

Tourism in Kuwait can generate 30,000 jobs in 10 years



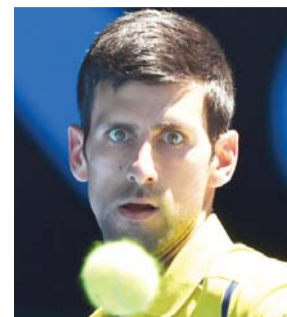
Clinton counters Sanders 'revolution' with her experience



Kuwait experience highlighted in Boumedjeria's maiden book



Djokovic, Serena star at scandal-hit Aussie Open



## KPC BOARD RESHUFFLES KEY POSTS IN OIL SECTOR

TERMS OF OFFICE END FOR MANY TOP OFFICIALS



Min 10°  
Max 26°  
High Tide 07:50 & 18:59  
Low Tide 01:18 & 13:01



### KIA REFUSING TO COOPERATE IN SALE PROBE

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** Head of the National Assembly's public funds protection committee MP Abdullah Al-Turajji yesterday accused the state-run Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) of refusing to cooperate with the panel's investigation. Turajji said the committee met yesterday to discuss the issue of selling a real estate services company by KIA in a suspicious way that "serves the relatives of the KIA director". He said that the director refused to provide the committee with documents of that sale and also refused to provide the documents to the Audit Bureau.

The committee intends to write a letter to the Assembly speaker stating that KIA has refused to cooperate with the panel's investigation and also with the Audit Bureau, and "we have the evidence of that and the cheques of the sale", the lawmaker said. Turajji also warned the finance minister, who supervises KIA, that the authority is committing a serious mistake of refusing to cooperate with an Assembly panel.

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### 4 KIDS KILLED IN FARWANIYA BLAZE



**KUWAIT:** Four children were killed in a fire in a sixth-floor flat in Farwaniya yesterday. Furniture, mattresses and other objects in the stairwell hindered firemen as they tried to reach the affected apartment, while residents of the building were evacuated. One fireman was injured. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's Board of Directors, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of Oil Anas Al-Saleh, yesterday conducted a reshuffle of major posts in affiliate companies. The board discussed nominations for the major posts in the oil sector as the term of office ended for a host of top officials, spokesman of the sector Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said in a press statement. Directors and their deputies were appointed at KPC, as well as CEOs of subsidiary companies, he added.

Hashim Sayed Hashim was appointed managing director of KPC, entrusted with management and implementation of the integration project between refining and petrochemical operations. Jamal Abdulaziz Jaafar was appointed CEO of the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC). Mohammad Abdulatif Al-Farhoud and Abdunasser Yusuf Al-Fluigi were appointed CEOs of the Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC) and the Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC) respectively. Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled noted that the KPC also appointed members of the boards of directors in all the KPC affiliated companies for the coming three years, after discussing the relevant criteria and regulations.

Kuwait's previous oil minister Ali Al-Omar was moved to the Public Works Ministry after a row with senior oil execs over his plan to reshuffle oil companies' leadership. He was appointed in Jan 2014 but faced repeated controversies during his tenure and fierce opposition to his plans to swap the CEOs of two state-owned oil company subsidiaries. KPC CEO Nezar Al-Adasani refused in November last year to make the swap as Omar decreed, instead arguing that the minister had no power over such decisions. — KUNA



**LEEDS:** British Prime Minister David Cameron (center) talks with Imam Qari Asim and Shabana Muneer, a member of the mosque's women's group, as he visits Makkah Masjid yesterday. — AFP

### CAMERON WARNS MUSLIM WOMEN: LEARN ENGLISH OR RISK DEPORTATION

**LONDON:** Muslim women who fail to learn English to a high enough standard could face deportation from Britain, Prime Minister David Cameron announced yesterday. He also suggested that poor English skills can leave people "more susceptible" to the messages of groups like Islamic State (IS). Cameron's comments came as his center-right Conservatives launched a £20 million (\$28.5 million) language fund for women in isolated communities as part of a drive to build community integration.

Immigration rules already force spouses to speak English before they come to Britain to live with their

partners. But Cameron said they would also face further tests after two and a half years in the country to make sure their language skills were improving. "You can't guarantee you will be able to stay if you are not improving your language," he told BBC radio. "People coming to our country, they have responsibilities too." Cameron's government estimates that around 190,000 Muslim women in England - about 22 percent of the total - speak little or no English. There are estimated to be around 2.7 million Muslims in England out of a total population of some 53 million.

Continued on Page 13

## KFC LUNCH BREAK

950 FILS  
4 chicken pcs.  
+ 1 bun

ADD TO YOUR MEAL

FOR 500 FILS

- SMALL FRIES
- SMALL PEPSI
- OR
- 1 COOKIE
- SMALL PEPSI
- OR
- SMALL GOESLAW
- SMALL PEPSI

VALID ONLY FROM SUNDAY TO THURSDAY FROM 12 PM TO 4 PM NOT AVAILABLE IN HOME DELIVERY

### WORLD TENNIS ROCKED BY MATCH-FIXING BOMBSHELL

**MELBOURNE:** A bombshell report alleging widespread corruption in tennis cast a shadow over the start of the Australian Open yesterday as officials vigorously denied suppressing evidence of match-fixing. The BBC and BuzzFeed reported that a "core group" of 16 players who reached the top 50 in the past decade, including Grand Slam title-winners, had repeatedly caused suspicion but never faced action. The claims, citing a leaked cache of secret files, broke as the year's first Grand Slam got underway in Melbourne, and prompted a swift response from tennis officials, with British Prime Minister David Cameron also calling for a full investigation by the sport's governing bodies.

As speculation swirled over the identities of the players under suspicion - eight of whom are reportedly in Melbourne - world number one Novak Djokovic said he was once approached to fix a match. The men's tour and the sport's anti-corruption body, the Tennis Integrity Unit, as well as Tennis Australia firmly rejected suggestions that any evidence was deliberately suppressed. "The Tennis Integrity Unit and the tennis authorities absolutely reject any suggestion that evidence of match-fixing has been suppressed for any reason or isn't being thoroughly investigated," men's tour chief Chris Kermode told reporters.

Continued on Page 13



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmed El-Tayeb.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Lord Mayor of London Jeffrey Evans. — KUNA photos

## AMIR MEETS AZHAR GRAND IMAM, LONDON MAYOR

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmed El-Tayeb, at Seif Palace yesterday. Tayeb is visiting the country to present His Highness the Amir with a medal for his appreciative endeavors in the field of religion. The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah and Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

Tayeb later met with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud, as well as Secretary General of National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Ali Hussain Al-Yoha, and NCCAL's assistant Secretary General for culture sector Dr Bader Faisal Al-Duwaish attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received Lord Mayor of London Jeffrey Evans, in presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The meeting was attended by head of honorary mission and Governor of Hawally retired Lieutenant General Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. In other news, His Highness the Crown Prince received Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Acting Minister of Oil Anas Khaled Al-Saleh, as well as Minister of health Dr Ali Saad Al-Obaidi, and President of the National Security Apparatus Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. — KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Minister of health Dr Ali Saad Al-Obaidi.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmed El-Tayeb.



KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works Dr Ali Al-Omar, Ambassador of Sudan to Kuwait Mohi Al-Deen Salim Ahmed and other officials cut the ceremony's cake. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



Sudanese ambassador Mohi Al-Deen Salim Ahmed welcomes Russian Ambassador to Kuwait Alexey Solomatn.

## PHILIPPINE AIRLINES STARTS KUWAIT OPERATIONS

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The maiden flight of Philippine Airlines landed in Kuwait yesterday and was accorded a traditional welcome by Kuwait airport officials. The inaugural flight to Kuwait carried passengers and several Philippines Airlines officials including Vice President for Sales Ryan Uy and Senior Assistant Vice President Genaro Velasquez. The first return flight took off yesterday afternoon. Abdullah Al-Rajhi, the superintendent of Air Transport for International Relations, welcomed the airline officials and passengers. "We welcome Philippine Airlines in Kuwait and we are hoping for the success of our business venture together. As part of the Kuwait Airport management, we are very happy over this new wonderful development," said Rajhi.

### Warm welcome

Uy thanked Kuwait and its people for the warm welcome accorded to Philippine Airlines. "On behalf of Lucio Tan, Chairman and CEO of Philippine Airlines, and Jaime Bautista, President and Chief Operating Officer, I would like to thank the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, the management of Kuwait International Airport and people of Kuwait for this wonderful reception," he said. "We are honored by the special attention and indeed your effusive welcome matches the warmth of your bright and sunny weather in Kuwait. I also bring you warm greetings from Manila," he noted.

The inaugural flight, according to Uy, was the first of many PAL flights that will bind Kuwait City and Manila closer together. "It took us a while to arrive here - in fact 75 years, or since PAL was founded in 1941. We consider you as a friend; Kuwaitis and Filipinos have been interacting since early 1960s when a newly-indepen-



DGCA's Director of the Department of Air Transport Abdullah Al-Rajhi with Philippine Airlines Vice President for Sales Ryan Uy.

dent Kuwait emerged as one of the world's major oil players in the world," he added. He mentioned that Filipinos were among the first to work in the oilfields and refineries in the country.

### 200,000 Filipinos

"With 200,000 Filipinos in Kuwait, it is high time that their flag carrier, the airline they trust, flies to their workplace to serve their travel needs. Of course PAL being an international carrier, we serve all nationalities. Our Kuwaiti friends and foreign expatriates based in Kuwait are most welcome as our guests, and indeed there are many reasons why PAL chose to fly to Kuwait. One and most important is the strong

and enthusiastic support from various sectors," Uy disclosed.

After Kuwait, Philippine Airlines will start operations to Jeddah from today, bringing to seven the flag carrier's total number of Middle East destinations which also includes Abu Dhabi, Doha, Dammam, Dubai and Riyadh. PR 668 departs Manila at 10:00 pm every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday and arrives in Kuwait the following day at 6:55 am local time; PR669 departs Kuwait at 2:55 pm local time every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and arrives in Manila at 8:15 am the following day. PAL's new A330-300 will be the fleet for the new Mideast routes.



KUWAIT: DGCA's Director of the Department of Air Transport Abdullah Al-Rajhi with Philippine Airlines officials in a group photo. —KUNA

## MINISTRIES SHOULD FOLLOW AMIR'S FOOTSTEPS: OMAIR

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Dr Ali Al-Omar said His Highness the Amir's orders to cut down the Amiri Diwan's expenses in view of the deteriorating oil prices was "an insinuation to all state departments to follow the same steps."

Dr Omar made those statements to reporters on the sidelines of a ceremony

organized by the Sudanese Embassy in Kuwait to celebrate Sudan's National Day. The minister also commented on the absence of some MPs from a recent parliament session, saying that it was unlikely to affect the parliament-government relation. He also stressed that Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem 'did his best' to contain the problem. Meanwhile, Omar noted that the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) security pact is on the parliament's agenda and would be discussed in due time.



DUBAI: Amiri Diwan Advisor Dr Abdullah Al-Maattouq greets UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon. —KUNA

## FINANCIAL HUMANITARIAN AID GAP RISING: UN CHIEF

DUBAI: Despite the generosity of donor countries, the gap of financial humanitarian assistance is on the rise, UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon stressed late Sunday. Ki-moon made this remark at an official launch of a report on humanitarian aid financing at International Humanitarian City in Dubai.

The one-day event, which highlighted the role of UAE in taking up international humanitarian causes, was opened by UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon and was under the sponsorship of Vice-President and

Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

Ki-moon pointed out "The gap between the increasing numbers of people in need of assistance and sufficient resources to provide relief is rising. The world today spends close to USD 25 billion annually to provide part of the required assistance to save lives and the people in need. Despite the generosity of many donors, there still remains a gap in the financing of humanitarian aid

estimated at USD 15 billion."

Sheikh Mohammad Al Maktoum lauded the UN decision to launch the report in UAE, as it has topped the list of donor countries. He stressed that joint international action is essential in narrowing humanitarian financing gap worldwide.

"To bridge the gap in humanitarian aid, it is necessary to consolidate international efforts, improve efficiency of humanitarian work, involve the private sector and establish good governance in the countries that

need help," said Sheikh Mohammad Al Maktoum said.

Meanwhile, Chairperson of International Humanitarian City Princess Haya Bint Al Hussain, wife of Sheikh Mohammad Al Maktoum said with the number of refugees and asylum seekers and internally displaced people in the world touching nearly 50 million. There are 125 million people around the world who are affected by lack of basic needs such as food, clean water resources, health and education, she added. —KUNA

# CABINET CONDEMNS TERRORIST ATTACKS IN TURKEY, INDONESIA

## CABINET NAMES SENIOR OFFICIALS TO NEW POSTS

**KUWAIT:** The cabinet yesterday condemned the recent 'criminal act' that hit Turkey 'terrorist attacks' and in Indonesia. Last Tuesday, a suicide attack struck the historical Sultanahmet Square in Istanbul, leaving many killed, mostly Germans, and wounded. Two days later, gun and bomb attacks targeted the Indonesian capital of Jakarta killing several people and wounding many others.

During a meeting held at Seif Palace and chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the cabinet expressed condolences to the two countries, and families of the victims, wishing the injured speedy recovery.

The cabinet reiterated Kuwait's unwavering stance, urging the international community to counter that "abominable phenomenon" that targets people's safety and stability worldwide, regardless of ethnicity or religion.

It also stressed Kuwait's firm rejection of all forms of terrorism, denounced by all faiths and human values and conventions. The country supports efforts seeking to vanquish the phenomenon, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Electricity and Water Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

### Diwan budget

As yesterday's weekly meeting started, the cabinet was informed of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's orders on rationalization of the budget of the Amiri Diwan, and affiliated bodies.

The ministers pointed out that His Highness the Amir's initiative offers a significant all-inclusive message, amid the

unprecedented falls of oil prices, prompting the entire society, individuals and institutions, to proceed and face the challenge, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah added.

His Highness the Prime Minister urged Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of Oil Anas Khaled Al-Saleh to coordinate with the concerned government bodies on the necessary measures and steps to enforce His Highness the Amir's directives, for rational-



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

izing expenditure, responding to requirements of current conditions, for the sake of public interests.

Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak then notified the cabinet of a message His Highness the Amir received from Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, also chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). In the message, Abbas expressed high appreciation for Kuwait's stances in support of the

Palestinian people and their just cause. He addressed means of boosting bilateral cooperation in all fields.

His Highness the Prime Minister also apprised the ministers of a message from the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to His Highness the Amir inviting him to attend the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit, to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, on May 23-24.

First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah briefed the meeting on his participation in the 4th session of Kuwait-Qatar Joint Committee that recently reviewed means of enhancing bilateral ties in all fields. In addition, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled gave notice of his meeting with Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani during his visit to the country last week. The Doha talks addressed the deep-rooted bilateral ties.

### Obaidi's grilling

Meanwhile, the cabinet lauded the argument of Health Minister Dr Ali Al-Obaidi in reply to a grilling motion submitted against him last week. The ministers stressed how Al-Obaidi disproved pivots of the grilling through facts and documents.

The cabinet reiterated keenness on public interests and enforcing real parliamentary practices, that require constructive and fruitful cooperation between the Legislative and Executive Authorities, to realize security and prosperity for 'dear Kuwait.' The meeting was concluded with a review of the political developments on the Arab and international arenas.

### Senior officials

Separately, the cabinet agreed to assign Engineer Ahmad Abdullah Al-Manfouhi to

the post of Director General of Kuwait Municipality, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah announced. He also indicated that the cabinet has appointed Dr Khaled Abdelsahab Mahdi as Secretary General of the Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (SCPD).

Moreover, the cabinet has appointed Faisal Saoud Al-Hasawi as Director General of Fish Resources at Kuwait's Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources Affairs while Mohammad Rashed Al-Hamad was assigned the post of Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice.

