



Interior minister warns security campaigns will continue



Four wheels good, two wheels better for Pakistan's female motorists



'Revenant,' 'Martian,' Damon, Stallone, Winslet win big at Globes



Lionel Messi scoops record fifth Ballon d'Or



BAHRAIN HIKES PRICE OF FUEL AS KUWAIT DITHERS

GOVT TO TAKE ISSUE TO ASSEMBLY • GHANEM REASSURES LOW-INCOME PEOPLE



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Max 18°
High Tide 00:16 & 14:20
Low Tide 07:50 & 19:42



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AID TRUCKS ENTER STARVING SYRIA TOWN

MADAYA, Syria: The first trucks carrying desperately needed aid entered the besieged Syrian town of Madaya yesterday, where more than two dozen people are reported to have starved to death. The Syrian Arab Red Crescent said two trucks loaded with food and blankets entered the rebel-held town in the late afternoon, at around the same time a military source said that three others entered the government-controlled towns of Fuua and Kafraya.

"The operation has started. It is likely to last a few days. This is a very positive development," said Marianne Gasser, the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross delegation to Syria. "But it must not be just a one-off distribution. To relieve the suffering of these tens of thousands of people, there has to be regular access to these areas," she said in a statement.

The Red Crescent, ICRC and the United Nations and its World Food Programme have been trying to get supplies to Madaya since President Bashar Al-Assad's regime gave permission for the deliveries on Thursday. The deliveries come after an outpouring of international concern and condemnation over the dire conditions in Madaya, where some 42,000 people have been living under a government siege. An AFP correspondent who reached Madaya with the aid convoy said the town's streets were deserted, with only a service station open.

A pair of elderly women were seen sitting on suitcases waiting to be evacuated. People said they resorted to extreme measures to survive. "For 15 days we have been eating only soup," said Hiba Abdel Rahman, 17. "I saw a young man killing cats and presenting the meat to members of his family as rabbit."

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MADAYA, Syria: A convoy containing food, medical items, blankets and other materials is delivered to this besieged town yesterday. — AP

By B Izzak and agencies

DUBAI/KUWAIT: Bahrain yesterday announced a hike of more than 50 percent in petrol prices following its cut in subsidies for energy products as oil producing countries struggle with nosediving crude prices. The government said the price of regular petrol will increase today from 80 fils (20 cents) per litre to 125 fils (33 cents), an increase of 56.3 percent. The more expensive super petrol will increase by 60 percent, from 100 fils (27 cents) to 160 fils (42 cents) per litre, it said after a cabinet meeting. Earlier this month, Bahrain cut government subsidies for diesel and kerosene following similar moves by its Gulf neighbors.

Saudi Arabia in December raised petrol prices by 50 percent as part of subsidy cuts for petroleum products, power and water, after the country posted a record \$98 billion budget deficit for 2015. The United Arab Emirates has liberalized fuel prices, while Kuwait lifted subsidies on diesel and kerosene from the start of 2015. Arab states of the Gulf, heavily reliant on oil income, have been hit hard by the sharp decline in crude prices.

Kuwaiti Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh said the government plans to take proposals to cut subsidies on commodities and public services, as suggested by an international consultant, to the National Assembly. The aim is to rationalize the use of these services and to ensure that subsidies reach those who deserve it, the minister said. National Assembly speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meanwhile said that he was assured by the prime minister that the government will not take any unilateral decision on subsidies and that it will share it with the Assembly.

Ghanem however insisted that the Assembly is prepared to adopt measures that do not harm low-income people and pave the way for "real economic reforms" to deal with the distortions in the national economy. He underscored the need to "tackle the large distortions in the state budget", adding that "it is not possible to lead the state to bankruptcy".

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RAMALLAH: Palestinian Mohammed Khatib trains on Nov 16, 2015 in this West Bank city as part of his preparations for the qualification of the 2016 Summer Olympics to be held in Rio de Janeiro. —AFP

PALESTINIAN DREAMS OF RACING PAST USAIN BOLT

RAMALLAH: Mohammed Khatib is 25 and dreams of winning Palestine's first Olympic medal. The yoga instructor with a sociology degree first starting dreaming of flying the Palestinian flag after winning a 100-meter sprint a few years ago. So every day, he rushes at full speed on an asphalt track - neither very professional nor very safe - in Ramallah in the occupied West Bank where he lives. "There are football stadiums but for athletics almost nothing. There are 100-meter tracks, but they are asphalt and can cause injuries," laments the young man wearing a keffiyeh in the colours of the Palestinian flag around his neck and with a curly mop of hair falling over his forehead.

But Mohammed Khatib has no time for the lack of infrastructure because the stakes are high and the smiling boy with crinkled hazel eyes has always set the bar high. He wants to "create hope and happiness" for Palestinians, who have been waiting 70 years for international recognition. The idea came to him in 2013, the year the Gazan Mohammed Assaf won Arab Idol - one of the most

watched Arab TV shows. "I saw how happy people were. They partied all night because a Palestinian had won thanks to the votes of the public across the Arab world. I told myself 'imagine what it could be like if a Palestinian won a global competition.'"

Since that night listening to the horns and cheers, Khatib has trained alone with exercises he found on YouTube. In three years, he said, he has managed to lower his 100 m time from 15 seconds to 11. But it is still far from the 9.58 sec world record held by Usain Bolt, and a distance from the 10.16 sec he needs to qualify for the Rio Olympics this year. Mohammed wants to believe. "Many people think I'm crazy for choosing the hardest discipline to win - the 100 and 200 m - but I'm sure I can do it and I'll show them," he insists.

There were times when he lost hope but he never stopped going every day and sprinting 100 or 200 m, headphones attached to his ears - "psychedelic trance, believe it or not, and dub reggae for the rhythm".

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ON IRAN-SAUDI RIFT, GULF ACTS WITH CAUTION

DOHA: Gulf Arab states rallied dutifully behind Saudi Arabia when it cut relations with Iran last week, recalling their ambassadors and cancelling flights to Tehran in solidarity with the oil-rich kingdom after its embassy in Iran was torched by protesters. But all apart from Bahrain stopped short of severing ties, responses that suggest these small states - energy powers but military minnows - wish to safeguard strategic interests and avoid a full-blown conflict with Iran in which they would fare poorly.

The crisis erupted when Saudi Arabia executed a prominent Shiite cleric on Jan 2 and Iranian protesters retaliated by storming and setting fire to the Saudi embassy in Tehran. Tensions in the Gulf have reached levels unseen since the 1980s, when Iraq received Gulf Arab funding for its 1980-88 war against Iran in a pan-Arab effort to stem the influence of the Islamic revolution that had toppled the Shah.

Sunni Muslim power Saudi Arabia has warned it could take further steps against Shiite Iran, which it accuses of meddling in Arab affairs. That raises the prospect of renewed Saudi pressure on its Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) allies to adopt more energetic responses. "Gulf countries are under immense pressure from Riyadh. Most are trying to appease Saudi and maintain minimal relations with Iran to prevent further escalation," said Lina Khatib, former director of the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut. "They fear they'll get caught in the middle."

In solidarity with Riyadh, Kuwait and Qatar last week pulled out their ambassadors from Tehran, and the United Arab Emirates downgraded its ties. Bahrain and two non-Gulf states, Djibouti and Sudan, severed relations completely. But long-standing trade links, shared access to oil and gas fields and the presence of sizeable Shiite communities stopped many Gulf states from shutting the door on Iran, opting instead for positions of neutrality and diplomatic half-steps that could be quietly reversed if the furor were to die down.

The Sunni-ruled Gulf states face a long-standing dilemma over Iran, whose regional clout gained an unintended boost from the 2003 US-led war that toppled its Iraqi foe, Saddam Hussein. Many of the smaller Gulf Arab states fret that deeper Saudi-Iranian tensions may only spur Iranian muscle-flexing. "The Saudis are on the phone lobbying countries very hard to break off ties with Iran but most Gulf states are trying to find some common ground," said an Arab diplomat in Doha.

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MUSIC LEGEND DAVID BOWIE DIES AGED 69

LONDON: British music legend David Bowie has died at the age of 69 after a secret battle with cancer, unleashing a cascade of tributes for one of the most influential and innovative artists of his time. A notoriously private person, Bowie's death in New York was a shock to the world with the announcement coming just three days after he released his 25th studio album "Blackstar", on his 69th birthday on Friday. "David Bowie died peacefully today (Sunday) surrounded by his family after a courageous 18-month battle with cancer," said a statement posted Monday on his official social media accounts.

The death brings the curtain down on an extraordinary musical innovator and style icon, with a career dating back to his first major hit "Space Oddity" in 1969, about an astronaut called Major Tom who became lost in orbit. Tributes poured in from the world of music, show business and politics for the singer-songwriter, producer and actor described as a visionary and master of re-invention. The Rolling Stones hailed Bowie as an "extra-

ordinary artist", collaborator Iggy Pop called his friendship "the light of my life" while Madonna described him as "Unique. Genius. Game Changer."

Bowie spanned styles ranging from glam rock, New Romantic and dance music to alternative rock, soul and hard rock, underpinned by an astonishing array of stage personas from the sexually ambiguous Ziggy Stardust to the Thin White Duke. "He will be remembered amongst the greats but not just one of them, as a unique great," said Bowie biographer Paul Trynka, describing him as "a creative force" who redefined pop music over decades.

Fans left flowers and messages by a colorful mural of him in Brixton, the south London district where he was born David Robert Jones on January 8, 1947, and where preparations were underway for a street party in his honor. Although Bowie left school with just one qualification, an O-level in art, he went on to sell an estimated 140 million records worldwide.

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FRANKFURT: A photo taken in May 1983 shows British rock music legend David Bowie performing onstage during a concert at the Festhalle. —AFP (See Pages 14 and 40)



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is pictured with Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Yaqoub Al-Sane. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets the new Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Takashi Ashiki.

AMIR, MERKEL DISCUSS TIES

CROWN PRINCE MEETS NEW AMBASSADORS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday received a phone call from Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel, regarding bilateral ties and issues of mutual concern. His Highness the Amir expressed his appreciation for the deep historic ties between Kuwait and Germany, while also sending his greetings to German President Joachim Gauck.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received at Seif Palace yesterday His Highness the

Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and First Deputy Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Separately, His Highness the Amir received Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Yaqoub Al-Sane who was recent-

ly awarded the medal of honor of the first degree by Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi. Sane was honored for his efforts in the promotion of religious moderation and tolerance. During the meeting, His Highness the Amir hailed Sane's effective efforts in spreading the Islamic concepts of tolerance and moderation.

New ambassadors

In the meantime, His Highness the Crown

Prince received the newly appointed Tunisian Ambassador to Kuwait Ahmad bin Al-Habeeb bin Al-Sagheer. His Highness the Crown Prince also received the newly appointed Ambassador of Switzerland to Kuwait Aldo de Luca, and the new Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Takashi Ashiki. The audiences were attended by Protocol Chief at His Highness the Crown Prince Diwan, Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah. His Highness also received Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, as well

as Chairman of the National Security Apparatus (NSA) Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah. Also yesterday, Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled received the outgoing Azeri Ambassador to Kuwait Tural Rzayev. Sheikh Sabah hailed the ambassador's efforts in developing bilateral ties between the two countries. The meeting was attended by assistant Foreign Minister for the First Deputy Prime Minister's office affairs Ambassador Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Iraq's Parliament Speaker Salim Al-Jabouri. — Amiri Diwan photo

IRAQI SPEAKER LAUDS TALKS WITH KUWAITI OFFICIALS

KUWAIT: Iraq's Parliament Speaker Salim Al-Jabouri yesterday commended talks he held with the Kuwaiti side during his official visit to the country. Jabouri said in a press statement that he had met His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Talks addressed several regional issues that necessitate unity, based on the necessity of calming the situation and promoting a state of rapport among regional and international parties to avoid further aggravation of crises, said Jabouri, who left Kuwait later yesterday, concluding a two-day visit to the country.

Meanwhile, Jabouri called for joining forces against terrorism and the so-called Islamic State (IS). Featuring high on the agenda was the forthcoming 11th conference of the Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Baghdad will host

later this month, he said, pointing out that Kuwait had been invited to attend the event.

The Iraqi chief parliamentarian stressed that Kuwait played a significant role for the conference to be held in Baghdad. The event will focus on regional developments, and seek a unified view to overcome all political worries. Jabouri said that he acquainted the Kuwaiti side with the nature of events in Iraq, the liberation of Ramadi, the return of the displaced to the provinces recaptured from the IS. He underlined keenness on dissolving differences among countries in the region.

Intensified efforts

Ghanem discussed with his Iraqi counterpart bilateral ties and means of promoting them in different domains, especially the parliamentary one. The meeting, held in Ghanem's office yesterday, also tackled recent developments on regional and international fronts. The two officials agreed to intensify efforts to face diverse challenges in the region. They also touched on preparations for

the Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation member states (PUIC) conference which will be held in Iraq in the foreseeable future.

The meeting was attended by chief of honorary mission MP Faisal Al-Shayeh, Treasurer MP Adel Al-Jarrallah Al-Kharafi, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Iraq Ghassan Al-Zawawi, Charge D'affaires at the Iraqi embassy in Kuwait Yaseen Al-Jabouri and Kuwaiti Parliament Secretary General Allam Al-Kandari.

In other news, Ghanem sent a cable of congratulations to Egypt's newly-named Speaker of House of Representatives Dr Ali Abdulaal. In the cable, Ghanem, who is also the Arab Inter-Parliament Union (AIPU) President, said he was confident in Abdulaal's capability in leading the Egyptian Parliament to attain its national and constitutional duties for the interest of Egypt and Egyptians. He also expressed his aspiration to cooperate with the new Egyptian speaker at bilateral level, or through activities and actions of AIPU.— KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chaired Sunday a meeting of the Supreme Petroleum Council. The meeting, held at Seif Palace, touched on items on the agenda. — KUNA

ARAB PARLIAMENT OFFICIAL CALLS FOR EMERGENCY MEETING

CAIRO: Deputy Speaker of the Arab Parliament MP Mohammad Al-Jabri called yesterday for holding an emergency meeting for heads of Arab Parliaments in February to discuss challenges facing the Arab nation.

Speaking to KUNA on sidelines of the parliament's permanent four committees meetings, he called the Arab Parliament, the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Arab League to meet the challenges, namely terrorism facing the Arab world at present.

Preparations are underway for the parliamentary summit, to be held with co-chairmanship by President of the Arab Parliamentary Union and Speaker of the Kuwaiti National Assembly Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, President of the Arab Parliament Ahmed Al-Jarwan in addition to the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Dr Nabil Al-Araby in Cairo in February, he added.

Jabri also pointed out to the statements of the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab Ministerial Council regarding condemnation of Iran's acts in regard to the attack on the embassy of Saudi Arabia in Iran and infringements of international conventions. There are already steps to address the

challenges and risks in the Arab arena beginning with the formation of the Arab army to support the legitimacy in Yemen in the fight against Houthi group and militias of Ali Abdullah Saleh, he said. He also announced proposed plans aimed at forming an Islamic army to fight terrorism.

Saudi support

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti MP and member of the Arab Parliament Mohammad Al-Huwaila stressed that Arab foreign ministerial support of Saudi Arabia is reflective of the stance of the Arab Parliament. Huwaila made the comments in a statement at the conclusion of a meeting of the Committee of Social, Educational, and Cultural Affairs of Female and Youth, an affiliate of the Arab Parliament. "The stance of Arab foreign ministers upholds Arab security and stability," the Kuwaiti MP said. There are insurmountable obstacles that threaten peace in the Arab world, ones that call for concerted Arab efforts to overcome any threat to any Arab nation, Huwaila said. Moreover, the Committee meeting yesterday revealed plans to introduce an Arab law designated for environment conservation. A final draft of a special resolution on Arab youth, to be verified in an Arab Parliament session today, was also discussed.—KUNA

HALA FEBRUARY TO REVITALIZE COMMERCIAL, TOURISTIC ACTIVITIES

OOREDOO MAIN SPONSOR OF THE EVENT

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: This year's edition of the annual Hala February Festival will be held between Jan 28 and Feb 24, 2016, and its various events will be broadcast by local and international media. Ooredoo is sponsoring the festival this year.

The main goal of the festival is to revitalize commercial and touristic activities. "This year we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's rule, 25th anniversary of liberation and 55th anniversary of Kuwait's independence. The previous editions of the Hala February festivals proved a success through high attendance, as Kuwait is the perfect place to organize it," said Waleed Al-Suqoubi,

head of the media committee of the festival, during a press conference yesterday.

Madina Ismael, head of the programs and activities committee, noted that the festival is made up of various activities. "The main and first of these activities is the opening carnival, which will be held on Gulf Road and will include a huge parade of floats from the public and private sectors. The festival will also include musical concerts, poetry evenings and religious symposiums, in addition to special activities held for the first time like 'Graffiti in the Love of Kuwait,' which is a competition for the best graffiti symbolizing love of Kuwait," she stated.

"Furthermore, there will be sports activities and international shows for children at the Ice Skating Rink in addi-

tion to a camp in Bneider. A marathon will also be held on Gulf Road and a special competition for horses will take place, in addition to many other activities," added Ismael. Hundreds of stores will be participating in this festival by holding special sales and providing discounts. "A daily raffle draw will be held for a vehicle in addition to cash and other valuable prizes given away daily as well," she concluded.

Mijbil Al-Ayoub, Corporate Communication Manager at Ooredoo, stated that Ooredoo is cooperating with the organizing committee of Hala February to present it in a new innovative style this year. "The company will sponsor various cultural and entertainment activities of the festival to make it the cultural showcase of Kuwait," he pointed out.



KUWAIT: Organizers and sponsors of the Hala February festival are pictured during a press conference yesterday. — KUNA photo



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah meets KUNA Chairman Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij Al-Ibrahim Al-Sabah. —KUNA

INTERIOR MINISTER APPRECIATES AMIR'S TRUST IN SECURITY FORCES

'CAMPAIGNS WILL CONTINUE TO ACHIEVE LAW AND ORDER'

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Premier Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on the national celebrations of the 55th of the National Day and 25th of Liberation Day. The Minister also extended greetings on the occasion of His Highness the Amir's 10th anniversary of ascending the throne.

The minister made these remarks in his office yesterday, while receiving Chairman of the Federation of Arab News Agencies (FANA), and Board Chairman and Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij Al-Ibrahim Al-Sabah.

Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled expressed his appreciation to His Highness the Amir for putting his trust in security forces for keeping the country's security. "This trust is a great incentive to keep giving," he said.

His Highness the Amir not only cares about

the safety of Kuwaitis inside the country but also look after them elsewhere, pointing to His Highness the Amir's endeavors towards releasing Kuwaiti detainees at the Guantanamo Bay. He added that His Highness the Prime Minister and National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem spare no effort in supporting the country's security's apparatuses.

"The Government does not fall short of protecting the country and its people and Kuwait will always remain safe and secure," he reassured. "We will not allow anyone to jeopardize the security of this country. We will not compromise people's rights and freedoms," he affirmed.

Security campaigns

Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled added that security campaigns will be carried out in many areas of the country in order to achieve "law and order". He encouraged violators of the residency visa to rectify their legal status to avoid taking any disciplinary measures against them.

To ensure further safety in the country, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled noted the min-

istry collected weapons and ammunitions from the public. Also, it is striving to get the approval to mount surveillance cameras in many vital locations for greater security measure, in addition to encouraging the application of an environment law.

On freedoms, the Minister reassured that "freedom is prerogative for everyone in the country," promising that people's rights will not be touched unjustly once the genetic data law is applied; "its goal is to provide a comprehensive database that will be beneficial for everyone."

On terrorism, he pointed out that Kuwait has succeeded in combating terrorism by taking precautionary measures. "It is important to go after terrorism before it gets to us," stressing that the country's security forces will not allow any harm to come to the country and its people.

Furthermore, the Minister pointed out that there is a multiple cooperation agreements among Kuwait, GCC, Arab and international nations to exchange information and to monitor criminal and terrorist acts. —KUNA

CABINET LAUDS AMIR'S EFFORTS TO FREE KUWAITIS AT GUANTANAMO

KUWAIT: The cabinet yesterday commended His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's efforts to free Kuwaitis at Guantanamo, which eventually led to the release of the last Kuwaiti citizens there.

During a weekly meeting held at Seif Palace and chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the cabinet stressed that the US authorities responded to His Highness the Amir's efforts and set free the last Kuwaiti detainee at Guantanamo.

The move reflects the deep-rooted ties between Kuwait and the US, said Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Electricity and Water Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. Fayed Al-Kandari has been recently released, and returned home.

As yesterday's meeting started, the cabinet was informed of two messages to His Highness the Amir from Presidents of France Francois Hollande, and Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Atambayev, on means of promoting bilateral ties, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah added.

GCC meeting

Then, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah briefed the cabinet on the outcome of the GCC Ministerial Council meeting held in Riyadh on Saturday, which discussed the aggression on the Saudi embassy and consulate in Iran. In a statement issued by the meeting, the GCC states voiced support to all measures taken by the Kingdom to counter terrorists and agitators.

They held the Iranian authorities fully responsible for the aggression, in line with Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1963) and the International Law.

The GCC also stressed that such acts serve neither peace nor security in the region, or the world at large. They contradict with principles of good neighborliness, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and respect of a state sovereignty. They can ignite the fuse of more crises in the region.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, also notified the cabinet of the outcome of the recent emergency meeting for the Council of the Arab League on the same issue. The Cairo meeting formed a committee from the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt to follow up developments of the crisis with Iran, and discuss means to combat its interference in internal affairs of Arab countries.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also briefed the meeting on the outcome of the recent visit Iraq's Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA

paid to Kuwait. The visit discussed means of enhancing bilateral ties in all fields, besides regional and international security and political developments of common concern, topped with the attacks on the Saudi embassy in Tehran and the consulate in Mashhad.

In addition, the First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister apprised the ministers of the outcome of the recent visit to Kuwait by Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Morteza Sarmadi. During the visit, Kuwait renewed its rejection of the aggression on the Saudi diplomatic missions, and reiterated solidarity with the Kingdom and fellow GCC member states in this regard.

The cabinet lauded the statements issued by the recent meetings of the GCC in Riyadh, and the Arab League in Cairo. It reaffirmed Kuwait's solidarity with the Kingdom and the GCC, as well as its rejection of violating the sanctity of diplomatic missions, and the interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

Relocation

Meanwhile, the cabinet approved a recommendation on a request by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor to move the administration of the Department of Disabled Care and the Vocational Training Center to be affiliated to the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs. It also agreed to shift supervision of private kindergartens from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor to the Ministry of Education.

Concluding yesterday's meeting, the cabinet appreciated the hard efforts by Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah and members of the Standing Committee of the celebrations of Kuwait's national holidays. This followed a video review of the preparations for the 2016 celebrations of the National Day and the Liberation Day next month. —KUNA

ACTIVISTS CALL FOR AMENDING COMMERCIAL MONOPOLY LAWS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

KUWAIT: Speakers at a seminar titled 'National Assembly: Between commercial monopoly and the nation's interests' unanimously agreed that parliamentary proposals and laws on commercial monopoly do not serve consumers, and called for amending them. Speaking at the seminar held in Andalus, Nasser Al-Shulaimi, Secretary General of the '11/11' movement stressed that they were not against merchants and were only fighting greedy ones, which were few but had enough power to have some legislations passed like a 'shadow government'.

Former minister Jassim Al-Oun stressed that governments worldwide have defined agendas and programs and that bills and parliamentary proposals do change by changing some people. "Our government lacks such concepts," he underlined, noting that once the government proposes a bill, the bill is subjected to change according to the interests of the group new ministers assuming power belong to.

Oun added that comparing various proposals made under the same name, one would find 180 degree changes, though the monopoly law affects all citizens and expats. "The government seems to be held hostage by each group for a while," he said, noting that it was politically unacceptable to change government policies when changing ministers.

Enormous burdens

MP Mohammed Tana Al-Azmi said that the agencies' bill would be reviewed today and that both the government and the parliament have enormous burdens and need to join hands to fight corruption and get the development wheel moving forward. Azmi added that he was surprised with amendments the financial committee made to article one of the bill in a way that alienates the principle of banning monopoly. "Laws should not be set to meet certain interests



KUWAIT: A photo showing the speakers at a seminar titled 'National Assembly: Between commercial monopoly and the nation's interests,' held Sunday night. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

or agendas," he underlined.

Also speaking at the seminar was management sciences professor Dr Yousif Al-Mutairi, who stressed that the articles discussed would make the law come out differently and that certain parties were actually working in favor of enhancing monopoly. Representative of the Civil Society for Consumer Protection Mohammed Al-Ali said that the state was heading towards reducing subsidies and at the same time try to keep prices under control. "With monopolizing certain goods, prices will never go down," he said. Former minister Ahmed Baqer stressed that Kuwait still has only one stock market while the UAE has two. "Competitiveness is very important and we had a competitiveness law passed in 2007, but it was never put into practice," he rued.

Victimizing citizens

Meanwhile, MP Faisal Al-Kandari strongly rejected passing the commercial agencies law in a way that takes merchants' side at the expense of citizens. "Passing the law with some amendments that changed its essence would victimize citizens and place them under the mercy of merchants," he said, noting that all anti-citizen and pro-merchant amendments will be rejected. Kandari added that the law had been set to protect agents' rights and achieve honest competitiveness amongst commercial agencies in order to eventually provide consumers with the best goods and services. "How can competitiveness be achieved when the law was amended in a way that bans the presence of more than one agent or distributor?" he wondered.

WORLD-CLASS AMBULANCES JOIN MEDICAL EMERGENCY FLEET: MINISTER

KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Ali Al-Obaidi announced on Sunday that 51 world-class ambulances joined the fleet of medical emergency services (EMS), reaching up to 219. In a festival marking this occasion, Obaidi said this move is part of the ministry's plan to expand and develop emergency services so as to upgrade skills of staff and ambulances through cooperating with international centers in this field. He stressed the necessity of benefiting from international techniques to develop systems of communications among EMS main operations room and all ambulances.

Asked about the service of air ambulances, the minister said that it started last March and has transferred about 400 cases so far from remote areas. He revealed that services of EMS are provided to people through 64 centers across the country, noting that the department has up to 1,500 employees.

167,000 cases

The department's staff dealt with more than 167,000 cases last year, he said, stressing the importance of implementing "the national project for training", which aims to train about 10 percent of Kuwait's population on first aid skills and life-saving. High rates of injuries are due to road accidents and high rates of heart diseases are among challenges facing the department, he stated. Meanwhile, the ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Medical Service Affairs Dr Jamal Al-Harbi said that ambulances

are equipped with internal cameras so as to communicate easily with hospital's casualty departments to help doctors achieve their missions.

Cooperation protocols

In other news, the Ministry of Health said it intends to sign a number of cooperation protocols with some Egyptian and Jordanian universities in areas of training and development so as to upgrade skills of psychologists and social workers at ministry. This came during a speech by Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Dr Majda Al-Qattan at a workshop on medical social care.

She said that the workshop, which was co-organized with Egypt's University of Helwan, focused on social workers at the ministry's hospitals, noting that the event featured more than 250 social workers. She urged the ministry's employees to acquire science and knowledge from all sources, and develop themselves through training courses, workshops and conferences.

Qattan stated that social care is a humanitarian profession which interests in concerns of people, appealing to workers to cope with the latest developments in this field in order to provide better services for people. Meanwhile, Dr Sara Al-Mutairi, a senior official at the ministry, said in a similar speech that the workshop discussed several topics, including skills of social workers and preparations for researches and studies. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Hawally prevention department at Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) carried out an inspection campaign at public and private hospitals in the Hawally Governorate. Brigadier Khalid Al-Ajmi said KFSD is keen on carrying out those campaigns because they are related to places with special nature such as hospitals. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

GCC TO SIGN VAT AGREEMENT BY JUNE

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is due to sign an agreement on applying value added tax (VAT) by June at the latest, after all requirements needed to pass it were completed, said the Saudi Okaz newspaper. According to Okaz, a special schedule will be prepared to indicate member states' readiness pending actual application by the beginning of 2018.

Draft laws

The government yesterday referred two draft laws to the parliament on psychiatric health, psychiatric patients' care and social care for senior citizens.



KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Ali Al-Obaidi speaks during a ceremony to announce acquiring 51 world-class ambulances. —KUNA photos



KUWAIT: A group photo for the students and organizers of a graduation ceremony of the fifth batch of 'The Protégés' program. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

'THE PROTÉGÉS' FIFTH BATCH STUDENTS CELEBRATE GRADUATION

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The graduation ceremony of the fifth batch of 'The Protégés' program's students was held on Sunday at Yarmouk cultural center. It was organized by Kuwait Projects Company Holding (KIPCO). "The Protégés has proved its success through its great projects, and I was very impressed with the quality of our Protégés and the work they did," said Abeer Al-Omar, corporate communications manager at KIPCO, the main sponsor of Generation 5.

Inspiring

Omar noted that KIPCO is keen to invest in Kuwaiti youth and the development of their skills. "The enthusiasm and teamwork that we saw from these guys is very inspiring, and it was a pleasure to recognize them. 'Raqsh: Donate to Educate' was a great humanitarian project, where members collected books and donated them to those in need in order to promote education," she enthused.

Mentor Shamlan Al-Bahar, The Protégés' general manager, spoke about The Protégés' beginnings. "We were six persons when we started The Protégés, and we decided to take out time to make a better future for Kuwaiti youth. Now we are here to graduate 24 young Kuwaitis with their humane ideas. The Protégés was our brainchild, and thousands of Kuwaitis applied this year, although we only accept 25 students in our program. And this shows how successful the program is," he said. "It has been a pleasure to get to know these passionate and motivated young people, and I am eager to see what they will achieve in the future. Young people are the means to uplift any community."

Underprivileged students

The Raqsh project seeks to provide books to underprivileged students by collecting books via devices placed in selected locations and by mass donations - the books donated are sent to refugee camps. The project emerged from The Protégés Generation 5 team of 24 to positively

impact society, and their goal is to collect 3,500 books in eight weeks.

The Protégés program is a part of a social enterprise that is designed to positively influence the youth of Kuwait through an inclusive program that combines travel, lectures, group activities, challenges, games and fun. Guided by a team of mentors, The Protégés are encouraged to discover their passions and are given the necessary tools to assist them excel in their future careers and contribute positively to society.

The Protégés aims to discover extraordinary potential in the youth and develop it through this once-in-a-lifetime experience. They offer these bright young minds the chance to master skills and techniques necessary to meet their goals. The Protégés are selected based on a thorough screening process ensuring that they meet high standards of excellence. Applicants must meet the following criteria: Aged 16 to 24, be charismatic, social, disciplined, tolerant, moral, eager to learn, hardworking, and demonstrate superiority to peers by successful achievements.

KUWAITI STUDENTS BEGIN TRIP TO CHINA

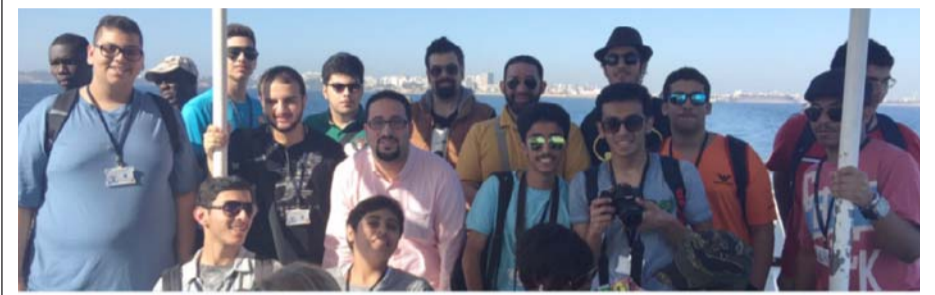
NINGXIA/DAKAR: A group of high-achieving Kuwaiti female students began a tour in the Ningxia autonomous region in China on Sunday, as part of an annual trip organized by Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and the Ministry of Education. The trip included a visit to Ningxia's public hospital in Yinchuan, the capital of the autonomous region, where the Hui Muslim ethnic community lives.

The hospital, funded by KFAED with \$34 million (41 percent), stretches over 43 hectares and contains 2,630 beds, deputy chairman of the hospital told KUNA yesterday. It is currently considered the fourth best in China, said the official, adding that the building will be renovated while another sub-branch of the hospital with 800 beds will be opened. Meanwhile, the group also visited the Ningxia institute for Islamic studies, where students receive education on Arabic, Islamic and literature subjects, as well as studies on Chinese history. The Kuwaiti students were accompanied by their Chinese counterparts during their tour in the institute, where they exchanged cultural experience. Ningxia was established in 1945 in northwestern China. The autonomous region is the smallest province in the country, stretching over 66,400 square kilometers. Meanwhile, another group of distinguished Kuwaiti high school students visited

historical and cultural sites in Senegal on Sunday as part of a trip organized by Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. After their arrival a day prior, the students were taken to Goree Island's House of Slaves, locally referred to as Maison des Esclaves, a museum and memorial said to have once housed slaves who were being transported to the Americas during the colonial period. Located in the Atlantic Ocean, the island itself is a stark reminder of a European colonial past in West Africa which stretched over three centuries. The island, a UNESCO World Heritage site, carries a traditional feel that is full of life scattered with outdoor markets selling local handmade goods. Other sites on the island include William Ponty School, a French colonial school established in 1903 which was instrumental in producing some of the most accomplished leaders on the continent.

Alli Al-Doukhi, one of the students, said that the visit, which concludes on January 16, has given him new insight into the tradition and culture of West African peoples, along with the impacts of colonialism on this part of the world.

The visit has also contributed to the photographic indulgence of Abdulredha Al-Muhanna, who said that the images he had witnessed were a great chance for him to take many a snap of traditional houses and colorful birds. — KUNA



DAKAR: Kuwaiti high school students visit historical and cultural sites in Senegal.

INDIAN EMBASSY CONFERENCE DISCUSSES COMMUNITY ISSUES

JAIN HIGHLIGHTS ACHIEVEMENTS AT PBD 2016

By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: The Indian Embassy in Kuwait hosted a conference at its auditorium on Saturday and discussed several welfare issues concerning the Indian community in Kuwait on the occasion of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) 2016. PBD is celebrated every year in India since 2003 in order to connect India to its vast overseas Diaspora and bring their knowledge, expertise and skills on a common platform. This year, making a paradigm shift in its format, PBD conferences were held at various Indian embassies across the world in which delegates participated and presented proposals on improving the lot of the diaspora.

In his opening remarks, Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain highlighted the achievements of the government and the measures the embassy has taken in solving several issues of the community. Specifically talking about the issue of unfair practices of recruiting Indian labor from Kuwait, Jain pointed out several improvements. Firstly, he said the India government had put an end to recruitment of female domestic servants to Kuwait. Currently there are about 300,000 Indian domestic helpers in Kuwait.



KUWAIT: Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Sunil Jain speaks at the PBD 2016 conference at the embassy.

Nurses

The embassy also signed an agreement with the Kuwait's Ministry of Health streamlining the recruitment of nurses from India through government agencies such as NORKA, ODE-PC and OMCL. It was a landmark agreement that has virtually abolished overseas recruitment of nurses by private agencies from April 30, 2015, he said.

In service to citizens in Kuwait, the embassy last year issued 87,083 passports compared to 75,031 showing a

growth of 16 percent while 94,363 attestations were done compared to 94,363 in 2014 registering a growth of two percent. The embassy issued 3,923 emergency certificates for repatriation of Indians in 2015 compared to 2,791 in 2014. The ambassador also noted that there is a 33 percent increase in drug and liquor related crimes by Indians living in Kuwait, which is a worrying factor.

Contracts

Indian companies won several

contracts for various projects in Kuwait in the year 2015, the ambassador said. In 2015, Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) has also made substantial investment in India showing the growing confidence of Kuwait in the Indian economy, he pointed out.

Various issues such as streamlining the activities of Indian associations, a platform for hosting Indian cultural events, exorbitant air fares being charged by India's state carriers from passengers from Kuwait were also raised and discussed during the conference.

Reaven D'Souza, Sajeev K Peter, Ashfaq Khan, Mohd Farooq, Sunoj Nambiar, Dr Shansethil, Vibheesh Thikkody, Chaitali Roy, S K Wadhawan, Rajpal Thyagi, Sharafudeen Kanneth, Dr Vinod Grover, Prashanth Nair and Hari Balaramapuram addressed the conference speaking on different issues. Deputy Chief of Mission Subhashish Golder concluded the event while A K Srivastava coordinated the event.

Representatives of various Indian associations, representing the community attended the event.

PBD is held on 9th of January every year to mark the contribution of overseas Indian community in the development of India.

UN OFFICIAL PRAISES KUWAIT'S HUMANITARIAN WORK

GENEVA: Director of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Rashid Khalikov lauded yesterday Kuwait's prominent role in supporting United Nations organizations tasked with humanitarian missions worldwide.



GENEVA: Kuwait's permanent delegate to the UN, Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim with the Director of UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Rashid Khalikov. — KUNA

Khalikov praised Kuwait in a meeting with Kuwait's permanent delegate to the UN, Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim, at the Kuwaiti Commission headquarters in Geneva, held ahead of his official visit to Kuwait planned today. He added that his visit to Kuwait will tackle topics related to cooperation between Kuwait and the United Nations in humanitarian field.

"The United Nations cannot forget Kuwait's voluntary contributions and rapid action to deal with disasters and conflicts wherever they occur in the world; reflecting its adherence to humanitarian work regardless of ethnic or religious affiliations," Khalikov added.

Khalikov also expressed deep appreciation to Kuwait for its remarkable efforts to tackle the humanitarian situation in Syria by hosting three donors' conferences. Meanwhile, Ambassador Ghunaim pointed out that the cooperation between Kuwait and the United Nations in the humanitarian field comes from Kuwait's foreign policy principles, and out of Kuwait's keenness in alleviating human suffering caused by crises and disasters around the world. — KUNA

ZAKAT HOUSE LAUNCHES URGENT RELIEF CAMPAIGN FOR SYRIA'S MADAYA RESIDENTS

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Zakat House launched an urgent relief campaign Sunday, receiving donations and alms to rescue residents of Madaya town in Syria who have been stricken by hunger and poverty due to the ongoing conflict in that country.

Zakat House's

Director General Dr Ibrahim Al-Saleh has met with organizers of the relief campaign to discuss the current situation in Madaya, and the possibility of granting aid convoys an access to the besieged town in order to deliver the relief materials to the residents, the Kuwaiti charity house said in a press statement. Saleh stressed the importance of speedy delivery of these aid to the town's families to enable them rescue their children and elders from starvation, the statement said, adding that he has affirmed Zakat House's willingness to receive donations from companies and individuals to aid devastated families.

Zakat House called on Kuwait's citizens and residents to donate to help Madaya residents via the House's website: <http://www.zakathouse.org.kw>, its branches that are usually located near cooperative societies in various areas around the country, or by calling 174 to be informed on donation methods.

The House is moving on with supporting philanthropic and humanitarian projects as part of implementing the directions of the Kuwaiti political leadership in cooperation with Kuwaiti philanthropists, companies and individuals, who trusted the House in delivering their aid to devastated families and people. — KUNA



EDUCATION MINISTER UNDERLINES IMPORTANCE OF GUIDE MOVEMENT

KUWAIT: Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Bader Al-Essa underlined importance of the guide movement in strengthening loyalty to the nation and volunteering. The guide movement is quite active in Kuwait, which houses the Arab Girl Guides and "is proud to do so," Essa said in a statement following the opening of the annual Peace Camp on Sunday. The camp's theme this year is strengthening principles of loyalty to the nation.

President of the Girl Guides Society Haid Al-Houly said the camp aimed at promoting values of belonging and loyalty to the nation. She said the camp also aimed at honoring aspirations of the girl guides, allowing them to interact and get acquainted with each other as well as improving their skills. The girl guides should develop their skills, she said, in a positive fashion. Other speakers highlighted the importance of promoting sound educational values. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Bader Al-Essa lights the torch of the camp. — KUNA

NUKS - USA HONORS ABK FOR GOLDEN SPONSORSHIP OF 32ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait recently announced that it was honored by the National Union for Kuwaiti Students (NUKS) - USA branch, represented by its President, Fahad Al-Jadaan and Treasurer, Daoud Al-Busairi, for its Golden Sponsorship of the 32nd annual conference.

The conference, which took place in San Diego - California, was held under the patronage and presence of Kuwait's Minister of Education and Higher Education, Dr Bader Al-Essa, and Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States, Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Sabah.

Abdulla Al-Sumait, Deputy Chief General Manager at ABK, recognized the tremendous

efforts of the members of NUKS - USA for successfully organizing the 32nd conference, and the active participation of students during the event. Sumait also highlighted the Bank's keenness to support Kuwait's youth and to offer these students job opportunities by participating in the job fair held at the conference. This participation allowed the Bank to introduce students to its activities, operations and services offered to its clients.

This sponsorship comes in line with the Banks Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives which include the education sector and the support of Kuwait's youth.



KUWAIT: Abdulla Al-Sumait, Deputy Chief General Manager at ABK receives a commemorative plaque from NUKS - USA branch President Fahad Al-Jadaan.

In Brief

LEAK CONTROLLED

KUWAIT: Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) said Sunday a leak in one of the fuel supply lines for power and Water Distillation station in Sabbiya Area has been controlled. The station was not affected because there were alternative supply lines, KOC Spokesman Menahi Al-Enezi said. KOC teams were cleaning the fuel and would repair the defect in the original fuel supply line, he said, adding that KOC would investigate the causes of the leak. —KUNA



MILITARY DRILL

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Defense announced yesterday a military drill code-named 'kolona eyalak,' would be held near Failaka island on January 16th. The exercise will be held between 4:00 am and noon time, the ministry said in a brief statement. The Ministry urged citizens and residents to abstain from approaching locations close to the drill zone during the declared scheduled of the training. —KUNA



AID TO REFUGEES

BEIRUT: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) delivered a new batch of humanitarian aid to help 30,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Head of KRCS' team Minhel Al-Enezi said yesterday that the new aid package consists of 300 detergent items and 600 blankets. The number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon amounts to more than one million, stationed in various camps across the country. —KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A statue made from copper of a man dragging a bull using a rope. It is from Persia or Mesopotamia, and dates back to the Bronze Age (2800 - 3000 BC). It is displayed at the Dar Al-Athar Islamiyyah museum in Kuwait City. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: Food restaurants' complexes overlooking seashores. —KUNA

SEASIDE RESTAURANT COMPLEXES: GROWING REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT

KUWAIT: A total of nine food restaurants' complexes overlooking seashores of the country reflects remarkable growth of this sector in the few recent years-starting from Al-Kout Mall in Al-Fahaheel city to Kuwait Towers at the Gulf Street.

Half of these complexes of various designs were built three years ago only. Many reasons are forcing real estate investors to finance such projects, regarding that tourism in Kuwait is of seasonal nature, which negatively affects revenues.

Such a phenomenon could be viewed "as a seasonal one or as a natural development in the realty commercial sector." The complexes offer consumers various choices of several and different restaurants and cafes, all situated in a single location overlooking the sea.

Real-estate experts in interviews with KUNA said continuous success in the restaurants' sector is considered the main reason behind this phenomenon. Another cause is shortage of entertainment and cultural places in the country.

Two million a day
Consumers spend KD 700 million, of average of two million daily, in the restaurant sector in Kuwait-of a total of 5,000 restaurants visited by 615,000 people on a daily basis, they said. Director General of 'Daam' Real Estate Development Company Gazal Al-Mufti, owner of the first project in Kuwait of such restaurant complexes, said they offer comfortable accommodation for socializing and family gatherings.

The restaurant sector is considered as the most successful in Kuwait and the Gulf region, as 10 percent of the Kuwaiti people visit the restaurants daily, according to recent statistics, she added. This sector in Kuwait reached the value of KD 1.5 billion in 2012, which increased to KD 2.2 billion in 2014, with an annual growth of 15 percent, thus reflecting its importance and vitality, she said.

Managers at these complexes are now working on new food concepts; merging between a numbers of cuisines to create food fusion, she mentioned. Director of Al-Dlajjan real estate office Slaiman Al-Dlajjan said that the strong purchasing power of the Kuwaiti people contributes to encouraging the business. —KUNA



KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced Hussein Nabil Asiri as the winner of a BMW X5, presented as part of a campaign targeting Kuwaiti employees who transfer their salaries to CBK.

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 - Free Camera Bag.
 - One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai-Kuwait.
- Second prize**
 - Canon Camera Eos 70D + Canon EF 20mm f/2.8 USM.
 - Free Camera Bag.
 - One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai-Kuwait.
- Third prize**
 - Canon Camera Eos 70D + Canon EF-S 18-135 mm.
 - Free Camera Bag.
 - One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait
- Fourth prize**
 - Canon Camera EOS 760D + Canon EF 85 mm f/1.8 USM.
 - Free Camera Bag.
 - One Economy class ticket Kuwait- Bahrain- Kuwait
- Fifth prize**
 - Canon Camera EOS 760D + Canon EF 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6 DO IS USM.
 - Free Camera Bag.
 - One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Bahrain - Kuwait
- Sixth prize**
 - Canon Camera PowerShot G15.
 - Free Camera Bag.
 - One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Bahrain - Kuwait

Rules & Conditions:

- The competition is open to individuals of all ages.
- The submitted photos should be taken by the participant.
- Every participant is allowed to submit maximum five entries.
- The photos can be black and white or colour.
- All entries should be provided a hard copy and Soft Copy on a CD (in high resolution)with photo of the participant needs to be included in the CD. The photos can be black and white or colour size 4x6x30 cm
- The original coupon should be attached to the back of each photo and should include a complete information about the participant. The coupons are advertised at Kuwait Times and Al Anba newspapers during the period of competition.
- All submitted photos will become property of Kuwait Times newspaper and can be used for different purposes.
- The winners will be chosen by a panel of judges.
- All photos must be original and should not be doctored with any design program, such as Photoshop.
- All photos should be submitted at the Kuwait Times newspaper before 17th of March 2016.

Kuwait Times
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

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التبليغ Al-Anbaa

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPOVERISHING REGIONAL COUNTRIES

By Sami Al-Nisf

Despite its industrial and scientific renaissance, Europe experienced severe poverty in the period between the Thirty Year War (1618-1648), which was a sectarian war amongst European monarchies, and the end of World War II in 1945. Most resources, revenues by factories, farms and colonies were spontaneously spent and consumed by wars, and up until a few decades back, it was Europeans' life dream to have simple jobs in peaceful rich countries like...Egypt.

Up until 1945, European conflicts were based on severe hatred amongst various peoples, races and sects. The German people had never imagined living peacefully while the French still existed and vice versa, feelings that, by the way, do not exist in our region because GCC and Arab peoples, for instance, have no hard feelings or grudges for the Iranian people and vice versa. There is nothing that proves this more than the eight-year Iraq-Iran war when Iranians continued working in GCC states without any problems and Iranian pilgrims continued to receive utmost care and support in Saudi Arabia.

Well, without any nice talk or courtesy, the main thing that is really destroying the Middle East, wasting its resources and impoverishing its peoples is the unconceivable policies of the Iranian government of interfering in domestic affairs of Arab countries like Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Palestine and Lebanon, that always leads to foreign and civil conflicts resulting in sectarianism, bloodshed, destroying houses, factories and cities and farms, wasting Arab as well as Iranian resources at the same time.

The funny thing is that Iranian interference is limited to Arab countries and does not include others surrounding Iran despite the presence of followers of the same doctrine in them. The region and its peoples' future is very gloomy and heading to severe impoverishment, spread of famine, fatal diseases and displacement of millions because of one reason - Iranian interference in domestic affairs that results in creating extreme groups like Al-Qaeda, IS, Houthis and others, who are all illegitimate armed groups that must be dealt with equally.

It is not acceptable to support the Iraqi army in its war against IS in the north, and at the same time, fight the legitimate Yemeni army in its war against the Houthis troops and the troops of the deposed president Saleh. Most of the regional problems will be solved, peace will prevail and regional peoples, primarily the Iranians, will start enjoying their wealth and fortunes before they become finite, with the very moment in which Iran changes its extreme policies towards its neighbors, because they do not serve Iran or other regional countries and only serves the interests of a third party that all extremists claim to antagonize while they are in fact their closest allies!

— Translated by Kuwait Times

Crime

Report

CITIZENSHIP FORGERY CASE DISCOVERED

KUWAIT: A security source said based on instructions from Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah to cooperate and exchange information between security departments with regards to forgeries in nationalities, the first case was discovered and sent to public prosecution of a citizen accused of adding one of his cousin's children (a bedoon) to his file and got him Kuwaiti nationality from which he benefited in his studies, worked in the defense ministry and received a marriage loan besides other financial and social advantages. The security source said under the instructions and supervision of Interior Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Nationality and Passports Affairs Maj Gen Mazen Al-Jarrah, and exchange of information between nationality detectives and defense ministry intelligence, it was learnt that the accused citizen, (A.R.A.) born in 1961, added the son of the second suspect (A.H.A.) who is his bedoon brother-in-law, to his nationality file and got him official documents as a Kuwait citizen in the name of (A.A.R.).

The source added that after making sure about the information, the first suspect's home in Ahmadi was raided and he was arrested. He told authorities that during the Iraqi invasion, he left for Syria where the second suspect asked him to add his newborn child in his name to get him to Kuwait following liberation and add him to his Kuwaiti nationality file, and he obliged and submitted inaccurate information to the Kuwait embassy in Syria. He brought him to Kuwait with a travel document then got him a birth certificate from the health ministry, then added him to his file in 1993. The second and third suspects were referred to the defense ministry as they are military men.

Drunk driver arrested

"I am a drunk, not a thief," is how an Iraqi man explained his condition when he was arrested with a liquor bottle. He was taken to the police station and charged with public drunkenness and possession of alcohol. Patrol officers spotted a car being driven erratically that almost hit other cars and ran over pedestrians. When stopped, he was found heavily drunk.

Khaitan fire

Firemen put out a fire in a Khaitan flat which started due to faulty wiring. The speedy response of firemen prevented the spread of the fire, and only material losses were reported.

KD 23,000 debt

Capital patrols arrested a 28-year-old citizen wanted for a KD 23,000 debt, and he was sent to the civil implementation department. The arrest was made in Sharq when a patrol officer suspected the man who seemed nervous when police approached him. When they checked his information, he was found wanted.

Kidnappers caught

Jahra police arrested three persons who kidnapped a bedoon (stateless) man, took him to the Jahra stables area and beat him up because of previous disputes. They were charged accordingly. A security source said a call was received about a kidnapping, so Waha policemen went to the area and found the victim, who told them about the three who beat him and fled. Policemen combed the area and found the three in a car and were arrested.—Al-Rai



التبليغ

Al-Anbaa

EGYPT: A PHOENIX THAT WILL RISE FROM THE ASHES

By Thaar Al-Rasheedi

I know each and every detail about Egypt, its buildings, people's aspirations and visions, media figures, policies, politicians and history very well and whenever I write about it, it is as if I am writing about Kuwait because I know its sorrows and its many joys. In June 2013, I wrote an article predicting that the Muslim Brotherhood would once more be deemed 'a banned group'. The article was written just before the runoff between Ahmed Shafiq and Mohamed Morsi. Many analysts from both Egypt and Kuwait criticized me at the time, saying that I was only fortunetelling, but in less than a year after that, all I wrote about my beloved Egypt was realized simply because I wrote about it out of full knowledge of Egypt and Egyptians' mentality.

Nowadays, some people expect Egypt's total failure, while historic facts, for those who never read history, say that Egypt and its people have always been unbreakable. It never falls, breaks or dies. Egypt's geographic location and people are an exception regardless of who is ruling them, be they pharaohs, Romans, Islamists, Ottomans or republicans. It is always capable of rising from the ashes of crises like a phoenix that is always reborn from its own ashes.

Despite repeated domestic and regional crises,

Egypt is capable today of going through them all and resume its status as the main Arab attraction. Egypt has been and will always be Arabs' cultural and political minaret. It has always embraced Arabs and will always do so despite the temporary current delay in the aftermath of the revolution, which is historically insignificant and Egypt will overcome it, passing into a better future.

All logical political analyses we have studied in books, universities and political science books does not apply to Egypt because it has been and will always be a blessed land beyond any political theories and explanations. I do realize the amount of pessimism most Egyptians might feel, but I assure them that tomorrow's dawn is very close and it will be much better, bringing a wonderful future beyond the most optimistic people's aspirations or dreams.

Egypt will once more be better and purer than ever and will once more be Arabs' beating lively heart. Egypt is fine today and do not worry about some pessimistic statements made by some media figures or politicians, because it has always been more like a phoenix that always comes back to life and rises from its own ashes. —Translated by Kuwait Times



KUWAIT: Retired Lieutenant General, Fahad Ahmad Al-Amir, the Governor of Al-Jahra, Salah Yousef Al-Fulaij, NBK-Kuwait Chief Executive Officer, Mohammed Al-Othman, Deputy General Manager, Consumer Banking Group and Ghadeer Al Awadhi, Assistant General Manager, Consumer Banking group during the branch opening.

NBK OPENS NEW BRANCH IN SAAD AL-ABDULLAH

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) opened recently a new branch in Saad Al Abdullah City, the third in Al-Jahra Governorate. The opening of the new branch comes in tandem with the bank's strategy to strengthen its domestic presence and better serve its customers.

The opening ceremony was attended by Retired Lieutenant General, Fahad Ahmad Al-Amir, the Governor of Al-Jahra, Salah Yousef Al-Fulaij, NBK-Kuwait Chief Executive Officer, Mohammed Al Othman, Deputy General Manager, Consumer Banking Group and Ghadeer Al-Awadhi, Assistant General Manager, Consumer Banking group along with NBK officials.

"NBK has maintained its leading position in the market by constantly investing in its local network to ensure the reach of products and services to a wider segment of customers," said Fulaij. "NBK enjoys the

largest banking network in Kuwait with more than 68 branches."

