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See Page 7



150 FILS

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## KANDARI WHISKED OFF TO HOSPITAL, MEETS FAMILY

LAST KUWAITI AT GITMO HELD 14 YEARS WITHOUT CHARGE



Min 07°

Max 16°

High Tide

13:12 &amp; 23:35

Low Tide

06:38 &amp; 17:27

conspiracy theories

### A REAL CONSPIRACY THEORY



By Badrya Darwish

badrya\_d@kuwaittimes.net

The most bizarre news I heard recently was reports about organized attacks targeting women during New Year festivities in various cities in Germany. Honestly, when I heard the news, my first thought was, "Oh God, I hope they don't pin it on the poor refugees". It took only half a second before the news confirmed my fear.

What happened was that gangs of hundreds of young men - described as North African or Arab in appearance - surrounded women near the places where year-end celebrations were taking place and harassed, robbed and in at least two cases, raped them. Now there are big demonstrations demanding the expulsion of the recent influx of Syrian refugees. The police have noted that the attacks were clearly organized and even repeated across Cologne, Hamburg and Stuttgart - all big cities.

How come three cities so far away from each other experienced the same type of attacks, same behavior, same pattern, same modus operandi...as if someone masterminded this and is trying to pin it on the refugees. I doubt that they were refugees with the way it happened - so well organized and orchestrated. I'm not saying that all refugees are saints. But I very much doubt that a Syrian fleeing his country with his family and waiting in camps in Germany to be resettled would come up with such horrendous actions.

It's impossible. Someone is benefitting from these attacks with the intention of spoiling the reputation of refugees - especially Arab and Muslim ones. Now when any murder takes place anywhere on earth, someone will witness that he heard the assailant say Allahu Akbar!

Why has it taken the police so long to identify these gangs of criminals? Whatever else they are, we definitely know they are criminals and gangs and the police in every city know the gangsters there. Are there not any CCTV cameras anywhere in Germany? Why hasn't anyone used these cameras to identify and arrest those involved? Tell us if they are Syrian refugees or not? Because I'm sure they have the photo of every Syrian refugee who has entered Germany.

I would bet that there are few Syrian refugees right now who are interested or willing to do anything that would give a bad name to their community. This was a deliberate and organized series of attacks to do exactly that. And in the future we will probably see worse.

### US RELEASES IRAN ROCKET FIRE VIDEO

DUBAI: The US Navy yesterday released footage it said showed Iranian Revolutionary Guard vessels firing rockets near warships and commercial traffic in the strategic Strait of Hormuz late last month, a move raising tensions between the two nations despite the recent nuclear deal. The Navy said it released the footage in response to a Freedom of Information Act request, though it also comes as US ally Saudi Arabia has cut ties to the Islamic Republic following attacks on diplomatic posts there after the kingdom's execution of a Shiite cleric.

Continued on Page 15



KUWAIT: Fayez Al-Kandari (second right), the last Kuwaiti inmate held at the Guantanamo Bay prison, is welcomed by his father (second left), brother (left) and Khaled Al-Oudah (right), President of the Committee of Families of Kuwaiti Detainees in Guantanamo, at a military hospital yesterday. — AFP

KUWAIT: The last Kuwaiti prisoner in the US Guantanamo Bay prison returned home yesterday to a family reception after 14 years of detention, the head of a detainee group said. Fayez Mohammed Ahmed Al-Kandari was the last of 12 Kuwaitis held for long terms in the prison as the United States prepares to close the facility. "He looked tired but his morale was very high. He was welcomed at the airport by his father, two brothers and uncle," Khaled Al-Oudah, head of the society of families of Kuwaiti prisoners in Guantanamo, who was also present, told AFP.

Kandari was immediately taken to a military hospital for medical examination where dozens of relatives led by his mother were allowed to greet and talk to him freely, Odah said. The former prisoner was brought back to the Gulf state aboard a private jet which flew from Guantanamo to the state via Casablanca, Morocco. He had been held without trial in the Caribbean detention center since 2002, and his return to Kuwait now means the facility has a population of 104. US President Barack Obama pledged to shut Guantanamo when he took office in 2009, but his efforts have been repeatedly thwarted by Congress.

Odah said Kandari will remain in hospital for some time and only his close family members will be allowed to visit him. He will then be taken to a rehabilitation center for more than six months after which prosecutors will interrogate him and decide whether to pursue legal action, Odah said. Odah thanked the efforts of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and other authorities in securing the return of Kandari.

Continued on Page 15

## GCC CONDEMNS IRANIAN INTERFERENCE

SAUDI ARABIA MAY TAKE MORE MEASURES AGAINST TEHRAN

RIYADH: Foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council expressed their "total support" yesterday for Saudi Arabia in its diplomatic row with predominantly Shiite Iran. The GCC "forcefully condemns the attacks on Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran," said a statement, referring to the sacking of Riyadh's embassy and consulate by demonstrators angered over its execution of a prominent Shiite cleric and dissident.

The statement, following an extraordinary ministerial meeting of the six-member group, criticized "Iranian interference

in Saudi Arabian affairs" over its denunciation of Nimr Al-Nimr's execution a week ago. It said Tehran's criticism had "directly incited the aggressions targeting Saudi diplomatic missions". The GCC "totally supports decisions taken by Saudi Arabia to combat terrorism" and "has total confidence in the independence and integrity of Saudi justice". Nimr was a cleric in Saudi Arabia's Shiite community who was behind demonstrations calling for better treatment of the minority, but he was executed for terrorism.

Continued on Page 15

### D&G UNVEILS DESIGNS FOR MUSLIM WOMEN

ROME: Dolce and Gabbana, designers best known for womenswear inspired by the sultry sensualism of southern Italy, are attacking the booming Middle Eastern market for high fashion

with a collection of abayas and hijabs. The Abaya line, which conforms with the modesty requirements of most versions of Islam, was launched last week

Continued on Page 15



ROME: Images show models wearing creations of Dolce & Gabbana's Abaya line, a collection of abayas and hijabs billed as capturing the "allure of the Middle East". — AFP



MEXICO CITY: Drug kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman is escorted to a helicopter at the airport on Friday following his recapture during an intense military operation in Los Mochis in Sinaloa State. — AFP

## MEXICAN DRUG LORD SENT BACK TO PRISON

MEXICO CITY: Betrayed by his desire to make a biopic, Mexican drug kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman was back yesterday in the prison he escaped from six months ago, amid calls to extradite him to the US. The world's most wanted drug baron was arrested in a military raid early Friday that left five suspects dead in Los Mochis, a coastal city in his native northwestern state of Sinaloa. Hours later, the Sinaloa cartel kingpin was flown in a military helicopter from Mexico City to the Altiplano maximum-security prison, the scene of his daring July 11 escape some 90 km west of the capital.

On July 11, after just 17 months at Altiplano, Guzman slipped through a hole in his cell's shower, climbed on a motorcycle mounted on rails, and traveled 1.5 km through a tunnel to freedom. But six months later, Guzman was back in the prison after authorities located him, in part because the kingpin wanted to make a biographical film about himself, according to Attorney General Arely Gomez. Gomez said an "important aspect that allowed us to locate him was that we discovered Guzman's intention to make a biographical film, for which he established contact with actresses and producers".

Continued on Page 15

Ministry seeks to prevent price increases after subsidies lifted



Officer, soldier killed near Cairo, hotel attack victims stable



'Perfect' Djokovic thrashes Nadal to win Qatar Open



'Unique' Messi masterclass puts Barca back on top





In Brief

SPEAKER RETURNS AFTER  
CAIRO, GENEVA TOUR

**KUWAIT:** National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem returned home yesterday after a tour that saw him visit Cairo and Geneva. On arrival, Ghanem was received by Minister of Justice and Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Yaacoub Al-Sane, National Assembly Secretary General Allam Al-Kandari, Egyptian ambassador to Kuwait Yasser Atef, Assistant Secretary General for National Assembly Security Guard Affairs Major General Khaled Al-Waqet and Assistant Secretary-General of the National Assembly for Public Relations and Organizations Mahdi Al-Mutairat. — KUNA



SESSION TO DISCUSS  
AUDIT'S REMARKS

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Rapporteur of the parliament's priorities committee MP Ahmad Lari said that the parliament plans to allocate a session by the end of this month to discuss the government's report concerning the State Audit Bureau's remarks. Lari added that the parliament is still waiting for the government's study on handling the falling oil prices and rationalizing subsidies. In addition, Lari stressed that the current term is expected to witness passing 23 priorities including public tenders, the payroll strategic alternative, the judiciary independence and senior posts.



GCC SUPPORTS UN  
EFFORTS ON YEMEN

**RIYADH:** GCC Secretary General Abdulatif Al-Zayani yesterday re-affirmed support for the diplomatic efforts exerted by the UN envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmad to "push forward the political process" for Yemen, aimed at resolving the crisis in this country. Zayani reiterated backing for the UN efforts during a meeting with the envoy of Yemen, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia yesterday. He stressed on necessity of implementing the UN Security Council resolution 2216, which imposed an arms embargo on the Houthis and their allies. —KUNA



Photo

o f t h e d a y



KUWAIT: Birds and tree branches, captured on a winter day in Kuwait. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

RED CRESCENT REACHES REFUGEES IN MOUNTAINS  
IICO DELIVERS AID TO REFUGEES IN JORDAN

**BEIRUT/AMMAN:** Teams of Kuwait Red Crescent Society delivered food and other necessities to Syrian refugees in Iqlim Al-Kharroub, a mountainous region located southeast of the Lebanese capital. Three hundred and fifty food rations and 700 bed-clothes were given to refugee families in the region, part of the Mount Lebanon province, said Menhel Al-Enezi, a member of the field team. The Kuwaiti teams also provided identical materials, sweets and toys to the refugees and their children in Shebaa, a town in southeastern Lebanon.

Meanwhile, Yousef Boutros, operations' coordinator at the Lebanese Red Cross, affirmed that the ongoing Kuwaiti aid deliveries to the refugees will certainly help them cope with the hard winter conditions, lauding the volunteers for braving heavy snow and rains for securing the aid to the impoverished

Syrians, many live in shanty towns in remote and border regions.

KRCS officials have vowed to do everything possible to help the refugees no matter how hard the weather conditions may be. Lebanon has been hit with a snow storm that has rendered color of much of the mountainous region white, with some villages being isolated due to the piling snow. The society is celebrating its golden jubilee today, boasting a long record of relief and humanitarian missions worldwide.

Military plane

Meanwhile, a Kuwaiti military plane has arrived at Marka Military Airport in Amman, Jordan, carrying around 19 tons of humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees at refugee camps in Jordan. Kuwait's fresh aid, which will be distributed in collaboration with the

Jordanian government, mainly includes food-stuff, blankets and detergents, a Kuwaiti diplomat said.

It is part of Kuwait's planned 40-ton relief aid campaign, launched by this Gulf nation's International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO), in order to ease out the woes of Syrian refugees, especially in winter, the acting Charge d'affaires of the Kuwaiti embassy in Jordan Abdurraheem Al-Zaabi said.

He stressed the significance of humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees in light of bad weather conditions in Jordan, noting that Kuwait's aid also aims to help in the alleviation of the financial burdens shouldered by the Jordanian government due to hosting 1.4 million Syrian refugees. Kuwait's humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees in host countries comes at the behest of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA



BEIRUT: Teams of Kuwait Red Crescent Society deliver food and other necessities to Syrian refugees.



Officials oversee the process of unloading aid to be delivered to Syrian refugees in Jordan.



AMMAN: A Kuwaiti military plane delivers 19 tons of aid to Syrian refugees in Jordan. —KUNA





# MINISTRY ACTS TO PREVENT PRICE INCREASE WHEN SUBSIDIES LIFTED

‘NO THREAT TO AVIATION SAFETY’ AT AIRPORT



Minister Yousuf Al-Ali

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry Yousuf Al-Ali reviewed his ministry's plan with the ministerial economic committee to control prices if subsidies are lifted and fuel prices are increased. Ali stressed that strict measures would be taken to prevent any unjustified price increases and that special inspection teams would be deployed in various markets and outlets to monitor prices. In a related development, informed sources said that the ministerial economic committee was currently considering rationalizing electricity, gas and water subsidies because they consume 70 percent of the total subsidies provided by the government. The sources added that four different scenarios had

been discussed with relation to fuel prices and that it was proposed to increase prices in three stages until 2018-2019.

### Airport's runway

Acting Director of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation Emad Al-Jlowi said the eastern runway at Kuwait International Airport had been built in 1984 and was too old and needed refurbishment. "Recent rain slightly affected the runway," he said, denying that the runway's condition posed any threat to aviation safety. "We have cleaned the runway of all gravel," he added, underlining that the department was very keen on achieving the highest levels of safety on the runway and was constantly removing all gravel from it. Jlowi added that the western run-

way will reopen next month once the current periodic maintenance operations are over. "The eastern runway will immediately be maintained then," he underlined.

### Kuwait Airways

The government referred a bill to the parliament asking permission to take KD 600 million from state reserves to pay the balance of Kuwait Airways' capital.

### Road development

The Ministry of Public Works' (MPW) assistant undersecretary for planning and development and the ministry's official spokesperson Abdul Mohsen Al-Enezi stressed that the ministry has a plan to develop Morocco, Fahaheel and Nuwaiseeb expressways.



By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Hawally municipality inspectors



launched a wide-scale inspection campaign in the early hours of yesterday. The campaign resulted in removing 15 abandoned trucks, 11 truckloads of

garbage from Surra, Bayan and Mishref, removing construction material waste, cleaning various roads and replacing some old garbage containers.



Firemen use a rope to get on board of a boat that was damaged near Ouha island.

# DRUGGED MAN SMASHES CARS IN SHARQ

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Responding to a video circulated over social media showing a man smashing the windows of a vehicle passing by in Sharq industrial area, the Ministry of Interior's Relations and Security Media Department explained that a police patrol was immediately dispatched to the scene and arrested the man. He was identified as a 57-year-old citizen, and was captured while behaving erratically. The department said that the man also had some illicit pills, which suggests he was under the influence of drugs at the time of the attack.

### Boats damaged

A wooden boat sustained an engine problem and water leakage near Ouha island, said security sources, noting that Salmiya rescue forces and Failaka firefighters were dispatched to evacuate the people on board and pump the water out of the boat until the engine was fixed. No casualties were reported. The same happened with an Iranian boat near the island of Miskan, and Salmiya rescue forces were dispatched to evacuate the sailors on board. No casualties were reported.

### No injuries in fire

A fire broke out in a 16 square meter warehouse located on a Wafra farm, said security sources, noting that the warehouse was used to store blankets and rugs. The fire was contained and prevented from spreading to other parts of the farm.

### Motorist hurt in crash

A female citizen suffered serious injuries when she was trapped inside her vehicle's wreckage after a collision near Sabah Al-Nasser, said security sources, noting that firemen from Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh were dispatched to the scene, who managed to

release the woman and send her to hospital for treatment.

### Fallen tree

Farwaniya firemen were dispatched to Rabiya where a huge tree had fallen outside a house, blocking the road. The tree was removed and no casualties were reported.



KUWAIT: The suspect pictured in this handout photo.



KUWAIT: The exotic orient is famous for 'Alatarah' markets which display various types of spices, as well as aromatic herbs used for cooking, popular and alternative medicines. —KUNA



# SPICE BAZAARS, A DISTINGUISHED ORIENTAL SCENE







## OOREDOO DONATES \$5,000 FOR FIGHT AGAINST RHEUMATOID

GALA DINNER HELD AT OOREDOO'S HEADQUARTER

**KUWAIT:** Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of the international Ooredoo Group, hosted a gala dinner in coordination with the Patient Helping Fund Society recently as part of a fundraising campaign entitled "Join the Fight Against Rheumatoid."

During the gala, Ooredoo Kuwait donated \$5,000 for the event's organizer, the Patients Helping Fund Society, which are aimed to raise

funds for 150 patients on their waiting lists, in an effort to make the necessary treatment available to all in need.

Commenting on the company's contribution, Mijbil Alayoub, Director of Corporate Communications at Ooredoo Kuwait said: "We always believed in the importance of playing an active role in participating to help others. We are honoured to be working with an esteemed

organization such as the Patients Helping Fund Society for this event, and we look forward to taking part in more events that contribute to the society."

Ooredoo's support to this cause comes in line with the company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy, which focuses a great deal on supporting health initiative and promoting a healthier Kuwait.



## OOREDOO'S QOUT MARKET OPENS DOORS FOR VISITORS

EXCEPTIONAL PACKAGES ON IPHONE 6S, IPHONE 6S PLUS

**KUWAIT:** Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of the international Ooredoo Group, welcomed visitors of the Qout's fifth market for this season, held yesterday at Murooj complex.

Welcoming all guests, Ooredoo offer Qout Market visitors a unique package on the iPhone 6s and iPhone 6s Plus that enable subscribers to get unlimited local minutes and SMS, 500 GB 4G+ internet subscription and an iPhone 6s

64GB. In addition to a Macbook laptop, Jawbone UP3 fitness tracker and a free 4G router at KD 60 a month.

Ooredoo team would like to encourage people of Kuwait to take part in this event and sharing the excitement with the entrepreneurs that will be displaying their own works of art and to pay a visit to the primary located Ooredoo booth to check out the exclusive offers.

The 'Qout Market' is taking place at Murooj - a Sahara Golf Club project - and will include local farm produce, artisanal food products and crafts, 'street food' section aiming at highlighting the culinary diversity of Kuwait's local food community and a section dedicated for children's activities. This market's season kicked off in November 2015 and will continue to be held twice a month until April 2016.



## NUKS-USA HONORS GULF BANK FOR PLATINUM SPONSORSHIP OF 32ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank was recently honored by the National Union of Kuwaiti Students - USA (NUKS-USA) in recognition of its participation and platinum sponsorship of the 32nd annual conference that took place in San Diego from 26-28 November 2015, under the patronage and attendance of HE the Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr. Bader Al-Essa.

Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager of Human Resources,

and Tareq Al-Saleh, Assistant General Manager for Investments, received the commemorative plaque in recognition of the Bank's role and on-going support of NUKS USA.

Hajjaj said: "We congratulate NUKS-USA on another successful conference. Gulf Bank is proud to have been a sponsor of the NUKS-USA conference for the third consecutive year. The Bank strongly believes in supporting youth

events to help empower the next generation of Kuwaitis. As part of our continuous recruitment strategy, a number of students were interviewed during the conference. We look forward to future investments in support of our youth and will continue to liaise with NUKS to keep our youth recruitment momentum going."

Gulf Bank played an important role during the conference. Gulf Bank conducted three workshops

focusing on: a post-graduate issues; gender diversity in the workplace; and career options in the investment industry. The event opened with a speech by Hajjaj discussing the emphasis Gulf Bank places on training and nurturing talented Kuwaitis. Saleh also participated as judge in the business startup idea competition. Additionally, the Bank held its popular raffle prize draw during the conference.

## FSRI, KSSS HOST WORKSHOP ON WOMEN'S HEALTH PHYSIOTHERAPY

**KUWAIT:** The Fawzia Sultan Rehabilitation Institute (FSRI), under the sponsorship of the Kuwait Society for Student Support (KSSS), hosted an educational workshop on women's health physiotherapy as part of the non-profit Institute's efforts to promote healthcare education across the Kuwaiti medical community.

The two-day workshop featured international female health physiotherapy specialist, Michelle Lyons, and was attended by local physicians and healthcare providers from both the public and private sector. The comprehensive workshop provided participants with general theoretical knowledge, as well as practical skills training, to help them develop treatment strategies for a wide range of issues affecting women including incontinence, pelvic pain, and menopause.

### Clinical practice

Dr Elham Al-Hamdan, President and Medical Director of FSRI, commented at the workshop: "At FSRI, we believe that continuing professional education is critical for improving clinical practice in all fields of healthcare. Workshops like this one help practitioners garner advanced therapeutic knowledge and insights, as well as develop and hone practical skillsets to provide an even higher level of care to patients."

She further added: "Women's health in particular is a very important topic; one that is often not given a great deal of attention in Kuwait. Our goal here has been to help broaden the knowledge of the local medical community about this specialized area, and enable them to help female patients live a happy, healthy and pain-free life."

The workshop comes as the second in a series of workshops taking place as part of a year-long educational program organized by FSRI and sponsored by KSSS. The program kicked off earlier this year with a spe-

cialized course on orthopedic physiotherapy, which took place at FSRI's Children's Evaluation and Rehabilitation Centre.

The third and final workshop under the umbrella of this program is set to take place in May of next year, and will focus on educating healthcare providers on the treatment of neurological conditions, in both children and the elderly.

### Supporting education

Talal Alarab, Chairman of the Kuwait Society for Student Support said: "We at KSSS are always looking to partner with institutions and organizations that support education, and whose goals and values are in line with our own goals and policies. We had begun working with FSRI in 2013, due to their being a non-profit institution that supports education and actively participates in many educational initiatives. Originally, the collaboration had been limited to a number of small initiatives. However, due to our belief in FSRI's mission and the need for more continuous and serious support, the partnership soon blossomed into something more long-term and we decided to sponsor this specialized three-part educational program focusing on important clinical care topics."

Dr Al-Hamdan further added: "FSRI has had a long and fruitful partnership with KSSS. In addition to the many educational workshops and courses we have organized with their support over the years, KSSS has played an instrumental role in furthering the education and training of our own staff - most recently supporting our resident speech therapist Dr Mohammed Al-Ameer in his pursuit of a doctorate degree from the United Kingdom. We look forward to building upon our successful partnership with them and are thankful to their constant support in assisting us in our cause of promoting healthcare education in the country."



**KUWAIT:** (From left) Ahmed Al-Shayji, Secretary General of the Kuwait Society for Student Support, Dr Elham Al-Hamdan, President and Medical Director of FSRI, and Talal Alarab, Chairman of the Kuwait Society for Student Support



**(From left) Dr Elham Al-Hamdan, President and Medical Director of FSRI, and Talal Alarab, Chairman of the Kuwait Society for Student Support**



**KUWAIT:** Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager, Human Resources and Tareq Al-Saleh, Assistant General Management, Investments at Gulf bank receiving the recognition award from the NUKS team.



## BANKS OFFER SCHOLARSHIPS FOR MS-LEVEL STUDIES ABROAD

**KUWAIT:** Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel said the CBK along with Kuwaiti banks offered for the second consecutive year scholarships for MS studies at top universities abroad. The offered higher studies include financing, economics, auditing and business administration, said Hashel, who doubles as Chairman of the Institute of Banking Studies (IBS), in a statement.



Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel

The initiative is part of the ongoing cooperation at the social level

between the CBK and the banks, he said, also noting the approach to up bring national cadres, capable of contributing to Kuwait development. Practically, the CBK, conventional and Islamic banks have formed a panel tasked with drawing up the studies' program. The IBS is charged with follow-up and implementation. Regulations and terms of the program are posted on the institute website.

Interested Kuwaiti university graduates can apply effective Sunday January 10th till Wednesday June 1st. MS holders benefiting from the scholarships will be free to work at any public or private bank or establishment. The freedom of choice is provided with aim of boosting the national human resources, in tandem with the socio-economic development strategy. —KUNA

## EXCELLENCE, CREATIVITY AWARD ATTRACTS KUWAITI YOUTH: OFFICIAL

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Award for Youth Excellence and Creativity, launched last November, has seen huge turnout by Kuwaiti youth, a Ministry of State for Youth Affairs official said yesterday.



Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi

More than 250 Kuwaiti young men and women have submitted their works in the ten categories of the Award, Assistant Undersecretary for Youth Development in the Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi said in a press statement.

These include entrepreneurship, education, media, culture and arts, voluntary work, sciences and technology, sports, boosting health, architecture, urban planning and, housing, and sharia sciences. Only Kuwaitis aged 14 to 34 are eligible to apply for the award, launched last November as the first of its kind in the Arab World. Deadline for application is January 14.

Mutairi stressed that the Kuwaiti youth have a spirit of entrepreneurship and creativity, and once they are offered a favorable environment, they can make achievements to enrich their society. The higher organizing committee of the Award includes institutions like the Kuwait University and the Ministries of Information, Education, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, and health, besides the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NACCL), the Public Authority for Youth (PAS), the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), the Kuwait Voluntary Work Center (KVWC) and the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

The Award boasts significant support from Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, who also chairs the higher organizing committee, Mutairi said. Launching the excellence and creativity award reflects the state's keenness on supporting youth and their projects, giving their ambitions a priority in the government work, he said. —KUNA

## PHILIPPINE AIRLINES RELAUNCHES KUWAIT - MANILA - KUWAIT ROUTE

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** Philippine Airlines Incorporated (PAL) will relaunch direct flights between Kuwait and Manila from Jan 18, 2016. "We are ready and very happy to be back in Kuwait. For some reasons we stopped the route many years back, but we are now ready to do business and serve our fellow Filipinos and other nationals desiring better services. We are here to fulfill their dreams," said Orty Liscano, Area Manager Kuwait, reminding that Philippine Airlines is among the earliest commercial airlines in Asia. Liscano urged travel agencies and media representative to assist them in spreading the news and awareness about the entry of the flag carrier and its offerings.

Al-Sawan Company is the local Philippine Airlines partner in charge of Kuwait operations, and assured its full support and cooperation to the travelling public and passengers. The announcement was made at a launch event at Holiday Inn Downtown, and representatives of various travel and tour agencies were in attendance. Reservations can be made online or by visiting its Kuwait City offices.

Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait Renato Pedro Villa lauded Philippine Airlines for the inaugural launch scheduled for next week. "We are very happy to welcome this new development, especially for our 'kababayans' (fellow Filipinos), who will now have several options for their travel plans to Manila. I am hoping that the launch of Philippine Airlines boosts relations not just economically between two friendly countries, but most importantly our tourism destinations back home. We hope to convince more Kuwaitis and other nationals to visit and enjoy the most scenic and world-class destinations throughout the country. We pray for more business, safe journeys and commercial exchanges," he added.

Flights will be four times a week: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Philippine Airlines was founded in 1941 and is the first and oldest commercial airline operating under its original name.



KUWAIT: Philippines' Ambassador Renato Villa speaks at the event.



Orty Liscano, Area Manager, Philippine Airlines speaks.



Officials pose with Ambassador Villa.

## INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND PEACE



By Labeed Abdal

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Pope Francis condemned in his speech on Christmas Day the "brutal terrorist activities" and "destroying entire peoples' legacies and cultural heritage" as well as the massacres committed in various countries worldwide. He also called for bridging dangerous gaps and abandoning violence and expressed his full support to the efforts exerted by the UN and hoped they would be fruitful and lead to peaceful solutions in Palestine and Syria.

Maintaining the current situations will eventually lead to same consequences, especially since many means of media have been using the same messages about some Muslim youth, that had been alienated for many decades and deprived justice in many parts of the Arab and Muslim world, and thus became easy targets for terrorists offering them job opportunities.

The pope said there is war and hatred everywhere nowadays. "What is left?" he exclaimed, noting that destruction was everywhere and that children were left without education, that so many

**Partnership is an important base of public-private sector relations (PPP). It also has a great role in building international relations.**

innocent lives had been lost with the result of putting more money in weapon merchants' pockets. Well, these are painful unavoidable facts. All financial and commercial bodies must be partners in creating peace and fighting poverty, lack of education, hunger and conflicts.

In case of contradiction of interest, the tasks performed by such bodies, companies as well as international organizations must be all combined and work together to achieve international peace and security if we wish to make the presence of the UN worthwhile. History has recorded many weapons and arms companies that have contributed to starting wars everywhere and this calls for more disciplinary measures, otherwise those companies and manufacturers will continue shaping international borders and wasting international peace efforts.

Partnership is an important base of public-private sector relations (PPP). It also has a great role in building international relations. Mega companies do not only contribute in forming ruling institutions, but they can also pave the way towards achieving international security and peace.

## MEDIATION IS USELESS



By Muna Al-Fuzai

muna@kuwaittimes.net

International mediation rarely works, but the important question is why does it fail? These days, the media are covering a number of reconciliation attempts being undertaken by some countries, such as Kuwait for example, between an Arab and non-Arab country, such as Egypt and Turkey on one hand and Saudi Arabia and Iran on the other.

The main objective of mediation of course is to contain conflicts and alleviate tension in the Middle East. It is well known that such steps rarely succeed to end raging disputes between states. Again, we keep wondering why we would seek reconciliation? What are the implications of the possible continuation of differences and strife? Who pays the price? And who wins?

The Middle East these days is in a deplorable situation at all fronts. The security, financial, social and political levels are all under pressure, and the continuation of this situation means that we are embarking on humanitarian disasters that will claim the lives of millions of people here.

In a previous article, I wrote about the possibility of a new world war, and I remember some of the comments that I received about exaggerating the threat. But today we are seeing some signs of a humanitarian war. In fact, the continued decline in oil prices will have serious implications economically, socially and thus security-wise and politically for Gulf states. For example, states that had been supplying several Middle Eastern countries with generous donations from oil money may now no longer be able to continue doing so, because they have their own expenses, like paying salaries to citizens. Moreover, the Gulf states are consumer countries and not agricultural or industrial states.

Let's not disregard the fact that Gulf states are also partners in the war in Yemen, which is expensive and may continue for years. All Arab countries are facing the threat of terrorist militias like IS and sectarian extremism at home, keeping them in a state of anticipation, stress and anxiety. So it is like being in an open war on several fronts, from Yemen to Syria to Iraq and all the way to Libya. This imposes tension and fear of the future. It is normal for Gulf states to worry and call for peace.

Mediation between Arab countries these days seems impossible not because the parties involved do not want peace and security, but because peace in some cases will entail certain concessions or terms that cannot be accepted at all. For example, when some call for mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia, they ignore the fact that this is not the first time relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran have been severed. It happened before in 1941 and 1987.

Today, the sectarian dimension is becoming dominant and the conflict has transferred from the official level to the public one without logic and considerations of international agreements of non-interference and respect for the affairs of other sovereign states. The same applies to the Egypt-Turkey situation. This is why I think international mediation rarely works.

I believe that only international reconciliation can be accepted or worthy, because regional conflicts cannot be negotiated. I can understand totally the Saudi position as well as Egypt's, and don't accept Iran or Turkey interfering in the affairs of Arab neighbors. These interventions divide the people and citizens on a sectarian basis and spread hatred between members of one nation.

We must be aware that blatant intervention in the private affairs of states and the lack of respect for their sovereignty is dangerous. It requires us, as journalists and peace activists, to call for awareness and support conditional mediation but without concessions to protect our countries and ourselves from sectarian extremism that may drag us into a global war and humanitarian disaster.

## OIL PRICE UP BY \$1.21

**KUWAIT:** The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by \$1.21 in Friday's transactions to reach \$25.33 per barrel in contrast to \$24.12 pb Thursday, said Kuwait Oil Corporation (KPC) yesterday. On the world level, the price of the Brent mix went up Friday by 2.3 percent to reach \$34.72 per barrel, an increase over \$2.00 from its lowest rate in 2004 which was at \$32.16 pb. —KUNA



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Al-Anbaa

## INSPIRATIONS FROM MAKKAH

By Dr Nermin Al-Houti

Every year when I go to Makkah to perform umrah, I find inspirations that are relaxing and pleasing to the eye. This year the holy mosque's gesture is mobile chairs. Everybody knows that many of the elderly or some of the sick who cannot carry out umrah or hajj rituals use wheelchairs and pay those who push them to perform the rituals. Today, we find those responsible for serving visitors of the holy mosque carrying out a new and beautiful idea by making part of the mosque a waqf for those who want to borrow a mobile chair for free.

This idea was there before, but the new thing is that they gave the opportunity for those financially able to contribute to that waqf through having the individual buy whatever he can from those chairs and hand them to the special part of that waqf. This is Islam, participating in goodwill, the help of the rich to the poor and how beautiful it is to help those who go to the holy mosque and are unable, and have his Muslim brother help him compensate his inability.

This is Islam, love and giving, and that is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, leading the change and development for the service of visitors of the holy mosque. Out of this approach and out of what I saw with my eyes and felt with my heart, I had an idea that complements the waqf idea (wheelchairs), which is the establishment of a waqf center that holds courses for those who wish to help the handicapped, elderly and the sick. The courses should train both genders, provided that they have general secondary certificates.

The course will educate the trainee on hajj and umrah rituals, then first aid for cases that ask for wheelchairs, then after completing the courses and getting their certificates by the center and the holy mosque, they should be given a permit to work in this waqf center. When the hajj or umrah performer asks for a wheelchair, the new service will be a companion of the sick, elderly and the handicapped from the center free of charge. Someone may ask: Who will pay the salaries of those companions?

Out of what I have seen in many people who buy those wheelchairs and donate them as waqf to the holy mosque, salaries can be paid to those working in it from the donations and charity, and in this way we would remove a burden from those who cannot pay those who are hired to push a sick or elderly person. This is an idea that materialized in my column today, so maybe there are those who will adopt it in the future and find it next year, and write about it through the inspirations of the holy mosque.

A final word: Omar bin Abdulaziz said: "Spread the wheat on top of the mountains, so that it will not be said that a bird went hungry in Muslim countries."

— Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Jarida



Al-Anbaa

## TRUTH BEHIND THE QUESTION

By Salah Al-Sayer

Referring to a press conference held by the Saudi ministry of interior's spokesperson, fellow writer Tareq Al-Hameed of the Asharq Alawsat newspaper pointed that most of the questions asked by journalists focused on reactions on social media networks. He added, with great dissatisfaction, that it seems as if Saudi Arabia is only found on Twitter or that real Saudi public opinion was only echoed on social media networks.

What a good point and severe burning criticism to 'responsible' journalism that has become enslaved by

*Journalists are now starting to ask questions based on hypothetical or false information*

the hypothetical, unknown and irresponsible press. Instead of looking up and getting information through real tangible sources, journalists are now starting to ask questions based on hypothetical or false information and opinions, which indicates a great deal of laziness, incompetence or lack of understanding. Real life is much deeper and richer than what we see on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

Public opinion polls or surveys cannot be measured or probed in this fake way because one person can actually make hundreds of accounts on various social media networks that have already become a 'hotbed' for various countries' intelligence to wage their e-wars against other countries. The internet has become the most perfect haven to spread rumors and lies in addition to fake information about countries, companies, organizations and even individuals far beyond any censorship or monitoring from outside or from within consciences!

— Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Anbaa

## COMPASSION IN THE OLD DAYS

By Dr Saleh Al-Ojairi

In the beginnings of the 1930s, Kuwait went through a great recession with the fall in pearl prices when Japan started producing cultured one. As a result, so many sailors fell in great debt to pearling ship captains who used to give them pre-voyage loans to leave back for their families on condition of paying the debt back once the pearling season was over and they were paid. This made many captains and ship owners seize many Kuwaitis' homes to pay off the debts, which created a great deal of discontent amongst Kuwaitis.

On their part, captains and ship owners justified this action by having to pay back the merchants who had

given them the loans in the first place. I recall that one of the houses was sold to the late Ali Abdul Wahab Al-Mutawa, one of Kuwait's most prominent benevolent and charitable persons. Going to the house to redeem ownership, he found a mother and her children crying and weeping because their house was being sold to pay off the debt of the sole breadwinner, the father, who was a sailor and pearl diver. Seeing the miserable state of the family, Abdul Wahab kept the family in the house and registered its deed in their name to end their suffering. This is how compassionate Kuwaitis used to be with each other in good old Kuwait!

— Translated by Kuwait Times

*Abdul Wahab kept the family in the house and registered its deed in their name to end their suffering*

## MUNICIPALITY DIRECTORS EXCLUDED FROM EMBEZZLEMENT PROBE: REPORT

**KUWAIT:** Directors of governorates' branches at Kuwait Municipality are reportedly being excluded from investigations in a corruption case that was discovered recently, a local daily reported yesterday quoting sources.

A recent report claimed that a case was discovered involving the embezzlement of the municipality's revenues during the period between 2011 and 2015. Al-Rai reported yesterday that there have been attempts to keep directors of governorates' branches out of the investigations, despite the fact that the municipality's Administrative Development and Training Department had indicated they are responsible for collecting and sending the revenues to the municipality's fund.

Al-Rai had also reported last week that Kuwait Municipality placed 40,000 bank guarantees under scrutiny after discovering actions that led to the release of several of them using forged documents, as the financial

department began reaching leads to the existence of an organized gang that has machines and tools to forge guarantees without involving banks.

A high ranking source at the municipality said State Minister for Municipality Affairs and Communications Essa Al-Kandari sent several forged bank guarantees to the public prosecution after Deputy Director General for Financial and Administrative Affairs Waleed Al-Jassim discovered forgeries in the stamps and signatures of banks and some municipality officials estimated in the millions, adding that the latest referral to the prosecution was the release of a KD 40,000 guarantee on Dec 28, 2015.

He added that the municipality follows a mechanism that refers any forged guarantee directly to the prosecution to avoid any delays in the investigation, especially since the financial and administrative department asks for canceling the guarantee from records in case of its release,

adding that the municipality has more than 40,000 bank guarantees, and they are all being reviewed.

He said that there is an integrated and organized gang that has machines and tools to forge bank guarantees without the need to go to banks, adding that this gang negotiates with companies on how to release the guarantees in exchange of a cut that may reach 10 percent. He said the banks provided the municipality with official letters stating that they did not issue guarantees to some companies, which confirms that they do not have any link with any data, signatures or stamps that belong to them. He said the majority of forged bank guarantees have accumulated over many years and not just over the past two years as it has been rumored.

He said that there is unlimited cooperation with the Audit Bureau to expose events related to guarantees, as the municipality prepared a detailed report on it, according to its latest report. — Al-Rai

## 11 MILLION PASSENGERS USED AIRPORT IN 2015

**KUWAIT:** Acting Civil Aviation Department Manager Emad Jlowi said that there was a considerable increase in aviation traffic through Kuwait International Airport during 2015. Jlowi explained that over 11 million passengers had used the airport during 2015. — Al-Qabas

## 30% REPLACEMENT AT MSAL

**KUWAIT:** Well-informed sources said the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's (MSAL) administrative affairs department had addressed all ministry departments, requesting lists of 30 percent of their expat employees who could be laid off and replaced by citizens by the beginning of the fiscal year 2016-2017. The sources added that if concerned departments fail to send the lists in time, the administrative department would itself decide whom to lay off in order to meet the government's plans to appoint more citizens and reduce the numbers of citizens awaiting appointment as per CSC records.

The sources highlighted that MSAL has 80 percent Kuwaiti staff and that 30 percent of the remaining 20 percent non-Kuwaiti staff would be laid off except those irreplaceable in technical positions. "This will not be done abusively and expats will get all their dues and have a chance to transfer their visas to the private sector," the sources concluded. — Al-Anbaa



Minister Bader Al-Essa

## REPLACING EXPAT TEACHERS WITH BEDOONS TO BE DONE GRADUALLY

**KUWAIT:** Education Minister Bader Al-Essa announced that a tripartite committee comprising of elements from the Ministry of Education (MoE), Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the Central Apparatus for Illegal Residents (bedoons) would be formed to invite bedoons to join the ministry's teaching staff in accordance to MoE's needs. Essa added that MoE had so far not received any instructions pertaining appointing bedoons in non-teaching positions such as accountants or legal affairs staff. Essa confirmed earlier reports about the ministry's intention to lay off 25 percent of expat teachers by the beginning of the next school year, those replaceable by citizens or bedoons, especially in subjects like Islamic Studies and Arabic. "This will be done gradually according to a set schedule and not all at once," he said. — Al-Rai



**KUWAIT:** The Directorate of Moral Guidance at the Kuwait National Guard hosted Dr Abdullah Al-Sharika, Secretary of the Moderation Supreme Committee at the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Relations, who gave lectures on the principles of moderation and enhancing ethics.



## Crime

Report

### Seven arrested for running fake domestic labor office

**KUWAIT:** Seven Africans, including five women, were arrested for running a fake domestic labor office that defrauded citizens desiring to hire domestic labor, said security sources.

### Rape charges

An Indian woman reported that a Sri Lankan man raped her at his apartment in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, where he took her to supposedly fill a job application form, said security sources. The woman said that as soon as they arrived at his place, the man attacked her, ripping her clothes off and raping her. She added that once he was done, he asked her to work for him as a 'prostitute', but she refused, which made him beat her. A case was filed and the suspect is being sought.

### Sexual harassment

An Egyptian saleswoman reported that a compatriot colleague suddenly charged at her, kissing and fondling her while saying "I had been longing for this for long," said security sources, noting that the woman resisted him and rushed to Salmiya police station to file a case. The suspect is being summoned for further investigations. Separately, a female citizen reported that an Asian man sexually harassed her in a popular shopping mall's parking lot and fled the scene when she reached out for her mobile to report the matter. In a similar report, a girl reported that an unidentified person forcefully hugged and kissed her in Surra co-op's parking lot before he fled the scene.

### Accidents

A citizen was instantly killed when an ATV he was riding rolled over in a camping area, said security sources, adding that another young citizen was rushed to ICU when he lost control over his bike and had an accident along King Fahd highway. Meanwhile, two US citizens were injured when four vehicles, including two belonging to a cleaning company they worked for, collided in Leyyah.

### Teen injured

An unidentified teenager was rushed to Jahra Hospital with a bullet in his abdomen, said security sources, noting that the boy was rushed for surgery to remove the bullet. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

### Family disputes

A citizen accused three of his cousins of assaulting him at their house when he showed up to pick up his wife after a family dispute, said security sources, noting that the citizen went to Riqqa police station with a medical report of his injuries. A case was filed and the cousins are being summoned for further investigations.

### Fugitive caught

A 25-year-old citizen, who had been wanted for a five-year prison sentence and a KD 30,000 financial claim, was arrested, said security sources.

### Drug possession

Three Asians were arrested in Farwaniya with 72 illicit pills, said security sources. Case papers indicate that a police patrol suspected a vehicle and on stopping it and searching the three people inside, detectives found the drugs. In another case, a Gulf national was arrested with two bags of meth in Sulaibiya, said security sources.

### Man found in maid's room

A citizen caught an Asian man in his housemaid's bedroom in Salwa, said security sources. The man reported hearing some sounds from the maid's room and on checking it out, found nobody there. Searching further, he found the suspect hiding inside the cupboard. — Al-Rai, Al-Anbaa



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- Free Camera Bag.
- One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Bahrain – Kuwait

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- One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Bahrain – Kuwait

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Jeb Bush races to save presidential campaign

## SECURITY EXPERTS FEAR 'EUROPEAN 9/11'



HURGHADA: Egyptian police and security stand guard in front of the Bella Vista Hotel in this Red Sea resort yesterday, a day after the hotel came under attack by knife-wielding assailants. —AFP

# IS KILLS EGYPT POLICE COLONEL, CONSCRIPT

## HURGHADA HOTEL ATTACK VICTIMS STABLE, WITNESS RECOUNTS ORDEAL

**CAIRO/HURGHADA:** The Islamic State group said its gunmen shot dead an Egyptian police colonel and a conscript west of Cairo as they travelled to work yesterday. The colonel, a traffic police district commander, and the conscript, who was driving, died in their car after coming under fire by unknown assailants, the interior ministry had said. In a statement posted on Twitter, the Islamic State group said its militants opened had fire on three vehicles in the colonel's convoy.

The group's Egypt affiliate has claimed credit in the past for similar attacks in the capital and the Sinai Peninsula, where its insurgency is based. The militants have killed hundreds of soldiers and policemen since the military toppled Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in 2013 and cracked down on his followers. They also claimed responsibility for bombing a Russian airliner over Sinai, killing all 224 people on board.

Egypt is fighting a wave of Islamist militancy against security forces which started in the remote regions of the Sinai, but is increasingly spreading closer to the capital and focusing on targets previously considered safe, such as tourist resorts on the Red Sea. On Friday two armed

assailants attacked a hotel in Egypt's Red Sea resort town of Hurghada, wounding three foreign tourists. The Interior Ministry had said that one of the attackers was a student from Giza.

The three European holidaymakers were in stable condition yesterday, as a witness recounted how the assailants burst into the hotel and stabbed guests. An elderly Austrian couple and a young Swedish man were hospitalized after the assault on Friday at the Bella Vista hotel in Hurghada. Egypt's Tourism Minister Hisham Zazou said the assailants appeared to have been acting alone, while the hotel described them as "drugged young men".

Police shot dead one of the knife-wielding attackers and wounded another, saying one of them was also carrying a "sound gun". A Swedish man who identified himself as the father of one of the victims, 27-year-old Sammie Olovsson, said they were sitting in the hotel restaurant when the assailants burst in and stabbed his son. "My son and me were eating in the restaurant and having a discussion," he told AFP in the Hurghada hospital. The two men rushed into the restaurant "very fast", he said. "They took knives and they tried to get Sammie here," he said, pointing to his

chest.

"Then (they) said 'down on the floor' and we do that," he said, adding that he told his son, who was bleeding, not to move. I got up two times and they stayed there with the guns. When I got up later on they were not here," he said, speaking in English. On its Facebook page, the hotel posted pictures of the two other victims, spelled in hospital records as Renata Weisslen and Wilhem Weislan, both smiling. "They are ok now," it said in a post. A doctor at the hospital told AFP they were a couple, both 72.

Zazou told AFP that the two attackers were "not part of an organization". It was "an individually motivated attack. This is the initial finding," said Zazou, who was in Hurghada to visit the victims, adding that the investigation was still ongoing. A video published by Egyptian news websites appeared to show the wounded assailant receiving emergency medical treatment and being questioned on his identity. He appears to have been shot in both legs. Zazou described the assailants as "amateurish" and said their motive was not yet clear.

On its Facebook page, the hotel said that "two drugged young men" attacked the restau-

rant with a "fake gun" and "small knives". But a worker at the restaurant, who requested anonymity, told AFP that one of the two men shouted "there is no god but God" on entering, and carried a black banner that resembled the Islamic State group flag. "The door opened and there was a man holding a knife and a black cloth with the (Islamic State group) flag on it," he said. Another held what appeared to be a gun. "One of them said: 'There is no god but God. We will blow up this place'. The first attacked customers sitting at a table, with a knife."

### Previous attacks claimed by IS

The incident further threatened efforts to repair the country's damaged tourism industry, coming a day after a Cairo hotel hosting Israeli tourists came under attack by men who hurled fireworks and fired birdshot. The Islamic State group claimed credit for that attack, which they said targeted "Jewish" tourists. Police said they were Arab-Israeli tourists, and the assailants had targeted policemen outside the hotel and not the tourists.

The extremist group's Egypt affiliate is waging an insurgency in the Sinai Peninsula, and

dealt a body blow to the country's tourism industry by claiming to have downed the Russian airliner in October, killing all the holidaymakers on board. The attack prompted Russia to suspend flights to and from Egypt, while Britain restricted flights to the Sharm el-Sheikh resort from where the doomed plane had departed. After the Russian plane tragedy, some major tourist operators suspended packages to Sharm el-Sheikh and Hurghada.

The resorts, which Egypt promoted as jewels of its tourism industry, had previously attracted millions of holidaymakers, including Russians, Britons and Italians, and are famed for their pristine beaches and scuba diving. The country's tourism industry was dealt several heavy blows in 2015. In September, eight Mexican tourists were mistakenly killed by Egyptian security forces in the vast Western Desert. In June, police foiled an attempted suicide bomb attack near the famed Karnak temple in Luxor - one of Egypt's most popular heritage attractions - when 600 tourists were inside. Nine Egyptians were sentenced in November to life in prison for their involvement in the failed attack, while two others were jailed for seven years. —Agencies

## ISRAELI SOLDIERS SHOOT DEAD TWO PALESTINIANS

**BEKAOT CHECKPOINT:** Israeli troops shot dead two Palestinian men at a checkpoint in the occupied West Bank yesterday, the Israeli military and Palestinians said, but details of the incident were disputed. The soldiers at Bekaot checkpoint in the northern West Bank were not injured and Israeli forces "thwarted the attack and shot the assailants", said the military. The Palestinian Health Ministry confirmed the two men were dead.

The Israeli military said the men tried to stab soldiers at the checkpoint but a Palestinian taxi driver, who asked not be identified, said the men did not get out of their vehicle before the soldiers opened fire. "We were three cars awaiting our turn to cross, the two men who were killed were in the car ahead of mine. The soldiers signaled to them to come forward. When they got there, they opened fire at the car," he said. A military spokeswoman asked about the taxi driver's account said the army was still looking into the incident.

On Friday, an Arab Israeli citizen wanted for a Jan 1 gun rampage in Tel Aviv, that had left three people dead, was killed in a shootout with police after a week-long manhunt. Authorities have so far said his motives were unclear.

Overnight, the army demolished a house in the West Bank village of Surda belonging to a Palestinian who was shot



SAIR: Mourners carry the bodies of four Palestinians, who were killed by Israeli security forces, during their funeral in this West Bank village yesterday. —AFP

dead on Oct 3 after killing an Israeli rabbi, the spokeswoman said. In November, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to expedite house demolitions in the West Bank and east Jerusalem, which he said were "one of the most efficient tools" in discouraging Palestinian attacks. The controversial practice, which critics claim amounts to collective punishment, is widely used in the West Bank and resumed in east Jerusalem in November after a five-year hiatus.

Also yesterday, Israel returned the bodies of four Palestinians killed on Thursday during two attacks in the southern West Bank. They were buried in the West Bank village of Sair. Thousands fol-

lowed their bodies as they were carried through the streets, according to an AFP journalist on the scene. Mohamed Kawazbeh, the brother of one of those killed, described them as "four martyr heroes". "We are proud of them," said Ziad Kawazbeh, a father of one of the victims. "You can't have a homeland without martyrs and to liberate our country we must sacrifice our martyrs."

