4% in December, making it a cumulative decline of 17.4% for 2015.

MENA markets liquidity continued its momentum in December, with volume increasing by 4% and value traded by 14.1%. With the exception of Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Abu Dhabi, other MENA markets witnessed rise in market liquidity, with Morocco, Oman and Jordan leading the charge. Morocco showed the most improvement with value traded

MENA Market Trends - December 2015 M. Cap Last Dec'15 2015 P/E P/B Div. correlation** Index (USD mn) TTM TTM Yield (USD Bn) close % % LargeMid Cap 110.4 135 0.146 9.80 1.27 5.64 1.8 N.A Saudi Arabia 419.0 6912 -4.5 -17.1-2.4 0.156 1359.63 13.01 1.64 4.43 Qatar 128.0 10429 3.4 -15.1 18.4 0.118 73.11 10.76 1.60 4.89 10.78 1.43 Abu Dhabi 111.9 4307 1.7 -4.9 5.6 0.111 49.30 Kuwait Price 87.4 5615 -3.2 -14.1 -13.4 0.089 31.07 13.95 1.13 Kuwait Wt.ed 87.4 382 -2.9 -13.0-3.1 0.048 31.07 13.95 1.13 Dubai 74.8 3151 -1.7 -16.512.0 0.119 95.81 8.53 1.18 Egypt 53.9 631 9.5 -24.4 23.5 0.056 60.78 9.24 1.36 -0.01745.7 8926 -1.8 -7.2 5.6 35.30 16.01 2.10 Jordan 22.1 4230 7.0 -0.2 -2,3 0.010 11.63 14.24 1.28 4.74 18.6 1216 -1.4-14.8 14.2 0.004 0.89 8.73 0.86 Bahrain 15.8 5406 -2.6 -14.8 0.116 20.68 9.09 1.21 5.31 -7.2

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

increasing by 388% and volume traded increasing by 360%. Overall MENA liquidity for the year was down 30% compared to previous year, with \$559bn value traded in 2015.

Qatari companies had a reversal of fortunes this month, with Ooredoo (Qatar) gaining 13.6% in December, followed by Industries Qatar (Qatar) and QNB (Qatar), which gained 10.5% and 9.4%, respectively. Ooredoo had a busy month, signing a MoU with Qatar Airways for onboard Wi-Fi, achieving speeds up to 375Mbps with the launch of LTE-Advanced (LTE-A), expanding services to Maldives and

announcing investments in Data Centre Solutions.

QNB acquired Turkey's Finansbank for \$2.94bn in the month, one of the largest takeovers to date by a GCC lender outside its domestic market. Fall in oil price affected SABIC's fortunes in the market (-14.5%), as the company slipped the most in the month, followed by Kuwait Food (-11.5%) and Emirates NBD (-7.5%). Emirates Telecom was the top performer in 2015, gaining 61.7%, as the company recuperated from the accounting scandal that affected perform-

Qatar's 2016 budget, which includes cut in expen-

ditures in anticipation of the country's first fiscal shortfall in 15 years, was released on 16th December 2015. Expenditures are forecasted at \$55.6bn next year, which is a 7.3% decline from the last fiscal year, despite the increase in outlays on government salaries, wages and major projects - such as major transportation initiatives and preparations for the 2022 World Cup. Saudi Arabia unveiled a \$223.8bn budget, as the Kingdom attempts to further diversify its revenues in an era of low oil prices.

The government incurred a deficit of \$97.9bn (15% of GDP in 2015), and with the 2016 budget it aims to cut that to \$86.9bn. Spending has been forecasted to decline to \$224bn, down from the \$260bn actually spent in 2015. Efforts are being undertaken to ensure government projects are more efficient, necessary and affordable. Omani government expenditures and revenues for 2016 are estimated at \$30.9bn and \$22.3bn, respectively, leading to an estimated deficit of \$8.6bn, lesser than the \$11.7bn deficit expected for 2015. The expenditures for 2016 are 15.6% less than in 2015 (\$36.6bn), while revenue estimates declined by 25.86%, compared to the previous year's \$30.1bn.

Threat of new sanctions over Iran did little to stem the oil price slide, as Brent crude price dropped 16.4% in Dec'15, extending the overall annual loss to 35%, and closing the year at \$37 per barrel. This reflects a drop of 68% since the highs seen in Jun'14 (\$115 per barrel). With production in US and OPEC growing over the last few months, the supply glut could take a while to clear. Brimming oil inventories across the globe implies low oil prices in the near- to medium-

AHLI UNITED BANK ANNOUNCES WINNER OF KD 250,000 OF GRAND HASSAD PRIZE

KUWAIT: On December 30, 2015, Ahli through the Al Hassad Awards for Islamic United Bank conducted the draw on the quarterly grand prize (Life Long Salary) which the bank offers within the Hassad Islamic Saving Prizes Program. The lucky winner was HASNA MOHD ALHUWAIDY who won the grand prize of the KD 250,000 to be paid monthly over 250 months. The draw was held on the 30 December and the winner of the quarterly award (lifetime

البنك الأهملي المتو

ahli united bank

Hasna Alhuwaidy receives the prize from Mohammad Al Qahtani, the head of branch-

Saving program.

The lucky winner had reaped a prize totaling KD 250,000 payable through continuous monthly payments of the award. Ahli United Bank invites all its customers, existing and new, to take the opportunity of Hassad Account thereby increasing their winning chances in this program. This program offers prizes with the highest value salary) provided by Ahli United Bank reaching KD 3.4 million annually with 26

principles and provisions. I Ahli United Bank is a leading Islamic

181,2000.

weekly prizes, the largest number of weekly winners.

> All customers interested in winning and achieving profits conforming to Islamic Sharia can open an Al Hassad Account for Islamic Saving with a minimum KD 100 deposit Minors can also open the account through their legal guardians or custodians. Through these simple steps to open Al Hassad Account, Ahli United Bank confirms it is the ideal choice to increase the value of its customer's' savings along with realizing their dreams through the first and only awards program conforming to Islamic

> Bank in Kuwait with over 74 years history. The Bank successfully converted to operate according to Islamic principles in April 2010. Since then the Bank has received excellent evaluations from major rating institutions. It has also obtained a number of awards including the Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait in 2015 for the third consecutive year. The award was provided by the International "The Banker" magazine. For more information about the "Al Hassad Islamic Saving Program" added to the Investment Saving Account, the prizes and eligibility criteria, please visit any of Ahli United Bank branches, or call "Hayyakum" at

GULF BANK MEGA TRIO DRAW 'BIGGEST EVENT OF THE YEAR'

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank's exciting 3-in-1 mega trio draw is to take place today in The Grand Avenues at The Avenues Mall starting at 7 pm. This event is the biggest of the year as it includes the Al Danah draw for 1 Million Kuwaiti Dinars, plus cash prizes of KD 250,000 and KD 50,000, which will also be awarded to lucky Al Danah account holders. This mega-trio draw event will additionally have the Salary and Red account holders draw take place and the prizes include a brand new Cadillac SRX and cash prizes up to KD 1,500. Furthermore, the yearly Salary draw will take place with 2 cash prizes of KD 25,000 each. As with all Gulf Bank's draws, the event will be held in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

To participate in the Al Danah draws, customers must have an Al Danah account containing a minimum of KD 200. Customers can open a new Al Danah account at any one of the 56 Gulf Bank branches in Kuwait. Those who have an account can increase their chances of winning by increasing the amount they have deposited in their Al Danah account. This will also increase their chances of winning one of the two KD1,000 prizes, which are drawn each working day.

Furthermore, new Red Account or Salary



Account customers who have opened an account and transferred their student allowance or salary are eligible to enter the monthly cash draws for a chance to also win up to KD 1,500. In addition, the quarterly car draw will be for 1 lucky winner who will have a chance to win a new Cadillac SRX. Plus. 2 salary winners will also be announced during the yearly salary draw who will each win a cash prize of KD25,000. For further information about the Al Danah, Salary and Red accounts and prize draws, visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches, or call Gulf Bank's Customer Contact Center on 1805805. General information about Gulf Bank's products and services can also be found at the Bank's website at www.e-gulfbank.com.

IIHS RECOGNIZES NISSAN VEHICLES

DUBAI: The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) recognized four Nissan vehicles with Top Safety Pick Plus (TSP+) or Top Safety Pick (TSP) designations for 2016. These latest announcements underscore Nissan's commitment to continuous improvement to passenger safety across its entire lineup. IIHS awarded the all-new 2016 Nissan Maxima a "Top Safety Pick Plus" (TSP+)safety rating, which is the group's highest designation.

The 2016 Nissan Maxima joins the previously announced 2016 Murano with the TSP+ rating. The Maxima scored "Good" in all five TSP categories and earned TSP+ status with a "Superior" rating for front crash prevention for those models equipped with Forward Emergency Braking. The 2016 Nissan Sentra joins the 2016 Roque in earning an IIHS "Top Safety Pick" rating. The 2016 Sentra will offer Forward Emergency Braking. Once that system is tested by IIHS the Sentra has the potential to be upgraded to a TSP+ rating. Nissan's top selling 2016 Altima will undergo IIHS testing this month with the possibility of achieving a TSP+ rating as well.

"Nissan is proud to again have our core vehicles recognized by IIHS for vehicle safety," said PierreLoing, vice president, Product Strategy and Planning, Nissan North America, Inc (NNA). "The new Maxima, like the Murano, is setting high standards in its class for styling, performance and interior refinement. The 2016Nissan Rogue and Sentra demonstrate Nissan's commitment to high quality and safety standards, and we are gratified that these outstanding vehicles have been recognized for excellent design."

For this year, IIHS has tightened its standards by requiring a "Good" or better rating in all five of the crashworthiness categories to earn a "Top Safety Pick" and making an available front crash prevention system mandatory for all awards. To earn the IIHS "Top Safety Pick Plus" designation, a vehicle must earn a "Good" or better on all five crashworthiness categories and also receive an "Advanced" or "Superior" rating for front crash prevention.

Safety and Security Features

Standard safety and security features on all 2016

Maxima trim levels include the Nissan Advanced Air Bag System (AABS) with supplemental front air bags with seatbelt and occupant classification sen-

> crumple zones and occupant zone; Nissan mmobilizer system and anti-theft alarm system. Maxima offers a variety of advanced technologies that are standard on three trim levels include Intelligent Cruise Control (ICC), Blind Spot Warning (BSW), class-exclusive Predictive Forward Collision Warning (PFCW), Forward Emergency Braking (FEB), and Rear Cross Traffic Alert (RCTA). Maxima offers Around View Monitor (AVM) with Moving Object Detection (MOD) system that features four small superwide-angle cameras mounted on the front, sides and rear of the vehicle that provide a "bird's eye" virtual 360∞ view around the vehicle. It provides additional selectable split-screen close-ups of the front, rear and curb views, helping the driver maneuver the car in or out of tight spots. Rear Cross Traffic Alert helps alert the driver of an approaching

vehicle when backing out of a parking spot.

sors; front seat-mounted side impact supplemental

air bags; roof-mounted curtain side impact supple-

mental air bags with rollover sensor for front and

rear-seat outboard occupant head protection; front

seat belts with pre-tensioners and load limiters and

adjustable upper anchors; and LATCH System

(Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children). Every

Maxima also offers child safety rear door locks;

Zone Body construction featuring front and rear

Moving Object Detection builds on the capabilities of the AVM system, helping enhance the driver's situational awareness by providing visual and audible warnings(front, side or back range object detection) if the system detects moving objects(such as another vehicle) within the displayed image in situations such as pulling out of a parking space. Using sophisticated image processing technology, the system detects moving objects within the virtual "bird's eye view" (when the vehicle is in Park). When starting off or backing up, it detects moving objects crossing within the front or rear views, respectively.

KAMCO Research

GCC'S FIXED INCOME MARKET **EXPECTED TO GROW FURTHER**

KUWAIT: The MENA fixed income market is expected to continue to grow during 2016 after a marginal growth of 4% in 2015. Sukuk issuance in MENA is expected to outpace bond issuance in 2016 (as against a 38% decline in sukuks in 2015) primarily due to still abundant liquidity in that market as against tight liquidity with conventional banks. Also supporting the expected issuance is the oil price led fiscal deficit gap and the need to invest in infrastructure by the sover-

The year 2015 saw higher issuances by sovereigns led by Saudi Arabia which tapped the market after an eight year hiatus. However, corporate issuers in the GCC pulled back from the bond market resulting in a decline of almost 22% in this segment during 2015. For 2016, Saudi Arabia has already announced that it would tap the international bond market to plug the expected budget deficit during the year. In addition, the excellent credit ratings of the GCC sovereigns should make their fixed income issuance attractive to investors globally.

On the international front, a process of normalization was finally initiated during December -15 when the US Fed raised benchmark rates after almost 8 years of a zero rate policy. However, the initial response to the rate hike by the year-end was a flattening yield curve. Short term interest rates saw an upward trend by year-end reflecting the increase in Fed benchmark rates. On the other hand, long term interest rates are yet to see the same pace of increase in response to the benchmark rate hike, which points towards a lack of confidence in the long term growth of the US economy. This has raised concerns of an "inverted curve" or recessionary pressure in the long run.

In fact, in 2015 the yield on 2-year US Treasury note posted the biggest yearly rise since 2006. A number of factors were responsible for this, including a steep decline in oil prices, recurring concerns of slowing global growth with continued slowdown in Europe, a bumpy landing expected in Chinese economy as well as the Yuan devaluation in August-15. In terms of international focus, demand for US bonds have increased globally resulting in a capital flight from emerging markets and some Asian economies as they seek safer bets. The higher investment was also due to a strengthening USD against the EUR, Yen and a number of currencies. Meanwhile, in terms of bond preference, municipal bonds in the US were preferred that generated higher total return as compared to junk category bonds and corporate bonds.

US & MENA rate hikes

Following the US Fed rate hike announcement, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain raised their benchmark rates. Saudi Arabia raised its overnight reverse reporate by 25 bps to 50 bps but left its benchmark repo rate unchanged at 2.0%. Meanwhile, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) raised its benchmark discount rate by 25 bps to 2.25%, whereas Bahrain, while keeping the repo rate unchanged at 2.25%, raised its overnight interest rate by 25 bps to 0.5% and its rate for one week also by 25 bps to 0.75%.

The move by the three gulf countries was expected since the GCC countries have pegged their respective currencies against the USD (with the exception of Kuwaiti Dinar which is pegged against a basket of currency dominated by the USD). The rate hike, as also highlighted by Fitch Ratings, is primarily to maintain the currency peg and does not represent any urgency or fiscal/ monetary pressure. On the other hand, absence of a rate increase would have put pressure on the local currencies and in the longer run lured investors to sell their local assets in the gulf region and invest in higher-yielding dollarbased investments.

The trend in the global sukuk index and the MENA fixed income indices highlight the divergent trends in these markets and clearly reflects the weakness in sukuk issuances during 2015. The sukuk market got a boost as sovereigns continued to diversify their funding sources and the trend is expected to be stronger in 2016.

Total bond issuance in the MENA region touched USD 105.7 Bn during 2015, a strong leap of 67% or USD 42.3 Bn as compared to t he previous year. Bond issuance activity got a boost from Saudi Arabia after the Kingdom issued bonds worth USD 30.6 Bn as compa red to no issues in the previous year. Saudi Arabia resumed issuing local currency bonds to banks in July -15 for the first time since 2007 in order to cover budget deficits due to the fall in oil

prices. The Kingdom issued an average of SAR 20 Bn (USD 5.3 Bn) every month since it started the program. Nevertheless, the market continues to be dominated by Egypt that issued USD 33.8 Bn in bonds during the year, an increase of 40% over the previous year level. The total number of issuances witnessed an increase of merely 4.5% during 2015 to reach 253. However, the average size of the bond offering in MENA was much larger as compared to the previous

Government institutions continue to be the biggest issuers of bonds in the region with total issues having more than doubled to USD 88.8 bn during 2015. Issues by banks totaled USD 13.5 bn in 2015 as against USD 12.2 Bn during 2014. In terms of the share of total issuance, sovereign bonds accounted for 85% of total issues in 2015, a much higher share as compared to 66% in 2014, whereas the share of corporates slumped from 30% in 2014 to merely 14% in 2015. Bond issues in Kuwait saw a significant jump from USD 1.6 Bn in 2014 to USD 5.2 Bn in 2015 primarily on the back of higher issuance by the government further supported by capital boosting bonds lau nched by NBK in order to meet Basel III requirements and to boost Tier 2 capital.

The bond market outlook for 2016 largely shows a grim picture with a majority of the fund managers expressing a more bearish view for the overpriced bond market as compared to compelling valuations for the equity markets. The rate hike decision in Saudi Arabi a, Kuwait and Bahrain following the US rate hike in December-15 has pushed up short-term interest rates and reduced bond yields thereby resulting in shrunken buying for Gulf bonds.

In addition, the severe decline in oil revenues has affected deposits with local banks resulting in significantly tight liquidity conditions. Nevertheless, expected issuance in 2016 include international bond issue by Saudi Arabia as indicated by the country's finance minister. Moreover, the yield on the expected bond issuance would largely depend on oil pr ice. The yield spread over US treasuries would be much larger if oil price continues to be at low levels but if it increase to USD 50/b level, yields spreads could be in the range of 200-250 bps over US Treasuries.

EMC WINS STC 'INNOVATION AWARD 2015'

DUBAI: EMC yesterday announced that the company has been awarded the STC Innovation Award 2015 for the transformation driven approach to technology and consulting. The announcement was made at the STC Vendors Day, a bi-annual event, bringing STC together with its larger community of vendors and partners. The fourth edition of the STC Vendors Day took place in the presence of Dr. Khalid Bin Hussain Al-Biyari, CEO of STC along with Cyrill Pourrat, VP of Procurement & Support Services, and Mr. Jawad

Chaudhary, Head of IT Procurement.

Celebrated every two years, the awards aim to recognize vendor excellence and highlight strong relationships between STC teams and different vendors. The 2015 edition of the awards consisted of three key categories- Valueadded, Innovation and Cooperation. EMC was recognized for their market leading technologies that are designed to help organizations establish an agile foundation to transform IT and business operations in an era of increasing mobility and

digitization. On the occasion, STC congratulated EMC for their innovation backed approach to technology, consulting and services, helping organizations identify the right combination of solutions to cater to the changing needs of customers in this information driven gen-

In recent months, EMC and STC have announced a number of strategic initiatives including a landmark cloud computing agreement aimed at enabling STC and its customers to power scalability,

agility and cost efficiency. In addition, the two companies came together to announce the STC Building Capabilities Program that is designed in collaboration with EMC Education Services division. The program built on EMC's value based Knowledge and Skills Analysis Service is aimed to help identify any gaps in knowledge and training to achieve defined business objectives and better support existing and planned IT deployments.

EMC and STC continue to work together to innovate and introduce new technologies to help enterprises in Saudi Arabia to adopt a digital mindset to help engage and retain the increasingly connected customer, Through its transformation into a true service provider offering enterprises a combination of best in class technology and service expertise STC together with its vendor partners like EMC has pioneered the application of leading third platform technologies to enhance routes to market and drive business agility to reinforce the overall customer experience.



LAS VEGAS: The Panasonic OLED 4K PRO TV is on display during a press event for CES 2016 at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center on January 5, 2016 in Las Vegas, Nevada. CES, the world's largest annual consumer technology trade show, runs from January 6-9 and is expected to feature 3,600 exhibitors showing off their latest products and services to more than 150,000 attendees. —AFP

ULTRA-THIN, HIGH-DEFINITION TVS BATTLE FOR CES CROWN

TITANS FIELDING NEW SLIM, SMART MODELS

LAS VEGAS: A battle for the title of best new television opened Tuesday at the Consumer Electronics Show, with titans fielding new slim, smart, ultra high-definition models. LG Electronics fired an opening salvo with a new OLED television no thicker than four stacked credit cards. The South Korean consumer electronics colossus opened a packed day of press conferences at the annual tech extravaganza in Las Vegas with a line-up that included an OLED Signature panel touted as "quite literally, a picture on glass." The television measures an unprecedented 2.57 mm, LG Electronics USA marketing vice president David VanderWaal said during an on-stage presentation. "Our passion and commitment for OLED has never been stronger," Vander Waal said.

"OLED TV is already recognized as the best TV ever." OLED displays have pixels that emit their own light, while pixels in LCD TVs are illuminated by backlights. OLED screens boast deeper blacks, allowing for a wider range of color than LCD displays. They also tend to come with higher price tags. LCD televisions remain "the king of screens" with sizes trending up, according to the Consumer Technology Association, the trade group behind CES. One in every five televisions sold this year is expected to be 50 inches or more, measured diagonally, and feature ultra high-definition 4K resolution.

'Premium' certification

LG was among the TV makers here introducing new models that will come with a freshly minted Ultra-High Definition Premium Certification signaling that they meet standards freshly established by an alliance representing manufacturers, technology companies and studios creating content. "The criteria established by this broad cross-section of the Ultra HD ecosystem enables the delivery of a revolutionary inhome experience," UHD Alliance chairman Hanno Basse said in a release. "And, the Ultra HD Premium logo gives consumers a single, identifying mark to seek out so they can purchase with confidence."