"NBK's new branch in Saad Al-Abdullah, in Al-Jahra Governorate reflects our commitment to continuously develop services and maintain our leading position as the bank of choice for customers," Fulaij added.

The new branch provides customers with complete banking solutions. It is fully equipped with the latest technology in banking services to ensure that customers are able to issue their cards instantly, carry out their transactions easily and meet their expectations.

NBK has maintained its leading position in the market by constantly investing in its local network to ensure the reach of products and services to a wider segment of customers. NBK customers can control their accounts and manage their finances around the clock, seven days a week via NBK Mobile Banking, NBK

Online Banking, or by simply calling NBK Call Center on 1801801.

'NO MARRIAGE LOAN REDUCTION'

KUWAIT: Sources said the economic committee at the cabinet asked for the cancellation of a suggestion to reduce the subsidy on marriage loans in the study presented to the finance ministry by Ernest & Young. The sources said the committee rejected any change in marriage grants to citizens, justifying it by saying they are not high to a point that make them part of the reasons for the budget deficit, because it is only KD 2,000 given to the married man. — Al-Qabas

التبليغ Al-Anbaa

I'M FREE WITH MY TUMMY

By Samy Al-Khorafy

Many people have become more concerned with appearances than real essences. I recently had the pleasure of running into Bo Hamad, an old friend I had not seen for long. It really caught my eye how overweight he was compared to the good old times when he used to be a role model in agility and fitness amongst us and throughout various neighborhoods around us. "What is wrong with you...you are becoming as roundish as the Sadeq Roundabout?" I asked him.

Responding with a grin, he said: "Look, Bo Fahad, I have tried everything. I ate dark bitter chocolate because somebody told me it helps lose weight and I found out it was nonsense. I tried all the diet meal companies and got fed up with machbous plates going past totally ignoring me as if they were laughing at me and saying: 'You will regret this, you fat man!' I tried saccharin with the hope of cutting down on sugar but I stopped using it when I learnt that it was bad for the heart and that many countries have banned it. I was advised not to eat red meat because it is harmful and might lead to what is known as the 'Kings disease', and you know I am dead poor....so what do you want me to have...just settle for nakhi and bajella?!"

"I am the type of person who adores Adani fat, especially when used in cooking mutabbaq fish. But I stopped it when they told me it increases cholesterol levels and blocks arteries and veins. So I stopped using it with tears in my eyes over such a silly advice. Others advised me not to go to bed after lunch to avoid turning carbohydrates into blood sugar. Who do they think I am - Napoleon Bonaparte?!"

"I was advised to eat as much vegetables as I could and I did to the extent that I started feeling like a goat totally ignored on a ranch. For god's sake, I am fed up with this! I was also advised to walk for half an hour every day to improve my blood circulation and I got everything set up and lost money to a company that got richer at my expense. I walked for a whole week and breathed in to make my tummy look smaller during the exercise, but the minute I returned to the scale, it seemed to be laughing at me and saying 'There is no way you will lose weight!'."

"Getting fed up with this routine, I tried alternative medicine and took many laxatives with no use. Whenever I learnt about a new medicine, they told me it was perfect, but later said it is harmful....and so on. Eventually, I decided to follow the old song that says: 'What do I have to do with people and what do people have to do with me.' And now, I am back to square one with the result that you currently see - Sadeq Roundabout!" he told me.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

TWO SISTERS ATTACK DOCTOR

KUWAIT: An Egyptian doctor was beaten by two Kuwait sisters following a verbal exchange at north Sabah Al-Salem health center, before others intervened and solved the problem, with the sisters leaving. Informed sources said a citizen went for treatment at noon, accompanied with her sister, and as soon as they entered the clinic, a verbal exchange took place. Then the two attacked the doctor, who attempted to defend herself but to no avail. A complaint was filed in the police station. — Al-Qabas

1-YEAR REHAB FOR KANDARI

KUWAIT: Fayez Al-Kandari, who returned from Guantanamo Bay prison, will go through a rehab program for one year and will be integrated with the society as soon as his health program is completed. Sources said a joint committee from the foreign, awqaf, interior and health ministries, that was formed to follow the case of fellow returnee Fawzi Al-Odah, will also handle the case of Kandari. — Al-Qabas

KD 1.34 BILLION UNCOLLECTED DUES

KUWAIT: Informed sources said that dues owed to the government continue to accumulate from the previous fiscal years, reaching KD 1.34 billion and are concentrated in five ministries. Sources said the amount includes dues on companies under the income tax decree, labor support and zakat law, with over KD 500 million, in addition to nearly KD 200 million due to MEW. They said the dues also include KD 86 million for the post office, KD 64 million for traffic in addition to KD 25 million for the health ministry. The sources said some ministries provided the State Audit Bureau with information to take action to collect the dues and go to court. — Al-Qabas

EXCEPTION FOR EXPAT TEACHERS AT EDUCATION MINISTRY

KUWAIT: Informed sources said the Civil Service Commission (CSC) informed the Education Ministry not to hire non-Kuwaitis except as teachers, adding that there will not be any openings for expat employees during the next school year except for teachers. Meanwhile, CSC asked five government entities to provide it with the necessary job descriptions and employment grades for rare specialties for those registered in the central employment system among graduates of Kuwait University and foreign ones. The sources said these areas are for the health, education, electricity and public works ministries in addition to the Environment Public Authority. He said these bodies are the ones most benefiting from rare specialties such as physics, biology and engineering. He added that the number of holders of such specialties has reached record levels over the wait period for employment, nearly 1.5 years, which did not occur previously. — Al-Qabas



Pakistan's female motorists push boundaries set by men
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PROBE BLAMES MIGRANTS FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE VIOLENCE

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ISLAMABAD: In this photo released by Associated Press of Pakistan, delegates from Pakistan, Afghanistan, China and United States attend a meeting hoping to lay the roadmap for peace talks with the Taliban, at the foreign ministry. — AP

PAKISTAN HOSTS FOUR-WAY PEACE TALKS

AFGHANISTAN, CHINA, US PAVE ROADS TO PEACE

ISLAMABAD: A key gathering was underway yesterday in Islamabad with four countries - Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States - hoping to lay the roadmap to peace for the war-shattered Afghan nation. The meeting comes as Afghanistan's battlefield losses are mounting and some parts of the country are under constant threat from Taliban gunmen. Taliban representatives have not been invited to the talks, vowing to talk only to the US and not to the government in Kabul.

As the gathering got under way, host Pakistan - seen as key to bringing the warring Taliban factions to the table - cautioned of the difficulties ahead. Sartaj Aziz, adviser to the Pakistani prime minister on foreign affairs, warned against prematurely deciding which Taliban factions are ready to talk, urging instead "confidence building" measures to get even the recalcitrant Taliban to the negotiating table.

But analysts and participants say much of the hope for progress toward peace rests with Pakistan, which is accused of harboring some of the fiercest factions of the Taliban, including the Haqqani group, a US-declared terrorist organization. Pakistan says its influence over the Taliban is overrated.

Spreading resources

"Even at the best of times they (Taliban) didn't listen to us," Aziz said earlier. "Look at Bamiyan," he said, referring to the Taliban's destruction in the summer of 2001 of some of the world's most precious statues of Buddha. The Taliban blew up the statues, ignoring the roars of dissent, including from Pakistan.

The Taliban have stepped up their insurgency since the

withdrawal of NATO-led combat troops from Afghanistan a year ago, testing government forces that are forced to spread their resources across the country. But while the fight intensifies, the insurgents rarely hold territory they take for more than a few days and are often driven back by Afghan security forces, sometimes with the support of US airstrikes.

Aziz refused to say whether Pakistan has a list of Taliban representatives prepared to enter into peace negotiations. The existence of such a list was announced Sunday by Javid Faisal, deputy spokesman for Afghanistan's Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah. At the start of yesterday's conference, Aziz urged that participants avoid the media and work toward finding ways to get all the Taliban to talk peace. He said the Islamabad gathering needs to define the "overall direction of the reconciliation process" and goals that would create a "conducive environment for holding direct talks between the Afghan government and Taliban groups." After Aziz's televised remarks, the meeting proceeded behind closed doors into afternoon hours.

Taliban ready for talks

Meanwhile, a breakaway Taliban group said yesterday it was ready for talks. The faction, which emerged following the revelation last year that the Taliban leader and founder Mullah Mohammed Omar had died two years ago, is believed to be relatively small and its absence from the battlefield is unlikely to be a game changer.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban have recently been on the offensive in southern Helmand province bordering Pakistan, threatening key towns, including the capital of Lashkar Gah. Most of the world's opium is produced in Helmand, which

along with other contraband helps fund the insurgency.

In the province's Sangin district, the Taliban besieging the local army base for days before reinforcements, backed by US air strikes and British military advisers, were sent in to repel the attackers. As the prospect of a peace dialogue grows, the Taliban can be expected to step up their fight in order to ensure they join any peace dialogue from a position of strength.

Imtiaz Gul, whose Center for Research and Security Studies has delved deeply into the Afghan conflict and Pakistan's decades-old involvement, says Pakistan has significant leverage with the Taliban, led by Omar's replacement Mullah Akhtar Mansoor.

Militants in both countries are allied, and getting rid of the Haqqanis, for example, could unleash a violent backlash inside Pakistan where the army has been fighting for several years to defeat a coalition of militant groups largely based in its border areas with Afghanistan, Gul said. That battle has been brutal with thousands of Pakistani soldiers killed and wounded and thousands more Pakistani civilians killed in deadly retaliatory suicide attacks by the militants.

Past practices

Gul said last month's trip by Pakistani army chief Gen. Raheel Sharif, who travelled to Afghanistan unaccompanied by the country's powerful ISI intelligence agency, long considered the force behind the Taliban, was a signal the military was ready to move away from past practices and center future policy decisions only at the army headquarters.

Changes won't come quickly, says Gul, "but important for us is to turn the page (from supporting militants) and I

think Gen. Raheel Sharif has turned that page." Though the Taliban were not invited to yesterday's talks, a senior Taliban official, who spoke on condition of anonymity fearing exposure and capture, told the AP that two Taliban delegates, currently headquartered in Qatar, will meet "soon" with China's representatives. The meeting, which will also include Pakistan, is to be held in Islamabad, said the official.

Still, there seems little to no chance for early peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government. The Taliban, struggling to consolidate their leadership council following Omar's death, have drawn their line in the sand: no official talks with Kabul on a peaceful end to their protracted and bloody war until direct talks can be held with the United States.

"We want talks with the Americans first because we consider them a direct party," the Taliban official said in a face-to-face interview with the AP. The Taliban want recognition of their Qatar office under the banner of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the name they used when they ruled Afghanistan until they were ousted by the US-led coalition in 2001. They also want the United Nations to remove the Taliban from its wanted list and they want their prisoners released from Afghan jails.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani wants no part in giving the Taliban official recognition. Maulvi Shazada Shaheed, a representative on Afghanistan's High Peace Council, tasked with seeking peace with the Taliban, said the distance between the two sides is vast, holding out little hope for peace. "In the current situation, it is not possible to bring peace," he said. — AP

AL-QAEDA THREATENS SAUDI OVER JIHADISTS' EXECUTIONS

DUBAI: The Saudi-Yemeni and North African branches of Al-Qaeda have threatened to avenge Saudi Arabia's execution of more than 40 jihadists, calling the measure a "foolish act." Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb said in an online statement Sunday that the kingdom executed the militants despite knowing that the "mujahedin have pledged to avenge the pure blood of their brothers."

The January 2 executions were a "new crime committed by the regime of Al-Saud, demonstrating their

tyranny and their fight against jihad (holy war)", the statement added, claiming that the judicial system serves the ruling family in "cementing their rule and oppressing their opponents".

"They should fear the day when the relatives of those martyrs, their brothers and partisans... celebrate (vengeance) against the infidel tyrants." The statement charged that the rulers of the leading Sunni Muslim kingdom "shed the blood of the mujahedin as an offer to the crusaders who were celebrating the beginning of their new year."

Riyadh announced the execution of 47 people convicted of "terrorism". Among them were four Shiites, including prominent cleric Nimr al-Nimr, whose death triggered a diplomatic crisis between Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shiite-dominated Iran. In an audio statement posted online, leading Saudi Al-Qaeda chief Ibrahim Al-Assiri warned: "we will deal with Al-Saud, now that the blood has been shed". AQAP is considered by the United States to be the most dangerous affiliate of the global extremist network. — AFP

قطع علاقة



تنوه شركة مجموعة فوزية مبارك الحساوي لإدارة المطاعم بأن السيد / محمد معز بن حسن بن تركيه كان يعمل لديها كمدير تسويق من ٧ ديسمبر ٢٠١٥ وحتى ٦ يناير ٢٠١٦ وعليه تنبه الشركة أنه لا يمثلها في أي تعاملات وأنها لا تتحمل أي مسؤولية مادية أو معنوية تجاه أي جهات أو أشخاص يتعامل معهم من ذلك التاريخ.

MUMBAI POLICE FORCE-FEED THIEF DOZENS OF BANANAS

MUMBAI: Indian police successfully deployed an unusual technique to retrieve a gold chain that a thief had swallowed while officers were in hot pursuit—they force-fed him more than 40 bananas. The man denied snatching the chain from a woman in the street in Mumbai and swallowed it in a desperate bid to conceal his crime last week, but hospital X-rays suggested otherwise.

Police in the western Indian city administered an enema which failed to yield the desired result. Doctors said an operation would be the best way forward, but police officers decided it would be too expensive and opted instead for the bananas. "He was fed more than 40 bananas throughout the day," Mumbai police Senior Inspector Shankar Dhanavade said.

"Eventually the chain was found. We made him wash and disinfect it," the policeman added. The 25-year-old man appeared in court on Friday and is in police custody, said Dhanavade. According to reports, it was not the first time Mumbai police had turned to the fruit in order to recover a stolen item.

In July last year a chain was retrieved after a thief was made to eat two dozen bananas and drink several liters of milk laced with laxatives, the Hindustan Times reported. Months earlier in April, a thief was fed five dozen bananas after swallowing a gold chain with a large pendant. The thief successfully excreted the loot. But the disgusted victim refused to touch it and instead took it to a jeweler in a plastic bag, the newspaper said. — AFP



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DEADLY STRIKE ON YEMEN MSF CLINIC DRAWS CONDEMNATION

A 'WORRYING PATTERN' OF SUCH ATTACKS

DUBAI: A missile strike on a Doctors Without Borders clinic in Yemen killed at least four people Sunday, the group said, condemning what it called a "worrying pattern" of such attacks. The raid was the third of its kind in four months in the war-ravaged country, where a Saudi-led coalition has been battling Shiite Houthi rebels who have seized territory from the internationally-recognized government.

It also follows a US strike in Afghanistan on a facility run by the Paris-based medical humanitarian organization, known by its French acronym MSF, which killed 42 people. MSF could not specify whether the medical facility was hit in an air strike by the Saudi-led coalition or by a rocket fired from the ground.

Three MSF staff were among 10 people wounded in the Yemen strike, and two other members of staff were in "critical condition," MSF said in a statement. "The numbers of casualties could rise as there could still be people trapped

in the rubble," it said, adding that the missile hit the medical facility in the Razeh district of Saada province.

All staff and patients had been evacuated, with the patients being transferred to another MSF-supported hospital in Saada, it said. MSF director of operations Raquel Ayora denounced the strike and repeated that the organization constantly shares the coordinates of its facilities with those fighting in Yemen. "There is no way that anyone with the capacity to carry out an air strike or launch a rocket would not have known" that the clinic was a functioning health facility supported by MSF, Ayora said.

"We strongly condemn this incident that confirms a worrying pattern of attacks to essential medical services and express our strongest outrage as this will leave a very fragile population without healthcare for weeks," said Ayora. "Once more it is civilians that bear the brunt of this war," she added.

MSF hospitals hit

MSF last month accused the coalition of bombing its clinic in Taz, southwest Yemen, wounding nine people including two staff members. The coalition said it would investigate that claim although it has repeatedly insisted it does not attack civilians. And in October, air strikes hit another hospital run by MSF near Saada without causing any deaths.

MSF facilities have also been hit elsewhere, with the deadliest recent strike coming during a US air raid on the hospital in the Afghan city of Kunduz. Washington has said the October strike, which came as NATO-backed Afghan forces clashed with insurgents for control of the northern provincial capital, was "caused primarily by human error."

The EU led international condemnation of the latest strike, describing it as an "unacceptable attack". Saada is the heartland of the Shiite Houthi rebels that the coalition has been bombing since March in support of Yemen's beleaguered government.

More than 5,800 people have been killed in Yemen since the start of the bombing campaign, about half of them civilians, according to the United Nations. At least 27,000 people have been wounded and 80 percent of the population is in need of humanitarian aid, according to UN figures. The UN envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, arrived in Sanaa on Sunday to convince the rebels and their allies to attend a new round of peace talks.

He had met with Yemeni government officials temporarily based in Riyadh, before he headed to Sanaa. Foreign Minister Abdel Malak Al-Mekhlafi said the talks, initially scheduled to start on January 14 had been postponed until January 20 or 23. The government sat down with the rebels and their allies last month in Switzerland for six days of talks that ended without a major breakthrough. Also on Sunday, Yemeni intelligence colonel Ali Saleh Al-Nakhibi was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in second city Aden, a security official said. —AFP



SANAA: Yemeni protesters hold a banner during a protest in front of the United Nations (UN) office calling for an end to the military operations carried out by the Saudi-led coalition on Yemen. — AFP



ROMULUS: In this Thursday, Dec 17, 2015, file photo, Syrian refugee Refaii Hamo addresses the media during a news conference. — AP

SYRIAN REFUGEE AMONG FIRST LADY'S GUESTS FOR STATE OF UNION ADDRESS

WASHINGTON: A Syrian scientist stricken with cancer and seeking a new start for his family in Michigan will represent Syrian refugees as a guest of first lady Michelle Obama for the president's final State of the Union address.

President Barack Obama has committed to accepting an additional 10,000 Syrian refugees, but some Republican lawmakers and presidential candidates are critical of the expansion. Republican presidential candidate Ted Cruz, for example, noted the recent arrest of two Iraqi refugees. During an interview with CNN that aired Sunday, Cruz emphasized that they came to the United States "using the same vetting that President Obama wants us to trust with Syrian refugees."

Refaai Hamo, his son and three daughters landed at Detroit Metropolitan Airport in December, anxious to rebuild their lives. Hamo fled to Turkey from Syria after a missile attack killed his wife and one other daughter. He was profiled on the popular photo blog Humans of New York as "The Scientist." The White House said Sunday that Hamo will be among about two dozen guests invited to sit near the first lady on Tuesday. The guests include several veterans and service members, including one of the three Americans who thwarted an attack aboard a Paris-bound train.

Those on the guest list will highlight

issues that Obama has attempted to prioritize during his tenure, such as expanded health insurance coverage, and issues that he hopes to work on during his final year, such as criminal justice. The guest list includes a California man whose partner was killed in the San Bernardino attack, the first female Army Reserve officer to graduate from the Army's elite Ranger School and a plaintiff in the landmark Supreme Court case that found same-sex couples have a constitutional right to marry. One seat will be empty, to represent the victims of gun violence.

Obama read about Hamo's story last month. His cancer had gone untreated because he lacked health insurance. More than \$450,000 for the family was raised through an online fundraising campaign actor Ed Norton had set up for them. The White House described Hamo as living the kind of life in Syria that is associated with the American dream. He married his college sweetheart, and they built a life together before a missile tore through the complex he helped design and where his family lived.

Obama told Hamo through a Facebook posting that, "Yes, you can still make a difference in the world, and we're proud that you'll pursue your dreams here. Welcome to your new home. You're part of what makes America great." —AP

PALESTINIAN ON HUNGER STRIKE IN ISRAEL IN CRITICAL CONDITION

RAMALLAH: The condition of a Palestinian journalist on a 48-day hunger strike in an Israeli jail is deteriorating, the man's wife and a Palestinian official said yesterday. Mohammed Al-Qeq is protesting his six-month sentence without trial or charge, under a measure called administrative detention. Israel's internal security agency Shin Bet said Al-Qeq was arrested in connection with his alleged involvement in "terror activities" linked to the Islamic militant group Hamas.

"Al-Qeq is in critical condition after 48 days in hunger strike and his life is at risk," said Issa Qaraqa, the Palestinian minister of prisoner affairs. Al-Qeq is being monitored in an Israeli hospital, according to Israel's prison service,

which would not comment on his condition. His wife, Faihaa Al-Qeq, said Israel "accused him of incitement."

Al-Qeq, 33, works as a correspondent for the Saudi channel Al-Majid and also appears as an analyst on channels linked to Hamas. Israel has arrested him in the past for his activities with Hamas' student organization. He was arrested Nov 21. Palestinian prisoners have used hunger strikes before to draw attention to their detention without trial or charges. Al-Qeq is the first journalist to do so.

Fearing that a fasting detainee's death could spark violence, Israel has at times acceded to hunger strikers' demands by agreeing to release

them at the end of their terms of detention. Israel sometimes extends the administrative detention of suspects.

A contentious law passed last year allows Israel to force-feed a hunger striker if his life is in danger, even if the prisoner refuses. Israel's medical establishment has protested the law, and there are no known instances of a prisoner being force-fed. Also yesterday, the Israeli military said forces shot and wounded a knife-wielding Palestinian who the military said attempted to stab a soldier in the West Bank, the latest in a four month-long wave of Israeli-Palestinian violence that is roiling the region. The Palestinian's condition was not immediately known. — AP

12 CHILDREN KILLED AFTER RUSSIA STRIKE HITS SCHOOL

BEIRUT: At least 12 children and three adults were killed in a Russian air strike that hit a school in Syria's Aleppo province yesterday, a monitor said. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the three adults included a teacher, and that the strike in the town of Anjara also injured at least 20 people, all of them children and teachers.

The monitor said there had been heavy air strikes and clashes between government and rebel forces since Sunday in the Northern Province, which is controlled by a mixture of moderate and Islamist rebels. Photos distributed by media activists in Aleppo province showed a classroom full of rubble with the wooden tops of desks blown off their metal frames.

The Britain-based Observatory also reported that three children were killed by rebel rocket fire on a government-held district in Aleppo city. Control of the city has been divided between government forces in the west and rebel fighters in the east

since shortly after fighting began there in mid-2012. Government forces regularly carry out air raids on the east, while rebels fire rockets into the west. The situation is largely reversed in the countryside surrounding the city, with rebels controlling much of the area west of Aleppo, and the government present to the east.

Russia, a staunch ally of President Bashar Al-Assad's regime, began air strikes in support of the central government in late September. It says it is targeting the Islamic State group and other "terrorists," but a third of those killed in its strikes have been civilians, according to the Observatory.

The monitor said in late December that Russian air strikes had killed more than 2,300 people since they began on September 30, among them 792 civilians. Moscow has slammed as "absurd" allegations that its strikes have killed civilians. More than 260,000 people have been killed in Syria since the conflict began in March 2011 with anti-government protests. —AFP

IRAQI TURKMENS ALARMED BY DEEP KURDISH TRENCH

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Turkmen leaders yesterday accused the country's Kurds of exploiting the war on jihadists to dig a trench that would strengthen their grip on expanded territory. Officials from the Turkmen minority said the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) was digging the trench roughly following conflict lines between the Islamic State group and Kurdish forces across northern Iraq.

Kurdish officials insisted the trench was not a political act but rather a purely defensive measure aimed at preventing attacks by IS suicide car bombers. "We see this move to dig a trench as suspicious," Arshad al-Salehi, the head of the Iraqi Turkmen Front, told AFP. "It starts in Rabia... and ends in Khanaqin," he said.

Rabia is a northwestern town on the Syrian border and Khanaqin lies 400 kilometers to the southeast, near the Iranian border. The Turkmen are one of Iraq's largest ethnic minorities and many of their hubs are in disputed areas, which are just beyond the KRG borders but claimed by the Kurds. The Kurdish peshmerga took over many of those areas on the back of the June 2014 IS offensive that saw the Iraqi federal security forces collapse completely. Salehi said he wanted Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi to clarify his position on the trench and said he would bring up the issue in parliament. "We see it as the beginning of the division of Iraq. It gives reality on the ground to a redrawn geopol-

itical map," he said. Jassem Mohammed Jaafar, a Turkmen MP, also accused the Kurds of using the war against IS as a pretext to further the expansion, and ultimately the secession, of their region.

'Fait accompli'

"It is against international conventions, it violates the rights of the people who end up on one or the other side of it," he said. "There is little doubt that this trench is part of a project to divide Iraq," Jaafar said. The KRG acknowledged it had recently stepped up the fortification of its frontline with IS but it denied any political motive.

"The purpose of the trench is to build a defensive system against vehicles used by Daesh (IS) terrorists who blow up car bombs," peshmerga spokesman Jabar Yawar said. "It is two meters deep and three wide. It is not everywhere, some areas don't need it. It is the military leadership that makes this decision," he said. Turkmen officials said their information showed that the planned path of the trench would include the town of Tuz Khurmatu in the Kurdistan region and leave that of Amerli out.

The trench has not been dug there yet but work has begun in areas around the oil-rich city of Kirkuk and in the Jalawla region near the Iranian border, they said. Mehdi Saadoun, an activist from the Turkmen Rescue Foundation, said the trench was being used to further Kurdish nationalist ambitions. — AFP



ASSALUYEH: A handout picture provided by the office of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani shows him attending the opening of the phase 15-16 of the South Pars gas field facilities in the southern Iranian port town. — AFP

ROUHANI PROMISES A 'YEAR OF PROSPERITY'

TEHRAN: President Hassan Rouhani pledged yesterday that Iran was about to enter "a year of economic prosperity", with sanctions lifted, and said his government had delivered on its promises. His comments referred to last July's nuclear deal with world powers that is finally expected to be implemented soon, possibly within days.

Speaking near Bushehr, a southern port city on the Gulf, Rouhani, a moderate cleric, also drew attention to elections on February 26 in which his allies are looking to make gains in parliament. "I promise the nation of Iran that next year, with sanctions behind us and by young people's efforts, will be a year of economic prosperity," he said in a speech broadcast on state television.

The government is this week expected to outline its budget for the next Persian year, which starts March 20, and like last year will do so at a time of plunging oil prices. "This government is running the country with \$30 oil and not with \$147 dollar oil," he said, comparing the cur-

rent price of crude to its value during the era of his hard line predecessor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

"The government is running the country under sanctions not under normal circumstances. God willing, in the coming days we will witness a wrapping up of the sanctions scroll in this country," Rouhani said his cabinet "was proud to have been able to curb inflation despite all difficulties" and said the economy will be shown to have grown by the end of the current year.

Atomic activities

Inflation was more than 40 percent when Rouhani came to power in August 2013 but it has since fallen to 13 percent, according to the national statistics agency. On the back of the deal on Iran's nuclear program—the Islamic republic has always denied seeking a bomb but agreed to curbs on its atomic activities in return for sanctions relief—Rouhani wants to make

greater inroads in domestic policy.

If the president's allies poll well they could swing the balance of power away from conservatives in the 290-member parliament, potentially leading to social and political reforms he promised before being elected in 2013. But Rouhani has faced criticism from hardline groups about the nuclear deal, with opponents warning it could lead to "infiltration" by the United States and derailment of Iran's revolutionary principles.

The US led the nuclear talks, which also involved Britain, China, France, Russia and Germany. On the same day as the parliamentary polls, the electorate will pick 88 members for the Assembly of Experts, a committee of clerics that monitors the work of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The Assembly has the power to dismiss Khamenei, who is 76 and has led the Islamic republic since 1989. But its more likely and most crucial role will be to pick his successor. — AFP

ROLLING STONE FACES INTERVIEW CRITICISM

NEW YORK: It was a big scoop, and one Rolling Stone may well regret. The magazine made stunning news over the weekend by revealing that actor Sean Penn landed a rare interview last fall with the notorious drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman while Guzman was on the run after escaping through a tunnel from a maximum-security Mexican prison.

Guzman was recaptured Friday in Mexico after a shootout that killed five of his associates and wounded one marine. Penn's long and often rambling essay, widely mocked on social media, included comments from Guzman on everything from his childhood to his thoughts on the drug trade.

It also raised questions of ethics and judgment, namely whether Penn should have met secretly with one of the world's most-wanted fugitives, whether the actor crossed the line by giving Guzman approval over the article before it was published, and whether Penn trivialized El Chapo's murderous past by asking him such questions as "Do you have any dreams?" and "If you could change the world, would you?"

A Rolling Stone spokeswoman did not immediately return requests for comment. Penn's story ran nine months after Rolling Stone retracted its discredited story about a gang rape at a fraternity party at the University of Virginia. The magazine was strongly criticized for

relying too strongly on the account of the alleged victim and failing to carry out basic fact-checking.

It is being sued for tens of millions of dollars by the fraternity, former frat members and a university administrator. Writing for Rolling Stone, Penn acknowledged that Guzman was granted prior approval over the article (Guzman requested no changes, according to the actor), a violation of the commonly held rules of journalistic integrity.

'Discredits the entire story'

"Allowing any source control over a story's content is inexcusable. The practice of pre-approval discredits the entire story - whether the subject requests

changes or not," Andrew Seaman, chairman of the ethics committee of the Society of Professional Journalists, said in a blog post titled "Rolling Stone Gathers No Accolades." "The writer, who in this case is an actor and activist, may write the story in a more favorable light and omit unflattering facts in an attempt to not be rejected."

Penn, an Oscar-winning actor who played a drug dealer in the 1985 movie "The Falcon and the Snowman," has had news-making encounters in other countries. In 2002, as the US was threatening war against Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Penn visited the country and met with senior officials. He has also spoken with such foreign critics of the US as Fidel

Castro and Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez. Rolling Stone has long mixed aggressive investigative and political reporting with coverage of rock stars and other celebrities. Former staff writers such as Greil Marcus and Jim DeRogatis have accused publisher Jann Wenner of allowing undue input from interview subjects or interfering with music reviews he found too negative about artists he likes. "It's unfortunately in keeping with Jann's tendency to ignore professional scruples in an effort to curry favor with celebrities," said Robert Draper, a correspondent for GQ and author of "Rolling Stone Magazine: The Uncensored History," said of the El Chapo story. — AP

RUBIO SHIFTS IMMIGRATION FOCUS TO NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS

BEDFORD: Marco Rubio is increasingly portraying immigration as a national security issue rather than a question of what to do with millions of people in the country illegally, a sign of his evolving stance on a topic that remains one of his liabilities with conservative voters.

"The issue is not the same one we had a few years ago," Rubio told voters recently in New Hampshire. "This issue's different now; we have radical jihadist groups that are using our immigration system against us."

As he seeks to emerge as a top contender in the GOP's crowded presidential field, Rubio still finds himself explaining his past support for an immigration overhaul bill that included a path to citizenship. Texas Sen Ted Cruz, one of his chief rivals, tries to use the bill to brand Rubio as too soft on the issue. And on the campaign trail, Rubio is often asked about immigration, either by skeptical voters or those simply seeking an explanation of where he stands.

"He still hasn't made up with me yet regarding the Gang of Eight," said David Merritt, a Massachusetts voter who came to see Rubio in Atkinson, New Hampshire. Merritt's comments refer to the immigration bill Rubio co-authored. "I'm not 100 percent sure that I trust him," Merritt said. The overhaul bill passed the Senate, with Rubio's help, but he later backed off the proposal as it began to draw fire from the conservative right. Asked to explain, he says he now favors a one-piece-at-a-time approach.

Modernize system

He says the federal government needs to boost border security and modernize the legal immigration system before it deals with the 11 million people here illegally. He says the government must do better at tracking the millions who overstay visas and must make mandatory the e-verify system, an Internet-based program that allows employers to check the eligibility of prospective employees through federal databases.

But in recent weeks, Rubio also has shifted the conversation, starting the immigration segment of his stump speech by painting gaps in the US-Mexico border and the existing legal immigration system as a national security threat. And he's taken to telling voters that the Islamic State group is actively recruiting fighters to send to the United States posing as doctors, students and investors.

"Radical jihadist groups, the same people who carried out the attacks in Paris, who inspired the attacks in California, are trying to use our immigration system against us," Rubio said Thursday to a crowd packed into a Bedford home.

"They've already gotten someone into this country as a fiancée," he said, referring to Tashfeen Malif, the wife accused in the California shootings. A Pakistani citizen, she was allowed into the country in 2014 to marry a US citizen. The FBI said after the shooting that Malif and her husband had been radicalized for some time, but the FBI also said recently there's no evidence of outside actors in coordinating the shooting.

IS concerns

Rubio says if the government doesn't know "100 percent" who someone is or why they are coming into the United States, they won't be allowed in under his administration. "This has become a national security issue, and when an issue changes, so must your policies," he said. But Rubio's stance on immigration was fluid long before the Islamic State was a concern.

As Florida's House speaker in 2008, Rubio came under fire from GOP colleagues for not bringing several bills aimed at discouraging illegal immigration to the House floor for a vote, including bills to increase employer verification requirements and require police to report those suspected of being in the country illegally.

He began to shift rightward when he ran for the Senate in 2010 as a tea party favorite, pledging to oppose any legislation that would grant amnesty to the millions here illegally. Pressed about what to do with millions already here illegally, Rubio said then that they would return to their homelands and re-enter once the federal government enforced a legal immigration system "that works." He also opposed a 2007 comprehensive immigration reform bill authored by Sen John McCain because it included "amnesty" for millions. Yet the bill he helped craft in 2013 included a path to citizenship.

Rubio's shifting stance isn't a problem for some voters. Cindy Coutu of Bedford considers immigration a top concern, and she appreciates his focus on the issue from a national security perspective. "Who's coming in? Who are you? Where are you from? Let's get a better idea, and then start dealing with who is already here," she said. "That makes sense." — AP



MEXICO CITY: A woman reads La Jornada newspaper in Mexico City, on January 10, 2016 which shows a picture of drug lord Joaquin Guzman, aka "El Chapo" (right), shaking hands with US actor Sean Penn. — AFP

MEXICO BEGINS EXTRADITION PROCESS AGAINST 'EL CHAPO'

MOVIE STARS, SEWER ESCAPES AND BLOODY SHOOTOUTS

MEXICO CITY: Mexico began the process of extraditing drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman to the United States, two days after the famed fugitive was recaptured following a dramatic, months-long hunt featuring movie stars, sewer escapes and bloody shootouts. Officials warned that the process could take a long time as Guzman's lawyers file legal appeals and maneuver to keep their client in Mexico, where he has already escaped from maximum security prisons twice.

On Sunday, agents formally notified Guzman that he was wanted in the United States. In a statement, the Attorney General's Office said Mexican agents assigned to the international police agency Interpol served two arrest warrants to the drug lord, who is being held at the Altiplano prison following his capture by Mexican marines on Friday.

Guzman's defense now has three days to present arguments against extradition and 20 days to present supporting evidence, beyond the plethora of other appeals they have already started filing. Guzman's powerful Sinaloa cartel smuggles multi-ton shipments of cocaine and marijuana as well as manufacturing and transporting methamphetamines and heroin, mostly to the US. He is wanted in various US states and his July escape deeply embarrassed the government of President Enrique Pena Nieto and strained ties between the countries.

'National sovereignty'

Guzman's attorney Juan Pablo Badillo has said the defense has already filed six motions to challenge extradition requests. Badillo said that his client shouldn't be extradited to the US because "our country must respect national sovereignty, the sovereignty of its institutions to impart justice." On Saturday, a Mexican federal law enforcement official said the quickest Guzman could be extradited would be six months, but even that is not likely because of the many appeals filed by his lawyers. He said that the appeals are usually turned down, but each one means a judge has to schedule a hearing. "That can take weeks or months, and that delays the extradition," he said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to comment. "We've had cases that take six years."

Mexico's willingness to extradite Guzman is a sharp turnaround from the last time he was captured in 2014, when then-Attorney General Jesus Murillo Karam said the extradition would happen only after he finished his sentence in Mexico in "300 or 400 years."

Guzman was re-apprehended on Friday after a shootout between gunmen and Mexican marines at the home in Los Mochis, a seaside city in Guzman's home state of Sinaloa. Five suspects were killed and six others arrested. One marine was injured. Mexican authorities say actor Sean Penn's contacts with Guzman helped them track the fugitive down - even if he slipped away from an initial raid on the hideout where the Hollywood actor apparently met him.

Penn's article on Guzman was published late Saturday by Rolling Stone magazine, a day after the drug lord's recapture. In it, Penn wrote of

elaborate security precautions, but also said that as he flew to Mexico on Oct 2 for the meeting, "I see no spying eyes, but I assume they are there." He was apparently right.

A Mexican federal law enforcement official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not permitted to comment on the issue, told the Associated Press the Penn interview led authorities to Guzman in the area of Tamazula, a rural part of Durango state. They raided Guzman's remote hideout a few days after the interview and narrowly missed capturing Guzman following his July escape from Mexico's top security prison through a mile-long tunnel.

'Actors and producers'

Describing the capture, Attorney General Arely Gomez said that investigators had been aided in locating Guzman by documented contacts between his attorneys and "actors and producers" she said were interested in making a film about him, though she did not name them. Three months after that close call, marines finally caught him in a residential neighbor-

hood of Los Mochis, where they'd been monitoring a suspected safe house. Guzman was able to escape via storm drains and exited a manhole in the street. But he was captured in a vehicle on the highway.

In the interview in Rolling Stone, Guzman defends his work at the head of the world's biggest drug trafficking organization, one blamed for thousands of killings. When asked if he is to blame for high addiction rates, he responds: "No, that is false, because the day I don't exist, it's not going to decrease in any way at all. Drug trafficking? That's false."

Penn wrote that Guzman was interested in having a movie filmed on his life and wanted Mexican actress Kate del Castillo, who had portrayed a drug trafficker in a television series, involved in the project. "He was interested in seeing the story of his life told on film, but would entrust its telling only to Kate," wrote Penn, who appears in a photo posted with the interview shaking hands with Guzman. Penn's representatives have not commented on the claims by Mexican officials. — AP



CONCORD: Republican presidential candidate, Sen Marco Rubio, R-Fla reaches out for a handshake during a town hall campaign stop. — AP

PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFULS TAKE 'PROBLEM SOLVER PROMISE'

CONCORD: Six presidential hopefuls have found some common ground on the nation's future, according to a bipartisan group created to bridge the divide between Republicans. No Labels, formed after the 2010 midterm elections, is asking candidates to embrace four broad goals related to job creation, the federal budget, energy independence and entitlements, promote them in the campaign and promise to work with a bipartisan group in Congress on at least one of them within 30 days of taking office.

To be sure, the goals are general enough so that people of vastly different political opinions - not to mention temperaments - can get behind them. Yesterday, the group's leaders are announcing the six who stepped up: Democrat Martin O'Malley, and Republicans Ben Carson, Chris Christie, John Kasich, Rand Paul and Donald Trump.

"I'm totally blown away that notwithstanding the ugly talk you find during any primary campaign, you have six very diverse candidates - a bipartisan group -

who are interested in a Problem Solvers promise," No Labels co-chairman Jon Huntsman told The Associated Press. "That means they're thinking beyond the primary and thinking about the process that will need to be in place to get some really important things done for the American people." The poll-driven No Labels agenda calls for creating 25 million new jobs over the next decade, securing Social Security and Medicare for the next 75 years, balancing the federal budget by 2030 and making the United States energy secure by 2024.

Dogging candidates

More than 1,000 people came to the group's convention in Manchester in October, when eight candidates showed up. Volunteers have been dogging candidates at town hall forums around New Hampshire. Next week, the group will deploy several trucks adorned with billboards to serve coffee to people and enlist their interest in having more candidates make the promise. — AP

SENATE DEMOCRATS RAMMED THROUGH JUDGES, NOW GOP CALLING THE SHOTS

WASHINGTON: After more than 400 days, Luis Felipe Restrepo is finally getting a confirmation vote in the Senate that would make him the first Hispanic federal judge on the US Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit.

With yesterday's vote on the federal judge from Philadelphia, the Senate will have cleared its to-do list of nominees to the powerful appeals courts. Nine vacancies will remain, but President Barack Obama has yet to nominate people for those posts. Among federal trial judges, 26 of Obama's nominees - out of 59 current vacancies - await votes. The Judiciary Committee has approved 13 of them, all by routine voice votes.

The vacancy rate for the federal judiciary rivals recent lows, and the number of current vacancies is almost exactly the same as it was when Obama took office seven years ago. But don't give credit to Republicans who now control the Senate. Chalk it up to a burst of confirmations in 2014 after majority Democrats rewrote filibuster rules and rammed through 89 judges, almost double the number of the previous year and the most since Bill Clinton's second year in office. When 2015 opened, there were just 40 vacancies out of 852 authorized federal appeals and trial judges.

'It's glacial'

Last year, the GOP-led chamber confirmed just 11 federal judges, the least in recent memory. That has Democrats crying foul, suggesting the pace is dictated by electoral politics. "It's glacial," says New York Sen. Chuck Schumer, one of the Democrats' point men on judges. "It's for the partisan purpose of hoping for a Republican president."

The top Judiciary Committee Democrat,

Patrick Leahy of Vermont, criticized Republicans in a Senate speech last month for having "the dubious distinction of matching the record for confirming the fewest annual number of judicial nominees in more than half a century." Leahy added: "Too many Americans who have sought justice in our federal courts this year have instead found delays and empty courtrooms because of Senate Republicans' obstruction on judicial nominees."

It is true that the number of vacancies has risen, but it is still slightly below the 59 vacancies Obama inherited in 2009 when he succeeded Republican President George W. Bush. Vacancies spiked after that as more judges stepped down and as the Obama White House moved slowly on nominating replacements.

Confirmations to lifetime appointments to the federal courts have long been a flashpoint in an increasingly polarized Washington. The current situation pales in comparison with the 2014 struggle that divided the Senate over new rules to accelerate the process. Almost a decade prior, after a spate of Democratic filibusters of President George W. Bush's judicial nominees, GOP leaders explored the same "nuclear option" to get nominees confirmed, but the fight was diffused by a bipartisan compromise.

When Democrats controlled the Senate, Republicans were less likely to filibuster outright, though they were often stinging in permitting votes. In December 2014, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, now a Republican presidential contender, created an opening that Democrats exploited, allowing 11 new judges to be confirmed in an end-of-session burst just before Republicans retook control of the Senate. — AP

STUDENTS BACK TO KENYA UNIV 9 MONTHS AFTER MASSACRE

GARISSA: Students trickled back yesterday for classes at a university in north-eastern Kenya where at least 148 people were killed by Islamist gunmen nine months ago. Security was tight but only around 20 students resumed classes at Garissa University, which had some 800 students before the massacre.

The high-profile assault on April 2, 2015 was the deadliest yet in Kenya by the Somali-led, Al-Qaeda-linked Shebab group. Nearly all the victims were students. Emotions were mixed for those returning. "I am very happy for the reopening...we went for our first lesson and we are really back to the university as normal," said Shamza Abdi, a student.

"There are some memories of a lot of our friends we lost here, but despite what happened, life must go on... we just pray for our friends," she added. The gunmen had lined up non-Muslim students for execution in what President Uhuru Kenyatta described at the time as a "barbaric medieval slaughter". The massacre was Kenya's deadliest attack since the 1998 bombing of the US embassy in Nairobi.

Most students, especially those who were not originally from Garissa, have transferred to other colleges. The students now returning are mainly those who come from the town, some 365 kilometers north of the capital Nairobi.

Security tightened

"We are really missing those students who were killed, and we are very bitter about it...the people of this area were really affected," said Hassan Kune Mire. "It is very important for us that learning has resumed, and that we shall continue with our education."

University principal Ahmed Osman Warfa, speaking last week when teachers returned, said security had been tightened with a new police post built within the compound and a perimeter fence planned. "I wish I was armed and trained on the use of firearms on that night, I would have fought with the attackers and at least ensure I have

saved some of my students from their killers," the principal said. Witnesses last week gave evidence in the ongoing trial of five men accused of supporting the attack. The four gunmen who carried out the massacre were all killed when Kenyan commandos stormed the building. Survivors described how the laughing gunmen taunted their victims amid scenes of total carnage.

Students, some who had to play dead among the pools of blood of their friends until they were rescued, said the gunmen shouted "We have come to kill and be killed" as they prowled the student dormitories shooting those they found. The Garissa attack followed the

2013 siege of the up market Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, when four Shebab gunmen killed at least 67 people. Last month Kenyan police warned of the risk of fresh attacks by Shebab insurgents, claiming they had split into rival factions inside Kenya, with some shifting allegiance from Al-Qaeda to Islamic State. The militants say their attacks are retaliation for the Kenyan military presence in Somalia and "war crimes" committed by Kenyan troops. Inside Somalia, they fight to overthrow the internationally-backed government in Mogadishu, which is protected by 22,000 African Union troops, including Kenyan soldiers. — AFP

TIGHTER BORDER CHECKS LEAVE MIGRANTS TRAPPED IN GREECE

ATHENS: Dreams rarely come true, at least not for long. For a few incredible months, the prospect of a better life in Europe seemed within grasp, attracting a wave of more than 1 million migrants from the war-torn, poverty-stricken Middle East and Africa. To get there, they risked their lives at sea and parted with fortunes. But a tightening of border controls closer to the promised lands of Germany and Sweden has left thousands trapped and destitute in the last place most want to be - financially wrecked Greece.

Ayman Daher, 29, from Lebanon, paid smugglers \$1,500 to squeeze onto a rubber boat with 80 people for the short and often deadly crossing from Turkey to the Greek island of Chios. His destination was Germany, where his father and three brothers live. "Life is good and safe there," Daher said. "In my country it is not." To reach Germany, he would have to traverse the western Balkans, starting with Macedonia on Greece's northern border - as hundreds of thousands did with relative ease for about five months last year. That happened because Balkan countries opened their borders in June to all transient asylum-seekers, in one of several policy lurches as a fragmented Europe vacillated between pity for refugees and concern over security and integrating huge numbers of immigrants.

But in late November the Balkan gateways started to close, and Greek officials fear they could be completely shut in coming months. Now, only Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis are deemed refugees and let through, with all others - about 12,000 of the 103,000 who entered Greece in December rejected as economic migrants.

'Countries are at war'

This seems absurd to Saleh Al Riyashy, 45, a former policeman from Yemen - whose civil war has been compounded by 10 months of airstrikes by a Saudi-led coalition. "Why does Macedonia only allow people from three countries through?" he said. "Other countries are at war too. My home was badly damaged in the fighting."

Al Riyashy and his family have spent the past week at Athens' Elaionas migrant camp, where about 560 people from 14 countries live in prefabricated homes. He wants to reach Sweden. As twilight falls outside the Hellenikon shelter - a former Olympic field hockey venue currently housing about 280 people - Iranian men play volleyball, a red line on the ground serving

as a notional net. Inside, migrants are coming to terms with their bleak future.

"I can't go back to Somalia," said English teacher Ali Heydar Aki, who hoped to settle in Europe and then bring his family. "I have sold half my house" to fund the trip. While it's unclear exactly how many are stuck in Greece, a comparison of arrivals there and in Macedonia since late November leaves about 38,000 people unaccounted for.

Greek immigration minister Ioannis Mouzalas' best guess is "a few thousand." "But (that's) a calculation based on experience, not something else," he said. Syed Mohammad Jamil, head of the Pakistani-Hellenic Cultural Society, says about 4,000 Pakistanis could be stuck in Greece, mostly still on the islands, and about as many Bangladeshis. "Every day we get ... phone calls from people in tears asking for help," he said. "We can't help - send them where? Germany, Spain, Italy, England? We can't."

All now face two legal options: To seek asylum in Greece - which has 25 percent unemployment and a crumbling welfare system - or volunteer for repatriation. Greek authorities have recorded an increase in both since Macedonia tightened controls. Karim Benazza, a Moroccan hotel worker in his 20s, has signed up to go home on Jan 18. "This is all I do now, smoke and smoke, but no money, no food," he said, lighting a cigarette outside the International Organization for Migration building. "There is nothing for us in Greece, and the Macedonian border is closed."

Daniel Esdras, IOM office head in Greece, sees a steep increase in voluntary repatriations, which the IOM organizes. About 800 people registered in December and 260 have been sent home. "It's one thing to return in handcuffs ... and quite another to go as a normal passenger with some money in your pocket, because we give them each 400 euros (\$435)," Esdras said.

Deportation awaits

Although able to continue north, Afghan Masoud Aziz, 23, will seek asylum in Greece. "I do not want to go to another country because it is difficult now, too (many) refugees go there," he said. Deportation awaits those who don't qualify for asylum and reject repatriation - with several hundred currently interned in Greece. About 20,000 were repatriated or deported last year. But most were Albanians, and only one in 10 from the Middle East and Africa. — AP



SACRAMENTO, California: Amanda Wilcox, a member of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, shows a photo of her daughter, Laura, who was killed in a shooting at a mental health clinic in 2001, following a hearing on gun violence on Monday. — AP

PROBE BLAMES MIGRANTS FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE VIOLENT ACTS

NEARLY ALL SUSPECTS 'OF FOREIGN ORIGIN'

COLOGNE: German authorities said yesterday that nearly all the suspects in a rash of New Year's Eve violence against women in Cologne were "of foreign origin", as foreigners came under attack amid surging tensions. Ralf Jaeger, the interior minister of North Rhine-Westphalia state, released initial findings of a criminal probe over the crime spree that has piled pressure on Chancellor Angela Merkel over her liberal stance towards refugees.

"Witness accounts and the report by the (local) police as well as findings by the federal police indicate that nearly all the people who committed these crimes were of foreign origin," he said. Although no formal charges have been laid, Jaeger said the attackers emerged from a group of more than 1,000 "Arab and North African" men who gathered between the main railway station and the city's iconic Gothic cathedral during the year-end festivities.

Amid concerns over reprisal assaults, police said a mob attacked a group of six Pakistanis late Sunday in Cologne, two of whom had to be hospitalized. Shortly afterwards, five unidentified assailants attacked a 39-year-old Syrian national, injuring him slightly.

After far-right protests erupted in Cologne during the weekend, a sister group of the xenophobic PEGIDA movement was due to hold another rally later yesterday in the eastern city of Leipzig. In the face of outrage over the New Year's Eve violence, Merkel has taken a tough line against convicted refugees. She has signaled her backing for changes to the law to ease expulsion rules, with officials within her ruling coalition expected to swiftly negotiate the proposals this week.

Police said late Sunday that more than a week on from New Year's Eve, some 516 complaints had now been lodged, including 40 percent that are related to sexual assault. Witnesses described terrifying scenes of hundreds of women running a gauntlet of groping hands, lewd insults and robberies in the mob violence.

'Assaults were planned'

The scale of the Cologne assaults has shocked Germany and put a spotlight on the 1.1 million asylum seekers who arrived in the country last year. It has also fuelled fear, with a poll published by the Bild am Sonntag newspaper saying that 39 percent of those surveyed felt police did not provide sufficient protection for the public at large, while 57 percent did.

And just under half (49 percent) believed the same sort of mob violence could hit their hometown, reported the newspaper which headlined its article with the question: "Is the New Year's Eve scandal the result of wrong policies?" A separate poll by broadcaster RTL found that 57 percent of Germans feared crime would rise along with the record influx of asylum seekers, while 40 percent disagreed.

Nevertheless a majority — 60 percent-said their opinion of foreigners has not changed, while 37 percent said they have become more critical and negative about newcomers. Justice Minister Heiko Maas has said he believed the violence in the western city of Cologne was organized. "For such a horde of people to meet and commit such crimes, it has to have been planned somehow," he told Bild am Sonntag newspaper. "No one can tell me that this was not coordinated or planned. The suspicion is that a specific date and an expected crowd was

picked," he said. Quoting confidential police reports, Bild am Sonntag said some North Africans had sent out calls using social networks for people to gather in Cologne on New Year's Eve. Separately in Hamburg, police said they had received 133 criminal complaints for similar violence during the northern city's own New Year's Eve celebrations.

Turning point?

With thousands of asylum seekers still streaming into Germany every day, Merkel has come under fire, even within her own conservative alliance, who want her to put a cap on the

number of refugees in the country.

Critics have questioned Germany's ability to integrate the unprecedented number of newcomers, many of whom hail from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Merkel had until now not wavered from her stance but has adopted a firmer tone after Cologne, even pledging to change the law to make it easier to expel convicted asylum seekers.

"It's not premature to speak of a turning point (after Cologne), or at least the reinforcing of a trend that had already started to take shape lately," Andreas Roedder, contemporary history professor at Mainz University said. — AFP

SPAIN'S PRINCESS, HUSBAND ON TRIAL IN LANDMARK GRAFT CASE

PALMA: Spain's Princess Cristina and her husband went on trial yesterday under intense global media scrutiny in a landmark corruption case that has outraged the country and sullied the monarchy's reputation.

Cristina, a 50-year-old mother-of-four with a master's degree from New York University, is the first Spanish royal to face criminal charges since the monarchy was reinstated following the 1975 death of dictator General Francisco Franco. The princess and her husband, former Olympic handball medalist Inaki Urdangarin, arrived together at a makeshift courtroom in Palma on the Mediterranean island of Mallorca as photographers snapped pictures and a police helicopter flew overhead. Following courtroom rules, they had to sit apart as judges read out the alleged crimes committed by the total of 18 suspects in the case, which alleges that Urdangarin embezzled public funds through a foundation he once chaired. Cristina has been charged with tax evasion while her husband is accused of the more serious crimes of embezzlement, influence peddling, document falsification, money laundering, forgery, breach of official duty and tax fraud. Almost immediately after the trial opened, Cristina's lawyers called for the case against her to be thrown out. Prosecutors have always refused to press charges against her, but under Spanish law, private entities can also file criminal

complaints-and that is just what anti-graft campaigners "Manos Limpias"-or "Clean Hands"-did.

Cristina's lawyers cited Spanish jurisprudence which allows an accused to escape trial if the victim of a crime does not back the charges-and in this case the alleged victim is the state. But Virginia Lopez Negrete, the lawyer representing "Manos Limpias", rejected the argument. "All citizens are equal before the law and as a result anachronistic doctrines cannot be applied" that would "privilege" the princess, she said.