Israel often retains the bodies of Palestinians killed during attacks, a measure that has drawn criticism from rights groups as well as Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas. Since the start of the year it has returned the bodies of dozens of Palestinians to their families. —Agencies

## RUSSIA STRIKE KILLS 39 IN SYRIA AS UN ENVOY VISITS

**BEIRUT:** A Russian air strike reportedly killed dozens of people in a rebel-held town in Syria yesterday as a UN envoy visited Damascus to advance preparations for peace talks planned this month despite opposition misgivings. Agreement was also reached for aid to be delivered tomorrow to an opposition-held town besieged by pro-government forces where United Nations says there have been credible reports of people dying of starvation, sources said. Aid will be sent simultaneously to two villages blockaded by rebels.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said at least 39 people were killed in the air strike, which hit a court house and adjoining prison in the town of Maarat al-Nusman in Idlib province. Most of those killed were rebels imprisoned by Al-Nusra Front, while other victims included prison guards and Al-Nusra fighters. Among the dead were five civilians, including a child. Russia has been staging air strikes in Syria in support of President Bashar Al-Assad since September. The building was struck with four missiles and the number of dead could increase due to the large number of wounded, the Observatory said. Syrian officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

The war has raged on since last month when the Security Council endorsed a plan for peace talks, a rare case of US-Russian agreement over a conflict that has killed 250,000 people. The talks are due to begin on Jan 25 in Geneva. The Syrian government told UN envoy Staffan de Mistura yesterday it was ready to participate but wants to know who would take part from the opposition, Syrian state media reported.

Foreign Minister Walid Al-Moualelem also said it was important to see a list of groups that would be classified as terrorists as part of the new diplomatic process, flagging another potential complication. Damascus views all the groups fighting to topple Assad as terrorists, including rebels who support a political solution and are represented in a recently formed opposition council tasked with overseeing the negotiations. A statement from de Mistura's office described yesterday's meeting as useful and said

the envoy had outlined preparations. "The Special Envoy is looking forward to the active participation of relevant parties in the Geneva talks. He will be continuing his consultations in the region," it added.

Syrian rebels and opposition politicians have expressed doubts over whether the peace talks will begin as planned. Their concerns over the diplomatic bid include the absence of any mention of Assad's fate. Earlier this week, they told de Mistura that before negotiations the Syrian government must stop bombing civilian areas, release detainees and lift blockades imposed on opposition-held areas.

### Aid Delivery Agreed for Monday

"Can the international community achieve the implementation of this pre-negotiation stage in the few remaining days? If it can, there is no problem. But I doubt they can," Riyadh Naasan Agha, a member of the opposition council, told Reuters. Another opposition official said on Friday the opposition would not name its negotiating team until the government did so. The outlook for the talks has been further clouded by increased tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which back opposing sides in the conflict. Tensions have risen since Saudi Arabia executed Shiite cleric Nimr Al-Nimr.

The aid deal agreed yesterday will result in humanitarian supplies being sent to the opposition-held town of Madaya at the Lebanese border, and to two villages in the northwestern province of Idlib that are blockade by rebels. Aid agencies have warned of widespread starvation in Madaya, where some 40,000 people are at risk. The United Nations said on Thursday that Damascus had agreed to allow access to all three areas, but did not say when the delivery would take place. "Both date and time have been set. Aid will go to three towns on Monday morning, all at the same time," said a source familiar with the matter. A second, pro-Syrian government source confirmed the details. —Reuters



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## AFTER 'CHAPO' CAUGHT, WILL HE FACE US JUSTICE?

**MEXICO CITY:** With Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman back in prison, Mexico's government will likely seek to quickly extradite the slippery drug baron to the United States rather than risk losing him again, analysts say. President Enrique Pena Nieto had balked at any extradition before Guzman escaped from a top-security prison on July 11, promising to keep him behind bars and putting the Sinaloa drug cartel kingpin on trial in Mexico.

Guzman's recapture by marines in the coastal city of Los Mochis, Sinaloa state, on Friday has helped Pena Nieto save face midway through his six-year term, but he won't take the risk of losing him again. The fear is justified, as Guzman escaped from two maximum-security prisons, fleeing in a laundry cart in 2001 and in a 1.5-km tunnel in July. And with few high-

security facilities available, Guzman was sent back to the Altiplano penitentiary that he escaped from near Mexico City.

"The big question is not if they will extradite him, but when," Alejandro Hope, a security expert and former Mexican intelligence service official, told AFP. "The day that Guzman enters a Mexican prison is the day that he will begin to plan his next escape," Hope said. "I don't think that the Mexican government wants to run the risk of another escape."

### Timing Unclear

Government officials avoided any talk of extradition following Friday's arrest, though prosecutors sought an arrest warrant for his extradition in September. But any extradition could take time as Guzman's attorneys won an injunction in

November, arguing that the 58-year-old kingpin risks the death penalty in the United States, a punishment that doesn't exist in Mexico. Guzman was wanted on drug trafficking charges in a half-dozen US states and the Mexican government said it formally received a US extradition request on June 25, two weeks before his escape.

His jailbreak highlighted the corruption problems facing Mexico's penitentiary system, as a dozen prison and police officials were detained over the jailbreak. US politicians quickly called on President Barack Obama to pursue Guzman's extradition. "Given that 'El Chapo' has already escaped from Mexican prison twice, this third opportunity to bring him to justice cannot be squandered," said US senator and Republican presidential candidate

Marco Rubio.

But Senator Miguel Barbosa, a leader of Mexico's leftist opposition Democratic Revolution Party, said Guzman should face trial in his homeland. "The easiest thing would be to swiftly extradite 'Chapo' Guzman and, once again, the Mexican state shows that it doesn't have the strength to punish those who commit crimes in our territory," Barbosa said.

### 'Cross Chapo Off List'

Raul Benitez Manaut, a security expert at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, said the authorities should "break with judicial nationalism" and extradite Guzman. "The government has an obligation to change opinion and favor his extradition," Benitez said. Pena Nieto's government showed its willingness to

ship out criminals in September when it extradited 13 top drug capos to the United States. Guzman's capture will likely help Pena Nieto recover in opinion polls, analyst said.

His popularity collapsed following the escape, along with his much-criticized handling of the presumed massacre of 43 students by a police-backed gang and a scandal over his wife's purchase of a mansion from a government contractor. "At least he can cross Chapo off the list," said Jose Antonio Crespo, political expert at the Center for Economic Research and Teaching. "It's convenient for Pena Nieto to extradite him, even though it's an admission that he can't hold him," Crespo said. This would allow the president to "wash his hands of" Guzman, he said. — AFP

## 'IS SYMPATHIZER' SHOOTS PHILADELPHIA POLICEMAN

COP TARGETED IN 'CHILLING' AMBUSH



**PHILADELPHIA:** This video still image combo obtained Friday shows a shooting suspect and a police car on Jan 7, 2016. — AFP

**NEW YORK:** A man claiming allegiance to the Islamic State extremist group shot and seriously wounded a police officer in Philadelphia, opening fire multiple times at point-blank range with a stolen police gun before he was arrested, officials said Friday. The apparent assassination attempt comes amid heightened security - and paranoia - in the United States following last month's assault by a radicalized Muslim couple in California that killed 14 people, and the November terror attacks in Paris.

Policeman Jesse Hartnett, 33, was shot three times in his left arm as he sat in his patrol car late Thursday in the northeastern city. "I'm shot. I'm bleeding heavily," he yelled in a dispatch call. Authorities said they were astonished he survived. Philadelphia police commissioner Richard Ross called the attack "absolutely chilling" and described the officer's injuries as "very, very serious."

Stills captured from video surveillance and released to the press show the suspect - named by police as Edward Archer, 30, a local man - opening fire as he walked towards the patrol car, extending his arm into the vehicle and then continuing to fire as he flees on foot. "If that doesn't just make the hairs on your neck just rise when you see that, it's scary," Ross told reporters. The officer got out of his vehicle, despite being injured, and managed to return fire, hitting the suspect, who was quickly arrested. "He stated that he pledges his allegiance to Islamic State, follows Allah and that is the reason he was called upon to do this," homicide police Captain James Clark told a news conference. Police said Archer has a criminal record, but that it was unclear whether he acted alone or as part of a wider conspiracy. "He doesn't appear to be a stupid individual, just an extremely violent one," Ross said. Ross added that he was "absolutely amazed" that Hartnett, an officer with four years' experience, had survived. "This man fired at least 11 shots from a nine millimeter at close range," he said.

### 'Nothing to do with Islam'

Police said it was unclear how the

suspect obtained the firearm, which was stolen from police in Oct 2013. "That is one of the things that you absolutely regret the most, that an officer's gun is stolen and it is used against one of your own," Ross said. Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney praised Hartnett's bravery but urged people to draw no link between the criminal act and Islam. "That is abhorrent, it's terrible and it does not represent the religion in any way, shape or form or any of its teachings," Kenney said. "This is a criminal with a stolen gun trying to kill one of our officers. It has nothing to do with being a Muslim."

Thursday's shooting is likely to raise further concerns about the threat posed by homegrown extremists within the United States, inspired to act by IS jihadists based in Iraq and Syria. Muslim community activists have already decried what they call an unprecedented anti-Muslim backlash in the wake of the Paris attacks. House Homeland Security Committee chairman Michael McCaul told reporters: "Once again we have a radicalized individual in the United States trying to kill law enforcement." He blamed extremist propaganda on the Internet emanating from Syria. "The message is clear: Kill military, attack military installations and kill police officers. In my judgment, this individual was carrying out these directives, these orders if you will, coming out of Raqqa, Syria from ISIS."

Elsewhere on Friday, two suspects with alleged ties to the IS group appeared in court in California and Texas. Aws Mohammed Younis Al-Jayab, an Iraqi-born Palestinian who was arrested on Thursday, came to the United States from Syria as a refugee in 2012. He is accused of fighting in Syria for various terror groups. Another Iraqi-born Palestinian, Omar Faraj Saeed Al-Hardan, made an initial court appearance after being indicted in Texas for providing material support to the IS group. The head of the FBI, James Comey, told lawmakers last year that upwards of 200 Americans have traveled or attempted to travel to Syria to join IS extremists. — AFP



**PENDELTON, South Carolina:** Republican presidential candidate Jeb Bush speaks during a town hall meeting at Dyar's Diner on Friday. — AP

## JEB BUSH RACES TO SAVE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

**WASHINGTON:** Jeb Bush's US presidential bid is boiling down to early voting New Hampshire, some associates say, while others envision his protracted battle for the Republican nomination stretching deep into the spring. Either way, supporters and analysts agree it will be difficult for Bush, a former Florida governor and son and brother of two presidents, to emerge as the nominee given American conservatives' current appetite for anti-establishment candidates and the rolling ethno-nationalism of erratic frontrunner Donald Trump.

Bush launched his campaign as the prohibitive favorite, his main hurdle being overcoming foreign policies of his presidential brother George W Bush. Jeb's team, and a supporting SuperPAC, a fundraising entity allowed to raise an unlimited amount of money, raked in a stratospheric \$100 million in early months. Today his poll numbers are in single digits and other campaigns appear to count him out. He is mocked relentlessly by Trump, who tweeted Friday that new figures showing his rival's poor favorability were "not good news for Jeb Bush".

Despite his command of the issues Bush has appeared stiff and frustrated at Republican debates. In private, according to one major donor and acquaintance, Bush has expressed exasperation at the state of the race, and how a bullying tycoon with a tenuous grasp of foreign policy has commandeered the primaries. "He's said he can't quite understand this phenomenon," the donor, who spoke under anonymity so he could discuss the campaign more freely, told AFP. It has been distressing, the donor said, for Bush "to see someone like Trump rewarded for so many intolerant, outrageous, false statements that he says all the time."

With Bush running sixth out of 12

Republicans, averaging 3.3 percent in polls, his campaign reportedly has now cancelled television ads in Iowa which votes on Feb 1. Instead he redeployed many staffers to New Hampshire to blanket the state until the Feb 8 primary, members of his state leadership team said. "I've now come to a recognition that New Hampshire is probably do or die for Jeb," the donor said. "I never would have thought that," he added. "But he has put so many resources into New Hampshire, it's like he's pushing all the chips into the center of the table."

### 'Volatile' Primaries

Bush is not alone. Fellow establishment candidates like New Jersey Governor Chris Christie and Ohio Governor John Kasich are crowding in for town-hall events as they make their stands in the all-important Granite State. "It certainly doesn't look wonderful for Jeb Bush," observed Steffen Schmidt, an Iowa State University professor who has analyzed presidential races for 40 years. "When you were supposed to be the establishment guy and now you're languishing at the bottom of the polls with Mike Huckabee and a bunch of other losers, it's tough."

And yet Schmidt insisted a long-term path exists for Bush beyond Iowa and New Hampshire, provided he does not tank there. Wins in those early states carry huge psychological boosts, but the primary race is about winning enough overall delegates to earn the nomination. Schmidt notes that Republicans in several large states like New York, Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, which vote in March and April, and California and New Jersey in June, are more moderate and less likely to support Trump or today's number two candidate, conservative Senator Ted Cruz. — AFP

## MASSIVE CALIFORNIA GAS LEAK PROVOKES ANGER

**LOS ANGELES:** For several weeks, Sam Mongeau's three-year-old daughter Bella has had a lingering cough, while other members of his family have experienced nose bleeds, headaches and fatigue. Mongeau, 40, blames it all on a massive gas leak near his home in Porter Ranch, a sleepy middle-class community northwest of Los Angeles, where a state of emergency was declared by California's governor earlier this week. "Everyone's been getting sick," Mongeau, a sales manager at an area auto dealership, told AFP. "It's almost like you wake up every day from anesthesia, feeling groggy, tired."

The leak was detected on October 23 in an underground natural gas well at the Southern California Gas Company's (SoCalGas) Aliso Canyon site - one of the largest gas facilities in the United States. The well sits about 2,651 m underground, and the leak is thought to come from a broken pipe about 500 feet below the surface. Repeated efforts to stop the leak by pumping liquid and mud down the well have failed, and the gas company is now drilling a relief well to intercept and plug the damaged well. The operation is expected to take until late February or March.

### 'Get Some Fresh Air'

That timeline is not soon enough for the area's 30,000 residents, many of whom say they are getting sick from the rotten-egg smell of the odorant put into the gas to help detect leaks. "I have been getting nausea and headaches," said Linda Noel, 50, as she waited outside a center set up by the gas company to

assist area residents. "Everyone in the family has been to the doctor or to urgent care. All I want is to get out of here and get some fresh air."

Suna Najjar, 46, said she has been getting rashes on her neck and face, and her 12-year-old daughter regularly has nose bleeds. "We are four in the family and they are offering to relocate us to one hotel room," she said. "You feel like this is totally out of your control and that you're at everyone's mercy."

More than 10,000 residents have so far been relocated by the gas company and hundreds more have asked to be moved. Two local elementary schools have shut down, and the students are being shuttled to other districts. Meanwhile some 1,000 people have joined a class-action suit against SoCalGas, many encouraged by well-known environmental activist Erin Brockovich, who works for a legal firm and who has held several town meetings with residents. Brockovich's story of taking on corporate America was made into a movie in 2000 that earned Julia Roberts an Oscar.

The gas company and health officials say the gas leaking from the facility poses not health risk. Experts however say the environmental impact will be significant, as methane is a potent greenhouse gas. The leak is spewing about 1,000 tons of methane a day, experts say, the equivalent to pollution produced daily by 4.5 million cars. "To put this into perspective, the leak effectively doubles the (methane) emission rate for the entire Los Angeles basin," said Stephen Conley, a scientist at the University of California in Davis. — AFP

## CRISIS LOOMS AS HAITI CAMPAIGNING KICKS OFF

**PORT-AU-PRINCE:** Campaigning for the second round of Haiti's presidential election opened Friday, with the opposition candidate refusing to participate without sweeping reforms to the process. Haiti, the poorest nation in the Americas, has endured years of political crisis aggravated by its attempt to recover from the massive January 2010 earthquake that claimed some 200,000 lives. Candidate Jude Celestin "will not launch his campaign and will not participate in the January 24 voting" until recommendations that an independent electoral commission presented earlier are fully implemented, his campaign spokesman Augustin Jinaud told AFP.

Celestin, the runner-up in Haiti's first-round vote in October, had earlier refused to campaign until an independent electoral commission was established to study voting problems. That commission issued a series of recommendations that included an end to voting in private homes and the use of indelible ink on voter's thumb to prevent multiple voting. Not all of the recommended measures have been implemented. President Michel Martelly "has not held elections in five years and now he urges us to join in this electoral masquerade, which we cannot condone," Jinaud said.

Meanwhile Celestin's government-backed rival, Jovenel Moise, was out campaigning Friday in the affluent Port-au-Prince suburb of Petionville. "An election belongs to the people and we must

work for their confidence," Moise told AFP. "My strategy is to go out and make contact with the population, walk with it, talk with the public." "But in my opinion, (Celestin) is also campaigning, because he has gone back and forth across the country," Moise said.

### 'Electoral Coup'

In the October 25 first-round election, Moise drew 32.8 percent of the vote against 25.3 percent for Celestin,

who dismissed the results as a "ridiculous farce". The contested result sparked angry and sometimes violent street protests, with several opposition candidates sharply criticizing the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP). Meanwhile, the second-round vote was delayed from December 27 to January 24. In its report the independent commission said that the first round of voting was marred by fraud and irregularities, and said that 60 percent of poll workers could not do

their jobs properly.

Noting that some Electoral Council members have been accused of corruption, the commission added that the CEP "is not listening to the Haitian people, for whom it works". Several hundred opposition supporters marched Friday in Port-au-Prince against what they said was "an electoral coup" and called for "civil disobedience". The march ended outside parliament, which is scheduled to reconvene on Monday. — AFP



**PETION-VILLE, Haiti:** Supporters of presidential candidate Jovenel Moise, from the PHTK party, dressed as bananas, walk in the street as they campaign Friday. — AP



# SECURITY EXPERTS FEAR 'EUROPEAN 9/11'

## ISLAMIC STATE RECRUITING AND TRAINING EUROPEANS

**PARIS:** Just a week into the year, France has already been rattled by an attempted attack on a police station, but counter-terrorism officials have far graver fears for Europe in 2016. November's attacks in Paris, in which 130 people were killed by Islamic State group jihadists, showed the trauma that could be caused by a group of men with Kalashnikov rifles, but experts fear it could be just the start. "Unfortunately, I think 2015 was nothing," a counter-terrorism official told AFP on condition of anonymity. "We are moving towards a European 9/11: simultaneous attacks on the same day in several countries, several places. A very coordinated thing. We know the terrorists are working on this," he added.

He said the Islamic State group was recruiting and training Europeans "with the goal of sending them back to hit their countries of origin." "They have the necessary false documents, the mastery of the language, the sites, the weapons. We stop a lot of them, but it must be recognized that we are overwhelmed. Some will get through-some already have." Recent arrests of jihadists returning from Syria and Iraq have added to concerns, he said. "The profiles are changing. We are seeing ultra-radical guys return, very battle-hardened, who

should have stayed over there. "Before we mostly had guys returning who had made a mistake, who didn't realise that war can be painful. But now, we are seeing guys return who are sticking to their chosen path."

### Rapid response needed

Faced with an enemy that is happy to die and maximize civilian casualties, the challenge for France's security forces is to massively speed up response times. "There will always be a delay for intervention forces that we have to reduce as much as possible," Colonel Hubert Bonneau, head of the elite GIGN police said. "In the Bataclan, the killing of 90 people took 20 minutes. It stops when there is the opposition of security forces," he said, referring to the attack on a Paris concert hall on November 13.

It took two-and-a-half hours for police to storm the concert hall as they tried to gather information on the layout of the building and position of the jihadists. Bonneau said this new type of threat meant there were no classic hostage situations such as in the past. "Hostages are just a buffer to slow the progress of security forces. If we don't intervene as quickly as possible there will be more victims. That's the lesson to draw from the

attacks of November 13, that will change our mode of intervention. "We need to have surgical action, as forceful as possible and as quickly as possible," he said.

### 'Just a rehearsal'

Multiple, pan-European plots are not new and have been disrupted on several occasions, including one in late August 2010, said Yves Trotignon, a former analyst for France's DGSE intelligence service. "At that time, it was still Al-Qaeda," he said. "The teams were due to arrive in western Europe, recover pre-placed material-handguns and assault rifles. It was disrupted by the Americans, who carried out a series of preventative drone strikes in Afghanistan and Pakistan against the guys thought to be mounting the operation. "This type of multiple attack is part of the worst-case scenarios for 2016," said Trotignon. "I know that in European capitals, particularly London, specialized services are working on this theory." Police, military and intelligence services are constantly adapting to the shape-shifting threat, but so are the other side and often more quickly and effectively, the specialists said. "It's not just us that learn the lessons, it's the Islamic State as well," said the counter-terrorism official. — AFP



**MONTROUGE:** French President Francois Hollande looks out of the window of his car after he honored late policewoman Clarissa Jean-Philippe in Montrouge south of Paris yesterday. Hollande is honoring 17 victims killed in Islamic extremist attacks on satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo, a kosher market and police a year ago this week, unveiling plaques around Paris marking violence that ushered in a tumultuous year. — AFP

# A SLEW OF RACIST COMMENTS EXPOSE SOUTH AFRICA'S WOES

## 'RAINBOW NATION' STRUGGLES WITH ITS DEMONS

**JOHANNESBURG:** A slew of racist comments on social media in South Africa have unleashed outrage and exposed deep hostility in the "Rainbow Nation" as it struggles with its demons 22 years after white-minority rule ended. Irritated by rubbish left on a beach following New Year's Day celebrations, Penny Sparrow, a white real estate agent from the eastern coast province of KwaZulu-Natal, wrote a savage comment on Facebook.

"From now I shall address the blacks of South Africa as monkeys as I see the cute little wild monkeys do the same-pick and drop litter," she said, in a posting that soon went viral. The following day Chris Hart, an economic analyst often quoted in the media, came under fire for comments on Twitter about a growing "sense of entitlement and hatred towards minorities" in South Africa. He has since been suspended from his position at Standard Bank, which said there were "racist undertones" in his comments. The posts touched off a vicious cycle of hatred in a country still traumatized by decades of finely-tuned discrimination between the races under apartheid rule. "I want to cleanse this country of all white people... We must act as Hitler did to the Jews," Velaphi Khumalo, a local government employee, wrote on another viral Facebook message as the war of words worsened. He too has since been suspended by the Gauteng provincial government department, which condemned his "barbaric and racist utterances".

### Flood of insults

Soon after Andrew Barnes, a white TV news anchor, was taken off air by local channel eNCA after mocking the pronunciation of a black government minister. The flood of insults "has shone a light on the amount of work that still needs to be done to bring true reconciliation to South Africa," Mienke Steytler of South Africa's Institute of Race Relations (IRR) said.

The ruling African National Congress (ANC) has filed charges of "crimen injuria" (intentionally impairing the dignity of others), against both Sparrow and Hart-but not Khumalo. "We opened and laid charges against the people who originally started making these offensive statements," party spokesman Zizi Kodwa said. "These individuals must be punished because they are taking South Africa back... South Africa has never been so polarized as it is today racially." Khumalo reacted to an offensive comment which was made against black people. Steytler slammed the ANC for "unacceptable discrimination" over its deci-



**NEW YORK:** South African President Jacob Zuma addressing the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York. South African President Jacob Zuma yesterday denounced what he called the 'demon of racism' following a slew of discriminatory insults on social media. Speaking to a stadium of supporters at the annual birthday celebration of the ruling African National Congress, Zuma said "a tiny minority" of South Africans still longed for the days of apartheid white minority rule. — AFP

sion not to pursue charges against Khumalo.

In 2000, 72 percent of South Africans were reported to believe interracial relations were improving. By 2012, that figure had dropped to 39 percent, according to a government report. The ANC has also floated the idea of laws criminalizing "any act that perpetuates racism and glorifies apartheid". But criminalizing racism is not necessarily the solution, said Nelson Mandela Foundation CEO Sello Hatang. He quoted the late president Mandela, saying: "In the end, reconciliation is a spiritual process, which requires more than just a legal framework. It has to happen in the hearts and minds of people."

### Party politics

A clumsy attempt to apologize by Sparrow only stoked public anger after she appeared to blame her diabetes for her outburst. And the country's largest opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, which has

long been trying to shake off its reputation as a "white party", was left red-faced when it was revealed that Sparrow was a member. The party fought to defend itself, lashing out at Sparrow for "dehumanizing black South Africans" and expelling her.

Khumalo, too, presented his apologies, but the explosion of vitriol across social media continued unabated-reflecting often-unspoken tensions within South African society. "The weaker the economy is and the higher the unemployment figures are, the more frustrated people are and the more they are likely to lash out at each other," said Steytler. South Africa is battling a 25 percent unemployment rate, slow growth and a sharply weakening currency, with the risk of junk status looming on the credit horizon. "We have been living on a cosmetic rainbow nation since 1994," said Ronald Lamola, a former leader in the ANC's youth wing. "There will be no racial harmony without economic equality." — AFP

# HUNDREDS OF FRENCH MOSQUES OPEN THEIR DOORS TO THE PUBLIC

**PARIS:** Hundreds of French mosques are participating in a major open-house event this weekend, offering visitors the opportunity to come in for tea and a chat about Islam in a country shaken by jihadist attacks. Organized by the country's leading Muslim body, the French Council of the Muslim Faith (CFCM), it aims to stimulate dialogue about Islam and create a greater sense of "national cohesion", a year after 17 people were killed in jihadist attacks in Paris targeting satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo and a Jewish supermarket. "The objective is to create a space where people can be together and meet normal Muslim worshippers and all of our fellow citizens," CFCM president Anouar Kbibeche said.

The idea is to use the anniversary of the January 7 attacks to "highlight the real values of Islam, to set straight the clichés about links to violence and terrorism," he said, describing the venture as a "gesture of openness". "Instead of dwelling on these tragic acts, it seemed more useful and important to celebrate 'the spirit of January 11'," he said, refer-

ring to the date when millions of people took to the streets in a mass show of solidarity. Following the November attacks, in which jihadists killed 130 people, France declared a state of emergency which has seen police staging around 20 raids on Muslim places of worship. At least three have been closed on suspicion of radicalizing their members.

Dubbed "a brotherly cup of tea", the initiative will take different forms with local mosques handing out hot drinks and pastries, offering guided visits, putting on debates and calligraphy workshops, and even inviting people to attend one of the five daily prayers. Although not all of France's 2,500 mosques and places of worship are taking part, the most important ones are, including the Grand Mosque of Paris. The event comes after a year which saw a surge in anti-Muslim acts in France, some of which targeted places of worship, although the number was much lower after the November bloodshed than after those that took place in January. — AFP



**BORDEAUX:** French imam of Bordeaux's mosque Tareq Oubrou gives a speech yesterday in Bordeaux, western France, during the first CAPRI meeting. CAPRI is an Action and Prevention Center Against Radicalization of persons. — AFP

# MIGRANTS 'FACE BEATINGS AND ABUSE' TRYING TO ENTER SPANISH TERRITORY

**MADRID:** Migrants trying to enter the tiny Spanish territory of Ceuta in North Africa from Morocco have faced beatings and other abuses from police, a migrants' rights group said yesterday. The Moroccan Association for the Integration of Immigrants, which is based in Malaga in southern Spain, said six migrants had been killed since December 25 trying to make the dangerous crossing. Three migrants drowned and 19 others were hospitalized on Christmas Day attempting to enter the territory by swimming from Morocco or scaling a barbed-wire fence, the rights group said in a statement.

Those hurt and killed were part of a group of over 300 migrants who were trying to reach Ceuta, which is located across the Strait of Gibraltar from mainland Spain. A total of 185 migrants managed to enter the Spanish territory but a "large group" was arrested by Moroccan authorities and released in cities in southern Morocco, the statement said. Another three migrants drowned on Monday and about 20 were hospitalized when hundreds of migrants once again tried to cross into Ceuta from Morocco, the association said.

Two men and a woman are in critical condition and will need surgery to repair fractured bones in their legs and hands, it added. "Two of the victims said

the fractures they suffered were due to the

violence and abuse exercised on the part of security forces against them," the statement said. About 250 migrants who tried to enter Ceuta at this attempt were arrested by Moroccan authorities and taken to cities in southern Morocco, including several who were in critical condition, it added. The association said it was "extremely worried" by the rise in the "acts of violence against migrants in border areas of Ceuta" and called for an investigation into the actions of security forces in the region.

Ceuta, along with Melilla to the east, are Spanish territories on the northern coast of Morocco that together form the European Union's only land borders with Africa. Spain fortified fences in the two territories last year in response to a rise in the number of migrants trying to jump over the barriers from Morocco. In February 2014, 15 migrants drowned in the Mediterranean after dozens tried to enter Ceuta by swimming from a nearby beach. Human rights groups and migrants said the Spanish police tried to keep them from crossing into Spanish territory by firing rubber bullets and spraying them with tear gas. Madrid has since said that its guards are now banned from using rubber bullets to repel migrants. — AFP

# AFTER SEXUAL ASSAULTS, GERMAN CITY BRACES FOR FAR-RIGHT RALLY

**COLOGNE:** The German city of Cologne, still shaken by a spate of sexual assaults in a crowd of migrants on New Year's Eve, braced yesterday for a rally of the xenophobic PEGIDA movement. The Islamophobic protest planned from 1300 GMT in the central square where hundreds of women last week ran a gauntlet of groping hands, lewd insults and robberies in mob violence that has shocked Germany. Most of the assailants were of Arabic or North African background, according to eye-witnesses, police and media reports.

Far-right groups have pointed to the assaults,

including two reported rapes, as proof that Chancellor Angela Merkel's liberal migrant policy-which brought 1.1 million new asylum seekers to Germany last year-is driving the country into chaos. The co-founder of PEGIDA, short for "Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident", Lutz Bachmann, posted a photo of himself on social media with the slogan "Rape Refugees not Welcome". In a similar vein, a leader of the populist right-wing Alternative for Germany party, which has polled at around 10 percent in surveys ahead of several state elections this year, claimed that

the events gave a "taste of the looming collapse of culture and civilisation". Police expect around 1,000 backers of PEGIDA and the local far-right group Pro NRW, as well as counter-demonstrators from the group "Cologne against Right-wingers", local media said.

### Frenzied crush

The mob violence at the start of 2016 has heightened popular fears of worse to come, and threatened to tip what was long a broadly welcoming mood that last September saw crowds cheering Syrian refugees arriving by train. Details of what happened in the frenzied crush remain hazy. Police have laid no charges but pointed to more than 30 suspects, almost all of them migrants and including many asylum seekers.

Among the suspects were nine Algerians, eight Moroccans, five Iranians, four Syrians, one Iraqi and one Serb, as well as two Germans and one US national, the interior ministry said Friday. It was unclear how many offenders may be long-time migrants or from a scene of drug dealers and pickpockets known to lurk around the central railway station, and how many may have been newly-arrived asylum seekers. On Friday, criticism of the Cologne police's failure to stop the violence, and subsequent obfuscation, claimed the scalp of police chief Wolfgang Albers, who was suspended in a bid to "restore public confidence" in the police force.

Cologne police were slow to unveil the true extent of the carnage, and the politically-charged fact that the hostile crowd was made up mostly of migrants. A day after the chaos, Cologne police had tweeted "festive atmosphere, celebrations largely peaceful", and the events did not make national headlines for four days. On social media, where PEGIDA backers have long rallied against the "flying press", the media has also been accused of seeking to suppress the attacks for days in an effort to be "politically correct". — AFP



**COLOGNE:** Police men walk next to a water cannon in Cologne, western Germany yesterday to clear the rally of the far-right xenophobic PEGIDA movement, after protesters hurled firecrackers and bottles at officers. — AFP



## TAIWAN CANDIDATES GET THEATRICAL IN PACKED ELECTION RACE

**TAIPEI:** From rock concerts to yellow rubber ducks and free condoms, Taiwan's parliamentary candidates are going to great lengths to stand out with a week to go in the island's tightest ever race for seats. The vote for president on January 16 is grabbing the biggest headlines, and yesterday sees a "super weekend" of rallies by rival leadership candidates. But a record 556 hopefuls are also running to become legislators in parliamentary elections which coincide with the presidential vote, with just 113 seats up for grabs.

The embattled ruling Kuomintang (KMT) risks losing its parliamentary majority this time, with the main opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) hoping to reap the benefits. But 26 smaller parties, many of them new on the political scene, are also gunning for glory and are pulling out the stops to garner attention. Rocker and social activist Freddy Lim of the newly formed New Power Party wooed thousands of supporters when he sang on stage with his heavy metal band ChthoniC in a recent free concert in Taipei.

The NPP, which grew out of the student-led Sunflower Movement that occupied parliament in 2014 over a trade pact with China, will enlist a theatre group to stage short plays, including the story of Don Quixote, in a campaign rally yesterday night.

Other candidates and their campaign teams have dressed as cartoon characters, or even stripped, for attention. Liu Shu-fang, an independent candidate in southern Kaohsiung city, removed her dress to expose a red bra at one public event. At other events, campaign teams appeared as Japanese cartoon characters, Hollywood animated movie "Minions", and the messaging app LINE's famous rabbit and bear.

Candidates are also turning to free gifts and memorabilia to get their message across. Lee Yen-jong, standing for the new Green Party-Social Democratic Party Alliance, has been giving out free condoms in wrappers printed with her campaign information to promote safe sex. Meanwhile, mainstream candidates are also trying an extra flourish. DPP candidate Lai Jui-lung decked out his campaign truck with yellow rubber ducks—a reminder to voters of his role in Kaohsiung city government when a giant inflatable duck, created by Dutch artist Florentijn Hofman, drew four million visitors to the southern city in 2013.

"The number of contestants in this parliamentary election is a historic high and some candidates are using gimmicks to get more media exposure for their campaign," said Chen Chao-chien, a commentator at Ming Chuan University. This year



**TAIPEI:** Journalists jam trucks to catch images of Eric Chu (not pictured), presidential candidate from the ruling Kuomintang (KMT), during an election campaign in Taipei yesterday. Chu was a reluctant candidate for the leadership as the KMT is widely expected to lose the presidency. — AFP

also sees more niche parties trying their luck—the Peace Pigeon Union is campaigning to promote "peaceful land and sea

pigeon racing as a legitimate entertainment" to dispel the stigma around the sport. Pigeon racing is popular in Taiwan

but has been linked to criminal activity such as gambling, race fixing and even the kidnapping of pigeons for ransom. — AFP



**HERAT:** An Afghan boy pushes a wheelbarrow as he transports thorns to be used as fuel for cooking on the outskirts of Herat yesterday. — AFP

AFGHANISTAN TURNS DISUSED NATO CAMP INTO DRUG TREATMENT BASE  
AS MANY AS 2.4 MILLION DRUG USERS IN AFGHANISTAN

**KABUL:** Afghan officials have opened a new drug treatment centre in an abandoned NATO military base in Kabul, in the latest attempt to stamp out the country's massive problem of drug abuse. Afghanistan is one of the world's biggest sources of opium, producing around 3,300 tons last year, despite a drop of 48 percent in output. With the economy in ruins after decades of war and unable to provide jobs for young Afghans, demand for the temporary relief provided by drugs is high. Camp Phoenix, a former training camp on the edges of Kabul set up by the US army in 2003, will take in around 1,000 homeless drug addicts who will receive food, medical attention and treatment, said Public Health Minister Ferozuddin Feroz.

"We give them a proper shave, they will take a shower, winter clothing and treatment will follow," he said, showing reporters around the facility, which offers a 45-day course of treatment for homeless addicts. "We will return them as normal members of society." The effort is the latest in a long series of anti-

drug initiatives backed by the government and its international partners, but it is only a very small step to tackle a sprawling problem, and many remain skeptical. Police regularly round up addicts who shelter in areas such as the Pul-e-Sokhta bridge in the western part of the capital, but successive governments have been powerless to resolve the problem.

In May, a US-funded report said around 1.9 million to 2.4 million Afghan adults may be drug users, from among a population of about 30 million, with drugs found in more than 30 percent of homes. To counter this situation, the country has just 123 treatment centers, sufficient to treat just over 10 percent of opium and heroin users. But even addicts who go through the centers often fall back into drug use. "I have received five rounds of treatment already, but am still using," said Sayed Dawod, one of the addicts at the new centre. "There is no proper treatment in Afghanistan."

Ministers say they are aware of the threat from the drug problem, not just to public health but also how

it feeds endemic corruption in the government, from police officials on up. Feroz was himself attacked on Sunday by a dealer who tried to stab him with an infected needle during an operation to collect addicts and take them to the new centre for treatment. But officials have only limited ability to curb a billion-dollar industry protected by powerful regional interests and controlled in part by warlords and Taleban militants who use the proceeds to fund their insurgency.

"Leaders of the unity government know the threat illegal drugs pose to our society and they are committed to dealing with this," said Salamat Azimi, the counter narcotics minister. The failure of past efforts leaves many uncertain of success this time, however. Najibullah, an addict who, like many Afghans, goes by one name, was dubious as he saw how few addicts got on the buses going to the treatment centers. "This is for show," he said. "If the government wants to bring about change and treat addicts properly, they have to put more pressure on police to arrest those who sell illegal drugs." — Reuters

LANDMINE BLAST KILLS 2  
PAKISTANI COASTGUARDS

**QUETTA:** At least two Pakistani coastguards were killed and three others wounded yesterday when their vehicle hit a landmine close to the Iranian border in southwestern Balochistan province, officials said. The coastguards' vehicle hit the explosives in Koldan town, near the Iranian border and some 80 kilometers from Gwadar, a seaport managed by Beijing. "The coastguards' vehicle was part of a convoy which brings drinking water for them from Koldan town to the port of Gwadar daily," said Muhammad Anwar, a senior administration official in the area. "Five guards were injured when their vehicle hit the landmine and two of them succumbed to their injuries later," he said.

Another government official confirmed the incident and casualties. Gwadar port is being developed under Beijing's ambitious \$46 billion infrastructure plan called the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, to link

China's western city of Kashgar to the Pakistani port of Gwadar on the Arabian Sea. The corridor plans have been strongly criticized by New Delhi, with India's Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj last year calling the project "unacceptable" for crossing through Indian-claimed territory-Pakistan's northern Gilgit-Baltistan region which is attached to the disputed territory of Kashmir. Pakistan's Balochistan province, of which Gwadar is a part, is rife with separatist, Islamist extremist and sectarian violence. The mineral-rich province has long been targeted by militants, and Islamabad accuses New Delhi of fuelling unrest in the region to hamper Pakistan's development. A spokesman for the separatist Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) said that they claimed responsibility for the blast. "We claim responsibility for this attack in Koldan. We will continue targeting Pakistani forces," Meerak Baloch said. — AFP

LOSSES MOUNT FROM  
AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRE

**PERTH:** The number of homes lost in a bushfire in Western Australia rose yesterday to 121, as officials admitted the emergency was not yet over with three people still unaccounted for. Fire tore through Yarloop, some 110 kilometers south of Perth, early on Friday, destroying scores of homes in the old mill town. That number rose to 121 on Saturday after a fuller assessment, as hundreds of firefighters continued to battle the huge blaze which is still threatening nearby areas. "It is still a cause for concern," Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Wayne Gregson told reporters of the blaze. "It has been a very challenging fire for us—it's still a challenge, (we're) not out of the woods yet." Gregson said three people who were unaccounted for on

Friday had not yet been located.

"We're holding our hopes out that they got out early and heeded the warnings," he said. "It's just the fact that we are not able to account for them. In the fullness of time, hopefully, we will account for them." Western Australia's Premier Colin Barnett said the event had been declared a natural disaster, a measure which gives residents access to greater financial support. But he admitted that the damage bill was going to be a "large one". Bushfires are common in Australia's hotter months, with four deaths in Western Australia last November. Australia's worst firestorm in recent years devastated parts of the southern state of Victoria in 2009, razing thousands of homes and killing 173 people. — AFP

EASTERN UKRAINIAN VILLAGES  
CHANGE HANDS DESPITE TRUCE

**PAVLOPIL:** Clashes between pro-Russian rebels and government forces in eastern Ukraine have dwindled but villages in the buffer zone around the frontline have been surreptitiously changing hands, raising fears that the tenuous ceasefire could unravel. Ukraine's blue and yellow flag was hoisted in December in the sleepy village of Pavlopil, which for months had remained trapped in the "grey zone" between Kiev-controlled and rebel territory.

The buffer-zone village had been cut off from food and water supplies until Ukrainian troops started distributing free bread, water and canned meat to residents last month, local shopkeeper Natalia Ivanivna said. This 30-kilometre-wide demilitarized area, which straddles the Donetsk and Lugansk regions, was created as part of a peace deal signed in Minsk last February. International observers have deplored recent military activity in the zone by both Ukrainian troops and pro-Russian rebels, which they say undermines the prospects for peace in the region.

Weeks after seizing Pavlopil, Kiev announced that rebels armed with

heavy weapons had entered the grey-zone village of Kominternove, some 20 kilometers northeast of the strategic port city of Mariupol. Separatist leaders denied they had entered the village, but observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) reported having seen "multiple fresh caterpillar tracks, consistent with infantry fighting vehicles and tanks" there.

## Renewed hostilities

Locals told the OSCE that armed rebels had entered Kominternove on December 22, leaving two days later before the arrival of international observers. "What happened in Kominternove was a clear violation of the Minsk agreement," said Alexander Hug, the OSCE's deputy chief monitor in Ukraine. "The ceasefire was broken by both sides; weapons were used with the intent to establish control over areas where previously there was no armed presence," Hug added, also criticizing Ukrainian troop "movements" in Pavlopil.

A high-ranking Ukrainian security official said on condition of anonymity that the rebel presence in

Kominternove was "retaliation" for the Ukrainian army's operation in Pavlopil. Both sides are trying to take control of villages-long neglected because of their limited strategic value—that fall under their respective jurisdictions according to the Minsk agreements, the official said. The silent incursions into the buffer zone came amid a lull in a conflict that has left more than 9,000 people dead since April 2014.

The warring sides had reached a September 1 truce agreement that significantly calmed deadly exchanges of artillery and missile fire along the buffer zone separating rebel-run territory from the rest of Ukraine. "In December, our forces gained control of seven villages," the security official said, saying troops were trying to seize the areas that coincide with the demarcation line established in the peace accords. The presence of Ukrainian troops and pro-Russian rebels in the buffer zone has worried locals, who view the militarization of the area as a prelude to renewed hostilities.

"A contingent of peacekeepers should have been stationed in the buffer zone to avoid this," said Sergiy



**PAVLOPOL:** A Ukrainian serviceman patrols outskirts of the village of Pavlopil, in the Donetsk region. — AFP

Shapkin, the mayor of Pavlopil and of the neighboring town of Pyschevyk, where Ukrainian troops are now present. The absence of peacekeepers in the buffer zone could lead to "provo-

cations", Shapkin said as he unpacked wood briquettes supplied by the Red Cross. "If shelling resumes, a single Grad missile will be enough to destroy all of Pyschevyk," said Lyubov Belik, a

pensioner waiting in line for wood. "This doesn't mean that we're not grateful to the Ukrainian military for bringing us food," she added. "We're just fed up with the war." — AFP



# PHILIPPINE CATHOLICS JOIN HUGE PARADE, PRAY FOR MIRACLES

**MANILA:** Barefoot men and women praying for miracles hurled themselves above huge crowds in the Philippines yesterday to touch a centuries-old icon of Jesus Christ in one of the world's largest Catholic festivals. Some of the Asian nation's most fervent scenes of devotion played out through the narrow streets of Manila's old quarter as the life-sized Black Nazarene statue was carried through a gauntlet of worshippers.

"The Nazarene our Lord gave meaning to my life," Nino Barbo, a 30-year-old high school dropout with an upper arm tattoo and a metal earring said. The construction worker said he gave up a day's pay for the sixth year in a row by skipping work to touch the statue, which many Filipinos believe can heal the sick and bring good luck. Risking life and limb, shoeless men and women like Barbo clambered over each other yesterday to touch the icon with white handkerchiefs or towels as others pulled on a rope to haul the metal float bearing the statue forward.

The pilgrims wore yellow or maroon shirts and walked barefoot, playing the role of supplicants. By noon, police said 1.5 million people were taking part in the seven-kilometer parade of the icon, considered by Catholics as a representation of the Son of God. The crowd estimate could not be independently confirmed. Manila city's civil defence office chief, Johnny Yu, told AFP at least 150 people were treated for various injuries and complaints in the first five hours of the parade, including two with suspected broken bones.

## Relationship with God

Police say the slow-moving procession from a Manila park is expected to reach the

Nazarene's traditional home inside the downtown Quiapo church at midnight (1600 GMT). Manila housewife Dang Villacorta, sat on the grass at the park between her sleeping son and a blue beach tent packed with other relatives said she planned to wave a white handkerchief when the procession crawled past. "If family members get sick we would give them sponge baths with it. That way we wouldn't spend money on doctors," the 36-year-old said.

Critics say the parade amounts to idolatry, but Church authorities say it is a vibrant expression of faith in one of the world's most fervently Catholic nations. More than 80 million of the Asian nation's 100 million people consider themselves Catholics. "The people reach out to it because they have a personal relationship with God," said Monsignor Hernando Coronel, the parish priest of Quiapo church. "They come to me and say the Lord has performed miracles for them. To the devotees he is for real," he told reporters earlier in the week, adding he expected "millions and millions" to take part in the parade.

Coronel said a male member of his parish told him his son regained his full sight after being accidentally shot in one eye with a shotgun pellet. A woman also told him her granddaughter miraculously revived after drowning. Cloaked in a maroon robe, crowned with thorns and bearing a cross, the Nazarene statue was brought to Manila by Augustinian priests in 1607, decades after the start of Spain's colonial rule. It was believed to have acquired its color after being partially burnt when the galleon carrying it caught fire on a voyage from Mexico, another Spanish colony at the time. — AFP



**PAJU:** North Korea's border county of Kaepoong is seen from a South Korean observation post in Paju near the Demilitarized Zone dividing two Koreas. South Korea resumed high-decibel propaganda broadcasts into North Korea as the United States ramped up pressure on China to bring Pyongyang to heel after its latest nuclear test. — AFP

# NORTH KOREA CITES GADDAFI, SADDAM IN NUCLEAR DEFENSE

## FATE OF LEADERS WHO FORSAKE NUKE AMBITIONS

**SEOUL:** North Korea has defended its latest nuclear test, citing the fate of two toppled Middle East leaders, while flexing its military muscle by showing TV footage of a submarine-launched missile test. A commentary published by the official KCNA news agency late Friday said the fate of Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Muammar Gaddafi in Libya showed what happened when countries forsake their nuclear weapon ambitions.

It also warned South Korea, which resumed high-decibel propaganda broadcasts across the inter-Korean border in response to Wednesday's test, that its actions were driving the divided peninsula to "the brink of war". The commentary said Pyongyang's fourth nuclear test was a "great event" that provided North Korea with a deterrent powerful enough to secure its borders against all hostile forces, including the United States. "History proves that powerful nuclear deterrence serves as the strongest treasured sword for frustrating outsiders' aggression," it said.

North Korea said the test was of a miniaturized hydrogen bomb-a claim largely dismissed by experts who argue the yield was far too low for a full-fledged thermonuclear device. "The Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq and the Gaddafi regime in Libya could not escape the fate of destruction after being deprived of their foundations for nuclear development and giving up nuclear programs of their own accord," the

commentary said. Both had made the mistake, the commentary argued, of yielding to Western pressure led by a United States bent on regime change. Asking North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons was as pointless as "wishing to see the sky fall", it said, adding that the entire country was proud of its "H-bomb of justice".

## 'Playing with fire'

In addition to the KCNA commentary, the state Korean Central TV late Friday released video footage of a purportedly new submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) test. But South Korean media suggested the footage was an edited compilation of the North's third SLBM test, conducted last month in the Sea of Japan, and a different ballistic missile test from 2014.

The undated footage shows leader Kim Jong-Un, on board a military vessel in a winter coat and a fedora hat, looking on as a missile is launched vertically from underwater and ignites in mid air. The video then cuts to a rocket flying through the clouds, suggesting the missile was able to reach such altitudes. But South Korean media said the images of a rocket rising through the clouds were in fact taken from footage of a SCUD missile test broadcast in 2014. North Korea first announced in May that it had conducted a successful SLBM test, a claim accompanied by pictures of Kim pointing at the missile as it blasted out of the water at a 45-degree angle.

A second SLBM test was carried out off the southeastern port of Wonsan in November but this was apparently a failure as only debris from its casing was seen in the sea and no traces of the flight were detected. South Korean military officials say the North is continuing to actively pursue the development of SLBMs, which would take its nuclear threat to a new level. The defiant message and video footage came as the international community scrambled to respond to North Korea's latest test. While UN Security Council members discuss possible sanctions, world leaders have sought to build a consensus on how best to penalize leader Kim Jong-Un's maverick state.

South Korea on Thursday took unilateral action by switching on giant banks of speakers on the border and blasting a mix of propaganda and K-pop into North Korea. The same tactic, employed during a dangerous flare-up in cross-border tensions last year, had seen an infuriated Pyongyang threaten artillery strikes against the loudspeaker units unless they were switched off. At a mass rally held Friday in Pyongyang' Kim Il-Sung square to celebrate the test, senior North Korean ruling party official Kim Ki-Nam said Seoul was once again playing with fire. "The United States and its puppets have wasted no time in driving the situation on the peninsula to the brink of war, resuming their psychological warfare broadcast," Kim said. — AFP



**MANILA:** Devotees join the annual procession with the religious icon of the Black Nazarene (center) in Manila yesterday. — AFP

# VIETNAM WARNS CHINA OVER AIR SAFETY THREAT

**HANOI:** Vietnam's civil aviation authority has accused Beijing of threatening regional air safety by conducting unannounced flights through its airspace to a disputed reef in the South China Sea, state media said yesterday. The Civil Aviation Authority of Vietnam (CAAV) warned that the unannounced flights "threaten the safety of all flights in the region," according to a report in the Tuoi Tre Daily newspaper.

In quotes published in Vietnamese official online newspaper Zing.vn late Friday, CAAV director Lai Xuan Thanh said a protest letter about the flights had been sent to Beijing, as well as a complaint to the United Nations' International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). "Chinese aircraft have

ignored all the rules and norms of the ICAO by not providing any flight plans or maintaining any radio contact with Vietnam's air traffic control centre," he added.