Analysts said they expected adoption of 4K ultra-high definition televisions to pick up speed this year as prices get in reach of more consumers and the displays become marketplace norms. LG built Dolby Vision technology into its new televisions. "Dolby Vision creates a picture so lifelike you will forget you are looking at a TV screen," Dolby Labs senior vice president Giles Baker said during the presentation. Dolby Vision has been used in major films including box-office recordbreaker "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," according to Giles. The LG television line-up included "Super UHD" LCD displays as slim as 6.6 mm and a new flagship 8K television measuring 98 inches diagonally.

Samsung steps up game

Later in the day, leading television maker Samsung unveiled a new line of ultra-highdefinition LCD televisions capable of not only streaming games or shows from the Internet but able to serve as command centers for smart home devices, from locks and lights to thermostats and appliances. Samsung Electronics visual display business president Hyun Suk Kim pulled back the curtain on new SUHD Quantum Dot televisions that he said marked the "start of a new era of

"This year we are focused on bringing the television experience into the future," Samsung Electronics America executive Dave Das said. "The new SUHD TV is a giant leap forward in time." New models have software designed to better consolidate traditional and online content, and remote controls that automatically detect and command accessories with no set-up needed. Samsung's new SUHD televisions will also allow people to play more than 500 video games, including blockbusters such as 'Assassin's Creed" streamed online in partnership with Sony's PlayStation Now service, without needing consoles.

Smart home hubs

The TVs will also act as command centers in smart homes by incorporating technology from Silicon Valley start-up SmartThings, which Samsung bought in 2014, allowing them to control devices synched to the platform. "I think this is really a big step forward for opening up the market," SmartThings founder and chief Alexander Hawkinson said. "You can have a smart home basically for free as a starting point; it is pretty amazing." SmartThings is based on open standards, letting tens of thousands of developers tailor applications to work with the platform. "In 2016, we're going beyond anything we've done before to offer a remarkable synergy of design, engineering and craftsmanship," said Hyun Suk Kim.

Sony streaming service

Sony unveiled a new flagship LCD televisions and boasted that it is ramping the quality of displays with "high dynamic range" technology that appeared to be a rage at CES. The Japanese consumer electronics and entertainment colossus said it has also broadened its line of ultra-slim Bravia televisions. Sony also introduced an Ultra 4K streaming service that taps into the company's film and television library and is optimized for Bravia models. —AFP

HUAWEI WANTS TO BE THE 'LEADER IN SMARTPHONES'

FRANCFORT: Chinese electronics giant ambition, Yu said: "Perhaps in three or Huawei hopes to overtake US rival Apple and Korea's Samsung to become the world's leading maker of smartphones in "three or four years," a top executive said in a newspaper interview yesterday. Asked by the daily Die Welt whether Huawei was satisfied in being the current number three, Huawei's consumer devices chief, Richard Yu, replied:

"No. We'll move up to number two and then number one very quickly. At the end, we'll be the world leader." Asked about the time frame for such an

four years." At the end of December, the group's chief Guo Ping said revenues rose 35 percent in 2015, driven largely by smartphone sales which topped the 100 million level. Huawei this week unveiled its new flagship smartphone called Mate 8 at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. Samsung was the biggest rival in the immediate term, Apple in the longer term, Yu said. "We sell more devices than Samsung on the Chinese market," he said. "But Apple is the leader in the premium segment." —AFP

TWEETS TOO SHORT?

Twitter mulling 10,000 characters

WASHINGTON: Twitter's 140 character limit on tweets has long frustrated and challenged its most verbose users. Now the company could offer a solution, according to tech news website re/code: the 10,000 character tweet, which could be available as soon as March. Re/code reported Tuesday that Twitter has been studying how to allow users to say more, after restricting them to 140 characters for 10 years.

That limit was based on the capacity of the original messaging software used, and though frustrating for many, unleashed a tidal wave of ultra-concise commentary across the web. Now more than 300 million regular Twitter users send hundreds of millions of messages every day-news reports, personal updates, advertisements, political pitches, photos and videos and, most often, just witty and innocuous comments.

Re/code says the company already allows 10,000 characters in a commercial product called Direct Messages, so the technology is no longer a barrier. The company is testing a version that would still only display 140 characters in a message, but carry much more, and a reader would have to click on the tweet to see the rest. The move is a part of Twitter's efforts to expand its user base and advertising sales and other sources of income. Twitter continued to lose money over the first three quarters of last year. In October it reported a third quarter loss of \$132 million, on a disappointing 11 percent year-on-year increase in regular users to 320 million.

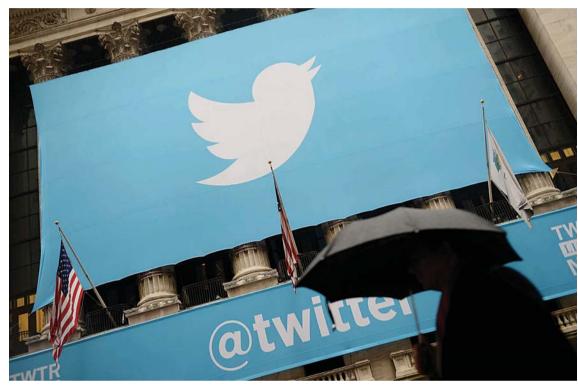
Users however were not entirely

enthusiastic about the possible new limit, bashing the company in characteristically terse missives. "140 characters is not NEARLY enough to express my outrage that Twitter is raising the character limit to 10,000," tweeted writer Brian Phillips, in 111 characters. "Twitter really going hard after those stubborn 300 million people who don't hate it yet," quipped Rusty Foster in just 87 characters. In his own tweet, Twitter chief executive Jack Dorsey

did not confirm the plan for a 10,000 character capacity, but said the company is "not going to be shy about building more utility and power into Twitter."

Using himself a popular method for getting past the 140 character limit-attaching a screen shot of a longer text to the tweet-Dorsey called the current format "a beautiful constraint." "It inspires creativity and brevity. And a sense of speed." Nevertheless, he said, Twitter has

taken note of how many people use such screenshots to surmount the text limit. "What if that text was actually text? Text that could be searched. Text that could be highlighted. That's more utility and power," Dorsey said. "As long as it's consistent with what people want to do, we're going to explore it." Investors did not take to the idea, either: Twitter shares closed down 2.8 percent to \$21.92 after the



NEW YORK: Photo shows the logo of Twitter on the front of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York. Twitter's 140 character limit on tweets has long frustrated and challenged its most verbose users. —AFP

GREEN CARS IN NORWAY WIN THE BIGGEST MARKET SHARE

OSLO: Zero emission cars accounted for 17.1 percent of new car registrations last year in Norway, the industry said yesterday, the highest market share for clean vehicles anywhere in the world. "Never has the market share of electric cars been as high as in 2015," Christina Bu of the Norwegian Association for Electric Cars said. Almost 26,000 zero emission cars-all of them electric except for nine hydrogen vehicles-were registered last year in the Scandinavian country, out of a total of 150,700 private new cars, the Information Council for Road Traffic said. The most sold models were the electric version of Volkswagen's Golf, the Tesla S, Nissan's Leaf, the BMW i3 and the Renault Zoe. In 2014, zero emission cars made up 12.5 percent of the Norwegian market. The Scandinavian country is cementing its role as a pioneer in the field.

By comparison, in neighboring Sweden green cars represented four percent of new car registrations last year, while in France they accounted for just 0.9 percent. Norway offers

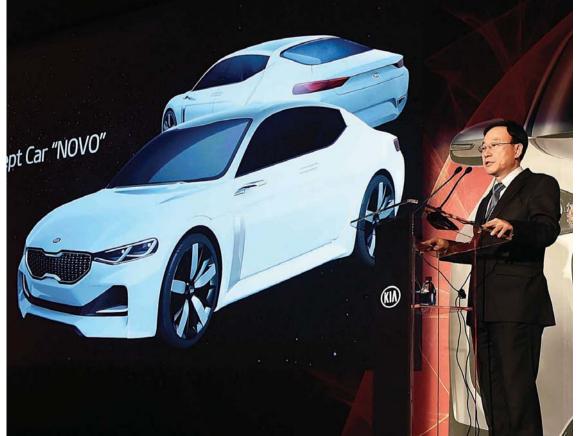
numerous incentives to encourage buyers to opt for green cars: while regular cars are heavily taxed, green car owners benefit from tax exemptions, and, under certain conditions, the use of collective transport lanes and free parking. Authorities plan however to very gradually reduce some of benefits, controversial due to their high cost. "The choice of a zero emission car has to remain profitable. The electric car market is still not viable without subsidies," insisted Christina Bu. —AFP

KIA SEES AUTONOMOUS CARS BY 2030 UNDER 'DRIVE WISE'

LAS VEGAS: South Korean automaker Kia said yesterday it envisions introducing an autonomous car using its own technology by

2030 under a new initiative dubbed "drive wise." Kia, a unit of Hyundai, had previously indicated plans for a partially autonomous vehicle by

2020 and at the Consumer Electronics Show announced its ambition for a fully self-driving car. "By 2030, Kia will bring the fully



LAS VEGAS: Hyundai Motor Group's Executive Vice President Vehicle IT Development Center Seung Ho Hwang speaks during a Kia press event for CES 2016 at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nevada. —AFP

autonomous driving technology to the market," Kia vice president Seung Ho Hwang told the technology gathering in Las Vegas. "By 2020, Kia will commercialize the partially autonomous driving technologies.

To this end, Kia will invest up to \$2 billion in developing necessary technologies by 2018." Kia is the latest of several automakers to invest in self-driving cars along with Google. Analysts see this as a gradual process starting with automating some functions like parking and crash avoidance.

Hwang said that making autonomous driving ubiquitous "is possible by reducing its cost" and that this is happening with the cost of sensor technology coming down. Autonomous driving is among the key themes at CES, with several automakers expected to discuss their plans along with a handful of automotive technology groups. Ford has said it will boost the

number of cars testing autonomous driving from 10 to 30 in the United States and has predicted that self-driving cars would be is use in the US market by 2020. Some say a number of hurdles, both technical and legal, need to be overcome. "We need to not only solve driving when it's easy, but also when it's difficult," Toyota Research Institute head Gil Pratt said during a CES event. —AFP

NOT JUST SCRIBBLES: HOW TOTS START LEARNING TEXT IS SYMBOLIC

scribbles. A novel experiment shows that even before learning their ABCs, youngsters start to recognize that a written word symbolizes language in a way a drawing doesn't - a developmental step on the path to reading. Researchers used a puppet, line drawings and simple vocabulary to find that children as young as 3 are beginning to grasp that nuanced concept. "Children at this very early age really know a lot more than we had previously thought," said developmental psychologist Rebecca Treiman of Washington University at St. Louis, who co-authored the study.

Yesterday's report, being published in the journal Child Development, suggests an additional way to consider reading readiness, beyond the emphasis on phonetics or being able to point out an "A" in

WASHINGTON: Celebrate your child's the alphabet chart. Appreciating that writing is "something that stands for something else, it actually is a vehicle for language - that's pretty powerful stuff," said Temple University psychology professor Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, a specialist in literacy development who wasn't involved in the new work. As for tots' own scribbling, what they call a family portrait may look like a bunch of grapes but "those squiggles, that ability to use lines to represent something bigger, to represent something deeper than what is on that page, is the great open door into the world of symbolic thought," Hirsh-Pasek said.

The idea: At some point, children learn that a squiggle on a page represents something, and then that the squiggle we call text has a more specific meaning than what we call a drawing. "Dog," for example, should be read the same way each time, while a canine drawing might appropriately be labeled a dog, or a puppy, or even their pet Rover. Treiman and colleagues tested 114 preschoolers, 3- to 5-year-olds who hadn't received any formal instruction in reading or writing. Some youngsters were shown words such as dog, cat or doll, sometimes in cursive to rule out guessing if kids recognized a letter. Other children were shown simple drawings of those objects. Researchers would say what the word or drawing portrayed. Then they'd bring out a puppet and ask the child if they thought the puppet knew what the words or drawings were.

Text and drawing

If the puppet indicated the word "doll"

dren said the puppet was mistaken. But they more often accepted synonyms for the drawings, showing they were starting to make a distinction between text and drawing, Treiman said. One question is whether children who undergo that developmental step at a later age - say, 5 or 6 instead of 3 or 4 - might lag on pre-literacy skills. That's not clear, cautioned Brett Miller, an early learning specialist at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, which helped fund the research.

Scientists have long known that reading to very young children helps form the foundation for them to later learn to read, by introducing vocabulary, rhyming, and different speech sounds. But it's important to include other activities that bring in

tot's scribbles. A child might say, "I'm writing my name," and eventually the crayon scribble can become smaller and closer to the line than the larger scrawl that the tot proclaims is a picture of a flower or mom, she said.

Previous studies have shown it's helpful to run a finger under the text when reading to a youngster, because otherwise kids pay more attention to the pictures, Miller said. If the words aren't pointed out, "they get less exposure to looking at text, and less opportunity to learn that sort of relationship - that text is meaningful and text relates to sound," he said. Make sure children see you that you write for a purpose, maybe by having them tell you a story and watch you write it out, adds Hirsh-Pasek. "That's much richer than just learning what

HEALTH AGENCY TAKES ON ADVERTISING FOR **ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES**

NEW YORK: The nation's lead public health agency on Tuesday focused its attack on electronic cigarettes on the issue of advertising, saying too many kids see the ads. There are bans on TV commercials and some other types of marketing for regular cigarettes but there are no restrictions on advertisements for e-cigarettes. About 7 out of 10 kids said they've seen the ads, mostly in stores, according to survey results released Tuesday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

About 22,000 high school and middle school students were asked in 2014 if they saw e-cigarette ads - in stores, online or in magazines, movies and television. The report doesn't prove advertising is actually causing more kids to pick up e-cigarettes and a trade group said the survey is flawed. But CDC offi-



CHICAGO: In this April 23, 2014 file photo, a man smokes an electronic cigarette in Chicago. — AP

cials worry e-cigarettes may hook a new generation on nicotine, and lead some to take up cigarettes - possibly reversing a long and gradual decline in smoking rates.

"Unfettered marketing of e-cigarettes has the potential to compromise decades of progress," said Brian King, a CDC expert on smoking issues. Youth e-cigarette smoking rates have risen at a similar trajectory as spending on advertising, say officials at the Atlanta-based CDC. And researchers say advertising has, in the past, been a big driver of youth smoking of traditional cigarettes. Cigarette sales to minors are banned

nationwide; most states now ban the sale of e-cigarettes to those under 18. The federal health agency has been taking an unusually hard stand against e-cigarettes, at a time when scientists still trying to determine if they are harmful. E-cigarettes have only been sold in the United States for about the past nine years.

Developing brain

E-cigarettes heat liquid nicotine into an inhalable vapor. Users get nicotine but not the thousands of chemicals, tar, or odor of regular cigarettes. Scientists say nicotine is highly addictive and can be harmful for the developing brain. CDC Director Dr Tom Frieden said ecigarettes can be a benefit if they help adult smokers quit, but kids should not be using them. "They are not harmless," Frieden said Tuesday, in a call with reporters. The Smoke-Free Alternatives Trade Association - an e-cigarette industry trade group - criticized the survey and CDC's stance.

The CDC continues to mislead the public about the benefits of vapor products as far less harmful alternatives to smoking," the group's executive director, Cynthia Cabrera, said in a statement.

"The CDC also fails to mention that teens are exposed to many other adult issues on the Internet, TV and movies, such as violence, sex and alcohol." Cabrera said her group supports age restrictions on e-cigarette sales. While smoking of traditional cigarettes has plummeted to about 9 percent among high schools students, e-cigarette use has become more common. Last year, about 13 percent said they'd used an e-cigarette in the previous month.

The US Food and Drug Administration has been working on new rules for e-cigarettes and other, newer tobacco products. The regulations - first proposed in 2014 and currently under White House review - are not expected to contain advertising restrictions. Advocates want limits. "It's time for the White House to issue a strong final rule and end this unregulated experiment that threatens our kids," Matthew L. Myers, president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, said in a statement. — AP



BEIJING: A woman wearing a mask to protect herself from pollutants walks past office buildings shrouded with pollution haze. — AP

BEIJING SAYS POLLUTION LESSENED **IN 2015 DESPITE SMOG ALERTS**

BEIJING: Environmental authorities in Beijing say the Chinese capital's air quality in 2015 was better than the year before despite the city's first two red alerts for pollution late in the year. China has been setting national and local targets to reduce its notorious air pollution as citizens have become increasingly aware of the health dangers. Beijing's municipal government has been replacing coal-fired boilers with natural gas-powered facilities, forcing older, more polluting vehicles off the road, and closing or moving factories that are heavy polluters.

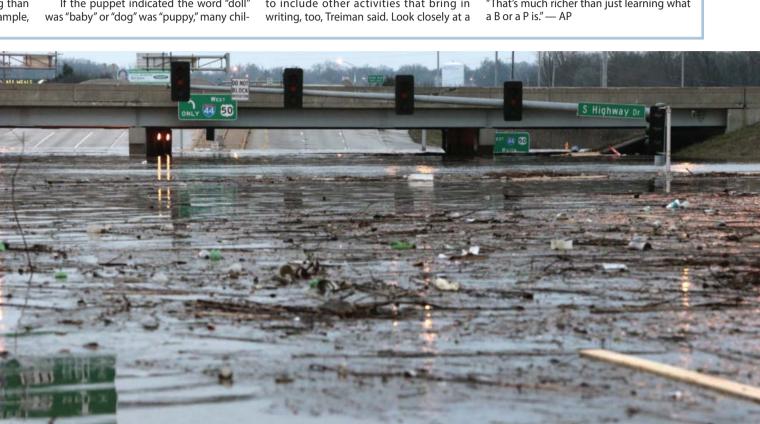
The city's average concentration of PM2.5 small, inhalable particles that can penetrate deep into the lungs and are considered a reliable gauge of air quality - was 81 micrograms per cubic meter in 2015. That was a drop of 6 percent from 2014, and 10 percent lower than 2013, when Beijing started publishing data on PM2.5. The "number of days of most serious PM2.5 pollution is falling each year," Beijing's municipal environmental protection bureau said Monday. It was, however, still more than twice China's own standard of 35 micrograms per cubic meter, and seven times higher than an annual mean of 10 that the World Health Organization gives as its guideline for safe air. Other pollutants also fell, including sulfur dioxide by 38 percent and nitrogen dioxide by 12 percent. The environmental protection bureau attributed the lowering of sulfur dioxide to the phasing out of coal-fired heating systems.

Beijing's air gets especially bad in the winter, when the burning of coal in northern China increases and weather patterns add to the smog. Beijing issued its first two red alerts in December under a four-tier warning system that has been in place for two years. —AP

HONG KONG ON HOLIDAY HEALTH ALERT AFTER CHINA BIRD FLU DEATH

HONG KONG: A woman in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen has died after being infected with the highly contagious H5N6 bird flu virus, days after she was admitted to hospital, Hong Kong's Health Department said yesterday. The 26-year-old woman's death last week comes ahead of the Chinese New Year holiday in early February when millions of Chinese travel to their home towns to celebrate with their families, with chicken a popular festive meal. All border check points between Shenzhen and Hong Kong, and the airport, had already introduced disease prevention measures with thermal imaging systems

in place, a department spokesman said. The department was also notified by the Guangdong health authority on Jan 1 that a 40year-old woman from Zhaoqing city in the same province was infected with H5N6 and was in a critical condition. The government has not banned poultry imports from the mainland so far, according to a spokesman from the city's Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. Hong Kong culled thousands of chickens and suspended imports of live poultry from mainland China in December 2014 after a H7 bird flu strain was discovered in live chickens. —Reuters



ST LOUIS: File photo shows water swells on Highway 141, underneath a closed Interstate 44 overpass in Fenton, Mo, a suburb of St Louis. — AP photos

FLOODWATERS DRAW WARNINGS ANEW ABOUT WASTEWATER, POLLUTANTS

'IT CAME UP THROUGH THE SEWERS'

KANSAS CITY: Veronica Tate knew from the stench that sewage was among the 8 feet of water that swamped the basement of her ranchstyle home after the nearby Meramec River overflowed. The larger concern for residents of her suburban St Louis neighborhood is the unknown of what else the noxious blend might have contained. "It came up through the sewers, I guess," ate, a customer service representative for an insurance company, said of last week's flooding. "When you get down there and look at it, there's a smell. There's an odor."

Wastewater was a certainty in her Arnold neighborhood, given that two nearby treatment plants failed when the Meramec flooded in record fashion after days of unrelenting rain. The inundation has spewed tens of millions of gallons of untreated human waste, according to the sewer district's website, on a path toward the Mississippi River and an unavoidable southward trek to the Gulf of Mexico. Those plants remained offline Tuesday.

But the floodwaters also could include such things as fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides washed away from farmland, not to mention livestock waste, industrial chemicals, dead animals, fuel from convenience stores and toxins from railroad tracks. Even pollutants from things as small as the gas can in a flooded garage. "You certainly don't want to expose bare skin to an unknown cocktail of chemicals," said Chris Whitley, a regional US Environmental Protection Agency spokesman in Lenexa, Kansas. "We recognize it's a balancing act between the desire to have things normal again versus sitting around waiting for the water to go down or other things to happen to clean up your property. The (health) consequences posed by these other hazards can be much longer lasting." Much of the pollution eases its way into the Meramec and other rivers that feed into the Mississippi, for many communities the source of drinking water.