Journalists from around the world have flocked to cover the trial, which was moved from a courthouse to a public administration school on the outskirts of Palma to accommodate the large number of reporters and lawyers. It comes as Spain seethes over repeated corruption scandals that have exposed politicians, trade unions, bankers and footballers, eroding Spaniards' faith in their institutions and elites after a major economic crisis and a government austerity drive.

"We have never had as much corruption in Spain's democratic history," said 45-year-old unemployed masseur Francisco Solana, one of a handful of protesters who gathered outside the courtroom. "No judge will dare send Princess Cristina to jail. I think justice is not equal for all, it favors the rich," added Solana who was wrapped in the yellow, red and purple flag of Spain's 1931-1939 second republic. — AFP



MALLORCA: Spain's Princess Cristina (right) and former Olympic handball player and husband of Spain's Princess Cristina, Inaki Urdangarin arrive for a hearing held in the courtroom in the Balearic School of Public Administration (EBAP) building in Palma de Mallorca. — AFP



ATHENS: In this photo taken on Saturday, Jan 9, 2016 a Pakistani man plays cricket as a boy covers his face at the Eleonas refugee camp. — AP

REFORMIST LAWMAKER ELECTED AS GREECE'S NEW OPPOSITION LEADER

ATHENS: Greece's conservative opposition New Democracy party elected a reformist on Sunday as its new leader. Former administrative reform minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis defeated party stalwart Evangelos Meimarakis in a leadership contest open to all party members. With only partial results available, Meimarakis called Mitsotakis to congratulate him on his victory.

Both candidates were seen as moderate, but Mitsotakis, the 47-year-old son of former New Democracy leader and Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis, was considered the change candidate. Mitsotakis is more clearly a market-friendly politician and less likely to use populist rhetoric.

And while Meimarakis has been an unsparring critic of left-wing premier Alexis Tsipras' government, Mitsotakis has promised an even tougher opposition line against what he called late Sunday a "populist...incompetent government."

Tsipras called Mitsotakis to congratulate him and invite him to a meeting this coming week, an invitation the new opposition leader accepted. But it is unlikely that their relationship will remain as courteous. Tsipras' Syriza party and government partners, the right-wing Independent Greeks, have repeatedly portrayed Mitsotakis as too will-

ing to do the bidding of Greece's creditors.

"New Democracy will now become a hardline neo-liberal party that will only do the bidding of the oligarchs, losing any connection with the people," the Independent Greeks said in a statement. Even Mitsotakis' opponents, however, largely refrained from referring to his status as a political family scion, at a time when nepotism and political dynasties have been convenient scapegoats for the ills of crisis-ridden Greece. Mitsotakis has created a profile of his own, distinct from his father's, and that of his elder sister, Dora Bakoyannis, who herself had unsuccessfully sought the party leadership in 2009.

Nonetheless, the family patriarch, 97, was there Sunday to congratulate his son and wish him to become prime minister in his turn. With 70 percent of polling, New Democracy officials announced that Mitsotakis was leading Meimarakis, 51 percent to 49 percent. About 400,000 people were eligible to vote. In the first round, held on Dec. 20, Meimarakis had led Mitsotakis, 39.8 percent to 28.5 percent. Two other candidates were eliminated. Meimarakis, 62, is a former minister and parliamentary speaker. He served as the New Democracy interim leader from July to November 2015. — AP

INDIA DETAINS 25 FOREIGN SHIP CREW MEMBERS IN ARMS CASE

CHENNAI: An Indian court yesterday sentenced crew members of a private American ship, including 25 foreigners, to five years in prison for illegal possession of arms in Indian waters in a verdict that could spark diplomatic tension.

The crew, which included foreign nationals from Ukraine, Estonia and six British former soldiers, was arrested from the 'Seaman Guard Ohio' in 2013 after they failed to produce papers authorizing them to carry weapons in India's territorial waters. Ten Indians were also arrested. The court in India's southern city of Tuticorin, in Tamil Nadu state, found the crew guilty of violating Indian laws by possessing prohibited arms. It also fined each crew member 3,000 rupees (\$45).

"This judgment is totally unfair and a great injustice to the accused," Arumugaram Ravipandian, a lawyer representing all 35 crew members, told Reuters. Ravipandian said his clients would seek bail and challenge the verdict in a higher court. The crew, that spent nine months in prison after the incident, has been out on bail but not allowed to leave India since 2013.

Paul Towers, a former British soldier among those convicted, said the weapons on board their ship were

properly registered. "We are speaking to our consulate ... this is not justice," said Towers. The British High Commission in New Delhi said it was providing consular assistance but could not interfere in another country's judicial process.

"Our staff in India and the UK have been in close contact with all six men since their arrest to provide support to them and their families, including attending court," it said in a statement. "Ministers have also raised this case at the highest levels, pressing for delays to be resolved." No comment was immediately available from the Ukrainian and Estonian embassies.

The southern tip of India is close to major trade routes and cargo ships often travel with armed guards to deter pirates. The ship was operated by a US maritime security firm and the incident highlighted the loosely regulated practice of placing guards on ships for protection against pirate attacks. Action by the Indian authorities has led to diplomatic rows in similar cases. Relations between India and Italy soured after a 2012 incident in which two Italian marines allegedly killed two Indian fishermen mistakenly believed to be pirates. — Reuters



LAHORE: Pakistani housewife Hina Kazmi rides a motorcycle on a street. — AFP photos

PAKISTAN'S FEMALE MOTORISTS PUSH BOUNDARIES SET BY MEN

FOUR WHEELS GOOD BUT TWO WHEELS BETTER

LAHORE: On the crowded roads of the teeming eastern Pakistani city of Lahore, Tayyaba Tariq zips through the rowdy traffic on her brand new motorcycle. In jeans and a bright jacket, with a white helmet clasped over her hair, the 22-year-old student is part of a new wave of female drivers in Pakistan who are pushing the boundaries set for them by men.

The idea of women straddling motorcycles, clambering into the cabs of Pakistan's iconic heavy trucks, or driving rickshaws for money is still taboo in the deeply conservative Muslim country of some 200 million, where gender discrimination is routine. There have been a slew of recent campaigns by women for greater access to public spaces to which they are often denied, such as roadside eateries and the roads themselves.

The importance of the issue is underscored by the fact that three quarters of Pakistani women do not participate in the labor market, mainly due to a lack of safe transportation, according to a study by the International Labor Organization. "If girls learn to ride a motorcycle, they can move freely, come and go independently," says Tariq, who rides 25 kilometers to the border with India and back every day for her job as a customs officer on her motorbike, a far more affordable mode of transportation than a car.

Sajjad Mehdi, a traffic police official in Lahore, said he had trained nearly 150 women to ride a motorbike recently. "But there are many women who learned to ride a bike on their own," he added. The government of Punjab province has also realized the importance of getting women on to motorcycles, launching an awareness campaign in November titled "Women on Wheels" that highlighted gender-based violence and street harassment.

City in pink

The campaign saw 150 women, who had completed a police-run motorbike training programme, ride through the streets of Lahore on Sunday in a rally attended by diplomats and human rights lawyers, as it was revealed that 1,000 subsidized pink scooters would be given to working women and students under the scheme.

Tariq may be able to avoid men harassing her by nipping through traffic, but women using Lahore's many rickshaws are often not so fortunate: trapped by necessity in a tiny vehicle with a male driver, getting from A to B can often be a hassle.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistani truck driver Shamim Akhter, 53, drives a truck loaded with bricks.

For Zar Aslam, the solution was obvious: women-only rickshaws, driven by women for women, empowering both passengers and enterprising women who need a source of income. Aslam launched her Pink Rickshaws scheme in 2014 beginning with just five rickshaws, and paraded them through the streets of Lahore in October last year.

"What we are doing is we are trying to help women become entrepreneurs and operators and owners of their own rickshaws," she said. "Anyone over 18 and under 102 can drive this rickshaw from any class, from any background," said actress Nadia Jameel, an ambassador for the scheme. "Some women will come out and drive because they have to. They need the money."

Driven by necessity

Money was also the driving force behind Shamim Akhter's decision to become one of the first female drivers of Pakistan's famous heavy trucks, chaotically decorated from top to bottom in merry "truck art". Abandoned by her husband after the birth of their five children, Akhter struggled in odd jobs for years to feed her family before she clambered into the cab of a truck to make history.

Now the 53-year-old works night and day to transport bricks in the capital Islamabad. "My husband doesn't live with me, he lives with his second wife and I have to bear the expenses of my family alone," she says. She learned to drive a car first then heavy vehicles and passed a test for the newly launched metro bus service in the capital-but was denied a job by the government because it was not policy to have female drivers.

So, she contacted a local trucking company. "I get 1,000 rupees (US\$10) for a longer trip outside Islamabad," she said, cleaning one of the cabs as she worked. The amount of trips she gets varies, she says, and her income each month usually falls below average for a worker in Islamabad. "It doesn't meet (all of) my expenses but... one can't sit idle," she said. "If we need 10,000 rupees and get 7,000 rupees, it's better than having nothing."

Learning to drive will hopefully give many women an economic boost but it will still take time for social attitudes to change-even in Lahore, arguably Pakistan's most cosmopolitan city. "Many times boys follow us (on their bikes)," Tariq the motorcyclist admits. "They think that a girl can't ride and will be frightened... But I have a message for boys. They should not consider girls inferior." — AFP



YANGON: This photo taken on January 10, 2016 shows ethnic minority Karen, who have their own calendar and have officially celebrated their New Year since the 1930s, gathered to celebrate their New Year festival. — AFP

HOPES FOR PEACE: MYANMAR'S KAREN CELEBRATE NEW YEAR

YANGON: Myanmar's ethnic minority Karen rung in their New Year with song, dance and traditional kickboxing, in celebrations a day before fresh efforts to reach a ceasefire to end the country's myriad rebel conflicts.

Tens of thousands of people, many in bright traditional clothing, thronged through teeming Yangon streets, in a three-day celebration. The Karen, who are Buddhist and Christian, have their own calendar and have officially celebrated their New Year since the 1930s. "I love my Karen people and value my ethnicity in my heart," Sa Ye Kyaw Oo, an event volunteer said.

New Year events, marked by dance competitions and bouts of the country's lethwei kickboxing, were also held across southeastern Karen state. The guns have largely fallen silent in the state after ethnic minority rebels waged one of the world's longest insurgencies-although recent months have seen sporadic clashes linked to smaller rebel factions.

The conflict saw Myanmar's army accused of widespread rights abuses that prompted tens of thousands of ethnic Karen to flee their homes, many into border camps in neighboring Thailand. "All ethnic groups have to take responsibility for the peace process if it is going to be really successful," Mann Phoe Saw, an organizer of the festivities said.

The celebrations come ahead of political dialogue between the Myanmar government and ethnic minority groups on Tuesday. The

meeting is set to be the last major push to cement the current leadership's peace-building legacy before handing over power to Aung San Suu Kyi's party which won November elections.

Suu Kyi used the New Year to send a message on efforts to end fighting between the army and rebels. She has said ending the violence, which has plagued a horse-shoe of border regions for decades, is her first priority of government. "We will have to build a peace that takes into account the rights of ethnic people and most importantly we must be united. So let us seek out a real peace for our nation," Suu Kyi said in a statement published on her official Facebook page.

The powerful Karen National Union (KNU) battled for greater political autonomy for decades before joining a peace process led by general-turned-reformist President Thein Sein. He has targeted ending the country's myriad ethnic minority rebellions as the final plank of his agenda before handing over power to Suu Kyi's opposition in March.

Thein Sein has sought to hold up war-battered Karen as an example of the development potential for peace in Myanmar's restive borderlands. In quotes published in the state-backed New Light of Myanmar yesterday, Thein Sein acknowledged that the Karen "have had to endure a tough road for a very long time." "But today, the rays of peace have already dawned," he was quoted as saying. — AFP

SYRIA FM VISITS INDIA BEFORE PEACE TALKS

NEW DELHI: Syria's foreign minister arrived in New Delhi yesterday for talks with his Indian counterpart, trying to build international support for President Bashar Al-Assad's government before peace talks in Geneva.

Walid Muallem will meet Sushma Swaraj and "other government functionaries" during a three-day official visit, foreign ministry spokesman Vikas Swarup said. Peace talks between Assad's government and the Syrian opposition are due to begin in January 25 as part of an ambitious 18-month plan endorsed by the UN Security Council.

More than 260,000 people have died since Syria's brutal civil war erupted in March 2011, and previous efforts to find a political solution to the war have failed. The UN-backed plan foresees a rapid ceasefire, and calls for talks that would lead to the "establishment of an inclusive transitional governing body with full executive powers" within six months, although it does not directly address Assad's fate.

Analysts said the Syrian minister's India visit, which follows trips to Russia and China, was an attempt to build international support for the Syrian president, who is backed by Russia. "The fact that the Syrian foreign minister is visiting India is a clear indication that India supports and has given legitimacy to the Assad government," said Ranjit Gupta, an independent analyst and former Indian ambassador.

"India is not expected to give explicit public support, except to say that there should be no regime change through external force... which in itself is a big boost for the Syrian government." The visit comes as Swaraj and Prime Minister Narendra Modi prepare for visits to the Middle East. — AFP



NEW DELHI: Indian Foreign Ministry official Satbir Singh (right) welcomes Syrian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Walid Al-Moualem, upon his arrival at the Indira Gandhi International airport, in New Delhi, India, Monday, Jan. 11, 2016. Al-Moualem is on four day official visit to India. — AP

INDONESIAN FORCES REGROUP AFTER FAILING TO CAPTURE TOP MILITANT

JAKARTA: Indonesian security forces are regrouping to launch a more aggressive campaign to hunt for the country's most-wanted man, police said yesterday, after months of fruitless searching in the jungles of Sulawesi island.

President Joko Widodo has made the arrest of Santoso, Indonesia's most high-profile backer of Islamic State, one of his national security priorities and had given security forces until Jan. 9 to arrest him. But Santoso, who has been on the run for more than three years, has proven to be more difficult to catch than expected.

Security forces plan to bring in 500 more policemen and soldiers to reinforce the 1,600 personnel looking for Santoso, who analysts say could be an inspiration for Indonesian militants returning from fighting with Islamic State in the Middle East.

"There is a new operation called Tinombala that will focus on Poso and the surrounding areas," said Hari Suprpto, spokesman for the Central Sulawesi police, referring to the district where Santoso is believed to be based.

Details of how the military and police would join forces still had to be worked out, he said. Officials at the presidential palace were not available for comment.

Determined to capture Santoso, President Joko Widodo in March approved the first major military counter-terrorism operation since the bombing of two Jakarta hotels in 2009. A blitz by troops, warships and fighter jets weakened Santoso's forces, but he got away and officials believe he still commands up to 40 men.

While security forces increase their focus on Santoso in Central Sulawesi, analysts have raised alarm over a growing network of Islamic State supporters around the capital, Jakarta. Police over the weekend arrested three people after finding bomb-making equipment at a house near Jakarta, said a police spokesman, Sulisty Pudjo Hartono. Police said the three were suspected of having links with a group of men arrested across the island of Java last month, who were believed to be planning attacks over the New Year holiday. — Reuters

CHINA TO RESTRICT FAMILY SIZE FOR UP TO 30 YEARS

BEIJING: China will stick to family planning restrictions for up to 30 years, a senior Chinese official said yesterday, rejecting concern that limits on the number of children had shrunk the pool of workers needed to support an aging population. Last year, the ruling Chinese Communist Party announced it would relax its long-standing and controversial "one-child policy", allowing all couples to have two children. But critics say the policy change comes too late to avert a dangerous population imbalance as many

couples are now not keen on having more children. China's population is set to peak at about 1.45 billion by 2050 when one in every three people is expected to be more than 60 years old, with a shrinking proportion of working adults to support them. But officials would adhere to family planning restrictions "for the long term", Wang Pei'an, vice minister of the National Health and Family Planning Commission, told a news conference. "This long-term adherence is at least

20 years, 30 years," Wang said. "After a period of time, along with demographic changes, and along with changes in the population's socio-economic development situation, we will adopt a different population policy." He said it was difficult to give a specific time on how long the restrictions on family size would be maintained, saying it was an issue that had to be dealt with "in line with the times". Asked about the danger the two-child policy would prevent China from getting

rich before it got old, Wang said an aging population was a global problem and "an inevitable trend of a society's development". China's main problem with its labor force was not the number of workers but "how to improve the quality of workers", he said. Wang said there was a demographic "imbalance" in China between poorer regions with higher fertility levels than cities, where many people are reluctant to have more children. The one-child policy was introduced in the late 1970s

to prevent population growth spiraling out of control, but is now regarded as outdated and responsible for shrinking the labor pool. It has also led to the problem of an aging society, with a smaller number of productive young people, a phenomenon usually seen in industrialized countries. With the adoption of the two-child policy, China's labor force could rise by more than 30 million by 2050 and its aging population will be reduced by 2 percentage points by 2030, Wang said. — Reuters

EIGHT REASONS CHINA OFF TO A ROCKY 2016

BEIJING: Barely more than a week into 2016, Chinese President Xi Jinping is having a rough time of it, with challenges ranging from a plummeting stock market to new provocations from obstreperous ally North Korea. While none pose an existential threat to his administration, the world will be watching to see whether he has the sophisticated touch needed to find durable solutions and maintain stability. Below is a look at eight key issues Xi is contending with:

Stock market volatility
China twice deployed its "circuit breaker" mechanism to halt trading as stock markets nosedived by 10 percent in the first week of the year. Beijing finally abandoned the mechanism, and left the perception that regulators don't have a clue as they try to stabilize a market that more than doubled between late 2014 and June, then dived 30 percent, causing deep pain among retail investors.

Currency queasiness
Meanwhile, China's currency, the yuan, has slid to a five-year low against the dollar, forcing the government to spend tens of millions of dollars from its foreign currency stockpile to defend it. The government last week guided the yuan 1.5 percent lower to assist hard-pressed exporters, but the clumsy move sent shockwaves through world markets, further weighing on Chinese share prices.

Slowing economy
Hiccups in the world's second-largest economy are expected to continue in 2016, with growth falling to a six-year low of 6.9 percent in the July-September quarter and forecast by the International Monetary Fund to decline further to 6.3 percent this year. That bodes ill for the economy's ability to generate enough new jobs for the more than 7.5 million students due to graduate from college this year, while also building momentum for a transition from an investment-based economy to one focused on services.

North Korea
Despite persistent calls for restraint, China's traditional ally North Korea staged what it claims was a hydrogen bomb test blast on Jan. 6 that sent actual tremors across the border into northeastern China and drew condemnation from Beijing. China now finds itself again under pressure to use any possible leverage with the North to tamp down tensions in northeast Asia, while facing the possibility of more robust security cooperation between South Korea and China's traditional rivals Japan and the United States.

Taiwan
Voters on the self-governing island democracy appear set to elect a new presi-

dent whose party opposes Beijing's goal of unification between the sides. Beijing's economic inducements have failed to persuade the Taiwanese public of the benefits of political union. If opposition Democratic Progressive Party candidate Tsai Ing-wen wins Saturday, as she is widely expected to do, Beijing may feel compelled to embark on economic and diplomatic pressure that could send relations into reverse. It's unlikely that Beijing would go so far as to back up its longstanding threat to use force to bring the island under Chinese control.

Politics
While Xi faces no such electoral challenges under China's one-party system, he does face resistance from political rivals and the vast bureaucracy. Xi shows no sign of abandoning his signature anti-corruption campaign blamed for creating a sense of fear and paralysis among the rank and file. His growing cult of personality exudes an exterior confidence. But with the economy slowing and no sign of political reforms, he may come under pressure from critics and rivals to show results on jobs, growth, good governance and addressing the yawning income gap.

South China Sea
Since the year began, China has landed three aircraft on a new island it built in the South China Sea, drawing protests from Vietnam and the Philippines, which have competing territorial claims in the region. China's robust assertions of its claim to virtually the entire South China Sea have long drawn complaints and sparked the occasional maritime confrontations in the area through which \$5 trillion in global trade passes each year. The test flights landed on one of seven new islands Beijing has built by piling sand atop reefs and atolls. The US is adamant that the new features don't deserve the legal status of actual islands, and the US Navy has flown and sailed close to them, drawing a furious response from Beijing. Xi now has to defend China's actions while avoiding damage to its foreign relations.

Hong Kong
China faces continuing opposition from pro-democracy forces in Hong Kong, the former British colony that reverted to Chinese rule in 1997 while retaining its own legal and economic systems. Beijing's hand-picked chief executive, Leung Chun-ying, is deeply unpopular, and planned electoral changes stalled after massive street protests in 2014, leaving deep rifts in hyper-efficient Hong Kong's society and politicizing a generation of students. Now, the recent disappearances of people associated with a publishing company that specializes in titles critical of China's leadership have raised fears that Beijing is tightening its grip on Hong Kong's freedom of the press and other civil liberties. — AP



PYONGYANG: This undated picture released from North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on January 10, 2016 shows North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un delivering a speech at the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces. — AFP

KIM'S NUKE TEST PROVES GIFT OF SORTS FOR S KOREAN PRESIDENT

TEST STOPPING PARK'S SLIDE IN POPULARITY

SEOUL: North Korea's nuclear test has provoked global outrage, a push for sanctions, even fear. But Kim Jong Un's decision to conduct it has also handed a gift of sorts to his rival in the South. In an instant, Wednesday's explosion shifted the focus on the presidency of Park Geun-hye, who has faced several mass protests condemning her leadership in recent weeks. Park's swift, hard-line response, including a return of cross-border propaganda broadcasts that Pyongyang loathes, has, for the time being, overshadowed criticism over her leadership style, her alleged abuse of workers' rights and her purported submission to Tokyo in a deal meant to end a dispute over Japan's wartime sexual enslavement of Korean women. Park has temporarily stopped a slide in popularity by doing something she has proven herself adept at: Standing tall in the face of what Seoul sees as a provocation from its northern rival. A survey showed her approval rating rose slightly last week, for the first time in five weeks. While the boost is likely temporary, the timing of the nuclear test may help Park and her ruling party. Crucial parliamentary elections loom in April.

'Quieting down'
The test is "immediately quieting down" the most contentious complaints against Park, said Yoon Tae-Ryong, a professor at Seoul's Konkuk University. "Some members of the ruling party must be grinning inside." Shortly after the North's test, Park put her front-line troops on their highest alert, reportedly moved missiles, artillery and other weapons closer to the border,

partially banned South Koreans from a jointly run factory park in the North and allowed huge green speakers along the border to begin cranking out South Korean K-pop songs and criticism of the North's leadership. She could have done more to punish the North, by slapping them with bilateral punitive measures and ending the South's participation in the factory park, which is a rare cash cow for the impoverished, widely shunned North. The park, however, is also the last major inter-Korean project from an earlier era of rapprochement. She's attempting to walk a delicate line: To show South Korea's intense displeasure without killing the possibility of drawing the North into future diplomacy that could settle the neighbors' many differences. A military clash is also a worry. Pyongyang posts a large part of its 1.2 million military and a huge array of weapons along the Korean border, within easy striking range of the South Korean capital, Seoul, and its 10 million residents. The North views the restart of the propaganda broadcasts and their criticism of its authoritarian leadership as tantamount to war. Seoul says the broadcasts led the North to fire artillery across the border the last time they happened, in August. British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond on Friday publicly urged Seoul to refrain from the broadcasts.

Propaganda purposes
North Korea, however, has done little to respond to the broadcasts this time, perhaps because Pyongyang is too focused on celebrating its nuclear test for internal propaganda purposes.

The most tangible effect of the South's retaliation so far is that it has helped Park change the conversation back home. Though the president has a strong base of conservative supporters, thousands of opponents took to the streets on several occasions before the nuclear test to criticize her policies and what they saw as her attacks on personal and political freedoms. There's resistance to a new requirement for schools to use only state-issued history textbooks starting in 2017, which critics call an attempt to whitewash past dictatorships - including that of Park's father, Park Chung-hee, who ruled South Korea in the 1960s and 1970s. The country's military dictatorship ended only in the late 1980s and the divide between left and right remains deep. Park has also received massive public criticism for a botched rescue operation during a ferry disaster in 2014 that killed more than 300, mostly schoolchildren, and for the handling of a MERS virus outbreak last year that killed 38. Most recently, the nuclear test tamped down anger over an "irreversible" settlement last month between Japan and South Korea of a decades-long standoff over Korean women forced into sexual slavery by Japan's World War II military. All those controversies may have been muted by the nuclear test, but none are going away. "Conservatives have mustered support temporarily because of this external shock," Jang Seung-jin, a professor at Seoul's Kookmin University, said of the nuclear test. "When the nuclear news calms down, I think her approval rating will dip back to where it was." — AP



HONG KONG: In this Sunday, Jan 10, 2016 file photo, a protester wearing a mask of missing bookseller Lee Bo stands in a cage during a protest against the disappearances of booksellers in Hong Kong after five men associated with a Hong Kong publisher known for books critical of China's leaders have vanished one by one in the last three months. The sign in front reads: "Missing men." — AP

PASTOR DETAINED BY N KOREA STRUGGLES WITH HARD LABOR

SEOUL: A 60-year-old Canadian pastor, jailed for life with hard labor in North Korea, spends eight hours a day, six days a week digging holes in an orchard in a prison camp where he is the sole inmate. In an interview in Pyongyang with CNN, Hyeon Soo Lim said it had been tough adapting to the physical rigors of his internment following his conviction last month on charges of "subversive" acts against the state. "I wasn't originally a laborer, so the labor was hard at first," said Lim, his head shaven and wearing a grey prison outfit with the number 036. The interview was conducted in the room of a Pyongyang hotel, where the North Koreans also presented another ethnic Korean prisoner, whom they said was a US citizen arrested for spying in October. There have been no recent reports either from Pyongyang or Washington of any American having been detained. But the North Korean side produced a US passport identifying the man as Kim Dong-Chul, 62, who became a naturalized US citizen in 1987. Kim told CNN he had been living in China near the North Korean border for the past 15 years, commuting regularly to Rason-a North Korean special economic zone.

Spying for S. Korea?
In the interview-conducted through an official translator-Kim said he had spied on behalf of "South Korean conservative elements" and taken photos of military secrets. The foreign ministry in Seoul had no immediate comment on the report. The interview with Hyeon Soo Lim began

with the pastor being briskly marched inside by two uniformed guards holding his arms. The guards left the room but the South Korean-born Lim, who speaks and understands English, said he had been told to answer all the questions in Korean-suggesting the conversation was being closely monitored. Lim was detained by North Korean authorities in January last year after arriving from China. At his sentencing last month, North Korea said he had admitted all charges against him, including "viciously defaming" the North Korean system and its leader, and plotting to overthrow the state. Lim, a pastor at the Light Korean Presbyterian Church in Toronto, was the latest in a series of foreign missionaries to be arrested, deported or jailed for allegedly meddling in state affairs. Lim said he was required to work eight hours a day, six days a week, digging in the orchard of a labor camp with no other prisoners except himself. He said he received regular medical care and three meals a day, and was hoping for a Bible which he had requested but still not received. "I pray every day for the country and the people, I pray for North and South to be reunified, so that a situation like mine won't happen again," he said. The interview lasted almost an hour, after which the guard returned and Lim was marched out. Canada has protested at the "unduly harsh" sentence and complained that consular officials had been denied access to Lim. Lim was no stranger to North Korea, having led multiple aid missions to the country, involving work with orphanages, nursing homes and food process-

ing factories. Pyongyang views foreign missionaries with deep suspicion, though it allows some to undertake humanitarian work. A number of Christian missionaries-mostly ethnic Koreans who are US citizens-have been arrested in the past, with some of them only allowed to return home after intervention by high-profile US political figures. —AFP



PYONGYANG: This file picture taken by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on July 30, 2015 shows Canadian reverend Hyeon Soo Lim, who is being held in North Korea, during a public interrogation at the People's Palace of Culture. —AFP

FRAIL THAI KING LEAVES HOSPITAL

BANGKOK: Thailand's ailing but much-loved King Bhumibol Adulyadej left hospital yesterday for the first time in several months in a surprise visit to a Bangkok palace, an official statement said. The 88-year-old king, who is regarded by many Thais as a near-deity and a unifying figure in the bitterly split nation, was driven from Bangkok's Siriraj Hospital to the sprawling Chitralada Royal Villa nearby. "The king went to the Chitralada Royal Villa by personal car," according to a statement on the Facebook page of the office of the king's principal private secretary. In a trip lasting around an hour the world's longest-reigning monarch paid a visit to a pond as well as other "projects" in the compound before returning to the hospital, the

statement added. It was a rare foray outside the hospital where the king has spent much of the last two years. He was last seen in an official photograph distributed in mid-December. Few details concerning his health are given out by the palace. But on Sunday it issued an update reporting that the king's pulse and blood pressure had returned to normal after he was given antibiotics to fight an infection and fever. In September the palace released a video of the monarch in a wheelchair, looking visibly weakened, visiting a shop in the hospital. Most Thais have only known King Bhumibol on the throne and anxiety over the future once his six-decade reign ends is seen as an aggravating factor in Thailand's bitter political divide. —AFP

ON IRAN-SAUDI RIFT, GULF ACTS WITH CAUTION

Continued from Page 1

"The problem is, common ground between everyone in this region is shrinking."

Some officials calculate that cutting ties with Tehran would complicate efforts to end Syria's war, in which Iran is providing military support to President Bashar Al-Assad. It would also risk antagonizing an emerging regional power that is set to benefit from an easing of international sanctions after its landmark nuclear deal with world powers last July, and is already being courted by Western investors. "Sudden escalations like this create a lot of anxiety in the region, a lot of fear. Oil prices are getting lower and lower and budgets are being restricted," said Shafeeq Ghabra, a professor of political science at Kuwait University. "For business at least, it's a bad time to be making enemies."

Different Outlooks

Despite their similarities, the Gulf Arab monarchies have varying regional outlooks, economies and political systems. Relations between Iran and Bahrain, a Sunni-ruled monarchy where Shiites are a majority,

were already poor. Over the past four years, Bahrain has regularly accused Tehran of meddling in its internal affairs by backing various Shiite opposition groups since the start of the Arab Spring in 2011.

Elsewhere in the region, though, the calculus is less straightforward. Oman stands apart from its Gulf Arab neighbors in keeping a cordial, even collaborative, relationship with Iran: much to the chagrin of its GCC partners, it played the role of intermediary in opening negotiations between the United States and Iran. Then there is the UAE, Iran's most important regional trade partner. Despite a decades-old territorial dispute between the two countries over small Gulf islands near the Strait of Hormuz, the UAE in 2013 sent over \$12 billion worth of goods to Iran according to IMF estimates. Most of this was exported from Dubai, which is home to a large population of Iranian nationals.

Trade between the other Gulf states and Iran is small, but goes back centuries. Much of that, too, is routed via Dubai. "We, as Arabs, do not want a conflict, a confrontation or even a war with Iran. Instead we seek to drive development in our countries, our peoples and our region," UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh

Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan said in an interview on Sunday after an emergency Arab League meeting in Cairo.

'No Grey Areas'

Navigating the rift between Iran and Saudi Arabia is particularly tricky for Qatar. The tiny, vastly wealthy monarchy shares access to the world's largest natural gas field beneath the Gulf waters with Iran which, following the nuclear deal, has sought to entice European and US oil firms to invest in its energy infrastructure. Qatar has drawn closer to Saudi Arabia since a spat in 2014 when Riyadh briefly withdrew its ambassador from Doha in a dispute over Qatar's alleged support for the Muslim Brotherhood.

Still, it took Doha more than three days after the attack on the Saudi embassy in the early hours of Jan 3 to announce it was withdrawing its ambassador to Tehran. During that time, Saudi Arabia banned access for its citizens to a major Qatari-owned news site, signalling the potential for tensions between the neighbors to reignite. Analysts see another possible reason for Qatar's cautious approach: Iran has declared its support for efforts to free 26 Qatari nationals kid-

napped in December while on a hunting trip in southern Iraq. "The Saudis need to know who supports them and who does not, because major, fateful battles have no grey areas," wrote Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi commentator, in an article published in a Qatari newspaper on Sunday that compared Riyadh's conflict with Iran to the European fight against fascism in the 1930s. Middle Eastern countries, Khashoggi wrote, faced a choice: "Submit to the Guardianship of Islamic Jurists or defend freedom."

But the GCC has so far largely avoided the upheaval that has swept the region, and analysts say suggestions that the hardline Saudi position on Iran could cause splits within the economic bloc, or see states break away, are overstating the case. "We can go on forever talking about disunity within the GCC. Yes of course there are differences of opinions, but to make too much of that diversity is to neglect completely the unity that also prevails, especially over Iran," said Abdulkhaleq Abdulla, a political science professor in the United Arab Emirates. "This is a time when the GCC are standing up to Iran and saying 'we've had enough of Iranian expansionism and we're going to be more determined to confront it.'" — Reuters

PALESTINIAN DREAMS OF RACING PAST USAIN...

Continued from Page 1

And when he runs, he "meditates at the same time." Nothing stops him: Not even the construction of a new building in Ramallah that encroaches on his athletics field, including cranes carrying iron sheets over the track.

For Mohammed has already been through a lot, he said from the garden of the stone house where he lives with his roommates. He has not yet known international competitions, adrenaline-filled stadiums or the stress of the starting blocks, but he has entered competitions "where the lanes are not curved but square, with 90-degree turns". Even if he doesn't make the time, other potential qualification routes exist: A small number of places are usually given to those who fell just short of the time, while some countries that have no representative are also granted a 'wildcard' spot.

Of the five members of the Palestinian delegation to the London 2012 Games, four were wildcards. The fifth, judoka Maher Abu Remeleh, was the first Palestinian in Olympic history to qualify on merit. Palestine has never won an Olympic medal and its national committee is under no illusions about the difficulty of doing so. But, as with qualifying matches for the football World Cup, participation in the Games is not only a sporting event but a

political statement in support of a Palestinian state.

Khatib is convinced he can set an example: Israel "wants to convince us that we can't do anything, you will always remain backwards, that's what they want the Palestinians to believe," he said. "I will prove them wrong." Instead of using his energy throwing stones at Israeli soldiers like many young Palestinians, "I prefer to use it to build something for my society: The idea of the Olympic Games is to create hope, to show that we are able to succeed".

To take the next step after years of training without supervision, he needed a push from outside. For that, he found a coach, but in Texas. After obtaining an American visa - far from a formality for Palestinians - he needed to raise nearly \$8,000 for three months in America. So he turned to the Internet. Launching a fundraising page, he was amazed at the result. "In three or four days, I met the whole amount." A few days later, it was close to \$13,000.

If after his training he is fast enough then "we are ready to support him and send him to train abroad as we do already with several other athletes", Munther Masalma, Secretary General of the Palestinian Olympic Committee, told AFP. "This year we hope to achieve an unprecedented feat and send between eight and ten Palestinian athletes to Rio," he added. Ten more reasons for hope for the Palestinians. — AFP

MUSIC LEGEND DAVID BOWIE DIES AGED 69

Continued from Page 1

In the first of many re-inventions, he took the name David Bowie in 1966 to avoid being mixed up with Davy Jones, lead singer with Beatles rivals The Monkees, and also studied Buddhism and mime. Married twice, he was notorious in the 1970s for his hedonistic lifestyle and ambiguous sexual orientation, once declaring he was bisexual but then retreating from his comments. During the 70s, he brought out a string of successful albums, dominating the British music scene, and also conquered the United States, his ever-changing fashion as groundbreaking as his music.

Beginning with the critically-acclaimed "Hunky Dory", he went on to produce "The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars", followed by rock album "Aladdin Sane", the apocalyptic "Diamond Dogs" before a fling with so-called plastic soul on "Young Americans". He then switched gears once more, moving to Berlin to work with the electronic experimentalist Brian Eno to produce a trio of albums - "Low", "Heroes" and "Lodger".

The 1980s saw him win over a new generation with "Let's Dance", which yielded the hit singles "China Girl" and "Modern Love" before a 1985 team up with Mick Jagger for a cover of "Dancing in the Street" that helped to push the BandAid and LiveAid charity projects. His chameleon-like ability to reinvent his image, drawing on everything from cabaret to kabuki theatre, was accompanied by a string of albums until heart problems curtailed his productivity in the 2000s. But he also appeared on screen, making a striking appearance in the 1986 cult film "Labyrinth", playing a prisoner-of-war in Japan "Merry Christmas, Mr Lawrence" (1983) and

portraying inventor Nikola Tesla in "The Prestige" (2006).

Rarely seen in public, Bowie's last live performance was a decade ago. But he surprised the world by launching a surprise single "Where Are We Now?" on his 66th birthday in 2013 after nearly 10 years of silence, recalling his days in Berlin in the 1970s and hailed by critics as a major comeback. An innovator to the end, Bowie on Friday released his final album "Blackstar". The work can be seen in a new light by the revelation of how ill he was when he created it, with lyrics including "Look up here, I'm in heaven, I've got scars that can't be seen."

Long-time collaborator Tony Visconti wrote on Facebook that he had known for a year what was coming. "His death was no different from his life - a work of art," Visconti wrote. "He made Blackstar for us, his parting gift." He leaves behind his second wife Iman, a Somali-born supermodel who he married in 1992 and with whom he had a daughter, Alexandria Zahra Jones. He also had a son, film director Duncan Jones, with his first wife Angie Bowie. She was informed of her ex-husband's death while cut off from the outside world on the television show "Celebrity Big Brother".

Germany thanked Bowie for what it said was his role in helping to topple the Berlin Wall in 1989, with a tweet linking to a video of his Cold War-era anthem "Heroes" set in the then-divided city. "For gay people, he was a leading light to give us hope," said charity worker Charlie Rice, 66, who was visiting the Brixton mural. "He was fearless." One tribute came from a real star man: British astronaut Tim Peake, who wrote a message from the International Space Station: "Saddened to hear David Bowie has lost his battle with cancer - his music was an inspiration to many." — AFP

AID TRUCKS ENTER STARVING SYRIA TOWN

Continued from Page 1

Some people went through garbage bins, others ate grass. We sought food from the fighters but they refused to give it to us." Since Dec 1, some 28 people had died of starvation in Madaya, according to Doctors Without Borders, a Paris-based charity known by its French acronym MSF. Residents have described desperate scenes, saying they have been reduced to eating weeds and paying exorbitant prices for what little food could be smuggled through the blockade. Fifty trucks bearing the Red Crescent symbol were on their way to Madaya and 21 heading to Fuua and Kafraya, the ICRC said. The trucks were carrying food, water, infant formula, blankets and medication for acute and chronic illnesses, as well as surgical supplies.

The three towns, along with rebel-held Zabadani near Madaya, were part of a landmark six-month deal reached in September for an end to hostilities in those areas in exchange for humanitarian assistance. A first aid delivery went ahead in October and in December some 450 fighters and civilians were evacuated from Zabadani, Fuua and Kafraya. But aid had not reached Madaya in nearly three months, and residents and rights groups have raised the alarm about deteriorating conditions.

Government forces have been able to airdrop some supplies into Fuua and Kafraya, which are home to around 20,000 people, but rebel forces are not able to do the same for Madaya. Over the weekend, MSF said 23 people had died of starvation since Dec 1 at one of the facilities it supports in Madaya. On Sunday it reported five additional

deaths, including that of a nine-year-old boy. "MSF-supported medics in the besieged town have 10 critical starvation patients needing urgent hospitalization," said MSF. It said that "200 more malnourished patients could become critical and in need of hospitalization within a week if aid doesn't arrive".

Another 13 people who tried to escape in search of food have been killed when they stepped on landmines laid by regime forces or were shot by snipers, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a British-based monitor. Last week, the UN said only 10 percent of its requested aid deliveries to hard-to-reach and besieged areas of Syria last year were approved and carried out. More than 260,000 people have been killed in Syria since the conflict began in March 2011 with anti-government demonstrations.

Britain yesterday called for an end to all sieges in Syria. "Starving civilians is an inhuman tactic used by the Assad regime and their allies," said Matthew Rycroft, the British ambassador to the United Nations. "All sieges must be lifted to save civilian lives and to bring Syria closer to peace," he said in a statement.

Elsewhere in Syria, at least 12 children were killed along with their teacher and two other adults when a Russian air strike hit their school in the west of Aleppo province, the Observatory reported. Russia, a staunch ally of Assad, began a campaign of air strikes in support of the regime in late September. It says it is targeting the Islamic State group and other "terrorists" and has dismissed reports that its raids have killed hundreds of civilians as "absurd". — AFP

BAHRAIN HIKES PRICE OF FUEL AS KUWAIT...

Continued from Page 1

Saleh said that the government will explain to the Assembly the financial and economic status of the nation and the urgent financial challenges the country is facing. The government will brief the Assembly on the proposed measures to face the challenges to ensure a sustainable capability for the state to continue to provide a dignified living for citizens, the minister said.

Saleh did not say what measures the government plans to propose to face the impact of the sharp fall in oil prices on the Kuwaiti economy, but he was referring to a study made by Ernst & Young that proposed massive cuts in subsidies on a wide range of services and commodities, especially raising the price of petrol, electricity and water.

A large number of MPs have openly refused any government austerity measures that could impact citizens and urged the government to find other alternatives to cut spending and deal with the budget deficit. Ghanem said that the Assembly may hold a special meeting or debate to discuss the issue, adding that he met Prime Minister HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah who promised that the government will not take any unilateral

action on this issue. The speaker said the country is facing difficult challenges but "we are capable of overcoming them without hurting low-income people".

At the start of last year, the government lifted subsidies for diesel and kerosene. Under a law, the government cannot increase charges on public services without amending a two-decade old law that bans the government from doing so without prior approval of the Assembly. But it is in the hands of the government to raise the prices of fuel without prior consent of MPs.

Kuwait's moves come after almost all GCC peers have increased or plan to raise the prices of fuel and other heavily-subsidized commodities and services. With the latest decisions, Kuwait collects the cheapest rates on electricity, water and fuel in the GCC. Based on an oil price of \$45 a barrel, the total cost of subsidies on fuel and electricity is about KD 2.2 billion in the budget of the current fiscal year 2015/2016, which ends March 31.

A similar amount of subsidies is spent on social allowances and aid to citizens, which includes KD 625 million for social aid, KD 495 million for supporting national labor employment in the private sector, marriage and housing allowances and others.

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Focus

SEEKING SUPPORT,
KHARTOUM MOVES
CLOSER TO RIYADH

By Tom Little

Long one of Iran's few Sunni Arab partners, Sudan has cut ties with Tehran in the latest step in its move towards Saudi Arabia as Khartoum seeks to end its isolation and right its economy. The impoverished east African state followed Riyadh in severing relations with Iran, saying it was responding to attacks on Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran after the execution of a Saudi Shiite cleric. But with Khartoum hungry for Saudi investment to boost its battered economy, the move was made for "pragmatic reasons", said Al-Tayeb Zein al-Abidine, political science professor at Khartoum University.

It follows Sudan's surprise decision in March to send troops to join the Saudi-led coalition against Yemen's Shiite Houthi rebels. "The government realized it was very isolated, even within the Arab world, and decided to change sides," Abidine said. President Omar Al-Bashir's 26-year rule has seen Sudan slapped with sanctions over rights abuses and its support for Islamic extremists, including Osama bin Laden. Bashir himself is wanted on war crimes charges related to the insurgency in the western region of Darfur.

Ties with the Gulf disintegrated over Khartoum's support of the 1991 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, leaving Sudan to turn to Iran, also isolated and hit by sanctions. Reports said Tehran supplied Sudan with ammunition and small arms, helping to develop its arms industry. Iranian warships used to stop over in Port Sudan across the Red Sea from Saudi Arabia.

'Relationship of Convenience'

But it was a "relationship of convenience", said Magdi El Gizouli, an independent analyst. "I don't think there's a strong ideological commitment," he said. The partnership soured in Sept 2014, when Sudanese officials ordered the closure of an Iranian cultural centre in Khartoum, accusing its employees of preaching Shiite Islam in majority Sunni Sudan. Observers saw underlying motives. "They closed the centres to give a positive signal to Saudi Arabia," a diplomatic source in Khartoum told AFP.

The closure came with the economy faltering after nearly 20 years of sanctions. When South Sudan became independent in 2011, it took with it three quarters of the country's oil reserves. And Sudan's lifting of fuel subsidies triggered street protests in Sept 2013, in one of the most serious challenges to Bashir's rule since he seized power. "The main driver of foreign relations is the situation of the 'bank of Sudan'," said Gizouli, referring to the overall state of the country's economy. Sudan made a firmer commitment to Riyadh and its Gulf allies in March when it joined the coalition, despite fighting insurgencies in the western Darfur region and South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. Its troops have reportedly been active in combat roles in Yemen and Sudanese troops have been filmed driving in convoy through the southern port of Aden. In August, Sudan said it had received a \$1 billion deposit in its central bank, with media reports at the time saying it was aimed at shoring up Sudan's foreign reserves. Foreign ministry spokesman Ali Al-Sadiq denied Sudan's "very good relations" with Riyadh were driven by financial and economic motives. "The flow of investments has (been) coming all the time," he said.

More Investment

But since Sudan's rapprochement with Riyadh and its Gulf allies, officials have been promising there will be more Saudi investment in the country. The investment minister told parliament last week that Saudi investments in Sudan were worth \$11 billion. And after Sudan cut ties with Iran, the deputy head of its mission in Riyadh met the head of the Saudi chamber of commerce to discuss more financial and economic projects. The diplomatic change of course is also likely to prove popular with the families of the hundreds of thousands of Sudanese workers living in the Gulf. "They give support to many families in Sudan, so mending relations with the Gulf was a very popular step," Abidine said.

In March 2014, Saudi banks stopped dealing with Sudan, hitting the workers sending remittances back badly. Following Sudan's decision to join the war in Yemen, officials said the measures could be eased. There has been little improvement in Sudan's economy since its attempted rapprochement, and Riyadh is also facing uncertainties due to the slump in oil prices. But Sudan is still banking on its backing. Khartoum may also hope Riyadh will lobby Washington over its sanctions regime, the removal of which would also lift the economy. "All countries lead a foreign policy in line with their interests," the diplomatic source in Khartoum said. "Sudan's interest now is economic." — AFP

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DAVID BOWIE: CHAMELEON OF ROCK

By Naomi O'Leary

From Ziggy Stardust to the Thin White Duke and Aladdin Sane, David Bowie was rock's ultimate chameleon. A master of reinvention whose career spanned two generations, he dazzled millions with his taste for experiment, taking on everything from glam rock and soul to electronica and jazz. Bowie's sexuality was an experiment too - he played with gender on stage and remained ambiguous on the issue off stage. He marked his 69th birthday on Friday by releasing his 25th studio album "Blackstar", hailed by many as one of his most innovative yet.

Delighted critics heralded a new musical era for the star. But just two days later, Bowie's family made the shock announcement of his death Sunday via social media, revealing that the star had endured a secret 18-month battle with cancer. Starting with "Space Oddity" in 1969, Bowie scored hit after hit over more than four decades, ranging from "The Jean Genie" and "Heroes" in the 1970s to "Let's Dance" and "Modern Love" in the 1980s to more recent hits like 2013's wistful "Where Are We Now?"

Many of these became era-defining hits around the world while successively defining what it meant to be a music legend. Bowie was "an innovator who proved time and again that the only way to make music a vital part of our culture is to continue to break the rules," said Bowie's long-term producer Tony Visconti.

From South London to Superstardom

Bowie sold an estimated 140 million records worldwide but the scale of his influence goes far beyond sales, with musicians from Lady Gaga to Blur citing the importance of his work for theirs. Born David Robert Jones in Brixton, south London on January 8, 1947, his family moved out to the leafy suburb of Bromley when he was six. He changed his name to avoid being confused with The Monkees singer Davy Jones. Bowie's eponymous first album was released in 1967 but it was "Space Oddity" that first caught people's attention.

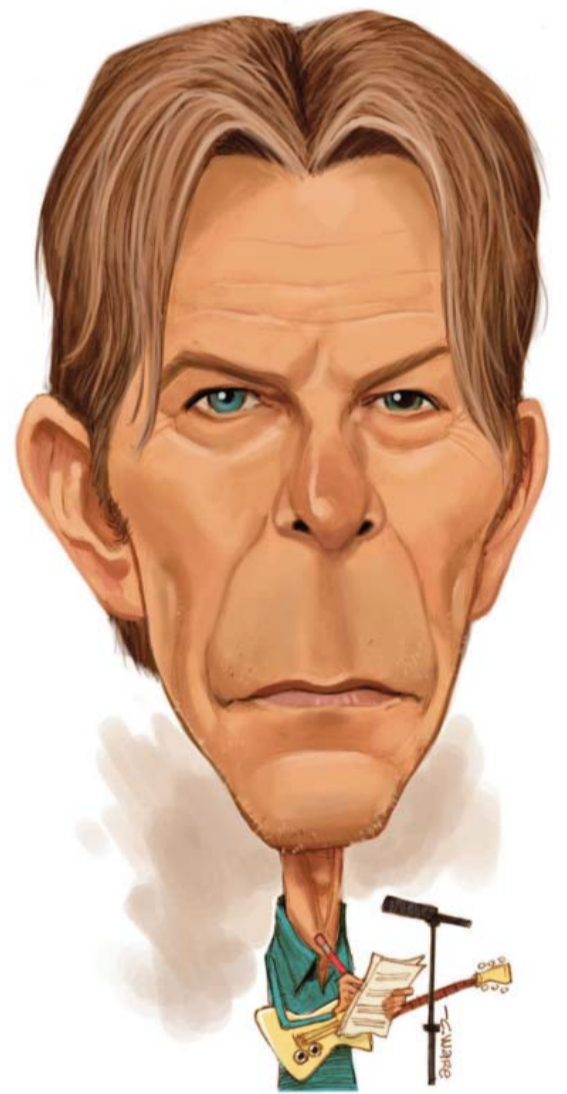
Then in 1972 with his first re-invention as the androgynous Ziggy Stardust, he hit the big time. He brought his

love of mime, fashion and theatre to his music - enabling him to challenge traditional views on style, gender and sexuality. In 1973 he moved on to create the Aladdin Sane persona and two years after that made his breakthrough in the US with "Fame", co-written with John Lennon and Carlos Alomar. The singer was living in the US with his wife Angie, but in 1976 he moved to West Berlin with his son Zowie, in a bid to escape a hedonistic life of drugs, drink and orgies. The marriage ended in divorce in 1980.

From 1976 to 1979, during his Berlin period, he produced a trilogy of albums with Brian Eno ("Low", "Heroes" and "Lodger"). His album "Let's Dance" in 1983, which yielded hits like "China Girl", conquered a younger audience on the dance floor and was his biggest-selling album to date. His late-1980s hard-rock period with the band Tin Machine, received mixed reviews. He married Somali supermodel Iman in 1992, with whom he had a daughter, Alexandria, and after a period living in Switzerland the family decided to split their time between London and New York.

Web Trailblazer

True to form, he was an online musical pioneer, releasing his 1999 album "Hours" on the Internet and sharing his news and passions on a website. Alongside his music career, Bowie took on regular film roles, from "The Man Who Fell to Earth" in 1976 to starring alongside Michael Caine and Scarlett Johansson in the period film "The Prestige", months before his 60th birthday. British media reports suggested he had declined a knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II in 2003. He did not confirm this but reportedly said of such honours: "I seriously don't know what it's for." Bowie suffered a minor heart attack in 2004 which cut short his "A Reality Tour" concert schedule, after which he kept a relatively low public profile. But to an ecstatic reception from fans, he released "The Next Day", his first album of new material for ten years, in 2013. That became his first UK number one for 20 years and his highest entry on the US billboard charts, at number two. "Blackstar", released on Friday, had also drawn critical acclaim, with many fans hoping it would lead to more new work in the coming years. — AFP



BRITISH EMPLOYERS KEEP TIGHT GRIP ON PAY

By William Schomberg

Britain's economy is heading into its seventh year of growth after the financial crisis but for many employers such as Mike Naylor, who runs a small metal-casting firm, business is too uncertain to raise staff pay by much this year. With the Bank of England holding off on raising record-low interest rates until it sees stronger pay growth, Naylor said he would probably only be able to offer an increase that is less generous than last year's. "If the confidence isn't there, it's very difficult to say we will give you 2 percent or 3 percent this year," he said.

Business has slowed recently at Naylor's firm, Durham Foundry, in line with much of British manufacturing, and he worries about the coming year. "I can't see what 2016 is going to do for us," Naylor said, adding he wished he could do more for the 15-strong team at Durham Foundry, which is based in the northern English city of Sheffield - a centre for metal-working since the 14th century.

BoE Governor Mark Carney has sounded equally wary and few economists expect the central bank to move closer to a rate rise this week when it holds its first policy meeting of 2016. After suggesting the BoE might increase rates on a couple of occasions in the past two years, only to be knocked off course by plunging inflation, Carney and his fellow policymakers are looking at pay, among other factors, to help them decide when to move on borrowing costs.

But rather than speeding up as the

BoE has predicted, earnings growth has slowed down, even as unemployment has fallen back to its levels before the financial crisis. Inflation has been stuck around zero, easing the strain of low pay growth for households, but looks set to start edging up soon. Trade union officials say stronger wage growth is needed urgently to make up for several years of below-inflation rises. "It will take until 2018 for average earnings just to get back to the real value they held in 2008 - 10 years of pay going backwards," Trades Union Congress chief Frances O'Grady said.

The breakdown in the usual economic relationship between employment, wages and inflation has stumped the BoE as well as other central banks witnessing a similar phenomenon. Carney said in November he would look for annual earnings growth of more than 3 percent, compared with a little more than 2 percent now, to help him feel that Britain was finally ready for a rate rise. Since then, oil prices have tumbled again and a new slump in China's stock markets has revived concern about the growth outlook there, prompting finance minister George Osborne to say the British economy faced a "dangerous cocktail" of threats.