In the seven days to January 8, Vietnam logged 46 incidents of Chinese planes flying without warning through airspace monitored by air traffic control in the southern metropolis of Ho Chi Minh City, according to civilian aviation authorities quoted in the Tuoi Tre Daily newspaper report. Chinese state media on Wednesday said two civilian planes landed on an island in the Fiery Cross reef in the contested Spratly Islands, which have long been at the centre of bitter wrangling between Vietnam and its giant neighbor. —AFP



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THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

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ESTABLISHED 1961

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**YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN**

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

PLAYERS, STRATEGIES  
IN VENEZUELA CRISIS

By Maria Isabel Sanchez

## Government

After 17 years in control, President Nicolas Maduro's socialist PSUV party has lost the National Assembly legislature to the center-right opposition, which is vowing to get rid of him and reform the economy. But Maduro is seen as holding sway over the Supreme Court, where a legal battle is likely to play out. His side has applied to it to annul the assembly's reforms. "The government has chosen the path of outright confrontation, raising once again the prospect of serious political violence," wrote Phil Gunson, an analyst with the International Crisis Group. Meanwhile skeptics say Maduro's appointment of socialist hardliners to economic posts in a cabinet reshuffle this week bodes ill for change.

## Military

The military could hold the key to resolving deadlock in a country prone to unrest. The defense minister and head of the armed forces, General Vladimir Padrino, pledged the military's "absolute loyalty and unconditional support" for Maduro. "The armed forces is a complex institution and its behavior in the event of a political crisis of such scale is difficult to predict," said Diego Moya-Ocampos, a London-based Venezuelan analyst with research group IHS Country Risk. "The armed forces will play a key role behind the scenes. Crucially they will prevent any confrontation between Venezuelans or between pro-government and opposition groups."

## Opposition

The opposition coalition MUD swore in a two-thirds majority in the assembly after winning December's elections. However Maduro supporters say that "super-majority" - which is large enough to give the opposition the power to launch constitutional measures to oust the president - is not legitimate. Their claim is based on the fact that the Supreme Court has suspended three opposition lawmakers pending allegations of electoral fraud. "The institutional crisis between the government and the legislature will escalate further as the MUD and the PSUV struggle to control the Supreme Court," said Moya-Ocampos. He said the deadlock will likely cause instability and a worsening of economic hardship for ordinary Venezuelans.

## Venezuelan People

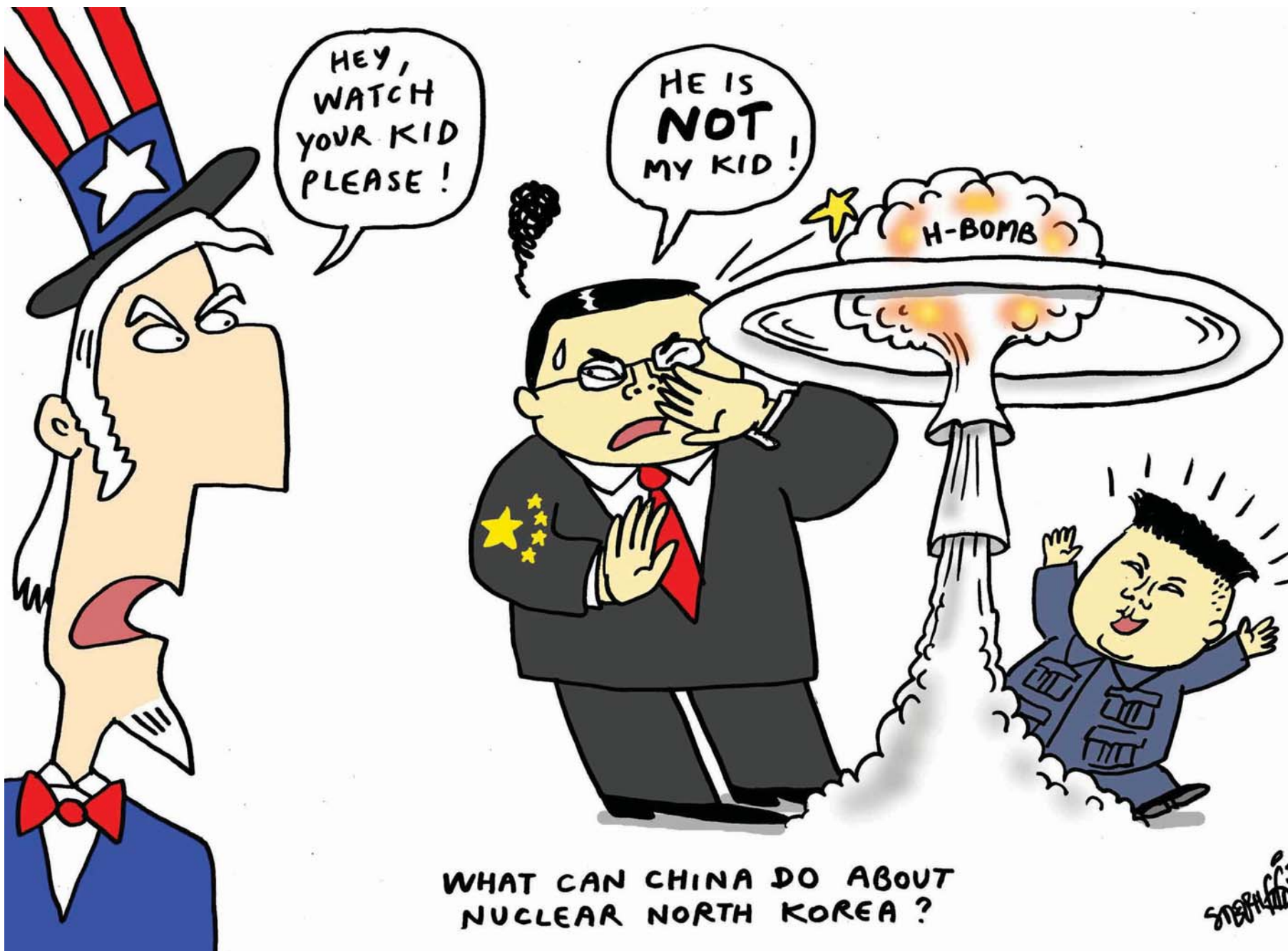
December's vote was widely seen as punishment for the government by an electorate fed up with economic chaos. "People are hoping their problems will be solved, but if the days go by and things go on like this, social tension will be exacerbated," said Asdrubal Oliveros, of Venezuelan research group Ecoanalitica. The plunging price of oil has hit Venezuela's foreign revenues. Venezuelans are having to queue for hours to buy rations of cooking oil, toilet paper and other basics. Domestic worker Gilma Vasquez said she voted to "end the queues." But in the current deadlock, she says, "I am afraid that nothing will change."

## International Community

The United States and Venezuela's Latin American neighbors are watching closely. Before the elections the United Nations expressed concern for jailed opposition leaders and the independence of the judiciary. Long at odds with Maduro and his predecessor Hugo Chavez, Washington has called for a "transparent" resolution. Maduro's Venezuelan Foreign Minister Delcy Rodriguez rejected that as "interference". The Organization of American States called for "dialogue and peace." Its leader Luis Almagro warned Maduro against "distorting the voice of the people" after the vote.

"The fact that the opposition was able to achieve a peaceful, democratic change of leadership in the Venezuelan parliament may suggest there is light at the end of the country's tunnel," wrote Gunson. "But for now no one can be sure it is not the highlight of an oncoming train." —AFP

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## Washington Watch

## MUSLIM MILLENNIALS' VIEWS ON RELIGION

By Dr James J Zogby

At the close of 2015, Zogby Research Services (ZRS) conducted face to face polling of 5,374 Muslim youth between the ages of 15 to 34 in eight Arab countries: Morocco, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, and Palestine. We had been commissioned by the Tabah Foundation to explore the views of Arab Muslim millennials, specifically with regard to their attitudes toward religious identity, religious leadership, the role of the state in religious affairs, the need for reform, and religious extremism. The results of the study provided fascinating insights into the views of a much "talked about" but not often "talked to" generation of Arabs.

What we learned was that, in the main, Muslim millennials: were committed to their faith; recognized a need for renewal in Muslim discourse; saw a need for a more visible role for women in religious life; believed that religion would play an important part in their country's future; and rejected extremist groups as a perversion of their faith.

While there were observable differences in the attitudes of young Arab Muslims from the different countries included in the study, overall we found a generation committed to their Muslim identity, seeing their faith as more of a "private spiritual affair" than "just about beliefs and laws defining right and wrong". It was noteworthy that the importance of Muslim identity was more pronounced in societies that were more pluralistic (like UAE,

Kuwait, and Egypt)-the very same societies where young Muslims indicated that they felt tension between the "temptations of today's society" and their Muslim faith.

## Key Role

When asked to identify the most important aspects of their faith, most frequently cited were "living by Islamic ethics and morals" and addressing the "political issues facing Muslim societies". And while majorities in most countries disagreed that religion was the source of decline in the Arab World and believed that religion has a key role to play in their country's future, there were differing views about the role of the state in administering religious affairs. Only in Egypt, Kuwait, and Palestine, were majorities inclined to support the state's involvement in anything related to religion. The only areas where majorities in all eight countries agreed with government intervention were in "ensuring that religious discourse is not used to promote violence, incitement, and hatred" and in banning movies, TV, etc, if they "breach the values of society".

Substantial majorities of millennials in all eight countries felt that the "language used to speak about Islam" and the topics and issues addressed by scholars and preachers needed to be made more relevant to today's life, which is why many also claimed that Friday sermons were either a "tirade", "boring", or "the government's voice".

Muslim millennials frequently pointed to their country's grand mufti or other prominent religious scholars as being the authorities to consult on matters of religion,

but a significant number pointed to religious TV shows as "their most important source or guidance and direction". And majorities of young men and women in every country agreed that there was a need for more women religious scholars and preachers.

## Perversion

What also came through quite clearly was the fact that Muslim millennials overwhelmingly reject extremist groups and movements largely identifying them as a "complete perversion of Islam". And they identify "corrupt, repressive, and unrepresentative governments" and "extremist religious teaching" as the principal reasons why some of their contemporaries join these groups.

The upshot of this study is that Arab Muslim millennials, like their age cohorts in other parts of the world, are struggling to find their place in a rapidly changing world. They are neither a "lost generation" nor are they an amorphous unthinking mass without definite ideas about the future of the societies they will soon inherit. They are not to be feared, nor should their insistence that there be change be ignored. As the Tabah Foundation noted in commissioning this study "it is only by knowing this generation that we can address the seismic religious, cultural, social, and political shifts taking place in the Arab World today and in the future".

*NOTE: The full report will be released at an event in Abu Dhabi this coming week and will be available on the Foundation's website [www.tabahfoundation.org](http://www.tabahfoundation.org). Dr James J Zogby is the President of the Arab American Institute*

## CAPTURED MEXICO KINGPIN: 'THE LORD OF TUNNELS'

By Laurent Thomet

With his daring underground escapes and ability to sneak narcotics under the US-Mexico border, Mexican drug kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman earned a new nickname: "The Lord of Tunnels". In fact, Guzman made one last tunnel escape before his capture on Friday, fleeing through a drainage system in the city of Los Mochis, Sinaloa state, as marines hunted him down. He was finally caught in a stolen car. The man whose old nickname means "Shorty" had used the money from a drug empire whose tentacles reach Europe and Asia to dig himself out of trouble again and again.

The bathtub in one of his houses opened into an escape route through drainage systems that he used to flee from troops in early 2014, and he repeated the act last year from a maximum-security prison. US and Mexican authorities have regularly discovered sophisticated tunnels with rails and electricity used to ship marijuana, cocaine and other drugs into the United States, with cash and weapons coming the other way.

## Folk Legend

The 58-year-old Sinaloa drug cartel leader's legend soared after he humiliated authorities by escaping prison in his most ambitious tunnel yet. On July 11, 2015, after just 17 months at the Altiplano prison in central Mexico, Guzman slipped through a hole in his cell's shower, climbed on a motorcycle mounted on rails, and traveled 1.5 km through the tunnel. US and Mexican law enforcement officials say Guzman then flew to his home patch on the Sinaloa-Durango state border because he is revered as a modern-day Robin Hood in the region. His octogenarian mother still

lives in his village of La Tuna.

Marines nearly captured him in October in a remote mountain region. Authorities said Guzman injured his face and a leg while falling in the rough terrain, but special forces failed to nab him. AFP journalists who visited the area weeks after the operation found bullet-riddled

Mazatlan. He was found in a condo with his wife and their young twin daughters. He had been on the lam for 13 years after escaping a first time in 2001 from another prison by hiding in a laundry cart. He had spent eight years in prison following his 1993 capture in Guatemala. Guzman became a legend of Mexico's underworld,

calmly and pay everyone's tabs before leaving.

## 'Public Enemy Number One'

Born on April 4, 1957 to a family of farmers, Guzman had humble beginnings in a region known as a bastion of drug trafficking. He dropped out of primary school to work in marijuana and opium poppy fields as drug consumption rose in the neighboring United States. He was recruited by Guadalajara cartel boss Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo, the godfather of Mexico's modern drug cartels. Guzman's job was to contact drug traffickers in Colombia.

After Felix Gallardo was arrested in 1989, Guzman's Sinaloa drug cartel began its meteoric rise. But he had enemies. A gunfight in 1993 at the airport of Guadalajara killed the western city's archbishop, Cardinal Juan Jesus Posadas Ocampo, allegedly because he was mistaken for Guzman. His ability to sneak tons of cocaine, heroin and marijuana into the United States made him "Public Enemy Number One" in Chicago, a moniker that had been given to US prohibition-era mafia boss Al Capone.

Guzman "easily surpassed the carnage and social destruction that was caused by Capone," the Chicago Crime Commission said in Feb 2013. The mustachioed drug lord made Forbes magazine's list of billionaires until he was left out in 2013 because he was believed to have spent much of his wealth on protection. Guzman married an 18-year-old beauty queen, Emma Coronel, in 2007 and is believed to have 10 children with various women. His family has paid dearly for his life of crime. One of his brothers was killed in a Mexican jail in Dec 2004 and a son was shot dead in a shopping center parking lot in May 2008. —AFP



**A Mexican navy marine inspects an open manhole after the recapture of Mexico's most wanted drug lord, Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman in the city of Los Mochis, Mexico on Friday. (Inset) Guzman is escorted on a helicopter at Mexico City's airport. —AP/AFP**

homes and cars. Residents said military helicopters fired on the community during the operation, prompting hundreds to flee.

Guzman had been previously captured on Feb 22, 2014, in the Sinaloa resort of

with musicians singing his praises in folk ballads known as "narcocorridos", tributes to drug capos. He is said to have been brazen enough to walk into restaurants in his state of Sinaloa, ask diners to hand their cell phones to his bodyguards, eat





A Syrian refugee boy plays on the beach at the Ramlet al Bayda public beach in Beirut yesterday. — AP

## US REFUGEE PROGRAM DECRIED AFTER TERROR ARRESTS

**LOS ANGELES:** The US refugee program came under fresh criticism after federal authorities revealed that two Iraqi-born men arrested on terrorism-related charges had come to America as refugees. While there was no evidence the men intended or planned attacks in the United States, Republican lawmakers already concerned about the federal government's ability to properly vet Syrian refugees said the cases highlight weaknesses in the program that put Americans' safety at risk.

"How many ticking time bombs are we going to bring in in this refugee program without a proper vetting system in place?" Rep Michael McCaul and chairman of House Homeland Security Committee, said at a news conference Friday. He and other GOP lawmakers urged the Senate to pass legislation to block refugees from Iraq and Syria until screening is improved. The House passed a bill in November.

The uproar comes after weeks of fervent debate in Washington and on the presidential campaign trail about tighter security screens in the wake of attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, California. Immigrant advocates said they have full confidence in the vetting process and that

tens of thousands of Iraqi refugees have been successfully resettled under the program.

On Thursday, federal authorities in California accused 23-year-old Aws Mohammed Younis Al-Jayab of Sacramento of traveling to Syria to fight and lying to US officials about it. Jayab had come to the United States as a refugee in Oct 2012, and discussed on social media how he fought against the regime in Syria as a teen, authorities said. In Texas, 24-year-old Omar Faraj Saeed Al-Hardan of Houston was indicted on charges that he tried to provide material support to the extremists. Both suspects are Palestinians born in Iraq, authorities said.

The US annually accepts 70,000 refugees from around the world, including people fleeing violence, religious persecution and war, and has announced plans to increase the number to 85,000 this year. Since the 2001 terrorist attacks, about 785,000 refugees have arrived in the country, and fewer than 20 have been arrested or removed over terrorism-related concerns, according to the State Department.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest said Friday the screening of refugees is rigorous and thorough. He

repeated the administration's opposition to proposals that would impose a religious test or bar individuals from the US based on their ethnicity. "That doesn't represent who we are as a country and, most importantly, it's not going to keep us safe," Earnest said.

More than 127,000 Iraqi refugees have arrived in the United States since Oct 2006, with the largest numbers headed toward California, Michigan and Texas, according to State Department statistics. Some Iraqis go through the U.N. refugee agency, while some can apply directly to the refugee program in Jordan, Egypt and Iraq.

### Suspicion

Melanie Nezer, vice president for policy and advocacy at the Jewish refugee agency HIAS, said she worries the recent backlash might place law-abiding refugees under suspicion. She said she has confidence in the government's screening measures and that these are continually updated by federal intelligence officials. "The vast majority of refugees, including Iraqi refugees, have not caused any harm to our country and will not cause any harm to our country," she said.

Federal authorities said Jayab promised to provide weapons training to Hardan and advised him on how he would be assigned to the battlefield once he arrived in Syria. While authorities say Jayab fought twice in Syria, including with a group eventually linked to Islamic State, there is no indication that Hardan actually traveled there. Hardan became a legal permanent resident of the United States in 2011 and applied in 2014 to become a US citizen, authorities said. Jayab was interviewed by immigration officials in 2014 for his green card and did not disclose his recent travel to Syria, authorities said.

Security screenings for immigrants and travelers have come under increased scrutiny because of recent attacks. Rules have been tightened for visa-free travel to the United States and lawmakers have vowed to look into the fiancé visa program, which was used by the husband-and-wife attackers in San Bernardino who killed 14 people last month. On Friday, senior White House officials and members of the president's national security team traveled to Silicon Valley to seek tech industry help to stop the Islamic State and other groups from radicalizing people online. — AP

## US RELEASES IRAN ROCKET FIRE VIDEO

Continued from Page 1

The 45 seconds of black-and-white Dec 26 footage, which the Navy said was shot from a Seahawk helicopter, shows what appears to be an oil tanker passing by. A flash appears on the left side of the video and after zooming in, it shows small boats the Navy said were Iranian firing rockets. The Navy has said the USS Harry S Truman aircraft carrier, the USS Bulkeley destroyer and a French frigate were nearby at the time, as well as commercial vessels.

There was no immediate reaction in Tehran to the video's release. Previously, Gen Ramezan Sharif, a Revolutionary Guard spokesman, said his forces didn't carry out any drills there at that time and called the American comments "psychological warfare". Military vessels taking part in the war against the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria also pass through the strait, a narrow waterway between Iran and Oman. The US Navy previously said Iran gave 23-minutes warning over maritime radio before opening fire with unguided rockets.

The Strait of Hormuz is only about 33 km wide at its narrowest point. Ships traversing the chokepoint have even less room to maneuver. The shipping lane in either direction is only 3 km wide, with a 3 km buffer zone between them. The US Navy's 5th Fleet is based in nearby Bahrain, on the southern coast of the Gulf. It conducts anti-piracy patrols in the greater Gulf and serves as a regional counterbalance to Iran.

US and Iranian forces clashed in the Strait of Hormuz in the 1980s, during the Iran-Iraq war. On April 18, 1988, the US

attacked two Iranian oil rigs and sank or damaged six Iranian vessels, including two naval frigates, in Operation Praying Mantis. That came after the near-sinking of the missile frigate USS Samuel B Roberts by an Iranian mine. A few months later, in July 1988, the USS Vincennes in the strait mistook an Iran Air flight heading to Dubai for an attacking fighter jet, shooting down the plane and killing all 290 passengers and crew onboard. The shoot-down of the jet came shortly after the US vessel reported coming under fire from Iranian speedboats.

Tensions have persisted in the strait even into this year. Iran sank a replica of a US aircraft carrier in February near the strait and it earlier tested out so-called "suicide drones" it said could crash into naval vessels. Iran seized a Marshall Islands-flagged cargo ship and later released it in May after its forces had earlier surrounded a US-flagged cargo ship transiting the strait. That caused the 5th Fleet to escort commercial ships traveling in the Gulf for a short time.

Iran and world powers led by the US agreed to a landmark nuclear deal earlier this year to limit Tehran's enrichment of uranium in exchange for lifting economic sanctions. Iran has always denied seeking nuclear arms. The deal reached with moderate President Hassan Rouhani's administration has been panned by Iranian hard-liners, and in the months since, Iran has conducted missile tests criticized by the US, as well as aired footage on state television of an underground missile base. In recent days, regional tensions have been escalated even higher as Iran and Saudi Arabia face off after the execution of Nimr Al-Nimr and the storming of the kingdom's diplomatic posts in Iran. — AP

## MEXICAN DRUG LORD SENT BACK TO PRISON

Continued from Page 1

"The follow-up work allowed us to document meetings between attorneys of the now-detainee and these people," she said, adding that the matter was under investigation. The manhunt led to his recapture, which featured one last underground escape for the man who became known as "The Lord of Tunnels" for his ability to ship drugs to the US under the border and dig his way out of trouble. Guzman was nearly captured in the mountain region in October, but marines chasing him in a helicopter decided not to shoot because he was accompanied by two women and a girl, Gomez said. The months-long investigation culminated in a house in Los Mochis, which authorities began to stake out in December.

Marines were met by gunfire when they swooped in on Friday, leaving five suspects dead and one marine wounded. Six others were detained in the operation. Guzman and his security chief fled through the city's drainage system, repeating a tactic the drug kingpin successfully used in escaping authorities in 2014 in the nearby city of Culiacan. This time however the marines expected such a move, Gomez said. The wanted men came out of a manhole and stole a car, but they were captured on a road and taken to a motel, where Guzman was seated on a bed, wearing a dirty sleeveless shirt - an ignominious end for a kingpin whose billionaire drug business reaches as far as Asia and Europe.

The 58-year-old's arrest provided a major sigh of relief for President Enrique Pena Nieto, whose administration was humiliated when Guzman broke out of prison. "Mission accomplished: We got him," Pena Nieto wrote on Twitter. But

calls quickly mounted among US politicians for Mexico to ship Guzman to the United States, where he also faces charges in half a dozen US states. The Americans had sent an extradition request two weeks before his July escape.

Some questioned Mexico's ability to hold on to Guzman, who previously escaped from another maximum-security prison in 2001 by hiding in a laundry cart with inside help. More than a dozen prison and federal police officials have been arrested on charges of helping Guzman flee again last year, along with several associates of the drug lord who worked from the outside on building the tunnel. "Given that 'El Chapo' has already escaped from Mexican prison twice, this third opportunity to bring him to justice cannot be squandered," said US senator and Republican presidential hopeful Marco Rubio. Senator John McCain congratulated Mexico's navy for the capture, but he added: "Now let's extradite him to the US." US President Barack Obama's administration did not indicate whether it would press Pena Nieto to send Guzman across the border.

US Attorney General Loretta Lynch said Guzman will "now have to answer for his alleged crimes," without indicating where. The Mexican attorney general's office secured an extradition warrant in September, but Guzman's attorneys sought an injunction that could delay the process. But a leading Mexican politician, Senator Miguel Barbosa of the leftist opposition Democratic Revolution Party, is already opposing an extradition. "The easiest thing would be to swiftly extradite 'Chapo' Guzman and, once again, the Mexican state shows that it doesn't have the strength to punish those who commit crimes in our territory," Barbosa said. — AFP

## KANDARI WHISKED OFF TO HOSPITAL...

Continued from Page 1

In all, 45 of the remaining inmates have been approved for transfer, and the Pentagon is trying to find countries to take them. Many are from Yemen and cannot go back given the country's collapse into civil war. US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter in December signed off on 17 of the 45 to be transferred as soon as this month, and officials say a further flurry of releases is expected in the coming weeks. Even if all 45 are released, the remaining inmates are expected to stay in indefinite detention. These include the "9/11 Five," a group of five men accused of plotting the Sept 11, 2001 attacks that unfolded in New

York, at the Pentagon and in the skies over Pennsylvania.

In the case of Kandari, the Pentagon released virtually no information about the detainee, as is typical with Guantanamo inmates. According to his leaked 2008 prison file, published by WikiLeaks and the New York Times, the 40-year-old was a "committed member" of Al-Qaeda and was an influential religious figure for the group's fighters in Afghanistan. He was initially captured in Dec 2001 and sent to Guantanamo in May the following year. Since 2002, a total of 779 detainees have been held at Guantanamo. Inmates are kept without recourse to the regular US legal processes and some likely will die in prison without ever being convicted of a crime. — AFP

## GCC CONDEMNS IRANIAN INTERFERENCE

Continued from Page 1

His death touched off anti-Saudi demonstrations elsewhere in the Shiite world, including the attacks in Iran. Riyadh was accused of silencing his criticism by killing him. The GCC groups Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

In response to the Iran incidents, Riyadh and Bahrain, which has a Shiite majority, severed diplomatic relations with Tehran. Kuwait recalled its ambassador, the UAE downgraded its ties, and Oman and Qatar condemned the attacks. And they threatened yesterday to "take other measures against Iran if it continues its aggression", without spelling them out. "We are looking at additional measures to be taken if it (Iran) continues with its cur-

rent policies," Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir said during a press conference after the meeting. "The escalation is coming from Iran, not from Saudi Arabia or the GCC .... We are evaluating Iran's moves and taking steps to counter them...things will be clearer in the near future," he said. Jubeir also said his country had asked the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, of which Iran is a member, to convene an extraordinary meeting to discuss the aggression against its embassy.

Iran has said the kingdom is to blame for the diplomatic crisis. In a letter to the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon published by Iranian news agencies earlier yesterday, Iran's foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif complained about Saudi Arabia's "provocations" towards Tehran. — Agencies

## D&G UNVEILS DESIGNS FOR MUSLIM WOMEN

Continued from Page 1

In D&G's boutiques throughout the Middle East, as well as in Milan, Munich, Paris and London, popular destinations for well-heeled shopping tourists from the region.

The mini collection, billed as capturing the "allure of the Middle East", has generated a stir of interest on social media with designers Stefano Gabbana and Domenico Dolce generally winning praise for demonstrating that dressing modestly does not have to mean dressing drab. A spokeswoman for the designers said there was no particular agenda other than catering for their customers' requirements. "It is not the first capsule collection Dolce and Gabbana has designed and dedicated to a specific market," she told AFP. "In the past, they have created collections for the China market, as well as Brazil, Japan and Mexico. So it's a collection without any ideological or polemic attitude."

The company describes the pieces as "a reverie amidst the desert dunes and skies of the Middle East: an enchanting visual story about the grace and beauty of the marvelous women of Arabia". Ankle-length dresses come in both subtle, sandy shades and dark, almost black, hues.

Some are embellished with the bright motifs that featured in D&G's main spring/summer 2016 collection: Daisies, lemons, white dots and red roses.

Fabrics include Georgette, a type of sheer crepe, and charmeuse, another lightweight material, with much use made of lace for trim and inserts. Oversized jewellery and sunglasses also give the collection D&G's distinctive signature. According to a report by management consultancy Bain, sales of personal luxury goods in the Middle East totalled \$8.7 billion in 2015, up nearly 28 percent from 2014. Other top fashion brands have already attempted to boost their sales in the region with collections tailor-made for the market, notably Oscar de la Renta, DKNY and Tommy Hilfiger.

Last year saw Japanese retailer Uniqlo enlist British designer Hana Tajima to design a range aimed at Muslim women in the run-up to the fasting month of Ramadan, while Sweden's H&M cast its first hijab wearing model, Mariah Idrissi. Idrissi said D&G's entry to this particular market was "definitely a positive thing". "I think (fashion houses) are realising; let's not just do it in that one month, let's make this something to stay, because they've realised the potential and how much Muslim women spend on fashion," she told Britain's Daily Telegraph. —AFP



# ZAIN HONORS POWERBOAT RACER YOUSEF AL RUBAYAN

KUWAITI RACER RETIRES AFTER 21 YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENTS

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, honored Kuwaiti Powerboat racer Yousef Al Rubayan, who recently retired after 21 years of achievements in local and international competitions.

Zain expressed its pride in Al Rubayan's achievements, as the company was one of the main sponsors who supported him during his recent participation in the UIM F1 H2O Powerboat World Championship, in which he proudly achieved the second place title.

Zain's sponsorship adds to its long list of Kuwaiti champions the company supports in local and international sporting events, as it comes in line with Zain's Corporate Social Responsibility strategy towards the youth and sports sectors.

Zain's sponsorship of Al Rubayan showcased its keenness to foster the further development and success of Kuwaiti athletes in the many fields of sports. Powerboat racing is increasingly becoming a well-recognized water sport among Kuwaiti youth, thus Zain's

eagerness to support Al Rubayan in his professional career in which he raised the Kuwaiti flag high in local and international competitions.

Al Rubayan's Powerboat racing career saw him achieving many titles, including the second place title of last year's world championship, the fifth place in the World's F1 Championship in 2013, the third place in Qatar's round during 2013, the second place in the World's F2 Championship in 2010, as well as the third place in the World's Championship in 2009.



LAHAINA: Jordan Spieth plays his shot from the 13th tee during round two of the Hyundai Tournament of Champions at the Plantation Course at Kapalua Golf Club on Friday in Lahaina, Hawaii. —AFP

## SPIETH GOES FOUR CLEAR AT TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS

**LAHAINA:** World number one Jordan Spieth delivered a putting masterclass on the way to a flawless nine-under-par 64 that took him four shots clear at the halfway stage of the Hyundai Tournament of Champions. Spieth, who would match Tiger Woods with a seventh PGA win before the age of 23 should he finish top of the leaderboard today, putted brilliantly on greens he said were the slowest he had ever encountered on the PGA Tour. Boosted by a 35-foot chip-in eagle at the par-five ninth, the Texan added seven birdies to post a 16-under 130 halfway total, with first round leader Patrick Reed (69),

Kevin Kisner (65) and Fabian Gomez (66) tied for second on 12-under. Spieth is also on track to beat the tournament record of 31-under set by Ernie Els in 2003, though he said the South African's mark was probably safe.

"I guess it's possible but that's asking a lot," Spieth told reporters at the Kapalua Plantation course on Maui. "(Another) 16-under will be difficult to duplicate.

"I don't know if I could have scored much better these first couple of days." Should he lift the trophy on Sunday it would be 22-year-old's seventh victory on the PGA Tour, matching the number

achieved by Woods before turning 23. Only Horton Smith, who won 14 times from 1928-30, piled up more victories by that age.

Posting his second straight bogey-free round, Spieth plundered the par-fives, playing them in a total of five-under, and on the few occasions he was in danger of dropping a shot his flawless cross-handed putting came to the rescue. He sank testing par-savers on the 16th and 17th holes and then finished his round in style, coaxing in a 13-foot birdie at the par-five 18th where his ball teetered on the edge of the cup before dropping in.

"It's nice to have no blemishes on the card," said the Masters and U.S. Open champion. "I started slapping it around (on) 16 and 17, but fortunately those saves really kept us on the go and allowed me to have that confidence on 18. "Patience is going to be key this weekend. There's going to be a lot of birdies made. "If I can continue to ... keep a blemish-free card, we're going to be in good position." Spieth's putting impressed former Tour player Notah Begay, who told the Golf Channel: "He's putting as well as anybody ever has in the history of the game." —Reuters

## BROOKS LEADS SA OPEN AFTER TWO ROUNDS

**JOHANNESBURG:** England's Daniel Brooks grabbed a one-shot lead at the BMW SA Open in Johannesburg yesterday as the field completed a second round held over from Friday due to bad weather. In all 78 players had to return to the course to finish their first 36 holes.

Brooks' only previous European Tour title came at the 2014 Madeira Islands Open in a tournament which was reduced to just 36 holes because of the weather. And he again showed he likes the going to be tough as he claimed six birdies in 11 holes upon the resumption to fire a 67 and move to nine under 135, one shot clear of South African Keith Horne who completed a 69 on Friday. "It was quite breezy yesterday afternoon and I wasn't playing that great as well, it was nice to come in for me for a bit of a rest, it was needed," Brooks said.

"It's going to be a long day having played 11 holes this morning so I'll just go out there and have some fun. "Last year I got off to a really slow start and only started playing well halfway through the year so hopefully it'll be the opposite way round this year."

Branden Grace was a further shot back after a bogey-bogey finish in his resumed round alongside Jbe Kruger who completed a 70 on Friday as South African golfers dominated the leaderboard.

Grace had been impressive form on Friday and held a share of the lead when he resumed on the 12th at five under for his round. He birdied the 14th to move ahead on his own, but bogeys on the 17th and 18th saw him drop back.

"I played some good golf and then didn't get it going this morning," he said. "I made a couple of good putts and then let it slip on 15 with a three-putt on the par five and then just a couple of bad swings to follow that." Former US Open champion Retief Goosen was in the group on 140, but defending champion Andy Sullivan missed the cut with rounds of 75 and 72.

Also packing his bags was tournament host Ernie Els who fired rounds of 73-74. —AFP



LAHAINA: Brooks Koepka plays his shot from the fourth tee during round two of the Hyundai Tournament of Champions at the Plantation Course at Kapalua Golf Club on Friday in Lahaina, Hawaii. —AFP

## ELS HOPING TO TAKE A FIRM GRIP ON THE YIPS

**JOHANNESBURG:** Ernie Els is determined to put struggles with his short

putting game behind him by working with a changed grip and playing golf

"properly" again this year after battling with the yips.



KOTA KINABALU: This handout photo taken and released by Lagardere Sports yesterday shows Namchok Tantipokhakul of Thailand posing with the championship trophy after the final round of the Warisan Harta Sabah Masters golf tournament at the Sutera Harbour Golf and Country Club in Kota Kinabalu. —AFP

The 46-year-old four-times major champion has missed some crucial short putts over the last year and again at the South African Open this week, where he duffed one from 18 inches on his way to missing the cut.

"I'm really looking forward to playing golf properly this year. I'm tired of being uncomfortable on those little putts. I want to give this cross handed method a real go," he said during a stint of television commentary on Saturday during the third round of the European Tour event at the Glendower Golf Club. Els has tried the grip, where the left hand is low, briefly before, but has struggled with the yips, a nervous condition in which athletes suddenly lose their ability to perform a certain skill.

He still feels positive about his game even after describing 2015 as his worst year in golf as he plummeted to 191st in the world rankings.

"I am really very comfortable in life, in general, I'm having a good time out there. Like Bobby Locke once said, he's never seen a grumpy good putter. But you see a lot of grumpy bad putters," the South African said.

Els, British Open champion in 2012, said he would play in Abu Dhabi and Qatar on the European Tour this month before heading to the U.S. PGA Tour.

"Depending on the weather I'm going to start my season at Pebble Beach (Feb. 11-14) or Riviera (Feb. 18-21)," he said. "I would love to have competed at the Olympics but I'm so far down the rankings, I'd need to win a couple of Majors to get back into contention," he said of golf's return to the Games in Rio de Janeiro in August.

"I think it's wonderful for our sport to be included in the Olympics and to meet the other athletes must be wonderful," he added. — Reuters



## DE FILIPPIS - FIRST WOMAN F1 DRIVER, DIES AGED 89

**PARIS:** Italy's Maria Teresa de Filippis, the first woman to compete in Formula 1, has died at the age of 89, the Grand Prix Drivers Club announced yesterday.

The Italian trailblazer competed in three grand prix behind the wheel of a privately-entered Maserati.

She finished 10th on her debut at Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium in 1958

aged 32, crossing the line two laps behind the winner, Briton Tony Brooks in a Vanwall.

She then failed to finish races in Portugal and Italy. Born on November 11, 1926, de Filippis tried but failed to qualify for the Monaco Grand Prix in 1958 and 1959. She retired at the end of that season after the death of her team

owner Jean Behra.

"Too many friends had died," she later told The Observer newspaper in 2006. The Italian reportedly became a F1 driver after a bet with her brothers over how fast she could drive.

In the interview with The Observer she related only one instance of prejudice, recalling how at a race in France

"The director said 'the only helmet a woman should wear is the one at the hairdresser's' - that was the only time I was prevented from racing."

On her retirement she maintained her interest in motorsport, joining the Grand Prix Drivers Club, eventually becoming the retired drivers association's president. She paved the way for

her compatriot Lella Lombardi who competed in a dozen races in the 1970s.

Aside from de Filippis, who died overnight in Bergamo, and Lombardi the sport has had several female test drivers, including Susie Wolff for Williams and the late Maria de Villota, who tested for Marussia until a crash in 2012. —AFP

## VATRANO'S GOAL LEADS BRUINS PAST BANGED-UP DEVILS, 4-1

**NEWARK:** Rookie Frank Vatrano scored early, Jonas Gustavsson made 19 saves and the struggling Boston Bruins beat the banged up New Jersey Devils 4-1 on Friday night for the 3,000th win in franchise history. Ryan Spooner, Jimmy Hayes and Colin Miller also scored as the Bruins snapped a two-game losing streak and won for only the second time in seven games. Bobby Farnham scored for the Devils, who have dropped three straight games in regulation for the first time since the start of the season. Cory Schneider finished with 27 saves. The game was the start of a five-game road trip for the Bruins, and that might be the best place for them now. They are now 12-3-2 on the road and 9-11-2 at home. Boston has won its last five against New Jersey and 17 of 20.

### DUCKS 4, BLUES 3, SO

Ryan Kesler tied it on a power play with his second goal of the game early in the third period, Ryan Getzlaf got the deciding goal in the fourth round of the shootout and Anaheim beat St. Louis. Corey Perry also scored for the Ducks and John Gibson made 25 saves. Ryan Reaves, Troy Brouwer and Robby Fabbri scored for the Blues, who have lost five in a row (0-2-3) for the first time since dropping their final six of the 2013-14 season. They were coming off back-to-back overtime losses to Ottawa and Colorado in which they squandered two-goal leads in both games - and did it again against the Ducks. The Blues have lost 10 straight games in Anaheim since Oct. 17, 2009.

### BLACKHAWKS 3, SABRES 1

Phillip Danault scored his first NHL goal, Corey Crawford made 28 saves and Chicago beat Buffalo for its sixth consecutive victory. Niklas Hjalmarsson and Jonathan Toews also scored for Chicago, and Crawford remained perfect in seven career starts against Buffalo. The Blackhawks have won nine in a row against the Sabres. Ryan O'Reilly had Buffalo's only goal in the Sabres' sixth consecutive loss. Chad Johnson had 42 stops in a terrific performance.



**NEWARK:** Adam Henrique #14 of the New Jersey Devils is checked by Torey Krug #47 of the Boston Bruins during the third period at the Prudential Center on Friday in Newark, New Jersey. The Bruins defeated the Devils 4-1. — AFP

## RACING NAB BONUS POINT IN GLASGOW THRASHING

**BORDEAUX:** Racing 92 pummelled Glasgow in a bonus-point 34-10 victory yesterday to put themselves firmly in the driving seat of Pool 3 of the European Champions Cup. The Parisian club proved far too powerful up front for the Scottish side, scoring four converted pushover tries.

Victory at home to already-eliminated Scarlets next weekend will secure Racing's progress into the knock-out stages. "The first objective was to win the match, put on a great performance and take the five points if we could," said Racing coach Laurent Labit. "In this European Cup we've had three bonus-point victories and a draw away from home in four matches, it's a competition that suits us. "Now we have a last match here against Scarlets to go to make sure of qualification."

Glasgow's Finn Russell missed his first penalty effort at a wind-swept Stade Yves-du-Manoir, but the fly-half was on target with his second attempt to hand the visitors an unlikely lead after a quarter of an hour. Racing's star man Dan Carter drew the scores level 10 minutes later with his own penalty and the one-way traffic continued when former Chiefs prop and one-time All Black hopeful Ben Tameifuna,

weighing in at 134kg (21 stone), crashed over from short range. Carter, the record points scorer in international rugby with 1,598 points from 112 caps, kicked the conversion and a second penalty shortly before half-time. Racing opened the second period in complete control, skipper and hooker Dimitri Szarzewski driven over for the Parisian club's second try, Carter making no mistake with the extras.

More forward power saw prop Eddy Ben Arous crash over as all three front-row forwards got on the scoresheet. Glasgow's outstanding Fijian lock Leone Nakawara claimed a try back after a smart lineout play following a rare foray into Racing territory, Russell kicking the conversion.

But Racing refocused and had the last laugh when Argentina lock Manuel Carizza was driven over the line for a bonus-point fourth try that leaves the Parisians top of the pool on 17 points, with just two games left, at home to Scarlets on January 17 and away to Glasgow on January 23. Racing's cross-city rivals Stade Francais host Munster in other game, in a round of matches rearranged in the wake of terror attacks in the French capital in November that left 130 people dead. — AFP

### LIGHTNING 3, OILERS 2

Victor Hedman had a goal and two assists and Steven Stamkos capped Tampa Bay's three-goal, third-period rally to beat Edmonton. Nikita Kucherov also scored for the Lightning, who benefited from some luck as each of their three goals deflected in off an Edmonton skater. Justin Schultz and Benoit Pouliot scored for the Oilers, who led 2-0 after two periods.

### AVALANCHE 5, PREDATORS 3

Tyson Barrie put Colorado ahead midway through the third period and the Avalanche beat Nashville. Ryan Johansen had a goal and an assist in his first game with the Predators since they traded for him Wednesday. Barrie beat goalie Pekka Rinne with a shot from the top of the slot with 9 minutes left. It was his third goal in three games. Jarome Iginla, Cody McLeod, Gabriel Landeskog and Jack Skille also scored and Semyon Varlamov made 19 saves to help Colorado tie Nashville in the Western Conference standings with 45 points. The Predators have played one fewer game. Ryan Ellis and Filip Forsberg also scored for Nashville and Rinne made 22 saves.

### HURRICANES 4, BLUE JACKETS 1

Elias Lindholm scored twice, Cam Ward made 35 saves and Carolina beat Columbus. Lindholm put Carolina ahead 2-1 on a slap shot with 5:25 left in the second period, then added an empty-net goal with 1:01 remaining. Jordan Staal and Chris Terry also scored for the Hurricanes, and Kris Versteeg had two assists, giving him 299 NHL points. Brandon Dubinsky scored for Columbus, and Anton Forsberg made 25 saves. Defenseman Seth Jones made his first appearance with Columbus since a trade from Nashville on Wednesday and played in his 100th NHL game. Columbus' Nick Foligno left early in the third after a hard hit from the Hurricanes' Brad Malone. This was the opener of a back-to-back, and the teams will play in Columbus. — AP



**ALTENMARKT-ZAUCHENSEE:** Lindsey Vonn, of the United States, right, is flanked on the podium by second placed Larisa Yurkiw, of Canada, after winning an alpine ski, women's World Cup downhill, in Altenmarkt-Zauchensee, Austria, yesterday. — AP

## VONN EQUALS RECORD WITH 36TH WCUP DOWNHILL WIN

**ALTENMARKT-ZAUCHENSEE:** Watched by Austrian great Annemarie Moser Proell, whose many World Cup records she has been breaking one by one, Lindsey Vonn cemented her status as the world's best downhill skier yesterday.

With her 36th victory in the discipline, the American matched the record set by Moser-Proell in January 1980. The 62-year-old Austrian was among the first to congratulate Vonn, who leaned backward and spread both arms in celebration right after finishing a full second ahead of the competition in an unusual two-run format downhill.

"She is so kind," said Vonn, who broke Moser-Proell's overall record of 62 victories a year ago in Italy. "I am so glad she's here today as she couldn't be in Cortina last year. It means a lot to me. She is a true legend of our sport."

Vonn, who now has 72 World Cup wins across all Alpine disciplines, already held the record for most super-G victories with 25. That discipline was introduced in the 1980s after Moser-Proell had retired.

The Austrian holds one more record that will take even Vonn some time to beat - Moser-Proell won six overall titles compared to Vonn's four. "I am very happy," said Vonn, competing in her first race of 2016 after taking a break with friends and family in the United States last week.

"I just had a bad feeling after (not finishing last month's downhill in) Val d'Isere, I lost the momentum, I was tired, my knees hurt, and I

was sick in the end," she said. "I went home and I felt much better. So far I like the new year."

Vonn, who held a comfortable lead after the first run, finished in an aggregate time of 2 minutes, 11.17 seconds, one second ahead of Larisa Yurkiw of Canada, who earned her third career podium.

Cornelia Huetter of Austria was 1.66 behind in third. Despite building big leads over her competitors, Vonn said she "wasn't trying to do anything special. I just tried to ski a solid run."

Overall leader Lara Gut of Switzerland failed to finish the opening run and didn't score points. Gut remains in the lead, 58 points clear of Vonn, going into Sunday's super-G. Gut lost balance halfway down her run and just avoided falling but missed the next gate. "It took me too long to react. But physically I am OK," Gut said. "It's become rougher, there are some bumps in it. It's dark so you don't see the bumps."

With her third downhill win of the season, Vonn extended her lead in the discipline standings. She has 300 points, followed by Heutter on 250 and Swiss skier Fabienne Suter, who is out injured for an indefinite time, on 200.

Despite being Vonn's closest competitor in the discipline, Huetter said winning the season's downhill title "would be an unreasonable goal."

"All I wanted for this season is to improve in downhill," the Austrian said. "Lindsey always keeps a perfect balance between risking and skiing smoothly. There is still a lot of work to do

for me." It was the first women's downhill in 14 years to be contested over two runs. Organizers had to lower the start because of insufficient snow conditions in the upper part, shortening the course from its usual 3 kilometers to 1,875 meters.

"It was hard to stay relaxed," Vonn said about her final run. "It was tough with lots of bumps. I knew many girls had problems so I chose to ski a rounder line." After the first leg, Vonn led Yurkiw by 0.91, and Tina Weirather by 0.92. The skier from Liechtenstein lost balance in her final run as her left ski was airborne. She remained upright but missed a gate.

Yurkiw returned to the resort where she made her World Cup debut nine years ago, finishing 58th in a downhill. "Today after the first run I thought this is my chance to show what I've learned," said the Canadian, who is traveling the World Cup circuit with her own team.

Yurkiw called racing against Vonn "a constant challenge. She is a good competitor though she is not unbeatable. But today she was."

The first run was interrupted for 15 minutes when Lotte Smiseth Sejersted crashed and had to be airlifted off the course with suspected knee injuries. The Norwegian skier fell and both her skis came off before she slid into the safety netting.

Sejersted returned from injury this year after a crash in Val d'Isere in Dec. 2014 had ended her season prematurely. — AP

## FARAH SECOND IN FIRST RACE OF 2016

**LONDON:** Britain's double Olympic champion Mo Farah lost out to American Garrett Heath at the Great Edinburgh International cross-country race on Saturday as he started 2016 with a runners-up finish.

The 32-year-old, who will defend his 5,000 and 10,000 metres titles at the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro later this year, finished two seconds behind Heath, who completed the eight-kilometre course in 25 minutes and 29 seconds.

On a bitterly cold afternoon in the Scottish capital, Farah was in contention for victory until the closing stages, but Heath made light of muddy conditions to outpace him in a sprint finish.

"You don't want to lose the race, but it's better to lose now than later in the year," Farah told the BBC.

Heath, who has now won the race three times, said: "I kept waiting for Mo to kick past me in the home stretch, because I could hear people shouting."

Farah now heads to Ethiopia for a training camp before returning to Scotland for the Glasgow Indoor Grand Prix on February 20. The women's 6km race was won by 24-year-old Briton Kate Avery. — AFP



**EDINBURGH:** (L-R) Second place finisher Britain's Mo Farah, winner US runner Garrett Heath and third placed US runner Scott Fauble pose on the podium after finishing the men's race in the Great Edinburgh Cross Country run in Holyrood Park in Edinburgh yesterday. — AFP



# WAWRINKA SAILS INTO CHENNAI OPEN FINAL

**CHENNAI:** Defending champion Stan Wawrinka sailed into the ATP Chennai Open final yesterday after defeating France's Benoit Paire, inching closer to a third consecutive title in southern India. The world number four took just one hour and five minutes to beat number three seed Paire in straight

sets, 6-3 6-4, at the Nungambakkam Tennis Stadium, setting up a title clash with Borna Coric of Croatia. "I'm happy with what I have done so far. I'm feeling great. But you know, the season is really on... Hopefully, I can stay fit and ready for a long season," the 30-year-old said after winning. Two-

time Grand Slam winner Wawrinka is seeking to get his name on the Chennai Open trophy for the fourth time in the \$480,000 tournament, after earning victories in 2011, 2014 and 2015. A victory in India will help keep top seed Wawrinka in prime condition

before the Australian Open kicks off on January 18 in Melbourne. Two years ago the Swiss clinched his first Slam when he won the Australian Open just weeks after triumphing in Chennai. Last year, Wawrinka followed up victory in the southern city by taking home the trophy at Roland Garros in June.

Meanwhile, eighth seeded Coric reached the final after beating Britain's Aljaz Bedene in the nearly three hour-long second semi-final. The Croatian fought off a spirited challenge from Bedene before winning 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (5/7), 6-3. The final takes place today.—AFP

# SPURS EDGE NY KNICKS TO MAINTAIN HOME WIN STREAK

**SAN ANTONIO:** Kawhi Leonard had 19 points and 12 rebounds and the San Antonio Spurs held off Kristaps Porzingis and the New York Knicks 100-99 on Friday night to remain undefeated at home. San Antonio won its franchise-record 22nd straight home game to open the season and is tied for the franchise's best start after 38 games at 32-6. This was its most difficult home victory yet, though. Porzingis had 28 points and 11 rebounds but was on the bench when the Knicks started a 14 4 run to pull within 96-94 with 1:27 remaining. Jose Calderon missed a contested 3-pointer from the left corner for New York that would have won it.