Meanwhile, Waleed Abdulaziz Al-Ammar was named Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. Mohammad Bader bin Naji has been assigned the post of Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information while Fatma Mohammad Al-Snan was named Assistant Undersecretary at the Ministry of Higher Education.

Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah also announced that Hamad Abdullatif Al-Barjas has been assigned the post of Deputy Director General of the Public Authority for Minor Affairs (PAMA). Haifa Abdulaziz Al-Mudhaf was named Assistant Secretary General of the Secretariat of SCPD.

Mahmoud Hamad Al-Qattan was given the post of Deputy Director General of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) while Mohammad Bahman has been transferred from PAHW to the Civil Service Commission (CSC) while retaining the same post. Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah also announced that Hadeel Abdellatif bin Naji has been transferred from Kuwait Credit Bank (KCB) to PAHW, while retaining the same post. —KUNA

In my view

## CHINESE PRESIDENT EMBARKS ON 5-DAY MIDDLE EAST TRIP



By Javid Ahmad

**T**omorrow, Chinese President Xi Jinping is embarking on a five-day trip to the Middle East. His trip to the region is going begin in Egypt, where he will meet his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. Xi is expected to discuss with Sisi bilateral and other regional issues such as Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen. Xi is also expected to discuss terrorism and the ways and means to counter this menace.

The Chinese present's visit to Egypt is on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic relationship between the countries. It is also expected that Xi will sign almost 51 bilateral agreements with the government of Egypt. Diplomatic relationship between the two countries is important as China has launched one of the most important and ambitious project of the 21st century known as 'One Belt, One Road', in which Egypt has a very important role.

On the second leg of his visit, Xi will be in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is one of the important regional countries on which China is largely dependent on for imports of crude oil. During his visit to Saudi Arabia, the Chinese president is expected to further strengthen bilateral trade and commercial relationship between China and Saudi Arabia.

Xi is also expected to visit Iran on the final leg of his visit to the region, where he is expected to discuss the 'One Belt, One Road' with the Iranian government. Iran is an important country that plays an important part in this ambitious plan. China recently opened the Asian Infrastructure investment Bank (AIIB) in which Iran's membership has been approved. China is not only importing crude oil from Iran, but is looking forward to further strengthen trade, commercial and diplomatic relationships with Iran. The lifting of sanctions on Iran may likely provide an opportunity for China to invest in Iran, and Beijing is likely to be interested to benefit from this opportunity.

Xi's visit to the region is occurring at the time when the relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia is tense. But the Chinese president's visit to the region was planned last year, and diplomatic sources are very optimistic about his visit. China may play an important role towards reducing the tension in the region and may help warring countries open diplomatic windows towards regional peace and stability. China considers Middle East's political stability is not only important for the region, but also very important for the interests of China.

Last month, the Syrian foreign minister and a Syrian opposition group were invited to visit China. Since the Syrian war started, it is expected that China has lost almost \$5 billion in investments in the oil sector. Last month, Iraq's prime minister visited China, where their bilateral relationship was upgraded. Iraq has been considered as a 'strategic partner' of China and in the near future, China is also looking to invest in Iraq and China has signed several agreements with the Iraqi government.

The fact of the matter is that China is slowly and gradually increasing its economic and political role in the region, and it seems likely in the near future that China could be play an important and leading political role along with other regional players such as the US, Russia, France and Britain. China can be counted as an important, emerging and trusted player in the region.

## ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP HAILS BLOCKING FALCONS' SMUGGLING

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The Green Line Environmental Group (GLG) expressed high appreciation Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah's instruction on the need to protect Kuwait's environment and fully respect the environment law regulations made by Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lieutenant General Suleiman Al-Fahd. GLG stressed that thanks to coastguard alertness, an Iranian boat was recently stopped on attempting to smuggle 23 rare falcons into Kuwait. "This is the largest number of falcons smugglers tried to smuggle into Kuwait," GLG said, warning that the current season was one during which falcon smugglers were very active to sell them in black markets in GCC states. GLG added that falcons were amongst endangered species included in the CITES international treaty that Kuwait joined in 2003. "This operation confirms Kuwait's commitment to the treaty," GLG highlighted, adding that falcons breed in over 25 European and Asian countries and migrate amongst 59 European, Asian and African ones during winter.

### MPs commend Amir

MP Kamel Al-Awadhi praised HH the Amir's instructions to cut the Amiri Diwan expenses and wished other ministries and government establishments would follow in view of the sharp fall in oil prices. "Rationalization is not only a patriotic duty, it is also a religious one because Islam teaches us not to be wasteful," he underlined. MP Abdulhameed Dashti also praised HH the Amir's instructions. "This step should be a role model for us all including ministries and various government bodies and establishments," he underlined, pointing out that such a step would help stop wasteful and unjustified spending as well as fight public fund violations and corruption.

## Crime

Report



## CHILD KILLED IN ACCIDENT

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** A child was killed in a car accident reported on Abdaly road yesterday. Abdaly firemen who responded to the call found that four injured people were trapped, so they freed and handed them over to paramedics, including the four-year-old Kuwaiti girl who died en route to hospital. In a separate accident, a vehicle flipped over on Salmi road, prompting the Salmi fire center to respond. Trapped people in the vehicle were freed. No injuries were reported.



### No injuries in fires

Jahra occupational fire department tackled a blaze in a vehicle in Saad Al-Abdullah. Firemen prevented the flames from spreading, bearing in mind that one of the vehicles had a gas cylinder in it. No injuries were reported. Meanwhile, a fire broke out in the kitchen of a flat in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, prompting Jleeb fire center to respond. The fire was contained to keep it from spreading and was put out without injuries. In the meantime, Jleeb fire men fought a fire in a main transformer in cooperation with electricity emergency. One electricity emergency worker was injured and taken by paramedics. Separately, fire broke in a vehicle in Mahboula behind Alia towers. Mangaf fire center responded and the fire was put out promptly. Fire also broke out in the 'Green Tower' in Fahaeel. The fire was limited, and was contained and put out. No injuries were reported.

### Liquor smuggling foiled

Detectives and customs officers foiled an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of liquor hidden in a container loaded with oranges. Official papers indicated it belonged to a company and contained oranges, but a source said Shuwaikh Port detectives became suspicious. When the container was searched, they found 200 cartons of liquor. A Pakistani mandoub was arrested when he went to clear the shipment and was sent for questioning.

## PIC ACQUIRES 25% OF SOUTH KOREAN COMPANY

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Petrochemicals Industries Company (PIC) signed an agreement to acquire 25 percent in South Korea's SK Gas Company, according to a statement by a senior official. The deal includes a propylene factory in South Korea with a production rate of 600,000 ton per year, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of Oil Anas Al-Saleh said yesterday.

Meanwhile, PIC's CEO Asaad Al-Saad stressed on the importance of this agreement in developing the oil sector in Kuwait and expanding investment in East Asia. He also said that SK Gas is one of the top partners of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), adding that petrochemical industries play a key role in supporting Kuwait's economy and petroleum resources. — KUNA



Anas Al-Saleh



**KUWAIT:** Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah is seen during his visit to the elections affairs department yesterday. — KUNA photos

## INTERIOR MINISTER INSPECTS ELECTIONS AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT FIRST FEMALE CANDIDATE REGISTERS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah yesterday visited the elections affairs department to review the latest developments and preparations for by-elections in the third constituency. The Ministry of Interior's Assistant Undersecretary for Research and Legal Studies Major General Asaad A-Rowayyeh urged candidates to formally apply to the department and Kaifan police station to get permission to set up their campaign headquarters.

The elections department manager Lieutenant Colonel Salah Al-Shatti invited candidates wishing to hold seminars and rallies to use Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor halls and school theatres after paying a deposit of KD 3,000 that would be refunded after getting clearance from the schools and the area's police station. Shatti added that the total number of candidates reached 35 including the

first female candidate Amani Al-Saleh, who registered yesterday along with four candidates. The four other candidates are Khaled Al-Daihani, Khalifa Al-Khaddah, Sami Al-Sharida and Faraj Al-Khadri.

### Court date set

The court of appeal yesterday set a hearing on Jan 25 to pass its verdict in a case filed against Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahd for slandering the judiciary. The court had reviewed an appeal made by Sheikh Ahmad over a previous verdict sentencing him to six months with labor and KD 1,000 to suspend the verdict.

### Blogger sentenced

The criminal court yesterday sentenced a blogger known as 'Carlos' to five years with labor over a case filed against him by the state security for slandering HH the Amir and Saudi Arabia.

### Life in prison

The criminal court yesterday sen-

tenced a citizen to life in prison for murdering his friend during a fight involving others in a Salmiya apartment. Notably, a fight had started amongst a number of citizens in an apartment overlooking the Fifth Ring Road, where the defendant used his gun to shoot his friend in the head and injured another.

### Ramadan donations

Informed sources at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor said that the ministry was in the process of preparing a system to collect donations during Ramadan and make sure those donations actually reach deserving people. The sources added that charities wishing to collect charity donations during Ramadan will, as usual, have to apply to get the ministry's approval and abide by the conditions and regulations to do so. The sources underlined that donations would not be collected through text messages or social media sites.



**Five candidates who registered yesterday for by-elections in the third constituency.**



**KUWAIT:** The Information Ministry's Undersecretary Faisal Al-Mutalaqem, Leaders Group's General Manager Nabila Al-Anjari and other officials inaugurate the Horeca Kuwait 2016 exhibition. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



**Officials cut the ceremonial cake.**



**Information Ministry's Undersecretary Faisal Al-Mutalaqem and Leaders Group's General Manager Nabila Al-Anjari visit a company's pavilion at the exhibition.**



**Chefs prepare food items during the event.**



**Statues made from chocolate on display at the exhibition.**

## TOURISM IN KUWAIT COULD GENERATE 30,000 JOBS OVER 10 YRS: OFFICIAL

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait will raise the standard of the tourism sector, which can provide around 30,000 job opportunities over the next 10 years, with an annual investment capacity of over KD 700 million, according to a senior official. The Information Ministry's Undersecretary for External Media Affairs and Acting Undersecretary for Tourism Faisal Al-Mutalaqem was speaking to reporters during the opening of Horeca Kuwait 2016, a two-day food, beverage and hospitality exhibition at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel.

Dubbed as one of the biggest annual hospitality expos, Horeca Kuwait has attracted several international brands from various countries around the world to display their products and services. The expo also hosts various side events

such as a live cooking demo, fruit and vegetable carving, culinary expo, sushi, burger, ice carving, wedding and decorative competitions among others.

### Pivotal role

Mutalaqem said the tourism sector will assume a pivotal role in the diversification of resources and in the reduction of the likely state budget deficit in the event of a persistent drop in oil prices. He underlined the ministry will be assuming its role in this endeavor, focusing its efforts on raising the standards of and transforming the tourism industry into a dynamic source of national income.

This strategy carries a rather large responsibility, he said, as promoting the country as a tourist destination requires huge commitment to

tourism and development projects in the country and opening more job opportunities for the youth, amid public and private sector coordination, he said. Citing Kuwait's successful participation in the global sociocultural Milan Expo 2015, the official urged the need for "specialized" exhibitions, which he said support development plans, reinvigorate trade and offer a dynamic role in encouraging youth to engage in businesses through support of SMEs.

Expected at the expo are culinary stars from various countries including Karlheinz Haase, Andre Shellenberg, Christelle Brua, Tareq Ibrahim, Luccien Veillet, Yousef Akiki, Lorenzo Cogo, Shaman Hilal and Yasser Jad. The event is organized by Leaders Group Company for Consulting and Development in collaboration with the Hospitality Services Company.



**Information Ministry's Undersecretary Faisal Al-Mutalaqem and Leaders Group's General Manager Nabila Al-Anjari tour the exhibition.**

## KUWAIT LOOKING INTO LATEST RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES: SHEIKH MOHAMMAD

**ABU DHABI:** Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Electricity and Water Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah said yesterday that Kuwait is keen



**Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah**

on looking into renewable energy's latest technologies. The Minister made this remark to KUNA upon arrival to UAE to par-

take in a two-day World Future Energy Summit (WFES).

Sheikh Mohammad said that Kuwait has practically started following serious measures in shifting to renewable energy, especially in the field of solar energy and hydro-electric, which would greatly improve the quality of the environment and save in energy cost.

The distinguished participation of Arab and international figures in the summit gave a great change to discuss means of activating clean energy technology in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, the Minister added.

The Ministry of Electricity and Water in cooperation Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation with are setting medium and long-term plans in order to achieve applying renewable energy in Kuwait. There are a number of renewable energy projects to be announced soon, he said. —KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Australian Ambassador to Kuwait Warren Hauck speaks at a dinner reception held last Sunday at his residence.



**Australian Ambassador to Kuwait Warren Hauck is pictured with some guests at the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra**

## AGRICULTURAL BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT STARTS ACROSS KUWAIT



**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) said that yesterday marked its new agricultural beautification phase of roads across Kuwait. The project will focus on suburban roads and highways with a budget worth over KD 2 million for each area, PAAAFR official Faisal Al-Sadiqi said. Sadiqi mentioned that past mistakes will not be repeated - whereby tenders were granted to less-expensive firms with lower capabilities. These negative circumstances will not be repeated, and the tender process will ensure better-equipped companies that have had past dealings with the authority, he added. —KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Scenes from agricultural beautification projects previously carried out in Kuwait. —KUNA



**Ambassador Hauck participates in meat grilling held during the reception.**



**Chefs cook a variety of Australian meat.**

## GUESTS ENJOY AUSTRALIAN MEAT AT AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** Australian Ambassador to Kuwait Warren Hauck hosted a dinner reception on Sunday for dignitaries and invited guests to taste a variety of Australian meat (Wagyu beef/steak/tenderloin and lamb chops) at his residence in Adailiya. The event was also attended by David Beatty, Regional Manager of Dubai-based Meat and Livestock Australia, who led a delegation of businessmen from "True Aussie Beef and

Lamb' Australia, who are participating in the Horeca exhibition at Jumeirah Hotel.

Australian beef/lamb takes pride of its 100 percent 'halal to the bone' meat, as sheep and cattle are slaughtered according to sharia law by Muslims. "We are happy to share with you the best of our meat from Australia. We have here with us famous Arab chef Tareq, and he's the ambassador of Meat Australia. He is the best person to showcase the best of Aussie beef and lamb. This is a rare opportunity to share right at my doorstep the best

of Australian meat," Hauck said.

According to the ambassador, Kuwait is the largest market for Australian meat, especially live sheep. "We are getting a lot of fresh meat in the market. We attribute the growing meat products here from Australia to the growth of direct flights to Australia and region - 163 flights per week between Australia and GCC countries," Hauck added. The value of live sheep trade alone is at \$80 million per year. Chef Tareq Ibrahim then held a live cooking demo.

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Al-Qabas

**ABDELHUSSAIN ABDELREDDHA'S HONORING, LONG OVERDUE**

By Ahmad Al-Sarraf

Kuwait enjoys an abundance of innovations in diplomacy, judiciary, poetry, music, film directors, humanitarian aid, business management, acting, medicine, security and sports along with other innovations, and their numbers are much more than Kuwait's geographic size, and it was possible for the number of these to increase much more if it was not for the fundamentalist attack that invaded us with its ideology, and consequently everything went backward.

All of us, along with those innovators, owe to one or more of those distinguished with something in making our life more beautiful and enriched, and our physical and mental health better, while our lives more secure and our mornings brighter. With all due respect to all Kuwaiti innovators and artists, the personality that the majority of Kuwaitis and a large portion of Gulf nationals and Arabs agree upon, and were influenced with some degree or another over the past half century, is the outstanding actor Abdelhussain Abdelredha!

Yes, we are in need of one who maintains the security of our country, and who treats us if we become sick, and who plays a piece of music if we become sick, and who writes us a beautiful novel to keep us away from our problems, and someone who produces an excellent movie that entertains us and documents our history, but we are in more need of one who puts the smile on our faces and gets happiness into our hearts, and gets happy tears out of our eyes, so our insides get rid of worries and prisons, and there is no better than what the comedians do, and those are headed by the outstanding actor who is still at the peak of his career, Abdelredha.