Trying to Read the Economy

On top of the risks from abroad, investors have also become nervous about a planned referendum on whether Britain should remain in the European Union. Markets are now betting on no increase in BoE rates until 2017, which would be eight years after they were cut

to 0.5 percent.

Jenny Holloway, who runs a not-for-profit clothes factory employing 85 people in London, shares the wariness of many employers. She held off on pay rises for her staff in January, when their wages usually go up. The firm, Fashion Enter, is facing demands for ever cheaper clothing from high-street stores who themselves are resorting to almost permanent discounts to win over careful shoppers. Around a third of her lowest-paid staff will benefit from a 7.5 percent rise from Britain's new minimum wage starting in April. But the outlook for the rest of her team is unclear. "At the moment I am just waiting. It's not very fair to staff, but I have got to read the economy," Holloway said.

Things are brighter in some pockets of the labor market. Firms desperate for skilled workers in areas such as cyber-crime prevention and digital marketing are offering double-digit pay increases to poach staff, according to Benjamin Frost, a consultant with Hay Group, a human resources firm. Long-standing shortages of engineers and other science-based professionals have pushed up their pay. Wages for construction workers are also rising more quickly as building picks up.

The new minimum wage will directly boost the earnings of Britain's nearly 2 million lowest-paid workers in April. About the same number who earn a bit more are likely to get a rise too, albeit a much smaller one, as its effects ripple up the pay scale, according to the Resolution Foundation, a think tank.

But the impact for Britain's 31 million workers as a whole is likely to be small.

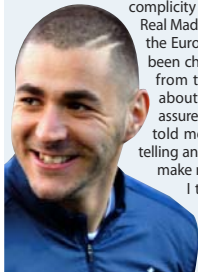
The Bank of England expects the new minimum wage to add just 0.1 percentage points a year to earnings growth in the next few years. At the same time, the BoE's forecast that wages would be rising by 3.75 percent a year by the end of 2016 looks too optimistic to many experts. This prediction, made in November, already depends a lot on an improvement in stubbornly weak productivity growth.

BoE officials accept unemployment might fall further without pushing up wages. Deputy Governor Minouche Shafiq, whose views are close to Carney's, has said she expects wages to resume their recovery soon but acknowledged this could take longer. Carney is likely to want to give a new message on the BoE's outlook, as his previous guidance that a decision on rates would become clearer around the turn of the year has timed out. Pay growth may be part of that.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, a trade group for human resources firms, expects pay rises to remain stuck around 2 percent this year. Unlike in previous economic recoveries, British employers can hire workers from across 27 other EU countries, easing the pressure usually felt when skilled workers become hard to find locally, the CIPD's chief economist Mark Beatson said. Tougher welfare rules that have pushed more Britons into work and a steady rise in the number of people delaying retirement have also kept the heat off wages. "I think it's old-fashioned to think that we hit skill shortages and then prices start going up," Beatson said. — Reuters

BENZEMA 'SCARED' VALBUENA OVER SEX-TAPE BLACKMAIL

PARIS: Mathieu Valbuena said that France teammate Karim Benzema "lied" and "scared" him over a sex-tape blackmail bid, according to testimony published yesterday. The account given by the Lyon midfielder, reported by Le Monde newspaper, highlighted tensions even though Valbuena said Sunday he would be ready to play with Benzema at the European Championships this year. Charges of complicity to attempted blackmail and conspiracy made against Real Madrid striker Benzema have jolted France's preparations for the Euro 2016. Three men, including a friend of Benzema, have been charged over the blackmail. Benzema has been excluded from the national squad. Benzema approached Valbuena about the tape at a national training camp in October. "He assured me he had seen it... he swore on his daughter's life, he told me it was hot. He scared me," Valbuena was quoted as telling an investigating judge on November 20. "He lied to me to make me meet this person, just to help his friend." "Afterwards I thought Karim is intelligent enough. He knows that if I meet his friend, it won't be for nothing," Valbuena added. Benzema later told investigators had not seen the sex-tape. — AFP



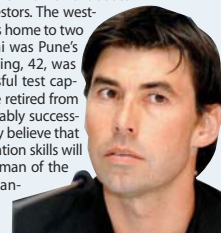
LEICESTER SIGN WINGER PIETERSEN

LONDON: Leicester Tigers have signed South Africa winger JP Pietersen on a three-year contract starting next season, the Premiership rugby club said on their website yesterday. The 29-year-old was a member of the Springboks squad that won the 2007 World Cup and he also played in the 2011 and 2015 tournaments. "We have been looking to add world-class quality throughout the squad and JP is certainly in that class," Leicester director of rugby Richard Cockerill said. "He has played at the very highest levels of the game for a long time...and is keen to experience club rugby in Europe." Leicester are one of English rugby's most successful teams and have twice been European champions.

They last won the Premiership title in 2013 and lie fourth in the table mid-way through the season. Pietersen, currently playing in Japan, has scored 22 tries in 66 internationals. He will join Leicester after the end of this year's southern hemisphere Super Rugby club competition, in which he will play for the Natal-based Sharks. "I'm really looking forward to joining up with a quality team like Leicester Tigers and competing for silverware in the Premiership and European Cup," Pietersen said. — Reuters

FLEMING TO LINK UP WITH DHONI IN PUNE

MUMBAI: Stephen Fleming will reunite with India's limited-overs skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni at the new Pune team after the former New Zealand captain was named as coach for the Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 tournament. Dhoni was captain of the Chennai Super Kings when Fleming was coach and he led them to the IPL title in 2010 and 2011. The ninth edition of the tournament will be played from April 9 to May 29. The franchise owners of Chennai and Rajasthan were suspended for two years in July following an illegal betting and spot-fixing scandal surrounding the IPL, which has an estimated brand value of \$3.5 billion and boasts Bollywood stars and major conglomerates as investors. The western Indian cities of Pune and Rajkot were named as home to two new franchises for the next two years and Dhoni was Pune's first pick in a player draft held last month. Fleming, 42, was New Zealand's longest-serving and most successful test captain and is his country's highest test run-scorer. He retired from international cricket in 2008. "He has been remarkably successful as a player in the international arena and I firmly believe that his technical knowhow, perseverance and organisation skills will work wonders for our team," Sanjiv Goenka, chairman of the RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group that owns the Pune franchise, said in a statement. — Reuters



The winners with their trophies and officials.

ANNUAL SHOOTING TOURNAMENT OF MUSTAFA KARAM CONCLUDES

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The Annual Shooting Tournament of Mustafa Karam Contracting Company concluded during a ceremony held at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex, in the presence of President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Eng Duaji Khalaf Al-Otaibi, Director General of Mustafa Karam Company and Vice President of Kuwait Shooting Sport Club

Mohammad Karam and board members, Assistant Secretary General Eng Mohammad Al-Ghurba and Assistant Treasurer Adnan Al-Ibrahim.

Speaking on behalf of the Shooting Club Eng Al-Ghurba thanked the company which has been supporting the Kuwait shooting sport activities, and encouraging the outstanding among national team players.

He said over 100 shooters participated in the

tournament in the skeet, trap and double trap events, and it was pleasing to see the strong competition between participants most notably the juniors.

Al-Ghurba said this tournament coincides with preparations being made for HH the Amir Annual Grand Prix tournament to be held from March 1-8, 2016 with the participation of more than 45 countries.

Results of the tournament are as follows:

* In the skeet's men event Mansour Al-Rashidi, followed by Abdelaziz Al-Saad and Mohammad Al-Daihani.

* In the trap men Abdelrahman Al-Faihan took first place while Mohammad Mizayad Al-Daihani took second and Talal Al-Rashidi ended in third place.

* In the double trap Hamad Al-Afasi first, Saad Lafi second and Jarrah Al-Shuwaier third.

* In women trap Shahad Al-Hawal made a

strong showing and took first place, Fatima Abdelmalek second and Sarah Al-Hawal third.

* The women skeet gold went to Eman Al-Shammaa, while Munira Al-Subaiti came in second and Sheikh Al-Rashidi third.

* In the juniors skeet event Nasser Al-Mutairi took gold, as Hamad Al-Khalidi took second and Salem Al-Rashidi was third.

* In the juniors trap Khalid Al-Murad first, Yousuf Torky second and Fares Al-Mutairi third.



HAWAII: Jordan Spieth places the trophy on the podium after the final round of the Tournament of Champions golf event, Sunday, at Kapalua Plantation Course in Kapalua, Hawaii. Spieth finished at 30 under par for the tournament win. — AP

SPIETH OPENS NEW YEAR IN STYLE WITH WIN AT KAPALUA

KAPALUA: The view from the top looks as spectacular as ever for Jordan Spieth. He was standing in the 18th fairway Sunday at Kapalua, his victory in the Hyundai Tournament of Champions easily secured, when his thoughts were interrupted by a comment from caddie Michael Greller: "Way to make a statement."

The statement was nearly as big as his eight-shot victory. Coming off a year that Spieth knows will be tough to match - the Masters, US Open, five wins, the FedEx Cup - the 22-year-old Texan backed up his sage comment at the start of the week that 2016 wasn't about an encore because that would mean the show was over.

IT'S NOT

Spieth crushed the winners-only field by closing with a 6-under 67 to become only the second player in PGA Tour history to finish a 72-hole tournament at 30-under par or lower. An 8-foot birdie on the final hole put him at 30-under 262, one short of the record Ernie Els set at Kapalua in 2003. "I thought that was cool," Spieth said about his caddie's comment. "It's not what I'm going for. It's not why I do what I do. I don't do it to talk back to any people that believe it's not possible or 'He got a lucky year' or something."

And then he paused with a smile and added, "But I still think it's going to be very difficult to have a year like last year." This one could not have gotten off to a better start. Staked to a five-shot lead, Spieth made two straight birdies around the turn to restore his margin, and he spent the rest of the afternoon soaking up sights of the sun and surf on Maui. The view of him at No. 1 in the world only looks daunting to the guys trying to catch him.

Patrick Reed got within three shots before he stalled on the back nine and Spieth poured it on with a combination of great shots and smart shots. It was like last year never ended, and that's what Spieth wanted.

"I felt like it was short three-week break and continue what we were doing last year," Spieth said. "That's the way I'll keep on thinking about it. It worked this week. All parts were firing."

GREAT PLAY

Reed, the defending champion at Kapalua, got within three shots with a birdie on the par-5 ninth. Spieth answered with a two-putt birdie in the group behind him, and then rolled in a 15-foot birdie putt on the 10th and was on his way.

Reed ended his bogey-free week on the 15th hole and closed with a 69. Brooks Koepka, playing with Spieth in the final group, had a wild start to his round but never got closer than the five-shot deficit he faced at the start. Koepka closed with a 71 and tied for third with Brandt Snedeker (67). Spieth won for the seventh time on the PGA Tour, joining Tiger Woods as the only players to get that many at age 22 since complete records began in 1970. That requires a little context. Spieth won his seventh title in his 77th start as a pro. Woods won his seventh PGA Tour event in his 38th start, and he had 18 wins in his first 77 tournaments.

Even so, comparisons with Woods in golf can only mean great play, and no one is playing better. "Nowhere near," Spieth said on how his record stacks up with Woods. "I don't think there's any reason to compare. It's awfully early. We're excited about where we're at to start our career. What Tiger has done, I can't imagine ever being done. But it's nice to be in that company. It's fantastic about our here with what we're trying to do, and doing it well."

It was the fifth time in the last 13 months that Spieth had at least a two-shot lead going into the final round, and he was never seriously challenged. That's not to suggest it felt like a breeze, especially early. His approach shot on No. 1 somehow ended up just out of a steep bunker on the very edge of sand, some 50 yards to the hole. He pitched it onto the green and let the grain take it to 4 feet for a save, and then he holed a 35-foot birdie putt on the next hole. Spieth called those two holes the toughest because of the Kona wind. He played them in 1 under. He wasted birdie chances on a pair of holes, made another bogey on No. 8 as Reed closed within three, but any tension didn't last long. "I knew I had to make birdies early to put pressure on him," Reed said. "I got it to within three. The next time I saw a board it was back to five. He's not going to shoot over par, especially the way he's playing now." The next questions is how good he can get.

After a week at home in Dallas, he heads to the Middle East for the HSBC Abu Dhabi Golf Championship and Asia for the Singapore Open before resuming his PGA Tour schedule at Pebble Beach and Riviera.

Much like Woods in 2000, and even David Duval in 1999, he sent an early message by winning Kapalua that he wasn't interested in this wave to end. — AP

MIDDLE EASTERN GT ACADEMY WINNER TO BE SPONSORED BY NISSAN IN 2016

DUBAI: Nissan has confirmed it will be sponsoring the winner of its 2014 GT Academy, Ahmed Khaled, in the Hankook 24H Dubai endurance race, which is to take place at Dubai's Autodrome between 14 and 16 January.

The race, which constitutes the first round of Hankook's 24H Series, marks a symbolic return for Khaled, having competed in it for the first time as a professional race driver in 2015.

"Nissan's GT Academy has proved, beyond doubt, that racing talent can be bred with gaming as its starting point," says Samir Cherfan, Nissan Middle East's Managing Director. "With the backing of Nissan, Ahmed Khaled has been able to turn dreams into reality and his story will inspire generations to come. We are all extremely proud of what he and others like him have achieved and to be competing once again at this prestigious event is an honour."

"It's only through carefully constructed continuous development programmes that drivers with his talent can continue in their success story and Nissan has been happy to help him exploit many opportunities and continue to nurture his racing career."

Having won the Middle East round of 2014's GT Academy was only the start point for Khaled and, since then, he has competed as one of Nissan's drivers in the Altimax 24 Hours, as well as in Drifting competitions across the region. Now Nissan is continuing its support by sponsoring him in Molitor Racing's GT-R GT3 for the highest profile endurance race in the Middle East.

"I am extremely happy to be back racing at this event," says Khaled. "For me, it is even more



special as this is where my racing career began a year ago. To be competing at the top level in such a car is an enormous privilege and I am looking forward to hopefully improving on last year's debut performance, which is something I am still very proud of."

The 24H Dubai event is one keenly followed by motorsports fans all over the world and is open to both professional and semi-professional teams. It is grueling for everyone concerned, with

drivers, cars and team members pushed to unimaginable extremes over an unbroken 24-hour race. "To succeed in endurance racing," adds Cherfan, "everyone needs to operate under enormous pressure and Nissan's Nismo GT-R GT3 has proved its mettle time and again in the world's toughest competitions. The legacy of Nissan's GT Academy is unparalleled in this industry and all of us at Nissan wish him and the team well and look forward to seeing the action unfold."

PISTORIUS MOVES TO APPEAL MURDER CONVICTION IN S AFRICA'S TOP COURT

JOHANNESBURG: Paralympic champion Oscar Pistorius yesterday made a last-ditch attempt with South Africa's top court to overturn his murder conviction for shooting dead his girlfriend in 2013.

He has been on bail awaiting a new sentence since December, when judges found him guilty of murder, overturning his earlier conviction on the lesser charge of culpable homicide.

The double-amputee killed Reeva Steenkamp, a model and law graduate, in the early hours of Valentine's Day, saying he mistook her for an intruder when he shot four times through the door of his bedroom toilet. Under the new conviction for murder, Pistorius, 29, faces a minimum 15-year jail term that may be reduced due to time already spent in jail and the fact that he is a first-time offender.

"We have lodged an application for leave to appeal to the Constitutional Court," Andrew Fawcett, a lawyer on Pistorius's legal team, told AFP.

Pistorius was released from jail in October to live under house arrest at his uncle's property in Pretoria after serving one year of his five-year prison sentence for culpable homicide-the equivalent of manslaughter. But Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA) judges last month described his testimony at his trial in 2014 as "untruthful" and delivered a damning indictment of the original verdict. Legal papers filed at the Constitutional Court on Monday by Pistorius's lawyers contended that the SCA had "acted unlawfully and unconstitutionally" by rejecting factual findings of the original verdict.

They also accused the SCA of making "errors of law" over the principle of "dolus eventualis"-aware-



PRETORIA: This file photo taken on December 8, 2015 shows former Paralympic champion Oscar Pistorius arriving in the South African Gauteng Division High Court in Pretoria, South Africa, ahead of his hearing. Pistorius yesterday, made a last-ditch attempt with South Africa's top court to overturn his murder conviction for shooting dead his girlfriend in 2013. — AFP

ness of the likely outcome of an action-which has been at the crux of the long-running case.

OUT ON BAIL

Pistorius was last seen in public at his bail hearing on December 8 in Pretoria High Court, after which he was fitted with an electronic monitoring tag. Under his bail conditions, he is allowed to leave his uncle's house at set times with official permission, and not travel further than 20 kilometres (12 miles). "The application has been served on the director of public prosecutions," Fawcett said.

"They will now indicate when they will be opposing the application and what the grounds of opposition will be. "Then we wait for the Constitutional Court to make a ruling on whether or not they will hear the appeal." Pistorius denied killing Steenkamp in a rage and, during his dramatic trial, sobbed and occasionally vomited in the dock as details of his lover's death were examined in excruciating detail.

Some legal experts have dismissed his chances of success at the Constitutional Court. "He is wasting his time. It is certainly not a constitutional matter," Tyron Maseko, a Johannesburg attorney told AFP. "If he ever succeeds then I will know there is no justice in this country." Pistorius shot Steenkamp at the peak of his fame, and he has since lost his glittering sports career, lucrative contracts and status as a global role model for the disabled. Her family welcomed his murder conviction and described his appeal to the Constitutional Court as a "delaying tactic" to keep him out of jail. — AFP

BENGALS PAY THE PRICE FOR CHARACTER OF PLAYERS

CINCINNATI: Vontaze Burfict was having the game of his life when he ran into the bowels of Paul Brown Stadium with what appeared to be a clinching interception, trailed by Adam "Pacman" Jones and several teammates eager to celebrate.

Had Burfict and Jones only stayed there, the Cincinnati Bengals might still be playing next week. That irony will probably not be lost on Bengals fans as they cope with yet another playoff meltdown, this one unlike any other. They'll spend a miserable offseason wondering what might have been had Burfict and Jones exhibited just a modicum of self-control in the final seconds against a Pittsburgh team with a quarterback who could barely lift his right arm.

It happened at the worst time and on the biggest stage. But no one can say the Bengals didn't see it coming. A team that gambled on a pair of players with well-known issues got beat precisely because of those

issues. Burfict went head hunting, Jones went after Steelers assistant Joey Porter, and the Bengals went off into the rainy night as losers once again.

Blame owner Mike Brown and team management for taking a chance on volatile players no one else would touch. Blame coach Marvin Lewis for not controlling them at the most critical time in the game.

Do, however, give them credit for this: At a time the NFL says it is trying to cut down on cheap shots and head injuries, they helped showed how little has really changed in the league. Heads are still being hunted. Defenseless players are still being knocked silly.

And all the fines and suspensions - Burfict will almost surely get one to start next season - are simply accepted as a cost of doing business. Just last month, Burfict got involved in a pregame altercation with Steelers players and was fined \$69,454 by the league for three different plays in the game. Yet the linebacker who is the star of

the Bengals defense was still allowed to spiral out of control when the teams met once again. Ugly isn't the word for how this one played out in prime time on a Saturday night. From fans throwing garbage at an injured Ben Roethlisberger to the brutal hit by Burfict that spun Antonio Brown's head around in a frightening moment, the rough edges of the NFL were on display.

VIOLENT GAME

"A vicious, violent game," said CBS announcer Jim Nantz, normally an apologist for any sport he covers. "What a disgrace an embarrassment," former Bengals quarterback Boomer Esiason tweeted.

Indeed, this was much like the NFL of old, where everything goes and only the strongest survive to play again the next week. Two teams that despise each other in a game decided by two personal foul penalties - there were seven total in the game - on the same play.

The Steelers aren't exactly innocent victims themselves. Ryan Shazier crumpled Giovanni Bernard with a hit that looked to be initiated by Shazier's helmet. Shazier wasn't penalized, and the Steelers recovered Bernard's fumble. That hit seemed to turn up the anger of the Bengals. Jones complained that Porter - known for some big hits of his own as a player - was on the field illegally when Jones was penalized.

There's not anything wrong with good, hard football. In this case, though, there wasn't a lot of good on the field. This could have been remembered as a game where AJ McCarron made his mark by leading the Bengals to the go-ahead touchdown in only his fourth NFL start. It could have been a game made memorable by Roethlisberger heroically coming back from being knocked out of the game by Burfict to rally his team despite hardly being able to throw. Instead, it will be remembered for all the wrong reasons. — AP

AFGHANISTAN'S CRICKET TEAM RETURNS HOME VICTORIOUS

KABUL: Afghanistan's national cricket team returned home yesterday after securing a second Twenty20 win over Zimbabwe in three months, propelling the squad into the top 10 in both the one-day and T20 formats. Hundreds of fans gathered at the airport in Kabul to welcome the team back from Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. They lined the capital's main roads, cheering, whistling and waving Afghanistan's black, red and green flag.

"Our cricket heroes continue to surprise us with the amazing performance. We proudly thank you for all the efforts and hard work," Afghan President Ashraf Ghani tweeted. Cricket is rapidly gaining a solid fan base in Afghanistan, which has been at war for almost 40 years. Most members of the team learned to play while growing up in refugee camps in bordering Pakistan.

The Afghans clinched the two-game series Sunday after Mohammad Shahzad hit the fourth-highest score in the format's history with 118, taking his team to an 81-run victory. Shahzad was also a key part of the earlier five-match ODI series in Sharjah, which Afghanistan won 3-2. The humiliation for Zimbabwe was complete, after losing an ODI series to Afghanistan on home turf in October.

That thrilled fans across the country when Gulbadin Naib hit a six with only three balls remaining to propel Afghanistan to their target of 254 and a victory that was greeted with celebratory gunfire across Afghanistan. Sports have become one of

the few bright spots for Afghanistan, as the Taliban insurgency intensifies and spreads across the country, killing thousands of troops and civilians. The cricket victory made up for the disappointment of Afghanistan losing the final of the South Asian Football Federation championship days earlier to India.

The team has the support of the International Cricket Council, which put Afghanistan 10th in its one-day international and ninth in the T20 international rankings. The ICC promoted Afghanistan to associate member in test cricket in 2013.

Nazeem Jaar Abdurahimzai, the domestic manager with the Afghanistan Cricket Board, said the national team had earned the support of the public and the government. Bringing in foreign coaches, including former Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq as head coach, has boosted the professionalism of the team, he said.

"In the current situation, with the war, few jobs available for young Afghans and many people leaving the country, cricket is certainly something that can grip the imagination of Afghans, as well as teach them patience, focus and tolerance because both are needed to play the game well," Abdurahimzai said. Afghanistan's cricket team secured a berth at the World Cup in Australia and New Zealand last year. They dropped out during the first round, after beating Scotland but losing the rest of their group matches. The tournament was won by Australia. — AP



MINNEAPOLIS: Minnesota Vikings kicker Blair Walsh (3) reacts after missing a field goal during the second half of an NFL wild-card football game against the Seattle Seahawks, Sunday, in Minneapolis. The Seahawks won 10-9. — AP

SEAHAWKS ESCAPE WITH 10-9 WIN OVER VIKINGS

MINNEAPOLIS: Russell Wilson and the Seattle Seahawks needed more than three quarters to warm up at Minnesota, their quest to avenge last year's Super Bowl loss nearly frozen before it began.

The Vikings, after gritting through this grind-it-out wild-card round playoff game, booted their chance to beat the two-time defending NFC champions. Blair Walsh's 27-yard field goal try into the frigid wind hooked left with 22 seconds remaining, handing the Seahawks a 10-9 victory over the stunned Vikings on a Sunday in below-zero weather that tied for the third-coldest NFL game on record.

"A lot of people would've folded up and said, 'That's it,' but we've got a team full of fighters," Seahawks cornerback Richard Sherman said.

The Seahawks (11-6) didn't score until Russell Wilson's short touchdown pass to Doug Baldwin early in the fourth quarter. Then, a fumble by Adrian Peterson for the Vikings on the next possession set up a field goal by Steven Hauschka.

The Vikings (11-6) took the ball for the deciding drive with 1:42 left at their 39 and, aided by a pass interference penalty on Kam Chancellor, drove deep into Seattle's territory. After draining the clock for the seemingly inevitable win, Walsh simply missed the winner after making all three of his earlier attempts.

"That's called grace," Chancellor said. "That's all it is." Seattle will play next weekend at Carolina, where the Panthers had a first-round bye in balmy mid-50s weather.

"I think we were fortunate that we got the win," Seahawks coach Pete Carroll said. "A lot of those times, guys make those kicks. There's a high percentage that they make them, but you've still got to do it." Walsh didn't hide. Holder Jeff Locke had the laces turned in, not out, but there were no excuses to be made.

"You're confident, but you never think that you have it or take it for granted," Walsh said, subdued with glassy eyes in the locker room afterward. "I just didn't put a swing on it that would be acceptable by anybody's standards."

Huddled around sideline heaters and wearing huge capes on the shaded side of the stadium, the Seahawks were subdued themselves for much of the game. Trailing 9-0 at the 13-minute mark, Wilson nearly took a huge loss on first down when he fumbled a shotgun snap he wasn't ready for. But the guy Vikings coach Mike Zimmer called "Houdini" during the week darted right, dodged a sack and found Tyler Lockett wide open for a 35-yard completion to set up the score to Baldwin.

IMPROBABLE WIN

"Just tried to extend the play," said Wilson, who went 13 for 26 for 142 yards. "Find a way." Chancellor, who ripped the ball away from Peterson that Ahtyba Rubin recovered, missed a tackle on tight end Kyle Rudolph's 24-yard reception that let the Vikings advance to the 18 with 1:26 left. But Peterson's next three carries

left the Vikings a yard short of the first down. Walsh, whose third kick was nearly blocked by Sherman, jogged out for the defining moment. And the Seahawks were suddenly celebrating an improbable win, not unlike their rally past Green Bay in the NFC championship game last year.

"It's a chip shot," Zimmer said. "He's got to make it." The Seahawks left their last visit to Minnesota with a 38-7 victory, pure domination on both sides of the ball that left no doubt that Dec. 6 afternoon they'd be a legitimate contender to reach their third straight Super Bowl even without the ear-splitting advantage of their home by the bay at CenturyLink Field.

For all their skills, experience and swagger, though, the combination of these conditions and a well-prepared, embarrassed-by-the-previous-performance Vikings team proved to be quite the challenge. This was a fittingly frigid finish for Minnesota's two-year stint outdoors at the University of Minnesota's TCF Bank Stadium during construction of the new covered downtown stadium. For the first natural postseason game here since the NFC championship game in 1976, the grizzled coach of that team, Bud Grant, served as an honorary captain. He strolled out for the coin flip in a Vikings cap and a purple short-sleeved polo shirt, looking ready for a round of golf.

The 88-year-old Grant got a roar of approval

from the crowd, most of which was dressed in as many layers as those purple replica jerseys would allow. The announcement of the minus-25 degree wind chill factor a few minutes later drew an equally loud cheer.

Every mistake and break was magnified in a game like this, and the Vikings benefited for the majority of the first three quarters. Punter Jon Ryan had to pick up a low snap on Seattle's first possession and, avoiding a potential block, tried to run up the middle before being upended by Jason Trusnik well shy of the first down. Ryan landed on his face, breaking and bloodying his nose, and the Vikings turned the shortened field into their first field goal.

Wilson, who led the NFL in passer rating after racking up a remarkable 24 touchdown passes with only one interception over the last seven games, was essentially reduced to a scrambler in the deep freeze. Facing the wind in the second quarter, he had Baldwin wide open behind the safeties at the goal line, but the ball hung in the air and was easily batted down. Headed the same direction toward the open end of the stadium in the third quarter, Wilson overthrew Chase Coffman, and Trae Waynes intercepted the deflected pass to set the Vikings up for another field goal. Cliff Avril's roughing-the-passer penalty gifted Minnesota 15 yards on that drive. — AP

AUSTRALIA NEW BOYS PARIS, BOLAND TO FACE INDIA

PERTH: Australian pacemen Joel Paris and Scott Boland will make their international debuts but Shaun Marsh will miss out when the one-day series opener against India starts in Perth today. Western Australia's Paris and Victoria's Boland get their chance following the retirement of Mitchell Johnson and injury to Mitchell Starc.

Australia captain Steve Smith said Paris's left-arm swing in his home conditions swayed the selectors in his favour. "Traditionally we like to play a left-armed hero who can use the breeze and move the ball so hopefully he'll be able to do that for us tomorrow," Smith told reporters yesterday.

"He's been very impressive in the (one-day) Matador Cup in the last couple of years and in the T20 Big Bash this year. We look forward to seeing how he goes. "It's a good opportunity for him and some other young quicks around the country. So it's an exciting time for Joel to make his debut at the WACA." Boland gets the nod after being on the fringes of the Australian Test team this season.

"His death bowling has been very impressive," said Smith of Boland's efforts with the Melbourne Stars in the BBL. "I think he hits a yorker as well as anyone at the moment. He's got a bit of pace to him so hopefully he can

hurry up the Indian batters a bit." Smith said he would decide who takes the important final overs of the Indian innings on the day.

"We've got a few options, all of our fast bowlers in this game can perform a role at the death," Smith said. Marsh, who has scored 218 runs in five matches for the Perth Scorchers in the BBL at 72.67, could not force his way back into the Australian team with George Bailey filling the batting spot left by the retirement of former captain Michael Clarke.

"It's very difficult but Shaun's been exceptional," Smith said. Marsh has been unlucky this season after scoring his highest Test score of 182 in the first Test against the West Indies in Hobart, only to make way for the return from injury of Usman Khawaja in the second Melbourne Test. "He hasn't whinged once, he's taken it on the chin and he's been great around the group," Smith said.

"He's been really impressive and hopefully every time he goes back (to state cricket) he can continue to dominate, keep scoring big runs and to put his name up there."

Australia - David Warner, Aaron Finch, Steve Smith (capt), George Bailey, Glenn Maxwell, Mitchell Marsh, Mathew Wade, James Faulkner, Joel Paris, Scott Boland, Josh Hazlewood. — AFP



KABUL: Afghans hold a trophy as they celebrate the victory of the national cricket team over Zimbabwe as the team returns and celebrates in Kabul, Afghanistan, yesterday. Afghanistan's national cricket team returned home victorious Monday after securing their second Twenty20 win over Zimbabwe in three months in a compelling series that propelled the Afghans into the world top ten in both the one-day and T20 formats. — AP

INJURED STEYN OUT OF THIRD TEST

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa paceman Dale Steyn was ruled out of the third test against England yesterday after failing to recover from a shoulder injury, depriving the Proteas of the world's top-rated fast bowler as they attempt to even the four-match series.

Steyn missed the drawn second test in Cape Town with the injury, but was retained in the squad for the final two matches and was expected to be available. He was hurt during the first test, won by England.

South Africa coach Russell Domingo said Steyn is not ready to return and will undergo further scans, although downplayed any long-term concerns about a player who will be missing his fifth test in his team's last seven. "I don't think it is the end of Dale Steyn's

career at all," Domingo said. "All players are going to experience some type of niggles at some stage. He's just had a few of late. "He's a great athlete. These things happen and I'm sure he'll get through it."

Kyle Abbott is fit to return to South Africa's squad for the match in Johannesburg starting Thursday after a hamstring injury, and will compete with fellow pacemen Morne Morkel, Chris Morris, Kagiso Rabada and Hardus Viljoen for a place in the team. Vernon Philander has already been ruled out for the series. England also said former national team spinner Robert Croft will join the coaching staff to work with the one-day squad for its five-match series against South Africa next month. — AP



PESHAWAR: Pakistani One Day cricket captain Azhar Ali (C) holds ICC 2016 World Twenty20 as he poses for a photograph with students from the Army Public School (APS) which was the scene of the deadliest terror attack in Pakistan's history, in Peshawar yesterday. The International Cricket Council (ICC) 2016 World Twenty20 trophy has reached Pakistan for a two-day tour. — AFP

OVECHKIN BECOMES FIRST RUSSIAN TO SCORE 500 GOALS

WASHINGTON: Washington Capitals superstar Alex Ovechkin joined the NHL's 500 goal club Sunday, becoming the first Russian-born player to reach the milestone.

Ovechkin's 500th NHL goal came on a powerplay against the Ottawa Senators with 3:41 left in the second period, and he added his 501st in the third to wrap up the Capitals' 7-1 victory. "It's a great feeling, obviously, to do it in front of our fans," Ovechkin said. "Mom and dad are here. Celebrating. Everybody jumping. Yeah! It was a very special moment."

Ovechkin became the 43rd player in NHL history to score 500 goals, and the fifth-fastest to reach the milestone, doing

so in his 801st game. Ovechkin's snapshot from the top of the left faceoff circle beat Ottawa goaltender Andrew Hammond on the glove side to give the Capitals a commanding 5-1 lead.

The 30-year-old Capitals left winger celebrated with a left fist pump and was then mobbed by his teammates who came off bench while the crowd at the Verizon Center arena gave their hero a standing ovation.

"I was surprised," Ovechkin said of his teammates' instant celebration, but added teammate Jason Chimera told him they had planned it. "I'm sure everyone is going to remember that moment," he said. "It's history." Only four other players—Wayne Gretzky in

575 games, Mario Lemieux (605), Mike Bossy (647) and Brett Hull (693) — have reached 500 goals quicker. That's caused some to wonder if Ovechkin could ever catch Gretzky as the league's all-time goal leader with 894.

Ovechkin had already notched one milestone this season, when his 484th career goal on November 19 saw him surpass Sergei Fedorov for most goals by a Russian in the NHL.

Since entering the NHL in 2005-06, Ovechkin has posted 150 more goals and 50 more points than any other player. He ranks first in the Capitals' 42-year history in goals (501), points (934), power-play goals (185), game-winning goals (85) and overtime goals



Washington Capitals left wing Alex Ovechkin.

(16). Capitals coach Barry Trotz said this week that he thought Ovechkin was more nervous about passing Fedorov than he was about reaching 500. "He's going to score a lot more than 500 goals, I'm pretty sure on that," Trotz said. Ovechkin has achieved numerous individual milestones but is still seeking team success as he has yet to win an Olympic medal with Russia or a Stanley Cup with his Capitals.

Washington has lost in the Conference semi-finals two out of the past five seasons. They lost in the Conference quarter-finals in 2012-13, failed to reach the postseason in 2013-14 and were bounced in the second round last season. — AFP

AUSSIE KYRGIOS IN THE SPOTLIGHT AT KOOYONG

MELBOURNE: The pre-Australian Open spotlight will be fixed firmly on volatile Nick Kyrgios with the exuberant young Aussie heading the field at the Kooyong Classic starting today.

Days after leading Australia to only its second title at the Hopman Cup mixed-teams event in Perth, the 20-year-old has become a hot topic in the Grand Slam run-up due to his heroics on-court and his new-look good behaviour.

Kyrgios, who had frequent brushes with officialdom last season, is the top drawcard in an expanded 12-man field at Kooyong Club in Melbourne, former home of the Australian Open and venue for an upcoming first-round Davis Cup tie against the United States in March.

The richly-talented youngster is coming off a contentious 2015, including an infamous on-court spat with Stan Wawrinka which sparked stinging criticism from fellow players.

It led to the ATP handing him a 28-day suspended sentence that remains in effect until late February. It will be imposed if he gets in trouble on court again, something he managed to avoid in Perth. The powerful Kyrgios, who won all four of his singles rubbers at the Hopman Cup and helped team-mate Daria Gavrilova to the first Aussie victory in the event for 16 years, will take to the court on Wednesday when he faces Belgian David Goffin. "My game can always get better. There's always things I need to

improve on. You can never be too ready, I feel, for a Grand Slam," world number 30 Kyrgios said as he prepared for the business end of the Australian tennis summer.

"I'm nervous, I'm excited. I don't really know how much or how little to do. I'm just going to get out there and practise a bit more. "I feel like I play my best tennis on big stages. If I'm serving well and playing the right game style, I think I've got a good chance."

Tuesday's opening programme will feature half of the field on court with the remainder to play Wednesday. As in the past, winners progress while losers complete relegation play.

Today, Frenchman Gilles Simon brings a 2-2 record into an opening match with Spain's Feliciano Lopez as the pair meet for the first time since 2014.

Australian Open wildcard Omar Jasika faces South Korea's Hyeon Chung and Nicolas Almagro and Paul Henri Mathieu hold another Spain-French clash.

The Wednesday line-up includes former Australian Open finalist Marcos Baghdatis taking on Spanish youngster Pablo Carenno Busta, while German teen Alex Zverev plays Britain's Kyle Edmund in addition to the showcase Kyrgios match.

The event is also used by major players for one-off warm-ups under match conditions with Kei Nishikori to take advantage of an invitation do that by testing himself against Jasika, a former US open junior winner. — AFP



WASHINGTON: Patrick Wiercioch #46 of the Ottawa Senators checks Tom Wilson #43 of the Washington Capitals as Andrew Hammond #30 makes a save at the Verizon Center on Sunday in Washington, DC. — AFP

PANTHERS EXTEND WINNING STREAK, BEAT OILERS 2-1

EDMONTON: The Florida Panthers directed only 14 shots on goal but Jaromir Jagr and Jonathan Huberdeau were still able to find the net in a 2-1 win over the Edmonton Oilers on Sunday. It was the Panthers' 12th straight win-marking the first time a team has won a dozen games in a row since the Boston Bruins did it during the 2013-14 season. After just 3:22 of the first, the ageless Jagr scored on a breakaway. The 43-year-old actually lost control of the puck as he bore down on Oilers goalie Cam Talbot but still managed to slide a shot between the netminder's pads. It was Jagr's 737th career goal, putting him just four behind Brett Hull for third all-time on the NHL all-time goals list. Huberdeau scored less than four minutes later before Oilers center Mark Letestu halved the deficit at 12:32 of the first but there were no more goals in a feisty, fight-filled encounter.

CAPITALS 7, SENATORS 1

Alex Ovechkin became the fifth-fastest player to record his 500th NHL goal and added his 501st for good measure, leading the Washington Capitals to a 7-1 rout over the Ottawa Senators. It was the 30-year-old Ovechkin's 801st NHL game. Justin Williams, T.J. Oshie, Zach Sill, Tom Wilson and Dmitry Orlov also scored goals for the Capitals. The Senators' only offense came from Mike Hoffman, who netted his team-high 20th goal of the season in early in the second period.

BLACKHAWKS 6, AVALANCHE 3

Patrick Kane and Marian Hossa scored two goals apiece, and Chicago overwhelmed Colorado. Jonathan Toews scored a goal and added two assists, Brandon Mashinter also scored for the Blackhawks. Matt Duchene led the Avalanche with two goals and Nathan MacKinnon added a goal. Corey Crawford stopped 34 shots for the Blackhawks and Semyon Varlamov allowed four goals on 20 shots before he was replaced by Calvin Pickard, who stopped 13 of 15 shots in relief for the Avalanche.

NHL results/standings

Buffalo 4, Winnipeg 2; Washington 7, Ottawa 1; Chicago 6, Colorado 3; New Jersey 2, Minnesota 1; Detroit 2, Anaheim 1; Florida 2, Edmonton 1.

Western Conference						Eastern Conference							
Central Division			Atlantic Division			Metropolitan Division			Pacific Division				
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS		
Dallas	29	11	4	149	116	62	Detroit	22	13	7	105	108	51
Chicago	27	13	4	126	104	58	Montreal	23	17	3	122	107	49
St. Louis	24	14	7	111	112	55	Boston	21	14	5	123	108	47
Minnesota	22	12	8	111	99	52	Tampa Bay	21	17	4	107	102	46
Nashville	19	16	7	107	115	45	Ottawa	20	17	6	119	131	46
Colorado	21	19	3	125	123	45	Toronto	16	17	7	104	112	39
Winnipeg	19	20	3	111	121	41	Buffalo	16	22	4	97	115	36
Los Angeles	26	12	3	108	90	55	Metropolitan Division						
Arizona	21	16	4	116	125	46	Washington	32	7	3	139	90	67
Vancouver	16	16	10	102	118	42	NY Rangers	22	14	5	121	109	49
Anaheim	17	17	7	78	99	41	NY Islanders	22	15	5	114	107	49
San Jose	19	18	2	109	108	40	New Jersey	21	17	5	97	102	47
Calgary	19	19	2	105	124	40	Pittsburgh	20	16	5	97	100	45
Edmonton	17	23	3	105	127	37	Philadelphia	18	15	7	91	108	43
Eastern Conference						Atlantic Division							
Florida	26	12	4	116	89	56	Carolina	18	18	7	102	118	43
						Columbus 15 24 4 109 139 34							

SABRES 4, JETS 2

Marcus Foligno snapped a tie early in the third period with his third goal of the season to help spark Buffalo over Winnipeg. Sam Reinhart's hat-trick scored three goals for the other Sabres goals. Blake Wheeler fired his 11th and Mathieu Perreault scored his seventh for the Jets.

DEVILS 2, WILD 1

Jon Merrill scored for the first time in 13 months, and New Jersey snapped a three-game losing streak with a victory in a defensive battle with Minnesota.

Cory Schneider did the rest of the work for the Devils, stopping 17 shots for a New Jersey team that has scored just four goals in its past

four games. Adam Henrique also scored for the Devils. Darcy Kuemper returned from an injury to make 15 saves in the loss for the Wild. Zach Parise had the only goal for Minnesota, scoring for the first time against his former team.

RED WINGS 2, DUCKS 1

Riley Sheahan scored with 3:44 to play, giving Detroit a victory over Anaheim at the Honda Center. Petr Mrazek stopped 30 shots to earn his fourth consecutive win for the Red Wings, who now have their longest winning streak of the season: four games.

Tomas Tatar scored in the game's opening seconds. Corey Perry collected his 16th goal for the Ducks, who took their second loss in three games. — Reuters



SYDNEY: Nick Kyrgios of Australia reacts during an exhibition match of Fast4 Tennis against Gael Monfils of France during the Sydney International tennis tournament in Sydney yesterday. — AFP

KERBER SURVIVES 'EXTREME HEAT' TEST IN SYDNEY

SYDNEY: Germany's Angelique Kerber overcame the loss of the first set on a day of extreme heat in Sydney as she maintained her build-up to next week's Australian Open yesterday. The fourth seed, one of the few members of the women's world top 10 not to be hit by injury in the lead-up to the year's first Grand Slam, came from a set down to oust Ukraine's Elina Svitolina 4-6, 6-0, 6-3 in Sydney International's first round.

Kerber, who lost to Victoria Azarenka in Saturday's Brisbane International final, is looking for more matches to hone her form leading into the Australian Open in Melbourne. While defending champion Petra Kvitova and second seed Agnieszka Radwanska pulled out of the Sydney event citing injuries, Kerber powered on to get in some valuable match practice.

Kvitova and Radwanska's withdrawals came after injury problems at other Australian tournaments for the world's top-ranked stars including Serena Williams (knee), Simona Halep (Achilles), Garbine Muguruza (foot) and Maria Sharapova (forearm).

"I had a lot of matches last week, but that was actually also my plan to come to Australia, to have a lot of matches, and also to play a few more matches here," Kerber said. "I don't know how far I can get. I'm healthy. I have no pain

anywhere. I will just try to recover and see how I feel tomorrow. But my body feels good." Kerber struggled with the intense heat early in her match, dropping the opening set without winning a game, but she battled on. "It's good to have a match like this under my belt. It's always hot in Australia. I think it was a good match to prepare for Melbourne," she said. With temperatures hitting 37 Celsius (99 Fahrenheit) the WTA's extreme heat policy came into force, allowing Kerber and Svitolina to take a 10-minute break before the third and deciding set.

Australia's Samantha Stosur fought back from a set and a service break down to overcome defeat Italy's Roberta Vinci 4-6, 7-5, 7-5 in two hours 30 minutes. Among other first-round winners on Monday were Italy's world number 19 Sara Errani, over Spanish seventh seed Carla Suarez 6-3, 6-3, and German Sabine Lisicki, who eased past Slovenia's Polona Herczeg 6-4, 6-3. In the men's draw, Italian fifth seed Andreas Seppi eliminated Denis Istomin of Uzbekistan in three sets, but Seppi's compatriot Simone Bolelli went out to American qualifier Alexander Sarkissian 6-2, 7-6 (7/5).

In the evening match, experienced Spaniard Tommy Robredo was too strong for Australia's John Millman 7-6 (7/3), 6-3. — AFP



SYDNEY: Angelique Kerber of Germany hits a return against Elina Svitolina of Ukraine during their women's singles first round match at the Sydney International tennis tournament in Sydney yesterday. — AFP

BOUCHARD COMEBACK GATHERS STEAM

HOBART: Canada's Eugenie Bouchard swept into the second round of the Hobart International with a straight sets demolition of American Bethanie Mattek-Sands yesterday.

The former world number 5 now ranked 47 took just 57 minutes to dispose of one-time tournament finalist Mattek-Sands 6-2, 6-1. Bouchard, 21, who reached the semi-finals of the 2014 Australian and French Opens before playing in the final at Wimbledon in the same year, suffered a big setback at the US Open last September.

She sustained a head injury after slipping in the locker room and was forced to pull out of her fourth-round match at Flushing Meadows with a concussion, which also forced her to withdraw from an event in Wuhan, China later that month.

It was feeling pretty solid out there, Bouchard said after her latest win. "The foundation of my game is to be really aggressive, but I also want to have that balance with consistency and I think I did a good job of that today." Bouchard lost just 14 points on serve in her first win in three attempts against the more experienced American.

It was nice to get a win against her finally, Bouchard said. "She's a great player and I was really aware that when she came to the net she is really solid, so I was just always trying to pass her."

Bouchard said she was feeling good. "The most important part right now for sure is feeling healthy and I walked off the court feeling healthy, and that's a very good positive sign," she said. The Canadian will next play eighth seed Alison Van Uytvanck of Belgium. — AFP

UK ATHLETICS: RESET WORLD RECORDS AMID DOPING CRISIS

LONDON: All world records in track and field should be reset and lifetime bans should be imposed on serious drug cheats to clean up the sport amid its global doping crisis, the governing body of British athletics said yesterday.

UK Athletics published "A Manifesto for Clean Athletes" containing 14 proposals aimed at restoring credibility to a sport battered by allegations of widespread doping, cover-ups and corruption.

"The integrity of athletics was challenged as never before in 2015," UK Athletics chairman Ed Warner said. "Clean athletes and sports fans the world over

have been let down. Trust in the sport is at its lowest point for decades."

One of the federation's proposals is to "investigate the implications of drawing a line under all pre-existing sport records ... and commencing a new set of records." Triple-jumper Jonathan Edwards and marathon runner Paula Radcliffe are current British world-record holders.

UK Athletics also proposed a lifetime ban for British athletes guilty of a serious anti-doping violation, rather than the current standard of four-year suspensions. The British Olympic Association previously had a lifetime ban for drug cheats, but the policy

was struck down after the World Anti-Doping Agency found the rule non-compliant with its code. "Greater transparency, tougher sanctions, longer bans - and even resetting the clock on world records for a new era - we should be open to do whatever it takes to restore credibility in the sport," Warner said. UK Athletics also proposed: Creation of a public register of athletes being tested. Sponsors should withhold support of athletes caught doping.

Member federations should be accountable for loss of prize money to athletes of other nationalities if their own athlete's medal winning result is later annulled.

Minimum bans for serious doping offenses should be extended to eight years to ensure cheats miss two Olympic and Paralympic cycles. The supply or procurement of performance-enhancing drugs should be criminalized. "UKA believes the time has come for radical reform if we are to help restore trust in the sport," Warner said. "Athletics needs to act very differently if we are to move on from the crisis facing the sport." Russia is currently banned from international track and field after a report commissioned by WADA alleged widespread doping and cover-ups in the country. Last week, two Russian officials and the son of

former IAAF president Lamine Diack were banned for life last week for engaging in blackmail, bribery and extortion to cover up a Russian doping case. Lamine Diack also is under criminal investigation in France over allegations he took payments for deferring sanctions against Russian drugs cheats.

The IAAF said it welcomed the proposals from UK Athletics, adding: "We look forward to reviewing the recommendations in full over the coming days."

Dick Pound, chairman of the WADA's independent commission, will announce the second part of the findings of his investigation on Thursday. — AP

MARADONA OFFERS PRAISE ON GOLDEN DAY FOR NAPOLI

MILAN: Diego Maradona offered glowing praise as Napoli boosted their hopes of a first Serie A title since 1990 by going two points clear of champions Juventus and Inter Milan. The last time Napoli were top of the table at the halfway stage of the season in Italy was 26 years ago, when Maradona led the 'Partenopei' to the second of their two league titles in 1990.

But Fiorentina's shock 3-1 defeat to Lazio on Saturday whet Napoli's appetite, and it grew considerably earlier Sunday when Inter suffered a shock 1-0 defeat to Sassuolo at the San Siro.

Napoli pounced on those setbacks to hammer league new boys Frosinone in a one-sided encounter that saw Gonzalo Higuain hit a brace, including one from the spot, to take his goals tally to 18 goals from 19 games. Sarri has consistently played down Napoli's title hopes and has every reason after Juventus beat Sampdoria 2-1 in Genoa to claim their ninth victory on the trot to move two places up to second.

Paul Pogba broke the deadlock on 17 minutes with an angled strike and Sami Khedira found himself in acres of space to double the champions' lead on 46 minutes before Antonio Cassano hit a consolation just after the hour. Inter dropped to third due to inferior goal difference, while Fiorentina are in fourth place at three points behind and Roma are seven points off the pace in fifth after being held 1-1 by AC Milan on Saturday. Only four months ago Maradona publicly embarrassed Napoli coach Maurizio Sarri following an inauspicious start to the campaign. On that occasion Sarri, a lifelong Napoli and Maradona fan, soaked up the criticism and on Sunday it was time for payback.

"It's with great joy that I heard about Napoli's result, which we've all been waiting on for many years," said Maradona in a message sent to Sky Sport Italia. "Knowing that the city of Naples and my Neapolitan fans

can enjoy such emotion makes me even more happy for them. Go on Napoli. Now I want us to win the league title."

Against a Frosinone side fighting for top flight survival, Napoli took a 20th minute lead when Raul Albiol coolly flicked a volley into the net at the back post following a corner.

Higuain doubled Napoli's lead from the penalty spot on the half-hour and claimed his second in two crazy, second-half minutes that saw captain Marek Hamsik on target. Frosinone's defence backed off as Hamsik ran towards the edge of the area before unleashing a drive that beat Massimo Zappino down low in the 59th minute. Barely 60 seconds later, Higuain muscled his way through two defenders to beat Zappino down low as the 'keeper came rushing out to block. The goals took the Argentinian's tally to 18 from 19 games, an impressive return given the league's 'Capocannoniere' (top scorer) award has been won the past two seasons with 22 goals.

Sarri replaced Higuain with Manolo Gabbiadini 20 minutes into the second half, and six minutes later the striker hit Napoli's fifth, a superb curling effort that sneaked into the far top corner.

Napoli looked to be heading for their second 5-0 win of the season having routed Lazio by the same scoreline in September, but with nine minutes remaining Paolo Sammarco swung at a short pass on the right side of the area to beat visiting 'keeper Pepe Reina with an angled drive. Sarri, who celebrated his 57th birthday on Sunday, was quick to underline the persistent threat of Juventus. "They've won four titles in four years, so you could say they've got something extra we don't," he said.

"I'm the only one who's been consistent in saying that, even when Juve were down near the bottom of the table, they would come fighting back with a series of wins and that's what they're doing." — AFP



VIGO: RC Celta's Sergio Gomez challenges for the ball with Atletico Madrid's Yannick Carrasco during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Celta Vigo and Atletico Madrid at the Balaidos stadium in Vigo, Spain Sunday. — AP

ATLETICO MADRID BEAT CELTA TO REGAIN SPANISH LEAGUE LEAD

MADRID: Atletico Madrid returned to the top of the Spanish league on Sunday after second-half goals from Antoine Griezmann and Yannick Carrasco secured a 2-0 win against Celta Vigo.

Griezmann scored from close range in the 49th minute after a nice exchange of passes with Luciano Vietto and Carrasco sealed the victory in the 80th after getting past a couple of Celta defenders outside the area.

Atletico has 44 points, two more than Barcelona, which beat Granada 4-0 with a hat trick by Lionel Messi on Saturday. Barcelona has a game in hand after playing in the Club World Cup late last year.

Real Madrid, which routed Deportivo La Coruna 5-0 on Saturday in club great Zinedine Zidane's first match as coach, is third with 40

points after 19 rounds. There were few significant scoring chances in bad weather at the Balaidos in Vigo, but Griezmann's goal was enough for Atletico to start relying on its solid defense. Atletico has the league's best defense at the halfway stage of the season, having conceded only eight goals. It was the 14th league victory for Diego Simeone's team, and seventh in its last eight matches. Its only setback was a 1-0 loss at Malaga three rounds ago. Celta was coming off two straight league losses, but had defeated Cadiz 3-0 on Wednesday in the first leg of the round of 16 of the Copa del Rey. It remains fifth in the standings despite Sunday's loss, but 13 points behind leader Atletico Madrid.

Celta was without forward Manuel "Nolito" Agudo, who has been nursing a muscle injury in

his right leg. Earlier Sunday, striker Cedric Bakambu scored a goal in each half as fourth-place Villarreal defeated Sporting Gijon 2-0 to reach 39 points.

Bakambu scored in the 26th and 51st minutes at the Estadio El Madrigal to give Villarreal its sixth consecutive league victory.

Real Sociedad won 2-0 against visiting Valencia with goals by Brazilian striker Jonathas in the 79th and 82nd.

Valencia remains winless in the league since signing former Manchester United defender Gary Neville as its coach. The team has drawn three matches and lost twice since the former England player took over. Valencia's winless streak in the league reached eight matches, and it's 11th in the 20 team standings. — AP



KUWAIT, SALMIYA CLASH TODAY IN CROWN PRINCE CUP FINAL

KUWAIT: The final match of the Crown Prince 23rd Cup between Kuwait and Salmiya sporting clubs will be held today at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium.