Sustained damage

By Tuesday, the inundation from last week's flooding had been cleared from Tate's home, and the 55-year-old woman's basement soon will be gutted to eliminate another potential health concern - dangerous mold that can infest soaked sheet rock, flooring and furniture. There's not yet an official tally of homes and businesses in the area that sustained damage, though Missouri Gov Jay Nixon said Tuesday the flooding affected about 7,100 buildings in four St Louis-area counties alone. An estimated half-million tons of debris needs to be removed, he added. Even soggy sandbags, touted as last-ditch defenders against floodwaters, can't be kept for reuse because the inundations turn them into mountains of smelly, polluted sacks ultimately destined for landfills, along with flood-ruined household wares like sodden flooring, furniture and appliances. Well over a million sandbags were put to use in Missouri and Illinois since Christmas Day, according to governmental figures. With each bout of broad flooding, such pollution threatens to sicken anyone who wades into the water, prompting health officials to urge affected residents - and even reporters - to proactively keep current on tetanus shots if they're unable to stay away from direct contact with the floodwaters.

Floodwaters may contain more than 100 types of disease-causing bacteria, according to a 2012 report by the Union of Concerned Scientists. And while the frequency of waterborne illnesses due to flooding is not immediately clear, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns that direct contact with inundations and the fecal bacteria in them could cause gastrointestinal illness or other infections.

Environmental standards

"The best way to avoid problems is to stay out of the water completely unless you have to be in them," Whitley said. "Let the water go down, then do your recovery. It's safer all around." In Chester, Illinois, 60 miles southeast of St Louis, the Mississippi rolling by is the 8,600-resident city's sole supplier of drinking water, Chester water plant supervisor Tim Crow said Tuesday. During inundations that could impact Chester, Crow said he relies on guidance from the Illinois

Environmental Protection Agency, But Crow insists the city's water supply remains safe and exceeds state environmental standards, noting that sewage in the engorged Mississippi "is so

diluted when it gets to us." "We monitor it, but at this time there's no level of concern," he said at the water plant, which treats roughly 1.5 million gallons of water a day during he winter. The rains that caused this winter's flood: blamed already for at least 25 deaths in Missouri and Illinois and damage to hundreds of homes and businesses, ended a week ago. But the water continued rising Tuesday in southern Missouri and Illinois. Several other states along the Mississippi

still were bracing for the crest. — AP



ST LOUIS: Flood water surrounds homes and businesses.

POOR SALES PROMPT SANOFI TO PULL PLUG ON MANNKIND INHALED INSULIN

LONDON: French drugmaker Sanofi is to stop selling an inhalable insulin developed by Mannkind, following disappointing sales of the product since its launch in February 2015. The decision to terminate the collaboration marks a blow for the idea of delivering insulin through an inhaler, rather than by injection, and shares in US-based Mannkind fell 40 percent after the companies announced the move on Tuesday. Rights to Afrezza will revert to Mannkind from Sanofi in the next 90 to 180 days and Mannkind said it was reviewing strategic options for the product, although analysts questioned if the

drug had any future. Sanofi first signed up the rights to Afrezza in August 2014 in the hope that an inhaled insulin would boost its flagging diabetes business, although many investors were skeptical from the start. Afrezza, which is delivered via a whistlesized inhaler, acts more rapidly than insulin injections made by Sanofi or rivals such as Eli Lilly and Novo Nordisk, but it also carries risks. The product can cause acute bronchospasm, or constriction of the airways of the lung, in patients with asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

A Sanofi spokesman said Afrezza continued to suffer from a low level of prescriptions, despite substantial sales efforts. "The product not project Afrezza reaching even the lowest patient levels anticipated at the time of entering the license and collaboration agreement, while costs are projected to remain very high for a significant period of time," he said. Afrezza was developed in the shadow of another failed inhaled insulin from Pfizer, called Exubera, which was approved in 2006 but eventually withdrawn due to poor sales. Under the Afrezza marketing deal struck with

never met even modest expectations and we do

Sanofi in 2014, Mannkind secured an upfront payment of \$150 million and had the right to potential further milestone payments of up to \$775 million, plus a share of profits.

Those payments, however, depended on the drug's success and Sanofi reported Afrezza sales of just 5 million euros (\$5.4 million) in the first nine months of 2015. Given such poor sales, Sanofi's decision to ditch Afrezza - albeit after an orderly transition - came as no great surprise to many analysts and the French company's shares ended 1.2 percent higher in Paris. "We can't imagine that another legitimate diabetes company would show serious interest in this asset," JP Morgan analysts said in a note. "With little hope for resuscitating Afrezza and a dismal balance sheet (net debt), we see Mannkind in an increasingly precarious position." — Reuters

FIVE HEALTH INSURANCE **RESOLUTIONS TO** CONSIDER FOR 2016

ealth insurance may not be the sexiest New Year's resolutions subject, but thinking about it could be just as important as vowing to drop a few pounds or quit smoking. The cost of health care rises every year and coverage has been shrinking, which leaves a greater portion of the doctor bill to patients. It could be very beneficial to your fiscal health in 2016 if you make a few promises to your-

Get familiar with your coverage

Know the limits of your insurance before you start using it. No one wants to begin the year with a nasty case of sticker shock from a steeper-than-expected doctor's bill. The particulars of your plan may have changed compared with last year, and perhaps you missed the letter or email from your employer or insurer. An outpatient surgery that would have cost you \$700 last year might run more than \$900 this year if the plan increased your coinsurance responsibility, or the amount you have to pay after meeting a deductible. Your deductible also may have jumped, which means you might have to spend more this year before most of your coverage begins.

Shop for care

Shopping for health care is the wave of the future. Many employers and insurers are convinced that health care costs can be controlled better if providers are forced to compete for your business. Insurers are providing online tools that let patients compare prices and quality measurements for a wide range of non-emergency care. Doing that could save hundreds of dollars on an outpatient procedure for people with high-deductible plans. But you don't need an app or some online tool to shop for all care. Drugstores and grocers have been squeezing clinics into their store spaces for years. The world's largest retailer, Wal-Mart, also has been developing in-store clinics that charge \$59 per office visit. That's much cheaper than the \$100 a patient with highdeductible coverage might pay for a doctor visit. The cost of an office visit can vary depending on factors like where the doctor is located. If you haven't met your deductible yet for the year, check with your insurer or the doctor's office to determine the cost of a visit before making an appointment.

Telemedicine is supposed to be all the rage in 2016, with big insurers like

human papillomavirus (HPV) and pneu-

monia, as Latin America's largest econ-

omy looks to reduce health costs in the

midst of a deep recession. In a state-

ment late Tuesday, the Health Ministry

said the changes were "routine" and

would not alter the efficacy of the vac-

cinations but also noted the cost of the

national program had risen 140 percent

nearly 300 million immunobiologicals,

such as vaccines, totaled 2.9 billion

reais (\$720 million), the ministry said.

Sources familiar with the matter said

Brazil has been reducing imports of

vaccines over the past year, resulting in

In 2015, the cost of distributing

over the past five years.

BRAZIL CUTS VACCINE DOSES AS

HEALTH SYSTEM UNDER PRESSURE

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil has cut the diminishing stocks. The ministry did not

number of doses for vaccinations given say how much money would be saved

by the public health service to counter by reducing the number of doses.

UnitedHealth Group Inc expanding coverage and the drugstore chain Walgreens pushing a smartphone app that lets patients see a doctor without leaving home or work. Doctors have used video feeds and other technology for years to treat patients in rural areas or remote locations. But experts say growing smartphone use and customer demand are fueling a rapid expansion of telemedicine into everyday care. If you're worried about a high deductible, you might want to think about adding to your insurance coverage. Companies like Sun Life Financial offer accident coverage that will provide cash that helps cover costs left behind by shrinking insurance.

Use it, don't lose it

This applies to flexible spending accounts, which employers provide to let their workers set aside income before taxes to cover health-related expenses. Resolve to use your entire balance before you lose it. Check with your employer on how that might happen. Some companies may require you to spend your money by the end of the year or give you a grace period into the new year. Many also allow you to carry over as much as \$500. These accounts can help pay for bandages, condoms or cough drops, among an array of eligible items, so think creatively if you need to spend a leftover balance. Those who can't spend down their accounts generally wind up forfeiting less than \$100, according to WageWorks Inc, which administers benefits accounts for employers.

Learn deadlines

If you don't like your coverage, you can change it. But you have to know when the next chance will arrive. Employers hold open enrollment periods every year, generally in late fall for coverage that starts Jan 1. That's the main window in which people can adjust coverage, unless they have a lifechanging event, like a marriage or the birth of a child. Likewise, coverage sold outside the employer-sponsored market also must be purchased largely during an openenrollment window. For 2016 coverage, that window closes Jan 31. If you miss the open enrollment windows and have no coverage, consider a short-term or limited benefits plan. These can provide some protection from a big medical bill, but they generally offer skimpier coverage than what you can get through an employer. — AP

Brazil's health system has been hit

hard by falling government revenues.

The state of Rio de Janeiro declared a

state of emergency in December after it

ran out of money to pay for equipment,

supplies and salaries. Revenues for the

state, which is Brazil's main petroleum

oil hub, have been particularly hard hit

by a slump in international petroleum

prices. The health ministry said the dos-

es for vaccination against HPV, a group

of sexually transmitted viruses that can

cause cancer, will be reduced to two

from three. The doses for vaccines giv-

en to babies to fend off pneumonia will

be cut to two, with a booster, from

three and a booster. — Reuters



WHAT'S NEW FOR BENEFICIARIES

WASHINGTON: Whether it's coverage for endof-life counseling or an experimental payment scheme for common surgeries, Medicare in 2016 is undergoing some of the biggest changes in its 50 years. Grandma's Medicare usually just paid the bills as they came in. Today, the nation's flagship health-care program is seeking better ways to balance cost, quality and access. The effort could redefine the doctor-patient relationship, or it could end up a muddle of well-intentioned but unworkable government regulations. The changes have been building slowly, veiled in a fog of acronyms and bureaucratic jargon.

So far, the 2016 change getting the most attention is that Medicare will pay clinicians to counsel patients about options for care at the end of life. The voluntary counseling would have been authorized earlier by President Barack Obama's health care law but for the outcry fanned by former Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin, who charged it would lead to "death panels." Hastily dropped from the law, the personalized counseling has been rehabilitated through Medicare rules.

Accountable Care Organizations

But experts who watch Medicare as the standards-setter for the health system are looking elsewhere in the program. They're paying attention to Medicare's attempts to remake the way medical care is delivered to patients, by fostering teamwork among clinicians, emphasizing timely preventive services and paying close attention to patients' transitions between hospital and home. Primary care doctors, the gatekeepers of health care, are the focus of much of Medicare's effort.

Patrick Conway, Medicare's chief medical officer, says that nearly 8 million beneficiaries about 20 percent of those in traditional Medicare - are now in "Accountable Care Organizations." ACOs are recently introduced networks of doctors and hospitals that strive to deliver better quality care at lower cost.

"Five years ago there was minimal incentive to coordinate care," said Conway. "Physicians wanted to do well for their patients, but the financial incentives were completely aligned with volume." Under the ACO model, clinical networks get part of their reimbursement for meeting quality or cost targets. The jury's still out on their long-term impact. Still, a major expansion is planned for 2016, and beneficiaries for the first time will be able to pick an ACO. Currently they can opt out if they don't like it.

"We're all trying to understand where is that threshold when things will flip," said Kavita Patel, a Brookings Institution health policy expert who also practices as a primary care doctor. It could be like the switch from snail mail and interoffice memos to communicating via email, she says, but "I'm not sure we have reached critical mass."

Glendon Bassett, a retired chemical engineer, says he can vouch for the teamwork approach that Medicare is promoting. Earlier this year, a primary care team at SAMA Healthcare in El



HOT SPRINGS, Arkansas: Glendon Bassett visits with Tamara Hess-Adams team leader of the fitness center at the Family YMCA.

Dorado, Arkansas, prevented what Bassett feared would turn into an extended hospitalization. It started with a swollen leg.

'It was scary'

SAMA is part of Medicare's Comprehensive Primary Care Initiative, an experiment in seven regions of the country that involves nearly 400,000 beneficiaries and a much larger number of patients with other types of insurance. The insurers pay primary care practices a monthly fee for care coordination, and the practices also have the opportunity to share in any savings to Medicare. The primary-care teams at SAMA consist of a doctor, a nurse practitioner, three nursherds patients to avoid gaps in care. The nurses can be an early warning system for the doctor.

Bassett said he had a history of circulatory problems in his legs, but this was different. "It was scary," he said. "Within a week's time it turned from red to dark." He thought about the emergency room, but he got in right away to see the nurse practitioner working with Dr Gary Bevill, his longtime physician. The nurse fetched other clinicians to look at Bassett's swollen right leg. He was immediately given antibiotics. And the doctor referred him to a cardiologist for an outpatient procedure that has since improved his circulation. While the medical treatment may have followed fairly standard protocols, Bassett believes the team approach prevented serious consequences. "If I hadn't seen the nurse practitioner when I did, I feel like I would have been in the hospital," he said. Bassett has since moved to Hot Springs, in another part of the state, but stays in touch. Medicare is weighing whether to expand the primary care model. Conway said more data is needed. Other notable changes coming in 2016:

Hip and Knee Surgery

Joint replacements are the most common surgical procedure for Medicare beneficiaries. Starting in April, hospitals in 67 metro areas and communities will be responsible for managing the total cost of hip and knee replacements. The experiment covers a 90-day window from the initial doctor's visit, through surgery and rehabilitation. At stake for the hospitals are potential financial rewards and penalties.

Medicare's goal is to improve quality while lowering cost. But hospitals worry about financial consequences and advocates for patients say there's a potential to skimp on care. "What we are discovering with all this change is that trying to get to value over volume is very difficult to do," said Herb Kuhn, who heads the Missouri Hospital Association.

Hospice Flexibility

Patients choosing Medicare's hospice benefit at the end of their lives have traditionally had to give up most curative care. Under Medicare's new Care Choices model, patients with a terminal illness will be able to receive hospice services without giving up treatment. A cancer patient could continue to get chemo, for example. Seventy hospices will start the experiment Jan 1, and another 70 will join in two years. — AP



Kuwait 🥗 Times 248 33 199





Indian Education Exhibition this weekend at Crowne Plaza

fter the grand success of IIK EDU EXPO in March 2014 and January 2015, popular community portal IndiansinKuwait.com (IIK) announces a one of a kind Indian Education Exhibition "IIK EDU EXPO 2016" in Kuwait. The IIK Edu Expo will be held here for two days, 8th and 9th January 2016. The two day expo will be at Crowne Plaza, Al Afrah Ballroom, Farwaniya, Kuwait from 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM.

The expo will give a good opportunity to the parents and students seeking admissions for higher education in India. Reputed residential schools, medical and engineering colleges, universities in India will be participating in the expo to showcase the latest educational opportunities available in India.

This pioneering endeavor from IndiansinKuwait.com will be a one-stop destination that caters to the needs of young

expats in Kuwait. This will give students an opportunity to meet face-to-face with representatives from Indian Residential Schools, Universities and Institutions directly and ask them their burning questions, get advice on their applications and more. Career consultants from reputed universities will give free counseling to the students at the venue. There will be free seminars for students on various career opportunities on both the days

in the same hall by university professionals.

In a unique opportunity, IIK offers the visitors to the expo a unique chance to win a Toshiba Notebook by pre- registering for the expo. Those who wish to attend the expo can pre-register their names at http://www.indiansinkuwait.com/EduExpo2016/. Pre-Registered lucky winner may win Toshiba Notebook at the end of the expo. Admission is free to the expo on both days, and it is

open to everyone.
Platinum Sponsor of the event is Amity University, Diamond Sponsor is SRM University and Gold Sponsors are Acharya, Nitte University, Bits Pilani, Yenepoya University, Institute of Management Technology, Amal Jyothi College of Engineering, Manipal University and Sona College of Technology. This event is sponsored by High Sierra and organized by Lemonade International.







BANGLADESH EMBASSY HOSTS 'BOOK FESTIVAL'

Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait celebrated a "Book Festival" and distributed text books of all classes of primary education in Bangladesh on 01 January 2016 among the Bangladeshi school-going children in Kuwait. Students of Class One to Class Five attended the distribution program of new and free text books at the Chancery. The

enthusiastic students and their guardians were very happy to receive the new books on the very first day of 2016. Earlier the text books were duly received by the Embassy from the concerned authority in Bangladesh.

The government of Bangladesh has also been distributing free text books to the all primary and high school students in

Bangladesh since 2010. This year a massive total of 334 million copies of text books of classes from pre-school to Year-10 have been distributed among 44.9 million students all over Bangladesh. The day is a special day for school going students.

Bangladesh. The day is a special day for school going students. The jovial students and their guardians participated in the joyous programs. The well-coordinated "Book Festival" ensures all

the students across Bangladesh to participate at their new academic classes with new sets of text books. As a part of the festive programs across Bangladesh the Embassy of Bangladesh in Kuwait also tried to share the similar sentiments among the school-going Bangladeshi students and their guardians living in Kuwait on the 1st of January 2016.



CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR CELEBRATED AT IISM (KG)

ISM team of aesthetic teachers from KG organized Christmas and New Year celebrations for their tiny tots under the guidance of Nilofar Qazi, KG Head.

The advent of winter season brings joy of Christmas which marks the birth of Jesus (PBUH) Christ followed by

the remarkable 'New Year'. At IISM KG atrium was decorated with gaiety and jubilation. The tiny tots of KG sang carols and performed a dance passionately. The bondless joy of celebrating the festivals was aptly visible on the faces of the tiny tots.

The occasion was graced by the presence of Director Malayil Moosa Koya, Principal FM Basheer Ahmed, Sr Vice Principal Narinder Kaur and Vice Principals. They blessed the students on this festive occasion and gave good wishes for a prosperous New Year.









WINTERY WEEKENDS AT THE SULTAN CENTER

inter is here... The Sultan Center (TSC) celebrated the season by organizing various exciting activities and contests for children to enjoy which took place at TSC stores in Salmiya, Shaab and Sharq. Under the theme "Winter Greetings!" a special corner was decorated with snow princess and snowman to reflect the spirit of the season. Cookie decorations and give-a-ways for children made the events fun for the whole family.

To spice it up, TSC held a social media contest, where children took pictures with the snowman or snow princess, posted it on Instagram and had the chance to win exciting gifts. The events where held on December 25th and 26th, 2015 as well on January 1st and 2nd, 2016 giving TSC customers the chance to enjoy the celebration with their families and friends.



Birthday Greetings

appy birthday to our beloved Ibrahim Ismael Al-Shennawi. The very best wishes from all his family and friends.

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

ALGHANIM INDUSTRIES JOINS JUDGING PANELS FOR STUDENT CAPSTONE PROJECTS AT AUM

Ighanim Industries, one of the largest private companies in the region, joined the judging panels for the Capstone Business Project Competition at the American University of the Middle East (AUM). Tom Hatton, Senior Director-Talent Management and Organizational Development, and Satish Kadkol, Manager-Kirby Post-Sales Engineering, were invited to join the judging panels, representing Alghanim Industries.

Tom was a judge for the Capstone Business Project Competition, in which 8 finalist groups presented an idea for a new company. The students prepared their business plan, covering everything from financial analysis to a complete HR organizational structure. Satish was a judge for the Capstone Engineering Project Competition, which included 9 groups that had to come up with a new operational solution or process enhancement for an existing company. Each of the companies represented on the panel, including Alghanim Industries, will give one of the students from the winning team a month-long internship opportunity.

The presentations allowed students to showcase their creative, business driven ideas to a panel of well-respected executives from different companies. Alghanim Industries gives a special thanks to

AUM for the invitation and looks forward to long, prosperous collaborations on similar initiatives moving forward.

It is part of Alghanim Industries' strategy to find, encourage and educate future leaders about the company and provide them with the resources to make informative decisions related to their careers. In line with that strategy, Alghanim Industries participated in a number of events recently, namely the NUKS-USA conference in San Diego. Apart from NUKS, the biggest event gathering of Kuwaiti students outside of Kuwait, Alghanim Industries also took part in region-wide university career fairs







AL MULLA EXCHANGE PROVIDES A MUSICAL START TO THE NEW YEAR

I Mulla Exchange provided a great opportunity for music lovers to journey back in time to the golden hits of India's man with the golden voice, Mohammed Rafi. The event titled 'Rafi Ki Ruhaniyat' was held on Jan 1 and 2, 2016, at the American International School, as a tribute to the legendary singer. The music show had capacity turnouts of more than 1,200 guests on both days.

Mohammed Rafi, who passed away at 56 in 1980, left behind a treasure trove of melodious songs which he sung during his illustrious career as one of Indian film industry's most famous playback singers. Rafi was notable for his versatility, his songs ranged from classical numbers to patriotic songs, sad lamentations to highly romantic numbers, qawwalis to ghazals and bhajans.

He was known for his ability to mold his voice to the persona of the actor, lip-synching the song. Between 1950 and 1970, Rafi was the most sought after singer in the Hindi film industry. He received six Filmfare Awards and one National Film Award. In

1967, he was honored with the Padma Shri award by the Government of India.