Kuwait planned a celebration, in an unprecedented move under the patronage of HH the Prime Minister, as part of the Al-Qurain cultural festival celebrations, to name Salmiya theater after Abdelhussain Adelredha in appreciation of his major artistic role and his contribution in making Kuwait more civilized and its people happier and proud of him. We hope the government continues to name other state facilities after outstanding innovators, and rids us from the naming randomness, and honors innovators while they are still alive to be happy about it. We should not forget to commemorate the late Khalid Al-Nafisi and Abdelamir Al-Torky, in addition to actors Saad Al-Faraj, Suad Abdullah, Ghanima Al-Fahd and others whose names we cannot fit here. Finally: We wish Abdelredha a longer life and continued contributions, and congratulate him for this deserved honoring, and congratulate ourselves for his existence among us.

— Translated by Kuwait Times



**NEW FLOORS TO ACCOMMODATE STUDENTS' INCREASE**

**KUWAIT:** Concerned authorities at the Ministry of Education is considering the addition of extra floors to the new schools in the intermediate and secondary stages to face the rising number of student, particularly in new cities.

The ministry's planning and information department carried out a study and survey on schools in new and old residential areas which are suffering from high student density, according to sources. The study

showed the existence of high densities even in areas which were built few years ago, they added. The sources said that new areas, in addition to some old one suffer an increase in student densities in all stages.

Meanwhile, the Education Ministry announced the need for "Educational Technologies supervisors" at the Educational Development and activities sector of the educational technologies department.

**1,450 schools**  
In other news, recent statistics showed that the total number of schools in Kuwait rose to 1,450, including public, private, special and religious education schools. The statistic also showed that the number of classrooms reached 24,567. Meanwhile, the stats showed that the number of students in all schools reached 647,238 while the number of teachers of both genders reached 81,404. — Al-Jarida, Al-Qabas

**ONLINE HOUSE LOAN APPLICATION SOON**

**KUWAIT:** Director General of Kuwait Credit Bank (KCB) Salah Al-Mudhaf said investment in bonds has made 4 percent returns, adding that the total invested value reached KD 13 million. Speaking during the opening

of a KCB branch in Ghirnata Sunday, Mudhaf said the percentage of returns from Dec 14, 2014 until last Saturday reached 16 percent with a total value of KD 2 million. He also said that the bank will launch a

service to provide the KD 70,000 housing loan electronically, in order to save citizens' time and effort. "Efforts continue to ease procedures and relieve burdens on citizens who apply for a loan," he said. — Al-Qabas

**OOREDOO KUWAIT PUMPS UP VOLUME OF RETAIL OUTLETS WITH ALFA PARTNERSHIP**  
24/7 ACCESS TO MOBILE SERVICES



**KUWAIT:** Ooredoo Kuwait, member of international Ooredoo Group, is offering customers 24/7 mobile services, in addition to the latest services and promotions at two locations within Alfa petrol stations. This follows an agreement that will see pumps outfitted with hi-tech Ooredoo Express Shops which will feature exciting promotions as well as a test zone

so customers can trial the latest technologies whilst they wait their car to be serviced. The Express Shops will be staffed by experienced Ooredoo Kuwait ensuring the highest quality, morning, noon or midnight.

Mijbil Alayoub, Director of Corporate Communications at Ooredoo Kuwait said: "This is the first time that round-the-clock



mobile services have been offered in Kuwait and we are grateful to the management of The Sultan Centre for their selection of Ooredoo as sole telecom operator within their shops and helping us introduce our Express Shops across the country. We are sure our customers will appreciate being able to try and buy at any time, seven days a week."

Alfa Fuel Services is part of SOOR Fuel Marketing Company (S.A.K), which was established in 2005. Following its incorporation and the constituent general assembly where it was declared finally established, the company acquired from Kuwaiti National Petroleum Company a set of 42 stations, and started operating by May, 2006.



Al-Anbaa

**IS' 7 BENEFITS FOR ISLAM AND SUNNIS**

By Sami Al-Nisf

The benefits brought about by IS and its sister organizations like Al-Qaeda, Zarqawi and all militias flocking out of their nations' legitimacy in the name of Islam, are countless for Islam in general, and Sunni Arabs in particular. Some of these benefits are as follows:

1. Distorting Islam's image before the whole world, making it appear as a religion of terrorism, decapitations, hatred and retardation through terrible crimes committed by IS and its sister organizations and putting them on video.
2. Destroying Muslim countries, particularly Sunni regions, by occupying them and making them targets for airborne and land strikes by Western and Oriental powers in collaboration with the fighters, tanks and troops of official armies in concerned states, such as Syria and Iraq.
3. Placing Muslims, namely Sunni Arabs, under criticism of national partners and fellow-citizens by destroying worship and holy places belonging to the followers of other religions and doctrines, which instigates them. They also do so through suicide bombings in market-places, schools, colleges and congregations and immediately claim responsibility for such brutal actions that are motivated and funded by ghosts and paid for by the innocent. None of the suicide bombers is the son of any of IS or similar organizations' leaders.
4. Inciting world nations against Muslims, namely Sunni Arabs, through terrorist operations committed in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas, to which IS always claims responsibility very fast to hinder any efforts to defend Muslims.
5. IS and its likes do not settle for harming and making Sunni Arabs jobless in their countries and turning those countries into war-afflicted wastelands - they also pursue them in countries they immigrate to and commit the same crimes to have everybody mistrust them and refrain from employing them.
6. IS and its likes deliberately wage consecutive wars that displace millions of Muslims, namely Sunni Arabs and deprive them from education and physical and psychological healthcare, which ends up creating generations of ignorant people who later on contribute to destroying various countries. What would one expect from millions of children deprived from school and proper food and dumped into crowded refugee camps except growing up into future killing and devastation tools?!
7. IS and its likes do not settle for destroying the present and future of the Muslim nation, it also destroyed its past through destroying temples and human heritage that had existed on those lands for thousands of years and had not been touched by the Righteous Caliphs. Thus, they strike several birds with one stone by erasing the past, provoking millions of followers of other religions and doctrines, proving that Arabs and Muslims are not fit enough to run their own countries and give enough excuses for those wishing to eradicate what is left of Arab and Muslim legacy and worship places using the 'same treatment' principle.

— Translated by Kuwait Times

**Crime**

Report

**Wife beaten for smoking shisha**

**KUWAIT:** An Egyptian woman was beaten by her husband who said he saw her smoking shisha. The woman went to the police station and submitted a medical report from Adan Hospital stating she had grazes and bruises, and claimed they were caused by her husband. The husband justified his action by saying he saw his wife smoking and lost his head. A complaint was lodged and investigations are ongoing.

**Fake cop caught**

Jahra police arrested a former police officer who claimed to be a detective and placed a flasher on his car, claiming it was his brother's. Police patrols noticed the car with the flashing light on it, and when they asked the driver for his ID, he told police: "I am your colleague from the detectives' department." Policemen insisted on seeing his ID, but he attempted to escape. Policemen caught him while he was resisting. He was taken to Jahra police station for further questioning.

**Search for swindler**

A female citizen accused a Syrian man of swindling her out of KD 7,200 she had set aside for purchasing beauty salon equipment. The woman told Jabriya police that the suspect told her about the equipment as she was preparing to open the salon, but took the money and disappeared. Hawalli detectives are investigating.

**Fight**

Hawalli police broke up a bloody fight between two citizens following a verbal dispute over a traffic disagreement. A security source said the Interior Ministry received a call about the fight, so police went to the scene and broke up the fight. They found one of the men with a wound on the head as a result of a strike with a sharp object. He was taken to Mubarak Hospital while the other man was taken to Maidan Hawalli police station. — Al-Rai

**HAWALLI STRUCTURAL STUDY SHOWS DETERIORATED INFRASTRUCTURE**

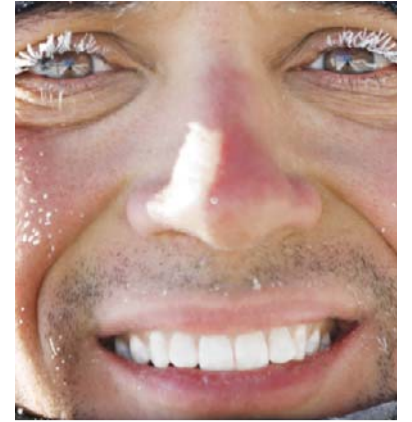
**KUWAIT:** A study recently conducted by Hawalli traffic department showed a great deal of deterioration in infrastructure in the area, and that most of its lands were used by public and private schools. The study stresses the need to approve a special plan to execute major and minor renovations and development in order to reduce the negative impacts on the roads network created by the presence of several schools in the area. The study added that the parking of vehicles in 'unofficial' parking places and yards is considered a major challenge in Hawalli's design.

Further, the study stressed that most facilities and infrastructure services were too old, outdated and in bad need for renovation, development and upgrading in order to absorb current and future population growth, which has already been overburdening electricity, water and drainage systems beyond their capacity.

The study was prepared by the Organizational Structure Department at the Hawalli traffic department and will soon be referred by Kuwait Municipality's Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi to the Municipal Council for approval. — Al-Qabas



**KUWAIT:** Director General of Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) Major General Yousef Al-Ansari lauded the role of the private sector in the success of the directorate's department plan, especially the import of vehicles and new boats that were launched on the last day of 2015. The latest experiment was carried out three days ago in a practical exercise to pump water and foam through hoses in a building under construction with a height of 164 meters which is equal to 47 floors. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun



**Bitter cold strikes Northern Plains, Great Lakes regions**

## WHERE NEXT FOR US-IRAN TIES?



(Left) Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz welcomes Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif ahead of their meeting in the capital Riyadh. (Right) Russian President Vladimir Putin shakes hands with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani during a meeting at the Kremlin in Moscow yesterday. — AFP photos



## PAK VOICES 'DEEP CONCERN' OVER SAUDI-IRAN TENSIONS

PUTIN, QATARI EMIR TALK SYRIA, ECONOMIC TIES

**RIYADH/MOSCOW:** Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif yesterday expressed "deep concern" to Saudi King Salman over escalating tensions between the Sunni kingdom and predominantly Shiite Iran. Sharif visited Riyadh in an effort to ease those tensions and is to head today to Saudi's rival Iran where he is expected to meet President Hassan Rouhani. "The prime minister expressed our deep concern on the recent escalation of tensions" between Riyadh and Tehran, Islamabad's foreign ministry spokesman Qazi Khalilullah said. "He also called for an early resolution of differences through peaceful means, in the larger interest of ummah (the Islamic nation), particularly during these challenging times."

According to the Saudi Press Agency, King Salman "welcomed the prime minister of Pakistan and his delegation" to his palace. The report gave no details of their discussions, which SPA earlier said were to touch on regional as well as bilateral issues. "The purpose of the visit is to mediate and to end the standoff between the two countries," a Pakistani government official told AFP, requesting anonymity, before the prime minister arrived. SPA said the prime minister was accompanied by Pakistan's powerful army chief, General Raheel Sharif. During yesterday's meeting, Pakistan "assured the kingdom of its support" for a Saudi coalition of 34 nations to combat "terrorism" in the Islamic world, the Pakistani statement said. "It was agreed that both countries would work together to defeat our common enemy - terrorism and extremism."

Separately, Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Emir of Qatar yesterday discussed the Syrian crisis, as global powers seek to push the warring sides towards the negotiating table. "Russia plays a main role when it comes to stability in the world," Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani said at the start of the meeting at the Kremlin. "We very much want to develop relations with Russia and find a solution to a number of problems related to stability in some countries of our region," he added in translated remarks released by the Kremlin.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said both Moscow and Doha were expecting that, in accordance with a UN-backed plan, talks between the Syrian government and the opposition would begin "in the nearest future, already this month." Lavrov said Russia and Qatar had also agreed to step up measures to battle terrorism. "Concrete steps that can facilitate this have been agreed," he said in televised remarks, without elaborating.

The two countries also agreed to ramp up economic cooperation, with Putin telling Sheikh Tamim that Russia is keen to coordinate efforts in energy, "especially in the gas sphere." "I am hoping that all the efforts we've made over the past years to build our ties will serve a good basis for further steps," Putin said. "Investment cooperation is deemed to be very important," the Qatari ruler said for his part. Amid persisting tensions with the West over the Ukraine crisis, Russia has over the past few years sought to forge closer ties with Middle East powers including Qatar. — Agencies

## IRAQ, US SEARCH FOR 3 ABDUCTED AMERICANS

**BAGHDAD:** Search operations were underway yesterday for three Americans kidnapped from a "suspicious apartment" in Baghdad, in a rare abduction of Western nationals in the Iraqi capital. Kidnappers in Iraq have recently seized groups of Qataris and Turks, but it has been years since Americans were abducted, with Iraqis suffering the most from kidnappings for ransoms or to settle scores. The Islamic State group, which overran large areas in 2014, has abducted thousands of people in Iraq, while Shiite paramilitary forces opposed to the jihadists have also carried out kidnappings.

"Three people carrying American nationality were kidnapped while they were in Dura... inside a suspicious apartment," a spokesman for the Baghdad security command said in a statement. "Security forces have begun searching for them," he said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the abductions and the identities and employment of the victims were unclear. A police colonel said on condition of anonymity that an Iraqi translator took the Americans for "drinking and women" at an apartment in the Dura area.

Militiamen "attacked the place", the colonel said, adding that "they were kidnapped from inside the apartment, not from the street". They were apparently taken to another area, as Dura was searched and they were not found, the officer said. He said that the translator was also kidnapped.

### Rise in Kidnappings

Brothels and alcohol shops have been repeatedly targeted by powerful Shiite militia groups in Baghdad over the years. Iraqi parliament speaker Salim Al-Juburi condemned the rise in "cases of foreigners being kidnapped in Iraq," saying it would harm the country's relations with other states. "The kidnapping of the American citizens yesterday, and before them the Qatari hunters, whose fate is still unknown, without a doubt indicates the increasing work of organized gangs in Iraq," Juburi said in a statement. US State Department spokesman John Kirby said Sunday that the US was "working with the full cooperation of the Iraqi authorities to locate and recover the individuals". Both Juburi and the police colonel said the kidnappings took place Sunday, but some reports indicated they happened earlier. Iraq turned to paramilitary forces dominated by Iran-backed Shiite militias in 2014 to help combat IS jihadists.

These groups, which fall under an umbrella organization known as the Hashed al-Shaabi, or Popular Mobilization units, have played a key role in the fight against IS. But they and their affiliates have also been accused of abuses including summary executions, kidnappings and destruction of property. The US is leading a coalition of countries that have bombed thousands of IS targets in Iraq and Syria and which are providing training to Baghdad's forces. Washington has also dispatched special forces to Iraq to carry out raids against the jihadists. — AFP







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## US RELEASES ACCOUNT OF SAILORS' IRAN DETENTION

**WASHINGTON:** In its first official account of Iran's seizure and subsequent release of 10 US sailors in the Arabian Gulf, the US military said yesterday the only items found missing from their two recovered boats were SIM cards for two satellite phones. But key questions, such as why the sailors had deviated from their planned route to enter Iranian territorial waters, remain unanswered in the account released by US Central Command. It's calling the description a preliminary timeline of the events of Jan 12-13.

"A Navy command investigation initiated Jan 14 will provide a more complete accounting of events," Central Command said. The investigation will focus on the US sailors' treatment while in custody, including any interrogation by Iranian personnel, the command said. Defense Secretary Ash Carter said last week while visiting Central Command headquarters in Florida that the boat crews had "mis-navigated". He did not say how that mistake happened or provide other substantial details about an episode that posed a potential complication to efforts by Washington and Tehran to establish better relations.