Kuwait Club is looking forward to win its sixth title in the competition's history after winning it five times in 1994, 2003, 2008, 2010 and 2011, while Salmiya is hoping to get its second title after the first achievement in 2001.

The qualification of Salmiya and Kuwait for the final competition which includes a football festival and valuable gifts for people attending the match, came after winning on Sulaibikhat and Al-Arabi counterparts. The last competition between the two teams was in November 27 last year during VIVA League and ended in a positive draw. Qadsia Club holds the record for the number of times win-

ning the competition for eight times, followed by the Al-Arabi seven times and then Kuwait, Salmiya, along with Kazma, which won the title once in 1995. Meanwhile, Kuwait Sport Club Manager Mohammad Ibrahim, and Salmiya Manager Salman Al-Sarbel said the match will be difficult, adding during the press conference that was held at Kuwait Football Association that opportunities must be utilized efficiently. Ibrahim said the match brings the two best teams in the country together based on their results both in this tournament and the league.

He said his team, Kuwait, is suffering from injuries. Al-Sarbel said Kuwait team has enough experience in dealing with final matches, though his team, Salmiya, is ready for the match and does not have any injured players as Musaed Nada is ready to play.



MARSEILLE: Marseille's French goalkeeper Steve Mandanda, in action during the League One soccer match between Marseille and Guingamp, at the Velodrome Stadium, in Marseille, southern France, Sunday. — AP

FALLEN FIFA CHIEF BLATTER TO APPEAL EIGHT-YEAR BAN

PARIS: Fallen FIFA chief Sepp Blatter will appeal against his eight-year ban, his lawyer said Sunday, joining fellow suspended official Michel Platini in a fight to clear his name.

"We will appeal it, of course," Blatter's US-based attorney Richard Cullen confirmed to AFP in an email. The confirmation came after FIFA's ethics tribunal on Saturday revealed it had provided Blatter and UEFA president Platini with the reasons for imposing the ban, clearing the way for both men to appeal. A lawyer for Platini, who has also been banned for eight years, had earlier confirmed an appeal would be launched. In December, FIFA's ethics tribunal ruled both men had abused their positions over a 2 million Swiss francs (\$2 million, 1.8 million euros) 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 while Platini, a FIFA vice-president, was fined 80,000 Swiss francs. The court insisted there was "no legal basis" for the payment that Blatter authorized for Platini in 2011.

Platini's lawyer Thibaud d'Ales said Saturday that his 60-year-old client had indeed received the reasons behind the ban. "We'll read them, analyse them and launch an appeal on Monday," d'Ales said. The tribunal did not provide further details 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. 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 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 oth-

er candidates. "In withdrawing, I am dedicating myself to my defence." FIFA has since last May been 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. — AP



GENOA: Juventus' Sami Khedira center, is celebrated by his teammates after scoring a goal during a Serie A soccer match between Sampdoria and Juventus Milan, in Genoa, Italy, Sunday. — AP

HIDDINK WANTS LOFTUS-CHEEK TO MAKE HIS MARK

LONDON: Guus Hiddink has challenged Ruben Loftus-Cheek to put in the hard work required to fulfil his potential after the teenager scored his first Chelsea goal in their 2-0 FA Cup win over Scunthorpe.

Loftus-Cheek gave a glimpse of his talent when he came off the bench to sweep home Cesar Azpilicueta's pass with a composed finish in the 68th minute at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

The 19-year-old finished off third tier Scunthorpe after Diego Costa had given Chelsea an early lead in the third round tie, but Hiddink claims the gifted midfielder still has a lot of work to do before he is the finished article.

London-born Loftus-Cheek has been regarded as the jewel in Chelsea's academy crown for some while, but previous

boss Jose Mourinho was critical of his attitude and rarely used him.

After pumping millions into overhauling the youth system of a club that hasn't produced a star of their own since John Terry, Blues owner Roman Abramovich is desperate for more homegrown players to emerge. Abramovich celebrated in unusually exuberant fashion when Loftus-Cheek scored, but Hiddink made a point of highlighting both the youngster's potential and areas where improvement is needed.

"Ruben came in and he had a beautiful goal, not just in the execution but the way he prepared himself, and that was good to see," Hiddink said.

"It's important he also has a hard-working role. If you play number 10 it's a role where you can maybe get away without so

much hard work, but that's not what we want. "I start knowing these youngsters now. I can see the possibilities they have and what they have to work on also."

Asked if he felt pressured by Abramovich to introduce more youngsters into the first-team, Hiddink insisted he is free to pick who he likes, but the Dutchman did concede Chelsea were right to expect more from such a heavy investment. "It is normal when you have the academy with a lot of investment you must develop players in the Premier League," he said. "If you see three or four of these players coming into the team that is what you want. "It is not said (by Abramovich) but that is the consequence of the academy; you have to use them, under the conditions that they learn. "Our position in the league gives a few options for putting

young players in the team."

REHABILITATION

Hiddink has overseen a four-match unbeaten run, including successive victories against Scunthorpe and Crystal Palace, since replacing Mourinho.

But the savvy veteran is well aware that Chelsea's rehabilitation after their remarkable collapse under Mourinho is still far from complete. "There were some vulnerabilities in the second half, it is true. We have to improve," Hiddink said.

"It was a difficult game, which we expected. We got a little bit sloppy in finishing it off after a good start."

With their Premier League title defence already in tatters, Hiddink says reclaiming the FA Cup—a competition he won with the

club in his previous interim spell in 2009—would help salvage a troubled campaign.

"We are aiming for the FA Cup, we have the Premier League which is difficult to get to fourth place, so it was a very important game to get to the next round," he said.

"We are very determined to go on to get silverware." To enjoy a successful end to the season, Hiddink will need Costa to stay fit and in form. The Spain striker's fourth goal in his last three appearances was well timed after his midweek training ground row with Oscar once again raised questions about his explosive temper.

"If you see his goal in slow motion it was a difficult goal, but he was so focused and concentrated to get the flick on it. It's nice to see when he is focused on the right things," Hiddink added. — AFP

VILLA WELL ON WAY TO JOINING LIST OF FALLEN ENGLISH GIANTS

LONDON: Evoking memories of Operation Desert Storm during the Gulf War, an American board member at Aston Villa recently urged fans of the Premier League's last-place club not to give up hope in its increasingly desperate bid to escape relegation. "We were standing next to minefields separating Saudi Arabia and Kuwait," Gen. Charles C. Krulak, a former Commandant of the Marine Corps, recounted in British newspaper The Sun. "There were trenches filled with gas, massive artillery ready to rain down on us and the threat of chemical attack."

"My next-in-command looked at me and said, 'How are we gonna get through this?' I said, 'We're gonna do it, we're gonna go through this like a knife through butter.' It's easy to give up, but you can't do that."

This particular call to arms, however, looks to be in vain. Villa, a seven-time English champion and European Cup winner in 1982, is an odds-on favorite to lose its unbroken status as a Premier League club. Winless since the opening day of the season on Aug. 8, the biggest team from central England—boasting famous fans in Prince William and British Prime Minister David Cameron—heads into a home match against Crystal Palace on Tuesday 11 points from safety with 18 games remaining, and in turmoil on and off the field.

Two weeks ago, disgruntled supporters chanted, "You're not fit to wear the shirt," as Villa players prepared to leave the stadium in Sunderland after a 3-1 loss to the league's next-to-last team.

On Saturday, the atmosphere became more heated, with players requiring a police escort to get on the team bus as angry Villa fans vented their fury following a humiliating 1-1 draw at fourth-tier club Wycombe in the FA Cup.

How has it come to this? How has a team that finished sixth in the Premier League for three straight seasons in 2008-10 and has long been one of the most celebrated clubs in English soccer fallen this far? It's a story of inertia and apathy

in the boardroom, of strategic failures in recruitment, and of a squad that has been regularly stripped of its best players. The people in key positions at the club appear to be either unsuited to the task, not up to it, or simply don't want to be there. Randy Lerner, the former owner of the Cleveland Browns, bought Villa in 2006 for \$104 million but has been looking to sell the club since May 2014, saying he was drained by the "week-in, week-out battles."

Villa's current manager is Remi Garde, hired in November as its sixth coach since 2010. Garde is a Frenchman with no previous coaching experience in England. Thrust immediately into a relegation dogfight, he has yet to win a game after 10 in charge. It sums up Villa's plight that in welcoming Garde to Villa Park, the club misspelt his name, saying on Twitter: (hashtag) WelcomeRemy.

Villa has an American chief executive, Tom Fox, whose background is mainly in marketing and who risked intensifying fan ire by saying last week that the club was "making progress" because it has "generated more revenue on both our shirt and kit deals and in our ability to control costs."

Fox arrived from Arsenal, as did newly hired sporting director Hendrik Almstadt, who brought with him the risky transfer strategy of buying young to get better value-for-money signings so they can be sold for a profit. The so-called "Moneyball" policy has been a disaster so far. Thirteen players—many unproven youngsters from overseas—joined last offseason for 50 million pounds (\$72.5 million), but for a reported net spend of only 7 million pounds (\$10 million) as Villa used the cash recouped from selling Belgium striker Christian Benteke and England midfielder Fabian Delph—its two best players.

Garde has the January transfer window to work a miracle, but which potential savior wants to join a club destined for relegation? Garde may just have to work with the current set of players, who have proven this season they are simply not good enough.

Since the departure of manager Martin O'Neill in 2010, Villa has been on the slide and only narrowly avoided relegation the last three seasons. A late-season surge under Tim Sherwood, Garde's predecessor, saw Villa escape the drop and reach the FA Cup final, where the team lost 4-0 to Arsenal at Wembley Stadium.

Villa hasn't recovered from that loss, and is set to lose its top-flight status just when Premier League teams are about to carve up a record 9 billion pounds (\$13 billion) from domestic and overseas TV deals over the next three years. The timing couldn't be worse and there's no telling when Villa will recover.

Once upon a time, Leeds, Nottingham Forest and Coventry were established top-division teams. Relegation led to financial problems and they've been unable to rebound. Could Villa be next? That 1-0 win over Bayern Munich in the 1982 European Cup final seems a long, long time ago. — AP



FUNCHAL: Benfica's Brazilian defender Jardel Vieira (R) heads the ball during the Portuguese league football match CD Nacional vs SL Benfica at the Da Madeira stadium in Funchal yesterday. The match was suspended yesterday due to the fog. — AFP

VAN GAAL CLINGS TO RESULTS AS MANCHESTER UTD TOIL ON

NEWCASTLE: Manchester United manager Louis van Gaal admits that his side need to play better, but they will go in search of a third successive victory at Newcastle United today. United last managed that in November, when victory over CSKA Moscow in the Champions League followed by Premier League wins over West Bromwich Albion and Watford had everything in the Old Trafford garden looking rosy. United, briefly, were second in the league, but after that they would not record another win until January 2, during which time they also limped out of the Champions League in the group phase.

United have eased some of the pressure on Van Gaal by recording back-to-back home wins, but Saturday's FA Cup victory over third-tier Sheffield United, secured by Wayne Rooney's injury-time penalty, was far from convincing. "The result is all right, but the performance was not all right," said Van Gaal, whose side were ironically applauded by their own fans as they toiled to break down their third-tier opponents.

But as long as United keep winning, Van Gaal has a defence and his team are looking to record a fourth successive Premier League win over struggling Newcastle in meetings at St James' Park. Victory would take United level on points

with Tottenham Hotspur, who occupy the fourth and final Champions League qualification place and host second-place Leicester City on Wednesday. "As we enter the second half of the season the games come quickly, so we want to build and move up the league as fast as we can," Van Gaal added. "This won't be easy, but I know that we are all determined to do this." Only Tottenham have conceded fewer league goals than United this season, but it is in attack where Van Gaal's side badly need to improve. Van Gaal hinted that Memphis Depay and Jesse Lingard could come into the team after coming off the bench against Sheffield United.

'ANGRY AND FRUSTRATED'

"I think that we have to play with wingers, who make the pitch as big as possible," he said. "And with Memphis and Lingard, I know it is like that." Newcastle manager Steve McClaren is under increasing pressure after his side's poor recent league form transferred to the FA Cup with a third-round defeat at Watford.

It is 412 minutes since they last scored and the reverse at Vicarage Road was their fourth successive 1-0 loss. They go into the game third from bottom in the Premier League and two

points from safety. McClaren hopes to welcome back midfielder Jack Colback from injury as he attempts to win round supporters who are growing frustrated with the lack of progress made during his eight-month tenure.

There were calls for him to go from some travelling fans at Watford and he must halt a record that has seen his side win just four of their last 20 home games if he is to orchestrate a climb up the table. "We're frustrated and angry at being out of the FA Cup, and we have to channel that in a positive way against Manchester United," said the former Manchester United assistant coach.

"At this stage, I can't ask for more from the players. We have to get on with it, that's the nature of football. The players have to be big enough, bold enough and show courage."

"It's Manchester United next. We'll have 50,000 people who have to get behind this side and support them."

"We have to stick together. It's difficult for all of us to show a little bit of patience, but there's work going on and today is the next challenge." Newcastle remain without long-term injury victims Tim Krul, Gabriel Obertan and Papiis Cisse. — AFP

FEAST AND FAMINE AS ARSENAL FACE REDS

LONDON: Two teams coping very differently with English football's high-intensity mid-season fixture programme meet tomorrow when Premier League leaders Arsenal resume their pursuit of the title at injury-ravaged Liverpool.

While Arsenal could afford to make five changes as they breezed past Sunderland in the FA Cup on Saturday, Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp's decision to field a youthful starting XI at fourth-tier Exeter City on Friday almost backfired as his side scraped a 2-2 draw.

First-team regulars like Mesut Ozil, Aaron Ramsey and Per Mertesacker will come back into the Arsenal team at Anfield and right-back Hector Bellerin believes such strength in depth bodes well for the months ahead.

"The legs are fine and we have shown that we have very good players on the bench also and the rotation helps us get good results," said the Spaniard, who set up goals for Ramsey and Olivier Giroud in the 3-1 success against Sunderland.

"We have a lot of games and they are all hard games, but we have to respond in the way we did (against Sunderland) and I'm sure we will be fine. "The team was up to the challenge. We didn't rush the games and we knew we had to be patient. It is nice to get the three goals and that is confidence for the team as we had a difficult week ahead."

Klopp can only envy the riches at Arsenal counterpart Arsene Wenger's disposal as he contemplates an injury list that currently features 11 senior players.

Seven of those—including playmaker Philippe Coutinho, striker Daniel Sturridge and centre-backs Dejan Lovren and Martin Skrtel—have hamstring problems, but Klopp has dismissed suggestions that his hard-running playing style is to blame.

Assessing the situation after the draw at Exeter, he said: "The main problems we have is because our centre-halves are injured in this moment. "We had five centre-halves at the beginning of the season and at this moment no centre-halves. That's the situation, but next week it could be different."

Leicester City, two points behind Arsenal in second place, return to White Hart Lane to face Tottenham Hotspur, just three days after a 2-2 draw between the teams there in the FA Cup.

Leicester were a minute from victory when Harry Kane equalised from the penalty spot for Spurs, but having made seven changes to his lineup, Leicester manager Claudio Ranieri was satisfied with the outcome.

WELL DONE!

"I was very pleased with our performance because eight players without play some play

sometimes, in the League Cup—and now they play in the FA Cup, and I think they deserve a positive result," he said.

"Two-two is a positive result. Well done!" Spurs start the week in fourth place, but Manchester United can go draw level on points with Mauricio Pochettino's men if they win at struggling Newcastle United in Tuesday's stand-off fixture.

United required a stoppage-time Wayne Rooney penalty to see off third-division Sheffield United in the FA Cup on Saturday, but midfielder Marouane Fellaini believes there was no shame in being made to toil by well-drilled opposition. — AFP

Live Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Newcastle v Man United 22:45
BeIN SPORTS

Bournemouth v West Ham 22:45
BeIN SPORTS

Aston Villa v Crystal Palace 22:45
BeIN SPORTS

SPAIN COPA DEL REY

Deportivo v Mirandes 22:30
BeIN SPORTS

Sevilla v Real Betis 22:30
BeIN SPORTS



BORDEAUX: This file photo taken on November 29, 2015 shows Bordeaux' Senegalese forward Henri Saivet running with the ball during the French L1 football match between Bordeaux and Caen at the Matmut Atlantique stadium in Bordeaux, southwestern France. Bordeaux captain and Senegalese international midfielder Henri Saivet has agreed terms to join English Premier League side Newcastle United, the French club's coach Willy Sagnol said yesterday. — AFP



ZURICH: Vila Nova's Brazilian forward Wendell Lira, formerly of Goianesia, poses after receiving the 2015 FIFA Puskas Award for the "goal of the year" award, which he scored with Goianesia, during the 2015 FIFA Ballon d'Or award ceremony at the Kongresshaus in Zurich yesterday. — AFP

Sports

Ovechkin becomes first Russian to score 500 goals

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Maradona offers praise on golden day for Napoli

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SEAHAWKS ESCAPE WITH 10-9 WIN OVER VIKINGS Page 16



ZURICH: (From L) Brazil and Paris Saint-Germain defender Thiago Silva, Croatia and Real Madrid midfielder Luka Modric, Brazil and Real Madrid defender Marcelo, France and Juventus midfielder Paul Pogba, Spain and Real Madrid defender Sergio Ramos, Brazil and FC Barcelona forward Neymar, Brazil and FC Barcelona defender Dani Alves, Argentina and FC Barcelona forward Lionel Messi, Spain and FC Barcelona midfielder Andres Iniesta and Portugal and Real Madrid forward Cristiano Ronaldo pose on stage after being selected in the 2015 FIFA FIFPro World XI during the 2015 FIFA Ballon d'Or award ceremony at the Kongresshaus in Zurich yesterday. — AFP

MESSI WINS RECORD FIFTH BALLON D'OR

CARLI LLOYD GETS FIFA WORLD PLAYER AWARD

JAMES SCORES 37, LEADS CAVALIERS PAST 76ERS

PHILADELPHIA: LeBron James raised the roof, then lifted the Cleveland Cavaliers to their seventh straight win, 95-85 over the Philadelphia 76ers on Sunday night. James tied a season high with 37 points and pushed both hands up in the air after several powerful dunks, drawing a rise out of the nearly 20,000 fans at the Wells Fargo Center. He had nine assists and seven rebounds in Cleveland's 13th win in the last 15 games. Even when James seems fallible he still steals the show. An unsuspecting James took an errant ball to the face during pregame warmups. The clip was a hit on social media. The 76ers pulled as close as two points with 8 minutes left before James thwarted the upset bid. Jahlil Okafor had 21 points for the Sixers, and Ish Smith had 18 points and 10 assists. Philadelphia is an NBA-worst 4-35.

CLIPPERS 114, PELICANS 111, OT

Chris Paul had 25 points and 11 assists, Jamal Crawford added 21 points, and Los Angeles beat New Orleans in overtime to extend the NBA's longest active winning streak to nine games. Two-time All-Star Anthony Davis, the Pelicans' leading scorer and rebounder, did not play because of a back contusion. He was hurt when he dove over the first row of seats chasing a loose ball early in the Pelicans' 91-86 home loss to Indiana on Friday night. The Pelicans forced overtime when Jrue Holiday made three free throws after he was fouled by Austin Rivers on a 3-point attempt from the top of the key with 1.6 seconds left. Los Angeles native Holiday scored 12 of his season-high 29 points off the bench in the fourth quarter to help New Orleans erase a 12-point deficit. Tyreke Evans added 26. Ryan Anderson, making his fourth start of the season in Davis' power forward spot, had 16 points and 10 rebounds in 42 minutes.

TRAIL BLAZERS 115, THUNDER 110

Damian Lillard scored 31 points, hitting five 3-pointers in the last 3:07, and Portland rallied to beat Oklahoma City. CJ McCollum added 22 points for Portland, which hit a season-high 19 3-pointers to snap a three-game losing streak. Thunder guard Russell Westbrook nearly had his fourth triple-double of the season, but fell just short with 25 points, 15 assists and nine rebounds. Last season, Westbrook led the NBA with 11 triple-doubles. Kevin Durant had 28 points for Oklahoma City.

KNICKS 100, BUCKS 88

Carmelo Anthony had 24 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists, Kristaps Porzingis

had a few more highlight plays during New York's high-flying third quarter against Milwaukee. The Knicks broke it open in the third by outshooting and outdunking one of the NBA's most athletic teams. Porzingis was at the forefront, with a sensational follow dunk on one end and a blocked shot on the other as the Knicks began pouring it on in the middle of the period. He had 15 points for the Knicks, who won for the fourth time in five games. Greg Monroe had 28 points and 10 rebounds for the Bucks, and Khris Middleton added 20.

GRIZZLIES 101, CELTICS 98

Zach Randolph had 25 points and 13 rebounds and Memphis overcame a 21-point deficit in the second half to beat Boston. Isaiah Thomas, who led the Celtics with 35 points, launched a 3-pointer as time expired but officials confirmed the basket came after the horn, giving Memphis its biggest comeback victory of the season. Mario Chalmers added 18 points for the Grizzlies, hitting 11 of 13 free throws. Tony Allen finished with 15 points and 10 rebounds. Amir Johnson and Avery Bradley had 14 points apiece for Boston. Johnson also grabbed nine rebounds.

ROCKETS 107, PACERS 103, OT

Trevor Ariza scored a season-high 24 points and Corey Brewer hit the go ahead 3-pointer in overtime to help Houston beat Indiana. James Harden had 21 points and Dwight Howard added 21 points and 17 rebounds for his fifth straight double-double in his return after missing a game with soreness in his lower back. Indiana's Paul George had just four points in the first half before scoring 14 of his 20 in a 27-point third quarter to help the Pacers build a big lead before Houston came back in the fourth.

MAVERICKS 93, TIMBERWOLVES 87

Dirk Nowitzki scored 29 points, converted a big three-point play and grabbed a key loose ball in the final seconds to lead Dallas past Minnesota. Nowitzki hit four of Dallas' six 3-pointers. Andrew Wiggins led Minnesota with 21 points. The Timberwolves have dropped six straight and 10 of 11.

JAZZ 86, LAKERS 74

Gordon Hayward scored 25 points and Utah beat Los Angeles to snap a seven-game road losing streak. Kobe Bryant didn't play for the Lakers because of a strained right Achilles tendon. Lou Williams led the Lakers with 18 points, eight rebounds and six assists, after scoring a career-high 44 on Friday night a home loss to Oklahoma City. — AP

ZURICH: Lionel Messi reclaimed the FIFA Ballon d'Or award for the world player of the year yesterday, after watching his great rival Cristiano Ronaldo walk off with the prize for the previous two years. The Barcelona and Argentina forward finished ahead of Ronaldo and Brazil forward Neymar as he scooped the award for the fifth time overall, having previously won it four years in a row from 2009 to 2012.

Messi helped Barcelona win a Spanish league, cup and Champions League treble plus the Club World Cup and also led Argentina to the Copa America final, where they lost to Chile. "It's a very special moment to be back here, winning another Ballon d'Or," said Messi as he received the award.

"It's incredible to win a fifth... more than anything I ever dreamed of as a kid. I want to thank my team mates, without them none of this would have been possible." Barcelona's Luis Enrique was voted coach of the year.

United States World Cup winner Carli Lloyd, who scored a hat-trick in the final against Japan, was named women's player of the year.

Ronaldo ended last season trophyless with Real Madrid although he helped Portugal qualify for Euro 2016. Neymar won a treble alongside Messi at Barcelona but had less happy time with Brazil, receiving a four-match international ban after he was sent off during the Copa America.

Much has changed since, just 12 months ago, a disgruntled Messi, fresh from losing a World Cup final and disillusioned with coach Luis Enrique's regime at Barcelona, sat in stony silence as Ronaldo announced his intention to hunt down the Argentine's then-record four Ballon d'Or haul.

A year on, the roles were reversed, Messi's record now even further beyond Ronaldo's reach in the personal duel between the two men who have taken standards to unseen heights in their domination of the sport during the past decade. Rarely has there been such little debate over who was the deserving winner. Even in the Spanish capital, unlike in previous years, there was no campaign for Ronaldo in the year he became Real Madrid's all-time leading goalscorer.

In Zurich last year, Messi had even cast doubt on his future at Barcelona. His benching for a 1-0 defeat to Real Sociedad the most ignominious start to what would turn out to be the second most successful in Barca's 116-year history.

DISSAPPOINTING YEAR

Messi missed an open training session with the club's fans, Barca sporting director Andoni Zubizarreta was sacked and club legend Carles Puyol walked. Enrique would have followed suit had Messi demanded it. Instead, he used the fuel of the most disappointing year of his career in 2014 to fire Barca to a treble of Champions League, La Liga and Copa del Rey trophies.

His partnership with Neymar and Luis Suarez suddenly kicked into gear, between them hitting 137 of Barca's record 180 goals in 2015, making the South American trio one of the most frightening frontlines the game has ever seen.

Even a two-month injury layoff due to knee ligament damage couldn't derail Messi's case as he also scored in the UEFA Super Cup and Club World Cup finals to take Barca's total trophy haul for the year to five. There was still disappointment at international level. Another final defeat this time on penalties to Chile at the Copa America - means Messi has still to deliver a major trophy for La Albi Celeste.

However, whilst others may use his record with Argentina to doubt his candidacy as the best player ever, in Barcelona 2015 enshrined his legacy as the greatest. He scored the goal that sealed a fifth La Liga title in seven years and maybe even his best ever goal in the Copa del Rey final. Yet, his signature moment came with the return of an old mentor in Pep Guardiola when Bayern Munich visited in the Champions League semi-finals in May.

Guardiola had made his long-awaited return to the Camp Nou as a fan in the earlier rounds, unable to hide his admiration as Messi's repertoire of outrageous skill tore Manchester City to shreds in the last-16. His first visit as an opposition coach since winning 14 trophies in four years between 2008 and 2012 was seen as a referendum on who had been the inspiration for the most glorious period in Barca's history.

MAGICAL GOALS

Messi won by a landslide. Two magical goals in three minutes at the Camp Nou dealt a killer blow from which Bayern never recovered. "There is not a system or coach to stop talent of his magnitude," said Guardiola. After a two-year spell on top, not even Ronaldo could prevent Messi's march back to being the world's best. The ceremony, at the Zurich Kongresshaus theatre, was held against the backdrop of FIFA going through the worst corruption crisis since it was founded in 1904.

The sport is facing criminal investigations in both Switzerland and the United States, where some leading FIFA officials are among 41 individuals and sports entities who have been indicted on corruption charges. Outgoing FIFA president Sepp Blatter, normally a central figure at the ceremony, was not involved after being banned for eight years by the Ethics Committee in December.

There was no President's Award, traditionally awarded for outstanding services to the game. Blatter was replaced by acting president Issa Hayatou who played a low-key role, reading a brief speech before the start of the ceremony and appeared on the stage when the awards for best player and women's player were presented. — Agencies



ZURICH: FC Barcelona and Argentina's forward Lionel Messi poses with trophy after receiving the 2015 FIFA Ballon d'Or award for player of the year during the 2015 FIFA Ballon d'Or award ceremony at the Kongresshaus in Zurich yesterday. — AFP



ZURICH: USA and Houston Dash's midfielder Carli Lloyd speaks after receiving the 2015 FIFA Women's World Player of the Year award during the 2015 FIFA Ballon d'Or award ceremony at the Kongresshaus in Zurich yesterday. — AFP

Kuwait Times BUSINESS

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Any Aramco share listing
will take time: Chairman

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UAE's real GDP growth
in non-oil sector
to remain resilient

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Honda, Volvo take top
awards at Detroit
Auto Show

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EU SHUTS DOWN BELGIUM TAX BREAKS FOR MULTINATIONALS

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JIUJIANG: A man looks at stock prices at a brokerage house in Jiujiang in central China's Jiangxi province yesterday. China's stock benchmark sank more than 5 percent and other Asian markets fell while Europe rose moderately. — AP

CHINA STOCKS PLUNGE ON ECONOMIC GLOOM RUBLE SLUMPS ON FIRST DAY OF TRADING AFTER HOLIDAY

SHANGHAI: China's stock market resumed its volatile plunges yesterday, as worries over the slowing economy and the government's ability to manage it sent traders fleeing, dealers said.

Investors have been alarmed by slowing growth in the world's second-largest economy, which is expected to have expanded last year at its slowest pace in a quarter of a century. Official data on fourth-quarter and annual growth is due to be released next week.

But early indicators have stoked pessimism. The government said on Saturday that China's consumer price inflation came in at 1.6 percent in December, well short of the government's target of "around three percent".

Yesterday, the Shanghai Composite Index plunged 5.33 percent, or 169.71 points, to 3,016.70 on turnover of 286.4 billion yuan (\$43.6 billion). The Shenzhen Composite Index, which tracks stocks on China's second exchange, dropped even more, tumbling 6.60 percent, or 130.62 points, to 1,848.10 on turnover of 377.8 billion yuan. In Hong Kong, the benchmark Hang Seng Index slipped 2.8 percent, or 565.21 points, to close at 19,888.50.

"The market is already in a downward spiral and it's still exploring the bottom after last week's plunge," Zhang Yanbing, an analyst at Zhesang Securities, said.

"The economy remains weak and there's no driver for a market rebound." The Shanghai index fell nearly 10 percent last week, slammed by concerns over China's flagging economy and weakening currency but also a regulatory blunder. On Friday, authorities reversed course and suspended a new "circuit breaker" mechanism that had fuelled investor panic and a global rout by automatically closing Chinese markets early

twice in just four days.

The plunges have brought a rough start to the year for an index which soared 150 percent in the 12 months to mid-June and then plummeted more than 30 percent in three weeks, prompting an unprecedented government rescue package which helped the market end the year up 9.4 percent.

Pessimism dominates

To the dismay of investors, China's central bank recently guided the yuan currency down by setting its daily fix lower for eight sessions, representing a 1.4 percent fall, before a slight reversal on Friday.

Yesterday, the People's Bank of China set the daily reference rate around which the yuan can move up or down two percent at a stronger 6.5626 to \$1.0, up .02 percent against the US dollar. "Pessimism is the dominant sentiment," William Wong, head of sales trading at Shenwan Hongyuan Group in Hong Kong, told Bloomberg News.

"Market conditions will remain challenging given weak growth, volatility in external markets and the yuan's depreciation pressure."

Yuan weakness, believed by some analysts to be a creeping devaluation, sparked worries China could set off a currency war in a bid to boost exports.

In August last year, China moved the yuan down nearly five percent over a week, saying the drop was a result of reforms aimed at making the unit more flexible. 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.

Ruble plummets

The Russian ruble fell sharply on its first day of trading after a ten-day holiday period, as a drop in the price of oil cast a shadow across the energy-exporting economy. The national currency dropped by nearly 2 percent half an hour into trading, to 76.1 rubles, as the Moscow exchange resumed trading in foreign exchange for the first time since Dec 31.

The price of oil, the backbone of the Russian economy, has declined over the past week amid fears about a slowdown in China's growth. Russia has also been hit by economic sanctions that Western nations imposed following the 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimea. The sharp decline in the price of oil, now trading at 12-year lows at \$34 per barrel for Brent crude, will likely cause a drain on Russia's reserves and push the government to cut down on expenses.

Russia has based its budget this year on an average oil price of \$50 per barrel and Finance Minister Anton Siluanov indicated last month that the government is prepared for cuts if crude were to fall to \$30. The Russian daily Vedomosti last month quoted a ministry draft proposal that would see budget expenses cut by 5 percent across the board. Russia is running a budget deficit of 3 percent of GDP this year and since President Vladimir Putin has ordered it to be kept below that level, the government will have to let the ruble depreciate further to balance the budget.

Analysts at Bank of America Merrill Lynch said in a research note last month that the ruble would need to weaken to a staggering 94 rubles to the dollar if Russia wants to keep its budget deficit below 3 percent. — Agencies



MOSCOW: A woman walks past a board listing foreign currency rates against the Russian ruble in Moscow yesterday. — AFP

SAUDI SHARES PARE LOSSES, BANKS WEIGH ON ABU DHABI

MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

DUBAI: Petrochemical and small-cap stocks turned around Saudi Arabia's index after early declines yesterday while blue-chip companies dragged other Middle Eastern bourses lower. The Saudi benchmark swung in volatile trade, dipping below the critical 6,000 level but then gaining momentum mid-session as petrochemical and speculative stock were heavily bought, lifting the index 1.4 percent to settle at 6,177 points.

"The swing factor in the stock market were the petrochemical shares," said a Riyadh-based trader. "Further dips in the market will make those stocks relatively more attractive from a valuation perspective." Saudi Basic Industries (SABIC), the largest stock by market value, jumped 3.3 percent, helping lift the petrochemical index 3.1 percent.

Upcoming earnings will show how far petrochemical companies' gross margins were squeezed by subdued global demand and the resumed slump in oil prices, coupled with higher operating costs following recent moves by the government to reduce subsidies.

"Petrochemical had a challenging year in 2015 and have lost their cost advantage

versus international players and we expect 2016's net income to decline," said a note from Riyadh-based NCB Capital. Traders also bought back speculative stocks which slumped on Sunday, triggered by margin calls. Emaar Economic City and Knowledge Economic City, mid-tier stocks, each soared more than 7.0 percent.

Yanbu Cement, a pure play on the kingdom's construction sector, jumped 7.1 percent after releasing its fourth quarter earnings on Sunday. Net income rose 8.3 percent from a year earlier, according to a bourse filing.

"We believe the 8.3 percent year-on-year growth in net income is attributed mainly to higher sales volumes coming from a low base because 2014's fourth quarter was hampered by the changes in the labour market and the lower demand due to the Hajj season," said a note by NCB Capital. High inventory levels and continued demand slowdown led larger cement companies to offer sales discounts in 2015. "We believe Yanbu Cement offered an average discount of 7 percent to its product in 2015," the note added. — Reuters

SAUDI RIYAL STABLE: MONETARY CHIEF

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia yesterday said its currency was stable despite volatility in the futures market as the kingdom takes unprecedented measures to deal with low oil prices.

The Saudi riyal will remain pegged at 3.75 to one US dollar, said the Governor of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency, Fahad bin Abdullah al-Mubarak, according to the Saudi Press Agency.

The currency is "backed by a full range of monetary policy instruments, including foreign exchange reserves," he said. "The agency noticed recent volatility in the futures market of the Saudi riyal against the dollar as a result of wrong perceptions of the general economic situation in Saudi Arabia

by some of the market participants," Mubarak added.

Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, reported a record budget deficit of \$98 billion for 2015 after a drastic fall in global crude prices.

The finance ministry last month imposed unprecedented cuts, including an immediate reduction in fuel subsidies, with plans to further diversify the economy and possibly increase charges on public services.

Riyadh maintained high spending last year, and launched a costly military intervention against Iran-backed rebels in Yemen, by drawing on huge fiscal reserves it accumulated when oil prices were high.

The kingdom withdrew more than \$80

billion from the reserves, which stood at \$732 billion at the end of 2014, and issued bonds worth around \$20 billion.

All Gulf Cooperation Council states except Kuwait peg their currencies to the US dollar. Earlier in December, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain raised interest rates after the US Federal Reserve increased its rates for the first time in more than nine years.

In an interview published last week, Saudi's Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman told The Economist that the country is "far" from an economic crisis, because it still has ample reserves and growing non-oil revenues. Global crude prices have plunged from above \$100 a barrel in early 2014 to below \$33 yesterday. — AFP

ANY ARAMCO SHARE LISTING WILL TAKE TIME: CHAIRMAN

ONLY DOWNSTREAM SALE BEING CONSIDERED

RIYADH: Any share listing of state-owned Saudi Aramco, the world's largest crude producer, will take time, the company's chairman told The Wall Street Journal in an interview published yesterday.

Khalid Al-Falih also said the potential sale of shares could include listing at least part of Aramco's crude extraction operations. "There is no plan that is concrete at this stage to do the listing. There are studies ongoing. Serious consideration," Falih told The Journal.

His comments came after Aramco said Friday it "has been studying various options to allow broad public participation in its equity". The move would be part of economic reforms by the kingdom coping with a collapse in global oil prices.

Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman first revealed that a share offer was under review, in an interview Thursday with The Economist. Falih told The Journal Saudi Aramco is considering listing "the main company, and obviously the main company, will include upstream," or the exploration and production sectors.

Aramco manages crude reserves that exceed 261 billion barrels. The company might also list refining and petrochemical units, The Journal said.

"Many of these assets are also with other joint venture partners so we have to go through the process of reviewing the legal agreements between us and our partners," said Falih, who is also health minister. "It will take time." Any listing would primarily occur on the Saudi exchange, "but I would not exclude at this stage international listings given the potential size," Falih told The Journal.

A public listing by Saudi Aramco would make it the first major state-owned oil firm in the Gulf to be floated on markets. The kingdom has adopted a policy of selling shares in all major state-owned companies and last year opened its Tadawul All-Shares Index to direct foreign investment.

Downstream sale

Saudi Arabia is considering selling shares in refining ventures with foreign oil firms but would not offer a stake in the crude oil exploration and production operations of state oil giant Saudi Aramco, sources familiar with official thinking said.

Some Aramco managers have been informed that the company is looking at listing shares in "joint downstream subsidiaries" at home and abroad, the sources said. One option is to create a holding company that would group together Aramco's stakes in the downstream subsidiaries,

one source said. Shares in the parent firm would not be offered, he added.

"The holding company is the one which could be listed, not Aramco itself," he said, declining to be named because of political sensitivities.

The global energy market has been awash with speculation since Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman appeared to indicate in an interview with The Economist magazine last week that Saudi Arabia might sell shares in Aramco, as part of a privatization drive to raise money in an era of cheap oil. On Friday Aramco, the world's largest oil company, issued a brief statement saying it was considering options including the stock market listing "of an appropriate percentage of the company's shares and/or the listing of a bundle (of) its downstream subsidiaries".

Aramco has crude reserves estimated at about 265 billion barrels, over 15 percent of all global oil deposits, so it could become the first listed company valued at \$1 trillion or more if it went public, analysts have estimated. But several sources close to Aramco said its massive size, and the confidentiality surrounding it as the main instrument of the kingdom's oil policy, meant the sale of a stake in the parent firm was not being actively considered.

"The government will never give up its crown jewel," said a senior banker in Riyadh. Instead, authorities are looking at accelerating plans that have been in the works for many years to sell shares in part of Aramco's vast refining and petrochemicals empire, which by itself is estimated to be worth tens of billions of dollars.

A precedent for the sale already exists: PetroRabigh, a refining and petrochemicals venture in which Aramco and Japan's Sumitomo Chemical each own 37.5 percent. It held an initial public offer on the Riyadh bourse in 2008.

"The higher priority is to IPO downstream - it would be low-hanging fruit," said Essam Al-Zamel, a prominent economic columnist in Saudi Arabia. Aramco could not be reached for comment on Sunday, a day off for the company's employees.

Ventures

It is not clear which ventures might be involved in a sale. But the range of candidates is wide; Aramco and subsidiaries own or have an equity interest in over 5 million barrels per day of refining capacity. Its operations include a joint refinery with Royal Dutch Shell in Jubail known as SASREF; a venture with Exxon Mobil in Yanbu known as SAMREF; and its YASREF refinery, which is a venture with China Petrochemical Corp (Sinopec). YASREF

has already said it is looking at listing its shares eventually on the Saudi stock market.

Subsidiaries of Aramco abroad include S-Oil in Korea; a refinery in Fujian, China owned jointly with Exxon and Sinopec; and Motiva in the United States, which is a venture with Shell.

Prince Mohammed told The Economist that he expected a decision on the Aramco privatisation to be made "over the next few months". But an actual sale of shares would probably take much longer to happen as it would involve reorganising Aramco. "This is still at a very preliminary stage. They have to do a study first and submit the results to the board members, and then decide whether to go ahead with it or not," said the first source.

Selling shares in joint ventures could prove problematic if foreign partners did not agree. An industry source said Aramco's foreign partners had not yet been consulted on the idea; at present, they are "like a deaf man at a wedding", he said.

At the right price, foreign investors might be keen on grabbing a chunk of Saudi Arabia's refining operations, which have been growing even as global oil prices have plunged in the last 18 months, squeezing upstream producers. But Saudi political sensitivities may influence any sale. Traditionally, shares in state firms have been sold at discounted prices exclusively to Saudi investors as a way of sharing the kingdom's oil wealth.

So any listing of shares would probably have to occur on the Saudi bourse, and though the market opened to direct foreign investment last year, participation in an initial public offer might well be limited to local investors; foreigners would have to buy the shares in the secondary market.

The Saudi bourse, capitalised at only \$379 billion, has been hit hard by the tumble of oil prices - it is trading at four-year lows - so it is in poor shape to absorb a big new supply of equity. Initially, any sale of Aramco assets might therefore be limited to several billion dollars, bankers say.

Nevertheless, the government appears determined to proceed with a sale - not merely to raise money, but as part of a drive to diversify the economy beyond crude oil production and have the private sector play a bigger role, analysts said. "This is part of the reformist tidal wave characterising Saudi Arabia...It's part and parcel of Mohammed bin Salman's drive to alter the structure of the economy," said John Sfakianakis, a Riyadh-based economist. —Agencies

News

in brief

US dollar stable against Kuwait dinar at 0.303

KUWAIT: The exchange rate of the US dollar against the Kuwaiti dinar yesterday was stable at KD 0.303, as well as the euro at KD 0.331 compared to the exchange rates for Sunday, said a statement by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK). According to the CBK, the exchange rate of the Sterling pound was stable at KD 0.440 while the Swiss franc went up to KD 0.305. Exchange rate of the Japanese yen remained the same at KD 0.002.

Egypt's treasury bond yields rise at auction

CAIRO: Yields on Egypt's 18-month, three-year and seven-year treasury bonds rose at an auction yesterday, data from the finance ministry website showed. The average yield on Egypt's zero-coupon, 18-month bonds rose to 12.306 percent from 11.993 percent at the last auction on Dec 28. The average yield on the three-year bond rose to 12.965 percent from 12.663 percent and on the seven-year bond to 14.870 percent from 14.572 percent.

Orascom Construction wins \$420m power plant contract

DUBAI: Egypt's Orascom Construction has been awarded a \$420 million contract to revamp two government-owned power stations, the company said yesterday. Orascom was part of a consortium that completed the build of the Assiut and West Damietta plants in the third quarter of 2015. The plants, which are operational and have a combined capacity of 1,500 megawatts, will now be converted to a so-called combined cycle from a simple cycle. A combined cycle re-uses waste products, increasing capacity by 50 percent with no additional fuel intake.

UAE revokes license of Al-Zarooni Exchange

ABU DHABI: The central bank of the United Arab Emirates yesterday said it had revoked the license of local money exchange firm Al-Zarooni Exchange due to anti-money laundering compliance violations. The license has been revoked with effect from Jan. 10, 2016, and comes after a special examination of the firm, the Central Bank said in a statement. Al-Zarooni was initially suspended on Nov. 10, 2015 from conducting business in remittances, currency exchange and payment of wages, the statement added. The US Treasury said on Nov. 12 it had imposed sanctions on the Altaf Khanani Money Laundering Organization and its Dubai-based supporter, the Al-Zarooni Exchange, for laundering money for criminals and political extremists.

MOODY'S DOWNGRADES MALAYSIA OUTLOOK

KUALA LUMPUR: Moody's Investors Service yesterday downgraded Malaysia's sovereign outlook from "positive" to "stable", citing deepening economic woes from falling oil prices and global economic uncertainty.

In a statement, the ratings agency said the country faced slowing growth and world market factors that have "undermined Malaysia's external position, with large capital outflows, a falling current account surplus, sharp exchange rate depreciation and falling reserves."

Malaysia's economic outlook has been a source of major concern since oil prices plunged in 2014. Exports of oil and natural gas are a major source of earnings for the country. The trouble has been compounded by a financial scandal involving Prime Minister Najib Razak, which has further rattled the country's markets.

The situation caused the ringgit to plummet, making it the worst-performing Asian currency last year. Najib in October forecast slower growth of 4-5 percent in 2016 and announced measures to spur demand, but has insisted the economy remains on solid footing.

His government introduced an unpopular consumption tax last year to raise revenue and has rationalized fuel subsidies, but Moody's said those moves have had limited impact on the government's balance sheet.

Critics have been demanding that Najib explain allegations that massive sums went missing from deals involving state-owned company 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), and the revelation that nearly \$700 million in mysterious deposits were made to his personal bank accounts.

The transfers were made shortly before a hotly contested election in 2013. Najib's government calls the deposits "political donations" from foreign donors but has refused to specify the source, purpose, or ultimate fate of the money. Both Najib and 1MDB have fiercely denied any wrongdoing.

Najib, who is also the finance minister, announced on Friday that the 2016 government budget released in October will be revised in light of the further deterioration of the global economic situation. —AFP

DUBAI AIRPORT TRAFFIC GROWS 8.1% IN NOV

DUBAI: Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest by international traffic, experienced an 8.1 percent increase in passenger numbers in November, its operator said yesterday. Traffic rose to 6.01 million passengers from 5.57 million a year earlier, taking the total so far in 2015 to 70.96 million, up 10.9 percent.

The largest increase in passengers came from the Indian subcontinent from where new flights were launched, while the most significant growth was driven by Eastern Europe and North America, the latter where Emirates added new destinations. Air freight volumes rose 3.8 percent in the month to 218,323 tons. Some cargo operations have moved to Al-Maktoum International-Dubai World Central (DWC). —Reuters



KARACHI: Pakistan brokers watch the latest share prices on a monitor during a trading session at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSE) in Karachi yesterday. The benchmark PSE-100 index was down 32354.43 in mid-day trade. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
ASIAN COUNTRIES		
Japanese Yen	2.593	
Indian Rupees	4.565	
Pakistani Rupees	2.900	
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.119	
Nepali Rupees	2.859	
Singapore Dollar	212.170	
Hongkong Dollar	39.200	
Bangladesh Taka	3.876	
Philippine Peso	8.460	
Thai Baht	84.100	
GCC COUNTRIES		
Saudi Riyal	81.177	
Qatari Riyal	83.620	
Omani Riyal	790.670	
Bahraini Dinar	808.420	
UAE Dirham	82.879	
ARAB COUNTRIES		
Egyptian Pound - Cash	40.900	
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	38.923	
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.420	
Tunisian Dinar	150.250	
Jordanian Dinar	428.910	
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.028	
Syrian Lira	2.169	
Morocco Dirham	31.141	

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES		
US Dollar Transfer	304.250	
Euro	333.460	
Sterling Pound	443.440	
Canadian dollar	215.470	
Turkish lira	100.410	
Swiss Franc	307.630	
Australian Dollar	213.130	
US Dollar Buying	303.050	

	GOLD
20 Gram	226.690
10 Gram	116.040
5 Gram	58.700

UAE EXCHANGE CENTRE WLL

CURRENCIES	TELEX TRANSFER PER 1000
Australian Dollar	203.08
Canadian Dollar	218.17
Swiss Franc	310.48
Euro	335.10
US Dollar	304.45
Sterling Pound	444.75
Japanese Yen	2.63
Bangladesh Taka	3.881
Indian Rupee	4.560
Sri Lankan Rupee	2.118
Nepali Rupee	2.850
Pakistani Rupee	2.901
UAE Dirhams	0.08285
Bahraini Dinar	0.8091
Egyptian Pound	0.03879
Jordanian Dinar	0.4330
Omani Riyal	0.7906
Qatari Riyal	0.08394
Saudi Riyal	0.08115

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 Franc	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	0.436272	0.445272
Czech Korune	0.004287	0.016287
Danish Krone	0.040493	0.045493
Euro	0.327539	0.335539
Norwegian Krone	0.030249	0.035449
Romanian Leu	0.087277	0.087277
Slovakia	0.009092	0.019092
Swedish Krona	0.031892	0.036892
Swiss Franc	0.299844	0.310044
Turkish Lira	0.096751	0.107051
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.204485	0.215985
New Zealand Dollar	0.193584	0.203084
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.209827	0.218327
US Dollars	0.300150	0.304650

US Dollars Mint	0.300650	0.304650
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003477	0.004077
Chinese Yuan	0.044632	0.048132
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037155	0.039905
Indian Rupee	0.004208	0.004598
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002505	0.002685
Kenyan Shilling	0.003162	0.003162
Korean Won	0.000244	0.000259
Malaysian Ringgit	0.066266	0.072266
Nepalese Rupee	0.002884	0.003054
Pakistan Rupee	0.002639	0.002919
Philippine Peso	0.006372	0.006652
Sierra Leone	0.000067	0.000073
Singapore Dollar	0.208533	0.214533
South African Rand	0.013058	0.021558
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001765	0.002345
Taiwan	0.009071	0.009251
Thai Baht	0.008099	0.008649
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.800139	0.808139
Egyptian Pound	0.035146	0.038272
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000200	0.000260
Jordanian Dinar	0.425130	0.432630
Qatari Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000153	0.000253
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021541	0.045541
Nigerian Naira	0.001258	0.001893
Omani Riyal	0.783839	0.789519
Qatar Riyal	0.082859	0.084072
Saudi Riyal	0.080274	0.081197
Syrian Pound	0.001290	0.001510
Tunisian Dinar	0.146586	0.154586
Turkish Lira	0.096751	0.107051
UAE Dirhams	0.081855	0.083004
Yemeni Riyal	0.001375	0.001455

REAL GDP GROWTH IN NON-OIL SECTOR TO REMAIN RESILIENT

NBK ECONOMIC OVERVIEW AND OUTLOOK: UAE

KUWAIT: Real economic growth in the UAE is estimated at 3.9 percent year-on-year (y/y) for 2015, as real oil GDP growth continued to be affected by conditions in international energy markets. A resilient non-oil sector and a recovery in oil GDP are expected to drive overall GDP growth higher in 2017.

Real oil GDP growth is expected to be weak in the near-to-medium term amid low global demand. Real oil GDP growth is estimated to slow down from 4.0 percent y/y in 2014 to 1.6 percent y/y in 2015. Growth is likely to be flat in 2016, before picking up in 2017 thanks to rising oil production.

Non-oil sector growth is likely to accelerate to around 5.5 percent and 6.0 percent y/y for 2016 and 2017. This sector should be led higher by firmer activity in tourism, financial services and construction. Construction activity is set to accelerate as the Dubai Expo 2020 draws closer. Furthermore, the President, Sheikh Khalifa, recently announced that the federal authorities plan to invest more than Dh300 billion (\$82 billion) domestically to foster a post-oil "knowledge economy". The plans also envisage tripling the labor force in the knowledge economy by 2021.

PMI trends lower in 2015

The Markit Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) trended lower throughout 2015, against a backdrop of a stronger US dollar (and thereby UAE dirham) and weak global demand. In Q4 2015, the UAE's headline PMI (a forward-looking economic indicator) averaged 53.9, down from 56.7 the first 3 quarters of the year but still consistent with economic expansion. (A reading above 50 indicates an expansion in activity; a reading below 50 indicates a contraction in activity.)

Inflationary pressures appeared to be rather subdued as input costs edged lower and staff costs remained steady. It is also worthwhile to note that employment conditions have remained modest, even while oil prices trend lower. This should help allay fears of a major oil-induced disruption to domestic consumption and the overall economy.

Residential property price growth

Growth in sales prices in Dubai's residential property sector continued to trend lower in 2015. However, data for the latter part of 2015 pointed to signs of stabilization, particularly in the case of apartment sales prices. According to Asteco, a major real estate services company, prices of apartments in Dubai fell by around 5.0 percent y/y in 3Q15 for the second consecutive quarter. Villa prices, meanwhile, had fallen by 10.2 percent y/y and 13.3 percent y/y in 2Q15 and 3Q15, respectively.

The imposition of higher transaction fees in 4Q13 and federal mortgage caps in early 2014 (before oil prices fell) undoubtedly delivered the results the authorities were looking for: cooling off the property market and curbing speculative buying. These measures have also been recently compounded by an ongoing rise in housing supply and a change in preferences and risk appetite within the residential property market.

Against a backdrop of greater supply, sellers have been forced to lower prices. Also, more and more buyers are favoring affordable (mid-range) and/or end-use housing. While transaction values continue to fall, growth in the number of transactions has recovered of late thanks to rising activity in the "more affordable" housing segment. (Charts 4 and 5.) Looking ahead, we expect to see more of this shift towards mid-range housing, especially amid a low oil price environment and tighter lending restrictions.

The property market has also been hampered by a stronger dirham (higher US dollar) currency relative to key emerging market currencies. This has dented sales to Russian and Asian buyers. But for the majority of buyers, hailing from the UAE or GCC region (dollar-based), the impact is expected to be more muted.

It is safe to conclude that Dubai's property market is going through a significant correction and that the measures that were put in place have so far shepherded the market in the right direction, with perhaps further correction ahead.

Table 1: Key economic indicators

	Year	Year			
		2014e	2015f	2016f	2017f
Nominal GDP	USD bn	399.4	361.4	387.1	427.9
Real GDP	% y/y	4.6	3.9	3.8	4.4
- Oil	% y/y	4.0	1.6	0.0	0.5
- Non-oil	% y/y	4.8	5.0	5.5	6.0
Inflation	% y/y	2.0	4.0	3.5	3.5
Budget balance	% of GDP	4.2	-1.2	-1.5	0.3

Source: Official sources, NBK estimates

Consumer price inflation

After accelerating throughout 1H15, headline inflation is expected to moderate over the coming months as housing inflation (rent, which weighs heavily in the index) stabilizes. September data showed inflation in the CPI slowing to 4.3 percent y/y as inflation in housing costs eased and food inflation remained subdued.