## THUNDER 117, LAKERS 113

Russell Westbrook had 36 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists, and Oklahoma City barely survived Lou Williams' 44-point performance. Kevin Durant scored 24 points in the Thunder's 15th victory in 18 games and their seventh straight win over the lowly Lakers, but Williams put an extraordinary scare into them. Williams scored 23 of his career-high output in the fourth quarter for the Lakers, who avoided a third straight blowout loss to the Thunder in three weeks. Williams had all but five of the Lakers' points during a frenetic fourth quarter. Kobe Bryant had 19 points while playing in back-to-back games despite an ailing right shoulder, but missed a potential tying shot over Durant with 4 seconds to play.

## CAVALIERS 125, TIMBERWOLVES 99

J.R. Smith scored a season-high 27 points and Kevin Love had 20 points, nine rebounds and four assists in his return to Minnesota to help Cleveland to its sixth straight win. LeBron James added 13 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists, Iman Shumpert had 23 points and the Cavaliers outscored the Timberwolves 22-5 in transition to win for the 12th time in 14 games. Smith made 5 of 6 3-pointers in just 19 minutes and Cleveland was 13 of 27 from long range to cruise to the win. Andrew Wiggins scored 35 points, Shabazz Muhammad had 22 and Karl-Anthony Towns added 22 for the Timberwolves, who have lost five in a row and nine of their last 10.

## WARRIORS 128, TRAIL BLAZERS 108

Klay Thompson scored 36 points, making seven 3-pointers, and Golden State beat Portland for its fifth straight victory. Reigning league MVP Stephen Curry added 26 points and nine assists in three quarters for the Warriors (34-2), who led by as many as 25 points and made 18 3-pointers. Draymond Green finished with 11 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists for his eighth triple-double of the season. Curry started despite continued soreness from a bruised left shin that kept him out of a pair of games late last month. He aggravated the injury again when he crashed into Roy Hibbert on Tuesday night and sat out the fourth quarter of Golden State's 109-98 victory at the Los Angeles Lakers. Damian Lillard had a season-high 40 points and 10 assists for Portland, which dropped its third straight.

## BUCKS 96, MAVERICKS 95

Khris Middleton's driving layup with less than 10 seconds to play carried Milwaukee over Dallas. Middleton scored 27 points, John Henson 16 and Michael Carter-Williams added 15 points and a season-high 12 rebounds as Milwaukee snapped Dallas' six-game winning streak against them. Dirk Nowitzki scored 20 points and Devin Harris came off the bench for a season-high 19 for Dallas. Nowitzki made two free throws with 38 seconds left for Dallas'

first lead since early in the first quarter. But Henson later blocked his pass and it deflected to Middleton, who raced down the court and scored. Deron Williams missed at the buzzer for Dallas.

## HEAT 103, SUNS 95

Dwyane Wade scored 27 points and Miami beat Phoenix for the 11th straight time. Former Suns guard Goran Dragic added 22 points and Gerald Green, also a former Sun, had 21. They were returning to Phoenix for the first time as opposing players. A 3-pointer from Green with 4:35 to play gave Miami the lead for good, and Chris Bosh's 3 with 1:57 left put the game out of reach at 98-91. Green's night included a third-quarter dunk, after which he ran past Suns majority owner Robert Sarver, who applauded him, and a 3-pointer after which he cast a glare at the Suns' bench. Brandon Knight scored 26 points in the Suns' 10th loss in 11 games.

## GRIZZLIES 91, NUGGETS 84

Zach Randolph scored 16 of his 24 points in the second half and Mario Chalmers made a pair of 3-pointers in the final 1:30 to lead Memphis over Denver. Chalmers scored 12 points in the game, with eight in the last 90 seconds to keep the Nuggets at bay. Jeff Green finished with 16 points, Matt Barnes scored 15 and Marc Gasol had 12 points and five steals. Tony Allen had 10 points, nine rebounds and three steals as Memphis won its fourth in the last six. Danilo Gallinari had 29 points for Denver, while Darrell Arthur finished with 12 points, all in the second half. Gary Harris scored 11 points as the Nuggets lost for the 10th time in the last 12 games.

## PACERS 91, PELICANS 86

Ian Mahinmi had 17 points and 10 rebounds, and Indiana beat a reeling New Orleans team that lost Anthony Davis to a lower back bruise early in the game. Davis was hurt diving into the stands to stop a ball from going out of bounds on the defensive end. He went to the locker room soon after and never returned. C.J. Miles scored 15, hitting a running hook inside the final 2 minutes to help Indiana hold on, while Paul George added 13 points and Monta Ellis 10. Tyreke Evans scored 27 for New Orleans, which has lost four out of five. Ryan Anderson scored 21 points and Jrue Holiday 15.

## RAPTORS 97, WIZARDS 88

DeMar DeRozan scored 21 of his season-high 35 points in the second half, Kyle Lowry had 21 points and 10 assists, and Toronto beat Washington. The Raptors overcame a season-high 23 turnovers, taking control with an 18-4 run that gave them a 69-59 lead with 2:40 to play in the third quarter. John Wall scored 21 points as Washington (15-19) lost for the fifth time in six games and matched a season worst at four games under .500. Washington, which swept a four-game playoff series between the teams last spring, has lost six consecutive regular-season meetings to the Raptors.

## MAGIC 83, NETS 77

Victor Oladipo and Nikola Vucevic each scored 20 points to lead Orlando over Brooklyn, which has lost nine straight home games. Aaron Gordon added 14 points and Evan Fournier had 13 for the Magic, who snapped a four game losing streak. Brook Lopez led the Nets with 17 points. Joe Johnson finished with 13. Brooklyn hasn't won at home since a 100-91 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers on Dec. 10. The Nets' team record is 14 straight home losses set in 2009-10, when they finished 12-70 while playing in New Jersey.—AP



DOHA: Novak Djokovic of Serbia celebrates with his winning trophy after beating Rafael Nadal of Spain in the final of the Qatar Open tennis tournament yesterday, in Doha. — AFP

# ‘PERFECT’ DJOKOVIC THRASHES NADAL TO WIN QATAR OPEN

**DOHA:** Novak Djokovic won his first title of 2016 yesterday, playing "perfect" tennis to thrash arch-rival Rafael Nadal in straight sets during a breathtaking performance at the Qatar Open final.

A near faultless world number one cruised to victory 6-1, 6-2 in a match lasting just one hour 13 minutes. The win not only secured the 60th career title for the Serb but also means he is leading for the first time in his head-to-head battle with Nadal, winning 24 of the 47 matches they have now played against each other.

"I played pretty much perfect tennis today from the very beginning I managed to get every shot the way I wanted," said Djokovic afterwards. "The way I played today gives me great satisfaction."

He added that he was playing the best tennis of his career. Djokovic was brilliant throughout and his victory was so comprehensive it will

send a message to the rest of the tennis world that he aims to dominate exactly as he did in 2015. He hit 30 winners, forced seven break points and faced only one himself, which, predictably, he saved.

Throughout the week in Qatar he did not drop a set and his victory means he won the only tournament in which he didn't make the final in 2015.

Watched by a full house-where spectators included players and officials from Bayern Munich as well as Premier League-bound coach Pep Guardiola-the result was never in doubt.

Djokovic broke Nadal's serve twice in each set and was in control throughout. Nadal took until the fourth game to get on the scoreboard but it proved only a brief respite as Djokovic breezed through the first set in 30 minutes.

He immediately took control of the second, breaking the Spaniard's serve in the very first

game. Any hope of a typical comeback from Nadal was fully extinguished in the fifth game when Djokovic broke a second time to go 4-1 ahead.

It was the 16th consecutive final for Djokovic who last lost a tournament in August last year in the US. What the defeat will do for Nadal's confidence though, desperate to return to his Grand-Slam winning form, is anyone's guess.

Rarely can the current world number five have been beaten so easily and he cut a forlorn figure after the match as he waited for the presentation ceremony.

He tried to remain upbeat immediately after the defeat saying he had made "a positive start to the season" before adding that Djokovic had played "at a level rarely difficult to imagine".

Djokovic won a first prize of \$201,165 (184,124 euros) while Nadal, playing in his 99th final, took home \$105,940 (96,965 euros). — AFP

# AZARENKA STORMS TO BRISBANE TITLE

**BRISBANE:** Former world number one Victoria Azarenka stormed to her second Brisbane International title when she downed Germany's Angelique Kerber in straight sets yesterday.

Azarenka, who won her maiden WTA title in Brisbane in 2009, overwhelmed the fourth-seeded Kerber, winning 6-3, 6-1 in 73 minutes, her sixth win over the German in six meetings. It was Azarenka's first title since she won in Cincinnati in August, 2013.

She sustained a foot injury in 2014 and only played nine tournaments. In 2015, she suffered a thigh strain that saw her slip down the world rankings. Azarenka admitted that she hadn't played at 100 per cent fitness during 2015.

"I was hurt the whole year-there was not a moment where I felt good and had no pain," she said. "It was a constant battle with pain, with my own fear. Like is it going to hurt again? I don't want to go through that."

The two-time Australian Open champion steadily improved in each round in Brisbane and showed in the final she will be a serious contender in Melbourne. "The focus is still there on Melbourne," said Azarenka, who brought a young fan on court to join her victory celebration.

"I'm going to do everything I can next week to prepare and feel the most comfortable to start the tournament. I can't wait to be in Melbourne."

Both women started the final in superb touch, playing with power and placement and looking untroubled on serve. But in the fifth game Kerber faltered and Azarenka broke the German to move ahead 3-2.

Kerber broke straight back but she was unable to keep the pressure on and lost her next two service games, handing Azarenka the set with a double fault.

Kerber had her chances at the start of the second set and had three break points. However, Azarenka saved them all and broke Kerber, and from that point the Belarusian never looked like losing.

Kerber said the first set and the start of the second were close but she conceded she made too many mistakes. "I think the first set was-we played both on the really high level," she said.

"But I think I made a few more mistakes than over the last few days, and she was playing very aggressively. She was going for it," Kerber added. — AFP



BRISBANE: Victoria Azarenka of Belarus lifts her winning trophy after defeating Angelique Kerber of Germany in the women's final match on the seventh day of the Brisbane International tennis tournament yesterday.— AFP

## NBA Results/Standings

LA Lakers 113, Oklahoma City 117; Phoenix 95, Miami 103; San Antonio 100, New York 99; Brooklyn 77, Orlando 83; Portland 108, Golden State 128; Memphis 91, Denver 84; Minnesota 99, Cleveland 125; New Orleans 86, Indiana 91; Milwaukee 96, Dallas 95; Washington 88, Toronto 97.

### Eastern Conference

#### Atlantic Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Toronto	23	15	.605	—
Boston	19	17	.528	3
New York	18	20	.474	5
Brooklyn	10	26	.278	12
Philadelphia	4	34	.105	19

#### Central Division

Cleveland	25	9	.735	—
Chicago	22	12	.647	3
Indiana	21	15	.583	5
Detroit	20	16	.556	6
Milwaukee	15	23	.395	12

#### Southeast Division

Miami	22	14	.611	—
Atlanta	22	15	.595	0.5
Orlando	20	17	.541	2.5
Charlotte	17	18	.486	4.5
Washington	15	19	.441	6

### Western Conference

#### Northwest Division

Oklahoma City	26	11	.703	—
Utah	15	20	.429	10
Portland	15	24	.385	12
Denver	13	24	.351	13
Minnesota	12	25	.324	14

#### Pacific Division

Golden State	34	2	.944	—
LA Clippers	23	13	.639	11
Sacramento	15	21	.417	19
Phoenix	13	26	.333	22.5
LA Lakers	8	30	.211	27

#### Southwest Division

San Antonio	32	6	.842	—
Dallas	21	16	.568	10.5
Memphis	20	18	.526	12
Houston	18	19	.486	13.5
New Orleans	11	24	.314	19.5



# BLATTER, PLATINI NOW FREE TO APPEAL BANS: FIFA

**GENEVA:** FIFA's ethics tribunal said yesterday it had provided Sepp Blatter and Michel Platini with the reasons for its decision to ban them from football for eight years, clearing the way for them to appeal against the decision.

"The adjudicatory chamber of the independent Ethics Committee ... has notified Mr Joseph S. Blatter and Mr Michel Platini of the grounds for the decisions passed in December 2015," the body said in a statement.

Platini's lawyer Thibaud d'Ales said the UEFA president had indeed received the reasons behind the ban. "We'll read them, analyse them and launch an appeal on Monday," D'Ales said.

In December, the ethics tribunal banned the FIFA president and vice president from football for eight years, saying they had abused their positions over a \$2 million payment made to Platini in 2011 for work carried out between 1999 and 2002.

Blatter, who has headed FIFA since 1998, was also fined 50,000 Swiss francs (\$50,000/46,300 euros) while Platini, the head of UEFA, Europe's governing body, was fined 80,000 Swiss francs. At the time of the verdict, which heightened further the crisis rocking football's scandal-plagued world body, the court insisted there was "no legal basis" for the payment that Blatter authorised for Platini in

2011. The tribunal did not provide further details Saturday of the reasoning behind its decision. Instead it stressed it had now "fulfilled its commitment to provide the grounds for the respective decisions to Mr Blatter and Mr Platini within the first half of January 2016."

"After receiving the grounds for the decisions, both officials may lodge an appeal with the FIFA Appeal Committee," the statement said. If that appeal is rejected, the two men can appeal further to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), the highest tribunal in sports.

## VOWED TO FIGHT

At the time of the verdict, both men

angrily vowed to fight the bans, which started immediately. The tribunal decision promises to end 79-year-old Blatter's four decades with FIFA in disgrace. It also dealt a devastating blow to 60-year-old Platini's hopes of taking over as head of FIFA in an election on February 26. The UEFA president pulled out of the race earlier this week, saying the ban has made it impossible for him to put together a campaign to take on the sport's most powerful job.

He told French sports newspaper L'Equipe that he no longer had "the time nor the means to go to the voters, to meet people, to fight against the other candidates. "In withdrawing, I am dedi-

cating myself to my defence." FIFA has since last May be rocked to its core by a cascade of corruption charges and arrests that culminated with the implication of the two long considered world football's most powerful men.

The US justice department has charged 39 individuals and two companies over graft within world football going back decades, in a sweeping prosecution that has sparked an unprecedented crisis at FIFA.

A total of nine FIFA officials were arrested during two raids at the five-star Baur au Lac hotel in Zurich, on May 27 and December 3, by Swiss police acting on US warrants.— AFP

## LIVERPOOL SURVIVE EXETER SCARE TO SPARE BOGDAN'S BLUSHES

**EXETER:** Liverpool were forced to come from behind twice to draw 2-2 at fourth tier Exeter City in the FA Cup third round after an horrendous error by goalkeeper Adam Bogdan almost gifted the minnows a shock victory on Friday. Tom Nichols opened the scoring for Exeter, seeking a place in the fourth round for the first time in 35 years, and after Jerome Sinclair's equaliser, Reds boss Jurgen Klopp saw Bogdan's blunder allow Lee Holmes' corner to go straight into the net.

Australia international Brad Smith eventually ensured Exeter had to settle for the consolation of a lucrative replay at Anfield when he equalised for Liverpool in the closing stages. "It's obvious what we have to learn in the future. We have to be more robust," Klopp said. "It was a difficult pitch. Exeter did really well. Maybe they know which part of the pitch you can play football.

"The first goal was unlucky for us, it was their first attack. I won't say anything about the second goal. "It was really difficult for us. On one-on-one situations they were more robust than our guys."

The fact that the opening effort came from the League Two hosts was not particularly surprising given the starting line-up selected by Klopp, a consequence of his team's current lengthy injury list and his desire to rest players for forthcoming Premier League and League Cup fixtures. It took just nine minutes for Exeter to delight the romantics keen for a memorable Cup upset as Jamie Reid sped down the right and crossed for Nichols to sprint ahead of veteran defender Jose Enrique and slide home the opening goal. But, despite that poor defensive effort, Klopp's incredibly inexperienced line-up, featuring three debutants and just two players-Enrique and Christian Benteke-with more than four appearances for the club, had started relatively confidently and required just three minutes to equalise. The goal owed much to poor Exeter defending, notably by Jordan Tillson, which failed to deal with Ryan Kent's pass into the feet of Benteke in the home area and, after the loose ball broke kindly for Sinclair, the 19-year-old made no mistake from 10 yards.

## INEXPLICABLY

However, in first half stoppage-time, those errors were forgotten by the home supporters as Hungarian goalkeeper Bogdan inexplicably allowed Holmes' right-wing corner kick to soar over his head and directly into the roof of the goal.

Exeter, 76 places below their visitors in the Football League pyramid, were equal to the task, however, and narrowly missed claiming a second goal from the best remaining chances of the half.

After 29 minutes, Christian Ribeiro's cross found David Noble dead in front of goal who hurried over his shot from 10 yards under pressure from Liverpool defenders and, just

before the half-time whistle, an excellent cross from Holmes was met by full-back Ribeiro who should have done better than send a bouncing header wide from the penalty spot. A goal down on the restart, it took Liverpool just five minutes to finally provide service to Benteke, and it almost brought an equaliser as Cameron Brannagan's left-wing centre picked out the Belgian international, whose close-range header looked destined for the back of the net until Olejnik produced a stunning reflex block to keep it out.

After 56 minutes, neat footwork from Alex Nicholls and Reid almost set up Nichols for another shooting chance, while Ribeiro was wide with another header, again following an excellent cross from Holmes. Nichols threatened with a couple more shots and substitute Arron Davies just missed the target from 20 yards with his first touch before Liverpool equalised for the second time, against the run of play, after 73 minutes. Substitute Sheyi Oji probed down the left touchline and his cross was cleared, poorly, by Jordan Moore-Taylor, directly to Smith who drilled the ball into the back of the net from a dozen yards. —AFP

## Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)

SPANISH LEAGUE		
Levante v Rayo Vallecano	0:05	
beIN SPORTS 7 HD		
Villarreal v Gijon	14:00	
beIN SPORTS		
Real Sociedad v Valencia	18:00	
beIN SPORTS		
Las Palmas v Malaga	20:15	
beIN SPORTS		
SD Eibar v RCD Espanyol	20:15	
beIN SPORTS		
Celta de Vigo v Atletico	22:30	
beIN SPORTS		
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE		
Inter v Sassuolo Calcio	14:30	
beIN SPORTS		
Atalanta v Genoa	17:00	
beIN SPORTS		
Bologna v Chievo Verona	17:00	
beIN SPORTS		
Torino v Empoli	17:00	
beIN SPORTS		
Hellas Verona v Citta	17:00	
beIN SPORTS		
Frosinone v SSC Napoli	17:00	
beIN SPORTS		
Sampdoria v Juventus	22:45	
beIN SPORTS		
FRENCH LEAGUE		
Nantes v Saint Etienne	16:00	
beIN SPORTS		
Lille OSC v OGC Nice	19:00	
beIN SPORTS		
Olympique v Guingamp	23:00	
beIN SPORTS		



**LIVERPOOL:** Everton's Spanish goalkeeper Joel Robles attempts to coax a cat off of the pitch during the FA Cup third-round football match between Everton and Dagenham & Redbridge at Goodison Park in Liverpool, north west England yesterday. — AFP

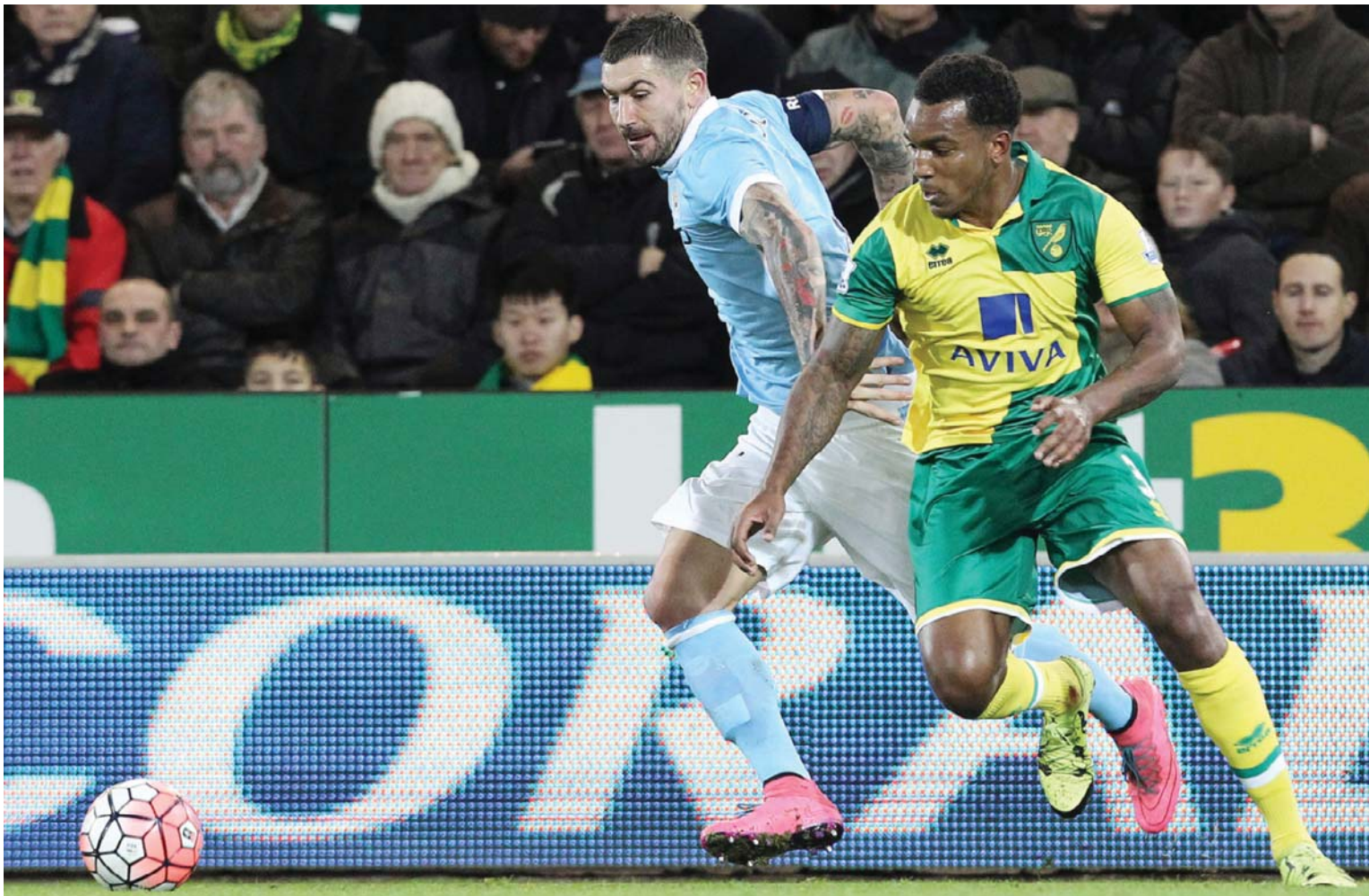
## EVERTON FELINE FINE IN FA CUP VICTORY

**LIVERPOOL:** A four-legged pitch invader stole the show in Everton's 2-0 FA Cup win over Dagenham and Redbridge yesterday when a cat scrambled onto the pitch.

Kevin Mirallas had just scored Everton's second goal in the third-round tie with an 85th-minute penalty when a black and white cat crept onto the pitch in the Everton penalty area.

After giving Everton goalkeeper Joel Robles the runaround, it was picked up by a member of the Goodison Park security staff and taken away, allowing the game to resume.

Asked if it might prove a good omen, Everton manager Roberto Martinez replied: "Hopefully, I thought he had great style and movement." — AFP



**NORWICH:** Norwich City's English defender Andre Wisdom (R) challenges Manchester City's Serbian defender Aleksandar Kolarov during the FA Cup third-round football match between Norwich City and Manchester City at Carrow Road in Norwich, eastern England yesterday. Manchester City won the match 3-0. — AFP

# AGUERO SHINES AS SLICK CITY DISPATCH NORWICH

**NORWICH:** Sergio Aguero kept Manchester City firmly in the hunt for silverware on four fronts with a sparkling strike in their 3-0 victory over Norwich in the FA Cup third round yesterday.

Aguero waltzed through the Canaries' defence to open the scoring at Carrow Road and then set up City's second for Kelechi Iheanacho.

Kevin de Bruyne added City's third in the closing stages as Manuel Pellegrini's side moved into the fourth round draw and maintained their bid to win a quadruple of the Premier League, Champions League, FA Cup and League Cup.

The last time the two sides met in the FA Cup was back in 1981, when Norwich lost 6-0 at Maine Road, and there were times when it looked like Pellegrini's men could hand their hosts a similar thrashing.

Both sides made seven changes to their starting line-ups and left their current first-choice goalkeepers on the bench. But those proved minor details, as Aguero led City to only a second away win in their last eight attempts.

As for Norwich, there were only occasional signs of Alex Neil's in-form Premier League outfit that had won three of their last four games and been unbeaten in five at Carrow Road, conced-

ing just twice. Instead, this was Norwich's fourth third round exit in the last six seasons and they could have few complaints.

Neil had little to cheer about in the FA Cup during his modest career as a player in English football, and his first game as a manager in the competition offered little better. Norwich made the brighter start but the visitors always looked the greater threat.

Iheanacho forced John Ruddy into the game's first meaningful save following a sloppy error from Sebastian Bassong and they did not have to wait much longer for their 16th minute breakthrough.

## MOMENT OF MAGIC

It was Aguero who picked up the ball 25 yards from goal following Raheem Sterling's back-heel, and the Argentine striker burst past Graham Dorrans and Bassong, jinked away from Russell Martin and slotted past Ruddy with ease.

It was a moment of magic that said everything about Aguero's importance to City.

The striker had already forced another save from Ruddy with a low volley, before making City's second thanks to Norwich's generous

defending. Centre-back Ryan Bennett handed Aguero far too much room from a long ball on 31 minutes, and the forward coasted to the edge of the box before teeing up Iheanacho, who slotted past Ruddy.

Those goals appeared to kill the game as a contest, as well as nullifying Norwich's five-man defensive line-a system that had gone close to earning a point at Eastlands in the Premier League earlier in the season.

Norwich chased the game sporadically after the break and did manage to have the ball in the net through Cameron Jerome after Jonny Howson's good work, only for the offside flag to end their celebrations.

Only a superb Bennett tackle on the edge of the six-yard box denied Iheanacho his second goal of the afternoon.

Pellegrini even had the luxury of withdrawing Aguero 20 minutes from the end, with the inspirational Argentine's departure drawing applause from visiting and home fans alike.

There was still time for substitute de Bruyne to skip through on goal and slot home between Ruddy's legs from a tight angle to provide the polish to a dominant display. —AFP

# RICHARDS IN HEATED DEBATE WITH VILLA FANS AFTER DRAW

**LONDON:** Aston Villa captain Micah Richards became embroiled in a heated pitchside debate with disgruntled fans yesterday as the Premier League strugglers' desperate season unravelled further with a 1-1 draw at fourth-tier Wycombe Wanderers in the FA Cup.

Villa's travelling fans, dismayed to see a 10th successive winless game under coach Remi Garde, poured out their growing frustration in an impassioned discussion with defender Richards after his substitution in the dying minutes. Richards stepped in to talk to a dozen fans next to the dugout after they expressed their anger about the result against the League Two side which left Villa without a victory in their last 16 matches.

One supporter, in the confrontation with Richards filmed by BT Sport, demanded to know where the players' passion was, leaving the captain to protest to him: "We're trying!"

Richards' interaction with the fans brought praise from his beleaguered manager. "It was brave of him to do that," Garde told reporters. "As professionals, we have to face our responsibilities-not only Micah, me and all the players.

"To be fair, I didn't see the incident, but I've been told about it. "I understand that the fans could be angry. We have to accept that. "Everybody has to keep calm, face their responsibilities, look in the mirror and ask themselves what they can do to get out of this difficult situation." Richards had been one of Villa's better performers before coming off with injury, having scored their 22nd-minute opener before Joe Jacobson equalised from the penalty spot just after halftime. Other players were let off much less lightly with some of Villa's 2,500

visiting fans turning particularly on their struggling striker Rudy Gestede as he trudged back to the dressing-room. Yet Villa can think themselves a mite unfortunate that they did not successfully negotiate what had always looked a tricky hurdle.

They had a strong claim for a penalty turned down in the first half, saw referee Michael Oliver award Wycombe a dubious penalty for Ashley

Westwood's clash with Matt Bloomfield and suffered more agony when Gestede's late deflected shot struck the bar.

It could not stop the chants of "We want our Villa back" from the travelling support nor the chants of "You don't know what you're doing" aimed towards Garde after he substituted the impressive Carles Gil in the second half. —Reuters



**HIGH WYCOMBE:** Wycombe Wanderers' Jason McCarthy (L) vies with Aston Villa's English midfielder Riccardo Calder during the FA Cup third-round football match between Wycombe Wanderers and Aston Villa at the Adams Park stadium in High Wycombe, west of London yesterday. — AFP



# Sports

Vonn equals record  
with 36th WCup  
downhill win



'Perfect' Djokovic  
thrashes Nadal to  
win Qatar Open



SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 2016

BLATTER, PLATINI NOW FREE TO APPEAL BANS: FIFA

Page 19



TRAFFORD: Sheffield United's English midfielder Dean Hammond (2L) tries to block as Manchester United's German midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger (R) slices a shot wide during the English FA Cup third-round football match between Manchester United and Sheffield United at Old Trafford in north west England yesterday. — AFP

## ROONEY SAVES MAN UTD IN FA CUP

**LONDON:** Wayne Rooney's stoppage-time penalty spared Manchester United from an embarrassing goalless draw as they edged third-tier Sheffield United 1-0 in the FA Cup third round yesterday. Holders Arsenal and Manchester City both had little trouble reaching round four, but United looked destined for an unwanted replay until Rooney struck in the 93rd minute after a foul on substitute Memphis Depay. It was only the second shot on target that United had mustered, against a team 47 places below them in the English league system, and it is unlikely to save manager Louis van Gaal from criticism.

United's fans made their feelings plain with mocking applause whenever their team registered an effort at goal and Van Gaal was being loudly goaded by Sheffield United's fans until the late drama. His side seemed to have turned a corner last weekend when they beat Swansea City 2-1 to end an eight-game winning run, but they looked desperately short of ideas on their return to Old Trafford. It took them 69 minutes to hit the target, Matteo Darmian shooting tamely at George Long, but with injury time ebbing away, Dean Hammond was penalised for lunging

in on Depay. The United winger reacted with an exaggerated dive, but there had been contact and Rooney made no mistake by sending Long the wrong way from the spot. **MORRISON RESCUES WEST BROM** Southampton and Newcastle United both fell at the first hurdle, but could at least console themselves that they were beaten by fellow Premier League teams. Wilfried Zaha's 68th-minute goal gave Crystal Palace a 2-1 win at Southampton, while Troy Deeney punished a loose back-

pass from Georginio Wijnaldum to give Watford a 1-0 home victory over Newcastle. West Bromwich Albion had James Morrison to thank for an equaliser in the fifth minute of stoppage time that prevented his side from losing at home to second-tier Bristol City. After substitute Saido Berahino gave West Brom a 67th-minute lead, goals from Jonathan Kodjia and Kieran Agard put Bristol City in charge, only for Morrison to secure a 2-2 draw at the death. Bolton Wanderers, bottom of the Championship and at risk of bankruptcy,

narrowly escaped succumbing to the day's biggest shock as Darren Pratley's scrappy 87th-minute goal earned them a 1-1 draw at fifth-tier Eastleigh. The lowest-ranked team left in the tournament, Eastleigh had gone ahead in the 51st minute via an own goal by Bolton's French defender Dorian Dervite. "It's quite emotional. The players have put in an unbelievable performance and we probably deserved to win the game," Eastleigh manager Chris Todd told the BBC. "But we're still in the draw for the fourth round, so we're happy overall." — AFP

## RAMSEY AND GIROUD GET ARSENAL GOING IN FA CUP

**LONDON:** Holders Arsenal came from behind to beat Sunderland 3-1 yesterday, maintaining manager Arsene Wenger's record of having never been eliminated from the FA Cup in the third round. Second-half goals by substitute Aaron Ramsey and Olivier Giroud proved decisive at the Emirates Stadium after Joel Campbell had replied to an early Sunderland opener from Jermain Lens. Both sides had made wholesale changes with Arsenal, the Premier League leaders, making five and Sunderland, who occupy one of the top-flight relegation slots, seven. Wenger, with one eye on Wednesday's trip to Liverpool, rested Mesut Ozil and Ramsey, among others, although Petr Cech continued in goal as David Ospina, who was to have played, was ruled out by a thigh complaint. Sunderland manager Sam Allardyce had already voiced his displeasure at Wednesday's trip to Swansea City being scheduled so close to this cup tie and left main goal threat Jermain Defoe on the bench as a result. Sunderland, in lurid green, began with a shot from Lens that clipped a post after Duncan Watmore had set him up. But the visitors soon required debutant goalkeeper Jordan Pickford to prevent Kieran Gibbs, played in by Giroud, from opening the scoring at the other end with a brave parry. Sunderland continued to counter-

attack with menace and were rewarded with an opening goal from Lens in the 17th minute that was also a personal disaster for Arsenal defender Laurent Koscielny. The France international allowed himself to be dispossessed by the Dutchman on the edge of the area after Gibbs had played the ball back to him, allowing Lens to fire home. Teenager Alex Iwobi, making a rare start for Arsenal, saw an effort blocked, but in the 25th minute Theo Walcott cut the ball back from the left for Campbell to calmly stroke in the equaliser. Arsenal were energised and Pickford soon had to beat out Walcott's long-ranger, but Sunderland negotiated their way to half-time without further alarm. The Gunners lacked a spark in the absence of Ozil and Alexis Sanchez, who is still not fully fit, but Campbell and Iwobi were keen to get on the ball and Pickford punched away a free-kick from the former. Campbell almost fashioned a breakthrough, but DeAndre Yedlin booted the ball away from the goal-mouth before anyone could pounce on the Costa Rican's pass. Arsenal came close to a second goal when Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's shot hit a post and Walcott put the rebound narrowly wide. Sunderland responded with a similar chance, however, which saw Steven Fletcher head Yedlin's cross against the bar and Watmore lash the



**LONDON:** Arsenal's Spanish defender Hector Bellerin (front) vies with Sunderland's English striker Duncan Watmore (back) during the English FA Cup third-round football match between Arsenal and Sunderland at the Emirates Stadium in London yesterday. — AFP

## MESSI TREBLE LIFTS BARCA TO THE TOP OF LA LIGA

**BARCELONA:** Lionel Messi warmed up for his anticipated fifth World Player of the Year crown by scoring his first hat-trick of the season to move Barcelona back to the top of La Liga by cruising past Granada 4-0 yesterday. Messi effectively ended the contest within the first 15 minutes with two easy finishes before completing his hat-trick after the break to take his tally to 12 goals in 10 games since returning from knee ligament damage in November, while Neymar completed the rout late on. The European champions lead Atletico Madrid, who travel to Celta Vigo today, by a point and are now five clear of Real Madrid. Real begin a new era under Zinedine Zidane later yesterday when they host Deportivo la Coruna at the Santiago Bernabeu. Messi is expected to beat off teammate Neymar and current holder Cristiano Ronaldo to the Ballon d'Or on Monday after leading Barca to a second treble of La Liga, Champions League and Copa del Rey in six years last season. And despite the fine form of Neymar and Luis Suarez in his two-month absence, Messi again demonstrated he is Barca's main man as Luis Enrique's men bounced back from drawing three of their last four La Liga games.

"He is a unique and unrepeatable player," said Enrique, who won't attend Monday's ceremony in Zurich despite being nominated himself for coach of the year. "It is evident there is the collective objective that attracts him, motivates him and continues to motivate him year after year. "Then there is the particular individual objective these type of players have to continue beating records and continue being the best." Arda Turan made his first league start for the hosts after Barca's year-long ban from registering new players was lifted earlier in the week, and the Turkish international provided his first assist for the club with a lovely through ball for Messi to slot home after just eight minutes. Barca's all-star front three combined to perfection six minutes later as Neymar's cross was helped first time by Suarez into the path of Messi to roll past the helpless Andres Fernandez. The hosts should have been much further clear by half-time than 2-0 as Suarez inexplicably fired wide with the goal at his mercy after a neat one-two with Neymar. Fernandez also produced a fine save to temporarily deny Messi his hat-trick before Neymar drilled a volley into the side-netting. — AFP





HOW TO CUSTOMIZE YOUR CV FOR A MARKETING POSITION

Page 25



BEIJING: An investor looks at screens showing stock market movements at a securities company in Beijing. — AFP

3 REASONS FOR CONCERN ABOUT CHINA ECONOMY

PESSIMISTS FEAR DEVALUATION SIGNALS DESPERATION

**WASHINGTON:** A scary sell-off in Chinese stocks is magnifying concerns about the health of the world’s second-biggest economy. The Shanghai Composite Index on Thursday tumbled 7 percent in 30 minutes before trading was suspended. The damage quickly rolled around the world: Stocks plunged in Tokyo, Hong Kong, London and New York. The Dow Jones industrial average finished Thursday down a steep 2 percent. On Friday, the Shanghai Index closed up 2 percent. China’s stock markets have little connection to the rest of its economy. A big reason Chinese shares are sinking is that Beijing is trying to undo some of the measures it took to prop up stock prices after the Shanghai market collapsed in June. Yet China watchers say there are reasons to worry about the Chinese economy. Among them:

**A weakening currency**

The Chinese government alarmed world markets in August by suddenly pushing down its currency, the yuan, by about 2 percent. Pessimists feared that the devaluation signaled desperation: Maybe Beijing had grown so worried about the country’s economic prospects that it had decided to give its exporters more help by lowering the yuan’s value, which makes Chinese products more affordable in foreign markets.

The government said it was merely responding to sig-

nals from the market: The yuan, closely linked to a surging U.S. dollar, had risen too high. After the August devaluation, the yuan stabilized for three months. Then it started sinking again. It’s dropped more than 4 percent against the dollar since the end of October. On Thursday, the yuan hit its lowest level against the dollar since 2011. The Chinese economy has been “weakening for years,” says Derek Scissors, resident scholar at the conservative American Enterprise Institute. “That hasn’t changed. What has changed is they pushed the yuan down.

**A tough transition**

“There’s a heightened risk that the Chinese are going to be more aggressively predatory on trade,” he said. “Everybody who competes with China - their profits are now in jeopardy.” Scissors says he thinks the Chinese authorities are actually just catching up with reality, not trying to give their companies an unfair edge. The yuan, he says, is still overvalued. “If you left it alone, it would probably fall another 5, 6, 7, 8 percent,” says Yukon Huang, senior associate at the Carnegie Asia Program. Chinese authorities want to keep the yuan from going into free-fall. But investors who fear that the currency has further to fall are likely to sell investments that are denominated in yuan, thereby putting further downward pressure on China’s currency and stocks.

China’s economic slowdown is partly deliberate. The country’s super-charged growth of the past quarter-century was built largely on massive investment in real estate and factories, much of it increasingly wasteful and inefficient. The government is trying to guide the economy toward slower but more sustainable growth built on spending by Chinese consumers. It’s also nudging the country away from overdependence on manufacturing toward more reliance on services industries.

Overhauling a sprawling and enormously complex economy was always going to be daunting. And a report Wednesday, seized on by global investors, suggested that the transition might not be going so well, at least not yet: The Caixin China General Services Index fell last month to its second-lowest level in records dating to 2005. The index showed that far from picking up the slack from faltering manufacturers, Chinese services businesses are barely growing. Moreover, the report noted that services firms weren’t hiring fast enough to offset factory layoffs.

**Economic mismanagement**

Chinese policymakers, long admired for their stewardship of a fast-growing economy, have worsened things by communicating poorly, meddling clumsily in the markets and backsliding on reforms. “The ongoing rout in China’s stock and currency markets reflects a sharp erosion of

confidence in the economic management skills of Chinese policymakers, coupled with rising concerns about the state of the economy,” says Eswar Prasad, professor of trade policy at Cornell University. The government’s heavy-handed attempts to stop a freefall in the Shanghai stock market dismayed those who had hoped China was moving toward a more open financial system. Chinese authorities banned investors from betting against stocks, suspended trading in hundreds of companies and poured money into the market. At first, the desperation measures seemed to work. Yet stocks plunged again once the government began to back away.

What’s more, the authorities have repeatedly confused investors about their policy toward the yuan, thereby unnerving the markets. “You have to explain what you’re doing,” Huang says. “The Chinese economic managers are not good communicators.” The uncertainty coincides with persistent doubts about China’s economic statistics. Even Premier Li Keqiang has conceded that Chinese figures for economic growth are “man-made.” Officially, the Chinese economy grew about 7 percent last year. Some economists suspect the actual growth rate might be 6 percent or lower. “I wouldn’t be surprised to see it decelerate to the 4 percent range this year,” says Daniel Meckstroth, chief economist at the Manufacturers Alliance for Productivity and Innovation. — AP

SRI LANKAN SEEKS \$300 MILLION  
FOR A RARE BLUE STAR SAPPHIRE

**COLOMBO:** A Sri Lankan gem trader who owns the world’s largest blue star sapphire has decided to sell the dazzling stone, with a dizzying asking price of \$300 million. The rare, egg-shaped stone weighs 1,404.49 carats and has been authenticated as the biggest of its kind at the Gemological Institute of Colombo (GIC), a private laboratory in the Sri Lankan capital. “Looking at the reserve price of other very famous gems, I have now valued this at over \$300 million,” the owner, who wants to remain anonymous for fear the stone might be stolen said. Unlike blue sapphires which have complete clarity of colour, blue star sapphires, a form of corundum, are opaque-but when placed under light reveal a six-line star.

Industry experts said the stone was so rare it was impossible to give a valuation. “We can’t put a price on something like this. It is so rare and unlike other (smaller) sapphires, this is not a stone that can be replaced,” Ashan Amarasinghe, leading gemologist with the GIC said. “This is something only collectors or museums can afford,” he said. The owner said he based his asking price on the Black Star of Queensland, a star sapphire which was reportedly sold for \$100 million in 2002, although details were not publicly disclosed. The gem, named Lankan Star of Adam by its owner, beat the previous record for the biggest stone of its kind-also held by a Sri Lankan businessman-by about nine carats.



**COLOMBO:** The world’s biggest blue star sapphire, the Lankan Star of Adam, is shown by its owner in Colombo. A Sri Lankan gem trader who owns the world’s largest blue star sapphire has decided to sell the dazzling stone, with a dizzying asking price of \$300 million. — AFP

Both sapphires were found in Sri Lanka’s central region of Ratnapura which is known as the island’s gem capital, industry officials said. The owner said he bought it for an undisclosed price in September before realising the rarity of his find-which he has kept a closely guarded secret. “I have lived in affluence, but now I feel even

more blessed,” he said. “This (find) has not changed my lifestyle. But, I feel thrilled to be the man owning this gem. It is good for the ego.” Sri Lanka is known for its blue sapphires, one of which was used in the engagement ring of Catherine Middleton, the Duchess of Cambridge, and formerly owned by Princess Diana. — AFP

IMF LAGARDE’S CALLS  
FOR MORE CLARITY FROM  
CHINA ON POLICY

**YAOUNDE:** IMF chief Christine Lagarde has called for more clarity from China on its economic policies as the easing of its exchange rate and plunging stocks sent shockwaves through global markets. “China is embarking on a historic rebalancing of its growth model, and activity is moderating to more sustainable levels,” Lagarde said during a visit to Cameroon. “Nonetheless, this rebalancing is a bumpy process whose effects are being felt worldwide-which reinforces the need for more clarity on policies, especially exchange rate policy,” she added.

This week the Chinese central bank guided the yuan currency down, setting its daily fix lower for eight sessions, cutting its value by 1.4 percent to its lowest level since March 2011, before a slight reversal on Friday. Although many economists say a gradual lowering of the value of the yuan was to be expected after other major economies weakened their currencies in recent years, the move spooked markets worried about the government’s ability to manage the gradual slowdown of growth in the Chinese

economy.

Analysts have said the Chinese central bank needs to better communicate its intentions concerning the yuan. Their handling of the stock market this week also dented confidence in the ability of Chinese officials to manage the economy. New “circuit breakers” brought into force this week meant to decrease trading volatility backfired. Trading was halted on Monday and Thursday as share prices plunged the daily maximum of 7 percent, prompting regulators to rescind the rule.

“As I underlined several times in the past weeks, this transition will certainly be far from easy, and is also feeding into lower demand for commodities,” she said. China is a major consumer of commodities, and its slowing growth has hammered prices of resources, with the price of oil falling by over two thirds in the past year and a half. While lower prices have been a boon for consumers, they have hurt commodity exporting nations across the globe. Lagarde said the “fragility” of the global economy would persist in 2016. — AFP



# FACING US STORM, VW SET FOR EASIER RIDE IN EUROPE

PRIVATE LITIGATION COULD BE BIGGER THREAT IN EUROPE

**BRUSSELS:** Volkswagen is unlikely to face US-style fines in Europe over its emissions scandal because of a softer regulatory regime and its home country Germany's determination to protect its car industry, EU sources and legal experts say. The carmaker has been embroiled in crisis since last September, when it admitted it had cheated US emissions tests using software known as "defeat devices". The US Justice Department is suing the German company for up to \$46 billion for allegedly violating environmental laws - though some legal experts expect the final settlement to be far lower.

Other countries have also acted - Brazil and South Korea, for example, have both imposed fines of well over \$10 million on VW for cheating on emissions. But although VW says 8.5 million of the 11 million vehicles world-wide that contain banned software are in Europe, no European national authority has ordered any

Commission wanted to impose penalties on VW, its powers are curbed. The EU executive can directly only impose financial sanctions on trade and competition issues. Lucas Bergkamp, a partner at law firm Hunton and Williams in Brussels, said any change to that "would be a huge step". "In general when companies are already in great difficulties due to some crisis, European governments tend to be understanding and will not necessarily seek the imposition of all possible penalties," he said, adding he could not comment on VW specifically. VW also declined to comment on anything pertaining to possible fines in Europe.

### Lawsuit threat

Britain has said it could prosecute a vehicle manufacturer if there were proof it knew or was reckless when supplying false information, for which there is an unlimited fine on conviction. But proving recklessness is a high hurdle - it

members of the European Parliament and environment campaigners want an independent EU-wide regulator, along the lines of the EPA. European Commission spokeswoman Lucia Caudet did not entirely rule out establishing such a body, but said there were other ways to improve oversight.

"All options are on the table, but greater oversight can be achieved without the need for another EU agency," she said, adding it was too soon to give detail of a proposal expected "in the coming weeks". The International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT), which alerted the EPA to Volkswagen's use of defeat devices to trick regulators, has said mandatory, independent testing of cars once they are in use is crucial to good regulation.

### EU plan

EU sources said the European Commission proposal was expected to ensure greater independence of the private firms that test car emissions in the bloc, which typically have worked very closely with the national regulators. The proposal, which would then face around 18 months of vetting from the European Parliament and member states before it can become law, could also hand powers to the European Commission to verify that cars on the market conform with standards and to exact clear penalties if they do not.

The sources said the plan from the EU executive would be viewed as far too ambitious by some member states and not ambitious enough by members of the European Parliament. The parliament has set up an inquiry into whether the European Commission has done enough to police the car industry, but the Commission also faces counter-pressure from the industry and member states. Even at the height of the VW scandal, in October last year Germany led the dilution of separate new rules to restrict how much pollutants cars are allowed to emit above official limits, EU sources said.

The sources said that Germany was supported by Britain, which is unwilling to hand extra powers to Brussels; Prime Minister David Cameron, whose party includes several Eurosceptic lawmakers, is seeking to renegotiate Britain's relationship with the EU ahead of a referendum on membership of the bloc. The difference in the tone struck by US and European authorities was underlined this week; even as the United States announced its legal action, the European Commission said it was giving VW an extra month - until the end of January - to explain why carbon dioxide levels emitted by cars were higher than stated.

For breach of carbon dioxide limits, there are clear penalties that so far have never needed to be enforced because EU cars - even allowing for Volkswagen's discrepancies - have as an average across the EU fleet been well below the legal limit of 130 grams per kilometer. But the target becomes more challenging in 2021 when a 95 g/km limit takes effect and the penalty for breaking that law will be 95 euros for every gram above the limit. "When we get to the 95 gram target, things (fines) could get more interesting," said Julia Poliscanova, policy officer at campaign group Transport & Environment. —Reuters



## LULU GROUP TO INVEST \$150 MILLION IN UTTAR PRADESH

**KUWAIT:** Yusuff Ali MA, Chairman of LuLu Group, on Monday announced his company's intent to invest Rs 1,000 crore in Uttar Pradesh's state capital Lucknow, where he plans to build a convention centre, shopping mall and a five star hotel. With a net worth of \$ 3.4 Billion, the Gulf-based retailer was ranked 24th on Forbes' list of India's richest 100, in 2015. Ali also hit the headlines for the \$170 million purchase of the iconic Scotland Yard building in London, in July last year.

Addressing the crowds at the maiden UP PravasiDiwas, Ali said, "As a businessman I travel to many countries. But whether I go to Europe, Asia or Far East, or in the Gulf countries, I find NRIs from Uttar Pradesh and the state of Kerala. When I went to Kenya, my friends in the business said "Humara tan Africa mein hai, Humaradhan London mein hai, lekin humara man Hindustan mein hai"." Ali's announcement, which drew loud cheers from the crowds, and an appreciative clap from chief minister Akhilesh Yadav, also drew on his own connection with UP. Ali said, "I have a very close association with Uttar Pradesh.

Nearly 2,000 persons from UP are work-

ing in our food processing companies. I was offered a doctorate by different universities of the world, but the only one I accepted was from Aligarh Muslim University in UP. After receiving the doctorate there I mentioned the need for sports and for students to have sports complex to promote health. I donated US\$ 2 million for both boys and girls sports complex. Announcing on Monday that the investment in UP will create an employment for 3000 people, Ali added, "I don't believe in declarations, we believe in work. If everything is ready, we promise to begin our construction."