The tribute was showcased by Shrikant Narayan, famed playback singer who has got into The Limca Book of Records for his continuous rendition of Rafi songs. Touted as a singer whose voice is perfectly near to Rafi's, Shrikant was able to put the crowd into a rapturous mood of nostalgia. He was able to bring in the various moods of Rafi with his wide range of vocal prowess.

Al Mulla Exchange organized the music show to give their customers a melodious start to the New Year, in line with its tradition of providing the best promotions, offers and festivities to customers. On Jan 1, 2016, Al Mulla Exchange, also launched the Transfer and Win Gold Festival, which gives customers a chance to win 1 gm gold daily for 3 months and 1 kg gold grand prize at the end of the promotion.

Al Mulla Exchange's General Manager, Rakesh Joshi, said Mohammed Rafi is one of the legendary singers in India who has a large fan following even after 25 years of his death, not only in India but in many



parts of the world. "His songs are evergreen and people from all generations enjoy them, and we thought of giving our customers a chance to relive those golden memories from the yesteryears. We are happy to bring Shrikant Narayan to Kuwait for this and crowd's acceptance of the program is a testimony of our reach".



KUWAIT CONTINENTAL HOTELS GROUP HOLDS ANNUAL CELEBRATION

he management of Kuwait Continental Hotels Co held the usual annual celebration of the hotels' staff and their families to strengthen the loyalty of them and to highlight their role in advancing & success the work during 2015.

The ceremony was held in Gardenia Hall of

opened by the hotel General Manager, Kamal El-Din Hussein, who explained how the development and expansion witnessed by the Hotels Group during the past eighteen years.

Kamal Hussein thanked and honored Mr Abdu, Mrs Wessam, Mr Abu Al Khair, Mr Kumar and Mr Mushtaq and Mr Balu as Ideal Employers of year 2015 and also honored one employer from each department of the hotel as their hard working.

Kamal Hussein thanked and commends the staff for their efforts during 2015 which was impact on the sales last year with 10% and average occupancy rate of over 75%, and sometimes in some group branches reaches the percentages of occupancy to 90% despite

stiff competition and the emergence of many new Hotels. Kamal Hussein also congratulate all the staff with the latest branch "New Born Branch" as he called, which joined latest the Hotels Group; it's "Continental Inn Suites " Before leaving staff to enjoy the ceremony, which included different Staff competition of

Kamal Hussein also honored the companies who shared to present gifts to the staff that also contributed to the success of the concert at the end of the ceremony, the General Manager, Kamal Hussein delivered the annual bonus; a month's salary for all staff of the Hotels Group which was ordered by Mr Fouad Al-Ghanim the CEO.











00:20 Fast N' Loud 01:10 Mythbusters The Carbonaro Effect 02:25 The Carbonaro Effect 02:50 You Have Been Warned Auction Hunters

04:05 The Liquidator 04:30 Storage Wars Canada 05:30 How It's Made

What Happened Next? 06:00 Ice Cold Gold Wheeler Dealers

10:35 Mythbusters11:25 The Carbonaro Effect

07:40 Fast N' Loud Teenage Witch 08:30 Auction Hunters 01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A 08:55 The Liquidator 09:20 Storage Wars Canada Teenage Witch 01:40 Wolfblood 09:45 What Happened Next? 02:05 Wolfblood How It's Made 02:30 Violetta

11:50 The Carbonaro Effect 12:15 You Have Been Warned 13:05 Auction Hunters Teenage Witch The Liquidator 13:55 Storage Wars Canada 14:20 Ice Cold Gold 04:10 Wolfblood 04:35 Wolfblood 05:00 Violetta 15:10 Wheeler Dealers 05:45 The Hive 05:50 Mouk

06:00 Lolirock

06:25 Hank Zipzer 06:50 Girl Meets World

08:30 Austin & Ally

Teenage Witch

Teenage Witch

09:45 Jessie

10:10 Jessie

14:55 H2O

15:20 Jessie 15:45 Jessie

16:10 Violetta

17:50 Jessie

19:05 H2O

19:30 Violetta

12:20 Hank Zipzer

12:45 | Didn't Do It 13:10 | Didn't Do It

13:35 Liv And Maddie

14:00 Liv And Maddie 14:30 H2O

17:00 The Next Step 17:25 Liv And Maddie

18:15 Austin & Ally 18:40 | Didn't Do It

20:20 The Next Step

20:45 Good Luck Charlie

21:10 Good Luck Charlie 21:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place

22:00 Binny And The Ghost

22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A

00:00 Keeping Up With The

00:55 The Grace Helbig Show

03:15 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills 04:10 Beyond Candid With

05:05 E! Entertainment Special 06:00 Keeping Up With The

11:10 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills

11:35 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills

15:00 Kourtney And Khloe Take

16:00 Kourtney And Khloe Take

17:00 Fashion Bloggers 17:30 Fashion Bloggers

20:00 Keeping Up With The

food

00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

02:00 Chopped South Africa

18:00 E! News 19:00 House Of DVF

06:55 Keeping Up With The

Style Sta

09:15 Giuliana & Bill

10:15 Giuliana & Bill

01:25 Keeping Up With The

Teenage Witch 23:10 Wolfblood

23:35 Wolfblood

Kardashians

Kardashians

Giuliana

Kardashians

Kardashians .

08:20 E! News

12:05 E! News

14:05 New Money

14:30 New Money

13:05 WAGs

The Hamptons

The Hamptons

Kardashians

21:00 Dash Dolls

22:00 E! News

23:00 The Soup

01:00 Chopped

03:00 Man Fire Food

03:30 Man Fire Food

23:30 Sex With Brody

02:20 E! News

07:15 H2O: Just Add Water

07:40 H2O: Just Add Water 08:05 Austin & Ally

08:55 Sabrina Secrets Of A

09:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A

10:35 How To Build A Better Boy 12:15 Disney Mickey Mouse

17:15 How It's Made 17:40 Predators Up Close With Joel Lambert 18:30 Deadly Islands 19:20 Manhunt With Joel Lambert 20:10 The Liquidator

16:50 What Happened Next?

16:00 Fast N' Loud

20:35 Storage Wars Canada 21:00 Predators Up Close With Joel Lambert 21:50 Deadly Islands

22:40 Treasure Quest: Snake Island 23:30 Wheeler Dealers



01:20 How It's Made 01:44 How It's Made 02:08 Strip The Cosmos 02:55 What Could Possibly Go Wrona? 03:42 How The Universe Works

04:29 Mythbusters 05:16 Strip The Cosmos 06:03 What Could Possibly Go Wrong? 06:50 Mega Builders

07:37 How Do They Do It? 08:00 How Do They Do It? 08:23 Mythbusters How The Universe Works 09:53 Mega Builders 10:38 How It's Made

How It's Made 11:23 Food Factory 11:45 Food Factory 12:08 What Could Possibly Go

Wrong? 12:53 Mega Builders 13:38 Mythbusters 14:23 How It's Made 14:46 How It's Made 15:10 How The Universe Works

15:57 Food Factory 16:20 Food Factor 16:44 What Could Possibly Go Wrong? 17:31 Mega Builders

18:18 How The Universe Works 19:05 Mythbusters 19:50 How The Universe Works 20:40 What Could Possibly Go Wrong? 21:25 How It's Made

21:50 How It's Made 22:15 How The Universe Works 23:00 How The Universe Works 23:45 What Could Possibly Go

00:40 Who On Earth Did I Marry?

01:05 Who On Earth Did I Marry? 01:30 The Haunted 02:20 Ghost Lab 03:10 Scorned: Crimes Of Passion 04:00 Deadline: Crime With Tamron

Hall 04:45 Who On Earth Did I Marry? 05:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry? 05:30 The Haunted 06:20 Deadly Affairs 07:10 True Crime With Aphrodite

Jones 08:00 Dr. G: Medical Examiner 08:50 On The Case With Paula Zahn Fatal Encounters 10:30 Murder Shift 11:20 Deadly Affairs

12:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones 13:00 The Will 13:50 I Almost Got Away With It 14:40 California Investigator 15:05 Dr. G: Medical Examiner Fatal Encounters

16:45 On The Case With Paula

17:35 Murder Shift 18:25 I Almost Got Away With It

Zahn

19:15 The Will 20:05 Deadly Affairs 20:55 True Crime With Aphrodite

California Investigator 21:45 22:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry? 22:35 Who On Earth Did I Marry? 23:00 Deadly Affairs 23:50 Swamp Murders

00:00 Violetta 00:45 The Hive 00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A

18:30 Grandma's Secret Cookbook 19:00 Chopped 20:00 Guy's Grocery Games 21:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers 03:15 The Hive 21:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers 03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A 22:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts Teenage Witch 03:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A 22:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts 23:00 Reza, Spice Prince Of Thailand

CHOICE

23:30 Reza, Spice Prince Of

04:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

05:00 Guy's Grocery Games 06:00 Chopped

09:00 Guy's Grocery Games

11:30 Barefoot Contessa 12:00 Chopped 13:00 Guy's Big Bite

13:30 Guy's Big Bite

15:00 Man Fire Food

15:30 Man Fire Food

16:00 Chopped

17:00 The Kitchen

18:00 Siba's Table

Barefoot Contessa

14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

07:00 Man Fire Food 07:30 Man Fire Food

08:00 Chopped

10:00 The Kitchen

00:10 Pick Me! 01:05 Emmerdale Coach Trip 02:00 Coronation Street 02:30 Murdoch Mysteries The Syndicate 04:20 Safe House 05:15 The Chase 06:10 Paddock To Plate 07:05 Coach Trip 07:30 The Syndicate

Safe House 09:20 Murdoch Mysteries 10:15 The Chase Coach Trip 11:35 Pick Me! 12:30 Paddock To Plate

Emmerdale 13:50 Coach Trip 14:20 Coronation Street Murdoch Mysteries 15:35 Pick Me! 16:30 Midsomer Murders Paddock To Plate 19:10 Coronation Street

19:35 Pick Me! Midsomer Murders 22:20 Coronation Street 22:50 Emmerdale 23:15 Paddock To Plate



01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore 01:30 The League 02:00 The League 02:30 The Big C 03:00 Your Family Or Mine 03:30 Benched

04:00 Men At Work 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon 05:30 Young & Hungry 06:00 Til Death 06:30 New Girl

07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers 08:00 Men At Work 08:30 Young & Hungry 09:00 Your Family Or Mine 09:30 Community 10:30 New Girl 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon

12:00 Til Death 12:30 Men At Work 13:00 Young & Hungry 13:30 New Girl 14:00 Benched 14:30 Community 15:00 Baby Daddy

15:30 Cristela 16:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore 16:30 Til Death 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
18:00 Last Man Standing 18:30 Benched 19:00 Community

19:30 Baby Daddy 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon 21:00 Cristela 21:30 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore 22:00 Web Therapy 22:30 Girls

23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers OM FIRST

23:00 The Big C

00:00 Justified 01:00 Marvel's Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D. 02:00 The Flash 03:00 American Horror Story: Hotel 04:00 The Fosters

05:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show

06:00 Covert Affairs

07:00 Switched At Birth 08:00 Odyssey 09:00 The Fosters 10:00 Covert Affairs 11:00 Switched At Birth 12:00 Coronation Street 12:30 Coronation Street 13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 14:00 Odyssey 15:00 Live Good Morning America 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 18:00 Odyssey 19:00 American Idol

> **O**IN FIRST MORE

21:00 Blindspot

23:00 Secrets And Lies

22:00 Empire

00:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 01:00 Good Morning America 03:00 Mistresses 04:00 Grimm 05:00 Good Morning America 07:00 Coronation Street 07:30 Coronation Street

08:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 09:00 Parenthood 10:00 Coronation Street 10:30 Coronation Street11:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 12:00 C.S.I.

13:00 Shark Tank 14:00 Parenthood 15:00 Chicago Fire 16:00 The Voice 18:00 Shark Tank 19:00 Parenthood 20:00 C.S.I. 21:00 Shark Tank 22:00 Mistresses

23:00 Grimm

OVI MOVIES **ACTION** 00:00 RoboCop

02:00 Berlin Job 04:00 I, Frankenstein 06:00 Falcon Rising 08:00 King Arthur 10:15 Stranded 12:00 I. Frankenstein 14:00 Justice League: Throne Of 16:00 Falcon Rising

18:00 Superfast 20:00 Stranded 22:00 Escape Plan

OM MOVIES HID ACTION 00:00 Berlin Job-18

02:00 I, Frankenstein-PG15 04:00 Falcon Rising-PG15 06:00 King Arthur-PG15 08:15 Stranded-PG15 10:00 I, Frankenstein-PG15 12:00 Justice League: Throne Of Atlantis-PG15
14:00 Falcon Rising-PG15 16:00 Superfast-PĞ15 18:00 Stranded-PG15 20:00 Escape Plan-PG15

MOVIES HID COMEDY

22:00 Freezer-PG15

00:00 Deliver Us From Eva

02:00 The Devil Wears Prada 04:00 UHF 06:00 The Lego Movie 08:00 When In Rome 10:00 UHF 12:00 The Devil Wears Prada

14:00 Simon Birch 16:00 When In Rome 18:00 Blues Brothers 2000 20:15 Fading Gigolo 22:00 The Babymakers

> **OVIN** MOVIES DRAMA

01:00 Shadow Witness-PG15 03:00 Lords Of London-PG15 05:00 Middle Of Nowhere-PG15 07:00 A Valentine's Date-PG15 The Truth About Emanuel

PG15 11:00 Middle Of Nowhere-PG15 13:00 Romeo & Juliet-PG15 15:00 Atlas Shrugged Part 2: The Strike-PG15

17:00 The Truth About Emanuel-PG15 19:00 Nightcrawler-PG15 21:15 Scenic Route-PG15

23:00 Only God Forgives-18

02:00 Se Puder... Dirija!

03:30 We Gotta Get Out Of This Place 05:15 Sleepless In Seattle 07:15 Lost Christmas 09:00 Awakenings 11:15 Se Puder... Dirija! 13:00 1911 15:00 Secret Window 17:00 Awakenings

01:30 Marco Macaco 03:00 Bolts And Blip

04:30 Minuscule: Valley Of The

17:00 Red Sky-PG15

21:00 Mortdecai-PG15

23:00 The Conjuring-18

19:00 Let's Be Cops-PG15

OM MOVIES HD

19:00 The Brass Teapot

OM MOVIES HD

21:00 Short Term 12

23:00 Rush

Lost Ants 06:00 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure 08:00 The Heart Of The Oak 10:00 The Adventures Of Don Quixote

11:30 Kikoriki: Team Invincible 13:00 Bolts And Blip 14:30 Cher Ami 16:00 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion 18:00 The Adventures Of Don

Quixote 20:00 Memory Loss 22:00 Cher Ami



23:30 Dixie And The Zombie

OVI MOVIES **PREMIERE**

01:00 The Liability-PG15 00:00 Devil's Knot-PG15 03:00 Not Safe For Work-PG15 02:00 Admission-PG15 05:00 How To Train Your Dragon 2-04:00 The Good Witch's Wedding-

07:00 Step Up All In-PG15 06:00 Penguins Of Madagascar-09:00 Red Sky-PG15 11:00 Lizzie Borden Took An Ax-13:00 Breathe In-PG15 15:00 Life Of A King-PG15

08:00 The Numbers Station-PG15 10:00 Christmas With Holly -PG15 11:45 The SpongeBob Movie:

Sponge Out Of Water-PG 13:30 Billy Elliot The Musical-PG15 16:15 The Numbers Station-PG15

18:00 Unbroken-PG15 20:15 The Remaining-PG15 22:00 300: Rise Of An Empire-18

NEWS 01:00 Live MSNBC Mtp Daily

03:30 ABC World News With David 04:00 Live MSNBC All In With Chris

05:00 Live MSNBC The Rachel Maddow Show 06:00 Live MSNBC The Last Word W/ Lawrence O'Donnell 07:30 ABC World News With David

08:18 ABC World News With David

09:06 MSNBC The Rachel Maddow Show 10:00 MSNBC The Last Word W/ Lawrence O'Donnell 11:00 Live ABC World News Now 11:30 Live ABC World News Now Live NBC Early Today 12:30 Live ABC America This

13:00 Live ABC America This Morning 13:30 Live ABC America This 14:00 Live ABC America This

Mornina

Morning 14:30 MSNBC First Look 15:00 Live NBC Today Show 19:38 MSNBC The Rachel Maddow Show 20:19 MSNBC The Last Word W/ Lawrence O'Donnell 21:00 Live MSNBC Live With Thomas Roberts 23:00 Live MSNBC Live With Kate

amc

04:15 Death Rides A Horse 06:10 Beat Street 07:55 Natural Causes 09:25 Teen Witch

10:55 The Man In The Iron Mask 14:35 Movers And Shakers 15:55 Saved! 17:25 Puckoon

18:50 The Man In The Iron Mask 21:00 Breaking Bad 22:00 LA Bamba 23:50 No Mercy 01:40 Joseph Andrews

crime &investigation 03:00 Crime Stories

05:00 The Ghost Inside My Child 06:00 The Haunting Of.. 07:00 Homicide Hunter 08:00 Surveillance Oz

22:25 Jake And The Never Land

22:55 Jake And The Never Land Pirates

00:05 Henry Hugglemonster

01:05 Art Attack 01:30 Henry Hugglemonster

02:55 Henry Hugglemonster

07:00 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero

Star vs The Forces Of Evil

Supa Strikas

08:40 K. C. Undercover

09:35 Kirby Buckets

23:20 Lilo And Stitch

23:45 Cars Toons 23:50 Zou

00:20 Calimero

00:50 Loopdidoo

01:45 Calimero

02:15 Loopdidoo

02:30 Art Attack

07:25 Boyster

08:15 Lab Rats

10:00 Lab Rats

10:25 Kickin' It

10:50 Mighty Med

11:20 Supa Strikas

12:35 Annedroids

11:45 K. C. Undercover

14:30 Phineas And Ferb

14:45 Phineas And Ferb

16:30 Kirby Buckets

18:15 Lab Rats

18:40 Mighty Med

19:10 Annedroids

20:25 Supa Strikas

20:00 K. C. Undercover

Lab Rats

22:10 Phineas And Ferb

Super Matrak

22:40 Super Matrak

21:20 Gamers Guide To Pretty

19:35 Kickin' It

Much Everything

21:45 Kickin' It

12:10 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero

Even Stevens The Movie

Disney Mickey Mouse

15:15 Rocket Monkeys 15:40 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero

16:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil

16:55 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything 17:25 K. C. Undercover 17:50 Supa Strikas

07:50

02:00 Zou

00:35 Zou

09:00 Surveillance Oz 10:00 Frenemies 10:30 Frenemies 11:00 Crimes That Shook Britain 12:00 Crime Stories 13:00 Homicide Hunter

14:00 | Survived 15:00 Frenemies 15:30 Frenemies Crimes That Shook Britain 16:00 17:00 Crime Stories

18:00 The First 48 19:00 | Survived 20:00 Homicide Hunter 21:00 Crime Stories

22:00 Crimes That Shook Britain 23:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover 00:00 Private Crimes Private Crimes

01:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos 02:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos

DISNED &

03:05 Calimero 03:20 Zou

03:30 Loopdidoo 03:45 Art Attack 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster 04:20 Calimero 04:35 Zou 04:45 Loopdidoo 05:00 Art Attack

05:35 Calimero 05:50 Zou 06:00 Loopdidoo 06:15 Art Attack 06:35 Henry Hugglemonster 06:50 Calimero 07:00 Zou

07:20 Loopdidoo

05:25

Henry Hugglemonster

07:35 Art Attack 08:00 Calimero 08:10 Zou 08:25 Loopdidoo 08:40 Jake And The Never Land **Pirates** 09:05 Sofia The First

09:30 Miles From Tomorrow 10:05 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse 10:35 Doc McStuffins 11:00 Sofia The First 11:30 Jake And The Never Land **Pirates** 12:00 Miles From Tomorrow

12:25 Special Agent Oso 12:50 Handy Manny 13:15 Jungle Junction 13:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse 14:00 Sofia The First 14:25 Sofia The First 14:50 Miles From Tomorrow 15:15 Jake And The Never Land

15:40 Jake And The Never Land **Pirates** 16:05 The Adventures Of The Disnev. 16:35 Miles From Tomorrow 17:00 Sofia The First

17:25 Aladdin 17:50 Gummi Bears 18:15 Chip 'n' Dales Rescue Rangers 18:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates

19:05 Miles From Tomorrow 19:30 Sofia The First 19:55 Doc McStuffins 20:15 Captain Jake And The Never Land Pirates



23:30 Boyster 00:00 Programmes Start At 7:00am

04:00 Appalachian Outlaws 05:00 Hunting Hitler 05:50 American Pickers 06:45 American Restoration 07:35 Shipping Wars

08:25 Big Rig Bounty Hunters 09:15 Mountain Men 10:05 Down East Dickering 11:00 American Restoration 12:00 Storage Wars Texas 13:00 American Pickers

14:00 Storage War 15:00 Pawn Stars 16:00 Shipping Wars 17:00 Ax Men 18:00 Mountain Men

19:00 American Pickers 20:00 Storage Wars 21:00 Big Rig Bounty Hunters 22:00 Pawn Stars

20:45 Sheriff Callie's Wild West 21:05 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse