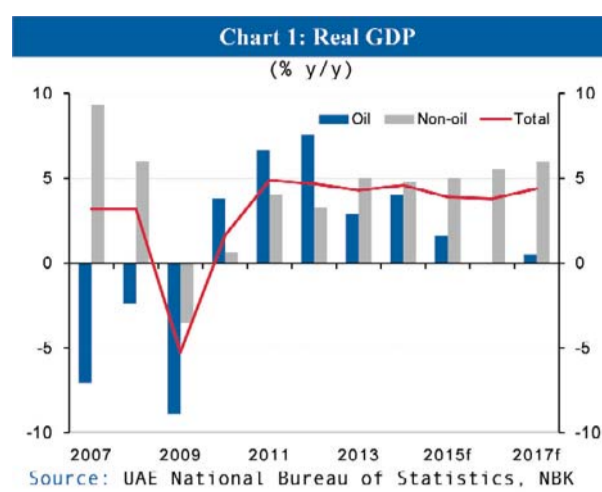
The rise in housing costs appears to have peaked at 10.2 percent y/y last June. It had been on an upward trajectory since the end of 2013 on the back of a recovery in the residential property sector. The steep rise in housing costs in 1H15 mainly came on the back of the one-off hike in electricity and water tariffs (for both nationals and expatriates) and the removal of the rental cap in Abu Dhabi. But with more housing set to enter the market and the effect of the one-off hike in utility tariffs set to wane, we should see inflation in the housing segment steady over the medium-term.

A stronger US dollar and lower commodity prices will also help limit any further gains in the headline rate. Consequently, we forecast inflation to average 4.0 percent in 2015 and 3.5 percent in 2016 and 2017.

Modest fiscal deficits in 2015 and 2016

Amid steady spending and lower revenues, the UAE's fiscal balance (breakeven oil price is \$70/b) is expected to swing from an estimated surplus of 4.2 percent of GDP in 2014 to a deficit of 1.2 percent and 1.5 percent of GDP in 2015 and 2016, respectively.

With abundant financial reserves (a staggering 200 percent of GDP) to help finance these deficits, however, it is unlikely that the UAE economy will need to carry out any significant fiscal consolidation in the medium-term. Both Dubai and Abu Dhabi are scheduled to maintain their high levels of public spending on infrastructure proj-

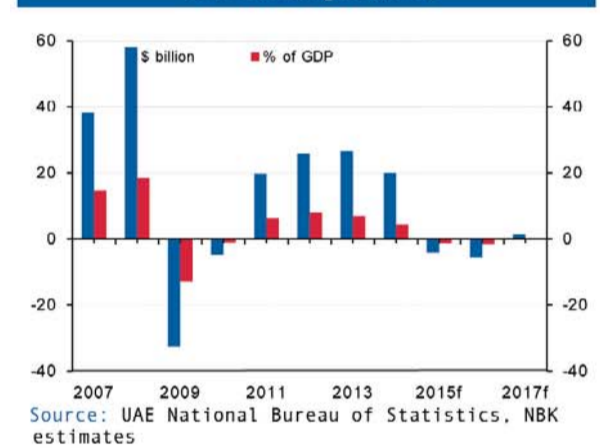
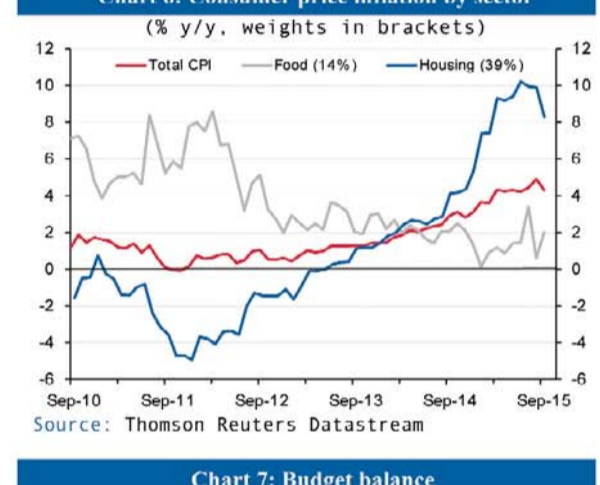
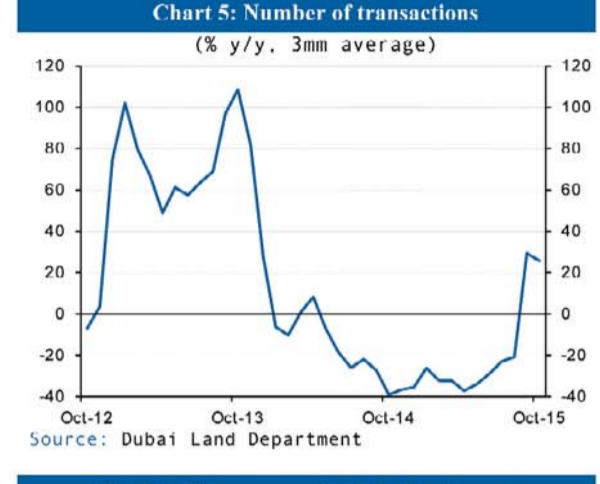
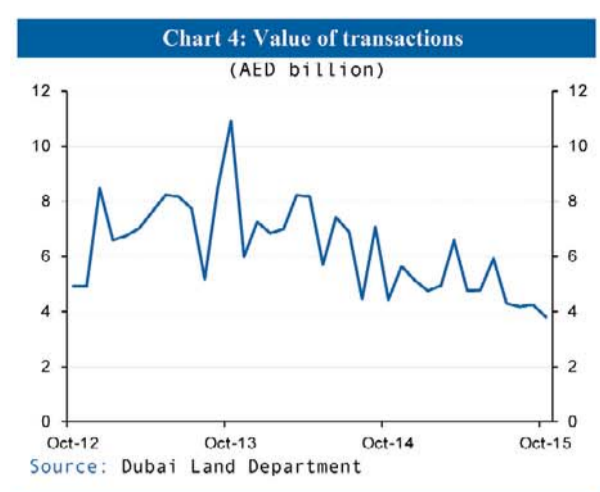


ects. In Dubai, infrastructure spending is expected to accelerate in the run-up to the Expo 2020 event. That is not to say that the major emirates have not exercised some fiscal prudence and reforms recently. According to official reports, Abu Dhabi has curtailed and/or delayed spending on a number of projects designated as low-priority. Dubai is poised to pass a law covering public-private partnerships (PPP) late in 2015, to tap into private sector funding for key projects. Furthermore, the UAE government is expected to impose further reductions in subsidies. At the start of 2015, it took the decision to hike utility tariffs. Later, in August, it deregulated petrol prices. This will help lower subsidy costs. The fiscal balance is expected to return to a surplus in 2017 on the back of an expected (delayed) oil price recovery and a planned increase in oil production.

Current account surplus

The current account is expected to continue to post a surplus, of 14-15.0 percent of GDP in 2016 and 2017, on the back of strong non-oil export revenues. Downward pressures on the surplus from lower oil export earnings and higher imports are being partly offset by robust non-oil export revenues, especially from the tourism, trade and financial services sectors.

The UAE's non-oil exports may be slightly affected by the strength of the dirham. The stronger dollar has led to



months. In October 2015 it climbed to a three-year high of 103.2 percent.

Slowing deposit growth is also evident in the slowdown in annual broad money supply (M2) growth. This has been trending downwards since mid-2014.

Monetary policy remains accommodative, and there is room for monetary tightening if need be. The UAE's three-month and one-month interbank rates both saw a slight uptick in 2H15, but they both remain low and below 1.0 percent. A rise in the US Fed rate is expected to further tighten liquidity conditions in the banking sector.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in Dubai have been struggling of late due to delayed payments by their customers. Since the summer of 2015, there have been anecdotal reports of defaults or late payments. According to the Dubai SME report (2013), SMEs account for about 95 percent of the enterprise population in Dubai, 43 percent of the workforce and 40 percent of the total value-added to the Dubai economy. Thus, they are one of the main driving forces behind the economy. The trading sector accounts for the majority (around 57 percent) of SME businesses in Dubai. Given that the trading sector is dominated by commodity trading, it has been hurt by the on-going weakness in commodity prices. Also, with around 51 percent of the SME businesses heavily dependent on trade/exports, they have been hit by the appreciation in the dirham against most major currencies (with the exception of the US dollar).

The UAE Banks Federation estimates that among SMEs, loans amounting to between Dh5 billion and Dh7 billion (\$1.36 billion-\$1.9 billion) are at risk of default. While provisions for non-performing loans (NPL) have remained steady in 2015, loan defaults among SMEs would ultimately lead to a pickup in NPL provisions. The government has vowed to step up its efforts in formulating a new bankruptcy law to help support SMEs and reduce the risk of default. However, with gross credit valued at Dh1.4 trillion and SME loans at risk of a default valued at Dh7 billion, the impact on the banking sector should be limited.

Markets and interest rates

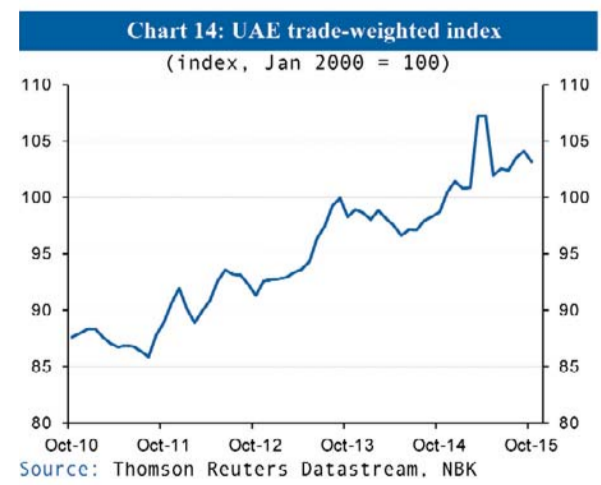
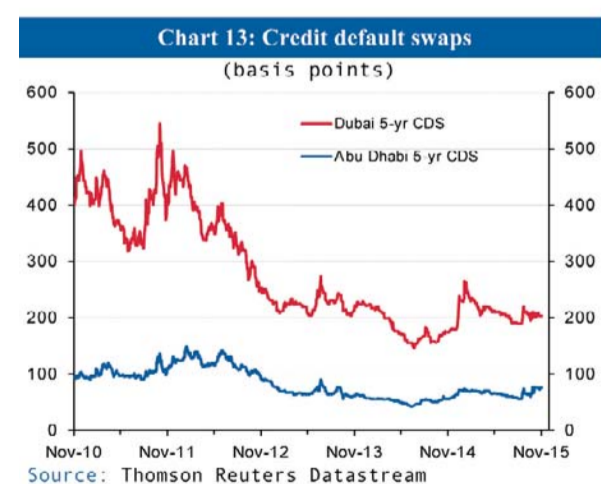
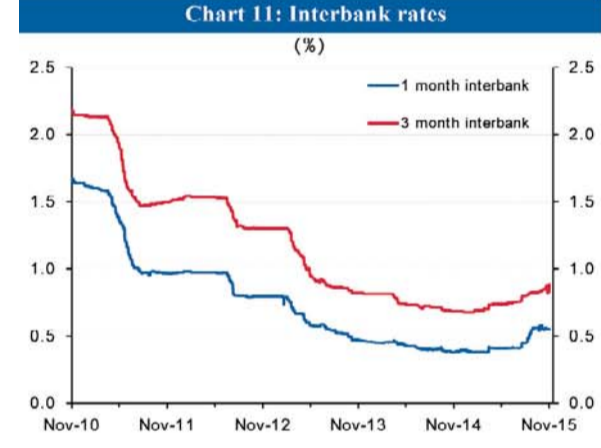
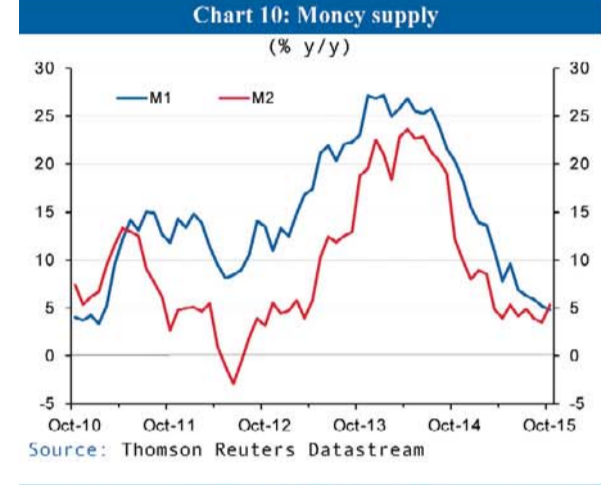
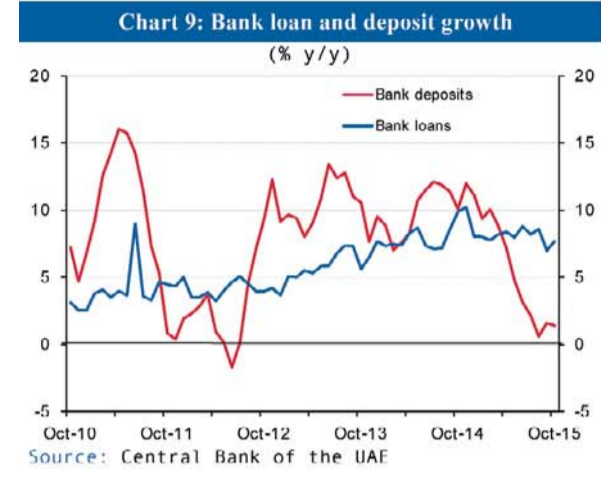
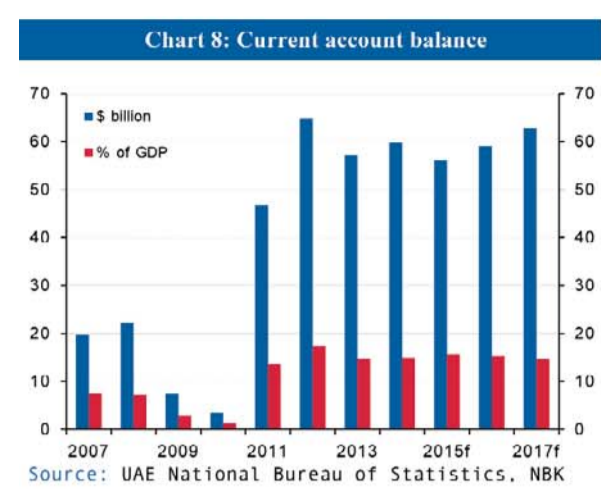
The main Abu Dhabi and Dubai markets were under pressure in the second half of 2015, in sync with international and other GCC markets, and amid a softer oil price environment.

The main credit default swaps (CDS), good indications of the level of risk within an economy, have stabilized recently. In mid-November, the CDS on five-year Dubai and Abu Dhabi government debt stood at 206 and 75 basis points, respectively.

In the near-to-medium term we may see the nascent effects of the long-awaited changes in the UAE's companies' law. One of the changes includes lowering the minimum percentage of equity that a company needs to float, from 55 percent to 30 percent. This should lead to an increase in initial public offering (IPO) activity; the 55 percent requirement was deemed too high by entrepreneurs, many of whom were reluctant to divest too much from their own businesses.

US dollar-dirham peg is here to stay

The dirham has been pegged to the US dollar at a rate



of \$1 = 3.673 Dhs since 1997. The current exchange rate policy has thus far helped the UAE economy instill macro-economic stability, keep the rate of inflation in check and maintain investor confidence. However, the peg has come under pressure of late against a backdrop of falling oil prices and a stronger US dollar against most other currencies. Nonetheless, thanks to the country's abundant foreign reserves, the UAE has enough ammunition to defend its peg to the US dollar.

OIL PRICES FALL FOR 6TH SESSION AS RECOVERY HOPES WANE

LONDON: Oil prices fell for a sixth session to trade at almost 12-year lows yesterday as slowing growth in China rattled investors' hopes for demand this year and traders increased bets against any near-term recovery. Brent crude futures were down by 47 cents at \$33.08 a barrel by 0935 GMT, off 15 percent in a week, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude was down 52 cents at \$32.64 per barrel. Speculators increased their net-short positions to a record high in the week to last Tuesday, in a sign that they are losing faith in a price rise anytime soon.

Analysts pointed to China's slowdown, which saw a slide in the yuan and two emergency suspensions in stock trading markets last week, as the main reasons for lower oil and commodity prices. Yesterday, turbulence gripped Chinese markets once again, as blue-chip stocks fell by another 5 percent and overnight interest rates for the yuan outside of China soared to nearly 40 percent, their highest since the launch of the offshore market. "If the first week is anything to go by we are in for a long, volatile and very exhausting year. The week started

on a bad note and ended on a good one but the market response, worryingly, was the same to both - sell, sell, sell," David Hufton, of oil brokers PVM Oil Associates, wrote in a note.

"China has torpedoed the hopes of the optimists. The third leg of the financial crisis involving emerging markets that the IMF, World Bank, BIS and various messengers of doom had warned of has come into play," he said. Morgan Stanley said yesterday that oil prices in the \$20s were possible, especially if the dollar surges more against

other currencies. "A 15 percent CNY (Chinese yuan) depreciation alone could send oil into the \$20s," the bank said. Yesterday's decline adds to last week's more than 10 percent drop in both Brent and WTI prices. Goldman Sachs analysts, who have also said oil could hit \$20 a barrel, said in a note on Friday that sustained lower prices were needed in the first quarter "so producers will move budgets down to reflect \$40 a barrel oil for 2016".

Oil prices have fallen over 70 percent since the downturn began in mid-2014 as soaring global production sees hundreds of thousands of barrels of crude produced every day without a buyer.

Adding to overproduction is slowing demand, especially in China where growth has dropped to its lowest rate in a generation and experts see few signs of improvement for the next few years.

"Chinese oil data are finally starting to reflect weak economic activity. Implied oil demand in China contracted 4.9 percent (537,300 thousand bpd) month on month and 2.0 percent (216,700 thousand bpd) year on year in November, the first decline since July 2014," Barclays bank said in a note on Friday. "We expect further compression in growth rates this year, with an average of 300,000 barrels per day (2.7 percent)," it said.

Gold down
Gold retreated yesterday as the dollar rose versus the euro, but was still around a nine-week high as pressure on Asian stock markets continued to support investors' flight to safety. Asian shares sank to their lowest in over four years after the People's Bank of China guided the yuan's midpoint rate sharply stronger, a move that might calm concerns about a competitive devaluation but only added to market confusion as to Beijing's ultimate intent on its currency policy.

European shares were steadier, slightly weighing on bullion prices, usually seen as a safer bet by investors. Spot gold was down 0.1 percent at \$1,103.06 an ounce by 1301 GMT, while US gold futures gained 0.5 percent to \$1,103.60. "Gold should be a lot higher, you've got all the China concerns, the Middle East tensions ... clearly there is a lot of overhead selling, which is capping the price," Societe Generale analyst Robin Bhar said.

Gold climbed to its highest since early November on Friday, adding more than 4 percent to its value this year, on concerns over the Chinese economy and tumbling stock markets. Perceived missteps by China's authorities in controlling their share market and currency have led to concerns Beijing might lose its grip on economic policy too. —Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report									
Monday 11 January 2016									
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low				
Price index	▼ -31.40	5,387.04	5,418.53	5,420.84	5,370.49				
Weighted Index	▼ -1.40	365.30	366.70	368.24	365.25				
KSX 15	▼ -3.42	857.94	861.36	867.53	856.80				
Trades									
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change		
MARIN	114	104	4100	427	2	114	▲ 10.0		
IKARUS	83	79	19,111	1,546	3	83	▼ -1.0		
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	320	— 0.0		
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	680	— 0.0		
ENERGYH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	39.0	— 0.0		
GPI	47.0	46.5	382,580	17,895	20	46.5	▼ -1.0		
ARAR	114	114	10,000	1,140	2	114	▼ -8.0		
Oil & Gas			415,791	21,000	27	816.35	▲ 2.20		
KFOUC	210	210	20,000	4,200	1	210	— 0.0		
DFCC	495	475	115,194	56,417	7	475	▼ -20.0		
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	610	— 0.0		
ALQURAIN	184	182	230,031	42,319	23	182	— 0.0		
Basic Materials			365,225	102,936	31	923.25	▼ -13.45		
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	370	— 0.0		
REFRI	300	300	957	287	1	300	— 0.0		
CABLE	350	345	24,480	8,543	3	345	▼ -5.0		
SHIP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	146	— 0.0		
PCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,040	— 0.0		
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	390	— 0.0		
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	79	— 0.0		
ACICO	290	280	1,400	390	3	280	— 0.0		
GGMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	490	— 0.0		
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	132	— 0.0		
KPAK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	360	— 0.0		
KBMM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	— 0.0		
NICBM	250	230	7,200	1,670	7	250	— 0.0		
EQUIPMENT	53	52	135,150	7,113	6	52	▼ -2.0		
NOCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	99	— 0.0		
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	102	— 0.0		
SALDOOKH	74	74	10,000	740	1	74	▼ -4.0		
AGLTY	440	425	3,514,525	1,513,334	112	425	▼ -5.0		
EDU	238	238	20	5	1	238	▲ 10.0		
CLEANING	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	38.0	— 0.0		
CITYGROUP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	405	— 0.0		
KGL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	40.0	— 0.0		
KGPC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	218	— 0.0		
HUMANSOFT	950	900	700	600	2	900	— 0.0		
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	154	— 0.0		
SAFWAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	320	— 0.0		
GFC	30.5	26.5	16,700	499	5	30.0	▲ 1.0		
MAYADEEN	20.0	19.0	1,521,557	29,064	44	19.5	— 0.0		
CGC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	780	— 0.0		
MITCC	65	63	608,000	38,985	20	65	— 0.0		
UPAC	650	650	940	611	1	650	— 0.0		
ALAFCC	206	206	50,000	10,300	5	206	— 0.0		
MUBARRAD	77	75	115,100	8,888	9	77	▲ 1.0		
LOGISTICS	52	50	373,002	19,133	21	51	▼ -2.0		
SCEM	85	82	251,000	20,607	4	85	▼ -2.0		
GCEM	73	70	151	11	2	73	▲ 1.0		
QCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	75	— 0.0		
FCEM	72	70	166,000	11,697	4	70	— 0.0		
RKWC	100	100	100	10	1	100	▲ 5.0		
SPEC	89	79	20,100	1,590	4	88	▼ -1.0		
Industrials			6,817,082	1,673,946	256	1010.44	▲ 1.55		
KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	220	— 0.0		
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	— 0.0		
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	106	— 0.0		
CATTL	128	124	136,000	17,050	14	124	▼ -2.0		
DANAH	80	78	227,570	17,471	8	80	— 0.0		
POULT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	196	— 0.0		
FOOD	2,020	2,000	58,296	117,092	11	2,000	▼ -60.0		
Consumer Goods			421,866	161,614	33	1070.45	▼ -8.47		
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	180	— 0.0		
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	— 0.0		
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	124	— 0.0		
Health Care			0	0	0	912.40	— 0.00		
KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	950	— 0.0		
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	220	— 0.0		
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	61	— 0.0		
CABLETV	27.5	22.5	6,100	138	4	27.5	— 0.0		
EYAS	335	330	430,965	142,111	2	335	▲ 25		
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	204	— 0.0		
QULAFUEI	104	100	189,014	19,283	39	104	▼ -4		
MUNTAZAHAT	95	92	30,200	2,779	2	95	— 0.0		
JAZEERA	840	830	44,891	37,514	9	830	▼ -20		
SOOR	106	100	31,780	3,317	16	100	▼ -4		
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	110	— 0.0		
ALNAWADI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	83	— 0.0		
ALRAI	142	136	3,747	525	5	142	▲ 2		
ZIMAH	100	93	360,697	33,236	23	100	▲ 2		
UFIG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	140	— 0.0		
KOUJIFOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	650	— 0.0		
Mezzan	1,100	1,080	685,899	753,055	25	1,080	— 0.0		
Consumer Services			1,772,553	991,958	125	980.07	▲ 3.80		
ZAIN	350	340	704,533	241,942	33	340	▼ -5		
ODREDO	1,080	1,060	4,792	5,080	4	1,060	— 0.0		
HITSTELEG	27.0	26.5	1,097,537	29,524	17	27.0	▲ 1		
VIVA	990	990	702,776	695,748	144	990	— 0.0		
Telecommunications			2,509,638	972,294	198	588.50	▼ -0.28		
NBK	780	760	1,150,112	885,803	36	770	— 0.0		
GDK	250	250	1,500	375	1	250	— 0.0		
CBK	500	500	200,000	100,000	3	500	▼ -10		
ABK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	365	— 0.0		
ALMUTAHED	510	510	414,463	211,376	8	510	— 0.0		
KIB	220	216	328,444	71,598	12	216	▼ -4		
BURG	360	355	771,514	276,887	25	355	▼ -15		
KFIN	510	480	8,604,009	4,297,086	249	495	▲ 15		
BOUBYAN	435	430	283,300	122,979	25	430	▼ -5		
AUB	204	200	497,027	100,235	19	202	— 0.0		
ITHMR	43.0	40.5	1,753,959	72,399	63	41.5	▼ -1		
WARBANK	190	186	606,432	114,195	107	190	— 0.0		
Banks			14,611,360	6,252,913	548	869.38	▼ -5.16		
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	315	— 0.0		
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	750	— 0.0		
AINS	470	465	2,500	1,173	2	470	▼ -20.0		
WINS	100	100	319	32	2	100	— 0.0		
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	200	— 0.0		
FTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	— 0.0		
WETHAQ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	41.0	— 0.0		
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	— 0.0		
Insurance			2,819	1,204	4	1103.02	▼ -6.88		
SOKOUK	43.5	41.5	463,0918	198,339	67	42.0	▼ -2.0		
KRE	51	50	2,278,644	114,506	27	51	▼ -1.0		
URC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	94	— 0.0		
NRE	88	85	55,100	4,684	3	85	▲ 1.0		
SRE	0.0								



BAIC'S BJ40 — READY FOR ADVENTURE

EYE-CATCHING DESIGN WITH STRONG BODY, UNIQUE SPORTS APPEARANCE

KUWAIT: When China launched its automobile industry way back in the 1990s, people were skeptic about those automobiles. But a decade later, international companies started flocking to China to build their own factories there or sign contracts with Chinese giants to completely or partially manufacture their vehicles.

Over the last three years these groups proved their competitiveness in manufacturing for others. Today, they decided to manufacture their own brand vehicles and they are now roaming the streets across the world with absolute confidence, great performance and unlimited factory support.

Recently, the Better And Ingenious Choice (BAIC) Company, one of the behemoth Chinese groups specialized in automobile industries, unveiled its BJ40 with its eye-catching design that attracts beholders for a closer look.

BJ40's exterior design implies its readiness for adventure with its fashionable streamline and ground clearance that is perfect for off-road and watery terrains.

From the front, BJ40 has height-adjustable halogen headlights for better vision with a uniquely designed front grill, long hood, black protection shields on both lower sides of the body, which give it a unique sports appearance.

Mechanically, BJ40 has a four cylinder, 2.4 liter, 143 horse power and 217 N/M rotation power engine and a five-speed manual transmission and a maximum speed of 190 kph.

BJ40 is characterized by flexible body arrangement as the roof, doors and windshields are easily detachable. It is designed to match many extra accessories such as front overhead lights, windshield LED lights, stone tires, front support, side steps and unique matte colors.

BJ40 has Strong Separate Frame Construction: the BJ40 boasts separate frame construction, which increases the body frame stability by 40 percent. The cross section of its frame is 138x60mm, so that BJ40 is able to withstand extreme torque.

Safe and Reliable: A standard configuration of ultra-high anti-roll frame in the front

and rear constitutes a natural barrier to ensure passengers' safety. The anti-compressive stiffness on the roof is very high.

The BJ40 is manufactured to meet military requirements, tested to military vehicle standards and comparable to a military vehicle. It is also equipped with Off-Road Survival Information System: The dashboard shows such information as gradient, direction, altitude and atmospheric pressure.

Practically speaking, BJ40 also has spacious trunk space and rear seats can be adjusted according to use and need and when folded, they provide up to 600 liter storage space.

In addition, BJ40 has so many other features such as front and rear A/C, smart screen with detailed information about journey, fuel consumption, gradient, direction, altitude and atmospheric pressure. It is also equipped with GPS and DVD, cup holders near the air vents, panoramic reversing radar, powered foldable side mirrors and overhead stereo system.

Safety-wise, BJ40 is equipped with ABS, EBD, Crash Sensor Activating Central locking Release, Engine immobilizer with alarm, ISOFIX, front airbags for driver and front seat passenger, reverse sensor, anti-theft alarm system and anti-roll cage. It is a multi-purpose vehicle equipped with unlimited potentials.

BAIC has contracts with major international automobile manufacturers like Mercedes, Hyundai, Suzuki and Saab. It owns automobile and spare part factories in many countries worldwide like Russia, Holland and Kenya and has exported its products to over 80 countries worldwide. BAIC is keen on using SAAB technology in automobile industries, that is efficiency, quality, effectiveness and high precision. BAIC managed to expand within and outside the Chinese markets, in South East Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, South, north, East and West Africa in addition to Southern America. BAIC recently started operating in local market through a partnership with The First Trading Company, a subsidiary of Mutawa and Alkazi group, the exclusive agent of BAIC in Kuwait.



KUWAIT: BJ40 with its eye-catching design attracts beholders for a closer look.



LINCOLN REVEALS ALL-NEW VIEW FROM THE TOP

TWO NEW CAMERA FEATURES A 360-DEGREE BIRD'S-EYE AND A 180-DEGREE SPLIT VIEW

DUBAI: Lincoln is taking "Quiet Luxury" to another level with the introduction of ingenious 360-degree camera technology in the all-new MKX crossover. This feature is a first-in-class for the medium premium utility segment. In addition to the 360-degree bird's-eye view, the camera system offers a 180-degree split view, which is particularly helpful in assisting in difficult parking situations.

The available features and technologies have been orchestrated to provide a seamless

experience. The front camera, for example, sits behind the Lincoln Star badge in the middle of the split-wing grille. When in Drive, Park or Neutral and the button is pushed, the Lincoln Star badge moves out about one inch and tilts up to deploy the available front camera.

The combination of front-camera deployment, and how the lens is cleaned via a built-in automatic washer, is an industry first. The 360-degree camera system - which shows up to seven feet all around the vehicle - looks out

for objects and perspectives not easily seen, stitching images from the front, rear and both sides to create a composite view of the area directly surrounding the vehicle.

The 12-sensor ultrasonic system enables the full range of available parking-assist features: front, rear, side sensing; perpendicular and parallel parking; and park out. The camera system's 180-degree split view can also be helpful in looking out in cross-traffic situations.

"While an amplified level of luxury is one of our main goals, safety is of paramount importance, which is why the addition of a 360-degree camera system in the MKX is ideal for Lincoln clientele," said Alex Schaeffer, head of Lincoln Middle East. "Being surrounded by such advanced technology will inevitably add a heightened sense of safety, instilling even greater confidence in the Lincoln MKX driving experience."

Powered by the 2.7-litre twin-tur-

bocharged GTDI V6, or the standard 3.7-litre V6 Ti-VCT, the all-new Lincoln MKX also comes with a line-up of innovative features like the state-of-the-art Revel audio system to complement the revolutionary 360 degree camera. Lincoln is the luxury automotive brand of Ford Motor Company, committed to creating compelling vehicles with an exceptional ownership experience to match. Lincoln is in the process of introducing four all-new vehicles in the next four years.



KFH PARTICIPATES IN AUTO MOTO 16 AT 360 MALL

BANK OFFERS VISITORS VAST ARRAY OF FINANCING SERVICES

KUWAIT: Executive Manager - Car Financing at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Ahd Alesia said that KFH's participation in the Auto Show Auto Moto 2016 as a strategic partner, confirms its keenness on serving its clients and the society, and its readiness to offer visitors a vast and comprehensive array of financing solutions. KFH's active role and contributions in auto market reiterate its flagship status and leading position in financing automobiles. KFH builds strong ties with the domestic suppliers for the benefit of clients and the national economy.

"KFH, thanks to its extensive experience, distinguished relationships with clients and suppliers, and the long track record of achievements, managed to develop strategic relationships with all car suppliers in Kuwait with the objective of serving its clients, and consolidating the common interest. KFH's car showrooms have become a major destination for people who wish to own a car. At Shuwaikh showroom, KFH encompasses over 20 brands of cars under one

umbrella which gives clients the opportunity to choose and compare between cars in a streamlined manner. This adds value to clients' car-buying experience," added Alesia.

KFH spares no efforts in strengthening its role in the auto market by revitalizing the market, increasing sales and addressing the requirements of clients and suppliers alike.

It is worth noting that Auto Moto 16 is considered as the largest auto show in Kuwait. It encompasses the best and the top luxury car brands. It is attended by local and international car agents' representatives, which comprises a chance to know more about the latest developments in this industry and the extent of its influence on the economy movement.

KFH was established in Kuwait in 1977 and is enlisted in the Kuwait Stock Exchange. KFH Group is a global pioneer in the field of Islamic banking services, where it offers a wide array of Islamic products and services, not to mention a high standard of innovation and client service.

KFH manages its operations in the GCC, Asia, and Europe through over 400 branches, including KFH-Turkey, in order to offer services for the bank's clients in Turkey, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Germany, Jordan, and Dubai.

KFH's mission is to achieve highest levels of excellence and innovation in the field of client service, while developing common interest for all those concerned with the financial institution. KFH's vision is to spearhead the global development in Islamic financial services, and to upgrade the bank into the level of becoming the most sustainable profitable Islamic bank in the world.

KFH's values include cementing leadership through all its businesses, including leadership in the Islamic banking services worldwide, through innovation and in client service and the development of its employees. In addition, KFH is committed to all its procedures, and to setting up long-life partnerships with the concerned authorities.

MORE MARKET WOES AS CHINA SEEKS TEMPORARY RELIEF

By Camille Accad
Asiya Capital Investments
Company Analysis

KUWAIT: Last Monday, Markit released the Caixin manufacturing PMI, showing a fall from 48.6 in November to 48.2 last month. When the PMI figure is below the 50.0 neutral level, the sector is considered to be in contraction. According to the report, output and employment are in decline as demand for Chinese manufacturing goods is weakening, both on the domestic and external front. In fact, new export business fell for the first time in three months. China's national bureau of statistics (NBS) also released its version of the manufacturing PMI, confirming that the sector was in contraction in December. Markets reacted negatively to the release. The Shanghai stock exchange dropped 6.9 percent in the first half of the session which triggered an emergency trading halt that closed the exchange in the afternoon. The emergency trading halt set off again on Wednesday after the market fell by another 7 percent on Thursday morning. Markets dipped worldwide as a result.

Information showing that China's manufacturing sector is deteriorating is not new to markets. December's contraction is the seventh in the past eight months for the Markit index and the fifth in a row for NBS's version. As a matter of fact, two other key factors exacerbated the loss of confidence in China last week. First, a ban on selling shares by major stakeholders introduced last summer was near its expiration date, which raised worries about the downside effect it may have on the stock market when removed. Second, and more importantly, the ongoing devaluation of the currency against the US dollar has fueled concerns about capital outflows from China. The country's foreign exchange trade system (CFETS), an arm of the central bank, sets a new central parity rate for the Chinese yuan every day. Last week, the currency was set lower in four out of the five trading days, at a total of around 1 percent lower against the US dollar, the most since the August devaluation. The currency already depreciated around 1.5 percent so far this year. The central bank is signaling further currency depreciation this year, but the lack of

clarity is hurting market sentiment.

As a response to the sell-off, China stepped in aggressively to restore confidence. The central bank has been active through open market operations, as well as required major state-controlled funds to support the stock market and currency. On Friday, the emergency trading halt mechanism which gradually became a concern for investors was removed altogether and the yuan central parity rate was increased. Additionally, the ban on major investors was adjusted to allow them to sell up to 1 percent of a company's share every three months, requiring them to file their plans three weeks in advance. These market interventions have been temporarily easing selling pressure in China, but they have been significantly undermining the credibility of China's pledges to move towards less intervened markets.

The sustained currency devaluation against the US dollar, the manufacturing sector weakness and Chinese intervention are not expected to dissipate soon. The Chinese yuan has been appreciating against its trade partners, as suggested by the nominal effective exchange rate and the freshly introduced CFETS index. This is causing a loss of competitiveness in the economy, mainly in the export-oriented manufacturing sector. Additionally, the widening spread between the onshore and offshore exchange rate shows a mismatch between the managed currency and the market view. This year, the central bank will devalue the currency further. The effect of the ban expiration may have eased for the time being, but other emergency measures introduced after last summer's market plunge still need to be wound down, which could potentially cause further market instability. Overall, the presence of these factors will continue to add downside pressure to the stock market this year. China is aware that it needs to move to a clearer and less interventionist market process if it hopes to attract investors with a longer term horizon. But for now, China is focusing on stimulating the economy before it resumes its liberalization process, a positive development for export oriented manufacturing companies.

MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS LAUNCHES ITS 144TH OUTLET GLOBALLY AT AL-WAHDA MALL

ABU DHABI: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the leading jewellery retailer launched its 144th outlet globally & 8th outlet in Abu Dhabi. Yusuf Ali M.A, renowned entrepreneur and philanthropist inaugurated this beautiful showroom on 7th January, Thursday, 2016 in the presence of Dr PA Ibrahim Haji - Co-Chairman, Malabar Group, Shamlal Ahamed M.P, Managing Director- International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Mohammed Korath - Chairman & Managing Director, KM Trading, other directors, dignitaries, invited guests and well-wishers.

This elegant showroom conveniently located at Al Wahda Mall, the iconic landmark & shopping destination of Abu Dhabi will be their 8th showroom in the emirate of Abu Dhabi. Like all other Malabar Gold & Diamonds outlets, this showroom will also display a significantly large collection of traditional as well as contemporary jewellery in gold, certified diamonds, platinum and precious stone jewellery from across the world that can hold you spell-bound with their awe-inspiring beauty. Jewellery lovers in Abu Dhabi can find beautiful gold jewellery in 18K and 22K at the outlet in Al Wahda Mall, Abu Dhabi.

One of the most important factors driving the group's success are innovation in their strategies, designs, promotions and the trust Malabar Gold & Diamonds evokes. With a rich mix of traditional and trendy jewellery in gold, diamond and platinum, Malabar Gold & Diamonds is one of the most preferred destinations for quality jewellery. The combination of purest jewellery and cutting edge designs combining unmatched grace and style makes their jewellery unique.

The branded jewellery segment of Malabar Gold & Diamonds that includes Ethnix - Handcrafted Designer Jewellery, Era - Uncut Diamond Jewellery, Mine - Diamonds Unlimited, Divine - Indian Heritage Jewellery, Precia - Precious Gem Jewellery and Starlet - Kids Jewellery are renowned globally for their flawless craftsmanship and the impeccable style.

The leap from a single store to 144 outlets globally did not happen overnight. It was achieved through consistent effort & an insistence on setting exceptionally high standards to meet the aspiration of customers over a period of 22 years. Their dedicated and highly skilled employees invest heart and soul in striving to

achieve maximum perfection. Absolute customer satisfaction is the overriding promise in everything they do.

Ornaments have never been so easier to buy, sell and exchange as it is in Malabar Gold & Diamonds and with their customer friendly policies, they give their customers enough reasons to come back to their stores. The jewellery group also gives their customers the advantage of using their 0% Easy Payment Plan with selected banks through which they can pay the total amount up to 12 monthly installments without any interest (T&C Apply).

The group is in the forefront when it comes to CSR activities as well. The group sets apart a fixed percentage of its net profit to the benefit of needy and the charity projects of Malabar Gold & Diamonds have touched the lives of thousands of people across the world. They focus primarily in five priority areas such as health, education, environment, housing and women empowerment.

In Abu Dhabi, Malabar Gold & Diamonds operates showrooms at Hamdan Street (2 showrooms), Al Wahda Mall, Madinat Zayed Shopping Centre, Mushrif Mall, Capital Mall, Shabia & Ruwais Mall.





DETROIT: John W Mendel, executive vice president of American Honda Motor Co, Inc, poses with the Honda Civic, winner of the North American Car of the Year award in Detroit yesterday. —AP



DETROIT: Volvo Car USA Senior Vice President Americas President and CEO Lex Kerssemakers stands next to the Volvo XC90 after winning the truck/utility of the year at the North American International Auto Show yesterday in Detroit. —AP

HONDA, VOLVO TAKE TOP AWARDS

DETROIT AUTO SHOW

DETROIT: After a few years of Detroit domination, two foreign automakers nabbed 2016 North American Car and Truck/Utility of the Year honors.

A panel of about 55 independent automotive journalists selected the Honda Civic and Volvo XC90 yesterday. The winners were unveiled at the start of press previews for the North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

Civic bested the Chevrolet Malibu and the Mazda MX-5 Miata, and the XC90 edged out the

Nissan Titan XD and Honda Pilot. Chevy was a particularly strong contender, with 2 additional cars on the pre-finalist short list of 10. It was the first time in the 23-year history of the awards program that a brand had three representatives on the short list, and General Motors Co. CEO Mary Barra was standing close by in case the big honor came her company's way.

Instead the Civic became a two-time winner. "What a great competitive set to be in with Malibu and Miata. All great cars," said John Mendel, executive vice president of

Honda's US operations. The Civic also garnered the award in 2006. Still, he pointed out the victory lap will be brief, as the award is "added pressure" to the development team already working on the next-generation Civic.

Volvo's award should help the automaker as it tries to re-establish itself in the US market after being sold in 2010 by Ford Motor Co to Chinese investors.

The company intends to use the award in its marketing, especially as it rolls out other new models, said Lex Kerssemakers, president

and CEO for the Americas. "It's a very well-known award, and I think people look at it," he said. "Customers need references. It's a very competitive environment outside."

The award for the XC 90, he said, validates Volvo's newly designed architectures and environmental engines and transmissions. "As we are using in the future the same platforms, the same drivetrains for all the other cars to follow, this shows that were absolutely on the right track," Kerssemakers said.

The Detroit automakers came away with

double-barreled wins in 2013 and 2014, and took top truck honors last year with the Ford F-150. The last year both awards went to foreign manufacturers was 2012, when the Hyundai Elantra and Land Rover Evoque won.

A vehicle must be all new or substantially changed for eligibility. The awards program launched in 1993, and patterned itself after the European Car of the Year. Organizers accept no advertising, though carmakers try to capitalize on the marketing value of the honors. —AP

WITH SUV LOOK, TECH TOUCHES, CHRYSLER AIMS TO REVIVE MINIVAN

DETROIT: Thirty-three years ago, Chrysler invented the minivan. Now, it's reinventing it with styling reminiscent of an SUV, high-tech features and a first-ever hybrid version that Chrysler hopes will make minivans popular again. The 2017 Chrysler Pacifica was yesterday morning at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

It's the latest incarnation of the family hauler that took the suburbs by storm. Lee Iacocca, Chrysler Corp's former chairman, drove the company's first minivan off the assembly line in 1983. Baby Boomers loved its sliding doors and roomy interior, and the minivan quickly replaced station wagons as the vehicle of choice for shuttling around kids. By the early 1990s, Chrysler was selling more than 500,000 per year. US minivan sales peaked at 1.37 million in 2000. But minivans took a hit when car companies started making crossovers - small SUVs that had as much space as minivans but handled more like cars and had better fuel economy. Minivans suddenly looked clunky and undesirable. General Motors and Ford

stopped making them altogether. Last year, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles - Chrysler's current owner - sold less than 200,000 minivans in the US.

FCA aims to reverse that slide with the Pacifica, which goes on sale this spring. It replaces both the Chrysler Town and

Country and Dodge Grand Caravan. There's hardly anything the company didn't change with the Pacifica - members of some focus groups didn't realize it was a minivan, the company says. FCA's car chief, Tim Kuniskis, says a vehicle so different deserved a new name; the company

settled on "Pacifica," the name of a small SUV Chrysler sold a decade ago.

The Pacifica has a sleeker, swept-back look than the current boxy models, which were last redesigned in 2008. It sits lower to the ground and has bigger wheels, giving it a more substantial feel. It looks more luxurious, with bright chrome strips outlining the windows and LED-accented headlights and taillights.

But FCA knows looks alone aren't enough to fend off rivals like the Honda Odyssey and the Toyota Sienna, which have been eating away at Chrysler's market share for years.

So it's debuting several segment firsts. The Pacifica will be the only minivan with a plug-in hybrid version. The hybrid will go up to 30 miles on electric power alone before its gas engine kicks in, thanks to a lithium-ion battery tucked under the second-row seats. Gas-powered models have a 3.6-liter V-6 engine with 287 horsepower. Chrysler promises the new minivan, 200 pounds lighter than its predecessors, will have the best fuel economy in the segment. —AP



DETROIT, MI - JANUARY 11: Chrysler introduces the 2017 Pacifica Minivan. —AFP

GERMAN AUTOMAKERS TO PUSH DIESEL IN US DESPITE VW SCANDAL

DETROIT: German automakers will continue to push diesel sales in the United States despite the Volkswagen pollution-cheating scandal, the head of the VDA automaker's association said yesterday at the Detroit auto show.

"Despite the resistance we are naturally experiencing here in the US, the German automotive industry will stand by its diesel strategy," VDA president Matthias Wissmann said. Diesel engines, which are about 30 percent more fuel efficient than gasoline engines, can help the United States and other countries meet stringent carbon dioxide reduction targets, Wissmann told reporters. And, despite the problems at Volkswagen, advanced exhaust technology allows diesel engines to "comply with the most stringent pollutant limit values... completely legally without any tricks."

"We stand firmly behind diesel vehicles," Wissmann said. The remarks come hours after Volkswagen chief executive Matthias Mueller apologized for cheating diesel car emissions tests on his first official US visit since the scandal broke in September. VW admitted it installed software in around 11 million diesel cars of its VW, Audi, SEAT and Skoda brands worldwide that helped them evade emissions standards after US regula-

tors discovered the problem. The so-called defeat devices turn on pollution controls when the car is undergoing testing, and off when it is back on the road, allowing it to spew out harmful levels of nitrogen oxide. "The diesel strategy that the German automotive industry has been pursuing for many years, in particular on the important US market, has suffered considerably as a result of the events," Wissmann said at a press conference on the sidelines of the Detroit auto show.

"I am sure that Volkswagen will do the utmost to regain lost confidence in North America."

While this will not happen "overnight," Wissmann said all German automakers will "work hard to convince consumers of diesel's advantages for fuel efficiency and CO2 reduction." German carmakers account for 95 percent of diesel sales in the United States, which comprise just three percent of overall auto sales.

Diesel became popular in Europe after governments shifted tax policies in the 1990s in order to cut carbon emissions. It never really caught on with American consumers, who face lower fuel taxes and were unwilling to pay thousands upfront for an engine that would save them money over time. —AFP

IDC REPORT: IN 2014 KASPERSKY LAB GREW FASTER THAN THE MARKET

DUBAI: International Data Corporation (IDC) has examined the consumer and corporate endpoint security market and issued a report based on the data for 2014. According to this, Kaspersky Lab is growing faster than the market as a whole: worldwide revenues for all endpoint security vendors increased by 2.6 percent in 2014, while Kaspersky Lab's revenues grew by 6.5 percent.

The report shows that worldwide revenues for endpoint security vendors reached a total of \$9.0 billion in 2014, with four endpoint security vendors achieving revenues in excess of \$700 million. Between them, these vendors account for 64 percent of total revenues. Kaspersky Lab is one of them, holding fourth position with revenues of \$710.6 million. In 2014, the company's earnings grew by 6.5 percent and captured a 7.9 percent share of the market. Kaspersky Lab was also ranked fourth in 2013, when earnings increased by 6.1 percent, with revenues of \$667 million.

In addition, Kaspersky Lab is named a notable gainer by IDC for its growing share of the consumer endpoint security market. This segment grew a paltry 1 percent worldwide in 2014, while Kaspersky Lab's share grew by more than 9 percent. The low overall growth of the segment is associated largely with declining shipments of PCs.

Garry Kondakov, Chief Business Officer, Kaspersky Lab, commented: "We are very glad to have been named by IDC as one of the notable gainers. Endpoint security has always been the core of our business, especially in the consumer and small-to-medium-sized business segments. We will continue to provide best in class solutions for them. At the same time, over the next few years, we expect one of our main growth drivers to be in the enterprise segment, particularly in the non-endpoint security area. Our customers' needs have changed in line with the evolution of the threat landscape and the rise of targeted attacks. Kaspersky Lab's global cybersecurity intelligence and advanced technologies can help them to address the most sophisticated threats. In the near future we will expand our enterprise portfolio with security solutions and services that extend beyond classic endpoint security, in accordance with our long-term strategic plan."

By Jeremy Burton

It's that time of year again, where we look ahead to determine what tech trends will make the most significant impact in 2016. From my view data analytics and our digital way of life will increasingly transform the world and the nature of business. Here are a few ways I see that playing out in the year ahead:

Prediction 1: Digital business makes its way
The C-suite increasingly understands the value of digital business and the data it produces, but they have yet to bring new executives permanently into the room to drive a digital agenda across their company. That's about to change. Increasingly Chief Digital Officer's will be appointed and tasked with utilizing the latest and greatest technology to make products smarter and create frictionless service experiences for customers. Data - the digital exhaust that these new capabilities leave behind - will need to be analyzed and exploited for competitive advantage. This is not a tech industry phenomenon - it is an 'every industry' phenomenon. Yet while the C-suite know it's good for them, they'll still grapple with decisions about org charts, duties and turf wars. Should the Chief Digital Officer report to the CEO, the CMO... or the CIO?

Prediction 2: Wearables win Olympic gold
Wearable sensors will usher in a new era that will overcome some of the, ahem, hurdles for some sports. Swimmers already rely on underwater cameras for stroke analysis, but those provide fairly limited insight. Newly developed sensors for that sport will be just one example of how 2016 will be a breakthrough year for athletes to use data analytics to execute peak performance. Companies like Nike - which calls data "the new voice of the athlete" - will aid them in that pursuit as they harness data for innovation, which will be both on display and behind-the-scenes at the Olympic Games like never before. We'll see sensors integrated into wearables to assess elite athletes across multiple dimensions - from diets and sleep patterns to running styles and optimum body angles - empowering athletes to



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become masters of their own physical performance. But Usain Bolt is not going to be wearing a Fitbit as he competes: to make an impact, wearables will be tailored to each athlete's bespoke needs.

Prediction 3: Wearables won't equal personalized medicine, yet
Despite the hype generated by Jawbones and Fitbits, wearables won't make a widespread impact on personal health next year. For wearables to deliver on the promise of personalized medicine, healthcare professionals will need direct access to the data they generate about their patients so that time isn't wasted when early warning signs surface. Will device makers and physicians connect to build out the needed back-end? Will consumers want to grant this type of continuous access to their biometric data? In my view, the cultural hurdle is the bigger barrier than the technology, but neither will be addressed to make personalized medicine a reality in 2016.

Prediction 4: The dark web: A tool for criminals in 2015, a source of security in 2016

In 2015, pop culture fed the legend of the dark web - the steamy digital back alley where criminals sell their illicit goods and occasionally order hit men. Digitally speaking, the dark web is the dark web because it is not indexed by search engines. But that will change - not so it can be searched by you or me (it'll stay very dark), but so that the dark web will actually turn into a tool for the good guys. Counterintuitive? Let me explain: most companies now understand that for security breaches it is not a question of if, but when. With this accepted, companies will embrace technology that minimizes risk. How? By looking for data in the place data goes after it's been stolen: the dark web. Software-driven tools that crawl the dark web as a means to identify stolen info will propagate in 2016. Eventually, use of these tools will reduce the amount of time security breaches last, while increasing the perishability of the data stolen. In doing so, companies will be able to take corrective action much more quickly to protect customers than they can today - all by using the dark web itself.

Prediction 5: VR will bring the stadium to your living room
Already you can buy a cheap set of VR goggles to clip onto your smartphone, but who does that? No one - ah, ok, maybe a couple of you. But that's not the point. This is: Innovation in virtu-

al- and augmented-reality technology will quicken, with entertainment leading the way.

Imagine going to a rock concert where you can have a front row view of the stage and a backstage pass - without ever leaving your living room. Led by Facebook introducing Rift, consumers will get their hands on high quality VR. And sports leagues and entertainers - with their eyes on turning an 80,000 seat stadium into an 800,000 seat one - will seek to transform digitally to take advantage of this in order to leap ahead. Sports teams and major touring acts will offer the first of a set of totally immersive experiences - a 360 degree view from inside an F1 cockpit, a front row seat to U2 - that you can fully experience without getting off your couch. Except to dance. Or brace for impact.

While I still think VR live streaming will take more time than 2016 offers, these first offers will start to get people hooked. There's plenty of incentive. It's a \$4.5 billion opportunity for sports and entertainment brands and it's a way for everyone else to avoid paying \$15 for hot dogs and \$100 for parking.

Prediction 6: Software eats the car

For a couple of years now I've been talking about how electric power is not the most interesting new innovation in the automotive industry - software is, and specifically, automation through software. The mighty German and Japanese automakers are in a race unlike anything they've ever seen before - a race to do to the car what Apple did to the phone. Having spent time playing with Tesla's new 'Autopilot' feature on my recent drive down Highway 101 to Carmel I'm convinced more than ever that every car will go this way - and the pace will accelerate dramatically in 2016. And I don't just mean a self-driving car... but a car that connects to your Wi-Fi when you pull into your garage, a car that is continuously updated with new features, a car that becomes much smarter about you every time you drive it, a car that predicts your needs before you need them. All of this is enabled by software... and analytics on the data that software collects. In the next 10 years half the automakers we know today will be gone - eaten by software. Jeremy Burton is president, Products and Marketing, EMC.

COURT REJECTS CHALLENGE TO DELHI CAR RESTRICTIONS

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court yesterday rejected a legal challenge to driving restrictions aimed at reducing pollution in the smog-choked Indian capital. The court said the Delhi government could continue to ban most private cars from the city's roads on alternate days until Friday, when a 15-day trial of the scheme is due to end.