The chief minister said the PravasiDiwas was a positive start to the state government's efforts to reach out to its non-residents and for the state machinery to facilitate their connection with roots. "I welcome Ali's promise to invest in Uttar Pradesh. The government will make every effort to ensure that land and any other assistance is provided to him so that he can begin work." Akhilesh also said he was hopeful that the more such proposals for investment are announced over the next day of deliberations - the second and last day of business at the UP PravasiDiwas.



## EGYPT PRESIDENT LAUNCHES LOAN PROGRAM FOR SMES

**CAIRO:** Egypt's banking sector will inject 200 billion Egyptian pounds (\$25 billion) to support small and medium businesses, President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi said yesterday, the latest bid to support Egypt's battered economy and create jobs. "I have assigned the central bank to make the most of the banking sector to implement a comprehensive program to support small and medium businesses," Sisi said, adding that loans for small and medium businesses over the next four years will not be less than 20 percent of all loans issued. Egypt's economy has been struggling to recover since a popular uprising in 2011 drove foreign investors and tourists away. The uprising was partly fueled by anger over the lack of job prospects for young Egyptians.

Sisi had pledged to reduce joblessness to 10 percent over the next five years. The unemployment level reached 12.8 percent in December. "The biggest hurdle for young entrepreneurs is the financing and if that issue is resolved there will be more businesses and more jobs created", one banker said, adding that with the new program banks will bear the burden on their profit margins. Egypt's economy grew about 4.2 percent last fiscal year and the government forecasts growth of about 5 percent in 2015/16. In November, Egypt's urban consumer inflation jumped to its highest level since June, propelled by the rising cost of food. Prices rose 11.1 percent in November, up from 9.7 percent in October. —Reuters



**WOLFSBURG:** A VW Golf car is pictured inside the so-called car towers of car manufacturer Volkswagen AG (VW) at the company's assembly plant in Wolfsburg, central Germany. —AFP

penalties so far. EU sources and lawyers say it would be surprise if the firm received any significant fines in the European Union.

While the bloc outlawed defeat devices in 2007, there are no defined penalties for using such software to mask emissions. Under US law, by contrast, carmakers must identify and describe any emissions control devices, meaning they can be pursued for omission or wrongful declaration, widening the scope for punitive action. EU states are also reluctant to mete out tough financial penalties, because of an unwritten rule in the 28-member club that some national interests are sacred, according to the EU sources - and Germany's car industry has traditionally been one of them.

VW, Europe's biggest motor manufacturer, employs more than 750,000 people in Germany, and has been a symbol of the nation's engineering prowess. VW, Daimler and BMW, Germany's big three German carmakers, hauled in revenues of 413 billion euros in 2014, far bigger than the German federal budget, which stood at just under 300 billion. Even if the European

remains unclear who at Volkswagen knew what and when, while the company itself has blamed a small cadre of employees. Lawyers say a bigger financial threat to VW than any EU regulatory fines is likely to come from private litigation. Lawyers are gathering investors for group actions in Europe and hundreds of lawsuits on behalf of enraged drivers have been filed in the United States.

The VW scandal has exposed the weaknesses of the regulatory system in Europe, where there is no EU-wide authority with oversight of car testing - like the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - but instead a patchwork of 28 national agencies with varying standards. A vehicle approved in one country can be sold across the bloc, which environmental campaigners say allows carmakers to take their pick from national regulators.

However European Commission proposals, expected over the coming weeks, will add some teeth to the EU regulatory regime and penalties for excessive emissions could start to bite around the start of the next decade. Some

# NEW VISA DUBAI SHOPPING FESTIVAL PROMOTION FOR ABK CARDHOLDERS

**KUWAIT:** Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently announced the all new 'Visa Dubai Shopping Festival (DSF) 2016' promotion available to ABK's Visa cardholders, which entails a variety of unprecedented offers for customers to enjoy when visiting the DSF. The promotion, designed by Visa

International, presents customers with exclusive offers and discounts that reach up to 80% when using their cards to pay for electronics, travel, entertainment, luxury goods and even cars. To enjoy these special offers, customers are required to sign up via [www.visamiddleeast.com/dsf](http://www.visamiddleeast.com/dsf) to start

receiving the 'Impossible Offer' daily alert, which is running until 1st February, 2016. For more information on Ahli Bank of Kuwait please visit [www.eahli.com](http://www.eahli.com) or contact an ABK representative via 'Ahli Chat' or by contacting a customer service agent via 'AhlanAhli' at 1899899.

## EXCHANGE RATES

### AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
ASIAN COUNTRIES		
Japanese Yen	2.573	
Indian Rupees	4.570	
Pakistani Rupees	2.908	
Srilankan Rupees	2.121	
Nepali Rupees	2.876	
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	83.771	
Omani Riyal	792.100	
Bahraini Dinar	809.984	
UAE Dirham	83.029	
ARAB COUNTRIES		
Egyptian Pound - Cash	39.300	
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	38.993	
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.423	
Tunisian Dinar	149.411	
Jordanian Dinar	429.689	
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.032	
Syrian Lira	2.173	
Morocco Dirham	30.944	
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES		
US Dollar Transfer	304.800	
Euro	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

CURRENCIES	TELEX TRANSFER PER 1000
Australian Dollar	213.03
Canadian Dollar	223.33
Swiss Franc	308.51
Euro	333.77
US Dollar	304.65
Sterling Pound	451.93
Japanese Yen	2.57
Bangladesh Taka	3.884
Indian Rupee	4.577
Sri Lankan Rupee	2.120
Nepali Rupee	2.862
Pakistani Rupee	2.904
UAE Dirhams	0.08290
Bahraini Dinar	0.8096
Egyptian Pound	0.03881
Jordanian Dinar	0.4333
Omani Riyal	0.7911
Qatari Riyal	0.08400
Saudi Riyal	0.08120

### DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.800
Canadian Dollar	216.885
Sterling Pound	443.575
Euro	334.510
Swiss Frank	304.295
Bahrain Dinar	806.370
UAE Dirhams	83.225
Qatari Riyals	84.445

Saudi Riyals	81.960
Jordanian Dinar	429.370
Egyptian Pound	38.814
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.123
Indian Rupees	4.563
Pakistani Rupees	2.902
Bangladesh Taka	3.877
Philippines Peso	6.470
Cyprus pound	580.550
Japanese Yen	3.595
Syrian Pound	2.380
Nepalese Rupees	3.850
Malaysian Ringgit	69.735
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.740
Thai Bhat	9.355
Turkish Lira	101.100

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.436709	0.445709
Czech Korune	0.004299	0.016299
Danish Krone	0.040537	0.045537
Euro	0.327868	0.335868
Norwegian Krone	0.030283	0.035483
Romanian Leu	0.087363	0.087363
Slovakia	0.009106	0.019106
Swedish Krona	0.031928	0.031928
Swiss Franc	0.300146	0.310346
Turkish Lira	0.096852	0.107152

Australian Dollar	0.204695	0.216195
New Zealand Dollar	0.193781	0.203281

Americas		
Canadian Dollar	0.210039	0.218539
US Dollars	0.300450	0.304950

US Dollars Mint	0.300950	0.304950
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003480	0.004080
Chinese Yuan	0.044678	0.048178
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037194	0.039944
Indian Rupee	0.004212	0.004602
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002508	0.002688
Kenyan Shilling	0.003165	0.003165
Korean Won	0.000244	0.000259
Malaysian Ringgit	0.066336	0.072336
Nepalese Rupee	0.002887	0.003057
Pakistan Rupee	0.002641	0.002921
Philippine Peso	0.006378	0.006658
Sierra Leone	0.000068	0.000074
Singapore Dollar	0.208742	0.214742
South African Rand	0.013077	0.021577
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001768	0.002348
Taiwan	0.009080	0.009260
Thai Baht	0.008108	0.008658

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.800934	0.808934
Egyptian Pound	0.035183	0.038309
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000201	0.000261
Jordanian Dinar	0.425555	0.433055
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000153	0.000253
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021575	0.045575
Nigerian Naira	0.001260	0.001895
Omani Riyal	0.784618	0.790298
Qatari Riyal	0.082941	0.084154
Saudi Riyal	0.080327	0.081277
Syrian Pound	0.001291	0.001511
Tunisian Dinar	0.146735	0.154735
Turkish Lira	0.096852	0.107152
UAE Dirhams	0.081937	0.083086
Yemeni Riyal	0.001377	0.001457



# GOT A STARTUP TO GET PEOPLE MOVING?

## ‘FORD-BACKED TECHSTARS MOBILITY’

**DUBAI:** Ford-sponsored Techstars Mobility, driven by Detroit is accepting applications from startups interested in developing future mobility solutions. Up to 12 startups will receive \$120,000 funding and three months of development training to develop ideas and solutions aligned with Ford Smart Mobility, the plan to take Ford to the next level in connectivity, mobility, autonomous vehicles, the customer experience as well as data and analytics.

“Working together, Techstars Mobility and Ford are supporting smart, ambitious inventors who are creating innovative solutions to change the way the world moves,” said Ken Washington, Ford vice president, Research and Advanced Engineering. “Some of today’s most innovative thinking is coming from startups, and we’re excited to bring this new thinking to Detroit and the auto industry.”

This startup class is asked to focus on innovations in four key areas: Consumer experi-

ence; Information technology and data analytics; Multimodal trip integration, and Flexible ownership and user experience. Applicants can apply at [www.techstars/apply](http://www.techstars/apply). Deadline for submissions is March 22. Participants will kick off June 13, with project support culminating Sept 8. Techstars Mobility, a mentorship-driven accelerator program, launched in 2015 to focus on next-generation mobility and transportation solutions. It is an offshoot of the Techstars global program, which launched in 2007 and has developed 660 companies that have raised \$5 billion.

Techstars Mobility’s focus on Ford Smart Mobility stems from the vision of company Executive Chairman Bill Ford, who has led the charge to bring attention to the potential long-term consequences of growing gridlock worldwide. The Techstars Mobility consortium also includes several other global corporations, including Magna International, Verizon, Dana, Honda, McDonald’s, Munich Re and Michelin.

Each has contributed program funding and mentorship. The 2015 class included 10 startups, which have raised more than \$3 million since completing the program. Seven of the companies are establishing a presence in metro Detroit to advance their innovations, including:

### Cosmos

A pay-as-you-go mobile platform. Now in testing, the plan would give mobile phone customers the option to pay per day or per use for phone data - eliminating the need for pricey contracts.

### Elegus Technologies

A battery technology that would increase the energy density and safety of traditional batteries, enabling batteries to become smaller and hold more power. Developed during a four-year period, the team is testing the technology for production in the near future. “The



first year exceeded all expectations, with 10 amazing companies, a worldwide response, more than 300 participating mentors across Detroit and eight active corporate entities,” said Ted Serbinski, managing director,

Techstars Mobility. “This was all brought together by the automotive dominance and entrepreneurial resurgence in Detroit. We’re excited to grow this program in 2016 and beyond.”



**RIO DE JANEIRO:** People march during a protest against bus fare hikes in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The march, which is also taking place in other Brazilian capitals, began peacefully in downtown Rio de Janeiro but turned violent. — AP

# BRAZIL INFLATION HITS 13-YR HIGH AMID POLITICAL CRISIS

## CLASHES AT BRAZIL PROTESTS OVER FARE HIKES

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Brazil’s inflation rate hit a 13-year high in 2015, in what analysts called payback for years of economic mismanagement, worsened by a political crisis in Latin America’s biggest economy. Brazil, which hosts the summer Olympic Games in August, is struggling through a deep recession and political instability after impeachment proceedings were launched against President Dilma Rousseff. Annual inflation reached 10.67 percent in 2015, the government said Friday, the highest rate since 2002 and more than double the government’s 4.5 percent target. “An adjustment was necessary after certain tariffs were frozen over recent years. But non-regulated prices such as those for services have also risen, even in a recession,” said economist Silvio Campos Neto.

“That shows that the policies of the past six years have been wrong, and have been made worse by a bad political climate which is actually making consumption fall.” In recession since the second quarter of last year, Brazil is suffering rising unemployment and a drop in investor confidence fueled by the impeachment proceedings against Rousseff and by a scandal in state oil firm Petrobras. The IMF expects Brazil will stay in recession in 2016. The World Bank on Wednesday forecast a 2.5 percent contraction this year.

### Mistakes in crisis

The government has revised its 2016 budget targets five times. It is now expected to post a \$31 billion deficit. The political chaos swirling around Rousseff has added to Brazil’s economic woes, with the nation-

al currency, the real, down one-third against the dollar in 2015. Last year’s inflation figure, while high, was still slightly below market expectations of 10.72 percent and the central bank’s last forecast of 10.8 percent.

“Prices were artificially held down, but prices for services have risen by nearly nine percent over the past two months,” said analyst Andre Leite of financial group TAG Investimentos. “That shows that a lack of budgetary control by the government has ended up influencing the market.” Rousseff admitted Thursday her government underestimated the magnitude of the economic crisis over recent years. “The biggest mistake was failing to see that the crisis was so big in 2014, failing to gauge the magnitude of the economic slowdown due to internal and external problems,” she said, as quoted by the Estado de Sao Paulo newspaper.

She cited economic uncertainty in China and severe drought in Brazil in explaining the slowdown in her own country, the world’s seventh biggest economy. Rousseff’s approval rating has slipped to single digits as she faces calls for impeachment over a public financing scandal. She said her top priority this year would be to rein in inflation and bring Brazil back to a budget surplus. Touching on the delicate issue of public spending reforms, she said changes to the pensions system should be considered as life expectancy is rising. Leite said the country’s deficit was to blame for soaring inflation, which has prompted the central bank to raise interest rates. “But the government should also cut spending on its mafia of public employees, and it is not doing so,” the analyst said.

### Clashes, protests

Meanwhile, Brazilian riot police clashed with masked protesters on Friday in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro during angry demonstrations against higher transport fares, officials and witnesses said. A hike in fares was one of the main drivers of the mass demonstrations that roiled Brazil in 2013, in one of the most serious threats to President Dilma Rousseff, who is under renewed pressure over a badly faltering economy and a billion-dollar corruption scandal.

Friday’s protest in Sao Paulo, which drew about 1,000 people, started peacefully and remained so for the duration of the rally. But it descended into violence when some of the young demonstrators threw stones and lit makeshift barricades made of trash and wood, an AFP photographer said. Police responded by firing a noxious gas. However, that failed to deter protesters, who vandalized newsstands and a bank, Sao Paulo military police said on Twitter, adding that officers were injured although it did not say how many. In Sao Paulo the price of a fare on public transport will rise Saturday from 3.50 reais to 3.80 reais (\$0.87 to \$0.94). Officials have defended the increase, saying it is below the rate of inflation. Similar scenes unfolded in Rio, where the hike is slightly steeper. The rally there was also mostly peaceful until towards the end, when demonstrators clashed with police. A protest in the city of Belo Horizonte went off peacefully. The huge demonstrations in 2013, which drew millions to the streets all over the country, began with disquiet over transport fare hikes and escalated into broader protests over corruption and the cost of staging the 2014 football World Cup. — Agencies

# STOP ALARMISM OVER VENEZUELA’S CRISIS, NEW ECONOMY CZAR WARNS

**CARACAS:** Venezuela’s new economic vice president has called for an end to what he termed alarmism over the OPEC country’s finances and said it had enough experience to emerge from its current crisis. Venezuelans are reeling from annual inflation thought to be in triple digits, a deep economic recession and shortages of basic goods, which have been aggravated by the tumble in oil prices. President Nicolas Maduro, who blames the woes on an “economic war” he claims businessmen are waging against his socialist government, appointed Luis Salas, 39, a hard-line sociologist, to lead the economy on Wednesday. “In Venezuela we have the background and accumulated experience to overcome this situation,” Salas said in an interview with regional broadcaster Telesur.

In the past Salas has argued against the idea that excessive printing of money causes inflation - an almost universally accepted tenet of macroeconomics. He insists prices rise primarily because corporations seek excessive profit mar-

gins. Salas’ appointment appears to signal a break with the Socialist Party’s promises for some market-friendly reforms last year, which ended in aborted efforts to liberalize cumbersome currency controls. “We have to leave ‘catastrophism’ aside,” Salas said. “This is not the worst economic crisis Venezuela has gone through. The worst one was the prolonged crisis during the 1980s and 1990s.”

In the mid-1990s, inflation peaked at more than 100 percent. Maduro last year said inflation would be near 100 percent in 2015 but the central bank has not published monthly figures for a year. Opposition lawmakers want to pressure the bank into revealing data on inflation and gross domestic product, which has also not been published for a year. Two-time presidential candidate Henrique Capriles said on Friday that annual inflation in 2015 reached 270 percent. He did not cite a source for his figure but in the past has frequently cited central bank statisticians on inflation. — Reuters

# PUERTO RICO ‘SUED’ AFTER DEBT DEFAULT

**WASHINGTON:** Puerto Rico warned Friday that a lawsuit by insurers of its defaulted debt would plunge the US territory into a “litigation crisis”, exacerbating its deep economic and financial problems. Three days after it defaulted on a small part of its \$70 billion in borrowings and warned of further defaults in the coming months, the heavily indebted Caribbean island was sued by bond insurer Ambac Financial Group.

Ambac said in the suit, filed Thursday in the US district court in Puerto Rico, that the Puerto Rican government had illegally “clawed back” or diverted revenues reserved for certain bond payments to be used to pay the government’s general obligation (GO) bonds. Ambac argued that such a move is only permitted if the government does not have other resources for the GO bonds. However, it said in a statement: “For

fiscal year 2016, the commonwealth forecasts approximately \$9.0 billion of available resources, which vastly exceeds debt service on the public debt of approximately \$1.85 billion.”

Puerto Rico missed \$37 million in payments on debt from small state-controlled units on Monday. It also “clawed back” some \$163 million of reserved funds, using the money to make another nearly \$1 billion in payments that were due January 4, including \$328.7 million in GO bonds. Ambac said those defaults had forced it to pay out \$10 million in claims to bond investors. Instead of negotiating with creditors, Puerto Rico “has committed itself to a ‘scorched earth’ strategy of blaming its fiscal and structural problems on lenders, Congress and others,” said Ambac chief executive Nader Tavakoli in a statement. — AFP



**SAN JUAN:** Photo shows the Puerto Rico and US flags in the Old Town district in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico warned that a lawsuit by insurers of its defaulted debt would plunge the US territory into a ‘litigation crisis’, exacerbating its deep economic and financial problems. — AFP

# TAX ERROR COMPLICATES FINANCIAL HELP FOR SOME WITH OBAMACARE

**WASHINGTON:** About 1.4 million households that got financial help for health insurance under President Barack Obama’s law failed to properly account for it on their tax returns last year, putting their subsidies at risk if they want to keep coverage. The preliminary figures were released by the IRS late Friday afternoon, a time when the government often reports unfavorable developments. A spokeswoman for the Department of Health and Human Services doubted there will be a major impact. HHS believes most of the people affected no longer have health law coverage.

Still, it’s a potential complication as the Obama administration strives to increase enrollment for 2016 in the face of rising premiums and skeptical consumers. Tax issues highlight the difficulties of the health law for the very people it’s intended to serve. The law provides tax credits to help people pay premiums for private insurance. Nationally, that aid is averaging around \$290 a month, roughly three-fourths of the typical premium. By funneling financial assistance through the income tax system, Democrats were able to call the overhaul the largest middle-class tax cut for

health care in history. But they also spliced together two really complicated areas for consumers: health insurance and taxes. Confusion has been the result for many.

Consumers can receive the tax credits

in advance if they qualify. But when they file taxes the following year, they must account for the subsidies on their tax returns. People who fail to do that cannot get subsidies paid to them in advance the following year. Without financial

assistance, health insurance premiums are unaffordable for many low- and moderate-income people. IRS said the more than 1.4 million households that have failed to properly account for their 2014 tax credits include:

About 316,000 households that got tax credits paid to them in advance but did not file any return at all last year. Before the health care law, many low-income people were not required to file taxes. Now they must do so if they got a subsidy. But if taxpayers don’t realize it, that can create mix-ups. Some 976,000 households that got tax credits and filed 2014 returns, but omitted a new form that is the key to accounting for their subsidies. Called Form 8962, it was introduced for the 2015 tax filing season. About 147,000 households that had requested extensions to file their 2014 taxes, but never followed through.

The consumers with tax issues represent about 30 percent of the 4.6 million households that had tax credits provided on their behalf. “We expect that taxpayers will continue to better understand this process as it becomes routine,” IRS Commissioner John Koskinen said Friday in a letter to Congress. “We are committed to learning from this experience so

that we can improve our processes and enhance the support we provide in the future.” Friday night, a Treasury spokeswoman said that for this year, the IRS will only flag people who do not file a return at all to have their tax credits turned off. Nonetheless, the spokeswoman said it is important for all individuals to file the proper tax paperwork. Starting early last summer, the IRS launched a large-scale effort to reach taxpayers who had potential health law issues. Results have been mixed. Under the health law, virtu-

ally all Americans are required to carry insurance and the uninsured face fines if they can afford coverage. Treasury said that compliance was simple for about three-fourths of taxpayers: All they had to do was check a box. But nearly 8 million uninsured individuals and families paid penalties averaging about \$210 each. Of those about 313,000 were low-income people legally exempt from the coverage requirement. They will be able to get their money refunded by filing an amended return. — AP



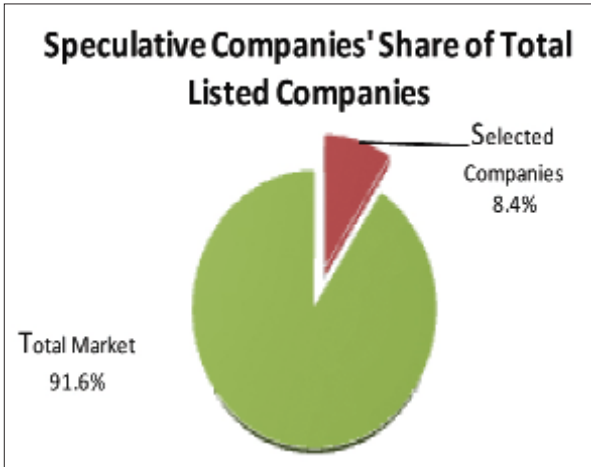
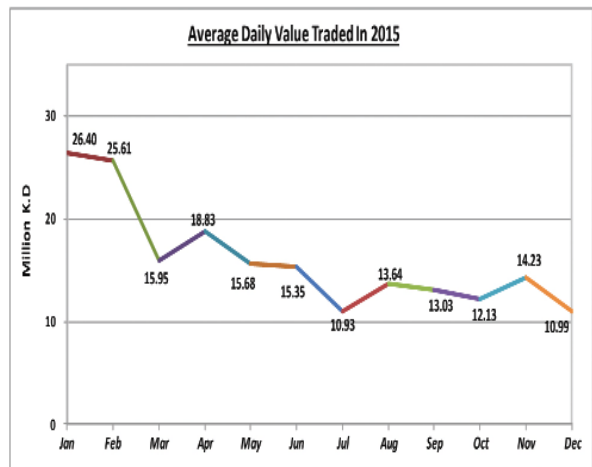
**Health care tax forms 8962, 1095-A, and 8965, are seen in Washington. The Obama administration says it’s giving employers who need more time a limited extension for critical reporting requirements next year under the federal health care law. — AP**

# BURGAN BANK TO ANNOUNCE THE NEW AL THURAYA SALARY ACCOUNT WINNER

**KUWAIT:** Borgan Bank will conduct the Al Thuraya salary Account draw very soon in which the winner will be granted a luxurious Audi R8 car. Al Thuraya is the only salary account in Kuwait offering a quarterly draw for a chance to win 4 new Audi R8 cars in a year. Borgan Bank’s Al Thuraya Account is a salary account that provides multiple features. Every KD 10 available in the

account is a chance for customers to enter the much anticipated draw every quarter. Customers wishing to open an Al Thuraya account can do so by simply visiting the nearest Borgan Bank branch and obtain all the necessary details, or simply call the bank’s Call Center 1804080. For further information, customers can also visit the bank’s website on [www.borgan.com](http://www.borgan.com).





# KUWAIT RECORDS A SUBSTANTIAL DROP IN REVENUES

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Finance issued the monthly follow-up report for the State's Financial Administration Accounts until November 2015 (published on its website), the Ministry of Finance indicates a substantial drop in revenues. Until 30/11/2015, eight months of the current fiscal year 2015/2016, total collected revenues amounted to approximately KD 10.420 billion, about 85.3% of the total estimated revenues for the entire current fiscal year in the amount of approximately KD 12.2106 billion, with a noticeable decline by -45.2% below the total collected revenues during the same period of last fiscal year 2014/2015 in the amount of KD 19.027 billion.

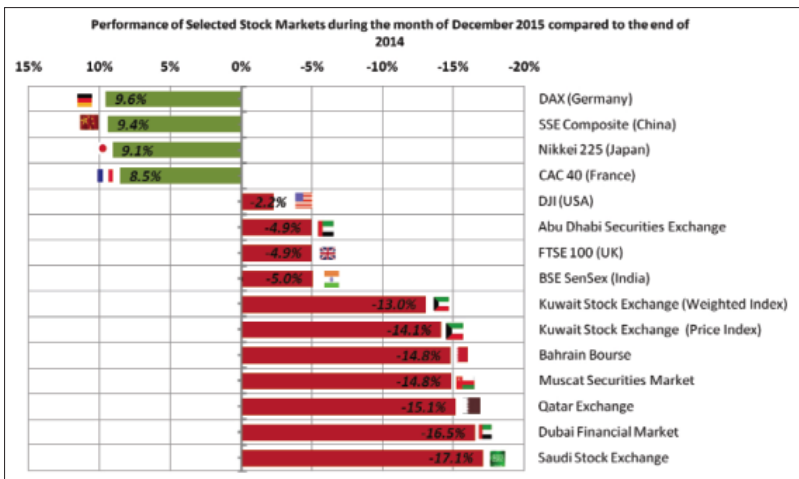
In detail, the bulletin estimates actual oil revenues until 30/11/2015 by about KD 9.681 billion, i.e. 90% of estimated oil revenues for the entire current fiscal year in the amount of KD 10.7575 billion, or about 92.9% of total collected revenues. The collected amounts from oil revenues during the first eight months of the current fiscal year - at an average price of Kuwaiti oil at US\$ 49.9 per barrel- were less by KD 8.268 billion, -46.1%, than its counterpart value last fis-

prices below US\$ 30 per barrel in the last month of the year, and the continued escalated violence curve in the region.

Adopting the same measurement tool, ie following up the share of the top 30 companies in trading value, we note a noticeable reduction in liquidity deviation despite its unjustifiable continuity. Those companies captured 72%, KD 2.851 billion, of market liquidity, representing about 67.3% of its total market capitalization value. The number of speculative companies within the sample was 16 companies, which captured about 32.2% of total market trading value, about KD 1.277 billion whereas their market value scored only 10.5% of total market capitalization value compared with 17 speculative companies which captured 3.4% of market capitalization value and 23% of 2014 market liquidity.

This drop in concentration on speculation companies in 2015 extended to their share turnover rates though they remained high. While the turnover average of all market companies continued weak at about 15.1% and weak even to the 30-companies sample with the highest liquidity at 16.2%, it scored

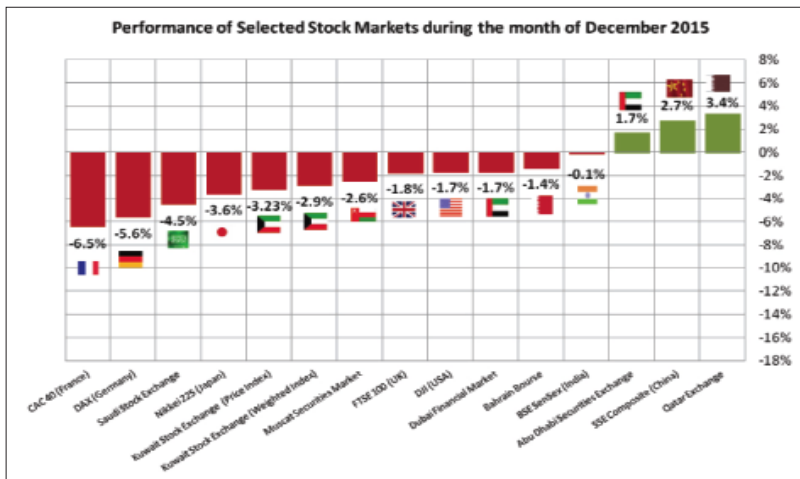
## ALSHALL WEEKLY ECONOMIC REPORT



and Iran, UAE remains the important destination for trade and entertainment tourism. UAE represents the main destination for Iran's capital exports, the headquarters for some private Iranian institutions and some Iranian businessmen. Therefore, the trade and service relations weapon, without the UAE, remains psychological and political only and not material. UAE enjoys a huge surplus in its commodities and service trade with

their markets into negative in last December when the French market lost -6.5% in one month, the German -5.6%, and the Japanese -3.6%.

In the negative zone where the 7 GCC markets are, the Saudi market achieved the highest loss by losing -17.1% in 2015. Dubai market came second in losses by -16.5%, Qatar by -15.1%. Three other markets achieved close results: Muscat and



the oil market, the doubt in their capability to confront the requirements of fundamental reform this time, and the fear from a disturbed geopolitical environment which is getting hotter.

Forecasting performance of a forthcoming year is extremely difficult. Partial changes in each country are no longer dominant but to total changes at a global or regional level whose direction is difficult to know such as the likely performance of the oil market after the battle has become one of bone-breaking among traditional producers, the

performance and mostly negative in the current year. Nevertheless, there is probable positive performance if geopolitical conditions get relaxed through a political conciliation among main traditional oil producers.

### The Weekly Performance

The performance of Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) for the last week (4 working days due to New Year Holiday) was mixed compared to the previous one, where the indices of the trade volume, the number of transactions index and the general

The following tables summarize last week's performance of KSE

Description	Week 1	Week 52	Diff
	07/01/2016	31/12/2015	
Working days	4	5	
AlShall index (38 Companies)	356.0	365.9	-2.7%
KSE index	5,475.2	5,615.1	-2.5%
Value Trade (KD)	44,412,717	51,011,799	
Daily average (KD)	11,103,179	10,202,360	8.8%
Volume Trade (Shares)	423,489,024	607,574,793	
Daily average (Shares)	105,872,256	121,514,959	-12.9%
Transactions	9,645	13,256	
Daily average (Transactions)	2,411	2,651	-9.1%

cal year. KD 739.3 million was collected from non-oil revenues during the same period, a monthly average at KD 92.413 million while the total estimated amount for the entire fiscal year was about KD 1.453 billion. This means the realized amount will be less for the entire fiscal year by about KD 344 million than the estimated amount.

Expenditures allocations for the current fiscal year were estimated at about KD 19.171 billion, of which an amount of KD 6.645 billion was actually spent -according to the bulletin- until 30/11/2015, a monthly spending average at KD 830.635 million. We, however, do not recommend relying on this figure because there are expenses which have become due but have not been actually paid. Spending in the last month of the fiscal year will be higher when settlements are made and then in the final account.

about 46.5% to the 16 companies. It scored about 1508.8% for the highest company, 1171.1% for the second highest and 938.1% for the third highest. Despite their high rates, they remain lower than the turnover rate of this sample of companies (30-companies) in 2014 which was 21.9%.

### Development of events with Iran

After the attack on the Saudi Embassy in Tehran and the Saudi Consulate in Mashhad, Iran, KSA severed diplomatic relations with Iran and so did Bahrain. UAE, Kuwait and Qatar downgraded their diplomatic representation in Iran by summoning their ambassadors there. Though we are not concerned with the political side, the stability of the region serves the region's people. In addition to severing diplomatic relations with Iran, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain also suspended trade dealing with

Iran; therefore, it is unexpected to impose a sanction and pays for it. The above figures are obtained from one source and are subject to verification and review. We are prepared to correct them if we get another source that provides different figures though we do not believe that the bottom line would differ.

Indirect consequences of increased tension in the region are more serious. After the late political confrontation, the likelihood of increased struggle pace and area is greater. On the one hand, it means allocating more resources, which have become scarce, to finance the security and military conflict. On the other, it means fewer prospects for compromise and coordination to reduce the surplus of traditional oil supplies which in turn means continued weak oil prices. Both factors have far reaching negative impacts on the stability of the region and all

ALSHALL INDEX	Week 1	Week 52
	07/01/2016	31/12/2015
Increased Value (# of Companies)	5	17
Decreased Value (# of Companies)	26	9
Unchanged Value (# of Companies)	7	12
Total Companies	38	38

Although the bulletin concludes that the budget surplus in end of the first eight months of the current fiscal year scored about KD 3.775 billion, we publish it without recommending its endorsement as we believe that the surplus figure will change into deficit in the end of the these eight months, and until the fiscal year end, and with the issuance of the final account.

In fact, the current fiscal year will witness a fundamental and negative difference with the budget deficit scoring about KD 4 billion. The deficit figure will be affected positively, i.e. will increase, if oil prices continue their decline but will be affected negatively i.e. will decrease, by the amount of actual saving in the expenses by less than the estimated.

### KSE Liquidity Features

By the end of 2015, KSE added to its liquidity in December 2015 -trading value- about KD 241.7 million, about 6.5% of its total liquidity in the preceding eleven months of the year 2015, and brought the total of the year 2015 market liquidity to KD 3.962 billion. This means that 2015 liquidity dropped by -35.2% compared with 2014. The drop in the liquidity was caused by weak confidence in the market, the drop in oil

Iran. It is unlikely that the other 4 GCC states will follow suit neither is it likely for Oman to downgrade its diplomatic representation.

Excluding the UAE, the commodity trade dealing between Iran and GCC states does not seem substantial or influential. According to the official site of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIM) for the Persian year 1393 (March 2014-March 2015), total trade scored about US\$ 16.6 billion. In details, GCC states exported US\$ 11.735 billion worth of goods to Iran and imported what is worth US\$ 4.848 billion, with a trade balance surplus in favor of the GCC states by about US\$ 6.887 billion. These figures do not carry a big significance if we exclude the UAE whose share out of total exports scored about US\$ 11.208 billion, about 95.5%, of total GCC exports to Iran. On the other hand, UAE imported about US\$ 4.064 billion, 83.8%, of total GCC imports from Iran. These figures do not include the huge figures of UAE re-exports to Iran.

Figures of service trade are not available such as religious trade, and entertainment tourism. We do not know if the boycott would include them if we exclude the pilgrimage season. While religious tourism is common between other GCC states

its individual states in the medium to long terms.

### Comparative Performance

2015 ended and was characterized by weak performance of capital markets within the sample. Out of 14 markets only 4 markets achieved positive performance, less than 10%, and 10 remained in the negative zone. During the year, sorting performance in favor of mature and emerging markets continued while the Gulf markets' performance lagged and 6 Gulf markets occupied the bottom of negative performance with 2-digit losses. The Indian market joined them as No. 7 in losses.

The German market took the lead in winning markets by adding 9.6% in a full year. The Chinese market with 9.4% came second due to the artificial support from the Chinese authorities after the huge losses in the beginning of summer. And so did the Japanese and French markets by 9.1% and 8.5% gains respectively. Though the four markets benefit from the extreme weakness of the oil market, the drop in the Chinese growth rates -the biggest global trade partner- the weak performance of the European economy due to the sovereign debt problems and the late influx of immigration which threatens its solidarity, turned the performance of the majority of

Most Active Sectors & Companies		
Description	Value Traded	% of Total
Sectors	KD	Market
KUWAIT FINANCE HOUSE	8,262,716	18.6%
NATIONAL BANK OF KUWAIT	3,857,128	8.7%
GULF FINANCE HOUSE E.C.	3,349,693	7.5%
AGILITY PUBLIC WAREHOUSING COMPANY	3,305,915	7.4%
Mezzan Holding Co. (K.S.C.C)	2,822,901	6.4%
Total	21,598,353	48.6%
Description	Value Traded	% of Total
Sectors	KD	Market
BANKS SECTOR	17,038,692	38.4%
FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR	9,111,315	20.5%
CONSUMER GOODS SECTOR	4,785,146	10.8%
REAL ESTATE SECTOR	4,719,819	10.6%
INDUSTRIALS SECTOR	3,954,845	8.9%

Bahrain markets lost -14.8% each and Kuwait's weighted index lost -13%. Only Abu Dhabi achieved less loss by -4.9% and came 6th among the sample markets. The weak performance of the regional markets is due to the accelerated weakness of

violent hot conflicts, both direct and the ones by proxy. If last December's performance fits to be index for the early months of the current year, contrary to the norm, the performance of 12 markets out of 14 in the sample was negative in December. This means that indexes imply weak

index, show a decrease, while the trade value index shows an increase. AlShall Index (value index) closed at 356 points at the closing of last Thursday, showing a decrease of about 9.9 points or about 2.7% compared with its level last week (end of 2015).

	Company Name	THU	THU	DIFF	CLOSE	DIFF
		07/01/2016	31/12/2015	%	2015	%
1	The National Bank Of Kuwait	395.9	401.1	(1.3)	401.1	(1.3)
2	The Gulf Bank	207.2	211.3	(1.9)	211.3	(1.9)
3	Commercial Bank Of Kuwait	402.3	402.3	0.0	402.3	0.0
4	Al-Ahli Bank Of Kuwait	242.2	245.5	(1.3)	245.5	(1.3)
5	Kuwait International Bank	229.3	235.5	(2.6)	235.5	(2.6)
6	Ahli United Bank	416.2	424.2	(1.9)	424.2	(1.9)
7	Burgan Bank	345.3	359.6	(4.0)	359.6	(4.0)
8	Kuwait Finance House	985.3	1052.0	(6.3)	1052.0	(6.3)
	<b>Banking Sector</b>	<b>399.7</b>	<b>409.7</b>	<b>(2.4)</b>	<b>409.7</b>	<b>(2.4)</b>
9	Commercial Facilities Co	116.9	125.6	(6.9)	125.6	(6.9)
10	International Financial Advisors	226.9	235.1	(3.5)	235.1	(3.5)
11	National Investments	105.7	110.7	(4.5)	110.7	(4.5)
12	Kuwait Investment Projects	1225.6	1292.5	(5.2)	1292.5	(5.2)
13	Coast Investment & Development	39.6	43.7	(9.4)	43.7	(9.4)
	<b>Investment Sector</b>	<b>328.8</b>	<b>347.4</b>	<b>(5.4)</b>	<b>347.4</b>	<b>(5.4)</b>
14	Kuwait Insurance Company	69.5	67.3	3.3	67.3	3.3
15	Gulf Insurance Company	427.7	427.7	0.0	427.7	0.0
16	Al-Ahleia Insurance Company	199.0	199.0	0.0	199.0	0.0
17	Warba Insurance Company	81.9	88.5	(7.5)	88.5	(7.5)
	<b>Insurance Sector</b>	<b>163.5</b>	<b>162.9</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>162.9</b>	<b>0.4</b>
18	Kuwait Real Estate Company	87.0	88.6	(1.8)	88.6	(1.8)
19	United Realty Company	191.7	193.7	(1.0)	193.7	(1.0)
20	National Real Estate Company	187.8	187.8	0.0	187.8	0.0
21	Salhia Real Estate Company	1494.0	1494.0	0.0	1494.0	0.0
	<b>Real Estate Sector</b>	<b>183.5</b>	<b>184.3</b>	<b>(0.4)</b>	<b>184.3</b>	<b>(0.4)</b>
22	The National Industries	103.6	112.6	(8.0)	112.6	(8.0)
23	Kuwait Cement Co	557.8	595.5	(6.3)	595.5	(6.3)
24	Refrigeration Industries Co	103.2	104.9	(1.6)	104.9	(1.6)
25	Gulf Cable & Electrical Industries	139.9	149.9	(6.7)	149.9	(6.7)
26	Contracting & Marine Services Co	63.6	64.8	(1.9)	64.8	(1.9)
	<b>Industrial Sector</b>	<b>161.5</b>	<b>172.4</b>	<b>(6.3)</b>	<b>172.4</b>	<b>(6.3)</b>
27	Kuwait National Cinemas	596.3	577.5	3.3	577.5	3.3
28	Kuwait Hotels Company	121.0	115.5	4.8	115.5	4.8
29	The Public Warehousing Co	1727.0	1862.8	(7.3)	1862.8	(7.3)
30	Mobile Telecommunications Co - ZAIN	338.2	353.8	(4.4)	353.8	(4.4)
31	Safat Energy Co	11.2	11.7	(4.3)	11.7	(4.3)
	<b>Services Sector</b>	<b>568.3</b>	<b>598.6</b>	<b>(5.1)</b>	<b>598.6</b>	<b>(5.1)</b>
32	Livestock Transport & Trading Co	105.0	106.7	(1.6)	106.7	(1.6)
33	Danah Aalsafat Foodstuff Company	82.8	81.8	1.2	81.8	1.2
34	Kuwait United Poultry Co	65.3	65.3	0.0	65.3	0.0
35	Kuwait Food Co	1990.4	1970.7	1.0	1970.7	1.0
	<b>Food Sector</b>	<b>687.4</b>	<b>681.5</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>681.5</b>	<b>0.9</b>
36	Sharjah Cement Co	362.5	362.5	0.0	362.5	0.0
37	Gulf Cement Co	294.3	322.6	(8.8)	322.6	(8.8)
38	Umm Al-Qaiwain Cement Industries	551.8	588.6	(6.3)	588.6	(6.3)
	<b>Non Kuwaiti Companies</b>	<b>221.8</b>	<b>228.6</b>	<b>(3.0)</b>	<b>228.6</b>	<b>(3.0)</b>
	<b>General Index</b>	<b>356.0</b>	<b>365.9</b>	<b>(2.7)</b>	<b>365.9</b>	<b>(2.7)</b>



## ROBUST US PAYROLLS BRIGHTEN ECONOMIC OUTLOOK REPORT EASES CONCERNS ABOUT ECONOMY'S HEALTH

**WASHINGTON:** US payrolls surged in December and the job count for the prior two months was revised sharply higher, showing the economy on solid ground despite a troubling international backdrop. Nonfarm payrolls increased by 292,000 last month, the Labor Department said on Friday, as hiring got a boost from unseasonably warm weather. The unemployment rate held steady at a 7-1/2-year low of 5 percent even as more people entered the labor force, a sign of confidence in the job market.

The robust employment data helped soothe fears about the economy's health, and suggested recent weakness would largely be contained to the manufacturing and export-oriented sectors, which have been hit by a strong dollar and anemic global demand. Efforts by businesses to whittle down an inventory glut and spending cuts by energy companies have also inflicted pain. "It gives us a short-term shot in the arm and pushes back the idea that we are headed for a global recession or that weakness in China will sink our economy," says David Donabedian, chief

investment officer at Atlantic Trust Private Wealth Management in Baltimore.

Slumping oil prices and slowing growth in China have cast a pall on the outlook for the global economy. The upbeat employment report briefly helped staunch the bleeding on Wall Street, but was offset by further declines in oil prices. The dollar firmed against a basket of currencies as traders ramped up bets the Federal Reserve would raise interest rates in March. Prices for US government debt rose on safe-haven bids. Concerns about a slowdown in China, the world's second-largest economy after the United States, have spooked investors worldwide. But signs of stability emerged overnight after China ditched a stock market circuit breaker and guided its currency higher.

US payrolls for October and November were revised to show 50,000 more jobs created than previously reported, adding to the report's upbeat tone. The only wrinkle was a one cent drop in average hourly earnings. Economists, who slashed fourth-quarter US

growth forecasts on recent soft economic data, had expected payrolls to increase by only 200,000 last month. Fourth-quarter GDP growth estimates currently range from as low as a 0.4 percent annual rate to as high as a 1.1 percent pace. Though payroll growth was softer last year than in 2014, with 2.65 million jobs created compared with 3.1 million in the prior year, the job gains in 2015 were still the second largest since 1999.

### Focus on wage growth

While the labor market's resilience could spur Fed policymakers to hike rates in March, some economists said low inflation and the recent turmoil in financial markets could stay their hand. "These figures obviously support a March rate hike from the Fed, but ... it is developments in inflation rather than the labor market that will determine the pace of future rate hikes," said Paul Ashworth, chief US economist at Capital Markets in New York. "With oil prices close to \$30 a barrel now, this latest labor market improvement doesn't necessarily guarantee a March rate hike." The

US central bank last month raised overnight rates by a quarter percentage point to between 0.25 and 0.50 percent, the first increase in nearly a decade, and a subsequent move at its next meeting this month was already seen as off the table.

With the Fed focused on inflation, wage growth is under scrutiny. Economists said December's decline in earnings could simply be due to a calendar-related quirk. Despite that drop, the year-on-year gain moved up to 2.5 percent from 2.3 percent in November, although that reflected an unusually weak December 2014. Also being watched closely is the labor force participation rate, or the share of working-age Americans who are employed or at least looking for a job. While the rate increased one-tenth of a percentage point to 62.6 percent in December, it remains near four-decade lows.

There are concerns persistently low participation could hamper job growth as the supply pool of workers shrinks, unless a pick-up in earnings entices more Americans to return to the labor force. The employment-to-popu-

lation ratio increased to 59.5 percent last month, its highest level since May 2009, from 59.4 percent in November. Employment gains in December were concentrated in the services sector, with mining shedding a further 8,000 jobs. Employment in the mining sector declined by 129,000 in 2015 and more losses are likely with oil prices at an 11-year low.

Oilfield services provider Schlumberger last month announced another round of job cuts in addition to 20,000 layoffs already reported in 2015. The company said it expected the slowdown in drilling activity to continue this year. Manufacturing added 8,000 jobs last month and warm weather boosted construction payrolls, which increased by 45,000. Retail payrolls rose only 4,300 as mild temperatures hurt sales of winter apparel. The weather also limited job gains in the leisure and hospitality sector, with employment rising 29,000 after increasing by 47,000 the prior month. Temporary help had a gain of 34,400 jobs last month and government payrolls rose 17,000. — Reuters

## HOW TO CUSTOMIZE YOUR CV FOR A MARKETING POSITION

**W**riting a good CV is probably the most difficult part of a job search. It is the part that can make or break your chances of landing a job interview, especially when you know that most employers will spend no more than 10 seconds reading your CV. A professional CV will impress employers at first glance; otherwise, it's going to get ignored. There is no perfect way to write a CV. A rule of thumb, however, is to tailor your CV for each position you're applying for, because different roles require different skill sets and different competencies. Luckily for you, Bayt.com knows the importance of a customized CV, and this is why it offers its full-fledged CV Builder which allows you to build up to 5 CVs online.

In this article, we'll discuss how you can customize your CV for a marketing position. Whether you're currently working in the marketing industry, or considering a higher position or career change, here are some tips to help you customize your CV for a marketing position, as suggested by the career experts at Bayt.com:

### Include keywords

Before you start customizing your CV, make sure you carefully read the job description of the job you are applying for and then use the keywords used by the employer. Examples of keywords employers use when looking for marketing candidates are "Communications Skills", "Social Media", "SEO", "Editing", "Marketing Plan", "Email Marketing", etc. You can do a quick search on the Bayt.com Career Map to get more information about the skills and competencies required by employers for marketing roles.

### Customize your work experience

Don't waste yours and the employer's time by talking about tasks or responsibilities or projects that have nothing to do with the job you're applying for. In fact, according to the Bayt.com 'Modern Job Search in the Middle East' poll, October 2013, 43% of employers prefer a short and concise CV that is no longer than one page. If your job responsibilities within a specific position include many different tasks, just focus on the ones related to marketing or to the job at hand.

### Be specific and precise

In addition to listing your responsibilities in each job, it is important to focus on how your work is contributing to the company's goals. Make sure you use concrete examples when describing your achievements. In matter of fact, employers value candidates who can clearly identify their accomplishments. For example, you can say: "I played an active part in meeting the company's projected growth rate for this year by generating several sales leads which resulted in a 20% increase in the company's revenue year-on-year."

### Highlight your networking skills

Marketing is all about networking! Make sure you show employers that you have a large network and a strong online presence by including links to your public profiles, online discussions and portfolios (if applicable). Among other skills, good communication skills (63%) emerge as the top attribute employers are looking for in a candidate, according to the Bayt.com Middle East Job Index survey, August 2015. Bayt.com People platform and Bayt.com Specialties are a great place to start!

### Add any relevant courses or certificates

A good education and added skills are always a plus when you're looking for a job in marketing. So mention any training courses or certificates or workshops you have recently completed. You can find out about relevant courses, conferences, seminars, and education programs provided by the best learning providers in the Middle East and across the world on Bayt.com. Bayt.com Tests is another great way to show employers that you are the person with the right skill sets for the job. Using tests, recruiters can qualify candidates by testing their expertise in a wide array of topics that include IQ, personality, and other technical skills.

*Bayt.com is the #1 job site in the Middle East with more than 40,000 employers and over 23,000,000 registered job seekers from across the Middle East, North Africa and the globe, representing all industries, nationalities and career levels. Post a job or find jobs on www.bayt.com today and access the leading resource for job seekers and employers in the region.*



WUHAN: Two investors look at screens showing stock market movements in a stock firm in Wuhan, central China's Hubei province. — AFP

## CHINA'S CONSUMER 'INFLATION RATE UP'

BEIJING TO MAINTAIN 'PRUDENT' MONETARY POLICY

**BEIJING:** China's consumer inflation rate crept higher in December, official data showed Saturday, as the world's second-largest economy struggles with slower growth. The consumer price index (CPI) - a main gauge of inflation - rose 1.6 percent last month from a year ago, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said in a statement, in line with the median forecast in a Bloomberg survey of economists. It edged up from November's 1.5 percent, and came in at 1.4 percent over the course of the year, well below the government's target of "around three percent." Food prices, however, rose at a faster pace, increasing 2.3 percent in 2015 with particularly steep rises in pork prices.