21:35 Sofia The First 04:00 Crimes That Shook Britain 22:00 Jake And The Never Land

FALCON RISING ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

CLASSIFIEDS

Kuwait Times

THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 2016





KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (07/01/2016 TO 13/01/2016)

2 Riboti Chins	AVA AA	.5.1.2.5.7.1. (0.7,0.1,2.0.10.10	15,01,2010
SHARQIA-1		APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film	1:45 PM
DADDY'S HOME	12:00 PM	PAPARAZZI -Arabic	3:30 PM
APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film	2:00 PM	APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film	5:45 PM
DADDY'S HOME	4:00 PM	PAPARAZZI -Arabic	7:30 PM
DILWALE - Hindi	6:00 PM	PAPARAZZI - Arabic	9:45 PM
		PAPARAZZI - Arabic PAPARAZZI - Arabic	9:45 PM 12:05 AM
DILWALE - Hindi DADDY'S HOME	9:00 PM 12:05 AM	PAPARAZZI -Arabic	12:05 AW
DADDY 3 HOME	12:05 AIVI	FANAD 4	
CHAROLA		FANAR-4	12:15 DM
SHARQIA-2	12.15 DM	THE REVENANT	12:15 PM
THE REVENANT	12:15 PM	APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film	1:30 PM
APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film	1:30 PM	THE REVENANT	3:15 PM
THE REVENANT	3:15 PM	THE REVENANT	6:15 PM
THE REVENANT	6:15 PM	THE REVENANT	9:15 PM
THE REVENANT	9:15 PM	THE REVENANT	12:15 AM
THE REVENANT	12:15 AM		
		FANAR-5	40.00.014
SHARQIA-3		DILWALE - Hindi	12:00 PM
THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	11:30 AM	DILWALE - Hindi	3:00 PM
THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	1:15 PM	WAZIR - Hindi	6:00 PM
THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	3:00 PM	DILWALE - Hindi	8:30 PM
THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	4:45 PM	DILWALE - Hindi	11:30 PM
PAPARAZZI - Arabic	6:30 PM		
PAPARAZZI - Arabic	8:45 PM	MARINA-1	
THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	11:00 PM	THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	11:45 AM
THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	12:45 AM	THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	1:30 PM
		THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	3:15 PM
MUHALAB-1		THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	5:00 PM
DADDY'S HOME	11:30 AM	PAPARAZZI -Arabic	6:45 PM
DADDY'S HOME	1:30 PM	PAPARAZZI -Arabic	9:00 PM
EXTRACTION	3:30 PM	THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	11:15 PM
DADDY'S HOME	5:30 PM	THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	1:00 AM
DILWALE - Hindi	7:30 PM		
DADDY'S HOME	10:30 PM	MARINA-2	
EXTRACTION	12:30 AM	DADDY'S HOME	11:45 AM
		DADDY'S HOME	1:45 PM
MUHALAB-2		POINT BREAK	3:45 PM
THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	11:45 AM	DADDY'S HOME	6:15 PM
THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	1:30 PM	EXTRACTION	8:15 PM
WAZIR - Hindi	3:15 PM	THE REVENANT	10:15 PM
PAPARAZZI -Arabic	5:30 PM	EXTRACTION	1:15 AM
PAPARAZZI -Arabic	7:45 PM		
PAPARAZZI -Arabic	10:00 PM	MARINA-3	
THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	12:15 AM	THE REVENANT	12:30 PM
		THE GOOD DINOSAUR	1:30 PM
MUHALAB-3		THE GOOD DINOSAUR	3:30 PM
THE REVENANT	11:30 AM	THE REVENANT	5:45 PM
THE REVENANT	2:30 PM	THE REVENANT	8:45 PM
THE REVENANT	5:30 PM	THE REVENANT	11:45 PM
THE REVENANT	8:30 PM		
THE REVENANT	11:30 PM	AVENUES-1	
		GET SQUIRRELY	12:30 PM
FANAR-1		GET SQUIRRELY	2:45 PM
DADDY'S HOME	11:30 AM	GET SQUIRRELY	5:00 PM
DADDY'S HOME	1:30 PM	APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film	7:15 PM
THE PEANUTS MOVIE	3:30 PM	APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film	9:15 PM
DADDY'S HOME	5:30 PM	APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film	11:15 PM
FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS	7:30 PM	APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film	1:15 AM
DADDY'S HOME	9:45 PM		
THE REVENANT	11:45 PM	AVENUES-2	
		EXTRACTION	1:00 PM
FANAR-2		EXTRACTION	3:15 PM
THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	12:30 PM	EXTRACTION	5:30 PM
THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	2:30 PM	CHARLIE- Malayalam	7:45 PM
THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	4:30 PM	EXTRACTION	10:30 PM
EXTRACTION	6:30 PM	EXTRACTION	12:45 AM
THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	8:30 PM		
EXTRACTION	10:30 PM	AVENUES-3	
THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	12:30 AM	DILWALE - Hindi	11:30 AM
3000, 0, 1110 1110 0110		DILWALE - Hindi	2:30 PM
FANAR-3		DILWALE - Hindi	5:45 PM
APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film	11:45 AM	DILWALE - Hindi	9:00 PM
	1 11 12 / 1111		2.001111

REQUIRED

For a reputed Textiles Showroom

- 1. Sales Lady 2. Fashion Designer
 - Visa Transferable Presentable
 - English & Arabic knowing

Interested candidates kindly send your CV Fax No. 22427072Email: admin@indianheritage.com

FOR RENT

- 1) In Fintas 4 appartment each apartment 3 BR + swimming pool + security + Gym 2) Mangaf 2 commercial floor
- 3) Villa in Abu Fatira
- 4) Villa and floors for rent in Jabriya

Contact 50904497 - 94035003

FOR RENT

- 1) Villa in Salam (South Surra) 5 BR
- 2) 2 floors Zahra (South Surra) 4 BR
- 3) 2 floors in Rumathiya 5 BR
- 4) Villa in Abu Halifa 4 BR

For companies we have building furnished or unfurnished For labors, technical, engineers

Contact No: **Q**

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation available for bachelor (partition) in a room in Salmiya. Call: 66711141. **(C 5110)**

Sharing accommodation in a 2 bedroom C/AC flat 1 room separate bathroom, new finger office Farwaniya, (family only) from Jan 30. Phone: 99482666. (C 5109) 6-1-2016

Sharing accommodation available for a bachelor with a Mangalorean Catholic bachelor near Khaitan cinema Garnatha bus stop. Contact: 66036893. **(C 5107)** 5-1-2016

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Gunasekaran R (Hindu), S/o Ramalingam, DOB 02.06.1974. Passport No: F5807434, residing at No. 28, Pillaiyar Koil Street, SiruPuliyur Eswarakandanallur, Villupuram, 607204 has converted to Islam with the name of R. Nazir on 30th November 2015. (C 5108)

6-1-2015

Departure Flights on Thursday 7/1/2016



REQUIRED

for a Construction Company

- Deputy Project Manager (Engineer)
- JCB Driver
- Dumper Driver Candidates must be fluent in English and have a minimum of 10 year experience in the Oil & Gas sector

Resumes to be sent to instkw.recruitment@gmail.com with "OIL&GAS" in the subject field

URGENT REQUIREMENT

WALK IN INTERVIEW FOR KUWAIT 12 TH & 13 TH JAN.2016 9 AM - 5 PM

WE ARE LOOKING FOR AGGRESSIVE AND SELF MOTIVATED SALES & SERVICE PROFESSIONALS FOR LEADING BRANDS IN CONSUMER ELECTRONICS, HOME APPLIANCES & LUGGAGE



• AC INSTALLATION & TECHNICIANS

• ASST SALES MANAGER (LUGGAGE)

POSITION



REQUIREMENT ASST SALES MANAGER SALES MANAGER 2 • MERCHANDISERS/PROMOTER 6

TRANSFERABLE VISA and DRIVING LICENSE is a MUST

SEFEENA GENERAL TRADING

AL-DUKKAN BLDG, BUILDING NO.13, BLOCK NO.3, 2ND FLOOR, MURGAB, KUWAIT TEL. NO. 22456296 FAX NO. 22456297 96696785 | 96696703 | 90920446

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	05:19
Shorook	06:43
Duhr:	11:54
Asr:	14:46
Maghrib:	17:05
Isha:	18:27



Flight Schedule

Arrival Flights on Thursday 7/1/2016

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

In case you are not travelling, your proper cancellation of bookings will help other passengers to use seats

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	KAC	284	Dhaka	14:30	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	FDB	076	Dubai	13:10
MSC	415	Sohag	00:05	KAC	672	Dubai	14:45	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05	MSC	402	Alexandria	13:30
KLM	411	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:03	KAC	788	Jeddah	14:50	JZR	528		00:05	KAC	537	Sohag	13:35
				GFA	221	Bahrain	15:00			Asyut		JZR	176	Dubai	13:45
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	KNE	472	Jeddah	15:05	BBC	044 216	Dhaka	00:10	JZR	786	Riyadh	13:45
JZR	539 782	Cairo	00:40	NIA	251	Alexandria	15:30	PIA FDB	072	KHI	00:40	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
AGY	782	Alexandria	00:45	OMA	645		15:30			Dubai	00:40	UAE			
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55	UNIA		Muscat	15:30	MSC	404	Asyut	00:55		872	Dubai	14:15
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	KAC ABY	562	Amman	15:40	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:55	THY	767	Istanbul	14:45
THY	772	Istanbul	01:05	UAE	127	Sharjah	15:45	MSC	416	Sohag	01:00	KNE	481	Taif	14:50
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	KLM	411	Amsterdam	01:35	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
RBG	555	Alexandria	01:35	JAD	301	Amman	15:55	AGY	783	Sohag	01:45	QTR	1079	Doha	15:10
DLH	635	Doha	01:35	QTR	1072	Doha	16:10	KAC	283	Dhaka	02:10	FDB	058	Dubai	15:10
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:45	JZR	535	Cairo	16:10	RBG	556	Alexandria	02:15	AXB	394	Kozhikode	15:20
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	JZR	779	Jeddah	16:10	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30	JZR	188	Dubai	15:40
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	FDB	051	Dubai	16:30	SAI	442	Lahore	02:30	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	JZR	257	Beirut	16:30	DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:35	KAC	617	Doha	15:45
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KNE	474	Jeddah	16:35	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	02:45	KAC	741	Dammam	15:50
PGT	5620	Istanbul	03:05	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	16:40	KAC	203	Lahore	03:05	KAC	773	Riyadh	15:50
FDB	067	Dubai	03:05	RJA	640	Amman	16:55	KAC	381	Delhi	03:30	KAC	613	Bahrain	15:50
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	KAC	542	Cairo	16:55	UAE	854	Dubai	03:45	SVA	505	Jeddah	16:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:15	JZR	787	Riyadh	17:00	PGT	859	Istanbul	03:55	KNE	473	Jeddah	16:05
KKK	6507	Istanbul	03:20	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:25
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:25	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	FDB	068	Dubai	04:00	OMA	646	Muscat	16:30
LMU	510	Cairo	04:05	MSR	614	Cairo	17:50	MSR	613	Cairo	04:10	NIA	252	Alexandria	16:30
JZR	503	Luxor	04:25	KAC	678	Muscat/Abu Dhabi	17:50	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:15	JAD	302	Amman	16:40
QTR	8511	Doha	04:40	KAC	118	New York	17:55	KKK	6508	Istanbul	04:20	KAC	563	Amman	16:45
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:40	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:55	PGT	5621	Istanbul	04:25	JZR	266	Beirut	17:05
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00	QTR	1077	Doha	05:00	KNE	475	Jeddah	17:25
FDB	5061	Dubai	06:30	KAC	502	Beirut	18:00	LMU	511	Cairo	05:05	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	17:30
BAW	157	London	06:40	FDB	063	Dubai	18:05	THY	765	Istanbul	05:15	FDB	052	Dubai	17:35
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50	UAL	982	IAD	18:15	QTR	8512	Doha	06:10	QTR	1073	Doha	17:40
KAC	412 1086	Manila/Bangkok	07:20	JZR	177	Dubai	18:20	JZR	560	Sohag	06:10	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
QTR	1086	Doha	07:40	KAC	786	Jeddah	18:30	FDB	070	Dubai	06:30	JZR	538	Cairo	17:45
FDB	053	Dubai	07:45	ABY KAC	123	Sharjah	18:45	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55	RJA	641	Amman	17:55
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50	KAC	742	Dammam	18:55	RJA	643	Amman	07:05	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
SVA	512	Riyadh	07:50	QTR KAC	1080	Doha	18:55	THY	771	Istanbul	07:05	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	206	Islamabad	08:25	KAC	614	Bahrain	19:10	FDB	5062	Dubai	07:10	JZR	184	Dubai	18:40
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	08:30	KAC	774	Riyadh	19:25	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15	JZR	238	Amman	18:50
KAC	344	Chennai	08:30	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30	JZR	240	Amman	07:15	MSR	615	Cairo	18:50
KAC	352	Kochi	08:30	KAC	618	Doha	19:35	FDB	054	Dubai	08:30	JZR	554	Alexandria	19:10
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	KAC	104	London	19:40	QTR	1087	Doha	08:40	JZR	124	Bahrain	19:10
KAC	362	Colombo	08:50	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45	BAW	156	London	08:45	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:50	KAC	154	Istanbul	19:45	SVA	513	Riyadh	08:50	ABY	124	Sharjah	19:25
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	KAC	176	Geneva/Frankfurt	19:55	JZR	256	Beirut	09:05	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
ABY	667 125	Sharjah	09:00	MSR	618	Alexandria	20:05	JZR	534	Cairo	09:15	UAL	982	Bahrain	19:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:20	KAC	538	Sohag	20:05	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:25	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25	KNE	480	Taif	20:10	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40	KAC	353	BLR	20:40
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	JZR	189	Dubai	20:15	UAE	856	Dubai	09:55	KAC	351	Kochi	20:50
OMA	641	Muscat	10:05	FDB	061	Dubai	20:20	KAC	101	London/New York	09:55	QTR	1081	Doha	20:50
IRM	1180	Mashhad	10:10	OMA	647	Muscat	20:20	KAC	541	Cairo	09:55	KAC	543	Cairo	20:55
IRA	673	Ahwaz	10:10	ABY	121	Sharjah	20:35	IRA	668	Mashhad	10:00	KAC	343	Chennai	21:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	FDB	5053	Dubai	20:50	KAC	561	Amman	10:00	MSR	619	Alexandria	21:05
SYR	341	Damascus	10:55	DLH	634 572	Frankfurt	20:55	KAC	671	Dubai	10:05	KNE	461	Riyadh	21:10
UAE	873	Dubai	11:05	JAI		Mumbai	20:55	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:25	ABY	122	Sharjah	21:15
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:15	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20	JZR	778	Jeddah	10:30	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20	KAC	501	Beirut	10:30	FDB	062	Dubai	21:20
AGY	682	Asyut	11:40	ALK	229	Colombo	21:25	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35	DLH	634	Doha	21:45
NIA	151	Caíro	11:55	UAE GFA	859	Dubai	21:40	KAC	153	Istanbul	10:40	FDB	5054	Dubai	21:50
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55		219	Bahrain	21:45	KAC	677	Abu Dhabi/Muscat	10:50	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
KAC	204	Lahore	12:20	JZR	125	Bahrain	21:55	QTR	1071	Doha	11:00	JAI	571	Mumbai	21:55
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25	QTR	1082	Doha	22:00	KAC	165	Rome/Paris	11:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	22:10
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30	KLM	417	Amsterdam Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:05	OMA	642	Muscat	11:05	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	AIC	981		22:25	IRA	672	Ahwaz	11:10	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
JZR	241	Amman	12:50	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:25	IRM	1181	Mashhad	11:25	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	KAC	564	Amman	22:25	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	FDB	059	Dubai	22:30	SYR	342	Damascus	11:55	UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
THY	5866	Istanbul	13:45	JZR	185	Dubai	23:15	RBG	554	Alexandria	12:00	QTR	1083	Doha	23:05
KAC	382	Delhi	13:50	UAL	981	Bahrain	23:25	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:20	KLM	417	Dammam/Amsterdam	23:05
KNE	460	Riyadh	13:50	PIA	205	Lahore Dubai	23:40	UAE	874	Dubai	12:30	KAC	205	Islamabad	23:10
FDB	057	Dubai	14:10	FDB THY	071 764	Dubai Istanbul	23:45 23:50	AGY	683	Alexandria	12:40	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:15
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	JAI	764 574	Mumbai	23:55	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55	KAC	411	Bangkok/Manila	23:35
AXB	393	Kozhikode	14:20	MSC	403	Asyut	23:55	NIA	152	Cairo	12:55	FDB	060	Dubai	23:35
				IVIJC	403	Asyut	۷۵.۵۵								

14:30

Jeddah

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION



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ACROSS

- 1. An independent ruler or chieftain (especially in Africa or Arabia).
- 5. Any of various evergreen plants of the genus Pavonia having white or yellow or purple flowers.
- 12. Inquire about. 15. Tear down so as to make flat with the
- ground. 16. Line of descent traced through the maternal side of the family.
- 17. A health resort near a spring or at the sea-
- 18. In the Roman calendar.
- 19. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh. 20. (Akkadian) Mother and earth goddess in
- Gilgamish epic. 22. The area of the states of North Carolina and South Carolina.
- 24. Being ten more than one hundred ninety.
- 26. An elaborate song for solo voice. 27. Of or relating to the United States of
- America or its people or language or cul-28. The god who fathered the islands and
- gods of Japan with his sister Izanami. 30. A living organism characterized by volun-
- tary movement. 31. (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
- 32. The month following March and preceding
- 35. A chronic inflammatory collagen disease affecting connective tissue (skin or joints).
- 36. English courtier (a favorite of Elizabeth I) who tried to colonize Virginia.
- 40. Fleshy spore-bearing inner mass of e.g. a puffball or stinkhorn.
- 45. Indigo bush. 46. A building having a circular plan and a
- dome. 50. Common black-and-gray Eurasian bird
- noted for thievery. 51. Type genus of the Adelgidae.
- 52. A medieval country in northern Europe that included regions now parts of ern France and Belgium and southwestern Netherlands.
- 54. annoy continually or chronically.
- 56. An associate degree in nursing. 57. Any of several related languages of the Celts in Ireland and Scotland.
- 58. A swelling that is the characteristic lesion of tuberculosis.
- 61. An official language of the Republic of South Africa.
- 63. Someone who races the luge. 64. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
- 66. Asian rat snakes. 69. A hotel providing overnight lodging for
- travelers. 70. A piece of dishware normally used as a
- container for holding or serving food. 72. The 11th letter of the Hebrew alphabet. 74. (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along

the celestial equator from the zenith

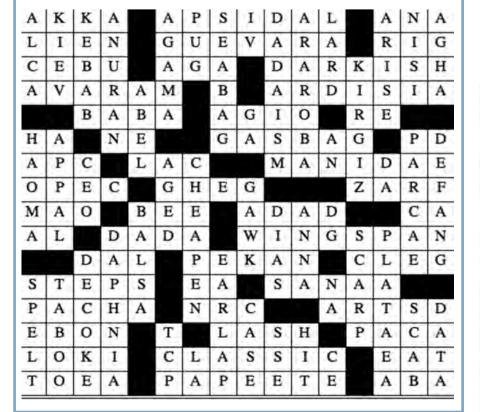
- crossing. 75. Kamarupan languages spoken in northeastern India and western Burma.
- 77. Small genus of western African evergreen trees and shrubs bearing fleshy capsular three-seeded fruits edible when neither
- unripe nor overripe. 80. (Greek mythology) God of love. 81. The ball-shaped capsule containing the
- vertebrate eve. 82. A loose sleeveless outer garment made

from aba cloth.