The restrictions are part of a slew of initiatives announced last year by the Delhi government, under pressure to improve air quality in the world's most polluted capital. A number of challengers had argued that they were not effective in bringing down pollution, and that the city's public transport system was not up to the task.

"All the petitions challenging the odd-even policy have been dismissed. We will continue with the scheme," the government's lawyer Rahul Mehra said. However, the court said the Delhi government

should consider such concerns before implementing permanent restrictions.

Authorities have already said the scheme may be extended beyond Friday if it is successful. Environmentalists have welcomed the restrictions, but say they are unlikely to make a dramatic difference in the short term. The US embassy in Delhi put PM2.5 levels at 97 yesterday afternoon-lower than earlier in the day, but still nearly four times World Health Organization safe limit of 25.

PM2.5 refers to microscopic particles that penetrate deep into the lungs and are particularly harmful to health. Delhi's air quality traditionally worsens in winter as the cooler air traps pollutants and people start lighting fires. A 2014 WHO survey of more than 1,600 cities ranked Delhi as the most polluted, partly because of the 8.5 million vehicles on its roads. —AFP

CANCER NOW NO 1 KILLER IN 22 STATES

NEW YORK: Cancer is becoming the No 1 killer in more and more states as deaths from heart disease have declined, new health statistics show. Nationwide, heart disease is still the leading cause of death, just ahead of cancer. While death rates for both have been falling for nearly 25 years, heart disease has dropped at a steeper rate.

As a result, cancer moved up to the top slot in 22 states in 2014, according to the latest government figures. It's also the leading cause of death in certain groups of people, including Hispanics, Asians, and adults ages 40 to 79. The trend is noted in the American Cancer Society's latest annual report released Thursday.

The cancer death rate has fallen 23 per-

cent since its peak in 1991. The decrease is attributed to declining smoking rates and advances in cancer detection, treatment and prevention. The heart disease death rate fell 46 percent in that time. The cancer society predicts there will be nearly 1.7 million new cancer cases this year, and nearly 600,000 deaths.

Government figures for 2014 show cancer was the leading cause of death in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin. —AP



BEIJING: In this picture taken on January 10, 2016, a woman poses for a photo in front of a beluga whale at a zoo. — AFP

SECONDHAND SMOKE HITS ALMOST HALF OF TEENS WHO DON'T SMOKE

RESEARCH SAYS IT'S STILL AFFECTING MILLIONS OF KIDS

CHICAGO: Even though fewer US teens are smoking, secondhand smoke remains a big problem for them, a government study found. Nearly half of nonsmoking kids in middle school and high school encountered secondhand tobacco smoke in 2013, and rates were even higher among smokers.

Earlier studies on teens and secondhand smoke in specific places, such as cars or indoors, indicate that the problem has declined in recent years but the new research suggests it's still affecting millions of kids. "These findings are concerning because the US Surgeon General has concluded that there is no safe level of secondhand smoke exposure," said lead author Israel Agaku, a researcher at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Secondhand smoke has been linked with several illnesses in children, including breathing problems, ear infections, bronchitis and pneumonia. In adults, it has been linked with heart disease and lung cancer. The study results are based on a national survey of more than 17,000 middle school and high school kids. Exposure was defined as being around tobacco smoke at least once within the past week.

Nearly 1 in 4 nonsmokers who reported any exposure said they were around tobacco smoke daily. Settings included home, school, cars and public places. It's not clear how many had only brief exposure. The study was published online yesterday in the journal Pediatrics.

CDC data show that youth smoking has fallen steadily in recent years, reaching about 9 percent



ALABAMA: In this Saturday, March 2, 2013, photo, a cigarette burns in an ashtray at a home in Hayneville. A government study released yesterday shows that even though fewer US teens are smoking, exposure to secondhand smoke remains a big problem. —AP

among high schoolers in 2014. At least 26 states have smoke-free laws affecting indoor public places and worksites, and more than 80 percent of U.S. homes have no-smoking rules. The researchers say the study results show efforts are needed to expand smoke-free zones. —AP



KAZAKHSTAN: British astronaut Tim Peake, member of the main crew of the expedition to the International Space Station (ISS), prior the launch of Soyuz TMA-19M space ship at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome. —AP

ASTRONAUT PAYS TRIBUTE TO 'STARMAN' BOWIE IN SPACE

LONDON: Here he is, sitting in a tin can, far above the world - and saying goodbye to David Bowie. Messages of condolence for the late rock star flowed yesterday from around the world - and from space, where British astronaut Tim Peake tweeted from the International Space Station.

"Saddened to hear David Bowie has lost his battle with cancer - his music was an inspiration to many," Peake wrote Monday. The outer-space tribute seemed fitting. Unique and otherworldly, Bowie often seemed like a creature from another planet, the "Starman" of one of his 1970s hits.

The cosmos fascinated him from his first big hit, "Space Oddity." Released in 1969, the year of the first moon landing, it told the story of Major Tom, an astronaut adrift, "sitting in my tin can, far above the world." The song caught the world's imagination again in 2013 when Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield strummed it on his guitar while orbiting Earth aboard the space station. The video was viewed millions of times, and Bowie gave the rendition his seal of approval, calling it "the most poignant version of the song ever created." —AP

EBOLA SURVIVORS' BLOOD NO HELP TO PATIENTS IN GUINEA

LONDON: Giving the blood of Ebola survivors to patients didn't seem to make a difference, doctors found in the biggest study so far on the approach, prompting some scientists to say it's time to abandon the strategy.

With no licensed treatment for the devastating disease, doctors have sometimes used blood from survivors to treat the sick, hoping its infection-fighting antibodies might help patients defeat the virus. It seemed to help some patients in the past but there was no clear proof. Amid the world's biggest outbreak of Ebola in West Africa in 2014, scientists decided to put the treatment to the test in Guinea.

At a clinic in the capital Conakry, scientists found no difference in survival between 84 patients who got survivor blood compared to about 400 patients treated some five months earlier, according to the study published in New England Journal of Medicine Thursday. "We would have liked to have seen more dramatic results," said Johan van Griensven of the study in Guinea, the paper's lead author. "But this doesn't mean (blood) plasma treatment doesn't work by definition."

He said antibody levels are often low in patients who have only recently recovered from Ebola and that doctors might need to use blood from long-term survivors to get a better effect. Van Griensven and colleagues studied people who got two transfusions of plasma - the clear part of blood that contains antibodies - in Guinea last year. The plasma came from 58 Ebola survivors, most of whom had recovered from Ebola within six months of donating

blood and are thought to have immunity to the strain. Scientists didn't know what the antibody levels were in the donated plasma and said it was possible some plasma was more potent than others.

Worth pursuing

A similar study on the blood of Ebola survivors in Liberia was discontinued because there weren't enough patients and another study in Sierra Leone had treated just three patients by last October. To date, the outbreak first noted in 2014 has killed more than 11,000 people in West Africa. Ebola was declared over in Guinea last month, the first time all three affected countries have stopped the virus' spread.

Some said the disappointing results should be enough to convince scientists to abandon this strategy. "From the data presented, it doesn't look like this is worth pursuing," said Thomas Geisbert, an Ebola expert at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, who has done similar studies in monkeys. He was not connected to the latest research. "The idea that antibodies from a person who survived Ebola could save lives was always a long shot, but it was too good an idea not to test," said Ben Neuman, a virologist at Britain's University of Reading. "The most valuable thing this study provides is clarity," Neuman wrote in an email. "Finally, the idea of using (survivor's blood) can be crossed off the list and other more promising drugs and vaccines can be tested." —AP

EPA: PESTICIDE HARMS BEES IN SOME CASES

WASHINGTON: A major pesticide harms honeybees when used on cotton and citrus but not on other big crops like corn, berries and tobacco, the Environmental Protection Agency found. It's the first scientific risk assessment of the much-debated class of pesticides called neonicotinoids and how they affect bees on a chronic long-term basis.

The EPA found in some cases the chemical didn't harm bees or their hives but in other cases it posed a significant risk. It mostly depended on the crop, a nuanced answer that neither clears the way for an outright ban nor is a blanket go-ahead for continued use. Both the pesticide maker and anti-pesticide advocates were unhappy with report.

The issue is important because honeybees are in trouble and they do more than make honey. They are crucial to our food supply: About one-third of the human diet comes from insect-pollinated plants, and the honeybee is responsible for 80 percent of that pollination.

Some advocacy groups target neonicotinoids - the chemical works on insects' central nervous systems and are often called "neonics" - and call for bans on the chemicals. Recent scientific studies have pointed to problems and pesticide makers dis-

pute those studies and this one from the EPA. Europe banned the pesticide class, and then lifted the ban.

Don't expect any future action on this pesticide to solve the dwindling bee problem because it's not just this pesticide alone, but a complicated puzzle that includes lack of food for bees, parasites, disease and the way different pesticides and fungicides interact, said bee expert May Berenbaum at the University of Illinois.

"Anything to reduce stress on bees is helpful," said University of Maryland entomologist Dennis vanEngelsdorp. "I am not convinced that neonics are a major driver of colony loss." Before it acts on a pesticide, EPA wanted more specific and targeted research. The risk report released Wednesday is the first of four on this class of chemicals. The study was done by the EPA and California's environmental agency, with a similar one done by Canada.

'Significant effect'

EPA analysis of detailed tests found a clear level of concentration of the pesticide imidacloprid, the most common neonicotinoid, in which things start to go awry. If nectar brought back to the hive from worker bees had more than 25 parts per billion of the chemical, "there's a

significant effect," namely fewer bees, less honey and "a less robust hive," said Jim Jones, EPA's assistant administrator for chemical safety and pollution prevention. But if the nectar chemical level was below 25 parts per billion, it was as if there were no imidacloprid at all, with no ill effects, Jones said. It was a clear line of harm or no harm, he said.

Levels depended on the crop, Jones said. While nectar of cotton and citrus fruits were above the harmful concentrations, the levels were not harmful for corn - the nation's top crop by far - most vegetables, berries and tobacco. Other crops weren't conclusive and need more testing, including legumes, melons, tree nuts and herbs.

Also, the controversial practice of treating seeds with the chemical seemed not to harm bees, Jones said. The problem crops of cotton and citrus are No 7 and 9 in US production value in 2014, according to Agriculture Department statistics. The study looked just at commercial honeybees because they are a good surrogate for all pollinators, Jones said. But Lori Ann Burd, environmental health director of the advocacy group Center for Biological Diversity, criticized the agency for ignoring wild bees, like bumblebees, which studies show are much more sensitive to the pesticides, calling the report

"weak."

Jones said this is a draft of a scientific report, not a regulation. After public comments and the report is finalized, then EPA may act. Imidacloprid-maker Bayer Crop Sciences said EPA "appears to overestimate the potential for harmful exposures in certain crops" and ignore its benefits. "With hundreds of studies conducted and their demonstrated safe use on farmland across the country, we know more about the safe use of neonics to honeybees than any other pesticide," Bayer Vice President Dana Sargent said in a statement.

University of Maryland's van Engelsdorp said in email that all too often farmers use the pesticide to protect "against pests that are simply very scarce or not found in the landscape. There are studies (including EPA's) that show no benefit to production when these products are used."

Last year the EPA proposed banning use of many pesticides that harm bees when crops are in bloom and bees are being used as commercial pollinators and the federal government is also trying to increase wild flower planting to give bees more food. Honeybees pollinate more than 90 flowering crops, including citrus, peaches, berries, melons, apples, nuts, avocados, soybeans, asparagus and cucumbers. —AP

HUNTER CANCELS LION HUNT AFTER PROTESTS

JOHANNESBURG: A professional hunter in Zimbabwe has canceled a plan to raffle a lion hunt at a hunters' convention in the United States, following protests from activists. Martin Nel said he is scrapping the raffle in which he hoped to sell 100 raffle tickets for \$1,500 each in Las Vegas next month. LionAid, a group based in Britain, had expressed shock at the proposal, which focused attention on the heated debate about whether hunting hurts already vulnerable species, or can help them by raising funds for conservation.

In a statement this month, Nel said the raffle winner could also have chosen to have a lion collared for research, and that the project was designed to raise funds for conservation studies at Zimbabwe's Buby Valley Conservancy.

The conservancy defended its record, saying cattle ranchers had wiped out lions, rhinos, elephants and other wildlife in the area decades ago. Established in 1994, the conservancy reintroduced lions in 1999 and today has a population of nearly 500 as well as a significant number of endangered black rhinos, it said. WildCRU, a wildlife research group based at Oxford University in Britain, operates at Buby. It said it did not endorse any proposal to auction a lion hunt and would not accept any donation from such an event.

Last year, an American killed a well-known lion named Cecil in Zimbabwe in an allegedly illegal hunt, causing an international outcry. The number of wild lions in Africa has been dwindling for many years. In his statement, Nel said there were more lions in Zimbabwe's hunting areas than in the country's national parks. Without well-managed hunting operations, he said, "many hunting areas would go back to goats and cattle at the expense of the wildlife and their habitat - how can that be considered a win for conservation?" —AP



LOGAN: This Dec 29, 2015 photo provided by the Logan, Utah, Police Department shows baby formula seized as evidence in a police department storage room. —AP

SCRAPE GROUND MARKS LINKED TO DINOSAURS

NEW YORK: Scientists say they've discovered evidence of a frenzied mating ritual by dinosaurs: Long grooves in the ground etched by the pawing of clawed feet. Such behavior is seen nowadays in some birds, and the discovery suggests that two-legged, meat-eating dinosaurs called theropods did it about 100 million years ago, the researchers said.

Martin Lockley of the University of Colorado Denver said the dinosaurs, probably males, apparently gathered in groups and "went crazy scraping" with their clawed, three-toed feet to attract mates. The beasts were built roughly like smaller versions of a T Rex. Footprints near the grooves suggest a variety of body lengths, up to about 16 feet from snout to tip of the tail. The grooves they carved are up to 6 feet long.

The ritual would have been entertaining to watch, Lockley said in an interview. "These animals would have been really frenzied." Lockley, an emeritus professor of geology, is an author of a paper on the discovery released Thursday by the journal Scientific Reports. The grooves were found at three sites in western Colorado and another just west of Denver.

Dinosaur expert Thomas Holtz Jr. of the University of Maryland, who didn't participate in the work, said it's reasonable to think that theropods created the grooves. But was it for mating? Holtz said he wasn't convinced that the new paper had sufficiently ruled out other explanations. But he added that there's no particular evidence for rejecting the mating idea.

"Whatever behavior is being recorded here, it is an expression of the fact that dinosaurs like all animals did more than hunt and attack and devour and fight and all that limited set of behaviors that popular culture often portrays," Holtz wrote in an email. —AP

BIG-DOLLAR BABY FORMULA THEFTS DOG STORES, POLICE ACROSS US

SALT LAKE CITY: The recent arrests in Utah of three people accused of stealing thousands of dollars' worth of baby formula is the latest example of a problem that officials say is vexing stores and police nationwide as thieves systematically swipe the mixture from shelves and resell it to unsuspecting parents.

Baby formula is a major expense for many new parents, with small canisters starting around \$20 and special or prescription blends costing two or three times that. It's also widely used. More than a third of infants receive formula in addition to breast milk in their first six months, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates. Often, babies who are weaned off breast milk will continue to drink formula into their toddler years. The high price and broad demand make it an enticing target for thieves, who typically sell the stolen formula at flea markets or list it on websites like Craigslist and eBay. In late December, police in Logan, about 80 miles north of Salt Lake City, confiscated 422 cans of stolen formula worth \$8,000 to \$10,000. It came from stores in Logan and three other northern Utah cities, and officers are looking for ties to similar recent thefts in Idaho cities about 150 miles away, Police Capt. Curtis Hooley said.

Multiple stores

In Pleasanton, California, thefts of large amounts of formula are reported at least once a month, with thieves fre-

quently hitting multiple stores around the San Francisco Bay Area, according to police Lt Kurt Schlehuder. He doesn't think the culprits are parents trying to feed their kids. "There are people that are making money off of selling the stuff," Schlehuder said. In April, Pleasanton police arrested two people suspected of stealing dozens of containers of the product. Officers happened to see the pair running from the store with shopping baskets full of formula. But arrests can be rare when police often have only an anonymous face captured by a surveillance camera, Schlehuder said.

Around the country, law enforcement agencies in recent years have reported heists ranging from thousands to several million dollars' worth of baby formula. In 2009, Florida authorities arrested 21 people accused in an elaborate theft ring that officials say pilfered more than \$2 million in formula annually.

Investigators working on that sting-called "Operation Hot Milk" - said thieves were paid between \$100 and \$300 a day and used multiple lookouts while filling bags with formula. They hit 15 or more stores a day and later repackaged the formula and sold it in other states, authorities said. The Infant Nutrition Council of America, an association of baby formula manufacturers, does not keep statistics on the thefts but said it's a continuing problem nationwide.

"We're not talking about petty

shoplifting," said Jennifer Hatcher, a senior vice president for government and public affairs at the Food Marketing Institute, which represents supermarket chains, small grocery stores, pharmacies and other food retailers. Large thefts can be a particularly costly problem for many such stores, which are required to keep a minimum amount of formula on their shelves to accept customers spending money dispersed through the federal Women, Infants and Children nutrition program, known as WIC. Hatcher said the industry has been working to combat the thefts for about 15 years.

Safety concern

For parents, stolen formula can be a safety concern. They can't be sure that what they're buying has been stored at proper temperatures or isn't past its expiration date. Some sophisticated theft rings even print counterfeit formula labels to make a cow's-milk-based product appear to be a more expensive soy or rice formula designed for children with milk allergies, Hatcher said.

Mardi Mountford, the nutrition council's executive director, recommends that formula be bought only from a trustworthy retailer, either in-store or online. New mother Erica Otten of Tabernacle, New Jersey, said she understands a parent's temptation to try and save on the expensive product by shopping for a discounted

version online.

Her 5-month-old daughter has a protein allergy requiring a specific formula that costs \$32 for a 1-pound can that lasts four days at most. Still, Otten sticks to the major retailers. "It sounds scary because you're feeding it to your infant," she said. "I inspect everything like crazy - the expiration date, the fact that it's sealed." To help with the cost, Otten signed up to receive regular coupons from formula manufacturers while pregnant. She now swaps the coupons she doesn't need with other mothers around the country.

Some retailers take extra steps to combat thefts, keeping their baby formula under lock and key. Others stamp their store names and locations on containers to alert consumers or police if the stolen product turns up for sale somewhere else, Hatcher said. When large amounts of formula are stolen, lot numbers are provided to websites like eBay that can monitor sale listings for the products.

To chip away at the black market demand, federal officials have started requiring grocery stores and retailers that participate in the WIC program to buy formula only from approved wholesalers. "Each one of these tactics, it seems to have helped alleviate some of the ability for them to resell this product quickly," Hatcher said. "That doesn't mean it's still not an incredibly attractive product to try to steal." —AP

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Muhammad Aslam Khan, Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait speaks at the event.



Fariha Pervez —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Pakistani Ambassador Muhammad Aslam Khan welcome Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub.



Fariha Pervez Performs.

FARIHA PERVEZ PERFORMS IN 'SHAM-E-GHAZAL'

By Ben Garcia

The Pakistani Embassy in collaboration with the Kuwait National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) and Bait Al-Othman organized on Sunday evening a "Sham-e-Ghazal", featuring famous Pakistani artiste Fariha Pervez. Muhammad Aslam Khan, Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait, welcomed visitors who thronged the Bait Al-Othman Museum in Hawally to witness the thrilling

concert. The ghazal is one of the most popular and revered forms of classical and semi-classical music in south Asia and for many it is the soul of poetry in both Urdu and Persian.

Fariha also rendered some Arabic and English popular songs to the approval and applause of the crowd. In his welcome address, Khan thanked attendees for gracing the event, which included top officials in Kuwait and members of the diplomatic corps. "I am proud to introduce to you one of the

famous and leading female singers from Pakistan. She has many invitations from all over the world and I am truly thankful because she accepted my invitation to perform for you here in Kuwait," the ambassador mentioned.

Fariha started her career with anchoring and acting, appearing in several drama serials including the famous kids' drama 'Ainak Wala Jin'. She then switched to singing with the release of her first album 'Nice and Naughty'

in 1996. Fariha has release seven albums and is recognized as one of the best female singers in Pakistan. She has been a regular television guest on various programs and rendered popular songs for the audience. She's been considered to be among the most versatile singers in her generation with the ability to perform in various genres including classical, folk, ballad and modern pop songs.

"Her performance was superb. I love ghazal music and it is one of my weaknesses. I

cried when I heard such a melodic voice performing right in front of me - such a gentle voice, as if I was being rocked in a cradle," said teary-eyed Emily, a European mother who attended the event with her teenage son. Ghazal means conversation with the beloved. It consists of rhyming couplets and a refrain, with each line sharing the same meter. Ghazal can be understood as poetic expression of both pain and loss of separation, and beauty of love despite pain.



Pakistani Ambassador Muhammad Aslam Khan welcome guests at the event.



A view of the audience.

MAKE MARINA HOTEL KUWAIT YOUR ONE STOP DESTINATION FOR ALL WEDDINGS

The magnificent Shaikha Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmad Theater and Hall of Marina Hotel Kuwait, nestled in the heart of Salmiya with a spectacular seaside location, is your one-stop-destination for all weddings. No matter what size wedding you are planning, Marina Hotel offers couples a truly memorable wedding to suit any type of wedding festivity. Having a great layout and capacity of up to 500 persons, the Shaikha Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmad Theater and Hall is an ideal place for your special event. The hall unravels beauty and flexibility with its expert wedding planning team who devote their attention to every detail ensuring that your wedding will surpass all expectations. The package is further complemented with an award winning culinary team comprising of dedicated chefs who constantly explore delivering tailor made menus and bringing to the hotel's guests a wide range of exciting experiences to each event. Wedding guests can enjoy the wide variety of scrumptious delicacies from the elaborate buffet at Shaikha Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmad Theater and Hall.

The memories of your wedding day will last a lifetime and Marina Hotel Kuwait will ensure that your special day is perfect. The hotel is delighted to offer

guests exclusive wedding packages across the year, which include accommodation for one night in a beautiful superior room and a romantic candle-lit dinner and breakfast in the room for the bride and groom. For the wedding celebrations, a custom-made, three-tier wedding cake is offered.

Such a momentous occasion that unites husband and wife must be conducted in a venue that can provide only the finest setting. This includes the most delightful cuisine and a magnificently decorated ballroom. With a venue that can also bring back treasured memories of lavish wedding celebrations from previous generations, today's weddings at the Shaikha Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmad Theater and Hall are among the most extravagant and memorable weddings imaginable.

Combining unparalleled excellence in service and hospitality with outstanding presentation and personal service, the hotel holds a reputation as an expert in turning your wedding celebration into a truly magnificent event.

If you are looking for a beautiful wedding ceremony venue, the wedding package at Marina Hotel is available all through the year. For more information, please visit our website: www.marinahotel.com



PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION AT BBS ORGANIZED STAFF APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

Al-Bayan Bilingual School (BBS) Parent and Teacher Association (PTA) organized a staff Appreciation Luncheon to express gratitude for their sincere efforts and dedication to offer the best educational Environment to BBS students.

The Luncheon started with a speech by Sundus Hussain, PTA President, who welcomed the Employees and expressed her gratitude and said "Another school year and there's a good chance you haven't been thanked your hard work. teacher. I am sure you have had a few students thank you, tell you that something you taught them, did for them, helped them learn was important and meaningful and changed them and inspired them and meant the world to them." "So if you haven't received the thanks you deserve, we as the BBS PTA want to thank you publicly now. And by "you" I mean those teachers who love to teach and do so with all their heart and soul to provide their students with what is important and necessary and inspiring and beautiful and meaningful and true and good and honest." She concluded. During the event, PTA members provided the teachers with a fun-filled and exciting atmosphere that included raffles prizes and open buffet. This initiative validates an appreciation and a positive platform to deepen the teachers' sense of compassion.

JAPANESE GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIP (TEACHER TRAINING STUDENTS) FOR 2016

The Embassy of Japan is pleased to announce that the Government of Japan offers scholarship to teachers who wish to conduct research on school education at Japanese Universities.

The Japanese Government Scholarship was established in 1954 in order to increase mutual understanding between the people of Japan and other countries as well as to make an international contribution to the intellectual field.

All Kuwaiti citizens who meet the qualifications below are eligible to apply:

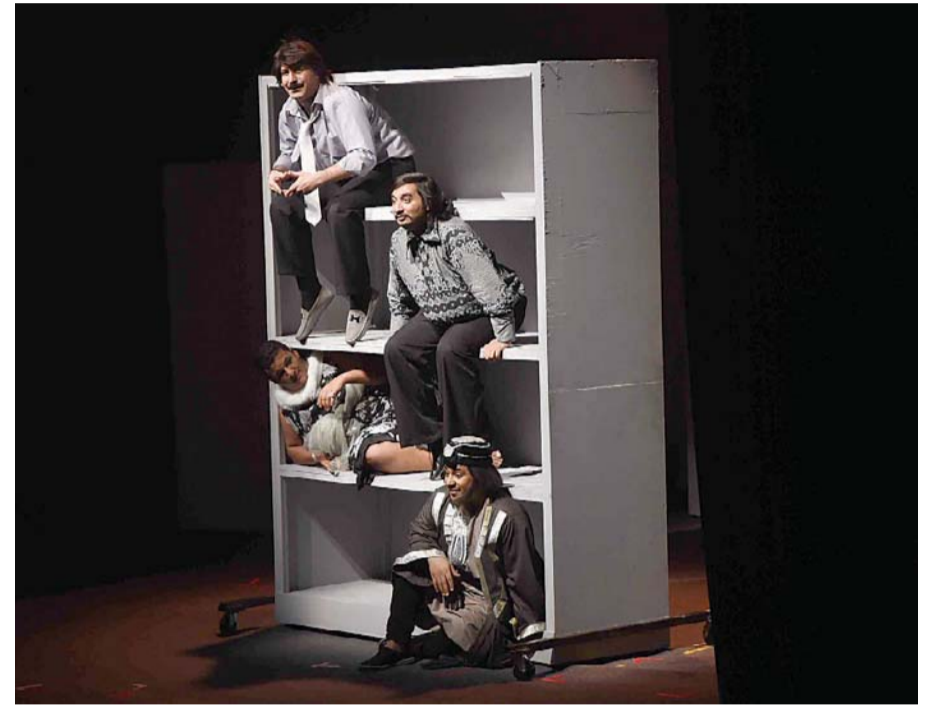
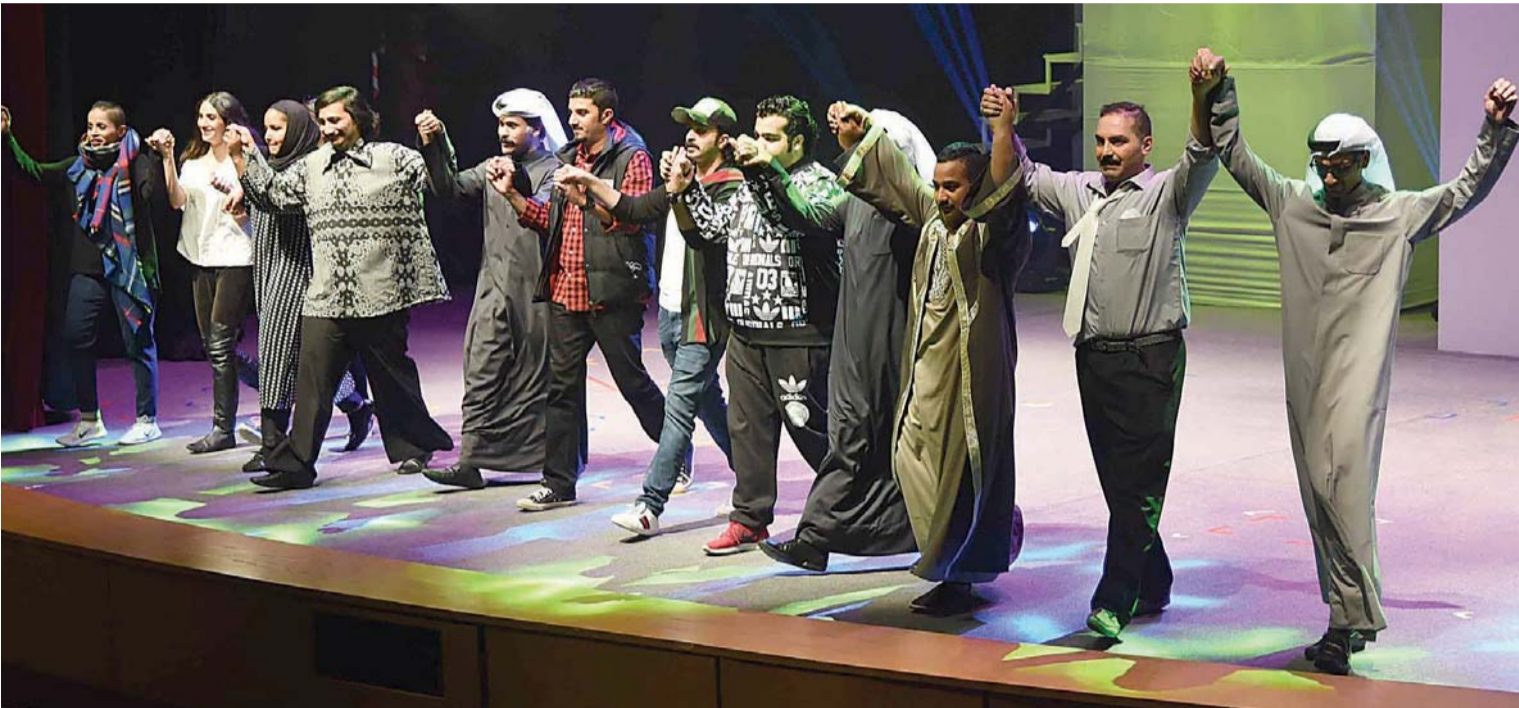
- Applicants are those who are born on or after April 2, 1981.
 - In principle, applicants must be graduates of universities or teacher training schools and have worked as teachers at elementary, middle or secondary schools for at least five years in total.
 - Applicants should be physically fit to participate in the program.
 - Applicants must be interested in Japan and be willing to deepen their understanding of Japan after arriving in Japan. Applicants must also have the ability to do research in Japanese and adapt to living in Japan.
 - Japanese Embassy will carry out screening, interview and written examinations.
- Application forms, detailed information and other conditions can be downloaded from Embassy's page: (http://www.embjapan.go.jp/tp/rja/00_000043htrnil).
The deadline for submitting applications is Thursday March 3, 2016. Only hard copies, preferably printed on A4 size paper, and mailed through courier or hand-delivered to the Embassy, will be accepted.
The application process consists of document screening, written exams, and personal interview.
Academic exams will be held Monday March 7, 2016.
Past exam until 2013 can be provided for public reading at the Embassy of Japan.
For inquiries, please contact cultural section, Embassy of Japan on 25309426.



A New Year's Eve celebration and Christmas caroling were held at sister Edith Lazo's residence.



Information and Youth Affairs Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah speaks at the opening ceremony of the 8th Arab Theater Festival. —Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh



SHEIKH SALMAN OPENS ARAB THEATER FESTIVAL

Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah said Sunday Kuwait's theaters are glowing with joy pride as the country hosts the 8th edition of the Arab Theater Festival.

The Kuwaiti theatrical troupes share the joy with their peers from Arab countries that deliver a noble, civilizational and humanitarian message, said Sheikh Salman, who is also President of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL). He made the comments in a statement on behalf of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the opening ceremony of the festival.

The current session of the annual event, themed "towards new and renewable Arab theater," is co-organized by NCCAL and the Arab Theatre Institute (ATI) until January 16 and gathers more than 400 Arab theatrical figures; its agenda includes several performances by Arab troupes and artistic workshops.

Sheikh Salman spoke highly of Dr Sultan bin

Hamad Al-Qassemi, member of the UAE Federal Supreme Council and Ruler of Al-Sharjah Emirate, for his role in founding the ATI in 2009 and the promotion of the Arab theatrical arts.

He noted that Dr Al-Qassemi, the co-founder and president of the ATI, made several initiatives to advance the march of Arab theater, including the offering of the ATI award - the most prestigious Arab theatrical prize.

Islamic culture

He conveyed to the audience the best wishes of His Highness the Amir, adding that the festival coincides with the celebrations marking the selection of Kuwait as "capital of Islamic culture for 2016" and the preparations for celebrating the country's 55th National Day and the 25th Liberation Day.

Meanwhile, Secretary General of the ATI Ismail Abdullah thanked His Highness the Amir for his kind patronage of the event and appreciated Kuwait's role in promoting cultural

enlightenment throughout the Arab world over long decades. He cited as example the presence at every Arab library of Kuwait publications such as 'Al-Arabi' magazine, 'Alam Al-Maarifa' (world of knowledge) and 'Alam Al-Masrah' (world of theater).

Zinaty Qodsia, a Palestinian-Syrian artist, said meanwhile that theater provides a unique aesthetic platform for theatrical artists to highlight the significance of "beauty making at a time of rampant distortion." "The journey of the festival started from Sharjah before coming to Kuwait - the oasis of culture, arts sciences, peace and love," Qodsia pointed out.

During the opening ceremony featured the offering of a performance titled "panorama" which includes excerpts from Kuwaiti immortal plays such as 'Bye Bye London,' '30 Days of Love,' 'Bye Bye Arabs,' 'Hami Al-Diyar,' and 'Party on a stake.' The NCCAL has nominated a number of notable figures who influenced the Kuwait theater for honoring during the current session of the festival. —KUNA



GUST PARTNERS WITH LOYAC TO DEVELOP YOUTH INITIATIVES

Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) and LOYAC, a non-profit organization, signed a memorandum of understanding yesterday to further enhance the interaction between the students and graduates of GUST and the community through LOYAC's youth programs and initiatives.

GUST and LOYAC are set to collaborate on a number of events including seminars, workshops, career fairs,

internships, and volunteer work opportunities. By leveraging LOYAC strength in creating and overseeing professional and personal development programs for youth, GUST exposes its students to a range of development programs to take advantage of and interact with the local community.

GUST Vice President for Academic Affairs and Acting Vice President for Planning and Development, Dr Salah Al-Sharhan, said, "We work vigorously

to give our students the best opportunities in the market to grow, develop, and explore their interests. This collaboration is one of those opportunities which we believe it opens many doors for our students, and give them unique life experiences to add to their academic and professional achievements".

GUST places great importance on youth programs and community outreach and has been initiating partnerships with many esteemed organiza-

tions locally and internationally to ensure that students explore their full potential.

This collaboration creates many viable opportunities for GUST students, whether through part-time job opportunities or internships. Students will also be fast-tracked in applying for LOYAC's Local and Global internship programs. Those awarded would receive certificates from LOYAC, and attain three credit hours towards their

degree upon successfully finishing the program.

LOYAC Board Member, Fetouh Al-Dalali, said, "LOYAC and GUST have been working together for some time, and we are very excited to be embarking on this formal partnership. Among the programs we are looking into the selection of a LOYAC Student Ambassador from GUST to help us connect directly with the entire student body on potential development

opportunities". LOYAC was founded by a group of committed women who hoped to provide youth with opportunities for personal growth, experiencing the joy of service, and developing their professional skills through on job training internships that build self-confidence. Today, LOYAC has become the first choice of the youth in Kuwait when it comes to innovative and high quality programs.

BRIDAL PACKAGES LAUNCHED BY TALISE SPA IN KUWAIT

PACKAGES OFFER STUNNING RESULTS FOR YOUR SPECIAL DAY

Exclusive bridal packages have been launched at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel's Talise Spa to offer the perfect pre-wedding celebration. Luxurious combinations of treatments, facials and massages have been designed to deliver relaxation and pampering within the tranquil surroundings of Talise Spa.

Brides can choose from three options. The 'Tradition with Luxury Ritual' is priced at KD 220 and offers a 190-minute hammam treatment - an exotic cleansing ritual which includes traditional soaping, exfoliation and perfumed water. This package also includes

the diamond sublime facial, a treatment which helps activate energy and soothes accumulated tensions.

The 'Head-To-Toe Ritual' is priced at KD 135 and offers a 180-minute traditional Dead Sea body scrub. This comprises an aromatic blend of herbs and Dead Sea salts to improve circulation and provide gentle exfoliation. This is then followed by the 'Dead Sea mud experience,' a body wrap of Dead Sea secrets which will leave skin soft and glowing. In addition, a full body massage and facial treatment tailored to the bride's skin type are included.

The 'Glowing Skin Ritual,' is priced at KD 120 and offers a 130-minute vitamin C body scrub with green tea and rose hip oil. It also includes a hydrotherapy treatment and a body mask treatment according to the skin type. The entire package also comprises a reflexology massage that utilizes pressure point therapy underneath the foot to relax the whole body and refresh tired feet. Located in Kuwait's idyllic resort, the Talise Spa was awarded the 'Best Luxury Resort Spa' in Kuwait by the 2015 World Luxury Spa Awards.





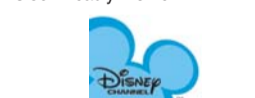
- 00:20 Fast N' Loud
- 01:10 Gold Rush
- 02:50 Catching Monsters
- 03:40 Auction Hunters
- 04:05 The Liquidator
- 04:30 Storage Wars Canada
- 05:00 What Happened Next?
- 05:30 How It's Made
- 06:00 Ice Cold Gold
- 06:50 Wheeler Dealers
- 07:40 Fast N' Loud
- 08:30 Auction Hunters
- 08:55 The Liquidator
- 09:20 Storage Wars Canada
- 09:45 What Happened Next?
- 10:10 How It's Made
- 10:35 Gold Rush
- 12:15 Catching Monsters
- 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 Machines Work
- 17:40 Spawn Of Jaws: The Birth
- 18:20 Dual Survival
- 19:30 Manhunt With Joel Lambert
- 20:10 The Liquidator
- 20:35 Storage Wars Canada
- 21:00 Bride Of Jaws
- 21:50 Dual Survival
- 22:40 River Monsters
- 23:30 Wheeler Dealers



- 00:35 Mythbusters
- 01:20 How It's Made
- 01:44 How It's Made
- 02:08 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 02:55 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 03:42 How The Universe Works
- 04:29 Mythbusters
- 05:16 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 06:03 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 06:50 Mega Builders
- 07:37 How Do They Do It?
- 08:00 How Do They Do It?
- 08:23 Mythbusters
- 09:08 How The Universe Works
- 09:53 Mega Builders
- 10:38 How It's Made
- 11:00 How It's Made
- 11:23 How The Universe Works
- 12:08 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 12:53 Mega Builders
- 13:38 Mythbusters
- 14:23 How It's Made
- 14:46 How It's Made
- 15:10 How The Universe Works
- 15:57 How The Universe Works
- 16:44 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 17:31 Mega Builders
- 18:18 How The Universe Works
- 19:05 Mythbusters
- 19:50 Food Factory
- 20:15 Food Factory
- 20:40 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 21:25 How It's Made
- 21:50 How It's Made
- 22:15 How The Universe Works
- 23:00 Food Factory
- 23:22 Food Factory
- 23:45 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

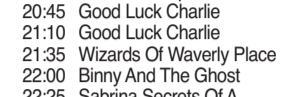


- 00:15 California Investigator
- 00:40 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 01:05 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 01:30 The Haunted
- 02:20 Ghost Lab
- 03:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
- 04:00 California Investigator
- 04:25 California Investigator
- 04:45 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 05:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 05:30 The Haunted
- 06:20 Deadly Affairs
- 07:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
- 08:00 Dr. G: Medical Examiner
- 08:50 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 09:40 Fatal Encounters
- 10:30 Murder Shift
- 11:20 Deadly Affairs
- 12:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
- 13:00 The Will
- 13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 14:40 California Investigator
- 15:05 Dr. G: Medical Examiner
- 15:55 Fatal Encounters
- 16:45 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 17:35 Murder Shift
- 18:25 I Almost Got Away With It
- 19:15 The Will
- 20:05 Deadly Affairs
- 20:55 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
- 21:45 California Investigator
- 22:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 22:35 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 23:00 Deadly Sins
- 23:50 Deadly Women



- 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 H2O: Just Add Water
- 08:05 Austin & Ally
- 08:30 Austin & Ally
- 08:55 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 09:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 09:45 Jessie
- 10:10 Jessie
- 10:35 High School Musical
- 12:20 Hank Zipzer
- 12:45 I Didn't Do It
- 13:10 I Didn't Do It
- 13:35 Liv And Maddie
- 14:00 Liv And Maddie
- 14:30 H2O
- 14:55 H2O
- 15:20 Jessie

- 15:45 Jessie
- 16:10 Violetta
- 17:00 The Next Step
- 17:25 Liv And Maddie
- 17:50 Jessie
- 18:15 Austin & Ally
- 18:40 I Didn't Do It
- 19:05 First Class Chefs
- 19:30 Violetta
- 20:20 The Next Step
- 20:45 Good Luck Charlie
- 21:10 Good Luck Charlie
- 21:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 22:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 23:10 Wolfblood
- 23:35 Wolfblood



- 00:00 Live From The Red Carpet
- 01:50 The Soup
- 02:20 E! News
- 03:15 Escape Club
- 05:05 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 Giuliana & Bill
- 10:15 Giuliana & Bill
- 11:10 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
- 11:35 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
- 12:05 E! News
- 13:05 House Of DVF
- 14:05 Fashion Bloggers
- 14:30 Fashion Bloggers
- 15:00 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
- 16:00 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
- 17:00 Giuliana & Bill
- 18:00 House Of DVF
- 19:00 WAGs
- 20:00 Live From The Red Carpet
- 22:00 Fashion Police
- 23:00 Dash Dolls



- 00:00 Defiance
- 01:00 Quantico
- 02:00 Rosewood
- 03:00 Allegiance
- 04:00 Switched At Birth
- 05:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 06:00 Covert Affairs
- 07:00 Switched At Birth
- 08:00 Odyssey
- 09:00 Quantico
- 10:00 Covert Affairs
- 11:00 Switched At Birth
- 12:00 Coronation Street
- 12:30 Coronation Street
- 13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 14:00 Odyssey
- 15:00 Live Good Morning America
- 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 18:00 Odyssey
- 19:00 Complications
- 20:00 The Night Shift
- 21:00 Deadline Gallipoli
- 22:00 Supergirl
- 23:00 Scream Queens



- 00:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 01:00 Good Morning America
- 02:00 Missresses
- 04:00 Grimm
- 05:00 Good Morning America
- 07:00 Coronation Street
- 07:30 Coronation Street
- 08:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 09:00 Parenthood
- 10:00 Coronation Street
- 10:30 Coronation Street
- 11:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 12:00 C.S.I.
- 13:00 Shark Tank
- 14:00 Parenthood
- 15:00 Franklin & Bash
- 16:00 The Voice
- 18:00 Shark Tank
- 19:00 Supernatural
- 20:00 C.S.I.
- 21:00 Shark Tank
- 22:00 Missresses
- 23:00 Grimm



- 00:00 Get Lucky
- 02:00 Hitman
- 04:00 Android Cop
- 06:00 Big Ass Spider!
- 08:00 Arachnophobia
- 10:00 The River Wild
- 12:00 Jurassic Attack
- 14:00 Percy Jackson And The Lightning Thief
- 16:00 Arachnophobia
- 18:00 Destruction: Las Vegas
- 20:00 The River Wild
- 22:00 Days Of Thunder

- 15:35 Pick Me!
- 16:30 Vera
- 18:20 Paddock To Plate
- 19:10 Coronation Street
- 19:35 Pick Me!
- 20:30 Vera
- 22:20 Coronation Street
- 22:50 Emmerdale
- 23:15 Paddock To Plate



- 00:00 Weird Loners
- 00:30 Cristela
- 01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
- 02:30 The Big C
- 04:00 Men At Work
- 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 05:30 Young & Hungry
- 06:00 Tii Death
- 06:30 New Girl
- 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 08:00 Men At Work
- 08:30 Young & Hungry
- 10:30 New Girl
- 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 12:00 Tii Death
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- 13:00 Young & Hungry
- 13:30 New Girl
- 15:30 Cristela
- 16:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
- 16:30 Tii Death
- 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 18:00 Last Man Standing
- 18:30 The Goldbergs
- 19:00 Modern Family
- 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 21:00 Cristela
- 21:30 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
- 22:30 You're The Worst
- 23:00 The Big C
- 23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers



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- 20:00 The River Wild
- 22:00 Days Of Thunder



- 00:00 Hitman-18
- 02:00 Android Cop-PG15
- 04:00 Big Ass Spider!-PG15
- 06:00 Arachnophobia-PG15
- 08:00 The River Wild-PG15
- 10:00 Jurassic Attack-PG15
- 12:00 Percy Jackson And The Lightning Thief-PG15
- 14:00 Arachnophobia-PG15
- 16:00 Destruction: Las Vegas
- 18:00 The River Wild-PG15
- 20:00 Days Of Thunder-PG15
- 22:00 The Scorpion King 4: Quest For Power-PG15



- 00:00 Three Night Stand
- 02:00 The Love Punch
- 04:00 The Misadventures Of The Dunderheads
- 06:00 Cas & Dylan
- 08:00 Vampire Dog
- 10:00 The Misadventures Of The Dunderheads
- 12:00 The Love Punch
- 14:00 Roommates
- 16:00 Vampire Dog
- 18:00 Napoleon Dynamite
- 20:00 A Case Of You
- 22:00 The Right Kind Of Wrong



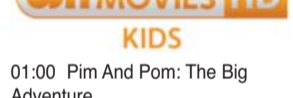
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- 03:00 Reach Me-PG15
- 05:00 Wrath-PG15
- 07:00 The French Minister-PG15
- 09:00 Still Mine-PG15
- 11:00 Wrath-PG15
- 13:00 United Passions-PG15
- 15:00 At Middleton-PG15
- 17:00 Still Mine-PG15
- 19:00 The Wee Man-PG15
- 21:00 The Disappearance Of Eleanor Rigby: Him-PG15
- 23:00 Kelly & Cal-18



- 01:30 Suspension Of Disbelief
- 03:30 Vanity Fair
- 06:00 Seven Days In Utopia
- 07:45 Great Expectations
- 10:00 Vanity Fair
- 12:30 The Bag Man
- 14:30 Mr. Pip
- 16:30 Great Expectations
- 19:00 The Hi-Lo Country
- 21:00 How I Live Now
- 23:00 Enemy



- 01:00 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure
- 02:45 Curious George: Back To The Jungle
- 04:30 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
- 06:00 Captain Sabertooth And The Treasure Of Lama Rama
- 08:00 The Heart Of The Oak
- 10:00 Marco Macaco
- 11:30 Snow Queen
- 13:00 Curious George: Back To The Jungle
- 14:30 The Adventures Of Don Quixote
- 16:00 Scooby-Doo! WrestleMania Mystery
- 18:00 Marco Macaco
- 20:00 Tom And Jerry: Santa's Little Helpers
- 21:00 The Heart Of The Oak
- 00:35 Fargo
- 02:10 No Mercy



- 03:55 Ghoules
- 05:15 Hero's Island
- 06:50 Saved!
- 08:20 Breakin'
- 09:45 Hercules
- 11:25 Adventures Of Hercules
- 12:50 It Runs In The Family
- 14:15 Music Of The Heart
- 16:20 Nobody's Fool
- 18:05 Puckoon
- 19:30 Saved!
- 21:00 No Mercy
- 22:50 Groundhog Day
- 00:35 Fargo
- 02:10 No Mercy



PERCY JACKSON AND THE LIGHTNING THIEF ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD



- 00:00 The Aggression Scale-PG15
- 02:00 In My Dreams-PG15
- 03:45 Christmas In Conway-PG15
- 05:30 The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies-PG
- 08:00 Kon-Tiki-PG15
- 10:00 40 Days And Nights-PG15
- 12:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles-PG15
- 14:00 Heart Of The Country-PG15
- 16:00 Kon-Tiki-PG15
- 18:00 Rio 2-FAM
- 20:00 Dracula Untold-PG15
- 22:00 The Interview-18



- 03:55 Ghoules
- 05:15 Hero's Island
- 06:50 Saved!
- 08:20 Breakin'
- 09:45 Hercules
- 11:25 Adventures Of Hercules
- 12:50 It Runs In The Family
- 14:15 Music Of The Heart
- 16:20 Nobody's Fool
- 18:05 Puckoon
- 19:30 Saved!
- 21:00 No Mercy
- 22:50 Groundhog Day
- 00:35 Fargo
- 02:10 No Mercy



- 03:00 Killer Kids
- 04:00 Lmn Crime Specials
- 05:00 Born To Kill
- 06:00 I Survived
- 07:00 Crime Stories
- 08:00 Surveillance Oz
- 10:00 Frenemies
- 11:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 12:00 Crime Stories
- 13:00 Homicide Hunter
- 14:00 I Survived
- 15:00 Frenemies
- 16:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 17:00 Crime Stories
- 18:00 The First 48
- 19:00 I Survived
- 20:00 Homicide Hunter
- 21:00 Crime Stories
- 22:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 23:00 When Life Means Life
- 00:00 They Took Our Child, We Got Her Back
- 01:00 Campus Nightmares
- 02:00 My Ghost Story



- 03:05 Calimero
- 03:20 Zou
- 03:30 Loopidoo
- 03:45 Art Attack
- 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:20 Calimero
- 04:35 Zou
- 04:45 Loopidoo
- 05:00 Art Attack

- 05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:35 Calimero
- 05:50 Zou
- 06:00 Loopidoo
- 06:15 Art Attack
- 06:35 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:50 Calimero
- 07:00 Zou
- 07:20 Loopidoo
- 07:35 Art Attack
- 08:00 Calimero
- 08:10 Zou
- 08:25 Loopidoo
- 08:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 09:05 Sofia The First
- 09:30 Miles From Tomorrow
- 10:05 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 10:35 Doc McStuffins
- 11:00 Sofia The First
- 11:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 12:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 12:25 Special Agent Oso
- 12:40 The Hive
- 12:50 Handy Manny
- 13:15 Jungle Junction
- 13:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 14:00 Sofia The First
- 14:25 Sofia The First
- 14:50 Miles From Tomorrow
- 15:15 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 15:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 16:05 The Adventures Of The Disney...
- 16:35 Miles From Tomorrow
- 17:00 Sofia The First
- 17:25 Aladdin
- 17:50 Gummi Bears
- 18:15 Chip 'n Dales Rescue Rangers
- 18:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates

- 19:05 Miles From Tomorrow
- 19:30 Sofia The First
- 19:55 Doc McStuffins
- 20:15 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 20:45 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 21:05 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 21:35 Sofia The First
- 22:00 The Adventures Of The Disney...
- 22:25 The Adventures Of The Disney...
- 22:55 The Adventures Of The Disney...
- 23:20 Lilo And Stitch
- 23:45 Cars Toons
- 23:50 Zou
- 00:05 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:20 Calimero
- 00:35 Zou
- 00:50 Loopidoo
- 01:05 Art Attack
- 01:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:45 Calimero
- 02:00 Zou
- 02:15 Loopidoo
- 02:30 Art Attack
- 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster



- 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
- 09:50 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 Cloud 9
- 14:25 Guardians Of The Galaxy
- 14:30 Phineas And Ferb
- 14:45 Phineas And Ferb
- 15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse Rocket Monkeys
- 15:15 Lab Rats
- 15:40 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
- 16:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 16:30 Kirby Buckets
- 16:55 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 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
- 23:00 Boyster
- 00:00 Programmes Start At 7:00am KSA



- 03:00 American Pickers
- 04:00 American Restoration
- 05:00 Shipping Wars
- 05:50 American Pickers
- 06:45 American Restoration
- 07:35 Shipping Wars
- 08:25 Counting Cars
- 09:15 Mountain Men
- 10:05 Ax Men
- 11:00 The Legend Of Shelby The Swamp Man
- 12:00 Mountain Men
- 13:00 American Pickers
- 14:00 Storage Wars
- 15:00 Pawn Stars
- 16:00 Shipping Wars
- 17:00 Pawn Stars
- 18:00 American Pickers
- 20:00 Storage Wars
- 21:00 Ax Men



A MILLION WAYS TO DIE IN THE WEST ON OSN MOVIES HD

CLASSIFIEDS

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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (07/01/2016 TO 13/01/2016)

SHARQIA-1
 DADDY'S HOME 12:00 PM
 APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film 2:00 PM
 DADDY'S HOME 4:00 PM
 DILWALE - Hindi 6:00 PM
 DILWALE - Hindi 9:00 PM
 DADDY'S HOME 12:05 AM

SHARQIA-2
 THE REVENANT 12:15 PM
 APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film 1:30 PM
 THE REVENANT 3:15 PM
 THE REVENANT 6:15 PM
 THE REVENANT 9:15 PM
 THE REVENANT 12:15 AM

SHARQIA-3
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 11:30 AM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 1:15 PM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 3:00 PM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 4:45 PM
 PAPAARAZZI - Arabic 6:30 PM
 PAPAARAZZI - Arabic 8:45 PM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 11:00 PM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 12:45 AM

MUHALAB-1
 DADDY'S HOME 11:30 AM
 DADDY'S HOME 1:30 PM
 EXTRACTION 3:30 PM
 DADDY'S HOME 5:30 PM
 DILWALE - Hindi 7:30 PM
 DADDY'S HOME 10:30 PM
 EXTRACTION 12:30 AM

MUHALAB-2
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 11:45 AM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 1:30 PM
 WAZIR - Hindi 3:15 PM
 PAPAARAZZI - Arabic 5:30 PM
 PAPAARAZZI - Arabic 7:45 PM
 PAPAARAZZI - Arabic 10:00 PM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 12:15 AM

MUHALAB-3
 THE REVENANT 11:30 AM
 THE REVENANT 2:30 PM
 THE REVENANT 5:30 PM
 THE REVENANT 8:30 PM
 THE REVENANT 11:30 PM

FANAR-1
 DADDY'S HOME 11:30 AM
 DADDY'S HOME 1:30 PM
 THE PEANUTS MOVIE 3:30 PM
 DADDY'S HOME 5:30 PM
 FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS 7:30 PM
 DADDY'S HOME 9:45 PM
 THE REVENANT 11:45 PM

FANAR-2
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 12:30 PM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 2:30 PM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 4:30 PM
 EXTRACTION 6:30 PM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 8:30 PM
 EXTRACTION 10:30 PM

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 12:30 AM
FANAR-3
 APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film 11:45 AM
 APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film 1:45 PM
 PAPAARAZZI - Arabic 3:30 PM
 APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film 5:45 PM
 PAPAARAZZI - Arabic 7:30 PM
 PAPAARAZZI - Arabic 9:45 PM
 PAPAARAZZI - Arabic 12:05 AM

FANAR-4
 THE REVENANT 12:15 PM
 APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film 1:30 PM
 THE REVENANT 3:15 PM
 THE REVENANT 6:15 PM
 THE REVENANT 9:15 PM
 THE REVENANT 12:15 AM

FANAR-5
 DILWALE - Hindi 12:00 PM
 DILWALE - Hindi 3:00 PM
 WAZIR - Hindi 6:00 PM
 DILWALE - Hindi 8:30 PM
 DILWALE - Hindi 11:30 PM

MARINA-1
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 11:45 AM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 1:30 PM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 3:15 PM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 5:00 PM
 PAPAARAZZI - Arabic 6:45 PM
 PAPAARAZZI - Arabic 9:00 PM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 11:15 PM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 1:00 AM

MARINA-2
 DADDY'S HOME 11:45 AM
 DADDY'S HOME 1:45 PM
 POINT BREAK 3:45 PM
 DADDY'S HOME 6:15 PM
 EXTRACTION 8:15 PM
 THE REVENANT 10:15 PM
 EXTRACTION 1:15 AM

MARINA-3
 THE REVENANT 12:30 PM
 THE GOOD DINOSAUR 1:30 PM
 THE GOOD DINOSAUR 3:30 PM
 THE REVENANT 5:45 PM
 THE REVENANT 8:45 PM
 THE REVENANT 11:45 PM

AVENUES-1
 GET SQUIRRELY 12:30 PM
 GET SQUIRRELY 2:45 PM
 GET SQUIRRELY 5:00 PM
 APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film 7:15 PM
 APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film 9:15 PM
 APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film 11:15 PM
 APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film 1:15 AM

AVENUES-2
 EXTRACTION 1:00 PM
 EXTRACTION 3:15 PM
 EXTRACTION 5:30 PM
 CHARLIE - Malayalam 7:45 PM

EXTRACTION 10:30 PM
 EXTRACTION 12:45 AM

AVENUES-3
 DILWALE - Hindi 11:30 AM
 DILWALE - Hindi 2:30 PM
 DILWALE - Hindi 5:45 PM
 DILWALE - Hindi 9:00 PM
 DILWALE - Hindi 12:15 AM

AVENUES-4
 DADDY'S HOME 11:45 AM
 DILWALE - Hindi 2:00 PM
 DILWALE - Hindi 5:15 PM
 STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS Special Show "THE BIG SHORT" 5:30 PM
 DILWALE - Hindi 5:30 PM
 DADDY'S HOME 8:30 PM
 DADDY'S HOME 11:45 PM

AVENUES-5
 THE REVENANT 12:15 PM
 THE REVENANT 3:30 PM
 DADDY'S HOME 6:45 PM
 THE REVENANT 9:00 PM
 THE REVENANT 12:15 AM

360°-1
 THE REVENANT 11:30 AM
 THE REVENANT 2:30 PM
 THE REVENANT 5:45 PM
 THE REVENANT 9:00 PM
 THE REVENANT 12:15 AM

360°-2
 THE REVENANT 1:15 PM
 THE REVENANT 4:30 PM
 THE REVENANT 7:45 PM
 THE REVENANT 11:00 PM

360°-3
 EXTRACTION 12:30 PM
 SNOWTIME! 2:45 PM
 EXTRACTION 5:00 PM
 EXTRACTION 7:15 PM
 EXTRACTION 9:30 PM
 EXTRACTION 11:45 PM

AL-KOUT.1
 THE REVENANT 11:30 AM
 THE REVENANT 2:30 PM
 THE REVENANT 5:30 PM
 THE REVENANT 8:30 PM
 THE REVENANT 11:30 PM

AL-KOUT.2
 DADDY'S HOME 12:30 PM
 EXTRACTION 2:45 PM
 DADDY'S HOME 5:00 PM
 DADDY'S HOME 7:00 PM
 DADDY'S HOME 9:00 PM
 EXTRACTION 11:00 PM
 EXTRACTION 1:00 AM

AL-KOUT.3
 FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS 12:45 PM
 FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS 3:00 PM

PAPAARAZZI - Arabic 5:15 PM
 PAPAARAZZI - Arabic 7:30 PM
 PAPAARAZZI - Arabic 9:45 PM
 FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS 12:05 AM

AL-KOUT.4
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 11:30 AM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 1:15 PM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 3:00 PM
 APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film 4:45 PM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 6:45 PM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 8:45 PM
 APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film 10:45 PM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 12:30 AM

BAIRAQ-1
 THE REVENANT 12:15 PM
 SNOWTIME! 1:30 PM
 THE REVENANT 3:15 PM
 THE REVENANT 6:15 PM
 THE REVENANT 9:15 PM
 THE REVENANT 12:15 AM

BAIRAQ-2
 EXTRACTION 12:30 PM
 THE PEANUTS MOVIE 2:30 PM
 DADDY'S HOME 4:30 PM
 THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEAD 6:30 PM
 DADDY'S HOME 8:45 PM
 APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film 10:45 PM
 EXTRACTION 12:30 AM

BAIRAQ-3
 DADDY'S HOME 11:30 AM
 DADDY'S HOME 1:30 PM
 DILWALE - Hindi 3:30 PM
 DILWALE - Hindi 6:30 PM
 PAPAARAZZI - Arabic 9:30 PM
 APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film 11:45 PM

PLAZA
 THE REVENANT 4:15 PM
 CHARLIE - Malayalam 7:30 PM
 THE REVENANT 7:30 PM
 PAPAARAZZI - Arabic 10:30 PM

LAILA
 DADDY'S HOME 4:00 PM
 APARTMENT NO. 6 - Kuwaiti Film 6:15 PM
 DADDY'S HOME 8:15 PM
 THE REVENANT 10:15 PM

AJIAL.1
 WAZIR - Hindi 3:45 PM
 WAZIR - Hindi 6:00 PM
 WAZIR - Hindi 8:15 PM
 WAZIR - Hindi 10:30 PM

AJIAL.2
 HO MANN JAHAN - Pakistani 4:15 PM
 CHARLIE - Malayalam 7:30 PM
 HO MANN JAHAN - Pakistani 10:00 PM

AJIAL.3
 DILWALE - Hindi 3:45 PM
 DILWALE - Hindi 6:45 PM
 DILWALE - Hindi 9:45 PM

FOR RENT

For rent new high end apartment 2B + 2B + kitchen, living room.