The boat seizure happened just hours before President Barack Obama delivered his State of the Union address and just days before implementation of the Iran nuclear deal with the West. The implementation triggered the end of crippling international sanctions on Iran and a US-Iran prisoner exchange. The timeline

released Monday said the US sailors were not mistreated during approximately 15 hours in Iranian hands. It said a post-recovery inventory of the boats found that all weapons, ammunition and communications gear was accounted for, minus two SIM cards apparently removed from two handheld satellite phones.

The sailors were traveling in small armed vessels known as riverine command boats, headed from Kuwait to Bahrain, which is the location of the Navy's 5th Fleet. "The planned transit path for the mission was down the middle of the Gulf and not through the territorial waters of any country other than Kuwait and Bahrain," the account said. The boats were seized by Iran and escorted at gunpoint to Farsi Island, which is in the middle of the Gulf and home to an Iranian military facility.

Along the approximately 80-km journey they were to have refueled by linking up with a US Coast Guard vessel, the Monomoy, in international waters. The timeline said that approximately 10 minutes after the scheduled refueling, Central Command's naval headquarters at Bahrain received a report that the boats were being questioned by Iranians. The account does not explain who sent this report or whether it included other details.

About 19 minutes later, the naval headquarters "was advised of degraded communications with" the two boats, the account added. After an additional 26 minutes, the naval headquarters was

notified of a total loss of communications with the boats. It does not explain who advised the headquarters of this problem or its apparent cause. A large-scale



This Nov 2, 2015, image shows Riverine Command Boat (RCB) 805 in the Arabian Gulf. —AP

search-and-rescue mission was undertaken at that point, but it is not clear whether the Americans had by this time already been taken ashore on Farsi Island. Aircraft from the USS Harry S Truman aircraft carrier, which was operating 72 km southeast of Farsi Island, participated in the search, along with Air Force planes and vessels of the US Coast Guard, the British Royal Navy and other US Navy ves-

sels. Central Command's naval headquarters at Bahrain attempted to contact Iranian military units operating near Farsi Island by using marine radio to broadcast

In the hours after the seizure of the Americans became public on Jan 12, there were conflicting reports about what caused the sailors to stray off their intended course. Yesterday's official account did not explain the reason. It said only that the crews "deviated" from their planned course. It made no reference to the navigation error cited by Carter last week. "At some point one (of the two boats) had indications of a mechanical issue in a diesel engine which caused the crews to stop and begin troubleshooting," the account said. Because the boats were traveling together, the other boat also stopped. At this point they were in Iranian territorial waters, "although it's not clear the crew was aware of their exact location," it added.

While the boats were stopped and the crew was trying to assess the mechanical problem, Iranian boats approached. First to arrive were two small Iranian craft with armed personnel aboard. Soon after, they were joined by two more Iranian military vessels. A verbal exchange ensued between the Iranians and Americans, but there was no gunfire. Armed Iranian military personnel then boarded the US boats while other Iranian personnel aboard other armed vessels monitored the situation. At gunpoint the US boats and their crews were escorted to a small port facility on Farsi Island, where the Americans went ashore and were detained, the account said. The sailors were released the following morning aboard their boats. —AP



TEHRAN: A picture taken yesterday shows an anti-US hoarding inspired by American photographer Joe Rosenthal's iconic World War II photograph "Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima" displayed on a building in the Iranian capital. —AFP

## WHERE NEXT FOR US-IRAN TIES?

### NUKE DEAL AND PRISONER SWAP A START

**WASHINGTON:** Was this weekend's nuclear deal and Washington's surprise prisoner swap with Tehran the final high point of a one-off diplomatic initiative or the start of a real realignment? Some 35 years after US-Iran ties were broken amid the chaos of the Tehran hostage crisis, might the Great Satan and the Axis of Evil lynchpin be on the brink of real detente? Most experts see a formal restoration of diplomatic ties as far off and progress as fragile, but Washington at least is ready to see how far the diplomatic track will take it.

"We do believe we should test whether or not there can be additional cooperation, or at least constructive dialogue," a senior US administration official told reporters. On Saturday, the UN nuclear watchdog confirmed Iran had put a nuclear bomb beyond its immediate reach and the US and EU lifted their most draconian economic sanctions. At the same time - in a surprise gesture - Tehran and Washington revealed they had reached a deal to exchange two groups of prisoners held in each other's jails.

"We were able, over the course of the last couple of years, to have more diplomatic engagement with Iran than I think we've had in total since 1979," the US official said. US diplomats insisted, to widespread skepticism, that the two breakthroughs were entirely separate. The Iran nuclear deal was the product of years of careful negotiations between Tehran and the P5+1 - the permanent UN Security Council members and the European Union. The prisoner swap, by contrast, came after 14 months of back-channel negotiations, conducted in secret between US envoys and Iranian diplomats and intelligence officials. But taken together, the initiatives have fed speculation that President Barack Obama is rewriting US networks in the Middle East to end the decades-long standoff.

#### 'Natural future partner'

Detente with Iran would make it easier to resolve the crises in Iraq, Syria and Yemen - even if it would unsettle traditional US allies Israel and Saudi Arabia. "Deeply encoded in Obama's software, the answer was Iran," Joseph Bahout, a Middle East scholar at the Carnegie Institute for International Peace, told AFP. "His team thinks that Iran is a natural future partner." If the tensions between the Shiite Islamic republic and the Sunni Gulf monarchies subside, other conflicts fed by their proxies and their funding might be solved.

"I think that we have shown that over time, very persistent diplomacy can yield results," said the Obama administration official, defending the outreach. The next test of whether Iran will continue to accommodate some US ambitions will be

the UN-mediated Syrian peace talks due to resume later this month in Geneva. Iran and its Lebanese ally the Hezbollah militia are key backers of President Bashar al-Assad's regime and potential spoilers as Washington tries to ease him out of office.

Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, is a sponsor of the rebels ranged against him, and Riyadh's anger at Obama's Iranian gambit may poison the mood as Washington pushes for peace. "We have profound differences and continue to have profound differences with Iran over the situation in Syria," the US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, admitted. And not only on Syria.

#### 'Terror Sponsor'

Despite the image presented by US Secretary of State John Kerry's frequent meetings and calls with Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, nothing concrete has changed. The countries still have no formal diplomatic ties. Crowds in Tehran

still chant "Death to America!" Washington still lists Iran as a "state sponsor of terrorism." And there may not be time to do much about this. Supporters of Iran's reformist president Hassan Rouhani hope to make gains in parliamentary elections next month that will give him more room to maneuver around hardliners.

But the stance of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei will remain key, and he may not be ready for further reconciliation. Obama, meanwhile, has a clearer deadline. He is out of office in a year's time, and if a Republican candidate wins the White House he or she will likely adopt a tougher tone. "Perhaps Obama is right," Bahout said. "But he won't get much further. What they achieved so far is huge, and they'll try to keep the relationship going discreetly, like a couple having an affair." So, administration officials admit, there won't be a dramatic US embassy re-opening like there was last year in Havana. There simply isn't time. —AFP

## IRAN POETS, FACING LASHINGS AND PRISON, ESCAPE COUNTRY

**DUBAI:** Two Iranian poets who face lashings and prison sentences have fled Iran, one of the writers said yesterday, a rare escape for local artists and activists ensnared in an ongoing crackdown on expression in the country. Fatemeh Ekhtesari and Mehdi Mousavi's freedom came as world powers lifted sanctions on Iran over its contested nuclear program and as the country separately freed four Iranian-Americans in exchange for seven Iranians held in the US. The poets' escape is a reminder that despite the growing detente with the West, hardliners still exert control over much of life in the Islamic Republic, which is one of the world's top jailers of journalists.

"Iranian political prisoners who are imprisoned on similarly baseless charges and do not hold a foreign passport do not get the same attention," Hadi Ghaemi, the executive director of the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, said in a statement this weekend. "This is a continuing travesty of justice." Ekhtesari, a practicing obstetrician, told AP yesterday that both she and Mousavi, a trained doctor who teaches literature and poetry, escaped from Iran in recent days and made it to another country. She declined to elaborate out of continuing concerns about their safety.

Ekhtesari faced an 111/2-year prison sentence, while Mousavi faced nine years on

charges ranging from propaganda against the state to "insulting sanctities." Each also was sentenced to 99 lashings for shaking hands with members of the opposite sex. They likely were targeted because their work is known abroad. Both are self-described "postmodern Ghazal" poets who seek to revive the traditional Persian love sonnet by applying it to contemporary political and social issues. —AP



Iranian poets Fatemeh Ekhtesari and Mehdi Mousavi pose in an unknown place in Iran. —AP

## FRANCE VOWS 'VIGILANCE' WITH IRAN ON NUKE DEAL

**ABU DHABI:** World powers will remain "very vigilant" to ensure Tehran commits to a nuclear deal that has seen the West lift sanctions on Iran, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said yesterday. The entry into force on Saturday of the July 14 deal between Iran and world powers "is a good thing... but we should be extremely strict in monitoring its implementation," he said. "We will be very vigilant," he told reporters on the sidelines of the World Future Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi.

The International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed late Saturday that Tehran had complied with its obligations under the accord, leading the United States and the European Union to lift sanctions imposed over Iran's disputed nuclear programme that had crippled its economy for a decade. These obligations included Iran dramatically downscaling its nuclear program, including slashing by two-thirds the number of its uranium centrifuges and reducing its stockpile of uranium. Fabius said he hoped "the state of mind that allowed for this deal will have positive consequences on Iran's general attitude in the

region". Peace talks scheduled to take place in Geneva on Jan 25 to resolve Syria's deadly conflict would provide the "first opportunity" to test Tehran's intentions, he said.

Iran - alongside Russia - is a key backer of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad's regime, which has been locked in deadly fighting with opponents since an uprising erupted in 2011. Fabius is to visit Tehran's regional rival Saudi Arabia today, just days before Iranian President Hassan Rouhani is expected in Paris. Saudi Arabia severed its diplomatic ties with Iran earlier this month after protesters attacked its missions in the Shiite-dominated Islamic republic.

The protests erupted in response to the execution in the Sunni-ruled kingdom of prominent Shiite cleric Nimr Al-Nimr. Asked if France could play a mediator role between Riyadh and Tehran, Fabius said: "Mediation is not the right word, but we are talking to both sides." Fabius said he would meet Saudi King Salman today ahead of a meeting on economic cooperation between France and Saudi Arabia in March. —AFP



ABU DHABI: Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (right), Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and deputy supreme commander of the UAE armed forces, meets French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius at his palace yesterday. —AFP

## US 'WON'T REST' UNTIL EX-FBI AGENT FREED

**WASHINGTON:** While five American citizens were freed from detention in Iran this weekend, the US government vowed Sunday to work tirelessly for the release of another missing for nine years. Ex-FBI agent Robert Levinson disappeared in mysterious circumstances in March 2007 during a visit to the Iranian island of Kish. He was reportedly investigating cigarette counterfeiting in the region. Levinson, 67, is considered to be the longest-held hostage in US history, if still alive.

"Even as we rejoice in the safe return of others, we will never forget about Bob," President Barack Obama said in a White House speech. "Each and every day, but especially today, our hearts are with the Levinson family, and we will not rest until their family is whole again." Of the US citizens who have been freed by Iran, four were part of a prisoner swap with America, while a fifth was released in a separate process, according to US officials.

Taking to Twitter, Secretary of State John Kerry said "For over a year, we have raised the cases of American citizens

unjustly detained in Iran at every opportunity." He added: "Iran also agreed to deepen our coordination as we work to locate Robert Levinson. We won't rest until the Levinson family is whole again." The Federal Bureau of Investigation has announced a \$5 million reward for information leading to his return. "The FBI expects our Iranian counterparts to fulfill their commitment to locate Bob and help bring him home safely," the agency said in a statement. "Bob forever remains part of the FBI family, and we remain committed to bringing him home safely to the family who misses him so much."



Robert Levinson

The FBI said "we continue to investigate and follow up on all information we receive, no matter how insignificant it might seem" In 2013, US media reports revealed that Levinson had been paid by the CIA to gather information during his visits to Iran. He had been hoping to meet an informant during his trip who could provide information about Tehran's disputed nuclear program, they said. The White House has denied Levinson was working for the US government when he vanished. —AFP



## BITTER COLD STRIKES NORTHERN PLAINS, GREAT LAKES REGIONS

**CHICAGO:** The arctic air mass that froze water pipes in Minnesota and lead Chicago officials to ask residents to check on neighbors this weekend is sticking around in some parts of the upper Midwest. Due to El Nino, winter got off to a mild start. But the blast of dangerous cold moved east across the Northern Plains and Great Lakes on Sunday, when temperatures bottomed out at 36 degrees below in Fosston in northwest Minnesota. It was so cold in western Minnesota that traffic lights went dark Sunday morning in Montevideo when a transformer blew. One homeowner's bid to thaw pipes in West Duluth caused a fire that led to \$37,000 in damage, WDIO-TV reported.

Meanwhile, parts of Illinois were in the single digits yesterday, the second day with such frigid air. Many cities sought to ensure no one succumbed to the cold. The Indianapolis Star reported that the state Department of Homeland Security would send anyone needing shelter from the weather Sunday and yesterday to a Salvation Army facility. But in Wisconsin, authorities said a 21-

year-old woman likely died of exposure in Milwaukee; she had reportedly left a house party and was found outside by a passer-by.

Snow accompanied the drop in temperatures in northern and western Michigan, where up to 16 inches of snow fell over 24 hours in Honor and Traverse City received 10 inches. Some reprieve from the cold is expected in the Midwest later in the week, with Chicago expecting to jump into the comparatively balmy 30s by Thursday. But the sub-freezing temperatures were moving eastward. In Philadelphia, a man who had been evicted from a homeless shelter returned Sunday morning and opened fire, killing one employee and injuring another, police said. Some officials feared the shooting might deter people from entering shelters as frigid weather entered the region. "We're very, very, very concerned; this is not something that happens in the city of Philadelphia's shelters for people experiencing homelessness," Marie Nahikian, director of the city Office of Supportive Housing, told WPVI-TV. — AP



CHARLESTON, South Carolina: Democratic presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders participate in the NBC News-YouTube Democratic debate on Sunday at the Gaillard Center.— AFP

# SANDERS SLAMS CLINTON IN DEMOCRATIC DEBATE

HILLARY COUNTERS 'REVOLUTION' WITH HER EXPERIENCE

**CHARLESTON, South Carolina:** Democratic presidential candidates clashed in their final debate before first votes are cast in Iowa, with Hillary Clinton saying she's ready to take on the "world's hardest job" as she sparred with her surging rival Bernie Sanders. The pair, along with former Maryland governor Martin O'Malley, met in Charleston, South Carolina, late Sunday aware that their performance could be the best opportunity to reshape the Democratic nomination race ahead of the Iowa caucuses, which will be held two weeks from Monday.

Clinton is ahead in national opinion polls among Democrats, but Sanders has surged in recent weeks and threatens her narrow lead in Iowa. Clinton wrangled with the leftist Vermont senator, sometimes intensely, over plans for universal healthcare, guns, battling Islamic State jihadists and reining in Wall Street. She emphasized her vast experience as former secretary of state, senator and point-woman for her husband ex-president Bill Clinton's efforts to reform healthcare in the 1990s.

"I understand that this is the hardest job in

the world. I'm prepared and ready to take it on," she said. She also insisted that she was best qualified to "bring our country together" during politically polarizing times. Sanders shook up the issue of healthcare when just hours before the debate started he unveiled a universal healthcare proposal he says can save American families thousands of dollars each year by no longer paying insurance premiums.

But the plan would require a 6.2 percent healthcare payroll tax on businesses, while slapping taxpayers with a 2.2 percent "premium" based on income. Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist, claims his plan would save \$6 trillion over 10 years compared with the current system. Clinton criticized his plan claiming it would shred President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act, which has helped 19 million new people get health insurance. "To tear it up and start over again... I think is the wrong direction," Clinton said at the debate broadcast by NBC News.