Moderate inflation can be a boon to consumption as it pushes buyers to act before prices go up, while falling prices encourage shoppers to delay purchases and companies to put off investment, both of which can hurt growth. China is crucial to the global economy and concerns over slowing growth and Beijing's management of the economy sent jitters through stock markets around the world this week. The producer price index (PPI), which measures prices of goods at the factory gate, fell 5.9 percent year-on-year in December, unchanged from November and its 46th consecutive monthly fall.

Overcapacity in manufacturing has been a major drag on China's growth and the protracted declines in PPI bode ill for industrial prospects. Beijing is seeking to transition the country's growth model away from reliance on exports and fixed-asset investment towards a consumer-driven economy, but the reform is proving bumpy. Growth hit a 24-year low of 7.3 percent in 2014 and President Xi Jinping said late last year that annual expansion of only 6.5 percent would be enough to meet the government's goals, the clearest signal yet Beijing will lower its growth targets for the coming years.

### 'Prudent' monetary policy

Meanwhile, China's central bank pledged to carry out "prudent" monetary policy Friday as the country's fumbling attempts to control its currency and stock market rattled investors worldwide. Policymakers adjusted the currency to a near five year low earlier in the week. The move may have exacerbated volatility in the country's stock markets, which dropped precipitously over concern Beijing would loosen restrictions on the sale of company's equities by major shareholders.

A circuit breaker intended to control stock market volatility added to the chaos, causing regulators

to cancel the mechanism after it halted trading twice last week. "The international and domestic financial situation remains complicated and severe," the People's Bank of China (PBOC) said in a statement on its website. The bank will carry out "prudent monetary policy" and work to ensure "reasonably abundant liquidity" in the banking system this year it said. The statement came amid worries over slowing growth in the world's second-largest economy and biggest trader in goods, which have roiled investors worldwide, and with pressure on its currency from capital outflows.

On Thursday, authorities lowered the yuan's central rate against the US dollar by 0.51 percent to 6.5646, the lowest since March 2011. It was the biggest drop since August when Beijing guided the unit down by nearly five percent in a week in a surprise devaluation. China limits the yuan to rising or falling two percent on either side of the reference rate, set by the PBOC. Authorities set the central rate for the yuan currency marginally higher against the greenback on Friday, ending eight days of falls. A lower currency should make Chinese exports cheaper on world markets - a challenge for overseas competitors - but at the cost of its imports becoming more expensive in yuan terms. — Agencies



SAN FRANCISCO: Emmanuel Macron, economy minister of France (left) hugs Segolene Royal, France Minister of Ecology Sustainable Development and Energy during a speech in San Francisco, Friday, Jan 8, 2016. Macron met with Silicon Valley titans as part of his effort to attract technology investment to France. — AP

## FRANCE'S ECONOMIC MINISTER'S PRIORITY IS PRIVATE INVESTMENT

**SAN FRANCISCO:** France's economy minister wants global investors to know that the country knows for handcrafted cheeses, wine and luxury apparel - all of which take time to make - is ready to speed up in order to embrace technology's startup culture. Socialist Emmanuel Macron told The Associated Press in an interview on Friday that his top priority in 2016 is to attract private investment to the country's fledgling yet growing tech industry. To do so, he's emphasizing to investors and technology executives in the United States that his country has relaxed some of its famously stringent workplace protections and will do more so that companies can restructure or lay off workers in order to be more nimble and competitive. "We have to provide more visibility, more certainty to the investors and reduce the cost of failure," he said, speaking before a reception at the French Consul General's home near San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district.

Macron, 38, is an unabashed admirer of tech innovation and competitiveness, making him a controversial figure within a party where opponents fear he is pushing the country toward an American style model that doesn't do enough to protect workers. In July, for example, the French

government approved an economic reform bill championed by Macron. Among other things, the law allows stores to open 12 times a year on Sunday instead of five and lets stores expand evening hours. France's 35-hour workweek law was unaffected. But he said Friday that French workers shouldn't worry that the country will turn into the United States, overnight or ever. France is not the United States, nor does it want to be, he said. "At the same time, what we have to do in France is to adapt the country to globalization and we have to accelerate, because everything is about speed," Macron said. Macron has spent the past two days at the annual gadget extravaganza known as the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. He noted there were nearly 200 French startups at the show, the most of any European country, he said. He said France creates about 1,500 startup companies each year, many in health care, energy and mobility. On his lapel, he wore a small red rooster pin, the official symbol of "La French Tech." He met with entrepreneurs and investors in Silicon Valley and San Francisco on Friday and has scheduled more meetings for Saturday, before heading home. — AP

**KUWAIT:** The interim public finance figures for the first eight months of fiscal year 2015/16 (FY15/16) point to a decline in government spending, as the price of oil fell to a seven-year low. However, despite the decline in overall spending, wages & salaries and capital spending still rose. The latter continued to reflect an accelerated pace of project execution. Meanwhile, nonoil revenues remained well below their 5-year average. The government recorded a preliminary deficit of KD 1.9 billion during the period before the transfer to the Reserve Fund for Future Generations (RFFG). We estimate FY15/16 will close with a deficit of KD 3.9 billion or 9.8% of GDP.

As of November, reported government spending stood at KD 6.6 billion fiscal-year-to-date (fytd); this figure was 22% lower than during the same period last year. However, at 35% of the FY15/16 budget, the spending rate is slightly lower than the five-year November average of 37%. Actual spending was even higher at KD 11.2 billion according to new data being published by the Ministry of Finance on actual withdrawals made from the government accounts at the Central Bank of Kuwait. This accounting difference is related to delays in reporting expenditures by some ministries. Also, the government has payments due of KD 1.14 billion to the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) and the Public Institute for Social Security (PIFSS).

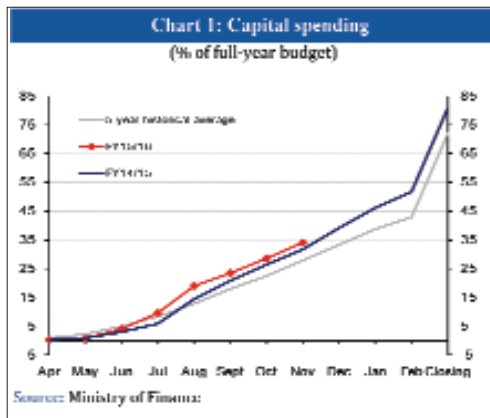
Current spending, the bulk of total spending, came in at KD 5.8 billion fytd, down 25% y/y. The

### NBK ECONOMIC UPDATE

decline in current spending was driven mainly by the 'miscellaneous expenditures & transfers' chapter, which includes military salaries and transfers to PIFSS. Wages & salaries stood at KD 2.4 billion fytd, up 9% y/y. Miscellaneous expenditures & transfers came in at KD 3.1 billion fytd, down 28% year-on-year (y/y), mainly due to a significant drop in support to refined products and LNG. Goods & services (Chapter 2) stood at KD 0.4 billion fytd, down by 72% y/y as spending on fuel for electricity and water (MEW) declined by 88% y/y.

Capital spending rose by 11% y/y to KD 0.8 billion fytd. Capital spending is currently at 34% of the full-year budget, compared to the five-year average of 28%. This reflects the government's commitment to the strategic projects of the development plan. Spending on projects, maintenance & land purchases (chapter 4) reached KD 740 million, up by 8.5% y/y. The Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) and Ministry of Public Works recorded the highest ratios of spending to budget in Chapter 4, at 41% and 48%, respectively.

Total government revenues were KD 10.4 billion in the eight months, down 45% y/y. Both oil and non-oil revenues witnessed significant declines, recording drops of 46% and 32% y/y, respectively. Oil revenues remain low as oil prices fell to a seven-year low and below last year's average. The Kuwait export crude (KEC) price averaged \$50 per barrel



during the first eight months of FY15/16 and \$38.2 in November. Oil prices are likely to remain subdued for the remaining months of the fiscal year; still, we expect oil revenues to reach KD 12.9 billion by the end of the fiscal year, surpassing the government's official projections by 20%.

Non-oil revenues were also weaker mainly due to the postponement of payments from the UN Compensation Commission (UNCC). Because of that, nonoil revenues were down 32%. The UNCC still owes Kuwait KD 1.4 billion, but payments have been postponed until early 2017. During FY14/2015, Kuwait received KD 1.1 billion in UNCC payments; the latest payment was in March 2015.



## AMAZING OFFERS ON THE CADILLAC ATS, SRX AND ESCALADE

**KUWAIT:** New years come and go, but luxury is timeless. Yusuf A Alghanim & Sons Automotive, the sole distributor of Cadillac vehicles in Kuwait, is proud to celebrate the new year of 2016 with its customers by offering them spectacular promotions on its award winning luxury vehicles. The January-only offer presents unsurpassable value on the ultimate sport car, Cadillac ATS, the all-new luxury crossover, Cadillac SRX and the premium Cadillac Escalade, with prices starting at KD 9,999, KD 12,999, and KD 25,995, respectively.

Combining bold looks with unstoppable performance, customers will enjoy the cars' athletic exterior and airy cabin, whose interior design combines thoughtful technology and cut-and-sewn details made by a professional team of designers and engineers, all in all making their New Year purchase that more memorable and luxurious.

This unique promotion is a testament to Cadillac Alghanim's ongoing commitment to provide its customers with fantastic offers and the opportunity to own a luxurious car equipped with high-tech features and safety standards. Also true to its commitment are Cadillac Alghanim's award-winning service center and after sales benefits that cumulatively offer customers competitive value and exceptional services. The company invites luxury fans not to pass up this limited time offer and to test-drive the cars of their dreams at any of its showrooms.

### Road Technology for Life

All Cadillac cars are enhanced with Cadillac User Experience (CUE), a comprehensive in-vehicle experience that merges intuitive design with auto industry-first controls while providing connectivity, control and convenience to the driver and passengers alike. It pairs entertainment and information data from up to 10 Bluetooth-enabled mobile devices, USBs, SD cards and MP3 players with a vehicle infotainment system.

A setup that will reduce complexity and confusion through natural voice commands, customized information, and fewer buttons and larger icons. CUE is operated from a vibrant 8-inch LCD touch screen that resembles a smart phone's screen by using large easy to see icons to

control commands and functions. The screen seamlessly integrated into the top of the central instrument panel, and a motorized fully capacitive faceplate at the bottom conceals a large storage area.

### Cadillac SRX: A Commanding Presence

The 2016 SRX's design is classic Cadillac, with luxury that touches every corner of the vehicle, from the high performance powertrain and technology drenched dashboard to the exclusive comfort and convenience features designed to surpass expectations. In addition to its roomy interior with seating for five and a large cargo area, the new SRX is also beautifully sculpted; its exterior design is distinguished by striking angles and refined detail while its signature shield grille offers expressive depth and refinement.

Performance is integral in the SRX, which is powered by a 3.6L direct-injected V-6 engine rated at a SAE-certified 308 horsepower (230 kW) and 359 Nm of torque. Lightweight features help reduce overall weight for greater efficiency and a more favorable front-to-rear weight balance. Examples include a composite intake manifold that saves approximately 2.5 kg over the weight of a comparable aluminum intake and an integrated cylinder head/exhaust manifold design that saves approximately 6 kg per engine. All-wheel drive offered on all models.

Radar-based Adaptive Cruise Control and Automatic Front and Rear Braking are also available on the SRX. Front and Rear Automatic Braking relies on short-range radar technology and ultrasonic sensors to help the driver prevent front and rear low-speed collisions via a progression of alerts that extend to complete braking, if necessary. Additional advanced safety features offered on the SRX's Driver Awareness and Driver Assist packages

### Cadillac ATS: Leaves an Impressive Trail

The Cadillac ATS compact luxury sports sedan challenges the world's best premium cars with an acclaimed balance of performance and refinement, effectively wrapped in a progressive expression of Cadillac's Art & Science design philosophy. With one of the lowest curb weights

in the segment-less than 1,542 kg-the ATS's driving dynamics are rooted in mass efficiency, which helps make it Cadillac's lightest and most agile sedan. Cadillac proprietary computational fluid dynamics (CFD) analysis techniques were used to develop an all-new combustion system with a higher compression ratio, which also helps boost efficiency. The award-winning 3.6L V-6 collection is rated at 321

buyers in the region, and now Cadillac has elevated its line even further to please customers that aspire for the finest and appreciate luxury craftsmanship in its details. The Escalade Platinum encapsulates the pinnacle of Cadillac luxury with the most premium materials. The first- and second-row seats are wrapped in Soft Nappa leather, while the dashboard, upper

18-way power front seats are standard, with a massage function on the driver's seat. A pair of seven-inch LCD screens, embedded in the back of the front seat headrests, supplement the overhead 9-inch screen, while a cooled center console compartment keeps beverages chilled. Platinum Collection models also include premium floor mats and Platinum-branded doorsill plates.

The exterior of the Escalade Platinum models are distinguished by 22-inch wheels with chrome accents, Platinum exterior badging, and a unique grille mesh design adorned by the new, streamlined Cadillac Crest.

Mechanically, the Escalade Platinum introduces new technical upgrades that will become standard on the entire Escalade range. Such as the new 8-speed automatic transmission and a two-speed transfer case [standard on four-wheel drive models]. A new Surround View camera system helps driving ease and increases visibility during maneuvering, and a now open and closing hands-free capability to the existing electronic lift gate enhances convenience.

### Premium Care Program

Yusuf Ahmed Alghanim & Sons Automotive showcases the company's commitment to enhance customers' unique Cadillac experience by offering customers peace of mind with a comprehensive insurance program. In addition, all Cadillac owners will enjoy service and maintenance for four years or 100,000 km, warranty for 4 years or 100,000 km, 24-hour roadside assistance anywhere in the Middle East for four years (unlimited miles) plus a courtesy transportation and a replacement vehicle upon availability. Adding to the luxury experience, Cadillac offers its customers in Yusuf Ahmed Alghanim the highest quality of services. The service center is equipped with a large variety of the most advanced equipment operated by a team of skilled professionals and effective consultants who ensure timely service.

Visit Cadillac's showroom in Safat Alghanim in Alrai today and do not pass up this opportunity to take advantage of this January-only offer.

### Step into 2016 with captivating luxury... with Cadillac



SRX 2016

horsepower and 373 Nm of torque, and comes equipped with Magnetic Ride Control, Brembo(r) Brakes and Cadillac's advanced crash-avoidance systems that can pre-fill and automatically apply braking in response to potential hazards.

### Benchmark of Luxurious Craftsmanship

To date, the new Escalade has resonated strongly among luxury SUV

door panels and center console are clad in hand-stitched and hand-wrapped leather. Customers can choose between two distinct interior environments, each paired with suede microfiber headliner trim and unique exotic wood accents.

The Escalade Platinum Collection has an interior crafted to provide its passengers with unsurpassed comfort and convenience. Heated and cooled



## GULF BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS IN ITS 'MEGA TRIO DRAW EVENT'

RAMADAN ALI HASSAN ABDULLAH AL-SHARAH WINS KD 1 MILLION

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank has announced the winners from its successful 3 in 1 yearly draw event that took place Thursday, 7 January 2016, in the Avenues Mall. 3 Draws took place at the same time and location. The Al Danah draw was held for cash prizes of 1 Million Kuwaiti Dinars, KD 250,000 and KD 50,000, while the Salary & Red Account draws included a brand new Cadillac SRX, two draws for KD 25,000 each and cash prizes up to KD1500. The draw event was held in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Gulf Bank

would like to congratulate Ramadan Ali Hassan Abdullah Al-Sharah (1 Million Kuwaiti Dinars), Hassan Mohammed Hassan Al-Ansari (KD250,000 winner) and Fadel Hashem Ali Ashkanani (KD50,000 winner) winners of the Al Danah draws.

In addition Gulf Bank would like to congratulate the Bank's Salary and Red account draw winners, which included the following: Zainab Abbas Abdulaziz Abdullah (25,000 KD) and Ahmed Ali Abduljabbar Al-Khashti (25,000 KD) in the annual Salary draw, Sarah Ali Mahmoud Yaseen (Cadillac

SRX winner), Mehsehan Mohammed Salem Al-Marri (1500 KD winner), Murooj Nadeem Nahi (1000 KD winner), Ghzlaan Thaher Mohammad Al-Dhfeeri (800 KD winner), Yasmeen Abdulrahman Mohammed Al-Bassam (600 KD winner), Abdullah Sameer Abdullah Al-Adeelah (400 KD winner), and Mashaal Theeb Hathal Al-Otaibi (200 KD winner).

To participate in the Al Danah draws, customers must have an Al Danah account containing at least KD 200. Customers can open a new Al Danah account at any one of the 56 Gulf Bank branches in Kuwait.

Those who already have an account can increase their chances of winning by increasing their deposits. This will also increase their chances of winning one of the two KD1,000 prizes, which are drawn each working day.

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](http://www.e-gulfbank.com)



## FCW OUTLINES INVESTMENT & BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

**KUWAIT:** Falconcity of Wonders LLC, the developers of the multipurpose mega project 'Falconcity of Wonders' (FCW) being built in Dubai, recently hosted a delegation of media representatives from Hong Kong to outline the business and investment opportunities of FCW. The visit provided valuable insights into FCW's progress, regional and global investment potentials, and its important role in reinforcing Dubai's role as a global real estate hub.

The guests were given an extensive tour of FCW's various phases and key components. Alharith bin Salem Almoosa, Vice Chairman & Deputy General Manager of FCW LLC, met with the delegates and explained how the project's various components complement and highlight the development's unique 'Wonders of the World' concept by presenting a full-scale model. He also emphasized key points related to FCW's emergence as one of the most prominent and worthwhile real estate projects in Dubai.

Alharith bin Salem Almoosa said: "This visit was an excellent opportunity for us to explain the major significance of our project for the real estate landscape of Dubai and the region to members of the press.

We intend to work more closely with the investors in Hong Kong and to strengthen our communication channels by matching FCW's offerings with the specific needs of their market, which represents one of the promising real estate audiences in the world today."

Interest in Dubai among leading investors from Hong Kong and China keeps on rising, a trend which FCW aims to leverage through strategic initiatives such as its active participation in the Hong Kong edition of the Dubai Property Show set to be held this January. The visit forms part of a series of initiatives to heighten FCW's global visibility to investors.

Covering more than 41 million square feet, FCW has been attracting international interest to its 'World in a City' concept complemented by various residential, tourist, entertainment and recreational elements that collectively form the shape of a falcon in tribute of the UAE's national emblem, culture and heritage. The mega development features the Leaning Tower of Dubai, Taj Arabia, the Dubai Hanging Gardens of Babylon, Dueiffel Tower and Dubai Great Wall, among other renowned wonders.





## HOLIDAY SHOPPING ONLINE SPURRED BY MOBILE SALES

**NEW YORK:** It was the year smartphones saved Santa. As expected, numbers out Friday from research firm comScore confirmed mobile shopping, which includes smartphones and tablets, jumped in November and December, spurring on holiday retail sales this year. Online shoppers are increasingly

comfortable with shopping on smartphones as screen sizes get larger and shopping apps get better. "I believe that we've seen a paradigm shift in 2016 where the future of retail will increasingly be defined by consumers' behavior on mobile," said comScore chairman emeritus

Gian Fulgoni. Total online spending during November and December rose 13 percent to \$69.08 billion from \$61.29 billion last year, slightly short of the 14 percent rise comScore, based in Reston, Va., was expecting. Spending on desktops rose 6

percent to \$56.43 billion, short of comScore's expectations of an 8 percent rise to \$58.3 billion. But mobile commerce helped make up some of that shortfall. Shopping on smartphones and tablets jumped 59 percent to \$12.65 billion, well above the 47 percent rise comScore was expect-

ing. Mobile commerce accounted for 18 percent of total online spending, up from 13 percent last year. Cyber Monday, Nov. 30, was once again the top spending day of the year with more than \$2 billion in desktop buying for the second year in a row. — AP



**LAS VEGAS:** Newly unveiled Haier Ubot household robots are shown in a kitchen display at the CES 2016 Consumer Electronics Show yesterday in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

## FROM THE HIGH-FLYING TO THE PRACTICAL: CES 2016 IN BRIEF

**LAS VEGAS:** This year's CES gadget show, like ones before it, showed off a mix of the dreamy and the practical in technology. Gadget prototypes promised us fully autonomous vehicles carrying commuters on the streets and in the sky, while gizmos went on sale that aimed to solve daily problems like restocking your fridge. Here's a quick summary of the highlights of CES 2016:

### DRONES

Drones might no longer be just a toy for hobbyists or weapons for the military. Chinese drone maker Ehang Inc. unveiled what it called the world's first drone capable of carrying a human passenger, a four-armed quadcopter with eight propellers that it said has been on more than 100 test flights, including some with a human passenger. The idea is to set a course and then sit back for about a 20-minute ride - assuming, of course, that regulators approve, which will probably be a long haul itself.

Companies are making drones smaller and smarter than ever for that high-tech selfie. Many can hover and shoot up to 4K video, and several companies are working toward including a "follow me" function that would let drones fly along above or behind you, shooting video all the way. Some such drones are so small they fall under the minimum weight requiring registration by the Federal Aviation Administration.

### CONNECTED CARS

Automakers and parts suppliers took further steps to make autonomous driving a reality. Quanergy, for instance, announced a low-cost version of laser-based sensors called Lidar that cuts the

cost of outfitting autos with the technology to around \$1,000 per car from about \$70,000.

Israeli company Mobileye and German company Here announced plans to start making super-detailed road maps based on cameras and sensors that exist in cars today. Those maps will help autonomous vehicles navigate in poor weather. Owned by Audi, BMW and Mercedes, Here said it plans to have detailed maps of the highway networks in North America and Western Europe by 2018.

### VIRTUAL AND AUGMENTED REALITY

Some companies showed off technology that combined augmented reality - which superimposes digital images and text on the real world - and virtual reality - which blocks out the real world in a completely immersive environment using a headset and headphones.

HTC says it's launching the latest version of its Vive headset with a front-facing camera that allows users to do real-life things like take a drink or sit down without taking it off. A startup called uSens showed off a prototype headset attached to a Samsung Galaxy S6 smartphone that had forward-facing infrared and optical cameras so wearers could use their hands to manipulate virtual objects.

Google and Lenovo announced a consumer mobile device would go on sale this summer that incorporates technology from its depth-sensing Project Tango robotic sight technology. That could make it easy to do things like get turn-by-turn directions indoors or measure dimensions in a room just by using the device's cameras.

But the biggest news was the sticker-shock of Oculus' consumer version of its Rift headset, which the company priced at \$599 - or \$1,499 with the

high-powered computer necessary to make it work. Facebook-owned Oculus began taking orders Wednesday for delivery starting at the end of March.

### SMART HOME

More intelligent home appliances that can tell people how well they're sleeping, order more dishwasher detergent and know how much ketchup is likely left in the bottle were among the gadgets on display at CES.

Segway, the maker of the two-wheel transporters popular with city tour guide companies, hopes that by next year people might add a personal robot to their homes to carry the groceries home.

That's if the milk, butter and bread weren't already ordered and delivered with a touch of a button on a fridge door, a technology unveiled by Samsung and Mastercard.

### KIDS

Companies are hoping new parents in the not-so distant future won't just want to share photos of their new arrival with Grandma. They might also want to presage that with a clip of the baby's heartbeat, while still in the womb.

Familial bonding now comes with plenty of Bluetooth. The newest baby monitors on display this week come equipped with smile detection, in the case of Motorola, or senses and records the baby's breathing with First Alert's One Link system.

Most if not all are sold as consumer devices, steering clear of any medical claims requiring FDA approval. That includes a \$250 sock equipped with a pulse oximetry device from Owlet. It can keep tabs on the child's breathing and heartbeat with the aim of alerting parents via their smart phones if either seems irregular. — AP

## DOES YOUR BATTERY LIFE STINK? TRY HIGH-TECH WORKAROUNDS

**LAS VEGAS:** It's enough to make you want to drop everything and race for the nearest power outlet: Your workday isn't even done, and your smartphone or laptop battery is already in the red zone.

If you're hoping that techno-progress will dispel that depleted feeling, you may be in for a long wait. Battery life is constrained by limitations in chemistry, and improvements aren't keeping pace with demands from modern gadgets.

We're still dependent on the venerable lithium-ion cell, first commercialized by Sony in 1991; it's light, safe and holds a lot of charge relative to most alternatives, but it isn't getting better fast enough to keep up with our growing electronic demands.

So instead, manufacturers are doing their best to "cheat" their way around lithium-ion's limitations. The CES gadget show in Las Vegas this week featured plenty of workarounds that aim to keep your screen lit longer.

Proceed with caution, though: Manufacturer claims of battery life improvement can fall short of real-world experience.

### NEW CHIPS

Not that long ago, computer-chip makers competed to make their chips ever faster and more capable, with power consumption a secondary consideration. But the boom in energy hungry smartphones and laptops means that companies like Intel need to put much more emphasis on power efficiency these days.

Intel says its sixth-generation Core chips, known as Skylake, add a little more than an hour to battery life to laptops compared with the previous generation, according to spokesman Scott Massey. The chips utilize a more compact design, hard-wired functions that used to be run via software and fine-tuning how they ramp power use up and down.

### BETTER-DESIGNED LAPTOPS

Laptop manufacturers are smartly sipping power, too.

HP says the Spectre x360 notebook it introduced in March gains up to 72 minutes

of battery life, for a total of up to 13 hours, thanks in part to Intel's new chip. Among other tricks, the PC doesn't refresh the screen as often if the image isn't moving. "If we can solve a bunch of small problems, they can add up," HP vice president Mike Nash said.

Similarly, Lenovo's new ThinkPad X1 Yoga tablet turns off its touch screen and keyboard backlight if it senses its owner is walking and has the screen folded back like an open book. Vaio, the computer maker formerly owned by Sony, says its Z Canvas launched in the U.S. in October benefits from shrinking components and efficiently distributing heat to make more room for a bigger battery.

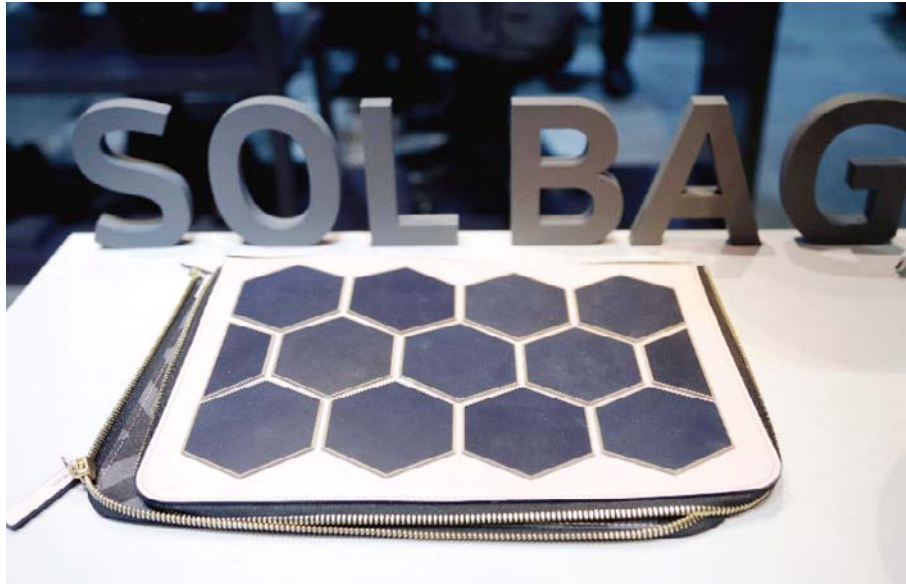
And Dell says it has worked with manufacturers to squeeze more battery capacity into the same space. It says its efforts recently boosted the energy storage of its XPS 13 laptop by 7.7 percent compared to an earlier version of the same model.

### NEW CHARGERS

Maybe it's your phone that's not keeping up. If so, you might check out new accessories designed to make it easier and faster to charge back up.

Kickstarter-funded Ampy uses your body's kinetic energy to charge up a pager-sized device. Strap it to your arm or a belt and it can recharge a smartphone in real time; an hour of jogging or similar exercise yields about an hour of use. You could also just throw it in your bag and get the same extra hour of gadget life after a week of walking around - not an awesome trade off, maybe, but possibly better than nothing.

The wireless-charging technology Qi makes it possible to charge a phone without plugging it in. Instead, you lay it down on a special pad and let electromagnetic field coupling do the work. Wireless charging has always been much slower than wired, although Qi's backers say it's speeding up. But wired charging is getting faster, too, at least for phones with the latest hardware - and with Qi, you still have to line up your device just right on the sometimes fussy pads. — AP



**LAS VEGAS:** The Sol Bag solar power charger and handbag is on display at the Samsung booth during CES International, Friday, in Las Vegas. — AP

## TECH TETHERS DOG LOVERS REMOTELY TO THEIR PETS

**LAS VEGAS:** Gadgets galore are letting dog lovers stay connected to their pets even when they can't take canine companions with them on the go.

A sea of innovations on display at the famously people-centric Consumer Electronics Show on Friday included a wave of technology aimed at those who consider pets cherished family members.

"Everybody loves their pets," said Mike Jander of Trackimo, one of several companies showing off tracking devices that can be affixed to collars and reveal where animals run off to.

A Trackimo clip-on device, which was on display at CES, can send an alert to an owner's smartphone if a dog ventures past a geo-fence-a designated virtual barrier-and then track the pet's whereabouts by satellite, according to Jander.

### 'FITBIT FOR DOGS'

Wondermento, which has offices in the US and Britain, showed off a bow-tie-shaped plastic activity tracker-the Wonderwoof-that chief technology officer Joe Morsman described as "a Fitbit for dogs."

"There are other pet trackers out there, but this is purely about the health," Morsman said of Wonderwoof.

"This is a fun, social way to exercise your dog."

He recounted leaving his dog at a kennel that promised four long walks daily, only to be shown by the device that the pet got only two brief outings a day.

"We now do home stays with other dog owners," Morsman said.

Applications tailored for mobile

devices powered by Apple or Android software come free with the \$95 Wonderwoof bow tie.

The apps let users see if other Wonderwoof-wearing dogs are out and about. Wondermento plans to add features allowing those owners to connect with each other while out.

"We are trying to accentuate the social element of walking your dog," Morsman told AFP.

"Wonderwoof is also very much a talking point; people stop you to ask what it is."

Wondermento describes the doggy device as a "fashion-forward brand with a fun social element."

The company is working on an enhanced indoor version that will use location sensing to let people know if pets are pinning at a door or making unusually frequent trips to water bowls.

The company is also developing an activity tracker for cats.

### 'MASSIVE MARKET'

"There is a huge interest in pet wearables," Morsman told AFP.

"It is a massive market."

People don't want to feel they are abandoning their dogs while off at work, he said, and technology is letting them stay virtually tethered.

A Petcube camera that links to wireless internet in homes lets people not only look in on pets but play with them remotely. Owners can use a smartphone app to make a point of laser light appear and flit about in the house while a cat or dog pursues it. — AFP

## SELF-CLEANING TOILET MAKES SPLASH IN VEGAS

**LAS VEGAS:** The demo high-tech toilets from Japan are unabashedly right in the middle of the floor at the Consumer Electronics Show in

Las Vegas.

While the toilets are not functioning ones, manufacturer Toto is keen to show how its



**LAS VEGAS:** The demo Toto toilet is seen on January 8, 2016 at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, Nevada on January 8, 2016. The demo high-tech toilets from Japanese manufacturer Toto are unabashedly right in the middle of the floor at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. While the toilets are not a functioning ones, the company is keen to show how its "intelligent" washlet system can be good for the environment and improve people's experience in the bathroom. — AFP

"intelligent" washlet system can be good for the environment and improve people's experience in the bathroom. How smart is the toilet?

"You walk up to it and it opens up, and when you leave it closes and flushes automatically," Toto spokeswoman Lenora Campos said. It also eliminates the need for toilet paper.

"It scans and delivers warm aerated water" to the user, she said. "It washes and then dries you. We can be clean without paper products." After usage, the toilet cleans and sanitizes itself with electrolyzed water. And because of its coating of titanium dioxide and zirconium, nothing sticks to the bowl.

That means it can go for a year without cleaning, avoiding the use of environmentally harmful chemicals, Toto says. None of this is new to many Japanese or visitors to the country-Campos said about 70 percent of Japanese homes use this kind of washlet system, but that the idea is gaining ground in other countries. Toto has been selling the Neorest model in the US and Europe and at in Las Vegas introduced a newer version-a wall-hung toilet which takes up less space with its tank and drain in the wall, and is even more water-efficient. This new model is being introduced in Europe this year with plans for the US market in 2017.

One thing that may be hard to digest for users is the price: a list price of \$10,000 for the original Neorest, and possibly more for the new model. Toto USA president William Strang said its customers are the best promoters of the intelligent toilet.

"Once they test-drive this, they don't want to go back," he said. — AFP



## UK HEALTH OFFICIALS CLAIM ALCOHOL LINKED TO CANCER

**LONDON:** British health officials say drinking alcohol regularly increases the risk of cancer. And they've issued tough new guidelines that could prove hard to swallow in a nation where having a pint is a hal- lowed tradition.

Britain's chief medical officer says in recommendations published Friday that men and women should not drink more than 14 units of alcohol - about six pints of beer or four large glasses of wine - per week, and consuming below that amount still carries a low risk of liver disease or cancer.

Alcohol is a known carcinogen. In the United States, experts estimate about 3.5 percent of all cancer deaths are alcohol-related. People who have more than about four drinks daily run up to triple the risk of contracting cancers of the head and neck

than non-drinkers. Here are questions and answers about the British guidelines and their likely effect:

### What's new?

For women, the guidelines remain unchanged, recommending no more than 14 units a week. Men, however, had previously been told they could drink up to 21 units a week. That now drops to the same limit as for women. The original guidance was published in 1995, before many links between alcohol and cancer were detected.

Friday's updated guidance clarifies advice to pregnant women, recommending they avoid alcohol "as a precaution." The recommendations say "the risk of harm to the baby is likely to be low if a woman has drunk only small amounts of alcohol before

she knew she was pregnant or during pregnancy." In the US, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says there is no known safe level of alcohol consumption for women who are trying to get pregnant or already in pregnancy.

### Will Britons go teetotal?

Almost certainly not in a nation known for its ales and its pubs. Lax control of retail sales and cheap alcohol has fueled a rise in binge-drinking, which Prime Minister David Cameron once declared a national scandal. Even the new guidance acknowledges that people are unlikely to give up drinking and does not call for abstinence.

To help Britons avoid binge drinking, the government recommends that people spread their drinking over at least three

days a week. It warns that the risk of cancers of the mouth, throat and breast increases with any amount drunk on a more regular basis. "This is not a crackdown on alcohol," said Dr. Niamh Fitzgerald, a lecturer in alcohol studies at the University of Stirling, who was not involved in drafting the government guidelines. "It is about supporting people to make up their own minds."

### What about the benefits of alcohol?

While some studies suggest that drinking moderate levels of red wine is good for the heart, British officials say that applies only to women over the age of 55, particularly those who drink no more than about two glasses a week. The British report said it "concluded that there is no justification for drinking for health reasons."

### What's the view down at the pub?

"This won't change a thing," said David Evans, an engineer enjoying a pint at a north London pub. He said he regularly exceeds the new limit of about six pints of beer a week in a single day and has no intention of changing his drinking habits. "A lot of people will let their own body tell them what's right and what's wrong," he said. UK Independence Party leader Nigel Farage said the advice was "over the top" and called for a mass protest against such "nannying." "We all know there is a big problem with excessive alcohol consumption in this country," he told LBC radio. "But frankly, if we choose to enjoy a few drinks four or five nights a week after a hard day at work, whether it slightly shortens our lives or not, so what?" — AP



**NEW YORK:** In this photo taken Jan 10, 2014, the United States side of Niagara Falls in New York has begun to thaw after the recent "polar vortex" that affected millions in the US and Canada. — AP

## WINTER'S A WEIRD WEATHER STAGE; HERE'S THE PLAYERS

### CLIMATIC FORCES ELBOW EACH OTHER FOR STARRING ROLES

**WASHINGTON:** Get ready for weather whiplash as powerful climatic forces elbow each other for starring roles in a weird winter show. The spine-chilling polar vortex is taking center stage in Europe and bringing persistent cold to much of North America - except in Hollywood, where soggy El Nino won't give up the spotlight. After El Nino delivered a balmy Christmas Eve to the eastern US and shattered national records with a warm, wet and wild December, Minnesota may host one of the coldest NFL playoff games in history today, with wind chills around 20 below, meteorologists predict.

"The biggest thing is this whiplash," said University of Oklahoma meteorology professor Jason Furtado. "It's going to be a shock for people." The center of the cold blast starts this weekend in the US in the upper Midwest, and then moves to the Hudson Bay area next week, while in Europe it starts in the east and north and then spreads, Furtado said. Europe may have to get used to temperatures 20 or so degrees below normal.

"Temperature will be dominated by the impact of the polar vortex," said Judah Cohen, seasonal forecast chief for the private Atmospheric and Environmental Research company outside Boston. It will feel similar to 2013 and 2014, he said. Americans became painfully familiar with the polar vortex during those winters. This time, America's winter temperatures will

depend on when the wet and warm El Nino pushes itself back to prominence, Furtado said. "We have all of these large and unusual events happening all at the same time and I don't think it has ever happened before," said Rutgers University climate scientist Jennifer Francis. For a winter this dramatic, it may help to consult the program:

### The cast

The star is El Nino, a veteran of this stage for a few decades now. This natural warming of the central tropical Pacific occurs every two to seven years or so, and changes weather worldwide, especially in the Americas and Asia. It is closely associated with heavy rain in California, and general warming. It has less effect in Europe because that's further away. With its flipside, La Nina, it is known as the El Nino Southern Oscillation, and it lasts about a year.

Playing off against El Nino is the Arctic Oscillation, and its index measures the differences in atmospheric pressure between the Arctic and mid-latitudes. When the AO is positive in the winter, polar air stays trapped up north and the weather is relatively mild further south. When the AO is negative, the cold Arctic air escapes and plunges into lower latitudes, treating the United States and Europe to the polar vortex - a swirling air mass that carries spine-chilling temperatures.

The North Atlantic Oscillation is a bit

player with a big influence over Europe's weather. As with its Arctic cousin, the more negative its index, the colder the continent becomes. The jet streams also are important to watch. These rivers of air heavily influence local weather everywhere, carrying storms and clearing skies around the planet. Usually in the winter, the jet stream that affects most people in the United States and Europe moves relatively straight from west to east. But when it weakens, it can plunge south and north and even get stuck at times, creating odd extremes.

Another air pattern playing a small but key role is the Madden-Julian Oscillation, which travels in the warm parts of the Indian and Pacific oceans, and may have triggered changes that "flipped the switch" in December, Furtado said. Still other characters may be a factor in making the jet streams oscillate more wildly: A huge blob of warm water in the northern Pacific, unusually low sea ice levels in the Arctic's Barents Kara sea area; a cool patch of water off Greenland, likely from melting ice sheets and glaciers; winter storm Frank that hit England; and of course man-made climate change.

### Act one

This was last month. El Nino appeared in classic form, tying 1997-1998 for the strongest on record. The Arctic Oscillation was very positive, trapping cold air in northern latitudes. With

so many warm, wet days further south, spring flowers popped up and trees bloomed in December. "It's not surprising we were 70 degrees on Christmas Day," said Mike Halpert of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center in College Park, Maryland. El Nino often spawns winter tornadoes in the southern US and they appeared on cue, killing two dozen people in just four days. The heavy rain that flooded the Mississippi River Valley isn't usually an El Nino signature though, Cohen said.

### Act two

The switch flipped: The Arctic Oscillation and its North Atlantic sidekick went negative big time. "When it's a negative AO, that's when people start mentioning the words 'polar vortex,'" Halpert said. This time, there's cold air, but it's mostly dry so far, despite El Nino, which still spawns a series of rainstorms hitting California. Meteorologists say wetter weather could bring heavy snowstorms, but that's not likely for another week or more, although cities along the Great Lakes may get lake effect snow. So far the east-moving moisture from El Nino is staying south of the Arctic plunge, but that may change. For now, the AO is dominating in its fight with El Nino, especially in Europe, Cohen said. NFL players and fans will likely brave temperatures around one below zero in Minneapolis. — AP

## NEW WAVE IN TECH: HACKING THE BRAIN

**LAS VEGAS:** The next frontier for the tech sector is the human brain. A new breed of neuro-hacker is finding ways to capture and manipulate brainwaves to improve health, with potential to help the severely handicapped. A number of the innovations were on display at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, where computer scientists and biomedical experts showcased ways to tap into and use brain signals.

The "mind control" headband unveiled by startup BrainCo effectively hacks into brain signals with a range of possible applications-from helping to improve attention spans, to detecting disease, controlling smart home appliances or even a prosthetic device. The device "translates your brainwaves into electronic signals," said the Boston-based firm's Zenchuan Lei. At CES, BrainCo demonstrated how a person could use the headband to manipulate a prosthetic hand-a potential life-changer for those paralyzed or missing limbs. "These signals can be used to control objects like a prosthetic hand," Lei said. "You can turn the lights on or off just by focusing on that." The device designed by scientists from Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology employs "neuro feedback," a means of allowing people to control their brain waves for various purposes. It is expected to be sold later this year for less than \$150.

Lei suggested the device could also help people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder because "it teaches you to enhance your focus and concentration." A similar project on display from New York-based OpenBCI (which stands for open-source brain-computer interface) seeks to create a platform for applications of the technology in health care, education or other fields. OpenBCI uses a 3D-printed helmet which captures brainwaves from various sectors of the brain.

### 'Neuro-marketing' potential

"This can be used to help people with ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or Lou Gehrig's disease) or quadriplegics communicate," said OpenBCI chief executive Conor Russomanno. The technology also offers a potential for so-called "neuro-marketing" which tests new products and services on the basis of sensory and cognitive response. South Korean startup Looxid Labs unveiled a headset that tracks both brainwaves and eye movements, claiming this provides more accurate insights into the mind. "No other device that I'm aware of combines these

things," said Looxid chief business officer Alex Chang.

With the headset attached to a computer, "you can roll your eyes to scroll the mouse, and click on a button by blinking," Chang said. The headset is being launched in July as a developer kit, with scope to build applications for controlling physical or virtual objects, communicating, analyzing a user's mood or mental health, or verifying their identity. "We also see this as having potential in gaming because you can control things with your eye," Chang said. "When you concentrate you can stop the bullets." He added that for neuro-marketing applications, "we can show someone an ad and we can see where the eyes are focused. We can scan emotions and understand how someone is responding." Other exhibitors at CES demonstrated wearable devices that block pain signals to the brain, as an alternative to medications with side effects for people who suffer from debilitating pain.

### Meditation aid

The neuro-feedback technique is being applied as a meditation aid by Canadian-based Interaxon and its Muse headband. Muse uses sensors on the forehead and behind the ears to measure brain signals, and advise users how to improve their meditation technique. The coaching app helps people achieve a level of consistency in their meditation efforts.

"It's like going to the gym. The muscle doesn't get stronger unless you do it over and over again. It's the same with your brain," said Muse marketing manager Tracy Newsom-Rosenthal at the CES show. One startup at CES was showcasing a technique to deliver pleasure signals to the brain via music, by triggering the release of neurotransmitters such as dopamine, serotonin and oxytocin.

The hand-held device from Florida-based Nervana allows users to plug in a music player into the \$299 device and get the pleasurable signals delivered by its headphones. "We send a signal into the vagus nerve which produces dopamine, and that relaxes you," CEO Ami Brannon told AFP on the show floor. "Some people describe the sensation as euphoric." But Brannon said the technique "is not really hacking the brain." "We access the central nervous system and it just tickles the nerve to remind the brain to release dopamine," she said. "People who practice yoga or meditation can already do this." — AFP



**LAS VEGAS:** BrainCo CEO Bicheng Han wears the BrainCo Focus 1 to use bio feedback to try concentrate on manipulate a mechanical hand using his brain during a press conference at the CES 2016 Consumer Electronics Show. — AFP

## GREAT WHITE SHARK DIES AFTER DAYS IN AQUARIUM

**TOKYO:** A great white shark which was captured and exhibited in a Japanese aquarium, one of only a few such sharks to ever be displayed in this way, has died

just after three days, the facility said yesterday. The shark, about 3.5 meters in length, was trapped in a fisherman's net and taken to an aquarium on the south-

ern Japanese island of Okinawa on Tuesday. It was exhibited in the Sea of Dangerous Sharks section at Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium, but died on Friday, according to the facility.

The aquarium, popular for its giant tanks where it exhibits whale sharks, said it is investigating what caused the death of the fish-of the same species as that featured in Hollywood buster "Jaws". "It is very difficult to keep great white sharks," said Keiichi Sato, an expert in cartilage fish, of the Okinawa Churashima Foundation.

Two aquariums in the United States, including Monterey Bay Aquarium in California, have had the species in captive for short periods in the past, he said. "It is rare that the kind of shark is spotted in the coastal waters of Okinawa in the first place, and even if they get caught in fishermen's net they usually die immediately because they must keep moving at high speed," Sato said. "We have almost no knowledge about (the great white's) nature, so although it died we would like to share what we learnt from this experience with researchers of the world," he added. — AFP



**OKINAWA:** This handout picture taken by Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium on January 5, 2016 shows a great white shark swimming in a large fish tank of the Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium. — AFP

## TELESCOPE PROTESTER FOUND NOT GUILTY AFTER TRIAL IN HAWAIIAN

**HONOLULU:** A man arrested while blocking telescope construction crews on a Hawaii mountain was acquitted Friday after a trial that was conducted in Hawaiian. Kahookahi Kanuha was among dozens of protesters arrested during attempts to resume construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope on Mauna Kea. One of the reasons protesters oppose the \$1.4 billion project is that many Native Hawaiians consider the mountain sacred.

Kanuha's case had been postponed because he insisted on defending himself in the language he's most comfortable speaking. The trial went forward Friday with a Hawaiian interpreter. Judge Barbara Takase found him not guilty of obstructing. County prosecutors didn't immediately return phone calls seeking comment on the verdict. The prosecution called two witnesses, a state Department of Land and Natural Resources official and the officer who arrested Kanuha. Because Kanuha didn't have an attorney for the case, he cross-examined the witnesses in Hawaiian. The interpreter translated the questions and the witnesses answered in English. Even though Hawaiian is one of the state's official languages, court cases are primarily conducted in English, with interpreters provided for those who speak other languages.

### 'Customary practice'

According to the most recent Census data available for

2009-2013, 5.7 percent of the state's residents spoke Hawaiian at home. Kanuha didn't present any witnesses or evidence in his defense. Instead he gave a speech in Hawaiian describing his reasons for being on the mountain that day in June when construction crews retreated from the mountain after encountering hundreds of protesters and large boulders blocking the road.

"I was there to prevent desecration and it's a traditional and customary practice," he said, describing his testimony. "I recited my genealogy...showing that I do have a genealogical connection to these people and that place. My ancestors recognized and revered this place as someplace sacred." Telescope construction has been on hold since April, when protesters - including Kanuha - were arrested. The state Supreme Court invalidated the project's permit to build on conservation land, ruling in December that the state Board of Land and Natural Resources should not have issued the permit before a hearings officer reviewed a petition by a group challenging the project's approval. The court sent the matter back for a new contested case hearing. Telescope officials haven't indicated whether they will pursue a new hearing. Kanuha has a court hearing later this month for his April arrest. He has an attorney for that case. He said he'll ask his lawyer to have the charge dismissed in light of Friday's verdict. Two other defendants also requested trials in Hawaiian. — AP



# LAST BID TO CONTACT SPACE ROBOT PHILAE

**PARIS:** Scientists initiated Friday a last-chance maneuver to contact a long-silent robot-lab dropped more than a year ago onto the surface of a comet hurtling through our solar system. Part of the European Space Agency's Rosetta mission, the Philae probe has yielded spectacular scientific results-and a few moments of high drama-since its near crash-landing onto comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko in November 2014.

But it has been six months since mission control engineers at the German Aerospace Centre in Darmstadt have been in communication with Philae, and

the odds of reestablishing contact are diminishing fast as the solar-powered probe speeds away from the Sun. "The last clear sign of life was received from Philae on July 9, 2015," the German Space Agency said in a statement. "Since then it has remained silent."

Scientists sent a command to the fridge-sized robot to spin up its flywheel, initially used to stabilize the probe when it landed. The hope is that so doing will "shake dust from its solar panels and better align it with the Sun", explained technical project manager Koen Geurts. It is also possible, however, that the command-routed through the Rosetta space-

craft orbiting the comet-will never even reach Philae.

## 'Desperate move'

Several further attempts will be made, he added. "It's an admittedly desperate move," Philippe Gaudon of the French National Space Agency told AFP. "It is very unlikely the robot will become functional again." Mission managers believe that one of the lander's two radio transmitters, and one of its two receivers, have both failed. Even the remaining ones may not be fully functional.

The window of opportunity for making contact with Philae will close defini-

tively toward the end of January, when the comet and its companion hardware will be some 300 million kilometers from the Sun. That's when the temperature is likely to fall below minus 51 degrees Celsius, the threshold beyond which Philae can no longer operate.

The robot-probe-packed with nearly a dozen instruments-landed on 67P after a 10-year, 6.5-billion-kilometre journey piggybacking on mothership Rosetta. It bounced several times on the craggy surface before ending up at an angle in deep shade, where it sent home some 60 hours of data before going into standby mode on November 15, 2014. The lander's pow-

er pack was recharged as 67P drew closer to the Sun on its elliptical orbit, and Philae woke up on June 13. After that, it made intermittent contact, uploading data, only to fall silent again on July 9.

The ground-breaking mission was conceived to learn more about the origins of life on Earth. Comets are pristine leftovers from the Solar System's formation some 4.6 billion years ago. Many experts believe they smashed into our infant planet, providing it with water and the chemical building blocks for life. Philae has found several organic molecules, including four never before detected on a comet. — AFP



**PANORAMA CITY:** Cars drive on Woodman Avenue along a culvert where rainwater runoff is directed to a leach field on the side of the street. — AP photos

# CALIFORNIA RAINING: FINDING WAYS TO FIGHT DROUGHT

**SAN DIEGO:** Much of the torrential rain that fell on Southern California this week flowed right into the ocean, just like it did before the state's epic drought. That seemed like a good idea for many years, as storm drains provided a crucial defense against flooding. But with California entering what may be a fifth year of drought, water agencies are slowly moving to capture and store more of this precious resource.