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Tel: 65797760

FOR SALE

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Contact: 99068246.

Accommodation

Accommodation available for a decent non-smoking bachelor/ working lady/couple with a couple in 2BR C-AC in Abbassiya near Integrated school. Contact: 66005134. (C 5111)

10-1-2016



Prayer timings

Fajr: 05:20
Shorook 06:44
Duhr: 11:56
Asr: 14:50
Maghrib: 17:09
Isha: 18:30

Flight Schedule

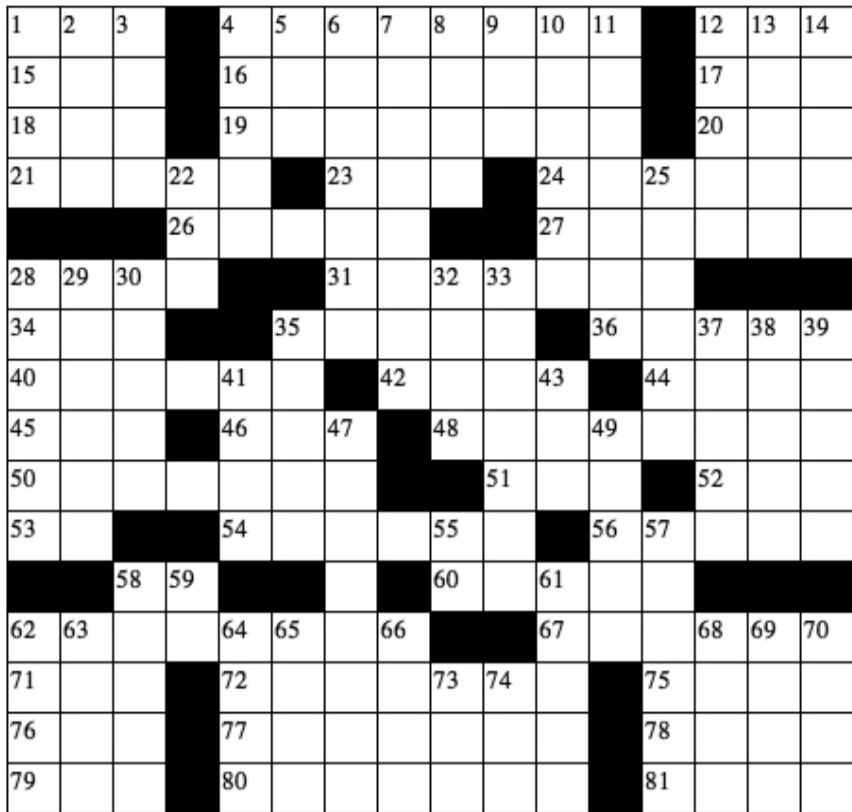
Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

In case you are not travelling, your proper cancellation of bookings will help other passengers to use seats

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 12/1/2016				Departure Flights on Tuesday 12/1/2016			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
BBC	143	Dhaka	00:05	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
MSC	415	Sohag	00:05	FDB	072	Dubai	00:40
KLM	411	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:20	MSC	404	Asyut	00:55
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:55
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	MSC	416	Sohag	01:00
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55	BBC	143	Chittagong/Dhaka	01:35
THY	772	Istanbul	01:05	KLM	411	Amsterdam	01:35
DLH	635	Doha	01:35	KAC	283	Dhaka	02:10
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:45	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:35
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	02:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	381	Delhi	03:30
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	UAE	854	Dubai	03:45
FDB	067	Dubai	03:05	PGT	859	Istanbul	03:55
RJA	644	Amman	03:05	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	FDB	068	Dubai	04:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:15	MSR	613	Cairo	04:10
KKK	6507	Istanbul	03:20	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:15
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:25	KKK	6508	Istanbul	04:20
THY	6376	Istanbul	05:05	QTR	1077	Doha	05:00
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:40	THY	765	Istanbul	05:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	JZR	560	Sohag	06:10
FDB	5061	Dubai	06:30	FDB	070	Dubai	06:30
BAW	157	London	06:40	THY	6376	Dubai/Istanbul	06:35
KAC	416	Jakarta/Kuala Lumpur	07:15	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
KAC	412	Manila/Bangkok	07:20	RJA	645	Amman	07:05
QTR	1086	Doha	07:40	THY	771	Istanbul	07:05
FDB	053	Dubai	07:45	FDB	5062	Dubai	07:10
SVA	512	Riyadh	07:50	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50	FDB	054	Dubai	08:30
OMA	641	Muscat	08:00	QTR	1087	Doha	08:40
KAC	354	BLR	08:15	BAW	156	London	08:45
KAC	206	Islamabad	08:25	SVA	513	Riyadh	08:50
KAC	352	Kochi	08:30	OMA	642	Muscat	08:55
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	JZR	1540	Cairo	09:15
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:50	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:25
KAC	362	Colombo	08:50	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	513	Tehran	09:45
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:20	KAC	541	Cairo	09:55
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25	UAE	856	Dubai	09:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	101	London/New York	09:55
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:20	KAC	561	Amman	10:00
IRC	6507	Shiraz	10:30	KAC	671	Dubai	10:05
IRA	675	Lar	10:40	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:25
UAE	873	Dubai	11:05	KAC	501	Beirut	10:30
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:15	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	KAC	165	Rome/Paris	11:00
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	QTR	1071	Doha	11:00
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:05
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30	KAC	539	Sharm el-Sheikh	11:25
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	IRC	6508	Shiraz	11:30
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	IRA	674	Lar	11:40
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	RBG	554	Alexandria	11:55
FBA	831	Al Najaf	13:30	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:20
AGY	780	Alexandria	13:45	UAE	874	Dubai	12:30
KAC	382	Delhi	13:50	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	KAC	785	Jeddah	13:00
FDB	057	Dubai	14:10	KAC	679	Muscat	13:00
KAC	514	Tehran	14:10	FDB	076	Dubai	13:10
AXB	393	Kozhikode	14:20	THY	764	Istanbul	13:30
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:30	JAI	574	Mumbai	13:45
KAC	672	Dubai	14:45	MSC	403	Asyut	14:00

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

CROSSWORD 1135



ACROSS

1. The compass point that is one point east of due south.
4. Husk of a pea.
12. Being one hundred more than two hundred.
15. Someone who is morally reprehensible.
16. City in central Iran.
17. A slippery or viscous liquid or liquefiable substance not miscible with water.
18. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
19. A mathematician specializing in geometry.
20. (computer science) A measure of how densely information is packed on a storage medium.
21. English economist noted for his studies of international trade and finance (born in 1907).
23. Airtight sealed metal container for food or drink or paint etc..
24. Normally existing at birth.
26. Tree (as opposed to shrub).
27. A conversation between two persons.
28. United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
31. An elaborate representation of scenes from history etc.
34. The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
36. The vertical triangular wall between the sloping ends of gable roof.
40. The state that precedes vomiting.
42. A person with an unusual or odd personality.
44. An elaborate song for solo voice.
45. Either extremity of something that has length.
46. Bark in a high-pitched tone.
48. The property characteristic of old age.
50. The god who fathered the islands and gods of Japan with his sister Izanami.
51. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
52. Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
53. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
54. Roman statesman and philosopher who was an advisor to Nero (circa 4 BC - 65 AD).
56. Industrial city of Belarus southeast of Minsk.
60. A large number or amount.
62. A salt or ester of sulphuric acid.
67. New Zealand timber tree resembling the cypress.
71. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
72. Russian ballet dancer (1910-1998).
75. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
76. In or of the month preceding the present one.
77. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
78. A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
79. A statement that deviates from or perverts the truth.
80. The great hall in ancient Persian palaces.
81. A unit of apothecary weight equal to an eighth of an ounce or to 60 grains.

DOWN

1. A fraudulent business scheme.
2. A Chadic language spoken in northern Nigeria.
3. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
4. An electronic device that generates a series of beeps when the person carrying it is being paged.
5. The compass point midway between east and southeast.
6. Abbreviation of a word by omitting the final sound or sounds.
7. A port city is southern Indonesia.
8. Any place of complete bliss and delight and peace.
9. Feline mammal usually having thick soft fur and being unable to roar.
10. A member of the Iroquoian people formerly living east of Lake Ontario.
11. The act of mending a hole in a garment with crossing threads.
12. Common Business Oriented Language.
13. An oral antibiotic (trade name Cipro) used against serious bacterial infections of the skin or respiratory tract of urinary tract or bones or joints.
14. Fruit (especially peach) whose flesh adheres strongly to the pit.
22. The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
25. The peninsula and island in the Philippines where Japanese forces besieged American forces in World War II.
29. A fixed number of lines of verse forming a unit of a poem.
30. Any taillike structure.
32. (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
33. Resembling or characteristic of or appropriate to an elegy.
35. United States baseball player.
37. Flesh of any of various freshwater fishes of the families Centrarchidae of North America or Cyprinidae of Europe.
38. A fabric woven with lisle thread.
39. An upright tripod for displaying something (usually an artist's canvases).
41. An unfledged or nestling hawk.
43. Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.
47. Pearl oysters.
49. (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
55. A soft silver-white ductile metallic element (liquid at normal temperatures).
57. United States assassin of President John F. Kennedy (1939-1963).
58. Having winglike extensions.
59. A person forced to flee from home or country.
61. Jordan's port.
63. Large sweet juicy hybrid between tangerine and grapefruit having a thick wrinkled skin.
64. A member of the Athapaskan people of the Trinity River valley in California.
65. A city in northwestern Syria.
66. A town in north central Oklahoma.
68. The sixth month of the civil year.
69. God of love and erotic desire.
70. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
73. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
74. Artists or writers whose ideas are ahead of their time.

Yesterday's Solution

D	A	H	A	B	Y	S	M	A	L	A	D	I	T	
I	R	A	H	A	U	L	A	G	E	Z	A	M	A	
O	E	D	A	R	M	A	D	A	H	A	D	A	L	
R	A	J	A	B	A	P	R	S	A	L	O	M	E	
C	A	N	A	X	I	L	E							
C	O	T	T	U	S	S	Y	N	T	A	G	M	A	
A	P	E	H	A	G	L	R	O	N					
M	O	R	P	H	N	D	O	U	B	T	I	N	G	
A	R	C	H	I	V	A	L	S	T	A	R	E	T	S
S	T	E	L	L	A	O	E	B	I	G	H	T		
H	O	E	L	A	V	O	C	A	B					
A	G	N	E	R	V	A	A	K	K	A				
D	E	S	M	O	D	U	S	I	L	L	O	E	B	
A	N	S	M	A	R	I	C	O	P	A	R	B	I	
M	O	A	A	C	I	C	U	L	A	R	D	A	L	
E	L	M	N	E	C	K	L	A	C	E	A	B	A	

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may be sought after as just the person for a particular job. Your management and directional abilities are in high focus. Remember, if your workload is too full you can always consider an advisor position. This has been a time of cleaning up old debts and any other difficulties. You are able to cut through the red tape in order to get beneath and behind most any problem that comes to your attention. The pressures you may have been feeling to complete your own personal concerns have either been eliminated or reduced for now. This is a very nice day, perhaps filled with some renewed appreciation for all that is beautiful. A sense of value and valuing may find you lavishing affection on those near you this evening.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This day may have a few challenges. It may be difficult to be appreciative of a particular situation, but... Everything has a way of working out for you-particularly if you take on the attitude of going-with-the-flow. Your mental discipline should come easily-you put it to work now. Obstacles will disappear when you shine the light of knowledge on them. Creating a structure to maintain your ideals and principles becomes a high priority-an article of faith. By completing your tasks and carrying out your responsibilities, you become an inspiration to others. You have respect for your co-workers who work hard and by the end of this day you will see great progress. It is important to spend the evening in rest and relaxation.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Being in touch with ideas and people on a large scale keeps your mind busy. Your taste in art and appreciation of life in general are sharply tuned. Be sure to keep an open mind about all ideas or proposals, paying attention to all the details involved. You could make your living at buying or selling art, furniture, vehicles, etc. Remember that this is a planning time and although action can be stimulating-making plans can also be fun. The domestic scene gains new appeal. This afternoon is a good time to talk with your parents and family. Interactions with friends are free of complication and much good can come about through spending time with people you have not seen in a while. Have some special time with someone you love.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Organizing and administering people and carrying out projects will become central to your lifestyle in the workplace. You are very motivated to improve business. Outside influences can undermine your professional status, knowledge, skills and influence-careful. Remember to analyze your motives and intentions-control or respect. Do not compromise your values. Set a daily routine for yourself and try to settle into the pattern. Every day that goes by brings you closer to an understanding of your psychic insights, study of phenomena and past lives, and a better understanding of life as we know it on planet earth.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

This morning provides the quiet time you have been searching for-no interruptions. Someone is determined for you to start a new project, but perhaps a little later in the day. Consider planning before you dive into the unknown. The most successful results will come from your careful planning. The reformer, the inventor, the engineer, the revolutionary-these are important archetypes for you, as a new cycle gets underway in your life. They are icons of the ambitions that stir you at this time. Independence, freedom from past patterns and a daring readiness to innovate-such are the paths of achievement for you now.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your sense of humor is in fine form and you can make the hours seem like minutes when it comes to work. You are able to sway others to your way of thinking. If you are purchasing or selling for someone else, you will have plenty of intuitive insight that will lead you in successful directions. This afternoon your friends are running behind schedule and may need your help, or at least, understanding. You may want to spend a large amount of money on others tonight-perhaps buying everyone a meal. This could present some real problems later and you will be wise to abstain from those urges just now. There are strong possibilities that you will heal some misunderstandings with a close friend or loved one today.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

If a new business idea is going to work, it will take some planning. If it is quiet around you today, you could work on this plan. Be aware that some people make big promises and have no intention of providing results-think about your ideas before you act upon them. Express your ideas, hopes and dreams with friends-they will probably want to help you as you begin your venture. This is a rewarding day and by the time this evening comes around you will have many things to think about for this year's endeavors. You are thankful for many things at this time, including the wonderful, thoughtful people in your life. Marriage, contracts and partnerships are seen as keys to success and happiness-they have plenty of lessons to teach you.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This is the time for positive thinking and actions that promote a healing. That could mean the earning of money as well as the cure for cancer! You find new ways to earn money today and may have to shoo away others from taking your ideas. Write your ideas down, but do not leave them in clear view for others to see. The old ideas do not cut it anymore: it's the new, the unique and the original that catches and holds your interest now. You may go into business for yourself soon or make a presentation of your own inventions. Idealism, rationality and critical thinking become more and more a part of your mental patterns and the way you communicate. You are inventive, original and high-tech.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Now is the time to examine and think about what is important and of lasting value and bring your goals into focus. If you do not have clear, short-term as well as long-term goals, you need to bring a focus on these matters. This is a great time to work with others. Some sort of group project is forming. Your attitude toward cooperation is commendable and others learn from your efforts. You are willing to compromise when problems arise. You have a clear vision into your own inner sense of values, how you appreciate and love. Any feelings of confusion or frustration will pass quickly. Your personal creativeness is at a high just now.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This morning there is plenty of work. A question arises as to which person has the responsibility regarding a puzzle or problem. Just get started and do a little whistling while you work-others will soon pitch in to help or they will just be more positive. In no time, you will find it is quitting time but not before you gather with friends to do a little celebrating. The happiest and most rewarding times this month come when you gather with friends. You may be able to talk others into helping you with some charity organization that you favor. Charitable activities bring you rewards that you would have never thought about before now.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Working on some project around the house this morning has you in a quandary. You see what is wrong and you know what to do but there is just no time-take notes. Later this afternoon a friend may want to help you with these projects if you would return the favor. Later there is time for a little relaxation and a call to the pizza place for dinner. An important new goal comes more clearly into focus and the two of you may talk about setting goals and making plans for later this year. This evening is a great time to reflect and understand your own situation. Being distracted from the family is difficult and you plan to spend more time with family members in the future. Your home life will lay the foundation for greater confidence at work.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You will be presented with a financial opportunity now and you will want to check out ways to investigate and multiply your good fortune. You seem to attract good luck in money matters and if you find a few extra dollars to invest this week, you might be surprised with the results of your investments. Anything that does not serve you successfully in your life may need to be placed in the past. You may want to rid yourself of a difficult relationship as well. It may be the only fair way for two people to move forward and progress-healings are possible. There is a personal project you have on your mind today and you need to follow through on this project all by yourself.

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

Baby Shower

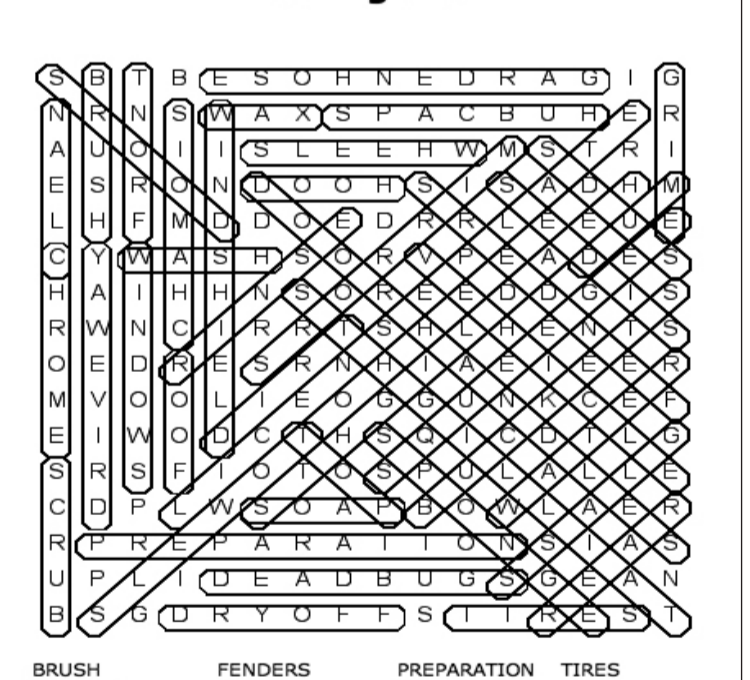
Find and circle all of the Baby Shower words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 32 letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| ACTIVITIES | CONFETTI | GIFTS | PARTY FAVORS |
| APPETIZERS | DECORATIONS | GLASSES | PLATES |
| CHAMOIS | EVENT | GREETING CARDS | PRIZES |
| CHROME | FAMILY | GUESTBOOK | PUNCH |
| CLEAN | FESTIVE | GUESTS | SANDWICHES |
| DEAD BUGS | FINGER FOOD | HOSTESS | SPOONS |
| DIRT | FLOWERS | INVITATIONS | STREAMERS |
| DOOR HANDLES | FORKS | KNIVES | TABLES |
| DOORS | FRIENDS | MOTHER | THEME |
| DRIVEWAY | GAMES | MUSIC | TRADITION |
| DRY OFF | GIFT OPENING | NAPKINS | WRAPPING PAPER |
| COFFEE | | | |

Yesterday's Solution

Washing a Car



- | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|------------|
| BRUSH | FENDERS | PREPARATION | TIRES |
| BUCKETS | FRONT | REAR | TOP |
| CHAMOIS | GARDEN HOSE | RINSE | TOWELS |
| CHROME | GLASS | ROOF | VEHICLE |
| CLEAN | GRIME | SCRUB | WASH |
| DEAD BUGS | HEADLIGHTS | SIDES | WATER |
| DIRT | HOOD | SOAP | WAX |
| DOOR HANDLES | HUBCAPS | SPONGE | WHEELS |
| DOORS | LICENSE PLATE | SQUEEGEE | WINDOWS |
| DRIVEWAY | MIRRORS | SUDS | WINDSHIELD |
| DRY OFF | MUD | TAIL LIGHTS | |

The hidden message is: BIRD DROPPINGS

Daily SuDoku

7			6	4				
		3			6		4	
		8			5			
	3			1	8	7		
6			2		5			3
		9	7	3			2	
	7					9		
2		6				4		
			1	7				8

very hard

Yesterday's Solution

3	7	5	4	9	2	6	8	1
1	9	8	5	6	3	4	7	2
4	2	6	8	1	7	3	5	9
7	4	3	6	5	9	2	1	8
8	5	9	2	4	1	7	3	6
2	6	1	7	3	8	5	9	4
6	1	4	9	7	5	8	2	3
9	8	7	3	2	4	1	6	5
5	3	2	1	8	6	9	4	7

easy

For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Luxembourg	00352
Albania	00355	Macau	00853
Algeria	00213	Macedonia	00389
Andorra	00376	Madagascar	00261
Angola	00244	Majorca	0034
Anguilla	001264	Malawi	00265
Antigua	001268	Malaysia	00660
Argentina	0054	Maldives	00960
Armenia	00374	Mali	00223
Australia	0061	Malta	00356
Austria	0043	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	Sao Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tone	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Toga	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lithuania	00370		

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours
Issued 11/01/2016-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 18 °C

By Day : Sunny with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 35 km/h .
By Night : Cold with light to moderate north westerly to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h with a chance for light fog over some areas.

SFC. CHART

MSL Analysis (hPa)
Valid 0000 UTC 11 JAN 2016

Four-Day Forecast

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Expected Weather	Mostly sunny	sunny	sunny	sunny
Min Temp °C	06	08	07	08
Max Temp °C	18	19	20	21
Wind Direction	north westerly to light variable	north westerly	north westerly	variable
Wind Speed km/h	06 - 26	08 - 30	10 - 32	06 - 22

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C	REC	Max °C
KUWAIT CITY	11		19
KUWAIT AIRPORT	05		18
ABDALLY	06		18
BUBYAN	07		18
JAHRA	07		19
FAILAKA ISLAND	09		18
SALMIYAH	12		17
AHMADI	10		18
JAL ALIYAH	06		17
QAROH ISLAND	15		19
UMM AL-MARADEM	14		18
NUWAISIB	09		20
WAFRA	08		20
MANAGISH	06		18
SALMY	04		17
MUTRIBA	06		18

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	18
Min Temp (°C)	08
Max Rel Hum (%)	99
Min Rel Hum (%)	30
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	39 N
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	06:44
Sunset	17:08

Prayer Times

Fajr	05:20
Sunrise	06:44
Zuhr	11:56
Asr	14:49
Sunset	17:08
Isha	18:30



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaizeem	22636920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rfae	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s.Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarroof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammes Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123

Psychologists /Psychotherapists	Soor Center Tel: 2290-1677 Fax: 2290 1688	info@soorcenter.com www.soorcenter.com	Kaizen center 25716707	Noor Clinic 23845955	William Schuilenberg, RPC 2290-1677 Zaina Al Zabin, M.Sc. 2290-1677
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Stars strut their stuff on GOLDEN GLOBE AWARDS red carpet



Taraji P Henson



Amy Schumer and Jennifer Hudson



Lady Gaga



Hollywood's top stars oozed glamour on Sunday as they hit the Golden Globes red carpet in plenty of bling and sequins-and with lots of attitude. Here are a few key takeaways from the A-list fashion parade:

Strapless glamour

Gina Rodriguez, who won a Globe last year for best actress in a comedy series for "Jane the Virgin" and is a nominee again this year, sizzled in a strapless sapphire blue Zac Posen gown, and had a quality accessory on her arm: her father. "Downton Abbey" star Joanne Froggatt, nominated for her supporting role on the wildly popular television series, meanwhile chose a



Gina Rodriguez

pale blue Reem Acra gown with a daring neckline. Comedian Amy Schumer sported a color-block black and white Prabal Gurung gown with pockets-certainly not a fashion "Trainwreck," the name of her hit film, nominated for best comedy on Sunday. And pop diva Lady Gaga, nominated for her role in fright fest "American Horror Story: Hotel," channeled Marilyn Monroe in a form-fitting black Versace gown, her platinum hair swept into a very Marilyn-esque style.

The bling ring

Brie Larson, nominated for best actress in a motion picture drama for her searing portrayal of a woman in captivity in "Room," stunned in a gold sequined halter gown from Calvin Klein, with cutouts at the waist. Julianne Moore glittered from head to toe in a deep blue sequined gown by Tom Ford-and with Ford on her arm.

Cleavage - lots of it

Viola Davis, already an Emmy winner for her portrayal of law school professor Annalise Keating in ABC's "How to Get Away with Murder," left little to the imagination in her Marchesa navy blue frock with sheer sleeves, all encrusted with silver accents. Pop star Katy Perry also dared in a plunging Prada gown in this year's Pantone color of the year, rose quartz. And Jaimie Alexander, the star of NBC hit drama "Blindspot" and a presenter at Sunday's ceremony, wowed fashionistas in her emerald and black Genny gown, which featured geometric patterns-and a plunging wide neckline.

(Somewhat) demure looks

Alicia Vikander, a double nominee for her work in "The Danish Girl" and "Ex Machina," looked ethereal in a pleated white goddess gown from Louis Vuitton with a sweet ruffled neckline. Saoirse Ronan, also up for best actress, similarly picked white-a feminine Yves Saint Laurent Couture gown with draping cape-for her big night. ("My Globes look" will be elegant, but it will still be young," Ronan told Variety at this week's "Brooklyn" celebration. "I have a brilliant stylist who has really encouraged me to just have fun with what I wear. When you're young, you don't want to be taken too seriously.")

Other ladies making statements in white included "Transparent's" Judith Light, who chose a sleek pantsuit. "Orange is the New Black's" Laverne Cox, who wore a simple white Elizabeth Kennedy dress with dramatic train. Eva Longoria, who picked a fitted white dress with floral embellishments and open back; and Taraji P Henson, who opted for a strapless Stella McCartney dress. Staying in the light color or family, lead actress nominee Cate Blanchett picked an elegant silk Givenchy dress in a pale shade of pink, while "Hateful Eight's" Jennifer Jason Leigh went for a Roland Mouret bespoke galaxy gown in powder blue.

Many other Globe attendees chose to stand out by way of sparkle. "American Crime's" nominee Regina King caught eyes in a caped Krikor Jabotian gown-which screamed haute couture. Eva Green glittered in gold Elie Saab. And Kate Hudson shimmered and showed a surprising amount of skin in a Michael Kors crop top and mermaid-cut skirt.



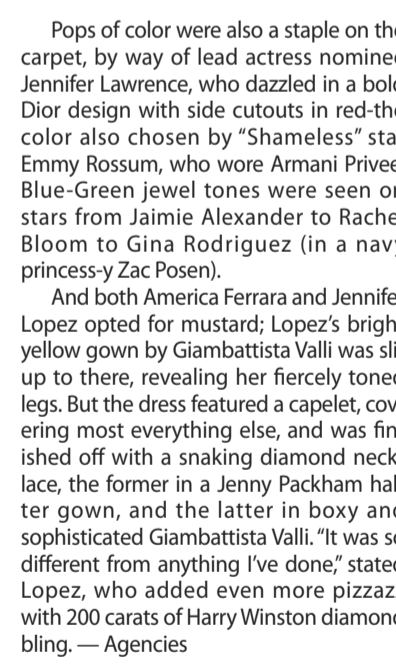
Eva Green



Brie Larson



Jennifer Lopez



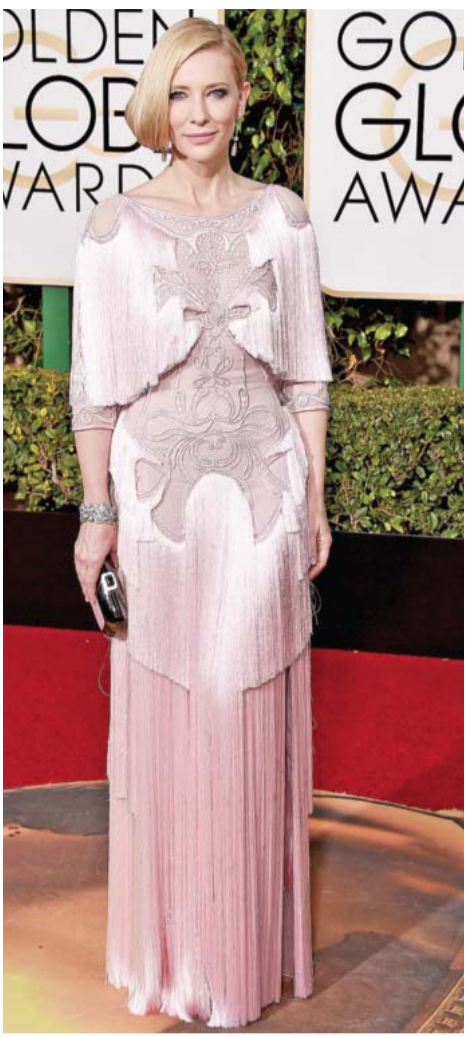
Joanne Froggatt



Viola Davis



Saoirse Ronan



Cate Blanchett



Judith Light



Queen Latifah



Regina King



Katy Perry



Selena Gomez



Madison Justice, left, and Victoria Justice



America Ferrera and Eva Longoria



Barbara Meier



America Ferrera and Eva Longoria



Danielle Panabaker



Lola Kirke



Paz Vega



Kelly Rowland



Xosha Roquemore



Aja Naomi King



Kate Bosworth



Malin Akerman



In this image released by NBC, Leonardo DiCaprio accepts the award for best actor in a motion picture drama for his role in "The Revenant".

Stallone, Lawrence, 'Mr Robot' win GOLDEN GLOBE AWARDS



Matt Damon poses in the press room with the award for Best Actor in a Motion Picture - Musical or Comedy for "The Martian".



Brie Larson poses in the press room with the award for best actress in a motion picture - drama for "Room".



In this image released by NBC, Laszlo Nemes accepts the award for best foreign language film for "Son of Saul".

Sylvester Stallone scored a knockout 29 years after the first "Rocky," Jennifer Lawrence notched her third Golden Globe and Matt Damon landed both best actor for his stranded astronaut in "The Martian" and withering jabs from host Ricky Gervais at the 73rd annual Golden Globes Awards. Nominated for the same character that earned him his only other Golden Globe nod, Stallone took best supporting actor for the "Rocky" sequel-reboot "Creed." The Beverly Hills, California, crowd greeted him with a standing ovation. "I want to thank my imaginary friend Rocky Balboa for being the best friend I ever had," said Stallone.

Though security was especially tight to guard against terrorism, the Gervais-led Globes, evidenced little of seriousness that marks most award shows, or the teary-eyed acceptance speeches. Instead, the Globes had a particularly unraveled atmosphere that included Jonah Hill dressed as the bear from "The Revenant," copious discussion of "Transparent" star Jeffrey Tambor's male anatomy by Gervais, and much buzzing about Sean Penn's escapade with Mexican drug kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman. Gervais greeted the crowd (which he labeled "pill-popping sexual deviant scum") with a predictably astringent opening, setting the tone for a much-bleeped night that was at turns irreverent and frivolous.

Awkward encounter

"I want to do this monologue and then go into hiding. Not even Sean Penn will find me," he said, pausing for a swig. "Snitch." In his fourth time hosting, Gervais' act dominated the evening, often drawing loud laughs from the Beverly Hilton hotel audience, but also the expected criticism. In a particularly awkward encounter, he and Mel Gibson stood arm-in-arm after exchanging insults.

"I love seeing Ricky once every three years because it reminds me to get a colonoscopy," said Gibson. Lawrence, who spent much of the night with her new friend and collaborator Amy Schumer (herself a nominee for "Trainwreck"), scored her third Globe for a David O. Russell-directed film. After winning for "Silver Linings Playbook" and "American Hustle," she made it three for "Joy," besting the category favorite Brie Larson ("Room").

Damon had to suffer being introduced by Gervais as "the only person who Ben Affleck hasn't been unfaithful to," but he later won best actor in a comedy for Ridley Scott's sci-fi hit "The Martian." Damon said the film's success was an unlikely pleasure: "I have made a lot of movies that people just didn't go see." ("The Martian" also won best film comedy.) Scott was also pegged by many for best director, too, but that honor went to Alejandro Inarritu for the frontier thriller "The Revenant," fresh off a \$37 million debut that nearly topple the box-office behemoth "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" - which didn't screen in time for the Hollywood Foreign Press to consider. Referencing the production difficulties of the on-location shoot in the Canadian Rockies, Inarritu - an Oscar winner last year for "Birdman" - said: "Pain is temporary. A film is forever."

Though "Steve Jobs" failed to win over many critics or moviegoers, Danny Boyle's drama about the Apple co-founder earned best screenplay for Aaron Sorkin and best supporting actress for Kate Winslet. Winning her fourth Globe in 11 nominations, Winslet triumphed over the lauded Alicia Vikander for "Ex Machina," though Vikander is also contending for best actress in "The Danish Girl." Citing the crowded categories, Winslet remarked: "What an incredible year for women in film." USA's "Mr Robot" won best TV drama for its first season, besting more established favorites like HBO's "Game of Thrones" and Fox's "Empire." Best comedy series was a similar upset, with Amazon's "Mozart in the Jungle," winning over the HBO heavy-weight "Veep." Actors in both shows - Christian Slater for "Mr Robot" and Gabriel Garcia Bernal for "Mozart in the Jungle" - also won.

Memorable moment

In an election year, Gervais had the only cutting political remark in the show. He introduced presenters Eva Longoria and America Ferrera as two talented actresses that "your next president, Donald Trump, can't wait to deport." The Cecil B DeMille lifetime achievement honoree, often an emotional high point in the awards, also lacked a memorable moment. Honoree Denzel Washington fumbled with his speech, while his wife, Pauletta, prodded him. As he wound down, Washington finally granted: "Yeah, I do need my glasses." Best foreign language film went to Hungary's Laszlo Nemes' "Son of Saul," a harrowing

view of life inside Auschwitz. Said Nemes: "The Holocaust over the years has become an abstraction. For me, it is more of a face. Let us not forget this face."

Best animated film went to Pixar's acclaimed "Inside Out." Lady Gaga, who has seven Grammys, won her first major acting honor for her performance on the anthology series "American Horror Story." Gaga compared the sensation to being like Cher in "Moonstruck." Best actress in a TV drama went to Taraji P Henson for "Empire." Jon Hamm won his second Globe for the final season of "Mad Men." He thanked the HFPA for the support to their long support of the show and his "horrible" character, Don



Rachel Bloom accepts the award for best actress in a TV series, comedy or musical, for her role in "Crazy Ex-Girlfriend".

Draper. Quentin Tarantino accepted the award for Ennio Morricone's score for his "The Hateful Eight" a winner that presenter Jamie Foxx initially read as "Straight Outta Compton" in a parody of the Miss Universe winner debacle.

Losing actors

Oscar Isaac, a star of the box-office behemoth "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," won best actor in a miniseries for HBO's "Show Me a Hero." Best limited series went to "Wolf Hall." Gervais spared little time before laying into the HFPA and the awards' network, NBC, which he noted had no nominations. He mocked the whole enterprise, assuring losing actors that "no one cares about awards as much as you do." The Globe award, itself, he said, is "a bit of metal that some confused old journalist wanted to give you to meet you in person and take a selfie." One of his three Globes, Gervais said, he stuffs up his rear.

After a 10-year ratings high three years ago, the Golden Globes' viewership has dipped slightly since, with an audience of 19.3 million tuning in last year. That, though, is still very strong for the Golden Globes, which have worked to shed an image of eccentric selections made by a group of little-known international journalists. The Globes have instead grown into one of the most popular award show broadcasts of the year, thanks to increasingly credible nominees, its trademark relaxed atmosphere and its unique position as a major awards show that honors both film and television. — AP



In this image released by NBC, Leonardo DiCaprio, left, looks on with the crew of "The Revenant," as director Alejandro G Inarritu, right, accepts the award for best motion picture drama during the 73rd Annual Golden Globe Awards at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. — AP/AFP photos



Sophia Stallone, from left, Sylvester Stallone, Jennifer Flavin, Sistine Stallone, and Scarlet Stallone.



Jennifer Lawrence poses with the award for Best Actress in a Motion Picture, Comedy for her role in "Joy".



Taraji P Henson poses in the press room with the award for best performance by an actress in a TV series - drama for "Empire".



Levente Molnar, from left, Geza Rohrig, Laszlo Nemes, Gabor Sipos, and Gabor Rajna pose in the press room with the award for best motion picture - foreign language for "Son of Saul".



Aaron Sorkin accepts the award for best screenplay for "Steve Jobs".



Director Quentin Tarantino accepts the award for best original score on behalf of Ennio Morricone for the film, "The Hateful Eight".



Sam Esmail, foreground, accepts the award for best TV series drama for "Mr Robot".

List of winners for the Golden Globe Awards

Motion pictures

Picture, Drama: "The Revenant."
 Picture, Musical or Comedy: "The Martian."
 Actor, Drama: Leonardo DiCaprio, "The Revenant."
 Actress, Drama: Brie Larson, "Room."
 Director: Alejandro Inarritu, "The Revenant."
 Actor, Musical or Comedy: Matt Damon, "The Martian."
 Actress, Musical or Comedy: Jennifer Lawrence, "Joy."
 Supporting Actor: Sylvester Stallone, "Creed."
 Supporting Actress, Motion Picture: Kate Winslet, "Steve Jobs."
 Foreign Language: "Son of Saul."
 Animated Film: "Inside Out."
 Screenplay: Aaron Sorkin, "Steve Jobs."
 Original Score: Ennio Morricone, "The Hateful Eight."
 Original Song: "Writing's on the Wall" music and lyrics by Sam Smith, Jimmy Napes), "Spectre."

Television

Series, Drama: "Mr Robot."
 Actor, Drama: Jon Hamm, "Mad Men."
 Actress, Drama: Taraji P Henson, "Empire."
 Series, Comedy: "Mozart in the Jungle."
 Actor, Musical or Comedy: Gael Garcia Bernal, "Mozart in the Jungle."
 Actress, Musical or Comedy: Rachel Bloom, "Crazy Ex-Girlfriend."
 Movie or Limited Series: "Wolf Hall."
 Actor, Limited Series or TV Movie: Oscar Isaac, "Show Me a Hero."
 Actress, Movie or Limited Series: Lady Gaga, "American Horror Story: Hotel."
 Supporting Actor, Series, Limited Series or TV Movie: Christian Slater, "Mr Robot."
 Supporting Actress, Series, Limited Series or TV Movie: Maura Tierney, "The Affair." — AP



Simon Kinberg, from left, Ridley Scott, and Michael Schaefer pose in the press room with the award for best motion picture - musical or comedy for "The Martian".



Denzel Washington, left, stands with his wife Pauletta and his family as he accepts the Cecil B Demille Award.



Actor Oscar Isaac, winner of Best Performance in a Miniseries or Television Film for "Show Me a Hero".



Jimmy Napes, left, and Sam Smith pose in the press room with the award for best original song in a motion picture for "Writing's on the Wall" from "Spectre".



Sylvester Stallone, winner of the award for best performance by an actor in a supporting role in any motion picture for "Creed".



Mark Wahlberg, left, and Will Ferrell present an award.



Jada Pinkett Smith, left, and Will Smith.



Lady Gaga poses with award for Best Actress TV Series or Limited Movie, for her role in "American Horror Story: Hotel".



Kate Winslet poses in the press room with the award for Best Supporting Actress - Motion Picture for her role in "Steve Jobs".



Christian Slater poses in the press room with the award for best supporting actor in a series, limited series or TV movie for his role in "Mr Robot".



Jon Hamm poses in the press room with the award for best performance by an actor in a TV series - drama for "Mad Men".



Bryce Dallas Howard, left, and Orlando Bloom present an award.



Colin Callender, center, appears with the cast and crew as he accepts the award for best TV limited series or TV movie for "Wolf Hall".



Roman Coppola, foreground, accepts the award for best TV comedy series for "Mozart in the Jungle".

Lifestyle

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Stallone, Lawrence, 'Mr Robot' win Golden Globe Awards

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A woman with a painted face stands for a photograph in front of a mural of British singer David Bowie, painted by Australian street artist James Cochran, aka Jimmy C, following the announcement of Bowie's death, in Brixton, south London yesterday.—AP/AFP photos



This is a June 19, 1987 file photo of David Bowie.



A makeshift memorial surrounds David Bowie's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in Los Angeles.

The wild, groundbreaking styles of David Bowie, fashion icon



A photo taken on February 22, 1997 shows British rock music legend David Bowie performing on stage during the German TV program "Wetten, da?...?" in M, nster, western Germany.

His groundbreaking career was as much about style as it was about music. David Bowie plundered a wild array of influences to redraw the boundaries of fashion and blur the lines between masculine, feminine and other-worldly. Throughout his heyday in the 1970s and beyond, each new album and sound was matched by a radically new look, bringing a dimension of performance art and daring experimentation to the world of pop music. Among the most memorable outfits: the huge, billowing trousers in black vinyl and white stripes from his Aladdin Sane period in 1973, inspired by Japanese kabuki theatre. Or the iconic appearance on British TV show "Top of the Pops" a year earlier, with his shock of fiery hair and gender-bending outfit in gold, red and azure blue—inspired by the dystopian futurism of Stanley Kubrick's "A Clockwork Orange".

The gang of "Droogs" in the film, Bowie drily commented, were "Ultraviolence in Liberty fabrics," referring to the famous London fashion store. Some of his styles were just too much for censors to stomach. A cobweb bodysuit-with two hands clutching the chest—designed by Natasha Korniloff for a Ziggy Stardust show in 1973 had to be modified at the insistence of a US TV network to remove a third hand thrusting up between Bowie's legs. He also used Korniloff for one of his more striking costumes—the blue Pierrot outfit that featured in his "Ashes to Ashes" video in 1980, recalling a classical clown and 17th century theatre.

'Radical innovations'

Bowie always had an eye for emerging fashion talent. In 1997, he solicited Alexander McQueen, then a young graduate, to design his Union Jack coat, inspired by that of Pete Townshend from The Who. "He mixed a very punk aesthetic—rips, cigarette burns—with this tradition of classic British tailoring, which is very Bowie," said Victoria Broackes, who helped curate a highly popular exhibition of the singer's clothes and style. "At the time, Alexander McQueen was not yet well known to the public. But Bowie always knew how to work with the most extraordinary and interesting guys," she added.

The retrospective, which first appeared at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 2013, underlined the extent of his influence on fashion and his enduring popularity as a multimedia artist. "David Bowie is" was the museum's fastest-selling show of all time, and brought together everything from baby photographs to painstaking sketches of designs for his own costumes.

"His radical innovations across music, theatre, fashion and style still resound today in design and visual culture and he continues to inspire artists and designers throughout the world," the V&A's director Martin Roth said at the time. Even in his early days, appearing with bands The Kon-rads and The King Bees, Bowie had an instinctive grasp of the power of image, meticulously designing the fledgling groups' costumes and stage sets. He went on to take obsessive care over every aspect of his appearances, from lighting to graphic design.

The Berlin years

The exhibition travelled the world, including an important stop in Berlin where Bowie spent three influential years in the late 1970s. That was the period of his slick Thin White Duke persona that spawned a trilogy of groundbreaking albums: "Low", "Lodger" and "Heroes". All were recorded at Hansa Studios, overlooked by the guard towers of the Berlin Wall. "It was here that he seemed to escape his demons, to throw off creative burn-out and rejuvenate his inspiration," said Broackes.

Wearied by fame, trying to kick a cocaine addiction and drawn by new electronic music, Bowie arrived in still war-scarred West Berlin in 1976 where he indulged his fascinations with German Expressionism, the 1919-1933 Weimar Republic and the buzzing subcultures of the 1970s. "It's a city that's so easy to 'get lost' in—and to 'find' oneself, too," Bowie said in 2001. His love affair with Berlin fed not only his personal style but also that of his friends, leading to the iconic image of US rocker Iggy Pop on his album "The Idiot" in 1977, which Bowie produced and photographed.

The East German Stasi secret police feared Bowie's attraction, with files showing their concern that a 1987 concert in front of the Reichstag in West Berlin would draw young East Berliners to listen across the Wall. His love of Germany was always reciprocated, even beyond his death yesterday on day when the German foreign ministry wrote on Twitter: "Good-bye David Bowie. You are now among #Heroes. Thank you for helping to bring down the #wall."—AFP



This file photo taken on February 13, 1997 shows David Bowie and his wife, supermodel Iman smile as they pose for photos after Bowie received a star on the world famous Walk of Fame.



In this file picture taken on October 20, 2003, British rock legend David Bowie performs on stage at the Bercy stadium in Paris.



Somali-born model Iman and her husband David Bowie (right) arrive for the 17th Annual Glamour Women of the Year awards.



This is a Dec 1, 1993 file photo of the Princess of Wales, shaking hands with David Bowie after a show in London.

David Bowie's last album fitting epitaph

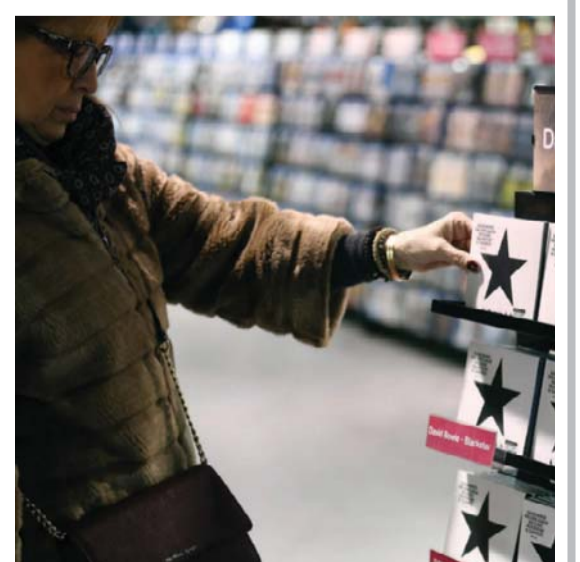
Two days before his death, David Bowie released "Blackstar," his 25th album, which serves as a fitting musical epitaph. On "Blackstar," he transforms himself once again, proving that at 69, he still had plenty of surprises up his musical sleeve. Recording primarily with an avant-garde jazz quartet and with a longtime collaborator, co-producer Tony Visconti, Bowie crafted a haunting, seven-song collection that deals thematically with death and despair - and now will be endlessly parsed for clues about his own impending mortality.

Far from being depressing, the album feels uplifting and relentlessly inventive. Credit, of course, goes to Bowie, but his new playmates here keep pace with him note for note, especially drummer Mark Guiliana, whose persistent beats provide an earthly tether to Bowie's often ethereal vocals, and saxophonist Donny McCaslin, whose bleating playing often gives the project a deliberately off-kilter, discordant feel.

Whether on the disturbing title track, which ties together two seemingly disparate tunes and is rumored to be about ISIS, the narrated-from-heaven tale "Lazarus," or the album closer, "I Can't Give Everything Away," Bowie has - for the last time - reinvented not only himself, but popular music in a way that challenges, but never alienates, the listener. It's an appropriate and satisfying musical goodbye.—AP



In this Sept 14, 1995, file photo, David Bowie performs in Hartford, Conn.



A customer picks up a copy of "Blackstar" the latest album by British musician David Bowie.