Perhaps her sharpest attack against Sanders was her claim that he is weak on gun control.

"He has voted with the NRA (National Rifle Association), with the gun lobby numerous times," including against legislation mandating background checks for gun sales, she declared. And Clinton wryly congratulated Sanders for flip-flopping on a proposal she has advanced to end gun makers' immunity from lawsuits. In 2005 Sanders voted for legislation that gave gun manufacturers legal immunity. "This should not be a political issue," Sanders said, noting the tragedy that befell Charleston when a "crazed person" shot nine African Americans in a church last year. "What we should be doing is working together."

### A 'Rigged' Economy

O'Malley has made little headway with voters despite considerable debate stage time. He squeezed into the conversation Sunday, indicting the Clinton political juggernaut by stressing that it was time for voters to "let go of the past and move forward". However, it is Sanders and his "political revolution" that has jostled team Clinton.—AFP



MINNEAPOLIS: Jack Delehanty poses for a photo after going on a 10-mile jaunt at Lake Harriet on Sunday. — AP



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## 4 DEAD IN SUICIDE ATTACK AT CAMEROON MOSQUE

**YAOUNDE:** Four worshippers were killed in a suicide bombing at a mosque in northern Cameroon yesterday, a security source said, five days after a similar attack left 12 people dead.

Yesterday's blast hit the village of Nguetchewe in Cameroon's Far North region, in an area near the border with Nigeria regularly targeted by Boko Haram jihadists. "The toll of this attack is four dead and two injured," the source, who was at the scene of the attack, told

AFP. A source close to regional authorities confirmed that a deadly attack had taken place in Nguetchewe, but was unable to provide details. The security source said the attack took place around 6:00 am (0500 GMT) just as morning prayers were ending. "The suicide bomber, a young boy, arrived in the village by foot," the source said, adding that a witness had noticed his behaviour seemed suspicious and had tried to intercept him.

"The bomber ran towards the mosque, where he set off the explosives he was carrying with him."

Cameroonian troops are at the scene of the attack, the source said. It is the second deadly blast to hit the Far North in less than a week, following a bombing at a mosque in Kolofata district during morning prayers last Wednesday. In November 2013, French priest Georges Vandenbusch was kidnapped from Nguetchewe, with the Boko Haram

Islamist group claiming responsibility. He was freed after around 50 days in captivity.

Communications Minister Issa Tchiroma Bakary said Friday that nearly 1,200 people have been killed in the Far North since 2013, when Boko Haram began attacking Cameroonian territory bordering its northeast Nigerian stronghold. Cameroon boosted its military presence along the Nigerian border in 2013, under increasing pressure from

the jihadists on the other side of the border. Boko Haram, which has waged a six-year campaign for a hardline Islamic state in northeast Nigeria, has been using the Far North as a base for supplying weapons, vehicles and equipment.

Along with Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Benin, Cameroon is part of a regional military force fighting the jihadists, who have killed at least 17,000 people and made more than 2.6 million others homeless. — AFP

## BURKINA FASO CAPITAL SECURITY TIGHTENS AFTER JIHADI ATTACK

**OUAGADOUGOU:** In the wake of a weekend attack that left up to 32 dead, security was beefed up across Burkina Faso's capital yesterday as businesses and banks reopened.

The West African nation also announced a joint effort with Mali in the fight against jihadi elements in the West African region. "Please go ahead and search my bag. We want to be protected and there is no way to refuse this," said Fati Doussa, who visited a bank to get some cash. Metal detectors have been placed at banks. "We know it is just going to be different from now on," said Ousmane Sawadogo, a cell-phone seller some 200 meters from the Splendid Hotel. The attack, which began Friday night, was the first of its kind in Burkina Faso, a largely Muslim country that had managed to avoid the kinds of jihadist attacks that have hit neighboring Mali since 2012.

At the site, forensic experts and investigators from France and Burkina Faso, dressed in white, filled the brown dusty street yesterday, gathering evidence in secured areas near the Cappuccino Cafe and Splendid Hotel. Military forces ended the siege Saturday. Officials said forces killed three attackers in the Splendid Hotel, and another in a neighboring hotel.

But a Burkina Faso gendarme official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not permitted to speak to the press, said they are investigating the person killed at the nearby hotel to determine if it was an attacker.

Burkina Faso's security minister, Simon Compaore, on Sunday said 32 people were dead, including three jihadists. The toll had earlier been 28 killed in addition to four

jihadists. The toll includes a Ukrainian woman who was co-owner of the Cappuccino Cafe, along with her 9-year-old son, according to Ukrainian and Italian officials, and six Canadians, according to Canada officials. The Canadian Press reported that the six were traveling together as part of a humanitarian mission, four them were from the same family.

Others killed included seven citizens of Burkina Faso, two Ukrainians, two Swiss, two French and one each from the US, the Netherlands, Portugal and Libya, and one French-Ukrainian, according to Burkina Faso officials who released a partial list. Other bodies were being identified.

At least 176 people were freed by Burkina Faso and French forces by Saturday, he said. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb put out a formal statement Sunday naming three of the attackers, according to SITE Intelligence Group which monitors extremist sites. It said it was a "drop in the sea of global jihad." The group on Friday claimed responsibility for the attack saying al-Mourabitoun fighters carried out the siege. Al-Mourabitoun joined AQIM last year and they claimed their first joint attack was the Nov 20 seizure of the Radisson Blu in Mali that killed 20 people. Burkina Faso and Mali's prime ministers met Sunday, and agreed to share intelligence and have joint patrols along shared borders, they said.

"It is obvious that, faced with this situation, both countries are going to beef up transnational cooperation with other countries, share intelligence, have mixed patrols at our borders and use adequate means," said Burkina Faso Prime Minister Paul Kaba Thiéba. Makan Kone, spokesman for Mali's prime minister said the countries will continue to fighting extremism in the region. — AP



Migrants and refugees walk through snow covered fields, after crossing the Macedonian border into Serbia near the village of Miratovac yesterday. — AFP

## MERKEL, JUNCKER PUT EURO'S FATE IN PLAY IF MIGRATION NOT SOLVED

PRESSURE MOUNTING ON MERKEL TO CLOSE BORDERS TO SYRIANS

**BRUSSELS/BERLIN:** Is this how "Europe" ends? The Germans, founders and funders of the postwar union, shut their borders to refugees in a bid for political survival by the chancellor who let in a million migrants. And then why not? they decide to revive the Deutschmark while they're at it.

That is not the fantasy of diehard Eurosceptics but a real fear articulated at the highest levels in Berlin and Brussels. Chancellor Angela Merkel, her ratings hit by crimes blamed on asylum seekers at New Year parties in Cologne, and EU chief executive Jean-Claude Juncker both said as much last week. Juncker echoed Merkel in warning that the central economic achievements of the common market and the euro are at risk from incoherent, nationalistic reactions to migration and other crises. He renewed warnings that Europe is on its "last chance," even if he still hoped it was not "at the beginning of the end." Merkel, facing trouble among her conservative supporters as much as from opponents, called Europe "vulnerable" and the fate of the euro "directly linked" to resolving the migration crisis — highlighting the risk of at the very least serious economic turbulence if not a formal dismantling of EU institutions. Some see that as mere scare tactics aimed at fellow Europeans by leaders with too much to lose from an EU collapse — Greeks and Italians have been seen to be dragging their feet over controlling the bloc's Mediterranean frontier and eastern Europeans who benefit from German subsidies and manufacturing supply chain jobs have led hostility to demands that they help take in refugees.

Germans are also getting little help from EU co-founder France, whose leaders fear a rising anti-migrant National Front, or the bloc's third power, Britain, consumed with its own debate on whether to just quit the European club altogether.

So, empty threat or no, with efforts to engage Turkey's help showing little sign yet of preventing migrants reaching Greek beaches, German and EU officials are warning that without a sharp drop in arrivals or a change of heart in other EU states to relieve Berlin of the lonely task of housing

refugees, Germany could shut its doors, sparking wider crisis this spring.

### GERMAN WARNINGS

With Merkel's conservative allies in the southern frontier state of Bavaria demanding she halt the mainly Muslim asylum seekers ahead of tricky regional elections in March, her veteran finance minister delivered one of his trademark veiled threats to EU counterparts of what that could mean for them.

"Many think this is a German problem," Wolfgang Schäuble said in meetings with fellow EU finance ministers in Brussels. "But if Germany does what everyone expects, then we'll see that it's not a German problem-but a European one." Senior Merkel allies are working hard to stifle the kind of parliamentary party rebellion that threatened to derail bailouts which kept Greece in the euro zone last year. But pressure is mounting for national measures, such as border fences, which as a child of East Germany Merkel has said she cannot countenance. "If you build a fence, it's the end of Europe as we know it," one senior conservative said. "We need to be patient." A senior German official noted that time is running out, however. "The chancellor has been asking her party for more time," he said. "But ... that narrative ... is losing the persuasiveness it may have had in October or November. If you add in the debate about Cologne, she faces an increasingly difficult situation."

He noted that arrivals had not fallen sharply over the winter months as had been expected. "You can only imagine what happens when the weather improves," he said.

### SCHENGEN FEARS

Merkel and Juncker explicitly linked new national frontier controls across Europe's passport-free Schengen zone to a collapse of the single market at the core of the bloc, and of the euro. Both would ravage jobs and the economy. "Without Schengen ... the euro has no point," Juncker told a New Year news conference on Friday. Historic

national resentments were re-emerging, he added, accusing his generation of EU leaders of squandering the legacy of the union's founders, survivors of World War Two. Merkel has not suggested-yet-that Berlin could follow neighbours like Austria and Denmark in further tightening border checks to deny entry to irregular migrants. But she has made clear how Europe might suffer. "No one can pretend that you can have a common currency without being able to cross borders relatively easily," she said at a business event last week.

In private, German officials are more explicit. "We have until March, the summer maybe, for a European solution," said a second German official. "Then Schengen goes down the drain."

A senior EU official was equally blunt: "There is a big risk that Germany closes. From that, no Schengen ... There is a risk that the February summit could start a countdown to the end." The next summit of EU leaders one month from now follows meetings last year that were marked by agreement on a migration strategy as well as rows over failures to implement it. Of the 160,000 asylum seekers EU leaders agreed in September to distribute among member states, fewer than 300 have been moved. Berlin and Brussels continue to press for more distribution across Europe. But few place much hope in that-one senior German official calls it "flogging a dead horse".

### TURKISH KEY

EU leaders' hope is for help from Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, a man many of them see as an embryonic dictator. Berlin is pressing for more EU cash for Ankara, beyond an agreed 3 billion euros, which Italy is blocking. Some Germans suggest simply using German funds to stem the flow from Turkey. EU officials say it is too early to panic. Arrivals have fallen this month. UN data show them running in January at half the 3,500 daily rate of December. Progress includes a move to let some of the 2.1 million Syrian refugees in Turkey take jobs. The EU will fund more schools for refugee children. —Reuters



OUAGADOUGOU: Burkina Faso troops provide security in the area yesterday after militants led an attack on a hotel and a cafe popular with foreigners over the weekend in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. — AP

## SPANISH KING MEETS PARTY LEADERS TO FORM NEW GOVT

**MADRID:** Spain's King Felipe VI began yesterday a week of meetings with party leaders in a bid to break a potentially damaging impasse over the formation of a new government following inconclusive elections. Acting Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy has headed a caretaker government with reduced powers since a December 20 general election produced a hung parliament in which a ruling majority cannot easily be formed.

Under Spain's constitutional monarchy the king must now meet with the leaders of all parties that won representation in parliament before nominating one of them to try to form a new government. The nominated party leader must then win a parliament vote of confidence to take office. If there is still a deadlock two months after the first vote, the monarch must call new elections. Felipe, who took the throne when his father Juan Carlos abdicated in June 2014, began the talks on Monday by meeting with the leaders of small regional parties. The consultations are due to end on Friday when he meets with Rajoy, whose conservative Popular Party (PP) won the most seats but fell far short of an absolute majority in the 350-seat parliament.

### 'Uncertainty has consequences'

Rajoy has called for a "grand coalition" of the PP, which has 123 seats, his traditional Socialist rivals who came in second place winning 90 seats and new centre-right party Ciudadanos which took 40 seats. The Socialists instead are seeking a left-wing alliance that includes new anti-austerity party Podemos, which won 69 seats.

Rajoy said yesterday he hoped a new government is formed "as soon as possible," warning political uncertainty threatens to derail the eurozone's fourth largest economy. "It is obvious that uncertainty has consequences. This is why it is so important

that we concentrate on what matters," he said during an interview with Spanish public radio. The majority of Spanish voters, 61 percent, oppose holding fresh elections to resolve the political impasse, a poll published in daily newspaper El Pais showed. The survey also showed that if new elections were held the results would be similar to the December vote and the deadlock would remain, although Podemos would edge out the Socialists from second place.

As such, European Union officials and Spanish business figures have pressed party leaders to move quickly to form a new government. "I hope that Spain will get a stable government as quickly as possible given that it is a member of the eurozone," European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker said Friday.

### 'Face up to' hardship

The PP hopes to hold a first vote of confidence during the last week of January or the first week of February. "From the point of view of companies, what matters to us is that there is a solid, strong government formed by those who will face up to economic difficulties," the head of the Spanish Confederation of Business Organisations (CEOE), Juan Rosell, told AFP.

Rajoy, who passed several reforms including a 2012 labour market shake-up that reduced firing costs, has kept quiet regarding which policy areas he would be willing to make compromises on to pact with other parties. "The one who puts his cards on the table before starting a negotiation is a poor negotiator," he said. The king traditionally has invited the winner of the most seats to form a government but he can opt for other leaders if it appears that they are better positioned to provide a stable cabinet. That has happened at the regional level in Spain but never following a general election. — AFP

## GERMAN TOWN REOPENS POOL TO ASYLUM SEEKERS

**BERLIN:** A German town said yesterday it would reopen its public indoor swimming pool to male asylum seekers after talking to migrants about the need to treat women with respect.

Bornheim, a small town 30 km (19 miles) south of Cologne, banned the men last week after receiving complaints of sexual harassment at the pool, saying it was not prepared to see German cultural norms compromised. It was the latest sign of social tensions caused by the arrival of 1.1 million migrants in Germany last year, followed by a wave of sexual assaults on women by gangs of young male refugees during New Year's Eve celebrations in Cologne.

The ban will be lifted on Wednesday, the town said in a press release. "The cancellation is not the result of pressure from the media's response, but rather follows intensive discussions with refugees on how they should treat women with respect, regardless of whether they have a migration background or not," it said.

Bornheim said last week it wanted social workers to teach asylum seekers at three shelters about gender equality and respect for women. The New Year's Eve attacks deepened public doubts about Germany's ability to integrate the mainly Muslim and Arab refugees, mostly fleeing war in the Middle East, whom Chancellor Angela Merkel has opted to allow in.

Police investigations into the New Year's Eve incidents are focusing on asylum seekers and illegal migrants thought to be mostly from North Africa. — Reuters



LONDON: British Prime Minister David Cameron (left) greets Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu as he arrives outside No 10 Downing Street in central London yesterday. —AFP

## ZUMA'S OFFICE ADMITS AFRICA ISN'T BIGGEST CONTINENT

**JOHANNESBURG:** South Africa's presidency issued an embarrassing correction yesterday to rectify an erroneous reference last month by President Jacob Zuma to Africa being the "largest continent".

Speaking at a business dinner on Dec. 9, Zuma, who has no formal education, also described Africa as so big that "all continents put together will fit into Africa".

The comments were seized upon by

Zuma's opponents, who argue that his lack of schooling makes him unfit to lead a sophisticated emerging economy. It was unclear why the presidency decided to issue the correction after a delay of nearly six weeks.