DOWN

- 1. Any plant of the genus Erica. 2. A woman of refinement.
- 3. A river in southeastern France.
- 4. Undergo resorption.
- 5. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
- 6. A genus of tropical American plants have sword-shaped leaves and a fleshy compound fruits composed of the fruits of several flowers (such as pineapples).
- 7. In a vacant manner.
- 8. (of securities) Not quoted on a stock exchange.
- 9. A B vitamin essential for the normal function of the nervous system and the gastrointestinal tract.
- 10. (Greek mythology) A maiden seduced by Zeus.
- 11. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
- 12. Earlier a god. 13. Small branch or division of a branch.
- 14. An island of Hawaii northwest of Oahu. 21. A cyst on the underside of the tongue.
- 23. A statement that deviates from or perverts
- 25. A male monarch or emperor (especially of Russia prior to 1917).
- 29. A port city in southwestern Iran.
- 33. Walk heavily and firmly, as when weary, or
- through mud. 34. A network of intersecting blood vessels or intersecting nerves or intersecting lymph
- vessels. 37. Advanced in years.
- 38. Wheelwork consisting of a connected set of rotating gears by which force is transmitted or motion or torque is changed.
- 39. The hole that an anchor rope passes
- through.
- 41. Having a bulb. 42. Marked by extreme anger.
- 43. A city in northwestern Switzerland.
- 44. Large genus of African trees bearing kola nuts.
- 47. Give a description of.
- 48. A radioactive transuranic element.
- 49. Having the slant of a bevel.
- 53. The event of dying or departure from life. 55. A technician who is highly proficient and
- enthusiastic about some technical field (especially computing). 59. Relating to or near the ulna.
- 60. A game in which numbered balls are
- drawn and random and players cover the corresponding numbers on their cards.
- 62. Strike with disgust or revulsion. 65. A Loloish language.
- 67. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
- 68. A island in the Netherlands Antilles that is the top of an extinct volcano.
- 71. Marked by skill in deception.
- 73. Aromatic bulb used as seasoning.
- 76. A very poisonous metallic element that
- has three allotropic forms. 78. A unit of magnetomotive force equal to
- 0.7958 ampere-turns. 79. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today marks the advent of a good time as far as career and social life are concerned. A time of dues paying is over; real accomplishment is now possible. You present your ideas and show off your ability to express them to others. Information gained from one person and transferred to another person can be misconstrued. Refer others to the source of your information. This afternoon you may want to talk budget with a loved one. There will be an acceptable plan for future enjoyment. This could mean the purchase of a home, a vacation or future education for a young person. Consider a vacation where you can trade places with some friends or family that may be living outside of your state. Good manner and clear communications make this a winner.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You feel a love of order and law-an appreciation for responsibilities and duty. Problems and obstacles that have previously been confusing, should find easy explanation under your keen examination. Today is as if you have overcome some invisible obstacle and this is making you feel very powerful. You are very motivated to improve all areas of your life. You may be sitting with an elderly person this afternoon and find he or she lights up with interest when asked about some event of the past. This person will be pleased that you took the time to listen to what he or she has to say. This interest usually promotes a feeling that a person matters, which is a good thing. This communication may give you ideas for further plans to help with retired individuals.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You will be working on ways to improve your professional skills now. Pay attention to the details-you will be glad you did. Acting on impulse or instinct can lead to false starts-so count to ten before starting anything important. This is a time when you can put your businesslike ideas into words and convey them to others. Authority figures are paying attention to your communication skills. The way you handle yourself when someone needs advice is very important just now. The pursuit of success takes on a high priority. This is a successful day, with the realization that you have accomplished much, at work and in your life progress. There is a dreamy manner about you tonight and the young people in your home will enjoy your stories.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Ambition, practicality and achievement are admirable, but they are means to an end-not ends in themselves. Enjoy and appreciate the experiences that come your way. Many times you will find that just when you think you are right where you want to be, you will see new challenges to budge you into another direction. Others value your decision-making abilities and you will know how to proceed in matters concerning the public. Support and harmony are yours without asking. Any hot spots can be worked through by thinking before you act-patience will expel any arguments. You may want to check out the study of herbs-you have a natural tendency toward the medicinal and aromatic type of plants. The psychic realm is fascinating to you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You have a flair for presenting yourself in a positive and well-groomed manner-regardless of the stress you may be feeling at times. This first impression will serve you well in your communications with others. If you are feeling nervous and not quite up to a particular task-practice some of the breathing techniques that the yogi masters teach. If you do not know the techniques, you might consider taking a class or buying a book on the subject. This afternoon you are close to making a discovery that will help you to save your company many problems or financial responsibilities-keep your focus. You will be pleased by the results that your efforts bring forth. Working with your favorite hobby this evening will help you relax



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You and your co-worker friends may seek answers to some long-unanswered questions. Finding the answer to some of your questions will have you wondering where the time went. You meet your obligations automatically and display your flexible way of working your magic. You leave positive impressions with people. Your superiors are very happy with your work and your co-workers appreciate working with you. Your money problems could find some relief today. Dive into some form of art expression this afternoon-you will find this a great stress valve. The more you enjoy your creative side the more you will come to know your spiritual side. This evening is a great time to just sit back and enjoy what you have. Romance is possible.

WORD SEARCH

6 Digit Numbers

Find and circle all of the 6 Digit Numbers that are hidden in the grid. The numbers may be hidden in any direction.

1	6	2	2	6	1	2	5	6	2	2	1	7
6	6	5	4	7	6	6	5	8	2	8	7	8
3	6	5	0	7	4	5	6	4	0	9	2	4
4	2	1	3	2	8	4	3	7	4	4	5	2
9	7	4	3	8	4	3	8	9	3	6	0	6
6	3	7	9	7	1	4	2	1	2	8	6	0
9	5	9	9	4	9	6	4	9	1	1	2	1
6	7	1	4	5	1	4	4	5	8	8	9	3
3	5	4	2	7	9	1	9	5	1	4	1	6
8	2	4	5	6	7	1	4	7	7	3	6	8
3	5	7	9	2	5	9	0	8	4	6	9	0
1	9	7	2	7	2	5	2	3	6	4	6	2
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106248	494114	564237
154259	496963	605271
162261	496974	653921
225479	532137	662735
236462	546183	751951
479158	563824	908469
489238		
	154259 162261 225479 236462 479158	154259 496963 162261 496974 225479 532137 236462 546183 479158 563824

9 7 6 7 3 1 2 3 5 1



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Today and tomorrow present opportunities to make extra money. This second job may eventually become your priority job. A conventional economic approach is the best way to start your family's income plan. You are motivated to use your creative mind today as you hear comments and are caught up in the passion of inventions, technology and creative expression as well. You may feel a sense of urgency in some of the projects that are presented to you. This afternoon you confirm appointments and schedule your time for the next few days. You may find that your job, or the motivation it creates, is more enjoyable than usual. Conversations with siblings could be confusing this evening. You might enjoy playing word games tonight.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This is one of your better days for money. You are able to find successful ways to increase your income. Stay on the job and do not plan any trips, if possible, until later this month. As you introduce ideas of moneymaking to others, you will benefit as well. This could be through advising others toward their professional goals, investments, real estate, etc. If you are in real estate or if you want to sell your home, or perhaps a car, you will find a nibble becomes a commitment. Balance your social and business affairs so that your energies are not depleted. Neighbors or siblings have a big impact on your goals and make a big impression. If work has not been too exhausting today, this evening could be a wonderful time to interact with friends.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You have your own philosophy and may see the world through multicolored glasses. As a young person, you seemed to be empathetic of others and their emotional suffering. As an adult, you are extremely tolerant of humanity. You are optimistic and attract the love of audiences or groups of people. This may be a time when you find yourself creative in the arts. You are magnetic as your positive attitude captures the imagination. You have ideas that benefit humanitarian or charitable interests and counseling may occupy some of your time. You must be free to travel to places where you are needed, as you enjoy being needed. Medicine, welfare work and the arts are only a few of the areas that attract you.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

There is a drive for disciplined work today. It may be a bit difficult to concentrate from time to time, considering the celebrations that you know will come later this evening. This could be a challenging day but you are motivated. You will want to give all your attention over to whatever you are involved with just now. If you find yourself becoming distracted, take a little break . . . Walk a little for the exercise. New opportunities are on the horizon. Check out all ideas before you act and do not let the obvious opportunities pass you by without your investigation. Efficiency at work will finally end with an evening of play. You may think about the future and find that a friend will offer some wise advice. Enjoy your evening.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

There is much to be said about competition; however, in the place of business it may be better to compete with your own record than that of others. Unless a fair game has been indicated . . . Set your own pace. This could be a challenging day-keep the challenges on a level that is manageable. You can set an example for others to follow when you turn difficult situations into solutions that you or others can handle. This may mean you work with the public. A good conversation with those you love is possible this evening. You may have missed being outside lately but if weather permits, you and your family might bundle up and go on a discovery walk early in the evening. There could be some good surprises right around the block!

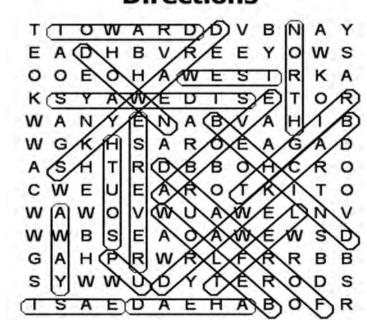


Pisces (February 19-March 20)

The workday is full of surprises and demands for quick decisions to be made. You do well in processing the information you get. Don't be afraid to ask questions-someone may be holding back information. You may have to do some reassessing and reevaluating with regard to priorities. Be careful not to overdo or overwork today and think about creating an opportunity to exercise. Others value you for your ability to make practical decisions concerning group issues. You could be solving some public-relations problems this afternoon. You have a natural sense of what the public wants at this time. Clear decisions affecting others could be made. You can create a peace of mind this evening and enjoy the company of a loved one as well.

Yesterday Solution

Directions



ABOVE AHEAD AWAY BACKWARD BEHIND BELOW DOWN

EAST **FORWARD** LEFT NORTH REVERSE RIGHT

SIDEWAYS SKYWARD SOUTH TOWARD UP WEST

Daily SuDoku

9		1	7	3				
	6			2				1
7	[7]							8
					2	3	7	
	2		8		2		5	
	2	3	1					
4								5
2				8			4	
				9	1	6		3

Yesterday's Solution

8 3 5 9 6 5 8 2 9 6 5 3 2 8 4 9 6 9 5 3 6 8 5 2 3 6 9 8 4 5 9 8 6 3 3 5 6 8 4 9 2 4 3 9 6 5 8 6 9

Sabah Hospital

Amiri Hospital

Chest Hospital

Adan Hospital

Ibn Sina Hospital

Al-Razi Hospital

Kaizen center

Rawda

Adaliya

Khaldiya

Shamiya

Shuwaikh

Nuzha

Qadsiya

Dasmah

Shaab

Qibla

Mirqab

Sharq

Salmiya

Jabriya

Bayan

Mishref

Sabah

Jahra

W Hawally

New Jahra

West Jahra

South Jahra

North Jahra

North Jleeb

Ardhiya

Firdous

Omariya

N Khaitan

Fintas

Bneid Al-Gar

Ayoun Al-Qibla

Maidan Hawally

Abdullah Salem

Industrial Shuwaikh

Kaifan

Physiotherapy Hospital

Maternity Hospital

Farwaniya Hospital

Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital

INFORMATION

For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Clinics

24812000

22450005

24843100

25312700

24849400

24892010

23940620

24840300

24846000

24874330/9

25716707

22517733

22517144

24848075

24849807

24848913

24814507

22549134

22526804

24814764

22515088

22532265

22531908

22518752

22459381

22451082

22456536

22465401

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25316254

25623444

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25381200

22630786

24810221

24770319 24575755

24772608

24775066

24775992

24311795

24884079

24892674

24719048

24710044

23900322

Soor Center

Tel: 2290-1677

Fax: 2290 1688

Four-Day Forecast

PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION

METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630 Fax: (+965) 24348714 www.met.gov.kw

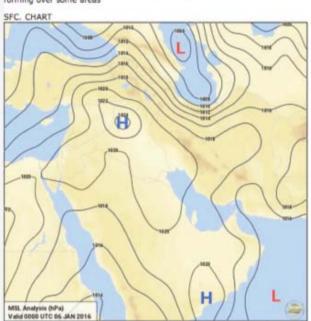
no warnings or weather watches



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours Issued 06/01/2016-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 22 °C

By Day: Sunny with light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 18 km/h By Night: Cold with light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 16 km/h with a chance for mist forming over some areas



	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	※	*	*	*
Expected Weather	sunny	clouds to increase	clouds to decrease + scattered rain	sunny
Min Temp °C	07	08	10	10
Max Temp °C	23	22	19	20
Wind Direction	north westerly to light variable	south easterly	south easterly changing to north westerly	north westerly
Wind Speed km/h	06 - 26	15 - 40	15 - 40	15 - 38

Station	MIN °C REC	Max °C EXP
KUWAIT CITY	12	15
KUWAIT AIRPORT	06	22
ABDALY	08	19
BUBYAN	09	15
JAHRA	09	19
FAILAKA ISLAND	11	15
SALMIYAH	13	15
AHMADI	14	16
JAL ALIYAH	09	16
QAROH ISLAND	17	19
UMM AL-MARADEM	16	18
NUWAISIB	10	20
WAFRA	07	20
MANAGISH	08	18
SALMY	09	19
MUTRIBA	09	17

Plax (em	19	
Min Temp	05	
Max Rel I	Hum (%)	100
Min Rel H	ium (%)	41
Max Wind and Direc	Speed (km/h)	21 S
TOTAL R	AINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm
*	Sunrise	06:43
	Sunset	17:04

Max Temp (°C)

Fajr	05:19
Sunrise	06:43
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	14:46
Sunset	17:04
Isha	18:26

PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologis	sts
Dr. Abidallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat	(ENT)
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daaory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practition	ners
Dr. Mohamme Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhazeem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abidallah Al-Refae	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abidallah Al-Awad	li 22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Psychologists

/Psychotherapists

Plastic Surgeons				
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272			
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700			
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60			
Family Doc	tor			
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581			
Psychiatris	its			
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047			
Dr Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0			
Gynaecologists & Ol	bstetricians			
DrAdrian arbe	23729596/23729581			
Dr. Verginia s.Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321			
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539			
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliytami	25343406			
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272			
Dr. Salem soso	22618787			
General Surg	eons			
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044			
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Bash	er 25327148			
Internists, Chest	& Heart			
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Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300			
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004			
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515			
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446			
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3			

info@soorcenter.com

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Paediatricians					
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Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300				
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444				
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099				
Dr. Snaa Maaroof	25713514				
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100				
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282				
Dermatolog	ıy				
Dr. Mohammed Salam					
Bern University	23845955				
Dentists					
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581				
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2				
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226				
Dr. Abidallah Al-Amer	22561444				
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557				
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888				
Dr. Abidallah Al-Duweisan	25653755				
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111				
Neurologist	ts				
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324				
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875				
Gastrologis	ts				
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464				
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030				
Dr. Foad Abidallah Al-Ali	22633135				

Kaizen center

25716707

Noor Clinic

23845955

	Endocrinologi	st				
00	Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330				
	Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari 25658888					
	Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr 25329924					
	Physiotherapists	&VD				
	Dr. Deyaa Shehab 25722291					
	Dr. Musaed Faraj Khamees	22666288				
	Rheumatologists:					
	Dr. Adel Al-Awadi 25330060	ı				
29581	Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290				
	Internist, Chest & Heart					
	DR.Mohammes Akkad	24555050 Ext 210				
	Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCPC, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicii Head, Division of Cardiology	ne				
	Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667				
	Consultant Cardiologist					
	Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555				
	Inaya German Medical Center Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123					

William Schuilenberg, RPC 2290-1677

Zaina Al Zabin, M.Sc. 2290-1677

INTERNATIONAL



CALL	S		
Afghanistan	0093	Luxembourg	00352
Albania Algeria	00355 00213	Lesotho Macau	00266 00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola Anguilla	00244 001264	Madagascar Majorca	00261 0034
Antiga	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina Armenia	0054	Malaysia Maldives	0060 00960
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Austria Bahamas	0043 001242	Malta Marshall Islands	00356 00692
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Burundi Cambodia	00257 00855	Netherlands Antilles New Caledonia	00599 00687
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Canada Cape Verde	001 00238	Nicaragua Nigar	00505 00227
Cayman Islands	001345	Nigeria	00227
Central African Chad	00236 00235	Niue Norfolk Island	00683 00672
Chile	0056	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
China	0086	North Korea	00850
Colombia Comoros	0057 00269	Norway Oman	0047 00968
Congo	00242	Pakistan	0092
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Czech Republic Denmark	00420 0045	Poland Portugal	0048 00351
Diego Garcia	00246	Puerto Rico	001787
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Dominican Republic		Russian Federation	007
Ecuador Egypt	00593 0020	Rwanda Saint Helena	00250 00290
El Salvador	00503	Saint Kitts	001869
England (UK) Equatorial Guinea	0044 00240	Saint Lucia Saint Pierre	001758 00508
Eritrea	00291	Saint Vincent	001784
Estonia Ethiopia	00372 00251	Samoa US Samoa West	00684 00685
Falkland Islands	00500	San Marino	00378
Faroe Islands Fiji	00298 00679	Sao Tone Saudi Arabia	00239 00966
Finland France	00358 0033	Scotland (UK)	0044 00221
French Guiana	00594	Senegal Seychelles	00221
French Polynesia	00689 00241	Sierra Leone	00232 0065
Gabon Gambia	00220	Singapore Slovakia	00421
Georgia Germany	00995 0049	Slovenia Solomon Islands	00386 00677
Ghana	00233	Somalia	00252
Gibraltar	00350 0030	South Africa South Korea	0027 0082
Greece Greenland	00299	Spain Spain	0034
Grenada Guadeloupe	001473	Sri Lanka Sudan	0094 00249
Guadeloupe Guam	00590 001671	Sudan Suriname	00249
Guatemala Guinea	00502 00224	Swaziland Sweden	00268 0046
Guyana	00592	Switzerland	0046
Haiti Holland (Netherlands)	00509 0031	Syria Serbia	00963 00381
Honduras	00504	Taiwan	00381
Hong Kong Hungary	00852 0036	Tanzania Thailand	00255 0066
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Toga	00228
Iceland India	00354 0091	Tonga Tokelau	00676 00690
Indian Ocean	00873	Trinidad	001868
Indonesia Iran	0062 0098	Tunisia Turkey	00216 0090
Iraq	00964	Tuvalu	0090
Ireland Italy	00353 0039	Uganda Ukraine	00256 00380
Italy Ivory Coast	0039	United Arab Emirates	
Jamaica Janan	001876 0081	United Kingdom	0044 00598
Japan Jordan	0081	Uruguay USA	00598
Kazakhstan Kenya	007 00254	Uzbekistan Vanuatu	00998 00678
Kiribati	00686	Venezuela	00582
Kuwait Kyrgyzstan	00965 00996	Vietnam Virgin Islands UK	0084 001284
Kyrgyzstan Laos	00996	Virgin Islands UK Virgin Islands US	001284
Latvia Lebanon	00371 00961	Wales (UK)	0044
Liberia	00961	Yemen Yugoslavia	00967 00381
Libya Lithuania	00218 00370	Zambia Zimbabwe	00260 00263
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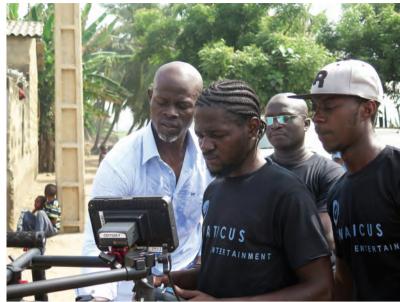
Features



American-Beninese actor Djimon Hounsou (center) walking barefoot in procession with voodoo worshippers dressed in white robes through the dusty streets of the Heve village, near Come, southwest Benin, during a film shoot.



Voodoo worshippers walking barefoot in procession, dressed in white robes American-Beninese actor Djimon Hounsou (left) supervising the shooting of and draped with long strings of multicolored beads, through the dusty streets of the Heve village, near Come, southwest Benin, during a film shoot.



voodoo worshippers walking in procession through the streets of the Heve vil-

'Blood Diamond' star returns to Benin to film 'true' voodoo

s the drumming rumbles on, Hollywood actor Djimon Hounsou walks shirtless with a voodoo procession making its way through the dusty streets of Heve in his native Benin. "I am like an African who has come home, who needs to know and learn about his culture," says Hounsou, who has starred in blockbusters like "Blood Diamond" alongside Leonardo DiCaprio and "Gladiator" with Russell Crowe. The American-Beninese actor is now making and starring in his own film documenting his quest to understand voodoo in this west African state where it was born, before history spread it overseas.

"The practices here are not bad and they aren't savage," says the tall 51-year-old with a shaved head and a salt-andpepper goatee, decrying the negative image often depicted on the silver screen of back-alley sorcerers casting malicious spells. One classic is the 1973 James Bond film "Live and Let Die" where a Caribbean dictator uses voodoo to frighten and manipulate his island. But Hounsou says such images under-

"That concept dates back to slavery. That is why we need to clarify what defines voodoo," Hounsou tells AFP, explaining that racism in the past is still perpetuating negative stereotypes about voodoo. In the village of Heve, which lies at the western edge of Benin's coastline, the people have long practiced voodoo, celebrating air god Dan and water god Mami Wata. As the worshippers file through the streets, resplendent in white robes and draped with multicolored beads, Hounsou's crew films everything.



A film crew following voodoo worshippers dressed in white robes and walking barefoot in a procession.

Worshipping ancestors

By mid-morning, the heat in Benin, a country of more than 10 million people, is already intense. As technicians set up equipment in the town square, girls draw water from a tap. The village, with its devoted voodoo cult, was not chosen at random. "These spirits are very well preserved and people kept dedicating themselves truly to voodoo," explains priest David Koffi Aza, who practises F, a system of divination-and is work-

ing as a guide for Hounsou and his crew. "Imported religions didn't take hold so it's a purer practice." Spirits play a central role in voodoo, acting as a link between the living and the dead in a religion which is built upon the worship of both ancient ancestors and the four elements: earth, water, wind and fire.

In the wake of the slave trade, voodoo practices spread from west Africa to the West Indies, Brazil and the United States. According to the last census in 2002, 17 percent of Benin's pop-

ulation practices voodoo-an official religion in the countrywhile 27 percent are Catholic and 24 percent are Muslim. However, such figures mask the reality that many Beninese, whether they go to church or attend mosque, have voodoo shrines in their homes.