"That was the 19th, 20th century thinking: 'Let's get that water out of here as fast as possible,'" said Deborah Bloome, senior director of policy at TreePeople, a nonprofit group that is working to increase rain capture in the Los Angeles area. Now people are more likely to see a rapidly disappearing flood - nearly 3 inches fell on much of Southern California this week - as a wasted opportunity.

The State Water Resources Control Board approved a broad plan Wednesday for capturing more rain. The regulator is launching a road show this month to explain how it will dole out \$200 million for projects to collect rain, part of a \$7.5-billion water bond voters approved in November 2014. The city of Los Angeles expects to collect 3.3 billion more gallons a year from projects now under construction, and eventually plans to capture 20 billion more gallons than the 10 billion it collects during

normal years and up to 26 billion gallons during wet years. Still, many believe more can be done, through projects large and small.

## 'Enormous potential'

"This is a source of water that has been neglected for far too long," said Peter Gleick, president of the Pacific Institute, which authored a 2014 report with the Natural

Resources Defense Council that estimated urban California could capture an additional 630,000 acre feet of rain a year, roughly enough for 1.2 million households. "It is untapped, and it has enormous potential."

Southern California imports a lion's share of its water from Northern California and the Colorado River, on aqueducts that stretch hundreds of miles. The drought has slashed water consumption across the state



**HOLLYWOOD:** Jessica Jewell, a marketing manager for the nonprofit TreePeople, kneels in a sunken "rain garden" in the front yard of a home where rain water captured in a backyard cistern may be released during dry days.

and renewed interest in developing new water sources, like recycling and seawater desalination.

California's rainy season usually runs from January to early March with short but intense storms, creating a limited window. Parched Southern California needs the water most, and has long had reservoirs to capture some of it. But much of the water dumped by El Nino's storms streamed down gutters and curbs through a concrete jungle, into drains that go through treatment plants and finally into the Pacific.

Los Angeles County captured 3.2 billion gallons during this week's storms as of Thursday afternoon, largely through 27 holding ponds, said Steven Frasher, a spokesman for the public works department. Water from the Los Angeles and San Gabriel rivers flowed into fields that percolate into aquifers for future pumping.

The Orange County Water District, which relies on rain capture for about 10 percent of its supplies to 2.4 million people south of Los Angeles, collected about 3.3 billion gallons from this week's storms as of Thursday afternoon. The captured water flows into the Army Corps of Engineers' Prado Dam and is slowly released 11 miles downstream on the Santa Ana River, to ponds that seep into an aquifer. The rest goes into the ocean. — AP

# ICEMAN'S GUT MICROBES SHED LIGHT ON HUMAN MIGRATION

**MIAMI:** The gut microbes of the Iceman, a 5,300-year-old mummy found frozen in a European glacier in 1991, have shed new light on the history of human migration, scientists said Thursday. Researchers thawed the mummy of the man, also known as Otzi, who was killed by an arrow when he was between 40 and 50 years old and hiking across the Otztal Alps between modern-day Italy and Austria.

When they tested the contents of his stomach, they found a bacterium called *Helicobacter pylori*, an age-old pathogen that has evolved into different strains according to the region of the world in which it is found.

About half the people on the planet harbor the bacterium in their stomachs. It can cause ulcers or gastrointestinal distress and is typically spread among children when they play in the dirt. While researchers cannot be sure if the Iceman was sick due to the infec-

tion, they were intrigued by their analysis of the geographic history of the bacterium.

"Surprisingly, a strain of bacterium in his gut shares ancestry with an Asian strain," said the study in the US journal Science. "In contrast to the fact that most modern Europeans harbor a strain ancestral to North African strains." If the stomach contents of the Iceman are a good reflection of Europeans 5,300 years ago, the analysis suggests that African migration had not yet resulted in intermingling with the Asian strain of the bacterium.

"This one genome has put things into wonderful perspective for us," said Yoshan Moodley, a researcher at the University of Venda in South Africa. "We can say now that the waves of migration that brought these African *Helicobacter pylori* into Europe had not occurred or at least not occurred in earnest by the time the Iceman was around." — AFP

# SPACEX TO RETRY OCEAN ROCKET LANDING AFTER SUCCESS ON LAND

**CAPE CANAVERAL:** Technology entrepreneur Elon Musk's SpaceX will attempt to land its next Falcon 9 rocket on a barge in the Pacific Ocean, seeking another milestone a month after landing a booster on the ground in a spaceflight first, the company said on Friday. The Falcon 9 rocket, carrying a NASA ocean-monitoring satellite, is slated to blast off from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California on Jan. 17.

About two minutes after liftoff, the first stage of the rocket will separate, flip around, fire engines to slow its fall, deploy landing legs and attempt to touchdown on a floating landing pad in the Pacific Ocean. SpaceX has tried ocean landings twice without success, but officials are optimistic after the company last month safely returned a Falcon 9 booster to a landing pad at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida.

Accomplishing an ocean landing will give the California-based SpaceX flexibility to recover its boosters from a wider variety of space missions. The firm, owned and operated by Musk, wants to refurbish and refly its rockets, potentially slashing launch costs.

Similar efforts are underway by fellow tech titan Jeff Bezos' rocket

company, Blue Origin, as well as industry stalwart United Launch Alliance, a partnership of Lockheed Martin and Boeing. For now, SpaceX is concentrating on reusing just the first stage of its Falcon rockets, which sell for about \$61 million, the company's website shows.

Of that, only about \$200,000 is for fuel, Musk said at the American Geophysical Union conference in San Francisco last month. "With reusable rockets, we can reduce the cost of access to space by probably two orders of magnitude," or a factor of 100, Musk said at the conference.

SpaceX eventually wants to return the rocket's second-stage for reuse as well. The rocket slated to launch NASA's Jason-3 satellite is an older version of the rocket that flew last month and does not have the power to attempt a touchdown on land, SpaceX said. The booster that landed on Dec. 21 will be test-fired in Florida, but probably not re-flown, Musk told reporters after the landing. He said the company likely would attempt re-launch of another recovered rocket in 2016. SpaceX has more than 60 missions on its schedule, worth about \$8 billion. — Reuters

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Kuwait Times  
248 33 199

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BSK STUDENTS ENJOY  
UNIQUE PRODUCTION  
OF HAMLET

There was great excitement amongst students from The British School of Kuwait (BSK) at the opportunity to be present at the world famous Globe to Globe's showing of William Shakespeare's Hamlet in Kuwait. The production is showing in every country in the world and started more than eighteen months ago in celebration of 400 years since Shakespeare died. With a minimal theatrical set, the multitalented actors took the audience on a journey, performing their roles in the play with passion and flair whilst also playing many different musical instruments. Although a tragedy, the actors managed to make the audience laugh in many places, especially during the performance of The Mousetrap. Many came close to tears during the tragic scenes towards the end.

It was a fantastic show and the students enjoyed it enormously, developing a deeper fascination with Shakespeare and his plays. For some, this was their first Shakespeare play but other BSK students said they had seen a number of Shakespeare plays in London and America. The actors also took part in a Q and A session with the students about what it is like to perform the show throughout the world and performing the same play for two years. Amanda Wilkin, who played Ophelia on the day, said she knows all the female roles and the characters swap roles to keep it interesting. Tom Lawrence, who played two roles in the play, said Shakespeare knew how to entertain people and that even in tragedy there has to be some comic relief. The show will finish in England on 23 April, the day Shakespeare died in 1616, four hundred years ago. The play definitely is the thing the students will remember from this wonderful afternoon in Kuwait.



INDIA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL HOLDS SEVENTH ATHLETIC MEET

The Seventh Athletic Meet of India International School Mangaf (IISM) was held at Fahaheel Sports Club on 21st and 22nd December 2015 with the motto 'Together Every One Achieves More'. The Meet which commenced with the spectacular March Past led by the School Council members followed by the

marching in of the four houses of the school viz. Sarabhai, Shanti Nikethan, Homibhaba, and Nalanda led by the respective house captains and vice captains. The Meet was inaugurated by the school Director, Mr. Malayil Moosa Koya. Various competitions were held on track and field for the students of classes from III to XII. The

speciality of this year's sports meet was that it was conducted class wise with the concept that no child should be denied the opportunity to bring out the innate abilities. The following students were declared individual champions at the end of the second day: Class III- Hadiya, Class IV-Zeefa Azeem and

Shayam, Class V-Aaron John, Class VI-Aliza Abdi and Hesham, Class VII- Assin, Class VIII- Abdul Raheem, Class X- Moumina and Sahad and XI and XII- Fareeda and Zaheer. The excitement reached its pinnacle when the trophies were given away to the first and second place winning houses by the Director

amidst loud cheer and applause. Shanti Niketan House bagged the Championship Trophy with 350 points and Homibhaba house was declared the first runner up with 298 points. Director, Principal and Vice Principals congratulated the winners and all those who toiled hard to make the event a grand success.



KUWAIT: As part of efforts and cooperation between the Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) and the Defense Ministry, a delegation consisting of officers who joined a special course on weapons of mass destruction made a field visit to Mubarak Al-Kabeer hazardous material center. The visit included a lecture on how to identify hazardous material, their type and identification. —By Hanan Al-Saadoun

IKFS POSTPONES  
COMPETITIONS IN PUBLIC  
SPEECH, CALLIGRAPHY TO  
15TH APRIL 2016

Indo-Kuwait Friendship Society (IKFS) Secretary K Natarajan said in a press release that the competitions in public speech, calligraphy for the students of 10th, 11th and 12th classes have been postponed to 15th April 2016 due to 2nd semester exam for student participants instead of 8th Jan 2016. The last date of registration is set on 31st March 2016. Students are requested to register thru email with the consent of their parents. Attention: Program Convener, ikfsociety@gmail.com (www.indo-kwtfriendshipsociety.com)





# RED CRESCENT'S WORK IN LEBANON 'UNDENIABLE'

As it celebrates its 50th anniversary today, the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) continues to provide relief assistance to the needy and misfortunate around the globe. In Lebanon, KRCS's humanitarian efforts had been ongoing since the Israeli aggression on the country in 2006 and continued with the advent of the Syrian conflict which began in 2011. Speaking to KUNA on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the society, head of volun-

teering department at KRCS Dr Musa'ad Al-Enizi said that under the guidelines set by the Kuwaiti leadership, the society had been able to help the needy in Lebanon. Thousands of Lebanese and Syrians affected by numerous conflicts throughout the years had been able to benefit from KRCS humanitarian work, affirmed Enizi, noting that relief aid consisted of foodstuff, handouts, necessities, generous sums of money, and various

projects aimed at decreasing the suffering of the impoverished. Gratitude was also reflected by statements on part of Lebanon officials who affirmed that KRCS had been playing a pivotal role in helping people in the country. Minister of Social Affairs Rashid Derrbas said that the generosity extended by the people of Kuwait through the KRCS and other humanitarian and charitable authorities is evident of the GCC country's strong conviction to help others.

The relief aid extended to the Syrian refugees during their plight is also another indication of Kuwait's generous helping hand, said the Minister. General Secretary of the Lebanese Red Cross Society George Kettaneh also reflected similar notions of gratitude towards Kuwait and the KRCS. He thanked Kuwait's Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for providing his direction to help the

needy around the global and especially in the Arab region, affirming that such gesture was not unfamiliar from the generous Arab leader. He also commended the existing cooperation between KRCS and the Lebanese Red Cross, affirming that the two humanitarian organizations have been cooperation together on numerous occasions to help both the Lebanese and other individuals from various nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. —KUNA







00:20 Superhuman Science  
00:45 You Have Been Warned  
06:00 Ice Cold Gold  
06:50 Wheeler Dealers  
07:40 Fast N' Loud  
08:30 Auction Hunters  
08:55 The Liquidator  
09:20 Storage Wars Canada  
09:45 What Happened Next?  
10:10 How It's Made  
10:35 Alaskan Bush People  
11:25 Alaska: The Last Frontier  
12:15 Railroad Alaska  
13:05 Auction Hunters  
13:30 The Liquidator  
13:55 Storage Wars Canada  
14:20 Ice Cold Gold  
15:10 Wheeler Dealers  
16:00 Fast N' Loud  
16:50 What Happened Next?  
17:15 How It's Made  
17:40 Street Outlaws  
18:30 Engine Addict With Jimmy De Ville  
19:20 Manhunt With Joel Lambert  
20:10 The Liquidator  
20:35 Storage Wars Canada  
21:00 Impossible Engineering  
21:50 Impossible Engineering  
22:40 Wheeler Dealers: Trading Up  
23:30 Wheeler Dealers



00:35 NASA's Unexplained Files  
01:20 How The Universe Works  
03:42 Mythbusters  
07:37 How Do They Do It?  
08:23 Food Factory  
12:08 How It's Made  
15:57 How Do They Do It?  
16:44 Mighty Ships  
17:31 Food Factory  
18:18 Strip The Cosmos  
19:05 How The Universe Works  
19:50 NASA's Unexplained Files  
21:25 How The Universe Works  
23:45 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?



00:40 Missing In Maui: A Disappeared Special  
01:30 Deadly Sins  
02:20 Deadly Devotion  
03:10 Swamp Murders  
04:00 Deadly Women  
04:45 Missing In Maui: A Disappeared Special  
05:30 Deadly Sins  
06:20 The Will  
07:10 The Will  
08:00 Fatal Encounters  
08:50 Disappeared  
09:40 Disappeared  
10:30 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones  
11:20 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones  
12:10 The Will  
13:00 The Will  
13:50 California Investigator  
14:15 California Investigator  
14:40 Dr G: Medical Examiner  
15:30 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones  
16:20 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones  
17:10 Disappeared  
18:00 Disappeared  
19:15 California Investigator  
19:40 I Almost Got Away With It  
20:30 I Almost Got Away With It  
21:20 I Almost Got Away With It  
22:10 I Almost Got Away With It  
23:00 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones  
23:50 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall



00:00 Violetta  
00:45 The Hive  
00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
01:40 Wolfblood  
02:05 Wolfblood  
02:30 Violetta  
03:15 The Hive  
03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
03:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
04:10 Wolfblood  
04:35 Wolfblood  
05:00 Violetta  
05:45 The Hive  
05:50 Mouk  
06:00 Lolirock  
06:25 Hank Zipzer  
06:50 Girl Meets World  
07:15 H2O: Just Add Water  
07:40 Wizards Of Waverly Place  
08:30 Wizards Of Waverly Place

08:30 Wizards Of Waverly Place  
09:45 I Love Violette  
10:00 Best Friends Whenever  
10:25 Disney's Descendants  
12:20 Liv And Maddie  
17:50 Cloud 9  
19:30 Gravity Falls  
19:55 Dog With A Blog  
20:20 Mako Mermaids  
20:45 Good Luck Charlie  
21:10 Good Luck Charlie  
21:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place  
22:00 Binny And The Ghost  
22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
23:10 Wolfblood  
23:35 Wolfblood



00:00 New Money  
00:30 Fashion Bloggers  
00:55 Fashion Bloggers  
01:25 Stewarts And Hamiltons  
02:20 E! News  
03:15 Eric And Jessie: Game On  
03:40 Eric And Jessie: Game On  
04:10 E! Entertainment Special  
05:05 E! Entertainment Special  
06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
07:50 Style Star  
08:20 E! News  
09:15 House Of DVF  
10:15 House Of DVF  
11:10 Fashion Bloggers  
11:35 Fashion Bloggers  
12:05 E! News  
13:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
15:00 Dash Dolls  
16:00 Christina Milian Turned Up  
17:00 New Money  
17:30 New Money  
18:00 E! News  
19:00 Fashion Bloggers  
19:30 Fashion Bloggers  
20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
21:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
22:00 Christina Milian Turned Up  
23:00 Dash Dolls



00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
01:00 Chopped  
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
03:00 Man v Food  
03:30 Man v Food  
04:00 Food Court Wars  
05:00 Chopped  
06:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
06:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
07:00 Man Fire Food  
07:30 Man Fire Food  
08:00 Chopped  
09:00 Amazing Wedding Cakes  
10:00 The Kitchen  
11:00 The Kitchen  
12:00 Chopped  
13:00 Guy's Big Bite  
13:30 Guy's Big Bite  
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
15:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
15:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
16:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
16:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
17:00 Chopped  
18:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts  
18:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts  
19:00 Siba's Table  
19:30 Siba's Table  
20:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers  
20:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers  
21:00 Chopped South Africa  
22:00 Australian Food Adventures With Matt Moran  
23:00 The Freshman Class  
23:30 The Freshman Class



00:20 Pick Me!  
01:10 Pick Me!  
02:00 Coronation Street  
02:30 Coronation Street  
03:00 Coronation Street  
03:25 The Chase: Celebrity Specials  
04:15 The Jonathan Ross Show  
05:05 Murdoch Mysteries  
05:55 Murdoch Mysteries  
06:50 Vera  
08:40 Safe House  
09:35 Churchill's Secret  
11:20 The Jonathan Ross Show  
12:15 Grantchester  
13:10 Murdoch Mysteries  
14:05 Murdoch Mysteries  
15:00 The Syndicate  
15:55 Midsomer Murders

17:40 The Chase: Celebrity Specials  
18:35 Coach Trip  
19:00 The Syndicate  
19:55 Midsomer Murders  
21:45 Safe House  
22:45 Coronation Street  
23:15 Paddock To Plate



00:30 Cristela  
01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore  
01:30 Saturday Night Live  
02:30 The Big C  
03:00 The Muppets  
04:00 Men At Work  
04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
05:30 Young & Hungry  
06:30 Tili Death  
06:30 New Girl  
07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
08:00 Men At Work  
08:30 Young & Hungry  
09:30 Mr. Robinson  
10:30 New Girl  
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
12:00 Tili Death  
12:30 Men At Work  
13:00 Young & Hungry  
13:30 New Girl  
14:30 Mr. Robinson  
15:30 Cristela  
16:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore  
16:30 Tili Death  
17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
18:00 Last Man Standing  
18:30 The Goldbergs  
19:00 Grandfathered  
20:00 Bad Judge  
20:30 Weird Loners  
21:00 Cristela  
21:30 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore  
22:00 Married  
23:00 The Big C  
23:30 Bad Judge



00:00 Defiance  
01:00 Heroes Reborn  
02:00 The Blacklist  
03:00 Minority Report  
04:00 Stitches  
05:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
06:00 Covert Affairs  
07:00 Switched At Birth  
08:00 Odyssey  
09:00 Stitches  
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 Covert Affairs  
16:00 Live Good Morning America  
17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
18:00 Odyssey  
19:00 Heroes Reborn  
20:00 The Blacklist  
21:00 Scandal  
22:00 How To Get Away With Murder  
23:00 Show Me A Hero



00:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
01:00 Chicago Fire  
02:00 Good Morning America  
03:00 Mistresses  
04:00 Grimm  
05:00 Chicago Fire  
06:00 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 Street  
11:00 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



00:00 Biker Boyz  
02:00 The Exorcism Of Emily Rose  
04:00 The Italian Job (2003)  
08:00 The Prince  
08:00 G.I. Joe: The Rise Of Cobra  
10:00 Don't Look Back  
11:45 The Perfect Storm  
14:00 Age Of Dinosaurs  
16:00 G.I. Joe: The Rise Of Cobra  
18:00 Don't Look Back

19:45 The Hulk  
22:15 Hummingbird



00:00 The Exorcism Of Emily Rose-18  
02:00 The Italian Job (2003)-PG15  
04:00 The Prince-PG15  
06:00 G.I. Joe: The Rise Of Cobra-PG15  
08:00 Don't Look Back-PG15  
09:45 The Perfect Storm-PG15  
12:00 Age Of Dinosaurs-PG15  
14:00 G.I. Joe: The Rise Of Cobra  
16:00 Don't Look Back-PG15  
17:45 The Hulk-PG15  
20:15 Hummingbird-PG15  
22:00 Hammer Of The Gods-18



00:00 Mystery Men  
02:15 Date Night  
04:00 You Again  
06:00 Happy Gilmore  
08:00 How To Lose A Guy In 10 Days  
10:00 You Again  
12:00 No Clue  
14:00 Down To Earth  
16:00 How To Lose A Guy In 10 Days  
18:00 Cuban Fury  
20:00 Save The Date  
22:00 Tim And Eric's Billion Dollar Movie



01:15 Testament Of Youth-PG15  
03:30 A Walk Among The Tombstones-PG15  
05:30 The Fold-PG15  
07:00 I'll Follow You Down-PG15  
09:00 Won't Back Down-PG15  
11:15 The Fold-PG15  
13:00 The Dependables-PG15  
15:00 Sunshine On Leith-PG15  
17:00 Won't Back Down-PG15  
19:00 The Double-PG15  
21:00 Trespass-PG15  
23:00 Clouds Of Sils Maria-18



01:30 The Nightmare Before Christmas  
03:00 Siberian Education  
05:00 Late Bloomers  
06:45 The Butler  
09:00 Jack And The Cuckoo Clock Heart  
11:00 Late Bloomers  
13:00 The Dangleing Limited  
15:00 The Invisible Woman  
17:00 Jack And The Cuckoo Clock Heart  
19:00 A Beautiful Mind  
21:15 At Any Price  
23:00 Waking The Dead



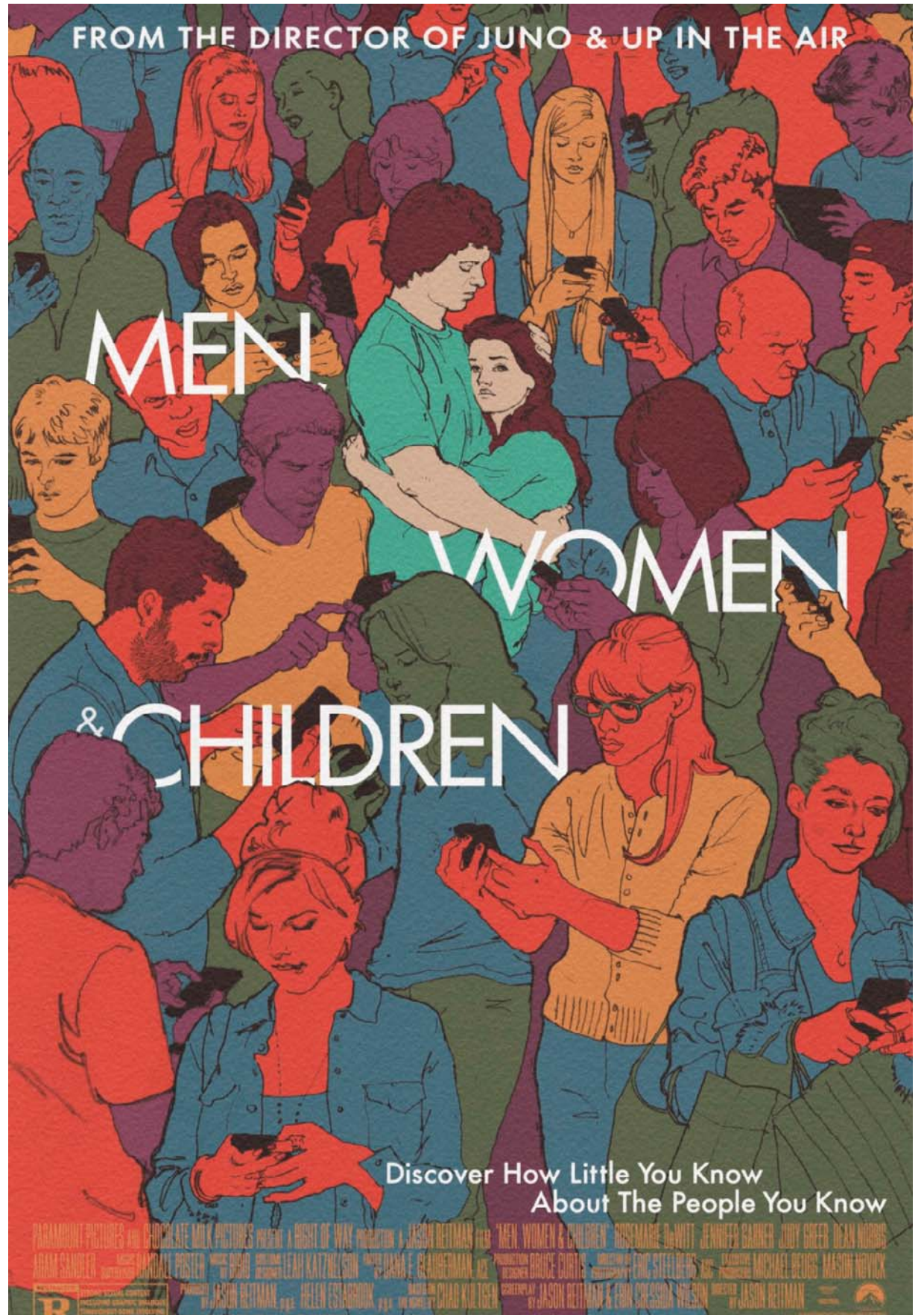
01:00 What If-PG15  
03:00 Tammy-PG15  
05:00 Barefoot-PG15  
06:45 Miss Julie-PG15  
09:00 Night At The Museum: Secret Of The Tomb-PG  
11:00 Quartet-PG15  
13:00 Forget And Forgive-PG15  
15:00 Penthouse North-PG15  
17:00 Night At The Museum: Secret Of The Tomb-PG  
19:00 Edge Of Tomorrow-PG15  
21:00 Persecuted-PG15  
23:00 Men, Women & Children-18



01:00 Blackie And Kanuto  
02:30 Charlie And The Chocolate Factory  
04:30 Egon And Donci  
06:00 Moomins And The Comet Chase  
07:30 Back To The Sea  
09:30 Krazzy Planet  
10:45 Justin And The Knights Of The Valour  
12:30 Charlie And The Chocolate Factory  
14:30 Christmas Is Here Again  
16:00 Daddy I'm A Zombie  
18:00 Krazzy Planet  
20:00 Ghatotkach - Master Of Magic  
22:00 Christmas Is Here Again  
23:30 Daddy I'm A Zombie



00:00 Dragonheart 3: The Sorcerer's Curse-PG15  
02:00 The Single Moms Club  
04:00 Guardians Of The Galaxy-



## MEN, WOMEN &amp; CHILDREN ON OSN MOVIES HD

PG15 Justice League: War-PG15  
06:15 The Hundred-Foot Journey-PG15  
08:00 Oggy & The Cockroaches: The Movie-PG  
10:15 Guardians Of The Galaxy-PG15  
12:00 Northpole-PG  
14:00 The Drop-PG15  
15:45 St. Vincent-PG15  
22:00 The Gambler-18



00:25 Shadows On The Wall  
02:00 Kuffs  
03:40 American Psycho 2  
05:10 Eight Men Out  
07:10 The Sharkfighters  
08:25 Brannigan  
10:15 Seven Years In Tibet  
12:30 Lords Of Dogtown  
14:10 Duplex  
15:40 Futureworld  
17:25 Eight Men Out  
19:25 Earthbound  
21:00 Desperately Seeking Susan  
22:45 Kuffs



00:20 Snake Sheila  
00:50 Gator Boys  
01:45 Lion Man: One World African  
Safari

03:10 Lion Man: One World African  
Safari  
03:35 Safari Sisters  
04:00 Safari Sisters  
04:25 Secret Creatures Of Jao  
04:50 Secret Creatures Of Jao  
05:15 Into The Dragon's Lair  
06:02 The Lion Man  
06:26 The Lion Man  
06:49 Wild Things With Dominic Monaghan  
07:36 Call Of The Wildman  
08:00 Call Of The Wildman  
08:25 Bondi Vet  
09:15 Africa's Trees Of Life  
10:10 Dog Rescuers  
11:05 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet  
12:00 River Monsters  
12:55 Snake Sheila  
13:20 Snake Sheila  
13:50 Bahama Blue  
14:45 Wild Iberia  
15:40 North America  
16:35 Deadly Islands  
17:30 Wildest Africa  
18:25 Wild Things With Dominic Monaghan  
19:20 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet  
20:15 Africa's Trees Of Life  
21:10 Dog Rescuers  
22:05 River Monsters  
23:00 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet  
23:55 Snake Sheila



00:15 Dara O Brain: This Is The Show  
01:05 Doctor Who  
01:50 Alan Carr: Chatty Man  
02:35 Sean Lock Live  
03:30 Last Of The Summer Wine  
04:00 Last Of The Summer Wine  
04:30 Last Of The Summer Wine  
05:00 Teletubbies  
05:25 The Green Balloon Club  
05:50 Nina And The Neurons: In The Lab  
06:05 Nuzzle & Scratch: Frock n Roll  
06:25 Nuzzle & Scratch: Frock n Roll  
06:45 Doctors  
07:15 Doctors  
07:45 Doctors  
08:15 Doctors  
08:45 Eastenders  
09:15 Eastenders  
09:45 Eastenders  
10:15 Eastenders  
10:45 The Weakest Link  
11:30 Doctor Who  
12:15 Last Of The Summer Wine  
12:45 Last Of The Summer Wine  
13:15 The Weakest Link  
14:00 Doctor Who  
14:50 Daddy Daycare  
15:35 Tough Guy Or Chicken?  
16:25 Pride And Prejudice  
17:20 Pride And Prejudice  
18:15 Pride And Prejudice  
19:10 Call The Midwife  
20:00 Crime And Punishment  
21:30 Spooks  
22:25 Spooks  
23:15 Crime And Punishment

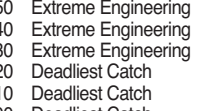


00:00 Deadly Wives  
01:00 The Haunting Of...  
02:00 Jack The Ripper  
03:00 Deadly Wives  
04:00 Deadly Wives  
05:00 The Haunting Of...  
06:00 O.J. Speaks: The Hidden Tapes  
08:00 After The First 48  
09:00 After The First 48  
10:00 The FBI Files

11:00 The FBI Files  
12:00 Campus Nightmares  
13:00 Campus Nightmares  
14:00 Campus Nightmares  
15:00 Crimes That Shook Britain  
16:00 Crimes That Shook Britain  
17:00 Crimes That Shook Britain  
18:00 Crimes That Shook Britain  
19:00 Crimes That Shook Britain  
20:00 Forensic Squad  
21:00 Forensic Squad  
22:00 Forensic Squad  
23:00 Jack The Ripper



01:05 Origins  
01:30 I Shouldn't Be Alive  
02:20 I Shouldn't Be Alive  
03:05 Treasure Quest  
03:50 Treasure Quest  
04:35 Treasure Quest  
05:20 Treasure Quest  
06:05 Treasure Quest  
06:50 Deadliest Catch  
07:35 The Aviators  
08:00 In The Footsteps Of Thesiger  
08:50 The Rise And Fall Of The Japanese Empire  
09:40 Scandals Of Ancient Egypt  
10:30 Who Was Moses?  
11:20 Collapse: When Structures Fail  
12:10 Extreme Engineering  
13:00 Extreme Engineering  
13:50 Extreme Engineering  
14:40 Extreme Engineering  
15:30 Extreme Engineering  
16:20 Deadliest Catch  
17:10 Deadliest Catch  
18:00 Deadliest Catch  
18:50 Deadliest Catch  
19:40 Gunslingers  
20:30 Animal Gladiators  
22:10 Gold Fever  
23:00 Animal Gladiators



00:00 Programmes Start At 7:00am KSA  
07:00 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero  
07:25 Boyster  
07:50 Supa Strikas  
08:15 Lab Rats  
08:40 K. C. Undercover  
09:10 Star vs The Forces Of Evil  
09:35 Kirby Buckets  
10:00 Lab Rats  
10:25 Kickin' It  
10:50 Mighty Med  
11:20 Supa Strikas  
11:45 K. C. Undercover  
12:10 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero  
12:35 Annedroids  
13:00 Lab Rats  
13:30 Lab Rats  
13:55 Lab Rats  
14:20 Lab Rats  
14:45 Lab Rats  
15:15 Lab Rats  
15:40 Lab Rats  
16:05 Lab Rats  
16:30 Lab Rats  
16:55 Lab Rats: Bionic Island  
17:25 K. C. Undercover  
17:50 Supa Strikas  
18:15 Lab Rats  
18:40 Mighty Med  
19:10 Annedroids  
19:35 Kickin' It  
20:00 K. C. Undercover  
20:25 Supa Strikas  
20:55 Lab Rats  
21:20 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything  
21:45 Kickin' It  
22:10 Phineas And Ferb  
22:40 Super Matrak  
23:05 Super Matrak  
23:30 Boyster



00:05 Henry Hugglemonster  
00:20 Calimero  
00:35 Zou  
00:50 Loopdidoo  
01:05 Art Attack  
01:30 Henry Hugglemonster  
01:45 Calimero  
02:00 Zou  
02:15 Loopdidoo  
02:30 Art Attack  
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster  
03:00 Calimero  
03:20 Zou  
03:30 Loopdidoo  
03:45 Art Attack  
04:10 Henry Hugglemonster  
04:20 Calimero  
04:35 Zou  
04:45 Loopdidoo  
05:00 Art Attack  
05:25 Henry Hugglemonster  
05:35 Calimero  
05:50 Zou  
06:00 Loopdidoo  
06:15 Art Attack  
06:35 Henry Hugglemonster  
06:50 Calimero  
07:00 Zou  
07:20 Loopdidoo  
07:35 Art Attack  
08:00 Calimero  
08:10 Zou  
08:25 Loopdidoo  
08:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
09:05 Sofia The First  
09:30 Miles From Tomorrow  
09:55 The Hive  
10:05 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
10:35 Doc McStuffins



G.I. JOE: THE RISE OF COBRA ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD



# CLASSIFIEDS



THE FIRST STEP TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE




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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (07/01/2016 TO 13/01/2016)				
				
<b>SHARQIA-1</b> DADDY'S HOME APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film DADDY'S HOME DILWALE - Hindi DILWALE - Hindi DADDY'S HOME	12:00 PM 2:00 PM 4:00 PM 6:00 PM 9:00 PM 12:05 AM	PAPARAZZI - Arabic PAPARAZZI - Arabic PAPARAZZI - Arabic	7:30 PM 9:45 PM 12:05 AM	Special Show "STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS" Special Show "THE BIG SHORT" DILWALE - Hindi DADDY'S HOME
<b>SHARQIA-2</b> THE REVENANT APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film THE REVENANT THE REVENANT THE REVENANT THE REVENANT THE REVENANT	12:15 PM 1:30 PM 3:15 PM 6:15 PM 9:15 PM 12:15 AM	<b>FANAR-4</b> THE REVENANT APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film THE REVENANT THE REVENANT THE REVENANT THE REVENANT	12:15 PM 1:30 PM 3:15 PM 6:15 PM 9:15 PM 12:15 AM	<b>360° 1</b> THE REVENANT THE REVENANT THE REVENANT THE REVENANT THE REVENANT
<b>SHARQIA-3</b> THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD PAPARAZZI - Arabic PAPARAZZI - Arabic THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	11:30 AM 1:15 PM 3:00 PM 4:45 PM 6:30 PM 8:45 PM 11:00 PM 12:45 AM	<b>FANAR-5</b> DILWALE - Hindi DILWALE - Hindi WAZIR - Hindi DILWALE - Hindi DILWALE - Hindi	12:00 PM 3:00 PM 6:00 PM 8:30 PM 11:30 PM	<b>360° 2</b> THE REVENANT THE REVENANT THE REVENANT THE REVENANT
<b>MUHALAB-1</b> DADDY'S HOME DADDY'S HOME EXTRACTION DADDY'S HOME DILWALE - Hindi DADDY'S HOME EXTRACTION	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 3:30 PM 5:30 PM 7:30 PM 10:30 PM 12:30 AM	<b>MARINA-1</b> THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD PAPARAZZI - Arabic PAPARAZZI - Arabic THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	11:45 AM 1:45 PM 3:45 PM 6:15 PM 8:15 PM 10:15 PM 1:15 AM	<b>360° 3</b> EXTRACTION SNOWTIME! EXTRACTION EXTRACTION EXTRACTION EXTRACTION
<b>MUHALAB-2</b> THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD WAZIR - Hindi PAPARAZZI - Arabic PAPARAZZI - Arabic PAPARAZZI - Arabic THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	11:45 AM 1:30 PM 3:15 PM 5:30 PM 7:45 PM 10:00 PM 12:15 AM	<b>MARINA-2</b> DADDY'S HOME DADDY'S HOME POINT BREAK DADDY'S HOME EXTRACTION EXTRACTION	11:45 AM 1:45 PM 3:45 PM 6:15 PM 8:15 PM 10:15 PM 1:15 AM	<b>AL-KOUT.1</b> THE REVENANT THE REVENANT THE REVENANT THE REVENANT
<b>MUHALAB-3</b> THE REVENANT THE REVENANT THE REVENANT THE REVENANT THE REVENANT	11:30 AM 2:30 PM 5:30 PM 8:30 PM 11:30 PM	<b>MARINA-3</b> THE REVENANT THE GOOD DINOSAUR THE GOOD DINOSAUR THE REVENANT THE REVENANT THE REVENANT	12:30 PM 1:30 PM 3:30 PM 5:45 PM 8:45 PM 11:45 PM	<b>AL-KOUT.2</b> DADDY'S HOME EXTRACTION DADDY'S HOME DADDY'S HOME DADDY'S HOME EXTRACTION EXTRACTION
<b>FANAR-1</b> DADDY'S HOME DADDY'S HOME THE PEANUTS MOVIE DADDY'S HOME FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS DADDY'S HOME THE REVENANT	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 3:30 PM 5:30 PM 7:30 PM 9:45 PM 11:45 PM	<b>AVENUES-1</b> GET SQUIRRELY GET SQUIRRELY GET SQUIRRELY APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film	12:30 PM 2:45 PM 5:00 PM 7:15 PM 9:15 PM 11:15 PM 1:15 AM	<b>AL-KOUT.3</b> FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS PAPARAZZI - Arabic PAPARAZZI - Arabic PAPARAZZI - Arabic FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS
<b>FANAR-2</b> THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD EXTRACTION THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD EXTRACTION THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD	12:30 PM 2:30 PM 4:30 PM 6:30 PM 8:30 PM 10:30 PM 12:30 AM	<b>AVENUES-2</b> EXTRACTION EXTRACTION EXTRACTION CHARLIE - Malayalam EXTRACTION EXTRACTION	1:00 PM 3:15 PM 5:30 PM 7:45 PM 10:30 PM 12:45 AM	<b>BAIRAQ-1</b> THE REVENANT SNOWTIME! THE REVENANT THE REVENANT THE REVENANT THE REVENANT
<b>FANAR-3</b> APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film PAPARAZZI - Arabic APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film	11:45 AM 1:45 PM 3:30 PM 5:45 PM	<b>AVENUES-3</b> DILWALE - Hindi DILWALE - Hindi DILWALE - Hindi DILWALE - Hindi DILWALE - Hindi	11:30 AM 2:30 PM 5:45 PM 9:00 PM 12:15 AM	<b>BAIRAQ-2</b> EXTRACTION THE PEANUTS MOVIE DADDY'S HOME THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD DADDY'S HOME

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation available for a decent non-smoking bachelor/ working lady/ couple with a couple in 2 BR C-AC in Abbassiya near Integrated school. Contact: 66005134. **(C 5111) 10-1-2016**

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**

EMERGENCY 112

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	05:20
Shorook	06:44
Duhr:	11:55
Asr:	14:48
Maghrib:	17:07
Isha:	18:29

MANUFACTURING CO. IN  
AMGHARA INDUSTRIAL AREA  
**REQUIRES**

- ELECTRICAL TECHNICIANS -3
- MECHANICAL TECHNICIANS -2

**REQUIRED SKILLS & EXPERIENCE**

- Experience in Maintenance of Industrial machines for carton manufacturing company
- Candidate will be responsible for the maintenance of the semi-automated & automated production line machines.
- Languages: English/ Arabic
- Visa: Article 18

Send Your CV To Email:

**claudio@kuwaitboxes.com**  
**info@kuwaitboxes.com**  
Mob: +965 99691054

**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



POSITION	REQUIREMENT
• ASST SALES MANAGER	<b>4</b>
• SALES MANAGER	<b>2</b>
• MERCHANDISERS/PROMOTER	<b>6</b>
• AC INSTALLATION & TECHNICIANS	<b>3</b>
• ASST SALES MANAGER (LUGGAGE)	<b>2</b>

**TRANSFERABLE VISA and DRIVING LICENSE is a MUST**

ADDRESS

**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**  
Email: sefeena.kuwait@gmail.com

**REQUIRED**  
*For ladies salon in Salmiya*

- 1) Cleaner (lady)
- 2) Hairdresser / Beautician
- 3) Marketing Lady
- 4) Office Assistant (lady)

Call: 66733222 / 66711141  
Email: lafemkwt@gmail.com

Flight Schedule				
Arrival Flights on Sunday 10/1/2016				
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	
MSC	415	Sohag	00:05	AXB 393
JZR	239	Amman	00:25	SVA 500
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	KAC 284
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	KAC 672
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55	KAC 788
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	GFA 221
THY	772	Addis Ababa/Riyadh	01:05	KNE 472
DLH	3402	Doha	01:30	OMA 645
ETH	635	Addis Ababa	01:45	KAC 562
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	ABY 127
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:25	UAE 857
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	QTR 1072
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	JZR 535
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	FDB 787
FDB	067	Dubai	03:05	ETD 303
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	RJA 640
CEB	7694	Manila	03:15	KAC 542
QTR	1076	Doha	03:15	SVA 510
KKK	6507	Istanbul	03:15	GFA 215
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:25	MSR 614
KAC	544	Cairo	03:35	KAC 678
LMU	510	Cairo	04:05	JZR 777
PGT	860	Istanbul	04:15	KAC 875
PGT	5620	Istanbul	04:35	UAE 502
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:40	FDB 063
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	KAC 982
QTR	8511	Doha	06:10	JZR 177
FDB	5061	Dubai	06:30	KAC 786
BAW	157	London	06:40	ABY 123
KAC	412	Manila/Bangkok	07:20	QTR 1080
FDB	053	Dubai	07:25	KAC 742
QTR	1086	Doha	07:40	KAC 774
SVA	512	Riyadh	07:50	166
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50	GFA 217
OMA	641	Muscat	08:00	JZR 483
KAC	354	BLR	08:15	KAC 618
KAC	206	Islamabad	08:25	KAC 674
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	08:30	FDB 101
KAC	352	Kochi	08:30	OMA 647
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	MSR 606
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:50	FDB 5053
KAC	362	Colombo	08:50	JAI 572
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	DLH 634
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:20	MEA 402
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25	ETD 307
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ALK 229
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:40	UAE 859
IRC	528	Ahwaz	10:00	GFA 219
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	JZR 125
UAE	873	Dubai	11:05	QTR 1082
SYR	341	Damascus	11:25	KLM 417
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	AIC 981
AGY	682	Asyut	11:40	ETD 309
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	FDB 059
SAW	701	Damascus	12:20	KAC 172
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25	MSC 501
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	JZR 239
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	JZR 185
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	UAL 981
JZR	175	Dubai	13:00	PIA 205
KAC	382	Delhi	13:50	FDB 071
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	THY 764
FDB	057	Dubai	14:10	JAI 574

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				
Departure Flights on Sunday 10/1/2016				
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	
AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05	AGY 683
FDB	072	Dubai	00:40	MEA 405
MSC	404	Asyut	00:55	KAC 785
JAI	573	Mumbai	00:55	JZR 786
MSC	416	Sohag	01:00	FDB 076
UAL	981	IAD	01:10	KAC 791
KAC	283	Dhaka	02:10	SAW 702
THY	773	Istanbul	02:30	JZR 176
DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:35	MSR 611
ETH	621	Addis Ababa	02:45	UAE 872
KAC	3403	Addis Ababa	03:05	KAC 673
KAC	381	Delhi	03:30	FDB 058
UAE	854	Dubai	03:45	QTR 1079
PGT	859	Istanbul	03:55	AXB 394
OMA	644	Muscat	03:55	SVA 503
FDB	068	Dubai	04:00	GFA 222
MSR	613	Cairo	04:10	KAC 617
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:15	KAC 773
KKK	6508	Istanbul	04:20	KAC 741
LMU	511	Cairo	04:55	KNE 473
THY	765	Istanbul	05:15	ABY 128
CEB	7695	Manila	05:20	OMA 646
JZR	560	Sohag	06:10	JZR 266
PGT	5621	Istanbul	06:25	JZR 238
FDB	070	Dubai	06:30	ETD 304
JZR	164	Dubai	06:55	FDB 052
RJA	643	Amman	07:05	QTR 1073
THY	771	Istanbul	07:05	JZR 538
FDB	5062	Dubai	07:10	UAE 858
GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15	RJA 641
QTR	8512	Doha	07:40	SVA 511
FDB	054	Dubai	08:10	GFA 216
JZR	174	Dubai	08:25	JZR 184
QTR	1087	Doha	08:40	MSR 615
BAW	156	London	08:45	JZR 124
SVA	513	Riyadh	08:50	FDB 064
OMA	642	Muscat	08:55	ABY 124
JZR	171	Frankfurt	09:05	UAE 876
Cairo	534	Cairo	09:15	UAL 218
Jeddah	787	Jeddah	09:25	GFA 982
Sharjah	126	Sharjah	09:40	KAC 361
Cairo	541	Cairo	09:55	QTR 1081
Dubai	856	Dubai	09:55	KAC 351
New York	117	Amman	10:00	OMA 648
Dubai	561	Dubai	10:05	FDB 062
Abu Dhabi	671	Beirut	10:25	MSR 619
Istanbul	302	Istanbul	10:30	DLH 634
Dubai	501	Dubai	10:35	DHX 171
Shiraz	482	Shiraz	10:40	FDB 5054
Abu Dhabi/Muscat	664	Abu Dhabi/Muscat	10:50	JAI 571
Doha	677	Doha	11:00	JZR 502
Ahwaz	529	Ahwaz	11:00	KAC 301
Bahrain	214	Bahrain	11:25	Luxor 2200
Jeddah	776	Jeddah	12:20	KAC 308
Damascus	342	Damascus	12:25	MEA 403
London	103	London	12:25	ALK 230
Dubai	874	Dubai	12:30	GFA 220

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION





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- ✓ بدون إضافة غلوتومات
- ✓ أحادي الصوديوم
- ✓ بدون مواد
- ✓ حافضة إصطناعية

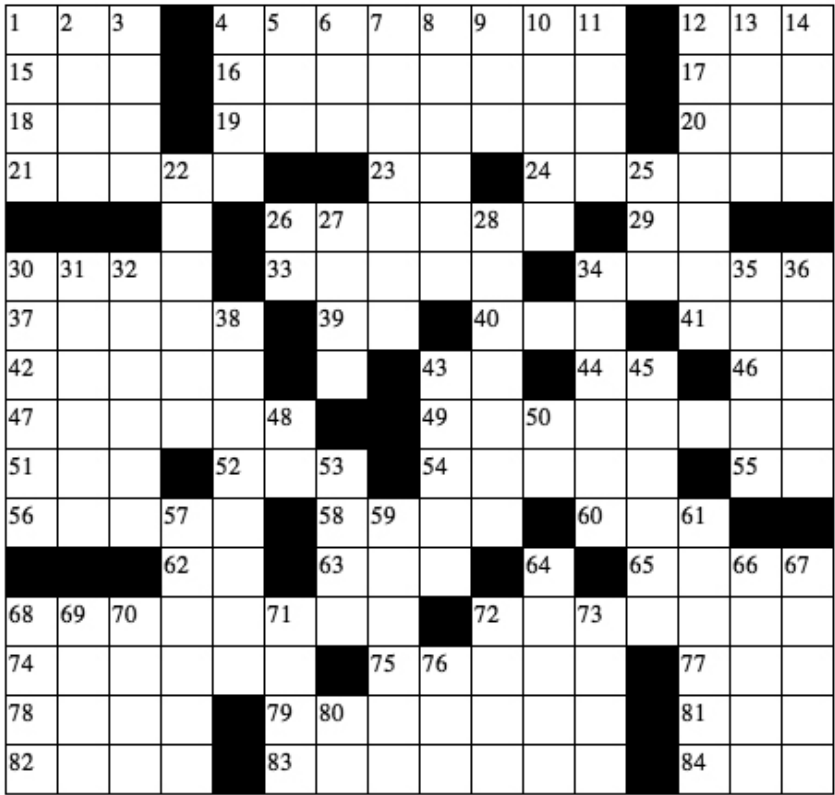
**IT'S HERE**  
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CROSSWORD 1133



ACROSS

1. Botfly larva.  
4. A plane curve formed by the intersection of a right circular cone and a plane parallel to an element of the curve.  
12. A syndrome that occurs in many women from 2 to 14 days before the onset of menstruation.  
15. Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.  
16. (meteorology) Of an air current or wind.  
17. Being two more than fifty.  
18. A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.  
19. Of or relating to Cyprus or its people or culture.  
20. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.  
21. An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.  
23. Being nine more than forty.  
24. Capital of Armenia.  
29. A public promotion of some product or service.  
30. Not fake or counterfeit.  
33. A desert in southern Israel.  
37. A sharp sound made by small birds or insects v 1.  
39. The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.  
40. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.  
41. A tube in which a body fluid circulates.  
42. Relating to the deepest parts of the ocean (below 6000 meters).  
44. A Russian river.  
46. Informal terms for a mother.  
47. The cardinal number that is the sum of seven and one.  
49. A resident of Alabama.  
51. One of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.  
52. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.  
54. Obvious and dull.  
55. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.  
56. Small and light boat.  
58. The state of being decayed or destroyed.  
60. (Scotland) A small loaf or roll of soft bread.  
62. Before noon.  
63. (usually followed by `to') Naturally disposed toward.  
65. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.  
68. A man who serves as a sailor.  
74. An Italian-speaking region of southern Switzerland.  
75. Any of various herbaceous plants of the genus Atriplex that thrive in deserts and salt marshes.  
77. The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).  
78. Studies intended to provide general knowledge and intellectual skills (rather than occupational or professional skills).  
79. A portion of something (especially money).  
81. 4-wheeled motor vehicle.  
82. A vigorous blow.  
83. East Indian cereal grass whose seed yield a somewhat bitter flour, a staple in the Orient.  
84. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from a cloth.