"Africa is in fact the second biggest continent in terms of population size, and the biggest continent in this regard is Asia. The President regrets the error," the statement said. —Reuters

## US ENVOY URGES MYANMAR TO FREE POLITICAL PRISONERS

**NAYPYITAW, Myanmar:** The first US envoy to visit Myanmar since last year's landmark polls yesterday urged President Thein Sein to release all remaining political prisoners before Aung San Suu Kyi's government takes power next month. Myanmar's quasi-civilian government steered reforms culminating in the November election that saw Suu Kyi's pro-democracy party win an outright majority.

Those reforms included the release of hundreds of political prisoners, many jailed for long sentences under the junta which ruled the country with an iron-fist for five decades. In talks in the capital Naypyitaw, US Deputy Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken met the president, Suu Kyi and army top brass and congratulated them on holding a "peaceful" and successful poll.

But he urged Thein Sein's government to free all remaining prisoners including dissidents prosecuted in recent months in legal moves that have raised fears of a return to the bad old days of repression. "One of the hallmarks of the reform process is that 1,300 or more political prisoners were released," he told reporters

after the talks.

"But political prisoners remain and others are in the process of being prosecuted," he said.

"It would be a fitting completion of that legacy (of reform) to release all political prisoners so that by the time transition is complete and the new government takes office, no-one is in prison for their political views."

Rights groups say scores of political prisoners remain behind bars from the junta era. Lawmakers from Suu Kyi's victorious National League for Democracy party are due to take their seats in parliament on February 1 as the country undergoes a surge in optimism for a democratic future despite myriad economic and social challenges.

Thein Sein has released prisoners at key moments in the reform process including ahead of high-profile visits from dignitaries including US President Barack Obama. But in March last year authorities launched a violent crackdown on a student-led education protest in the town of Letpadan, some two hours north of Yangon. Around 60 young activists remain

in prison following that episode and face trial accused of stirring unrest. Obama has pumped large amounts of political capital into Myanmar's transition from authoritarian basket case to a fledgling democracy, offering financial help and diplomatic support.

But the US has also made clear its discomfort at ongoing violence between Myanmar's army and ethnic rebels as well as religious violence and discriminatory policies particularly targeting the Muslim Rohingya minority in the west of the country.

Blinken called on the government-in-waiting to end "discrimination and violence experienced by ethnic and religious minorities including the Rohingya population in Rakhine state".

"The solution is the rule of law equally applied to all," he said, urging Myanmar's people to grasp the chance to create "an equal chance for everyone to participate in the democratic life of the country."

The final session of the current parliament is set to end on January 29, but a new government will not be formed until March. —AFP



**NAYPYITAW:** National League for Democracy party leader Aung San Suu Kyi (front center) poses for photographers with US Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken (front right), US Ambassador to Myanmar Derek Mitchell, front left, and others following a meeting in Naypyitaw yesterday. —AFP



**KABUL:** Head of US delegations, Ambassador Michael McKinley (2R) shakes hands with Pakistani Foreign Secretary, Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry (left) prior to the start of the second round of four-way peace talks at the presidential palace in Kabul yesterday. —AFP

### FOUR-NATION MEETING IN KABUL SEEKS TO REVIVE TALEBAN TALKS

**KABUL:** A second round of four-country talks aimed at reviving peace negotiations with the Taliban began in Kabul yesterday, even as the insurgents wage an unprecedented winter campaign of violence across Afghanistan. Delegates from Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States convened in the Afghan capital for a one-day meeting seeking a negotiated end to the bloody 14-year insurgency.

"The people of Afghanistan will not accept a prolonged peace process with no results," Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani said in his opening remarks at the meeting.

"On behalf of the people and government of Afghanistan, I urge all Taliban groups to accept our peace message and come to the negotiating table and resolve our differences politically."

The first round of the "roadmap" talks was held in Islamabad last week as the four nations try to lay the groundwork for direct dialogue between Kabul and the Islamist group.

Taliban representatives were notably absent in both rounds and analysts caution that any substantive talks are still a long way off. The Taliban have stepped up attacks on government and foreign targets in Afghanistan this winter, when fighting usually abates, underscoring a worsening security situation.

Late Sunday a rocket launched by the militants landed very close to the Italian embassy compound. The foreign ministry in Rome reported no casualties and said it was unsure if their compound was the target. Observers say the intensifying insurgency highlights a push by the militants to seize more territory in an attempt to wrangle greater concessions during talks.

At last week's talks in Islamabad an Afghan government spokesman said Pakistan would unveil a list of Taliban members who are ready for talks, but no names have so far been released.

Pakistan's Taliban's historic backers-hosted a milestone first round of talks directly with the Taliban in July. But the negotiations stalled when the insurgents belatedly confirmed the death of longtime leader Mullah Omar, sparking infighting within the group. Afghanistan sees the sup-

port of Pakistan as vital to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table.

#### Parliamentary polls

Afghanistan will hold its delayed parliamentary elections on October 15, the top polling official said yesterday, after last June's deadline to choose a new assembly was missed because of political disputes. Parliament's five-year term expired in June but polls were postponed amid concerns over whether the vote could be fair and transparent after a disputed presidential election in 2014.

President Ashraf Ghani last year extended the assembly's mandate until elections were feasible, prompting many to question the legality of his decision.

"Today we announce the date for the parliamentary and district council polls on October 15," election commission chief Ahmad Yousuf Nuristani told reporters. "The parliamentary election and district council polls will be held on time if the government provides the necessary budget, security for candidates, electoral workers and polling centres." Nuristani urged the international community to provide funding and support for the election, which will likely be held against the backdrop of a worsening security situation in Afghanistan.

"We have learnt good lessons from the challenges and problems of the last elections. We are committed to holding (fair and transparent) elections," Nuristani said.

Both Ghani and his rival Abdullah Abdullah, a former anti-Taliban resistance fighter, claimed to have won the fraudulent 2014 presidential election, tipping Afghanistan into a crisis that threatened to trigger nationwide unrest.

It took months for both candidates to agree on a US-brokered deal to form a "National Unity Government". Nuristani's announcement comes as Kabul hosts a second round of four-country talks aimed at reviving peace negotiations with the Taliban, even as the insurgents wage an unprecedented winter campaign of violence. NATO-led US troops formally ended their combat mission in 2014, leaving Afghan troops and police to battle an emboldened nationwide Taliban offensive. —Agencies

### 5 BANGLADESH MILITANTS JAILED FOR 10 YEARS FOR BOMBINGS

**DHAKA:** A court in Bangladesh yesterday jailed five militants of a banned Islamist group for 10 years over bombings in 2005 that formed part of a series of blasts across the Muslim-majority nation.

The Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen group set off nearly 500 bombs almost simultaneously on a single day in 2005, including the capital Dhaka. Subsequent suicide attacks on courthouses by its militants killed 25 people and injured hundreds. Five members of the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen group were convicted and sentenced for the explosions in the southeastern district of Rangamati, court inspector Mominul Islam said. "Six mili-

itants were charged with the bombings," he told Reuters by telephone. "And five of them were convicted and sentenced to 10 years in jail, while one was acquitted."

The group, thought to have been lying low since six of its top leaders were hanged in 2007, is blamed for a spate of recent attacks, including the bombings of a Shi'ite shrine and the shooting of three foreigners, two of whom died.

Last year, four bloggers and a publisher were killed in Bangladesh, amid a rise in Islamist violence in which liberal activists, members of minority Muslim sects and other religious groups have been targeted. —Reuters

## COURT ACQUITS MUSHARRAF OF REBEL LEADER'S KILLING

### BOMB KILLS FIVE SOLDIERS IN WESTERN PAKISTAN

**QUETTA:** A Pakistani court yesterday acquitted former military ruler Pervez Musharraf over the 2006 killing of a Baloch rebel leader, one of three legal cases he faced after returning from exile, lawyers said. The decision Monday was the first significant ruling in the cases, which include the murder of former leader Benazir Bhutto in 2007 and treason, since Musharraf was indicted in 2015 for the killing of nationalist leader Nawab Akbar Bugti.

A spokesman for Musharraf told AFP he was happy with the ruling, which "will restore the people's confidence in the judiciary". The former ruler also hopes to be acquitted in the other cases, which the spokesman said Musharraf described as "false and politically motivated". Bugti was killed in a military operation in 2006, sparking deadly nationwide protests and inflaming a separatist insurgency in resource-rich but impoverished Balochistan province. "The court has dismissed all the charges against former ruler Pervez Musharraf and all those named in the case," Aftab Sherpao, a former interior minister also named in the case, told media in the southwestern city of Quetta.

The anti-terror court's ruling was confirmed by lawyers on both sides.

"It's an injustice and a joke," Suhail Rajput, lawyer for the Bugti family, told media and vowed to appeal. Musharraf seized power in a bloodless coup in 1999. Facing impeachment following elections in 2008, he resigned as president and went into self-imposed exile in Dubai. He returned to Pakistan in 2013 on an ill-fated mission to run in the general election, but was barred from taking part and has since faced a barrage of legal cases. They include treason for imposing emergency rule in 2007, and the assassination of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto in a gun and suicide attack that same year.

Musharraf has been under house arrest in Karachi while the cases have ground through Pakistan's notoriously slow legal system, moving from adjournment to adjourn-

ment with little clear progress apart from the granting of bail. Analysts have previously said they believe the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif lacks the will to offend Pakistan's powerful military by pushing for Musharraf's prosecution.

Sharif was also prime minister in 1999, when he was deposed by Musharraf. Pakistani analyst Imtiaz Alam said the Bugti investigation

significant fall-out from the decision. "It's a win-win situation both for the government and Musharraf," he said.

#### Bomb attack

Five Pakistani soldiers were killed yesterday when a bomb exploded next to their vehicle in Baluchistan province, officials said, the latest attack in a region that will

force in restive Baluchistan, were wounded in the attack, Wasey said. No one has claimed responsibility. Rich in resources and vast, Baluchistan is at the heart of the multi-billion-dollar energy and infrastructure projects China and Pakistan hope to build along a corridor stretching from the Arabian sea to China's Xinjiang region. The planned route will run through the



**QUETTA:** Pakistani former interior minister, Aftab Sherpao, (3R) leaves the court after a hearing in Quetta yesterday. A Pakistani court acquitted former military ruler Pervez Musharraf over the 2006 killing of a Baloch rebel leader, one of three legal cases he faced after returning from exile, lawyers said. —AFP

and prosecution had been "poor".

"The administration was under pressure not to find any hard evidence against the powerful players," he told AFP, without specifying who was applying the pressure.

Government efforts to persuade militants to lay down their arms in Balochistan has seen the insurgency begin to slow in recent months, and security analyst Talat Masood said there would not be

be home to the planned route of the \$46 billion China-Pakistan economic corridor.

The bomb, planted in a coal-mining district 50 km (30 miles) east of the provincial capital, Quetta, was detonated remotely as members of the Frontier Corps patrolled the area, said Khan Wasey, a spokesman for the paramilitary force. At least two members of the Frontier Corps, the main state secu-

Quetta. But the region is also home to several separatist groups that have waged war against the state for years, as well as the Pakistani Taliban, raising concerns about security.

Two Pakistani coast guards were killed this month when a bomb exploded under their vehicle in the Gwadar district of Baluchistan, whose port is at one end of the proposed corridor. —Agencies

## MALDIVES 'DISAPPOINTED' NASHEED WON'T TRAVEL TO UK

**MALE, Maldives:** The Maldives government said yesterday it was "disappointed" that jailed former leader Mohamed Nasheed would not travel to Britain for surgery after he rejected a demand for a relative to guarantee his return. The government had said Nasheed, whose conviction last year on terror-related charges has been widely criticized, could travel to Britain for 30 days to receive urgent spinal cord surgery. He was due to leave late Sunday under a deal brokered by diplomats from India, Sri Lanka and Britain, but his lawyer accused the government of introducing the "illegal" last-minute condition.

"The government reneged on the agreed deal at the last minute, demanding a close family member of Nasheed remain in Male, effectively as a hostage, until he returns from the UK," Hassan Latheef told AFP. "If Nasheed does anything that will breach the terms of the agreement by the government, the family member could then be criminally prosecuted," Latheef said.

"This kind of blackmail is illegal, unheard of in international affairs, and totally outrageous." The foreign ministry said the law required any prisoner requesting treatment abroad to sign a document committing to

return which must be co-signed by a guarantor. In a tweet, it said the government was "disappointed by the refusal of former president Nasheed to travel to UK for surgery, as requested by himself".

Home Minister Umar Naseer told reporters Nasheed would only be allowed to travel if he provided a guarantor for his return to serve the remainder of his 13-year jail sentence.

"This is not holding someone hostage," Naseer said. "It is appointing a guardian until the inmate returns to (the) Maldives."

#### Guarantee return

Nasheed, 48, became the first democratically elected president of the Maldives in 2008 and served for four years before he was toppled in what he called a coup backed by the military and police. Last year he was sentenced to 13 years in jail on terrorism charges relating to the arrest of an allegedly corrupt judge in 2012, when he was still in power.

The United Nations has said his trial was seriously flawed and he should be released and compensated for wrongful detention. But hardline President Abdulla Yameen has refused to accept the UN ruling and is resisting international pressure

to release Nasheed.

The country's prisons chief Mohamed Husham announced at the weekend that Nasheed had been granted 30 days' leave from prison to receive surgery for a spinal cord problem that requires specialist treatment. The government initially said Nasheed could have the procedure on the tiny archipelago, but then agreed to allow him to travel to Britain for treatment. The announcement of the concession came as Britain's Deputy Foreign Minister Hugo Swire visited the Maldives for talks with Yameen as well as the opposition and rights groups.

Swire tweeted that he "talked through concerns and opportunities" with the president, but full details of their discussions were not disclosed. He left Male yesterday with Nasheed still locked up in a cell at the Maafushi prison on an island near the capital.

London-based barrister Amal Clooney is part of the legal team fighting for Nasheed's unconditional release. President Yameen is a half-brother of former strongman Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, who ruled for 30 years until his defeat by Nasheed in the country's first multi-party elections in 2008. He has cracked down on dissent and arrested political opponents. —AFP

## AFGHAN TALEBAN FLEX MUSCLES WITH NEW TELECOM 'TAX'

**KANDAHAR, Afghanistan:** The Taliban have demanded a hefty new "protection tax" from Afghan mobile phone companies, industry and militant sources told AFP, as the resurgent group tightens its stranglehold on a rare successful business in a slumping war economy.

At a secret meeting last month near the Pakistani city of Quetta, the Taliban's central leadership formally demanded the tax from representatives of four cellular companies in exchange for not damaging their sites or harming their employees. The edict was motivated by an Afghan government announcement in October that it had amassed a windfall of 78 million Afghani (\$1.14 million) within days of imposing an additional 10 percent tax on operators, according to two telecom company officials who attended the meeting and a third industry executive privy to the information.

"They want us to pay the same amount paid to the government," one of the officials who was at the gathering told AFP. "We told them that this will kill our business, but they said: 'This is the only way to guarantee your people are not harmed and your sites are not burned,'" he added.

A source in the Quetta Shura—the Taliban's Pakistan-based leadership council—confirmed the meeting, telling AFP the group was waiting for a formal response from the companies. "We told them: 'It is our right to tax you if you want us to protect your (transmission) towers around Afghanistan,'" he said. "You will have to pay." The Islamists have long targeted

Afghanistan's private telecom firms, kidnapping engineers, destroying transmission masts and forcing regular coverage blackouts in volatile areas to avoid detection of their fighters.

Local-level Taliban commanders have been known to extort from businesses operating in their areas, notably the telecom firms and logistics companies supplying NATO bases and Western-funded construction projects. But this appears to be the first time the central leadership has formally demanded a levy from business enterprises, underscoring how they increasingly operate like a shadow government.

It also highlights the dangers of doing business in conflict-torn Afghanistan—particularly for the telecom industry, fast becoming a battleground in the Taliban's war against the US-backed Afghan government.

### 'We are helpless'

The companies said to be at the meeting—Abu-Dhabi based Etisalat, South Africa's MTN and homegrown firms Roshan and Afghan Wireless Communication Company—officially declined to comment when contacted by AFP.