'A story badly told'

"After spending so much time in Europe and the US, seeing African diaspora traditions that resemble ours, I began to ask questions," says Hounsou, dabbing sweat off his brow. Working with Hounsou on his bid to document voodoo in Benin is codirector and star Sorious Samura, a well-known journalist from Sierra Leone. The two met nine years ago on the set of "Blood Diamond", a film that was based on Samura's documentary "Cry Freetown" which dealt with the civil war gripping his country. "Voodoo is a story that is very badly told, full of witchcraft, magic and evil-even Africans believe that," says Samura, adding that such ideas have been "buried deep in our psyche."

The two directors hope their film, entitled "In Search of Voodoo: Roots to Heaven," can help change that misconception. With less than a month until they finish shooting, Hounsou says they are not seeking to win converts. "Voodoo has existed for centuries. It doesn't force itself on you," he says. Shooting of the film is expected to finish on January 10, when a huge voodoo festival will be celebrated across the country. — AFP



Beauty company looking to help change red carpet chatter

hose in Hollywood looking to broaden the red carpet conversation beyond the inevitable "Who are you wearing?" have a powerful new ally: beauty giant L'Oreal Paris. The company is promoting use of the hashtag "WorthSaying" on Twitter during Sunday's Golden Globe Awards and will break out the best posts for use in digital advertising. Kristen Comings, a company vice president, said Tuesday the idea is to urge women everywhere to expand the red carpet chatter beyond

"We really wanted to be part of that conversation," she said. "It's really about engaging beyond beauty and fashion to more substantive questions on the red carpet. These are amazing women who should be known for more than just a beautiful face. Many of the actresses become frustrated by those conversations." Brand ambassadors Julianne Moore, Karlie Kloss, Eva Longoria, Freida Pinto and Liya Kebede are among those who plan to participate. L'Oreal has been a broadcast sponsor of the Golden Globes for 13 years. The new hashtag is a play on the company's 40-year-old tagline, "Because You're Worth





Your eyes choose the cleansing expert

pplying makeup is a very important part of many women's daily routine. Here in this region especially, applying kohl is a strong Arabic tradition that goes back to Ancient Arabs, and remains an important part of women's make-up regime. However, removing stubborn eve makeup can irritate the skin, especially since some kohls and mascaras can require incessant rubbing to get it off due to oil or fat based ingredients that repel water.

NIVEA, the number one face cleansing brand, has the solution with its NIVEA Face Care Double Effect Eye Make-Up Remover that eliminates even the most resilient waterproof mascara with a gentle swipe while protecting the eye-area at

Suitable for all skin types, the NIVEA Double Effect Eye Make-Up Remover is also suitable for contact lens wearers. The oil phase, particularly extracted from sunflowers, effectively removes even waterproof mascara and eye-make-up, while the aqueous phase protects and cares for the eye lashes with its caring formula, without leaving an oily residue. With an objective to unleash the secrets of Arabian beauty, NIVEA Face Care has partnered with Emirati make-up & skin care expert Asma Lootah.

As part of the campaign, Asma will help women learn the right cleansing and make-up techniques and reveal the secrets behind cleansed radiant skin. These are revealed in videos exclusively available on Nivea Middle East's website. NIVEA Double Effect Eye Make-Up Remover is the perfect addition to every woman's Arabian Beauty regimen! Available in leading supermarkets across the GCC, NIVEA Double Effect Eye Make-Up Remover is available at a price of Dhs 22.



container has an inner spool that you wrap the cords around, and tuck the earbuds into the center. — AP photos



The Nest pliable plastic earphone storage Photo shows the Nest pliable plastic earphone storage container.



In this photo provided by AsianFreckles, Lissan Loi's clever knitted golden snitch, inspired by the Harry Potter series, is a fun receptacle



In this photo Lissan Loi's clever knitted golden

Products and ideas for tangle-free earbuds

nyone who's wrestled with tangled earbuds knows how hard it can be to keep the little devils from becoming a scrambled bunch of knots, no matter where or how you store them. Here's the latest in cord technology designed to solve this messy problem:

Product ideas

Zipbuds' Juiced 2.0 and Pro Mike models have an actual zipper between the cords; the glow-in-the-dark green version would be easy to dig out of the dark recesses of a bag. The Slide model employs a tiny zipper attachment like the ones on re-sealable plastic containers.

From Beats by Dre, urBeats have a flat, bright-red cable that resists tangling and is easy to see.

Storage ideas

If you're not in the market for new earbuds but are just looking for a way to store them smoothly, there are lots of

options. The Sinch is a little rubber band that slips over a phone's cord port. Wrap the cords around the phone and secure with the built-in magnet.

The Spyder Byte is a black, plastic, spider-shaped clip that attaches to the cords to clasp and secure them.

The Nest is a pliable silicone case with an inner spool to hold earbuds. Pull one of the earbuds to release them from the spool when needed. For kids or those after a bit of whimsy in their tech accessories, Storenvy has a silicone 3-D rabbit that offers storage in its rear and room for a phone up front. It comes in a slew of hues.

Look online for ideas on repurposing tape dispensers, thread spools, badge clips, credit cards, small snack boxes, travel-size swab holders, gum dispensers, bandage holders

and contact lens cases into earbud storage. Crafty types might tackle the bunny, butterfly or bear hold-

er; it's made from just felt, Velcro and thread. Cord tacos - discs that folds in half, with a simple closure - work for any tech cords, including earbuds. You can devise your own out of scraps of material, or find distinctive leather ones online.

Knitters can create a menagerie of cute earbud holders, including turtles, fish, frogs and mice. Tiny pouches secured with small buttons or snaps can be made quickly. Harry Potter fans might like a crocheted Golden Snitch; find Lissan Loi's pattern on her Etsy.com site, Asian Freckles.

Technique

However you decide to store your earbuds, you might first want to explore whether there are ways to coil them so they won't get tangled. YouTube's got a half-dozen or more helpful folk who think they've got it figured out, and are willing to



Actress Ruby Rose poses for a portrait in Los Angeles. — AP

Ruby Rose trades jailbird jumpsuit for designer denim

ow sought-after for her edgy, androgynous style, actress Ruby Rose initially struggled to find her niche. "When I first started in the industry back home in Australia at 18 there was a lot of push and shove as to how I should dress, if I was allowed to cut my hair short, if I had too many tattoos, " said Rose in an interview Tuesday. "If I didn't get a campaign or if I didn't get a role, they would always come back to 'well she dresses like a boy."

Times have changed for the "Orange is the New Black" breakout star who recently swapped her Litchfield Prison uniform for distressed overalls and cutoff shorts as the face of Denim & Supply Ralph Lauren. Rose, who counts Vivienne Westwood, Annie Lennox and Madonna among her style icons, teamed with model Hailey Baldwin for the brand's latest social media and global ad campaign. She credits her hit Netflix series along with Amazon's "Transparent" for sparking a dialogue about gender identity and acceptance in the entertainment industry and beyond.

"People were waiting to start this conversation," said Rose. "Someone had to ignite it and once that happened, it was just a snowball effect where you had celebrities and all different people coming out and saying 'I'm gender fluid' or 'I'm transgender' and people feeling more comfortable in their skin." The 29-year-old also praised Louis Vuitton's latest womenswear campaign featuring actor-rapper Jaden Smith. "I mean he's so amazing but the reason that's so special is because that's how he dresses," said Rose. "It's not like they just went 'OK we're going to grab a guy that's popular, that people like, and we're going to put him in a dress.' It's not done in a tasteless way. It's just this is who he is." Though it has not yet been announced if her "Orange" character, Stella Carlin, will return for season four, Rose is busy with upcoming films including "John Wick 2" and "Resident Evil: The Final Chapter." "Acting is my life. It's what I live and breathe," said Rose. — AP

Music & Movies



Various cast members of 'The Hateful Eight' and director Quentin Tarantino (second right) attend a cere- Director Quentin Tarantino is honored with hand/footmony honoring Tarantino with a hand/footprint ceremony at the TCL Chinese Theatre IMAX, in Hollywood, California. — AFP photos





Director Quentin Tarantino is honored at the hand and footprint ceremony.

Tarantino makes his mark-on Hollywood sidewalk

scar-winning American director Quentin Tarantino made another mark in Hollywood Tuesday, leaving his handprints on the sidewalk outside the legendary Grauman's Chinese Theatre. Out promoting his latest movie "The Hateful Eight"-which has been nominated for three Golden Globes-Tarantino, 52, said he was delighted by the honor. "Actually, it's not that I have wanted to do this my whole career, I have wanted

to put my hand and footprints in the Grauman Chinese Theatre courtyard way before I ever had a career," he said of the longtime Hollywood tradition at the cinema house, where thousands of stars have cast hand- and footprints in the cement.

"This is something I have wanted to do my entire life," he added. Tarantino was joined by Austrian actor Christoph Waltz, who won Oscars for "Inglourious Basterds" in 2010 and "Django

Unchained" in 2013 working with Tarantino. "Quentin baffles, he exhilarates, he perplexes, he surprises, but most of all he entertains us," Waltz said. "We want more and more of these imprints and always in 24 frames per second." Just two weeks ago, Tarantino got his star on the better-known Hollywood Walk of Fame. The filmmaker, who dropped out of high school insisting he could learn more on his own, won Oscars himself for black

comedy western "Django Unchained" in 2013 and cult favorite "Pulp Fiction" in 1995. "The Hateful Eight" is nominated for Golden Globes for supporting actress for Jennifer Jason Leigh, best screenplay and original score for composer Ennio Morricone. — AFF

In this photograph Indian Bollywood actress Kriti Sanon looks on during a promotional event for the forthcoming Hindi film 'Dilwale' in Mumbai. — AFP

Bollywood star shames man watching pirated film on flight

Bollywood star posted a series of angry tweets after a passenger sitting next to her on a flight brazenly started watching a pirated copy of one of her films. Actress Kriti Sanon was travelling to Delhi last week when the man seated beside her and her mother started using an iPhone projector to watch Hindi blockbuster "Dilwale". The \$15 million movie, which sees Sanon star alongside Bollywood icon Shah Rukh Khan, had only been released in cinemas 10 days previously.

"Someone watchin pirated version of Dilwale in front of me on phone in the flight! Annoyed!! #SayNoToPiracy," the 25-year-old posted on Twitter. The tweet, which has been liked almost 3,000 times, was accompanied by a photo showing the passenger watching the movie. It also included an angry emoji face. Shortly afterwards she tweeted again. "Sad to c the hardwork of so many ppl bein watched in such pathetic quality! Please enjoy films in cinemas #SayNoToPiracy," Sanon wrote.

It was accompanied by another picture of the passenger, who appeared to be enjoying the movie. A third tweet followed, in response to a user who said that watching pirated movies was a criminal offence. "Yup..told him politely that he would enjoy the film more in a theatre. but he was busy showin off his projector!," she wrote, this time including two angry emoji faces. — AFP

Bollywood's 'Deadly Dutt' set for prison release

Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt will be released from prison next month after serving a sentence for possessing weapons supplied by gangsters behind the 1993 Mumbai bomb blasts, reports said yesterday. The disgraced star will walk free from Yerwada Central Jail in the western state of Maharashtra on February 27, slightly ahead of schedule, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported. Dutt was originally sentenced to a six-year term after being convicted in 2006 of possessing guns supplied by mafia bosses who orchestrated the series of bombings in Mumbai that killed 257 people.

He spent 18 months in prison before being released on bail in 2007, pending an appeal. In March 2013, the Supreme Court upheld his conviction but cut his prison term from six years to five. Dutt was later granted four extra weeks of freedom to work on unfinished movies and went back to jail in May that year to serve the remaining three-and-a-half years of his sentence. PTI said yesterday that Maharashtra Home Minister Ranjit Patil had granted Dutt remission, clearing his release for February 27. Calls and text messages to the minister by AFP went unanswered. The 56year-old actor shot to fame in the mid-1980s in a string of action movies in which he performed his own stunts, earning him the nickname "Deadly Dutt".

He is best known for playing a mobster with a heart of gold in the popular "Munnabhai" series. The 1993 attacks were believed to have been staged by Muslim underworld figures in retaliation for religious riots in which mainly Muslims died, following the razing of an ancient mosque at Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh state. Dutt was found guilty of possession of an automatic rifle and a pistol, which he insisted were only meant to protect his family in the tense atmosphere in Mumbai following the mosque's destruction. In 2007, he was acquitted of more serious charges of conspiracy in the deadly blasts, which also wounded more than 700 people. — AFP





Picture taken on October 17, 2008 shows French conductor and composer Pierre Boulez conducting the SWR Symphony Orchestra during the opening concert of the Donaueschinger Musiktage music festival in Donaueschingen, southern Germany.



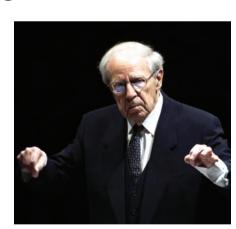
This file photo taken on January 9, 1984 shows French conductor and composer Pierre Boulez (right) talking with US composer and guitarist Frank Zappa (center) and French Ministre of Culture Jack Lang (left), at the Theatre de la Ville in Paris, where he directed three works of Zappa. — AFP photos

French avant-garde composer Pierre Boulez dies aged 90

orld-renowned conductor-composer Pierre Boulez, considered one of the most influential voices in contemporary classical music, has died aged 90, his family said yesterday. "For all those who knew him and who appreciated his creative energy, his artistic rigour, his openness and his generosity, his presence will remain alive and intense," the family said in a statement from the Philharmonie de Paris, which Boulez spearheaded. As well as being an expert interpreter of the works of Stravinsky, Schoenberg and Scriabin, the Frenchman found himself, with KarlHeinz Stockhausen, a seminal figure in the mid-20th century experimental avant-garde.

Later in the 20th century, he would push back the frontiers of music still further with computer-generated music at his Paris studio. Born in 1925 in the small provincial town of Montbrison, in central France, Boulez studied under Olivier Messiaen at the Paris Conservatoire during the war years, where he was influenced by his teacher's own abstract, atonal style with irregular rhythm. A frequent guest conductor for great orchestras on both sides of the Atlantic, Boulez famously shunned the baton, always conducting with his hands.

He led the BBC Symphony Orchestra and from 1971-77 was music director of the New York Philharmonic, where he favored contemporary works over the classics beloved by his acclaimed predecessor Leonard Bernstein. It was his exasperation with the relative conservatism of the French musical world that prompted Boulez to make his



This file photo taken on December 20, 2011 shows French composer and conductor Pierre Boulez directing the Paris Orchestra under the Louvre Pyramid during a free concert in Paris.

home in the southwestern German city of Baden-Baden in the early 1960s, where he eventually died. Boulez's compositions were noted for their difficulty, with one of his defining works, "Le Marteau Sans Maitre" ("The Hammer Without a Master"), drawing inspiration from surrealist poetry and lacking any bass line. French President Francois Hollande offered his condolences to Boulez's family and hailed someone who "made French music shine throughout the world." "As a composer and conductor, he always reflected his era," said Hollande. — AFP

Italian screen siren Pampanini dead at 90

ilvana Pampanini, an Italian actress and beauty who was one of the country's leading post-war cinema stars, has died at the age of 90, local media reported yesterday. Pampanini, who had been hospitalized since October according to Corriere della Sera, starred in over 50 films during her 1950s heyday. She came to prominence as a Miss Italy contestant in 1946 (her failure to win caused a tabloid outcry) and went on to work with a long list of famous film figures, including Buster Keaton, Marcello Mastroianni, Alberto Sordi, Toto and Jean Gabin.

With her voluptuous, wide-eyed looks, Nini Pampan, as she was nicknamed in France, became a symbol of Italian beauty around the world. The brunette was seen as having paved the way for fellow screen sirens Sophia Loren and Gina Lollobrigida. Pampanini never married but was reported to have sparked the romantic ardour of a string of famous men, from Cuban leader Fidel Castro and Egypt's King Farouk I to Orson Welles and Omar Sharif. Described as both a devout Catholic and a lifelong diva, she worked only occasionally after giving up full-time acting to look after her elderly parents in the mid-1960s. — AFP



Madonna's Singapore concert is for adults only

Madonna's global Rebel Heart Tour has been restricted to fans aged 18 and above, the concert's local coordinator said yesterday. The one-night-only event on February 28, Madonna's first-ever concert in the city-state, will be held at the 55,000-seat National Stadium, entertainment firm MediaCorp Vizpro said. "Please note that this concert is rated 'R18' with the consumer advisory on 'Sexual References'. Only those above 18 years of age will be permitted into the venue," it said on its Facebook page. Concerts and other forms of public entertainment are

The Singapore leg of pop superstar classified by the Media Development Authority, which also regulates the film

and broadcast industries. The Straits Times newspaper noted that Madonna's concert tour setlist includes a segment involving dancers dressed as scantily-clad nuns pole-dancing on cross-shaped stripper poles. Affluent Singapore, often ridiculed as a "nanny state" for its tradition of social control, has eased censorship in recent years and become an Asian entertainment hub. But the authorities say its population is still largely conservative. — AFP



Movies







Why 'Creed' was Sylvester Stallone's toughest role

early 40 years after Sylvester Stallone introduced audiences to Rocky Balboa, the actor's return for his seventh shot at the character in "Creed" has propelled him into a surprise awards-season contender-a status he hasn't claimed for a long time. "I actually am startled," says Stallone, 69, in a recent interview at an upscale Beverly Hills hotel. "It's a character that I love and never thought I'd play again. I didn't think it would resonate like it did, especially with a newer generation. I never went into the film thinking this is going to be a transformative performance. I just thought Rocky has a lot of issues, a lot of problems. He's like all of us."



If Stallone sounds like a retired champ, the story line fits his real life. In the '80s and '90s, Stallone-along with Bruce Willis and Arnold Schwarzenegger-ruled the action industry with tough-guy hits like "Rambo," "Demolition Man," "Cliffhanger" and "Cobra." But those kinds of midbudget action films are no longer an essential part of a movie industry that relies on comicbook sagas and reboots. The real draw of "The Fast and the Furious" franchise isn't Vin Diesel's biceps, but the cars. And many of the less macho leading male stars of today-Ryan Gosling, Jake Gyllenhaal, Joseph-Gordon Levitt, James Franco, Oscar Isaac and Michael Fassbender-tend to be slender, sensitive types. Art Streiber: Location: SLS Hotel, Beverly Hills

Main attraction

Stallone says that Rocky's appeal has always been that he's an Everyman. Although he's nothing like Rocky in real life-he's soft spoken, a poet not a fighter, and he peppers references to Shakespeare and Homer in conversation, often sounding like a high-school English teacher-he's managed to age with his on-screen alter ego in real time. "You just take from your own life experiences, and I've had many peaks and valleys," Stallone says. "It's confounding, because you think with age you acquire a surety of choice and perception. Quite often, it's just the opposite. You realize the older you get, the less certain everything is." He's had to ask friends if "Creed" really is a good movie. "I'm not sure if I trust my own impressions anymore," he admits.

The movie, which opened in November, is the first "Rocky" film Stallone didn't write himself. The

Warner Bros release, financed for \$35 million by MGM and New Line, was directed and co-written by Ryan Coogler, the 29-year-old Sundance wunderkind behind "Fruitvale Station," who grew up watching the boxing movie series with his dad. In this latest chapter, Rocky isn't the main attraction. He coaches Adonis Johnson (Michael B. Jordan), the son of his late rival and pal Apollo Creed (Carl Weathers). The surprise success of "Creed," which grossed more than \$100 million domestically, has given Stallone a renewed spring in his step. The performance has earned him his first Golden Globe nomination since "Rocky" and a National Board of Review award as best supporting actor.

Stretching his muscles For many years, Stallone tried to stretch his

muscles as a serious thespian without much luck. It's ironic that the role that typecast Stallone for most of his career, paving the way for all those "Rambo" and "Expendables" sequels, has finally set him on a dramatic path. "It's changed everything," says the actor, who lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Jennifer Flavin. "Now my kids will actually listen to me for five minutes. Like, 'Ohyou got nominated for something.' I get some respect." "Creed" was the hardest "Rocky" for Stallone. He wasn't sure if he even wanted to step back into the ring, since he'd already concluded 2006's "Rocky Balboa," which was supposed to be the franchise's finale, on an upbeat note. "To resurrect Rocky under the premise that you're dying is a tough sell," Stallone says of the subplot in "Creed," in which Rocky's diagnosed with cancer. "I kept saying, 'I'd be interested, but can the neighbor be sick, and Rocky helps?' I didn't know if people wanted to see him sick."

Stallone allowed Coogler the freedom to work on the first draft of "Creed" with co-writer Aaron Covington. But Stallone, also a producer of the film, was active in shaping Rocky's journeyand his dialogue. "When it comes to Rocky," Stallone says, "his world is the size of a matchbook cover. It's very tight. The more simplified you keep it, the better." He recalls studio executives offering notes over the years for the different U-turns Rocky has faced. "Rocky never existed," Stallone says. "It's a fairy tale. It's a myth. I love allegories, and I love very much 'The Iliad' and 'The Odyssey.' I wasn't doing a documentary. I was trying to create a modern-day fable." "You think with age you acquire a surety of choice and perception," Stallone says. "Quite often it's just the opposite."