DOWN

1. Old World wild swine having a narrow body and prominent tusks from which most domestic swine come.  
2. Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.  
3. A sock with a separation for the big toe.  
4. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.  
5. One or some or every or all without specification.  
6. A reproach for some lapse or misdeed.  
7. Reduce in scope while retaining essential elements.  
8. The agent to whom property involved in a bailment is delivered.  
9. A member of the Siouan people inhabiting the valleys of the Platte and Missouri rivers in Nebraska.  
10. A metric unit of capacity equal to the volume of 1 kilogram of pure water at 4 degrees centigrade and 760 mm of mercury (or approximately 1.76 pints).  
11. Type genus of the Aceraceae.  
12. An ancient city in southern Bulgaria.  
13. Any of various minerals consisting of hydrous silicates of aluminum or potassium etc. that crystallize in forms that allow perfect cleavage into very thin leaves.  
14. A city of central China.  
22. Type genus of the Tetraonidae.  
25. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.  
26. Half the width of an em.  
27. A condition requiring relief.  
28. Pertaining to filberts or hazelnuts.  
31. A Bantu language spoken by the Chaga people in northern Tanzania.  
32. Not accessible to view.  
34. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.  
35. Large ornamental tropical American tree with bipinnate leaves and globose clusters of flowers with crimson stamens and sweet-pulp seed pods eaten by cattle.  
36. (Hindu) A manner of sitting (as in the practice of Yoga).  
38. (British) A disparaging term for an appointee.  
43. An established custom.  
45. When dried yields a hard substance used e.g. in golf balls.  
48. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.  
50. An associate degree in nursing.  
53. (Scotland) A slope or hillside.  
57. Ill-mannered and coarse and contemptible in behavior or appearance.  
59. A state of commotion and loud confused noise.  
61. The basic unit of money in Macao.  
64. The back side of the neck.  
66. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.  
67. The capital and largest city of Ghana with a deep-water port.  
69. A genus of Mustelidae.  
70. A book of the New Testament.  
71. A training program to prepare college students to be commissioned officers.  
72. Noisy talk.  
73. Wild goose having white adult plumage.  
76. A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.  
80. An artificial language for international use that rejects rejects all existing words and is based instead on an abstract analysis of ideas.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You have insight into your emotions and drive and you can talk about your feelings with great insight. You may be pleased at the new people entering your life this year. This could be a new work group, religious group or hobby group. You will soon find yourself inviting people into your home and receiving invitations to other people's homes. You are most creative and will have an opportunity to express that creativeness in many ways. Becoming bored easily, you will probably have several crafts or projects developing this year. You may have an important announcement to make this evening. Perhaps you or someone close to you is looking forward to a wedding or the birth of a child or you have scheduled a cruise-it's a good time to travel.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Everything points to your taking the initiative today. You may feel that your opinion is not what someone needs to hear and you could decide to take a listening attitude for now. This may mean that young people need a bit of guidance through example. You could feel great support from those around you. You will find this time is favorable for you to take the initiative in social matters. There is a desire to break with outmoded patterns from the past. A trip to the country or an opportunity to use your new sports equipment is just what you have been looking forward to this weekend. You may even want to change or update your personal appearance for an evening away from home, dancing perhaps.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may find yourself reflecting on your own youth or some event from the past. Perhaps a friend from your youth is visiting this weekend. You put the young people to work around your place with some fun activities. You may even have some ideas about ways in which they could make some extra spending money. This could mean they will be painting houses or helping to clean up the neighborhood and neighbors may be willing to make a contribution for this service. Young people may come up with some constructive ideas own their own. Of course, if you are in a cold part of the country a bit of shoveling would probably have the best appeal for making extra money. This evening is a good time for surrounding yourself with friends and young people.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This morning is an excellent time to sit down alone and get many things accomplished. A friend may join you in your exercise program. The ways in which you involve yourself with community concerns may depend on how much power you have. You may be held back from some of the things you want to see accomplished. Remember to continue to express your desire to help others; trust and getting to know you will be the turning point. You truly desire some fun times and should not hesitate to get to know new people and form new acquaintances. Also, love is in full bloom and it is a good time to fully demonstrate the depth of affection to a loved one.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

A few emotional questions come to the front of your mind this morning, but you may do well to keep them to yourself. With a few hours behind you, you will have the answers you need. You are appreciated for your compassion, intelligence, sharp business mind and willingness to create a positive change. This afternoon finds you responding to the needs of many. This could include neighbors; it could be that someone would like to go with you to the grocery store, church or whatever errands you may need to run. Your frame of mind is positive and you encourage others. The power of attraction and desire for love is great, but you should exercise caution before entering a new relationship, which may come about during this time.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

A love for the unusual may have you thinking about your normal routine this morning. Unconventional romantic and social connections are likely now. You could be thinking about reaching beyond your normal routine. You may enjoy doing some different activities for a change: camping, exploring, fishing, etc. Whatever you decide to do, it will be a refreshing change from your usual Saturday adventures. Any activity outdoors is tempting, depending on the weather. Fresh air and country roads bring opportunities to stretch and enjoy nature. This afternoon neighbors or friends may be having a get-together and you are invited. This is a wonderful time to be with the people whom you enjoy and who enjoy you.

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

Roller Coasters

Find and circle all of the roller coasters that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 20 letters spell a Ernest Hemingway quotation.

R E D I R T S O H G U S T A T H R  
E E N L L P H O E N I X T T I A E  
D N I R L I T V S S N S E N N D T  
L O T A R U E H E S I O R A T E I  
A L R O O L B M U E O E F M I S P  
B C O R T L E G G N N L I F M P U  
H Y T O A N L N N E D N O I E J  
T C R R R Z E E G I D E S C D R N  
A O E F E P I A V B G H R N A A G  
I T L R L M D B E I E A U B T D M  
L W W A E E O N E I A T R I O O O  
O I O P C T D R K O A T T E R L N  
G S R T X E T R S K H E H E P F T  
U T P O R L A K C I R E V A M I U  
L E E R A F T E R B U R N S N O V  
T R O Y D I A M O N D B A C K T C

AFTERBURN ALPENGEIST BALDER BIZARRO COLOSSOS COMET CYCLONE DESPERADO DIAMONDBACK EL TORO  
GHOSTRIDER GOLIATH GRIFFON HADES INTIMIDATOR JUPITER KATUN LEVIATHAN MANTA MAVERICK  
MIND BENDER MONTU NEMESIS NITRO PHOENIX PROWLER RAGING BULL RAPTOR RENEGADE ROAR  
SHEIKRA TATSU THUNDERBOLT TITAN TREMORS TROY TWISTER VIPER XCELERATOR



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may decide to make some changes in your appearance today. Perhaps you have decided to grow a mustache or get a tattoo-real or not. Whatever you decide to do, you will have fun with these new beginnings. Eccentricities and a different manner of presenting yourself may be fun through using tools such as a wig or new hair color or a glue-on mustache. A friend may decide this all looks like fun and join you in this little escapade. By the time the day is over, you will have a firm idea of the changes you want to put into effect. Someone you encounter today may behave in a frustrated way. This person may see you as a sounding board. Listening and encouraging calmness is a good thing; this frustration will pass. Listening is good therapy.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Teamwork is the active word today. You may find yourself involved in some sort of group work. This could be anything, such as clearing away snow from an elderly neighbor's door, preparing the ground for a spring garden with the neighbors or attending a planning committee of some sort. Today you encourage others to expand their education, read a book or take a class. You are productive but at times you can overdo when it comes to helping people. Take some time later this afternoon to put your feet up and relax with some favorite music. You enjoy making others feel at ease but this evening a loved one may treat you as specially as you treat them. Stay flexible and give yourself time to enjoy the evening.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

There is a new person in your life today and you may become a bit analytical, perhaps psychoanalyzing a particular situation. You could be very helpful, but be wise and stop while you are ahead. What you perceive in others, you are strengthening in yourself. You may even attract people that are headstrong and confident. Celebrate fun things with friends today. Marriage and partnerships should be lucky this year. Problems seem to have a short burn time. With forethought, money problems can also be handled. Even when exercising, look forward, not backward; this attitude will bring you many accomplishments. You will be getting some helpful information this afternoon that will help you with health matters.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Whatever today brings, you will probably be totally involved. This could mean that you become most interested in an exhibit or speaker or article of some sort. Perhaps a hobby that you are interested in is gaining public interest. You may also enjoy a bit of people watching while you move through your day. You bounce around with the energy that others dream about having. Young people need your attention this afternoon and you enjoy the interaction that takes place. One young person announces plans for the near future. This may call for a bit of reminiscing and picture taking.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

The way things have been done in the past may not be working now. This may mean a budget is not working or the training of an animal or some other technique is not appropriate at this time. Take some time off this Sunday from trying to make sense out of anything meaningful-tomorrow is another day. Cleaning chores, errands and other busy work should go well. You are inventive, original and high-tech. You may have some great ideas for improving or updating the home front. Perhaps it would be good to write these ideas down for a discussion soon. You could be entertaining a few friends this evening. Relax and forget technicalities for a while. Enjoy this opportunity to relax and be with friends.

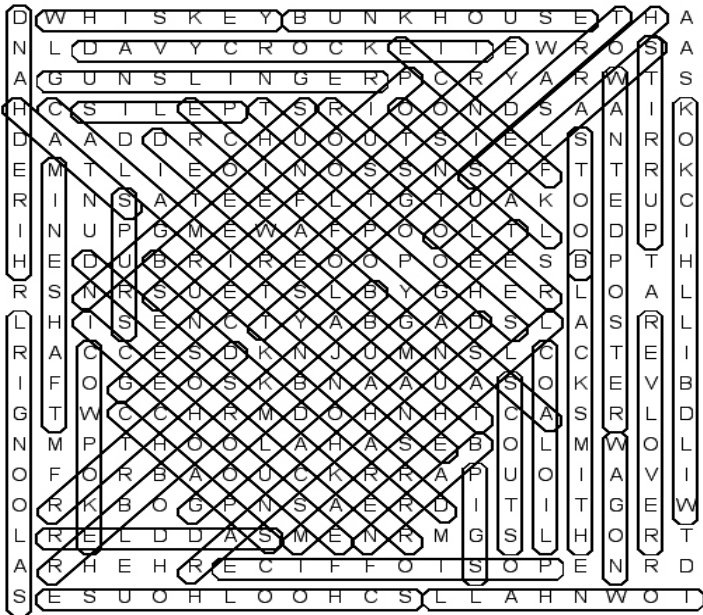


Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Your psychic awareness is particularly strong. If you keep a logbook or notebook of your visions you may be surprised at the insight you will gain from them. New energies surrounding a love relationship may bring much happiness and will take on an emotional depth. Feeling cared for and needed is comfortable; the lack of these things can cause an unconscious feeling of uneasiness. Young children enjoy learning under your patient tutelage-you give them much encouragement. Through teaching others, you may become more creative yourself. You are able to enjoy and value your own life situation at this time. A friend whom you have not seen in some time may come to visit you in your home this evening.

Yesterday's Solution

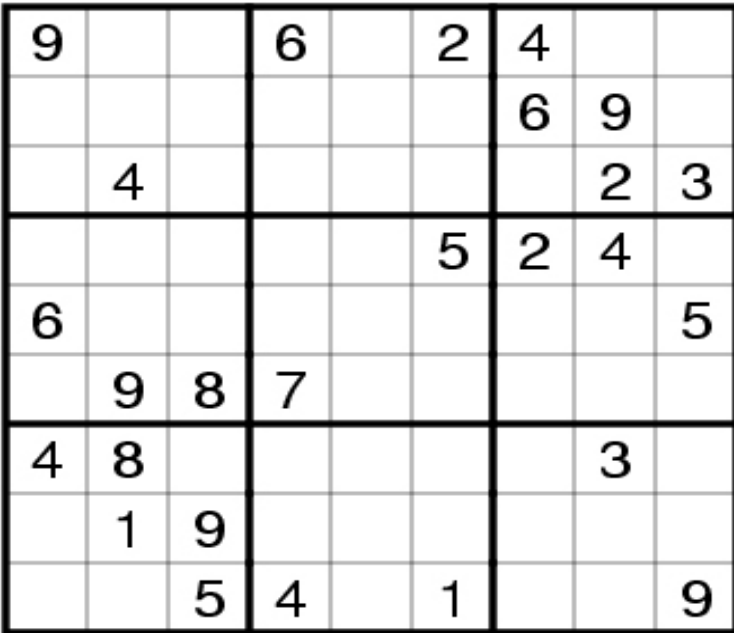
Old West 2



ASSAY OFFICE DOCTOR MINE SHAFT SCOUTS  
BANK ROBBER DRESSMAKER OUTLAWS SHOOTOUT  
BARN FENCE PELTS SHOTGUN  
BLACKSMITH GENERAL STORE PIGS SPURS  
BOOTS GOLD NUGGET PIONEERS STRIPP  
BUCKBOARD GUNSLINGER POST OFFICE TOWN HALL  
BUNKHOUSE HATS RANCH HAND TRADING POST  
CALAMITY JANE HIRED HAND REVOLVER TUMBLEWEED  
CHAPS HORSES RUSTLER WAGON  
COAL OIL ICE HOUSE SADDLER WANTED POSTER  
COWPOKE LASSO SALOON GIRL WHISKEY  
DAVY CROCKETT MARSHALL SCHOOLHOUSE WILD BILL HICKOK

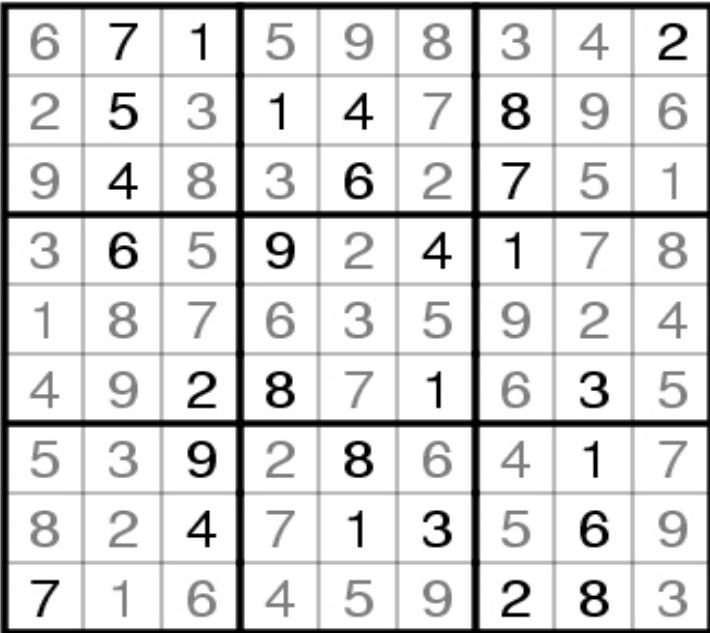
The hidden message is: ALWAYS DRINK UPSTREAM FROM THE HERD

Daily SuDoku



medium

Yesterday's Solution



very hard

Yesterday's Solution





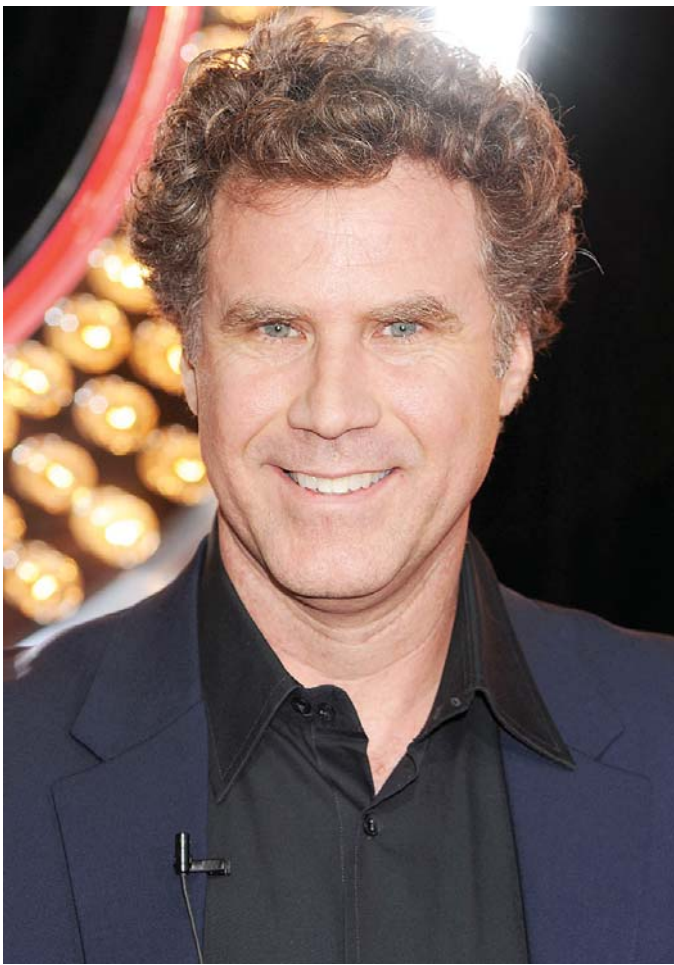


## Cuoco devastated after dogs died

While the 'Big Bang Theory' star was still mourning the loss of her pet Petey, who she has had for 14 years, she was left "in shock" when another beloved pooch, Chester, suddenly passed away. Taking to Instagram, Kaley, 30, wrote: "It hasn't been a great week for dogs so with a heavy heart I must tell you, sweet Chester (aka Cheddar cheese) has passed away. We rescue these angels blindly and have no idea what problems they may have.. I'm still in shock but I just keep feeling blessed to have him in my life even for a small amount of time. He was such a joy- hilarious ears and followed me everywhere I went. He loved people so so much- loved being held and cuddled. Slept right on my pillow every night. I can sleep knowing that he felt extreme love towards the end of his life. Thank you @pawworks for blessing me with the big eared wonder". Kaley adopted Chester and previously praised Petey for inspiring her interest in animal adoption. She added: "My folks gave him the greatest life and he taught us what it meant to love an adoption pup. I have since named my corporation after him (peteypie inc) and he has brought a lifetime of joy and laughs to our entire family. "I know he will now enjoy doggie heaven where there will be an abundance of greenies just for him. This little guy, I will never ever forget."

## Perry, Damon and Ferrell will all present awards at the Golden Globes

The trio are among the final batch of presenters announced for the upcoming ceremony, which will also see Kate Bosworth, Sophia Bush, Chris Evans, Will Ferrell, Tom Ford, Tom Hanks, Jonah Hill, John Krasinski and Andy Samberg take to the stage throughout the night. Previously announced presenters include Amy Adams, Eddie Redmayne, Channing Tatum, Jamie Foxx and Amy Schumer. Meanwhile, host Ricky Gervais recently admitted he plans to get drunk at the ceremony today. The comedian is returning to host the show for the fourth time and admitted he won't be entirely sober when he takes over proceedings at the 73rd annual awards show. Speaking to chat show host Ellen DeGeneres, he said: "If I didn't drink, I wouldn't be brave enough to say some of the things I'm going to say." When Ellen asked: "So in what hour do you start drinking before the show?" he quipped: "Well, it starts very early, so I probably have a little one. So, you know, I start at a reasonable hour - I'm not a maniac - three or four or something like that." Ricky, 54, who previously hosted in 2010, 2011 and 2012, admitted he initially turned down the chance to return as presenter but relented when he was told he could say whatever he wanted. He explained: "I really did say 'no'. I was editing one film I made this year and I was about to film another one, and I just thought, I just haven't got the time, but they said all the right things. They said I could say what I want again."



## Liv Tyler IS PREGNANT

The 'Leftovers' actress and her fiancé Dave Gardner - who already have 11-month-old Sailor Gene Gardner - are expecting their second child together later this year. Liv wrote on Instagram: "Oh my goodness it seems the stork is visiting us again !!!! I am growing another little Tyler Gardner in my belly . our family is growing!!! So grateful. @davidgardner I love you." She added a picture of herself sporting a tiny baby bump. Liv also has 10-year-old son Milo from her marriage to musician Royston Langdon while Dave has son Grey, seven, with ex-wife Davinia Taylor. The couple currently divide their time between her home in New York City, his base in London and Austin, Texas, where she films her HBO series, but hope to be more settled in the future. The brunette beauty previously said: "We're doing everything we can to be together, but right now because of work we're going back and forth." And speaking about getting married again, she said: "I had this philosophy that you should only get married once. But then, of course, that changes. I definitely believe we have lessons we learn through our relationships. You're meant to work through and mirror each other. It's the thing in someone that drives you the most crazy that is maybe a part of yourself somewhere."



## Madonna will 'fight to the end' for custody of her son

The singer's 15-year-old son walked out of her 'Rebel Heart' tour in December to stay with his father Guy Ritchie in London and Guy is said to have hired lawyers as he prepares to battle to retain custody of the teenager. A source told PEOPLE: "She is going to fight, fight, fight, and she is going to fight to the end. "She is not happy. She is an excellent mother, and people can say whatever they want - but her children mean the world to her." Rocco is now living with Guy, his wife Jacqui Ainsley and their three children, Rafael, four, Rivka, three, and Levi, 18 months, in the UK and Madonna is said to be worried that Rocco is missing school. Explaining he has missed some school, a source said: "He should have been home already. "Madonna is a devoted mother, and a big priority is her children's education." It was recently claimed the final straw for the teenager was when Madonna - who also has children Lourdes, 19, David, 10, and Mercy, nine - confiscated his mobile phone because she thought it was interfering with his homework. A source said: "Madonna is quite firm with Rocco and she took his phone from him when it interfered with his studies. "She is stricter than Guy and Rocco doesn't like it. When she took the phone away, it pushed him over the edge."



## Lady Gaga says being sexually assaulted changed her 'forever'

The chart-topping singer was raped at the age of 19 and has admitted that 10 years later she is still coming to terms with what happened. She explained: "It's something that changed me forever, and it made me question everything about what I had done to be where I am today. I thought to myself, 'Did I do something wrong to bring this on myself? What did I do?' "I choose to wear these clothes, and I choose to dress this way and sing about sex, and you wonder if you're implying to people that it's okay." Speaking about her song, 'Til It Happens to You', which was inspired by her trauma, Gaga told The Hollywood Reporter's podcast, 'Awards Chatter': "The person that I'm singing to is the person that wants to heal me - I'm telling them they can't. I am so sick of people walking in and out of my life, telling me that I'm gonna be okay, because I am still in so much pain that you can't understand."



## Janet Jackson is not suffering from cancer

The 49-year-old has been rumored to be undergoing tests for the disease after doctors discovered a tumor on her vocal cords while prepping her for surgery. However, Janet took to the Internet on Wednesday night to set the record straight, and insisted the postponement of the next leg of her 'Unbreakable World Tour' is not to do with having cancer. Janet shared a video on Twitter, in which she reads the message: "Remember... believe it when you hear it from my lips. The rumors are untrue. I do not have cancer. I'm recovering. My doctors have approved my concerts as scheduled in Europe, and as I promised, the postponed shows will be rescheduled. Thank you for your prayers and love." Janet did not go into further details about her condition, but reassured her fans that she's "recovering". In announcing the postponement of the tour last year, Janet - who is married to Wissam Al Mana - appealed to her fans for prayers. She said on her website: "Hey you guys...Happy Holidays to each and every one of you! I need you to know, I learned today, from my doctors that I must have surgery soon. "It breaks my heart to tell you that I am forced to postpone the 'Unbreakable Tour' until the spring. "Please pray for me, my family and our entire company during this difficult time...There will be no further comment."







## Blanchett

has likened the Golden Globes to a ‘mosh pit’

The ‘Carol’ star - who is nominated in the Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture (Drama) at this year’s award show - has revealed the ceremony can get “very sweaty” because everyone is sat in such close proximity. Speaking on Jimmy Kimmel Live!, she said: “It’s like a mosh pit actually, it gets very sweaty down there. There are tables and if there isn’t enough ketchup on your table you literally lean and get DiCaprio’s ketchup from the table behind. You’re all very tightly packed, it’s quite sweaty.” Normally you’re so stitched into those dresses that you cannot drink anything because if you have to pee it’s a disaster. It’s so hard being an actress! Meanwhile, the 46-year-old actress previously revealed she is planning on slowing down her career this year to focus on her family. She said: “I’m not planning on working much in 2016 either ... We got a phone call earlier this year and we adopted a little girl. You’re on the list and then you get the call. You don’t know anything about the child you’re going to meet. “It’s always the first time. Always. Our three biological children have been extraordinary. It’s been wonderful watching them become a little brood.”

## Katy Perry

has become the most followed person on Twitter

The 31-year-old singer - who created her account in 2009 - has been crowned the queen of the social networking site after she became the first person to reach 80 million followers. However, hot on her heels is ‘Sorry’ hitmaker Justin Bieber - who Katy clambered past in 2013 - with his 73 million followers, while Taylor Swift follows closely behind as she secures third position with 69 million fans on the website. And one of the reasons the brunette beauty thinks she’s so popular on Twitter is the fact she writes her own Tweets. She said recently: “I would say 90 per cent of my Tweets, I’ve just made them up and you can tell because many of them are misspelled and full of typos. “But the other five per cent is work related or it’s just to keep people in the know about where I’m playing or if I’m doing a show and I always get really confused.” However, the ‘Roar’ hitmaker sometimes likes to step away from her phone and just unwind without social media. Asked if she replies to her fans on Twitter, she told Mashable: “Sometimes I do, I kind of do a lot more of it when I’m in the zone mode. “Right now I’m in a relaxed, chilled vacationing zone, I’ve got my spanx on and I’m just taking a little break ... “I think I have to find that balance between Tweeting too much and plus I have so many followers that nobody really wants me to fill up their timeline.”



## Brie Larson

‘grateful’ for rejection

The ‘Room’ star - who is nominated for a Golden Globe for her portrayal of Ma in the thriller film - insists she “appreciates the darkness” she has experienced as it makes her a better actress. She said: “I feel grateful every day for all the times I was told no. The thing I appreciate the most is the darkness I’ve experienced, because I wouldn’t know how to play Ma or Grace [her character in 2013’s ‘Short Term 12’] if I hadn’t experienced loss or sadness; I wouldn’t know how to express it. “It’s such a valuable part of our experience: to not become afraid of the pitfalls, but to instead become curious about them.” The 26-year-old actress also starred in the well-received comedy ‘Trainwreck’ and couldn’t help but gush about her co-star Amy Schumer for helping people to see the ‘ugly side of humanity”. She added to ELLE magazine: “Laughter is the best way to get over something. It’s one of the things I respect most about Amy Schumer. She has found a way to get us closer to ourselves and see the ugly side of humanity, but not in a way that’s pointing a finger, or that’s angry. She does it in a way that makes us see the absurdity and laugh at it.”

## Spears

missed the People’s Choice Awards because she was ‘sick’

The ‘Toxic’ hitmaker has apologized to her fans for missing the ceremony in Los Angeles but thanked them for voting her the winner of the Favourite Social Media Celebrity category. She shared a statement on her social media pages which read: “I wish I could have been at the People’s Choice Awards tonight but I started feeling sick. “Thank you so much for voting me Favorite Social Media Celebrity! This is dedicated to my fans, the Britney Army - without you this would not be possible.” The 34-year-old star also appealed to her fans to use the Internet to be “kind” and “spread love”. She added: “I love that I can share my world with you and that you are so supportive of me. Remember to be kind online and spread love. #ThankYou.” The ‘Pretty Girls’ singer beat out competition from Beyonce, Taylor Swift, Dwayne ‘The Rock’ Johnson and Anna Kendrick - none of whom were at the ceremony - to scoop the accolade. It was Britney’s second-ever win at the annual ceremony, having scooped the Favorite Pop Artist prize in 2014.



## JK Rowling

has bought Johnny Depp’s yacht

The author of the ‘Harry Potter’ book series has put £22 million down to secure the sale of the luxury 156-foot vessel, which was previously owned by the ‘Pirates of the Caribbean’ star. The 50-year-old writer was fascinated by the ship’s five cabins and three large decks after she took it out on a family charter trip. And the 52-year-old actor had previously undertaken over £5 million of works done on the luxury boat, which can hold up to ten guests and nine crew, before he sold it off to an unknown buyer, The Sun newspaper reports. JK is now planning to spend holidays on the boat with her husband Neil Murray and their two children 12-year-old David and ten-year-old Mackenzie and 22-year-old daughter Jessica from a previous relationship. Meanwhile, Johnny was reportedly forced to sell off the boat by his wife Amber Heard as it was originally bought for his ex-wife, and the mother of his two children, Lily-Rose, 16 and Jack, 13, Vanessa Paradis. A source said at the time: “Johnny loved that yacht. But he bought it for Vanessa. And Amber is still jealous of her.”



## Bieber

vowed to change his life after God spoke to him

The 21-year-old singer - who previously hit the headlines for his wild partying, arrests for motoring offences and egging a neighbor’s house - was feeling “pretty lost” and though he isn’t “super religious”, his faith inspired him to take things in a different direction. He said: “I am not going to go into detail of what I was doing and where I was at, but I was pretty lost and woke up one day and felt like God was telling me something.” I’m not super religious or anything but I just heard a voice and was like, ‘You know what? I’m going to change my life around. I’m going to switch up some things and put some stuff together.’ “I called my manager Scooter and said, ‘We need to fix it.’ “The ‘Sorry’ hitmaker - who is dating model Hailey Baldwin - still enjoys drinking and having a good time and doesn’t think that is at odds with his religious beliefs. Speaking on radio program ‘The Bert Show’, he said: “We’ve going and celebrating all the time, getting drinks. I am 21 now so I can go out with my friends and be responsible and still have a good time. “What’s weird is I am a Christian, I am a believer, and often people are too conservative and I don’t think it’s wrong. “I’m stumbling over my words right now because I don’t want to offend anybody, but I believe you can go and have a good time, get some drinks and enjoy yourself and can be with girls. “I don’t think you need to be serious about it.” Loving God is a separate thing. But I don’t think you have to love God and not be able to go out and enjoy yourself. “As long as it’s not provocative or intense or mean or evil. If you are living life based on loving God then just keep that in mind.”



## Kerr

has a ‘modern family’

The 32-year-old beauty believes she is lucky to have the support of the father of her five-year-old son Flynn, and her ex-husband, Orlando Bloom and has revealed the ‘Pirates of the Caribbean’ star thinks her new man Evan Spiegel is “great”. She said: “Flynn was two, so it was really hard to make the decision, but our son is our priority so you have to come from love. You have to be kind. “[Orlando and I decided] that we had to know the person for six months and feel good about them [before introducing them to Flynn]. Evan met Flynn, so yeah, things are going well. Orlando thinks he’s great. We’re just a modern family now!” And Miranda also couldn’t help but gush about the 25-year-old entrepreneur, admitting she has the “best of both worlds”. She told Net-A-Porter’s The EDIT magazine: “He’s 25, but he acts like he’s 50. He’s not out partying. He goes to work in Venice [Beach], he comes home. “We don’t go out. We’d rather be at home and have dinner, go to bed early. [But] in some ways he does [feel like a younger man]. I’m telling you, I’ve got the best of both worlds.” —Bangshowbiz







This photo provided by courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox shows, Leonardo DiCaprio as Hugh Glass, in a scene from the film, "The Revenant," directed by Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu. — AP

# 'The Revenant'

## hunts for \$35 million-plus opening

Underlining Leonardo DiCaprio's star power, "The Revenant" is heading for a better-than-expected \$35 million to \$40 million this weekend in a potential showdown with box office magnet "Star Wars: The Force Awakens."

"The Revenant" grossed an impressive \$2.3 million in Thursday night preview screenings as it expanded from a successful four-screen run that began on Christmas Day to 3,371 site on Friday. Recent expectations had been for a weekend in the \$20 million range domestically for "The Revenant," or less than half than the fourth weekend of "Star Wars." Friday estimates showed "The Revenant" with \$13 million to \$15 million on Friday, which will likely be the 22nd day of the seventh Star Wars movie. "The Force Awakens" is still expected to win the weekend with nearly \$45 million.

"The Revenant" has suddenly become the got-to-see film because of DiCaprio," noted Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst with Rentrak. "He may be one of the last movie stars, which is a rare commodity these days."

The stark drama, directed by Alejandro G Inarritu, has performed solidly in its limited release, earning \$1.5 million since Christmas at the four sites-including the nation's sixth-best per-location gross with \$198,767 at the Arclight Hollywood while "The Force Awakens" posted the top five. DiCaprio portrays fur trapper Hugh Glass, who was mauled by a bear and left for dead by members of his party during a brutal winter expedition in 1823. The shoot lasted nearly a year and stretched from Canada to South America to capture realistic conditions. "The Revenant" carries plenty of awards season credibility with a Producers Guild nomination announced Tuesday, American Society of Cinematographers nom unveiled Wednesday, four Golden Globes nominations and a Screen Actors Guild nod for DiCaprio. The film carries a \$135 million price tag with New Regency financing along with RatPac, Alpha Pictures and Empyre. The opening of Gramercy's horror-thriller "The Forest" is performing in line with expectations and heading for a \$10 million launch at 2,451 theaters. The

story centers on an American, played by "Game of Thrones" star Natalie Dormer, investigating the disappearance of her twin sister in the legendary Aokigahara Forest at the base of Mount Fuji. "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" set a new record Wednesday as the top domestic movie of all time by eclipsing the final total for "Avatar." "The Force Awakens" took in \$6 million domestically on Thursday, its 21st day of release, for a total of \$770.4 million and the international gross grew by \$9 million Thursday to push the total to \$821.3 million-just ahead of "Minions" \$821.2 million for the 10th spot.

Paramount's third weekend of Will Ferrell-Mark Wahlberg comedy "Daddy's Home" will continue to perform solidly and finish in third place with about \$16 million at 3,493 sites, lifting its 17-day total by Sunday to \$117 million. Quentin Tarantino's "The Hateful Eight" looks likely to finish the frame in fifth with a 50% decline to about \$8 million at 2,938 sites. The Western has grossed about \$35 million so far.— Reuters



Kanye West

# Kanye

## West signals new album out next month

Rap superstar Kanye West has hinted that his long-awaited next album "Swish" will come out next month. "Swish February 11 16," West wrote on Twitter late Friday without further explanation. West, who is one of the most-accoladed rappers ever with 21 Grammys, has not put out an album since 2013's "Yeezus," a hard-edged work inspired by Chicago's drill music scene.

West had since been coy about the release of his new album, repeatedly saying that he would take his time. The husband of reality television show star Kim Kardashian, West has managed to keep himself in the headlines for other activities. Likening himself to Michelangelo for his diverse interests, West has pursued fashion design and has declared, with an unclear degree of seriousness, that he will run for president in 2020. But West has recently put out for free a number of tracks, with Kardashian suggesting on Twitter that he planned to do so every week until "Swish" comes out. Last month Kardashian gave birth to their second child, a boy named Saint. If the February 11 date is confirmed, West would be putting out "Swish" on a Thursday, ignoring a music industry decision last year to make Fridays the standard global release day. Headliner for Governors Ball festival -

The signs of the imminent album came as West's first performance of 2016 was confirmed as a headliner of the June 3-5 Governors Ball festival in New York. West headlined the Glastonbury festival in England last year but has kept a comparatively quiet performance schedule in recent months. Other headliners at Governors Ball will include The Strokes, who helped define the New York music scene, as well as the larger world of indie rock, in the 2000s with their spirited post-punk revival.

The band has played only sparingly in recent years, with lead singer Julian Casablancas pursuing a side project, although The Strokes performed at Governors Ball in 2014. Governors Ball announced its full lineup on Friday that will also include the alternative rock icon Beck, who won last year's Grammy for Album of the Year, as well as Swedish electro-pop star Robyn and popular rockers The Killers and Death Cab for Cutie.

Governors Ball was inaugurated in 2011 on Governors Island off southern Manhattan before moving to larger Randall's Island. Festivals have since boomed around the world and especially in North America, becoming a critical source of revenue in the music industry. Governors Ball has voiced concern amid moves by major promoter AEG, which runs Coachella in California, to create another festival in New York in 2016. In the lineup release, Governors Ball said it was "born and bred" in New York and last year generated \$49 million for the city's economy. —AFP



## Home Centre celebrates 20 years and outlines roadmap for 50-store expansion by 2020

Home Centre, the largest home retailer in the Middle East, kicked off its milestone 20th anniversary celebrations by unveiling plans to expand its regional presence through the addition of over 50 new stores over the next five years. The brand has grown from a single store opened in Sharjah, UAE in 1995 into an international network of nearly 90 stores spread across 10 countries and occupying a total space of 4 million sq. feet.

Attributing its leading status to the versatile product offering, affordable pricing and customer-centric approach that have been the cornerstones of its business strategy, MEdEric Payne, CEO of Home Centre announced the brand's plans to invest more than AED 1 billion over the next five years to strengthen its presence across the Middle East, North Africa and Asia. Home Centre will also remodel over 40 existing stores in the region, fortify its existing supply chain and enhance its warehouse infrastructure.

While continuing to strengthen its existing market presence, Home Centre will also explore expansion opportunities in countries such as Kazakhstan, Morocco, Kenya, Algeria and Angola, both through organic growth and new franchise operations. The brand's projected expansion will create around 3,000 additional job opportunities by 2020.

In a bid to adapt to evolving customer needs, Home Centre aims to introduce a wider offering over the next five years to



Mederic Payne, CEO of Home Centre

include a range of innovative products, a lifestyle range of home storage options, modular furniture concepts, as well as completely new product categories.

Mederic Payne, CEO of Home Centre, said: "Twenty years marks a significant milestone for a home-grown brand like ours that has today evolved to become the region's preferred home shopping destination. We started with a vision to provide customers with high quality products at affordable prices and



today two decades later, customer satisfaction continues to remain a prime focus for us.

In our endeavor to extend an exceptional brand experience, we ensure that our product range is aligned with global trends, while continuing to cater to our diverse local customer base as well. We also routinely reformat our store design and enhance our customer service experience in line with new technology and changing trends that sweep the home retail market.

We have ambitious plans for Home Centre in the next five years. We will increase our store count and retail footprint by 50%, while venturing into new markets. This expansion will fuel Home Centre's next phase of growth."

In the last two decades, Home Centre has invested in building strong and enduring relationships with its customers. More than 80% of Home Centre customers are reported to be loyal to the brand, with studies indicating that on an average, a Home Centre Shukran mem-

ber visits one of the brand's stores at least three times a year.

Home Centre has been consistently ranked among the top 50 brands in the Middle East Global Brand Simplicity Index. In addition to this accolade, it maintained its Superbrand status for three consecutive years in the UAE (2010-12), as well as once each in Kuwait (2010) and in Jordan (2012).







Models present the creations of designers Agi & Sam, Charles Jeffrey Loverboy, Rory Parnell-Mooney, Wales Bonner and Nasir Mazhar at the Autumn/Winter 2016 London Collections: Men fashion event in London. — AFP photos

# Seaside and Star Wars vibes as London men's fashion week opens

London Men's Fashion Week



Leaping from the traditional to the radical, the men's edition of London fashion week opened on Friday with shows from country gentleman label Barbour and young urban designer Nasir Mazhar. Fashion VIPs, buyers and journalists gathered under the elegant arch of the Swiss church in central London to catch a glimpse of Barbour's autumn/winter 2016 collection, the first of dozens of shows to be held before the event wraps up on Monday.

An intermittent spotlight, mimicking a lighthouse, illuminated the stage as the soothing sound of breaking waves filled the room. "The collection is inspired by the Beacon that has stood watch at the mouth of the River Tyne in the North East of England since 1882," the label said in a statement. Early highlights included loose-fitting jackets decorated with tartan lining, mottled grey sweaters and snoods.

The Barbour man will be wearing black and sienna trousers next winter-tight to the ankle-and leather boots. The label, founded in north-east England in 1894, also showcased modern twists on its classics, including its famous waxed canvas jackets. "We have taken inspiration from our history and archive to create strong looks that remain true to Barbour's DNA in modern, contemporary pieces that represent what Barbour is today," said Ian Bergin, the label's director of menswear.

## Star Wars and seventies

At nearby Victoria House, but a world away in atmosphere, audacious young designer Nasir Mazhar presented his street-inspired collection. To the sound of a relentless electro beat, Mazhar promised to conjure "a club world of individual characters unified by darkness", delivering a confusing and provocative collection mainly in black.

The London-born designer set the tone with an ensemble that included an upturned black bucket gilded with strips of tissue worn on the model's head, recalling Star Wars arch-villain Darth Vader. Mazhar said that the collection reflected the "creative freedom" of his "non-commercial, purely creative beginnings".

Alongside the macho hip-hop inspired track-suits, combat gear and heavy boots trimmed with chrome, Mazhar added a number of skimpy androgynous outfits — some modeled by women, revealing bare chests and legs. These models, "are just people of my generation, of my society," he told the press. "We see all kinds of people in London."

The opening day was rounded off with a return to the more conventional, as Topman

Design showcased its 1970s inspired collection marked by orange, brown and floral motifs. The suits were baggy, worn with slip-on shoes and occasionally paired with silk bathrobes and coats. Sales in men's fashion leapt by 22 percent in Britain to £13.5 billion pounds between 2009 to 2014, according to market researcher Mintel. Following London, the male fashionista will pack his bags for Milan next week, followed by Paris and then New York. — AFP



# How to do Sundance and leave a little cash for popcorn

Every January, the streets of the mountain town of Park City, Utah, light up as the Robert Redford-founded Sundance Film Festival pulls in big names to introduce future Oscar winners and eye-opening documentaries. Over the years, movies screened in this one-time mining town have ranged from "The Blair Witch Project" to "Little Miss Sunshine."

Seeing buzzed-about films before the rest of the world isn't restricted to the Hollywood elite, though. Tickets for many screenings during the festival that starts Jan 21 are publicly available, and there are

ways to get in on the action and still have some cash left over for popcorn.

## Get on the list

While tickets to big-name releases sell out fast, fans can now get online to put their names on wait lists and check out the chances of getting in before heading into the cold. Park City is packed during the festival's opening days, but the second half of the event is a bit more laid-back, making it easier for movie-lovers to score seats. And for those who stay through to the end, there are additional screenings of award-

winning movies after the ceremony on the final day, Jan 31.

## Main street scene

If spotting movie stars during the hottest days of the festival is your thing, think about grabbing tickets for a lower-profile film in the festival's vast selection. Then scope out celebrity arrivals at the big-name screenings or hit up the lively Main Street scene after the show. Besides, you could end up discovering a cinematic gem.

## Plan meals now

Getting restaurant reservations in Park City is all about planning and flexibility. Call far in advance and be prepared with a backup. Many restaurants get booked for private parties, says Linda Jager with Visit Park City, the tourism agency. Off-hours are also good times to try in-demand spots like the ski-in High West Distillery and Saloon, or to sample the state's burgeoning craft beer scene at Wasatch Brew Pub or Squatters Roadhouse Grill. For cheaper eats, try places like El Chubasco and Good Karma, or venture outside of Park City to Kimball Junction, a 15-minute drive away.

## Hit the slopes

Sundance's not-so-dirty little secret? The area's epic mountains are relatively empty during the festival as people staying to watch movies all day, says Nathan Rafferty with Ski Utah. And you never know who you might be sharing a chairlift with if you step away from the festival to check out

one of the nearby ski areas that now include the new Vail-owned Park City mega-resort, touted as one of the biggest in the country.

## Fly under the radar

For some free entertainment between screenings, hunt street art left by the mysterious artist Banksy when the documentary "Exit Through the Gift Shop" premiered in 2010. One work that's been framed and covered in Plexiglas is on the Java Cow building at 402 Main St. The other is harder to find, on the side of a parking garage

between Park Avenue and Main Street.

## Think outside pc

Lodging in Park City can range into the hundreds of dollars a night and many rooms sell out quickly. Salt Lake City offers a wider hotel selection a 40-minute drive away, and Sundance also holds movie screenings there. The city's nightlife, including two adjoining bars owned by "Modern Family" actor Ty Burrell, Beer Bar and Bar-X, is also worth checking out. —AP



The Egyptian Theatre on Main Street during the first day of the 2015 Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah. — AP photos



Festival goers walk up Main Street past a design by graffiti artist Banksy.



Kanye West  
signals new album  
out next month

38



Children play in the surf at Kite Beach with the Burj al Arab, the Dubai Marina and a man flying a powered parachute in the background in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. — AP



Adventurer Tracey Curtis-Taylor smiles after arriving in her vintage, open-cockpit 1942 Boeing Stearman aircraft at Sydney International airport in Sydney. — AFP photos

## Female pilot lands after epic journey in 1942 aircraft

Adventurer Tracey Curtis-Taylor yesterday completed her epic flight from Britain to Australia, landing her vintage, open-cockpit 1942 Boeing Stearman in Sydney. "I need a drink," she joked after finishing the final leg of the three-month journey which saw her contend with some treacherous weather in the air and logistical obstacles on the ground.

Modeled after pioneering aviator Amy

Johnson's historic 1930 solo flight from England to Australia, Curtis-Taylor said her journey was a homage to female pilots of the past. She said flying the open cockpit biplane had given her an "insight into something of what she (Johnson) went through getting here".

"The flying has been sensational and that's why you do it," she told reporters at Sydney airport shortly after her arrival. "To fly something

like this, low level, halfway around the world seeing all the the most iconic landscapes, geology, vegetation... it's just the best view in the world. It's the best adventure in the world."

Curtis-Taylor, who flew from Cape Town to Goodwood, England in 2013, took off from Farnborough on October 1, with a flight path over Europe, the Middle East and Asia. The route of nearly 21,000 kilometers saw her stop in places such as Vienna, Istanbul and Amman before she headed to Pakistan and India and on to Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

She crossed the Timor Sea to Australia this month. Curtis-Taylor said she struck some bad weather, mostly in Eastern Europe, as she flew the stick and rudder airplane with basic period instruments. But as the journey involved frequent stops because of the plane's short range, many of her obstacles were not related to flying.

"I've lost my rag several times dealing with people on the ground," she said, adding that she spent seven hours trying to get fuel at one airport. "In the end I just lay down on the tarmac and went to sleep with my head on my hand-bag." She said that it was an experience to fly over Australia, where her stops included the out-back towns of Tennant Creek and Alice Springs and flying over the monolithic rock Uluru. Curtis-Taylor, 53, said she would love to continue the adventure and fly up north along Australia's east coast. But instead the plane, which the aviator said "did not miss a beat" during the epic journey, will be shipped to the United States. —AFP



Tracey Curtis-Taylor (rear) comes in to land.

## AFI Awards honor 'Game of Thrones,' 'Mad Max'

"The Martian" gang mixed with the "Star Wars" team, WB's Sue Kroll chatted with Harvey Weinstein, while Cate Blanchett, Ryan Gosling, Steven Spielberg and F Gary Gray accepted congrats for their work at the 16th AFI Awards Friday afternoon at the Four Seasons in Beverly Hills.

The event honored 10 films and 10 TV works that had been announced last month as being "the year's most outstanding storytelling," and as usual, the mood was high energy yet relaxed. The honorees knew that they were all winners, so there was no suspense, with no acceptance speeches, minimal red-carpet coverage and no fashion commentary. And a key to the buoyant mood: There were no TV cameras focusing on the 220 people in the room.

In the two-hour luncheon, each of the 20 works got a film clip of a few minutes, with the biggest reactions going to "Martian," "Mad Max: Fury Road" and "Straight Outta Compton" on the film side, with "Better Call Saul," "Black-ish" and a "Mad Men" montage getting the most whoops on the TV side.

The heavy-hitters in attendance included Bob Iger, Jim Gianopulos, John Landgraf, David Nevins, Matt Blank, Brad Grey, Donna Langley, Cheryl Boone Isaacs, Ron Meyer, Ted Sarandos and Chris Silberman. Film and TV creators on hand included Adam McKay, George Miller, Pete Docter, Jonas Rivera, Drew Goddard, Ridley Scott, Lenny Abrahamson, Tom McCarthy, Josh Singer, JJ Abrams, Lawrence Kasdan, Vince Gilligan, Matthew Weiner, Ilene Chaiken, Brian Grazer, David Benioff, DB Weiss, Aziz Ansari, Joel Fields, Michael Giacchino and Mark Johnson.

AFI selects a jury every year to weigh

the potential honorees, with Rich Frank and Tom Pollock respectively heading the TV and film panels. For TV, the AFI panel always salutes a mix of new TV works and continuing series. The jury also voted a special award to "Mad Men," which concluded this year and which had chalked up more AFI honors in its nine-year run than any other series.

The films saluted were "The Big Short," "Bridge of Spies," "Carol," "Inside Out," "Mad Max: Fury Road," "The Martian," "Room," "Spotlight," "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," and "Straight Outta Compton." On the TV side: "The Americans," "Better Call Saul," "Black-ish," "Empire," "Fargo," "Game of Thrones," "Homeland," "Master of None," "Mr. Robot" and "Unreal."

AFI president-CEO Bob Gazzale said, "This is a campaign-free zone. You don't have to thank anybody; we are here to thank you." He also pointed out that the event is a showbiz rarity: An event where the honorees do not have to buy tables, thanks to the sponsors Audi and American Airlines. Robert Towne delivered the annual benediction in tribute to the honorees and their remarkable achievements in film and television.

Last year, six of AFI's best pic honorees also scored best-picture Oscar nominations; in the previous year, it was seven of the top 10. However, the American Film Institute downplays its role as a harbinger of Oscar attention. Execs at the organization, including Gazzale, have always stressed that their list recognizes a community of artists, and is not competitive. AFI does not rank choices, only listing them alphabetically. — Reuters



George Miller arrives at the AFI Awards at the Four Seasons Hotel on Friday, Jan 8, 2016, in Los Angeles. — AP