But one of them confirmed the meeting and tax demand, voicing a mix of helplessness and frustration. "Ten percent tax to the Taliban? That means we will have to share our revenue information with a militant organization," a Kabul-based company representative told AFP.

"That's just not feasible. We told them

"no." But one of the telecom officials who attended the Pakistan meeting said there was no escaping the Taliban edict, adding that the companies at best could wrangle

one militant group, others will start harassing us.' The National Directorate of Security, Afghanistan's main intelligence agency, declined to comment when con-

Taliban last month went one step further in Helmand, enforcing a round-the-clock transmission blackout for nearly two weeks as fighting escalated in the southern opium-rich province.

"Except for the government operator Salaam, all private companies cut off their signals," Omaidullah Zaheer, Helmand's telecommunications director, said. "Private operators begged me: 'Do something, we are losing money everyday.' But what can we do? We are helpless."

Afghanistan boasts 18.5 million mobile users in a population of 30 million, with the fast-growing industry employing around 200,000 people and reporting annual revenue of \$150-200 million in an otherwise moribund economy. But around 40 percent of the country's 6,319 base towers are in insurgency-hit areas, according to the communication ministry, and the Taliban have regularly mounted crippling attacks on the infrastructure worth millions of dollars.

### 'Extortion'

The levy demand appears to be an effort to replenish coffers as the Taliban mount an unprecedented winter offensive, in the face of dwindling traditional sources of revenue.

The insurgents are reeling from a sharp decline in opium production, the mainstay of Taliban income; the NATO troop draw-down and consequent loss of "extortion" income from logistics firms; and the shift of Gulf-based donor funds towards the Middle East, experts say.—AFP



**KANDAHAR:** An Afghan policeman sits near a private cell phone antenna in Kandahar. The Taliban have demanded a hefty new "protection tax" from Afghan mobile phone companies, industry and insurgent sources told AFP, as the resurgent militant movement flexes its muscles like a virtual parallel government.—AFP

a concession from the insurgents in future negotiations. "What choice do we have? All our investment, our infrastructure is at stake," he said, adding he was unaware what his company's official response would be. "But I fear that if we start paying

tacted by AFP. In the past cellular operators have capitulated to Taliban decrees—in particular, their demand to switch off their signals at night in many insurgency-prone areas. Wary of intelligence tip-offs and phone intercepts of their fighters, the



**TOKYO:** Marzuki Darusman (R), the United Nation's Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in North Korea, is welcomed by Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida (L) prior to their meeting in Tokyo yesterday. Darusman is on a five-day visit to Japan.—AFP

## N KOREA MUST BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR ABDUCTIONS: UN ENVOY

**TOKYO:** A UN special envoy on human rights in North Korea said yesterday the country should be held to account for state-sponsored abductions, slamming the disappearances as a "crime against humanity". The condemnation from Marzuki Darusman, who spoke during a meeting with members of Japanese families whose children and siblings were kidnapped by North Koreans, is the latest rebuke against Pyongyang over widespread rights abuses.

"This is not just a tragedy, but it is a crime against humanity," he told reporters. He called on North Korea to "acknowledge that abductions have been undertaken by the state with complicity and knowledge at the highest level of leadership." The special envoy will report his findings and recommendations to the UN Human Rights Council in March, before the end of his tenure in July.

Darusman was involved in a 2014 report from the UN Commission of Inquiry on human rights in North Korea that detailed what it described as horrific abuses in the isolated nation. After the report was issued, the UN Security Council agreed to formally take up the human rights situation there.

North Korea admitted in 2002 that it had dispatched agents to kidnap 13 Japanese in the 1970s and 1980s who were tasked with training its spies in Japanese

language and customs.

Five of the abductees were allowed to return to Japan but Pyongyang has insisted, without producing solid evidence, the eight others are dead. Around 500 South Koreans were also kidnapped by North Korea in the years following the 1950-53 Korean War.

Suspicions persist in Japan that many more of its citizens have been abducted than officially recognized. The lack of diplomatic relations between the two countries, along with Pyongyang's pariah status internationally over its nuclear and missile program, have hampered progress on the issue.

"My beloved child was taken away and many years have passed," Sakie Yokota, whose 13-year old daughter Megumi was abducted in 1977, told Darusman. "It's been 38 years but I haven't been able to meet or speak with her. There is no information as to how she has been doing." North Korea has said Megumi was one of the deceased, insisting she committed suicide, though her parents and other supporters say Pyongyang cannot be believed. Japan and North Korea struck a deal in 2014 in which the secretive state said it would investigate the abduction of Japanese citizens, though Tokyo has voiced frustration at the lack of progress.—AFP

## INDONESIA AT RISK OF BIGGER IS-LINKED ATTACKS: POLICE

### EXPERIENCED FIGHTERS RETURNING FROM MIDEAST

**JAKARTA:** Indonesia is bracing for the return of experienced Islamic State fighters from the Middle East who would be capable of carrying out attacks far more deadly than the assault on Jakarta last week, the country's police chief said yesterday.

Thursday's attack in the heart of Jakarta was a hastily executed "Plan B" by Islamist militants, after police raids had disrupted preparations for other strikes against Christmas and New Year events, Police General Badrodin Haiti told Reuters in an interview. Eight people, including four militants, were killed in the assault on the capital's main Thamrin Road that involved pistols and home-made bombs.

The attack, the first of its kind in Southeast Asia to be attributed to Syria-based Islamic State, could have been far deadlier, but the militants lacked training and powerful weapons, Haiti said.

"I believe this was a Plan B. Their main target was Christmas and New Year. They chose Thamrin (after that plan was disrupted) because they were hoping for a big impact

despite their small size, because this is a crowded centre," he said. "The perpetrators had the opportunity to take more victims (during the attack), but because their capabilities were limited, we were able to take them out of action."

There are fears that much deadlier attacks could follow, with the return of experienced frontline fighters with Islamic State currently in Syria and Iraq, Haiti said.

Authorities say about 500 Indonesians have travelled to the Middle East to join the extremist group. About 100 are believed to have returned, although experts say only about 15 have combat experience. "Those on the frontlines are better trained, because they're facing their enemies (in) the field. If they come back, then it will be dangerous because they can carry out acts of violence and terror," Haiti said.

"There is the possibility (of a bigger attack) if they can train people in preparing explosives," he said. The majority of those believed to be involved in Thursday's attack, include two of the four militants who carried it out,

were part of an attempt to establish a training camp in the forests of the northern province of Aceh that was thwarted by police in 2010, Haiti said.

In the wake of the latest attack, police would redouble efforts to monitor radical networks in Indonesia, he said. "We want these networks to be mapped fully, because they can collaborate with each other. There are about nine distinct terror groups in Indonesia. So our hope is that this incident can reveal their collaborations," he said.

"We have found communications between people in Syria and here and we should be able to tell who is responding to those communications and can become a future threat."

The last major attack in the world's most populous Muslim nation before last week was the twin bombing of luxury hotels in Jakarta in 2009. Police said in December that a series of raids disrupted plans by militants to launch a string of deadly attacks on Christmas and New Year celebrations, as well as against the country's Shia Muslim minority.—Reuters



**SURABAYA:** The Indonesian made naval warship for the Philippine Navy is seen at a shipyard in Surabaya located in eastern Java island during turnover ceremony yesterday led by Philippines Defence Secretary Voltaire Gazmin and Indonesian counterpart Ryamizard Ryacudu.—AFP

## FOREIGN JURISTS CALL FOR RELEASE OF DETAINED CHINESE LAWYERS

**BEIJING:** Twenty prominent lawyers and jurists from Europe, North America, Australia and Pakistan yesterday urged Chinese President Xi Jinping to release a dozen Chinese lawyers and legal assistants held in detention in an open letter published in the British newspaper The Guardian.

In the letter, the legal professionals, predominantly from Western countries, expressed worries that the Chinese lawyers have been denied legal counsel since their July detention. They also said they feared that without legal representation the Chinese lawyers and legal assistants could be "at high risk of torture or other cruel and inhumane treatments." China has arrested six rights lawyers and legal assistants on suspicion of state subversion, and three more on suspicion of inciting state subversion. One legal assistant was arrested on suspicion of helping destroy evidence. Hong Kong-based China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group said several more

lawyers remain missing.

The lawyers have sought to use China's own laws to hold officials accountable or to protect citizens' rights, but Beijing says they are trying to sabotage the judicial system with improper activism.

Since July, more than 300 lawyers, legal assistants, staff members of law firms, and social activists have been detained and interrogated. Most have been released, but some of the most prominent rights lawyers have been arrested, including Wang Yu, who defended one of the five women who became known as the "Feminist Five." They were detained last March after they planned to hand out flyers against sexual harassment in several Chinese cities in a case that drew international scrutiny.

The lawyers are known to have taken up some of the most contentious cases in China, often involving petitioners who have grievances with local governments, practitioners of the banned spiritual group Falun Gong, or political dissidents.—AFP

**MANILA:** Philippine officials said yesterday they received two intimidating radio warnings identified as from the Chinese navy when they flew a Cessna plane close to a Chinese-constructed island in the South China Sea.

Eric Apolonio said the incident happened Jan 7 when he and other personnel of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines flew to a Philippine-occupied island for an engineering survey for the installation of civil aviation safety equipment on the island.

The island, which the Philippines calls Pag-asa and is home to a small fishing community and Filipino troops, is close to Subi Reef, one of seven reefs in the disputed Spratly archipelago which China has transformed into islands in the last two years using dredged sand.

Chinese officials say they have completed the island building and are now constructing buildings and runways to ensure safe civilian sea travel. They have acknowledged, though, that the islands could also be used militarily, adding that they have the right to build on what they say is

Chinese territory. The United States and governments with rival claims with China in the disputed region, including the Philippines and Vietnam, have expressed alarm over the Chinese construction, saying it raises tensions and threatens regional stability and could violate freedom of navigation and overflight.

As their Cessna approached Pag-asa to land, Apolonio said a message was received over an emergency radio channel warning: "Foreign military aircraft, this is the Chinese navy. You are threatening the security of our station."

The Filipino pilots ignored the warning and continued with the trip since they were flying a civilian plane over what Apolonio said was Philippine territory. After finishing the survey on Pag-asa, known internationally as Thitu island, they left in the plane and later received the same warning message, he said. Asked if they felt threatened, Apolonio said they were apprehensive because "you'll never know, we can be fired upon." Mayor Eugenio Bito-onon, the leader of the community on Pag-asa who flew with

Apolonio's team, said the radio warnings were an act of intimidation and illustrated the threat to freedom of flight in the region. He said other civilian and military planes have also been shooed away by the Chinese in the region.

Despite the incident, Apolonio said the government will proceed with plans to install the aviation equipment, which is required by the International Civil Aviation Organization to help ensure the

safety of commercial flights. Called the Automatic Dependent Surveillance Broadcast, the equipment helps aircraft determine their positions via satellite navigation and enables them to be tracked.

British Ambassador to Manila Asif Ahmad said Monday that his government would oppose any move that restricts freedom of navigation and overflight in the disputed waters. "If a British aircraft, civilian or military, was intercepted and not allowed to fly over a space which we regard as international, we will simply ignore it," he told reporters.—AP



Starlings fly around the Rise Sculpture, also known as 'The Balls on the Falls', in Belfast, Northern Ireland, yesterday. — AP

## WORLD TENNIS ROCKED BY MATCH-FIXING BOMBHELL

Continued from Page 1

"And while the BBC and BuzzFeed reports mainly refer to events from about 10 years ago, we will investigate any new information, and we always do."

The report comes after allegations of doping cover-ups at athletics' world body, the IAAF, and also follow the corruption scandals which have convulsed football's FIFA. "It is deeply concerning that another sport is facing such serious allegations," an official spokesman for Prime Minister Cameron said yesterday. "As with the allegations we have seen in other sports like athletics and football, the people

who suffer most are the fans. "The Prime Minister would want to see these issues investigated by the independent authorities. The most important thing is that action is taken in response and the independent authorities get on with that." The leaked files include details of an investigation into a 2007 match between Nikolay Davydenko and Martin Vassallo Arguello, which found insufficient evidence of corrupt practice. The report said the probe uncovered syndicates in Russia and Italy making hundreds of thousands of dollars betting on matches investigators thought to be fixed. The key group of 16 suspect players had not been targeted in any crackdown, it said, question-

ing the effectiveness of the Tennis Integrity Unit (TIU).

Kermode said the TIU had won 18 convictions including six life bans since it was set up in 2008, adding it "has to find evidence as opposed to information, suspicion, or hearsay". BuzzFeed said players were targeted in hotel rooms at major tournaments and offered \$50,000 or more to fix matches for the betting syndicates. Other allegations included that a confidential report in 2008 recommended investigations into 28 players but the findings were not followed up, apparently on legal advice. The report also said the European Sports Security Association, which monitors betting for bookmakers, flagged up more than 50 suspicious matches to the TIU last year.

Djokovic played down the report's significance but he also said he was targeted in 2007 to throw a first-round match at St Petersburg. "I was not approached directly. I was approached through people that were working with me at that time," said the defending Australian Open champion,

after beating Chung Hyeon in the first round. "Of course, we threw it away, right away. It didn't even get to me, the guy that was trying to talk to me, didn't even get to me directly. There was nothing out of it."

Djokovic was reportedly offered \$200,000 to throw the match, in an incident which gives an insight into the murky world of match-fixing - which the Serb called "a crime in sport". Roger Federer also said it was difficult to guess the significance of the report, but he welcomed the extra pressure that would now focus on match-fixers. "There's more pressure on these people now maybe because of this story, which is a good thing," Federer said. Other players seemed unaware of any problems with corruption, with both Serena Williams and Japan's Kei Nishikori saying they hadn't noticed anything untoward. "I think that... as an athlete, I do everything I can to be not only great, but, you know, historic. If that's (match-fixing) going on, I don't know about it," Williams said. — AFP

## KIA REFUSING TO COOPERATE IN SALE PROBE

Continued from Page 1

KIA manages Kuwait's foreign assets currently estimated at over \$600 billion. There is no direct oversight by the parliament of investments and income from KIA investments are not counted as part of Kuwait's budget. The sovereign wealth fund is required to present a detailed report to the Cabinet on the assets under its management and performance but is strictly forbidden from sharing this information with the general public.

Meanwhile, MPs continued yesterday to hail the move of HH the Amir to order cuts in the Amiri Diwan spending in light of the sharp fall in oil prices. The lawmakers also called on the government to take similar steps to cut spending by ministries. MP Fares Al-Otaibi praised the Amir's move and urged the government to follow suit. The lawmaker said that the prime minister had asked his ministers to cut spending and stop unnecessary expenditures, but so far nothing has happened.

Islamist MP Abdulrahman Al-Jeeran demanded yesterday a special debate on the consequences of the plunge in oil prices and the sharp drop in the Kuwaiti bourse. He said the debate aims to discuss preventive

measures taken by the government and what has been implemented of those measures to face the developments on the economic front. The Assembly and the government have agreed to hold a joint meeting shortly at the Assembly bureau to discuss the issue of lifting subsidies to reduce the budget deficit and boost non-oil revenues.

MP Askar Al-Enezi meanwhile submitted a draft law calling on the government to grant Kuwaiti citizenship to up to 4,000 stateless people known as bedoons in 2016. Enezi said he submitted the bill because the validity of the previous law expired by the end of last year and a new law must be approved to help speed up solving the problem of 110,000 bedoons.

The interior and defense committee of the Assembly discussed the issue on Sunday with the interior minister and the head of the bedoons committee. Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah told the panel that the ministry intends to grant citizenship to 155 people soon, mostly children of Kuwaiti women married to foreigners. Head of the bedoons committee Saleh Al-Fadhalah said that authorities have begun looking into the cases of 32,000 stateless people to see if they deserve to be granted citizenship or not.