Art Streiber for Variety

Even though Rocky is part of his DNA, Stallone turned to an acting coach to prepare for "Creed"-the first time he's done that for a role since 1997 drama "Cop Land." "I just started to understand how you break down moments," Stallone says. "What are the obstacles you're overcoming? Who is this character you're playing? Who do they remind you of in real life?" Stallone compares himself to a professional athlete who enlists a trainer to stay in shape. "You need that perspective to push you over that chasm of fear," he says. This was the rare "Rocky" in which he isn't physically hit. "I'm just carrying over the injuries from the other movies," he jokes. "I start to walk toward the ring, and I bleed." It was his co-star who took a beating in "Creed." During the film's final fight, Coogler noticed that a slow-motion blow to Jordan's face didn't look convincing. Stallone finally suggested that Jordan take the shot for real. "The expression 'I saw stars'-I now know what that looks like,"

Jordan says. "I was down for a minute."

Stallone exposed himself to emotional punches that were far more painful. He first met with Coogler in mid-2012. The young director had wanted to make a new "Rocky" because it was a franchise he loved watching as a kid. When Coogler's dad got sick from a rare vitamin deficiency that caused his muscles to atrophy, he got the idea for a "Rocky" reboot in which the character fell ill. "I wanted to see my dad's hero go through something similar to what we were going through," Coogler says. Yet "Creed" isn't just a son's homage to his father. It's also a dad's valentine to his boy. In July 2012, Stallone's son Sage died of a heart attack at 36, shortly after that first meeting with Coogler. Stallone was devastated. Sage had played Rocky's son in 1990's "Rocky V," and Stallone would often think about his son while on the "Creed" set. "I wanted to pay respect to him," he says, "and share those feelings with people who have undergone a tremendous loss."

"Creed" honors Sage in a gut-wrenching moment that brings Stallone's pain to the screen. In a scene midway through the film, Adonis holds up a picture of Rocky's son, who has moved to Vancouver to escape the shadow of his famous father. The image-a young Sage, wearing

script to "Rocky" in a fever dream. Before he was sucked into the action-movie vortex, he wanted to star as Edgar Allan Poe in a biopic. Throughout his career, the more intellectual side of his personality often came into conflict with the meatheads he portrayed onscreen. To find other creative outlets, he not only launched side jobs as a screenwriter ("First Blood," "Cliffhanger") and director ("Staying Alive," "The Expendables"), he also moonlights as a painter who creates Kafkaesque portraits on large, colorful canvases, with subjects that range from his mother to Rocky himself. "He had an exhibit in Russia," says Kellan Lutz, a friend. "I would like to buy one or

By now, the story of how Stallone became famous by penning the screenplay for 1976's "Rocky" in a few days, insisting that MGM cast him as the star, is well known. "Rocky" director John G. Avildsen says that he wasn't excited to crack open the script, because he had no interest in boxing. "I finally read it," he says. "On the second and third page, the guy is talking to his turtle, and I was charmed." Stallone says that the Hollywood movie-making business is markedly different now than it was in the '70s. "It's less instinctual and more mercurial," he notes, before Apollo's death. "There's a lot there," Stallone says, adding that he recently bumped into Weathers, who looked as imposing as ever. "I can't believe I got in the ring with him," Stallone says.



"Even if it was play fighting." Coogler is startled to hear that Stallone has already let the cat out of the bag about their plan. "Oh no!" he says with a sigh. "There are no secrets with Sly." Jordan sounds more skeptical. "So it's going to be a CGI version of Sly?" he teases, adding that he'd like to be in the next film. Sylvester Stallone and Burgess Meredith in 'Rocky' REX/Shutterstock. As for his non-"Rocky" career, Stallone is more ambivalent about continuing as an action star. He hopes that "Creed" finally leads the way to more dramatic roles. "I had never, ever thought of myself as an action person," he says. "I'm just not that athletic. I'm not naturally a mesomorph. I'm actually kind of thin. But I do like the physical challenge." He adds that shooting tenptole action movies is physically grueling. "I never got tremendous fulfillment from it. Because it becomes a tug of war between exasperation and exhaustion. Very rarely does it all go well.

It's kind of like one of those triathlons." Stallone had previously said publicly that he was working on "Rambo V," but he thinks the character is done. "The heart's willing, but the body says, 'Stay home!" he says. "It's like fighters that go back for one last round and get clobbered. Leave it to someone else." He's also not involved in the "Rambo" TV series, which focuses on the character's son. "I don't want to cast aspersions," Stallone says, "but it's delicate to try to replace a character with his son. I've seen the son of Flicka, the son of Tarzan, the son of King Kong. It's a very difficult premise."

With more than 20 scripts to his name, Stallone admits that he's struggled to come up with new stories. "I find writing very debilitating, exposing," he says. "It can be a very noisy, angry neighbor." He wonders whether he's inspired by the same material he once was. "What would I write today?" he asks "I don't know. I would have to retool my thinking and realize it would not be some grand adventure. It would be about something biographical-the journeys of a young man trying to make it in the world." As for his Oscar prospects, Stallone is unfamiliar with the award season gauntlet. That may explain why he hasn't been as present at cocktail parties and lunches as some of the other aspiring nominees. He's not even sure he should join the campaign trail. "Do you think it makes a difference?" he asks.

If Stallone does land an Oscar nomination, he'll at least be better dressed for the occasion this time around. He remembers attending the 1977 ceremony in a rented tux. As his car pulled up to the show, his bow tie broke. "Bam!" Stallone says. "The chauffeur said, 'Hey do you want to borrow my tie?' I go,

'Nah I don't think it's going to matter.' I put my collar on the outside. The undershirt was showing. It was just so street. And by the way, I was perceived as being arrogant. No, I'm just poorly dressed. I had no style." He lost for actor, but was brought up onstage when "Rocky" was named best picture over "All the President's Men" and "Taxi Driver." "I felt as though I peaked in 1977," Stallone says. "Your film got an award. Now what? It was an incredible amount of success from nowhere." He likes to tell young actors to savor every moment. "When you're in the center of the storm, you miss all this incredible energy," Stallone says. "It's like a tsunami." — Reuters



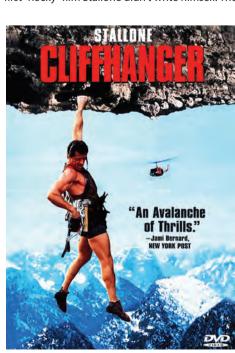
boxing gloves, posing with Stallone in front of a punching bag-is from a family album. "I remember the first time I saw the photo, I was heartbroken," says Coogler, who urged Stallone to give him the picture. "I thought it wouldn't be right not to have a representation of Sage in the movie." "It's a character that I love and never thought I'd play again. I didn't think it would resonate like it did, especially with a newer genera-

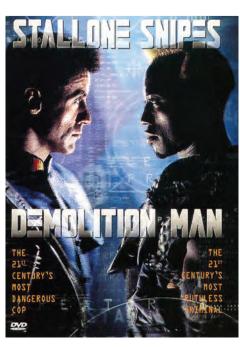
Sylvester Stallone

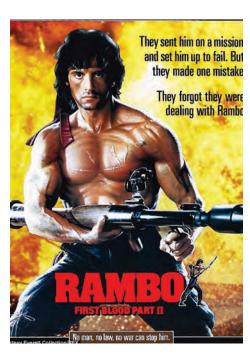
Stallone had originally resisted the idea. "It took a while," he says, his voice softening. "I really didn't want to do it-I swear to you. It's just too painful. It's rough. There is no closure. There is nothing. The wonderful thing about acting is that it's a release. I can take some solace in that." Stallone, who grew up on the East Coast, was born to a working-class family. He harbored dreams of acting, and was-according to Hollywood lore-dead broke when he wrote the explaining how all studio executives make decisions based on numbers. "I think it makes the movies worse. 'Rocky' today would have been a footnote in a cancelled office meeting. It just wouldn't have worked."

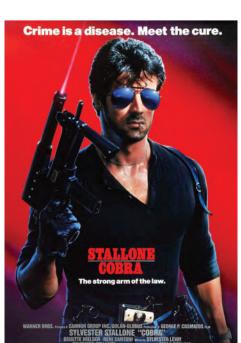
Stallone is gunning to make more "Creed"

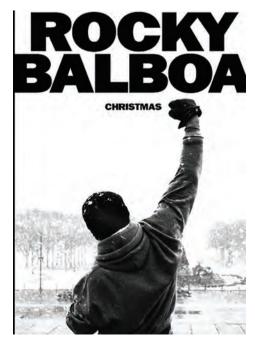
films. "There's no doubt that we're making a 'Creed 2," says MGM CEO Gary Barber. Stallone says that he's not sure Coogler-who is in talks for Marvel's "Black Panther"-will return in the director's chair. "There's a diminishing time acceptance of a sequel," Stallone says. "Three years is a little much." But if he's not back as the director, Coogler will be an executive producer, and he's already been batting around ideas with Stallone for the next installment. One option would be a linear story with Adonis that mirrors the plot of "Rocky IV." "You'll have him face a different opponent, which I would say is a more ferocious, big Russian," Stallone says. But Stallone lights up when he reveals another idea they are considering: a "Godfather II"-like sequel set in the past,











Music & Movies



Matt Damon, left, and Luciana Barroso attend the National Board of Review Awards gala at Cipriani 42nd Street on Tuesday in New York. — AP photos

with multiple tributes.

actor for "Creed."

he was."

over-sharer.

hoo!"

VIEW

Matt Damon

year's winner for best actor in "The Martian"revealed that when he was shopping around

1997's "Good Will Hunting," the fact that

Stallone starred in "Rocky," after writing the

screenplay, kept him from letting another

actor from stealing his movie. "Believe me,

they really wanted to take it away from us,"

Damon said, as he credited Stallone with both

his and Ben Affleck's acting careers. He

revealed that studio executives thought,

"God, Leonardo DiCaprio would be so good in

this" of the screenplay he co-wrote. But, he

added, "every time they said, 'You can't do

this,' we said, 'It's been done before." Then

came Stallone's award for best supporting

Ryan Coogler

a sprawling introduction to his hero-he

watched Stallone growing up in all the

"Rocky" movies. On the first day on the

"Creed" set, Coogler was surprised to see

Stallone arrive with four pages of notes for a

character he's played since 1976. "He was like

a malleable piece of clay, but a piece of clay that's been a movie star for 40-plus years,"

Coogler said. He noted that he's often asked

how he directed Stallone. "I still don't know,"

Coogler admitted. "I tried to see him for who

The National Board of Review gala, where

the winners are announced in advance, is

always like the un-televised rehearsal dinner

for the Golden Globes. Yet this year's ceremo-

ny at Cipriani 42nd Street, held as the Oscar

ballots are due in mere hours, could actually influence the Academy Awards nominations

next week. When the NBR announced "Mad

Max: Fury Road" as best picture last month, the selection drew snickers around the blo-

gosphere. But that was before the action tent-

pole starring Tom Hardy became the surprise

darling of many critics' groups. Director

George Miller proved to be the night's best

duced him, had been suffering from a "tum-

my bug" and hadn't eaten a bite. He also offered his surprise at collecting year-end

accolades. "I didn't think we would still be

talking about it," Miller said of his epic. "Yet

here we are, still in conversation. In my home,

our kids called it the National Board of Woo-

He said that Nicholas Hoult, who intro-

Director Ryan Coogler took the stage with



Actor Finn Wittrock, from left, director Adam McKay and actor John Magaro.



Actor Nicholas Hoult, left, and director George Miller.

Actor Sylvester Stallone.



Actress Jessica Chastain.



Actress Brie Larson. Kristen Stewart

launching his career at NBR dinner

■he National Board of Review dinner on Tuesday night in Manhattan doubled as Brie Larson continued her awards streak a victory lap for an old Hollywood by landing a best actress statue for "Room." champ, as Sylvester Stallone was showered "I've been working since I was a kid, and watched fancy things on TV, and never thought real people go to them-I thought you were bred and born into it," she said. "I Early in the evening, Matt Damon-this didn't know a girl from Sacramento could make it this far."

Jennifer Jason Leigh

Brie Larson

Jennifer Jason Leigh, named best supporting actress for "The Hateful Eight," called her part in the Quentin Tarantino Western the role of a lifetime. "It was freezing, the costumes weighed 100 pounds, I was covered in blood and chained to another actor for six months," she said. "Honestly, I've never had more fun."

Ridley Scott

Ridley Scott, the best director winner for "The Martian," described his film as a drama, a comedy and an action movie all rolled into one. "I'm proud of 'The Martian,' because it could only be fulfilled with my special team," he said, including the actors who "made it fly."

Jessica Chastain introduced the prolific director, as she recalled the first time she saw "Alien" as a girl. "I remember sitting in my room with that borrowed VHS," she said. "At that young age, that film had brought a novel concept to my childhood home-there's more than one kind of role for an actress."

Jason Segel

Jason Segel shared a story about meeting Jacob Tremblay from "Room," who won the best newcomer award. The 9-year-old actor recognized him by asking: "Are you the Muppets guy?" "I told him I was and we became fast friends," Segel said. "Later, he came back eager to introduce me to his new friend Johnny Depp. I told him I was too shy. In reality, I was worried it would look like I used a 10-year-old to meet Johnny Depp." Tremblay's speech had the crowd oohing. Standing on a crate, he told the audience he needed a minute. "This is my first award and that makes me really happy," he said. "The mind of me is so blown." He shared the breakthrough prize with Abraham Attah from "Beasts of No Nation," who flew in from Ghana for the ceremony. Attah noted that after the shoot, one of the producers on the film enrolled him in a private school, where he's now studying.

Cary Fukunaga

Cary Fukunaga accepted the NBR's Freedom of Expression Award for "Beasts of No Nation." He extended his appreciation to the producers at Red Crown Productions for standing by him, even as the budget for his indie ballooned due to unexpected costs

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from shooting in Africa. "You allowed me to make this film without trying to destroy the vision of what we were working for," he said. "Thanks for protecting me." The night wasn't without a pair of swipes at a certain Republican frontrunner. When emcee Willie Geist brought up the Twitter feud Samuel L. Jackson was having with Donald Trump, the actor offered a quip: "I'd say f-k him, but this is a polite crowd." Later, "Inside Out's" Lewis Black (who voices Anger) was presenting best-animated film to director Pete Docter, and he suggested that if he'd seen the Pixar hit as a kid, he would've saved himself years of therapy. "I think if Donald Trump had seen this film when he was 10, he'd be a better person today," Black said. "For those of you who didn't applaud, I pray for your souls."

Damon credits **Stallone** for

Meanwhile, Stallone, 69, managed to cement his status as the perennial underdog in his acceptance speech. He leapt on the stage, and gave Coogler a big embrace. "You are the future," he said. "I'm the past." He talked about his passion for storytelling. "I love all artists," he said. "As we get older, we become better actors. Quite often, the opportunity doesn't present itself." — Reuters

Jennifer Jason Leigh

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Director Ridley Scott and wife Giannina Facio-Scott.





Emily Blunt, left, and Benicio del Toro.



Samuel L. Jackson, left, and Jennifer Jason Leigh.



Jason Segel







Visitors walk through the China Ice and Snow World during the Harbin International Ice and Snow Festival in Harbin, northeast China's Heilongjiang province on January 5, 2016. Over one million visitors are expected to attend the spectacular Harbin Ice Festival, where buildings of ice are bathed in ethereal lights and international ice sculptors compete for honors. — AFP

India's Mumbai to get 'world's first slum museum'

he teeming Indian metropolis of Mumbai-home to the neighborhood made famous by the film "Slumdog Millionaire"-is to get the world's first slum museum, organizers said yesterday. The museum will showcase some of the myriad of objects that are produced every year in Dharavi, one of Asia's biggest slums and the setting for Danny Boyle's hit 2008 movie. "It will be the first museum ever created in a slum," Spanish artist Jorge Rubio, who is behind the initiative, told AFP.

The small mobile museum will open in February for two months and display everything from pottery and textiles to recycled items, Rubio added. The organizers of 'Design Museum Dharavi' say they want to challenge people's perceptions of slums by highlighting the creative talent that resides in them. More than a million people live in the maze of alleyways that make up Dharavi with many working in the area's mini-factories, which produce every kind of goods imaginable.

Following the success of "Slumdog Millionaire", the slum has become a tourist attraction and guides offer tours of its hundreds of workshops. In 2010 Britain's Prince Charles cited Dharavi as a role model for sustainable living, praising its habit of recycling waste. Last year the slum hosted its first art biennale. More than half of Mumbai's 20 million inhabitants live in slums, enduring cramped conditions, poor ventilation and a lack of toilets — AFP



Alligator wrestler Pharaoh Gayles wrestling an alligator at the Miccosukee Indian Village in Miami, Florida.



On billboards across the Florida Everglades, a burly Native American man pries open an alligator's mouth, pressing his face dangerously close to the reptile's 80 glinting teeth.



Alligator wrestling is considered a Native American tradition, but animal rights group have criticized the shows.

Florida Indian tribe's last alligator wrestler bows out

n billboards across the Florida Everglades, a burly Native American man pries open an alligator's mouth, pressing his face dangerously close to the reptile's 80 glinting teeth. "Adventures Await," the ads promise, as motorists whiz by. The man's name is Rocky Jim, Jr, a 44-year-old Miccosukee Indian who has been wrestling alligators for 31 years, entertaining countless tourists from a sand pit and pond beneath a chickee hut along the Tamiami Trail, a two-lane road linking Miami to the port city of Tampa.

But on the final Sunday of 2015, the last remaining Miccosukee Indian in the century-old tradition of wrestling alligators decided it was time to step down, leaving no successors in sight among the tribe of around 600 people. The end came just minutes into the 1 o'clock show, when Jim coaxed the alligator's mouth open by gently tapping its snout, then placed his hand inside. The move is perilous only if something touches the alligator's palate-a drop of sweat, a grain of sand-causing the jaw to reflexively snap shut. While pulling out his hand, he rotated it slightly and accidentally grazed a tooth.

The feeling was like "a door slamming on your hand. With sharp teeth," Jim said in an interview later. But in the moment, as he looked down at his palm and forearm encased in the alligator's jaw, he had only one thought: "Don't shake." "If it shakes, my hand is going to go with it," he told AFP, describing the thrashing motion alligators use to slice up fresh meat, much the same way as sharks. "Its natural instinct is to do that," said Jim, who had been bitten several times before.

Native tradition

Alligator wrestling is considered a Native American tradition, first popularized in the early 1900s by a white man, Henry Coppinger, Jr, the US-born son of Irish immigrants, according to historian Patsy West. Coppinger himself wrestled alligators, and recruited natives-who lived alongside the reptiles and hunted them-to perform, too. Paying crowds flocked to see men climb on alligators' backs, open their jaws and flip them over-with the effect of making them go limp for a few minutes. But today, the tradition is waning. Animal rights group have criticized the shows, casino revenue rather than alligator tourism often provides cash flow for native tribes, and Indian youths are increasingly turning to careers in modern society.

"The skills are not as common as they once were," said author and anthropologist Brent Weisman. Some native alligator wrestlers still remain among the larger Seminole tribe of

some 2,000 people, which shares a historical connection to the Miccosukees. Those that remain "have decided to do it very deliberately, not for a tourist attraction as it once was, but as a way of keeping traditional Seminole culture alive," Weisman

'Read their body language'

Jim was 13 when he learned to handle alligators from his father, Rocky Jim, Sr They would go out in the canals of the Everglades in search of turtles, and the elder would demonstrate how to move the creatures away without hurting them, or getting hurt. "Just see how they are moving and how they are going to react," Jim recalled his father saying. "Just read their body language." Jim was in his 30s when the tribe asked him to perform at the Indian Village, a tourist stop that sells crafts, offers airboat rides and hearty foods like pumpkin fry bread and catfish. He agreed.



Far from a punch-out, smack-down event as the name "alligator wrestling" might imply, Jim became famous for pulling wild, hissing alligators heavier than his own 278-pound (125-kilogram) frame out of the water by their tails, then tip-toeing around them, stroking them, tapping them, even getting close enough to touch his nose to the snouts of the most aggressive among them. His secret? "We just respect them," he said. When he first saw Jim perform, Pharaoh Gayles, a 25-year-old wrestler of Puerto Rican, African-American and Seminole descent, "thought he was a little bit crazy." But he watched, and learned. "He just really knows what he is doing and he has an understanding of the animal."

An owl and a shadow

Recently, arthritis in his knee began to slow Jim down, and he cut back to part time. But this winter, an annual festival beckoned. He performed five shows on the first day, as Gayles knelt in the pit with him and narrated for the audiences. Driving home that evening to his home in a Miami suburb, Jim saw a shadow of a man by the side of the road. A couple of yards later, an owl flew in front of him. "For us, an owl means somebody will pass, and a shadow is the same thing, so when they are together it is a bad thing," Jim said. The next day, the alligator

Fortunately, the animal did not thrash. Gayles helped open its jaws, which left Jim with seven puncture wounds, and his mind made up to retire. "I was just really waiting for the right time. I guess this was the right time," he said. For Gus Batista, who wrestles alligators on a Seminole reservation, Jim "has been a big partaker in this beautiful art" and "has earned the right to bow out honorably." And while Jim's absence leaves a void, he has already begun teaching his 13-year-old son to catch baby alligators-not necessarily to make it his trade, but to keep a tribal tradition alive. — AFP

Rocky Jim, Jr, a 44-year-old Miccosukee Indian who has been wrestling alligators for 31 years, entertained countless tourists. — AFP photos