## CAMERON WARNS MUSLIM WOMEN...

Continued from Page 1

Cameron said that a lack of language skills could make Muslims in Britain more vulnerable to the message of extremist groups. "I am not saying there is some sort of causal connection between not speaking English and becoming an extremist, of course not," he told BBC radio. "But if you are not able to speak English, not able to integrate, you may find therefore you have challenges understanding what your identity is and therefore you could be more susceptible to the extremist message."

His comments drew criticism from Muslim groups and opposition parties. Mohammed Shafiq, chief executive of the Ramadhan Foundation, which campaigns for better community relations, accused Cameron of "disgraceful stereotyping". "David Cameron and his Conservative government are once again using British Muslims as a political football to score cheap points, to

appear tough," he added.

Andy Burnham, home affairs spokesman for the main opposition Labour party, accused Cameron of a "clumsy and simplistic approach" which was "unfairly stigmatizing a whole community." Ex-Conservative Party co-chair Sayeeda Warsi said her former boss's idea was "lazy and misguided" and a "stereotyping of British Muslim communities". "My parents came to this country with very little English - my mum's English still isn't great, even though she has been to English language classes," she told BBC Radio 4's World at One. "I think it is lazy and sloppy when we start making policies based on stereotypes which do badly stigmatize communities."

Shuja Shafi, secretary general of the Muslim Council of Britain, backed Cameron's call, but questioned his tactics. "The prime minister's aim to have English more widely spoken and for better integration falls at the first hurdle if he is to link it to security and single out Muslim women to illustrate his point," he said. — AFP

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**Focus**

**2015 'TIPPING POINT'  
FOR CLIMATE CHANGE**

By Marlowe Hood

**W**hen future generations write the history of humanity's faltering quest to repair Earth's climate system, 2015 will have its own chapter. Nature, along with the usually fractious family of nations, conspired to make it a landmark year: almost certainly the hottest on record for the planet as a whole, and a rare moment of unity when 195 states pledged to curb the carbon pollution that drives global warming. Whether the Dec 12 Paris Agreement is the key to our salvation or too-little-too-late depends on what happens starting now, experts and activists told AFP.

"The most compelling thing you can say about Paris is not that it saved the planet, but that it saved the chance of saving the planet," said Bill McKibben, founder of the grassroots organization 350.org and an architect of the worldwide movement to divest from fossil fuel companies. Robert Stavins, director of the Harvard Environmental Economics Program at the Harvard Kennedy School, was also chary: "We will only be able to judge whether it is truly a success years, perhaps decades, from now."

But whatever lies ahead, they all agree, the last year has been a "tipping point" on climate change. "Paris represented a real sea change in seriousness in coming to grips with the issue," said Alden Meyer, a veteran climate analyst from the Washington-based Union of Concerned Scientists who has followed the UN process for nearly three decades. Much of that seriousness was driven by a crescendo of deadly extreme weather and the growing confidence of science in connecting the dots with long-term shifts in climate. The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will likely report tomorrow on record-breaking heat in 2015.

**The 'Golden Spike'**

They could point to the most powerful hurricane ever registered; freakish, above-freezing temperatures - if only for a day - at the North Pole in December; or life-threatening droughts in eastern and southern Africa. Some of that will be chalked up to El Nino, a natural weather pattern that creates havoc along the tropical and southern Pacific Rim every five or six years. But the very fact that this El Nino is the most intense ever measured may itself be a by-product of global warming.

Scientists reported last week that climate change was probably pushed back the next Ice Age by 50,000 years. That may sound like good news, but more than anything it is a stunning testament to the extent to which human activity - mainly burning fossil fuels - has played havoc with the planet's thermostat. Experts have also come a step closer to concluding that our impact on Earth's bio-chemical systems has been so massive as to justify the christening of a new geological era. The "golden spike," or start date, for the Anthropocene - the "Age of Man" - will probably be the mid-20th century.

What Saleemul Huq, director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development in Dhaka, calls a "greater planetary consciousness" on climate has shown up in business and politics as well. In the World Economic Forum's annual survey on global risks over the coming decade, released last week, some 750 experts put "failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation" at the top of the list for the first time. "Mitigation" means cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and "adaptation" refers to coping with the consequences of climate change. In third and fourth position are "water crises" and "large-scale involuntary migration".

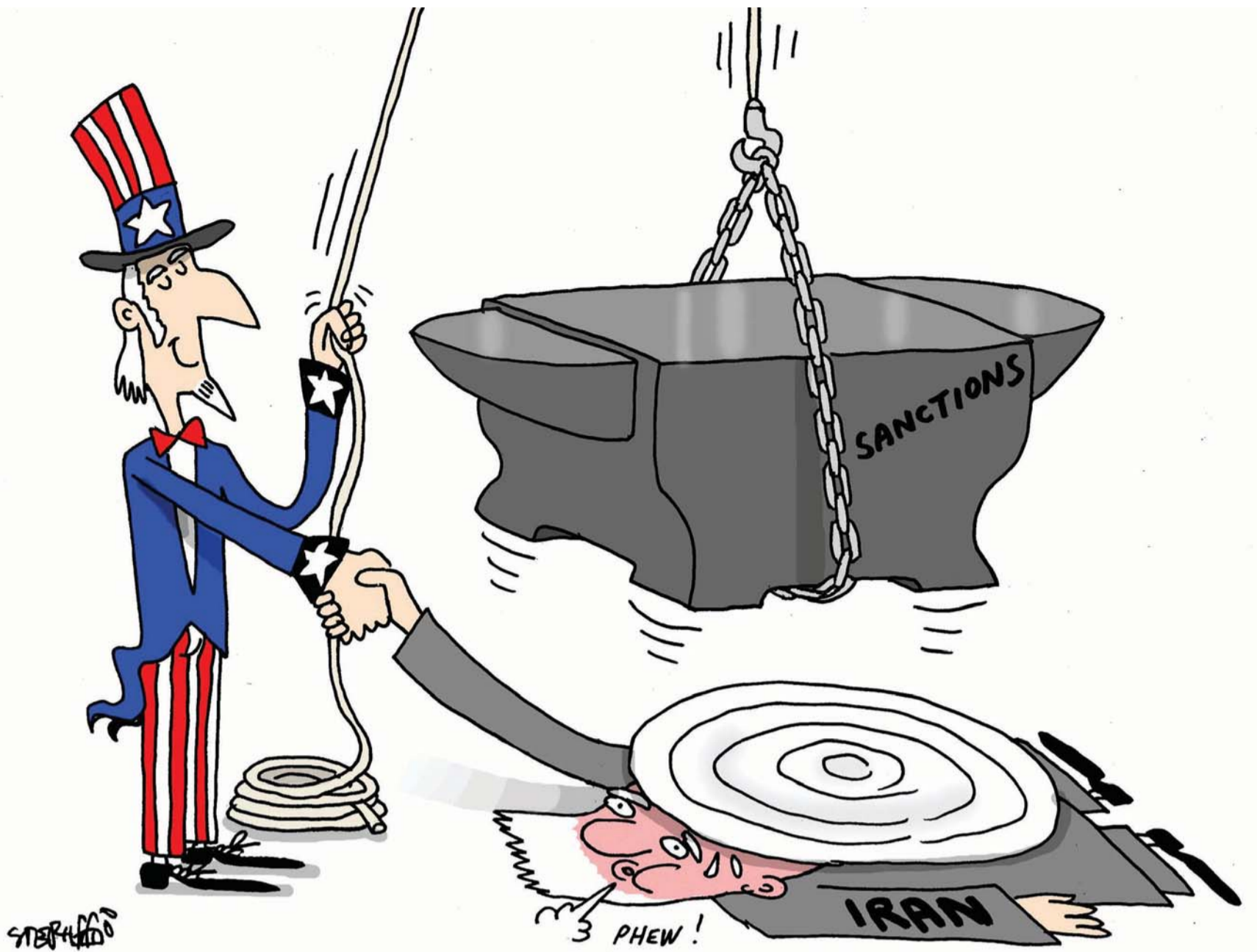
**Record Clean Energy Investment**

In the business arena, the balance of investment is shifting away from fossil fuels and towards renewables, Bloomberg New Energy Finance reported recently. Despite tumbling oil and gas prices, global investment in clean energy reached \$329 billion (300 billion euros) in 2015, a new record, Bloomberg said. US President Barack Obama has dealt the US coal industry - already reeling from bankruptcies - another body blow in announcing a freeze on new coal mine permits on federal land.

The 2015 watershed on climate change has crystallized a gradual shift from debate over the reality and extent of global warming, to a discussion on what to do about it. "After having concentrated for years on the problems generated by climate change, we are seeing across the globe solutions responding to the crisis," said Pascal Canfin, a former French government minister and the new head of WWF France. But Canfin and others caution against undue optimism.

"There's a huge amount of resistance and inertia built into the system," said Huq. "Changing the global economy is not a trivial matter." Much of that resistance will come from the fossil fuel industry, faced with the fact that 80 percent of known reserves must stay in the ground to have even a shot at holding global warming to "well below two degrees Celsius" above mid-19th century levels, much less the 1.5 degree target climate-vulnerable countries fought so hard to include in the Paris Agreement as an aspirational goal. "The writing is on the wall for coal. But the oil and gas industry is much bigger and more powerful," said Meyer. "You don't want to delude yourself that they are going to go away quietly." —AFP

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**IRAN DEALS MAY NOT HERALD RAPID CHANGES**

By Adam Schreck

**T**he lifting of crippling international sanctions linked to Iran's nuclear program and the flurry of diplomacy that led to the release of Americans held by Tehran suggests a new era could be dawning. But anyone hoping for rapid change is likely to be disappointed. President Hassan Rouhani and his team have plenty to celebrate now that nuclear sanctions have been removed. The moderate leader promised to boost Iran's struggling economy and improve its relations with the wider world during his 2013 campaign. The nuclear deal achieves both aims.

He hailed the deal Sunday as a way to open "new windows for engagement with the world," and said fresh investments and newly freed overseas assets could kick-start the transformation of a country struggling with high unemployment and inflation. At the top of the shopping list are more than 100 planes from Europe's Airbus. It will take time for the economic benefits to trickle down to ordinary Iranians, but the goodwill from the deal could translate into electoral gains for moderate and reformist candidates in parliamentary elections late next month. Voters will also select members of the 88-seat Experts Assembly, an influential clerical body that picks a successor for the 76-year-old supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in the event of his death.

Rouhani may have pushed for the rapid implementation of Iran's commitments under last summer's nuclear deal, ensuring faster sanctions relief, with the electoral

timetable in mind. But he still faces intense domestic opposition from hard-liners who believe he has given away too much and fear Iran's opening to the outside world leaves it exposed to corrupting foreign cultural influences.

In the months leading up this past weekend's implementation of the nuclear deal, Iranian authorities pursued a renewed crackdown on free expression, jailing several writers and artists, including award-winning filmmaker Keywan Karimi. The November anniversary of the 1979 takeover of the US Embassy in Tehran drew thousands of demonstrators, who burned American flags and hoisted signs denouncing McDonald's and Starbucks.

That hardline pushback also helps explain paradoxes like the fact that officials, including Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, tout the deal's benefits on Twitter even as Iranian censors block the site and other social media services at home. Khamenei, Iran's top decision-maker, has left little doubt where he stands on the question of whether the opening with the West should lead to a relaxing of conservative values. During a speech to prayer leaders this month, he warned that "one of the main objectives of the enemies of Islam and the Iranian nation is to change the culture and moralities of people, particularly their lifestyle."

**Resistance**

Those hoping for greater openness in Iran will face resistance from entrenched interests such as the powerful

Revolutionary Guard, notes Cliff Kupchan, the chairman of the Eurasia Group. He predicts "a path of slow, non-linear political and economic liberalization" in the wake of the deal's implementation. "Khamenei has been intent on showing that the deal is a one-off, not a detente," Kupchan wrote. "And for some years the Leader will need the image of the 'Great Satan' to legitimize his rule in the eyes of key constituencies - the (Revolutionary Guard), conservative clerics and the pious poor."

And for all the conversations US Secretary of State John Kerry and Zarif had over the past few years, the fact remains that they represent countries that do not have formal diplomatic relations. Official ties were severed after the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the storming of the US Embassy. Wide-ranging US sanctions imposed over the years and unrelated to Iran's nuclear program remain in place. That will complicate American companies' ability to do business in the Islamic Republic.

"Both sides would like to open a new chapter. This does not mean they see eye to eye," said Fawaz Gerges, a Middle East expert at the London School of Economics. "This does not mean the end to mistrust. This does not mean the end to divergent interests in the region." Still, the two diplomats have forged a working relationship that can at times bear fruit. Months of negotiations resulted in the release of four Iranian-Americans from prison, including Washington Post journalist Jason Rezaian, in exchange for seven Iranians held in the US, six of them also dual nationals. A fifth

American held in Iran, student Matthew Trevithick, was also released.

And rapid-fire diplomacy managed to get 10 US Navy sailors and their boats released from Iranian custody in less than 24 hours last week - an unthinkable quick turnaround compared to past cases where foreigners found themselves in Iranian territory. But there are limits. Iranian-American businessman Siamak Namazi, who is believed to be detained in Iran, was not part of this weekend's prisoner swap. Also still missing is former FBI agent Robert Levinson, who disappeared in Iran in 2007 on an unauthorized CIA mission.

Meanwhile, Iran remains a staunch backer of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, putting it at odds with the US and Sunni Arab powers including Saudi Arabia, even as it shares the West's interest in defeating the Islamic State group. In Yemen, a US-supported, Saudi-led coalition is fighting to roll back gains by Iranian-backed Shiite rebels. And mistrust runs deep on both sides. Rouhani said Sunday that even with a deal in hand, Iranians will not easily trust the US because "our people have suffered from plenty of promise-breaking," the official IRNA news agency reported.

In Washington, President Barack Obama hailed the American prisoners' release and the implementation of the nuclear accord as victories for "smart" diplomacy, declaring that "this is a good day." Not long before, his administration announced new sanctions against Iran - this time on 11 people and entities involved in the country's ballistic missile program. —AP

**SAUDIS ALARMED AT IRAN SANCTIONS RELIEF**

By Angus McDowall

**S**audi officials have said little in public, but they fear the end of sanctions on Iran could boost what they see as its subversive activities in the Middle East while also enriching a diverse economy that the oil-dependent kingdom views as a major competitor for regional influence. Saudi-Iranian political rivalry has aggravated tumult across the Middle East for years, but has escalated in recent months as Riyadh's new rulers have taken a harder line and as the nuclear deal has relieved pressure on Tehran.

Iran's international rehabilitation also opens the prospect of economic rivalry, with Saudi Arabia facing not only a fellow oil producer in an era of oversupply and low prices, but also a more self-reliant and multi-skilled economy. Even without public pronouncements, Riyadh's private consternation could be discerned in the pages of semi-official media and comments by influential clerics.

The main cartoon in Al-Watan daily simply showed a pencil broken mid-way through writing the word "peace", while an opinion piece underneath it asked "Will Iran change after the nuclear deal enters implementation?" Its answer: probably not. Saudi Arabia, a conservative Sunni Muslim monarchy, sees revolutionary Iran as the paramount threat to the Middle East's stability, because of its support for Shiite militias that Riyadh says have inflamed sectarian violence and undermined Arab governments.

For the Al Saud dynasty, the nuclear deal was a double blow, freeing Iran from sanctions it believed helped check those regional activities and raising the spectre of a rapprochement between Tehran and Riyadh's most powerful ally, the United States. Under King Salman, Saudi Arabia has launched a war in Yemen to stop an ally of Tehran gaining power, mobilised Muslim states to freeze Tehran out of regional and Islamic influence, and has boosted support to rebels fighting Iranian allies in Syria.

Iran's pragmatist President Hassan Rouhani, who has publicly reached out to Riyadh repeatedly since his election in 2013, on Sunday rebuked the Saudis for their own regional stance and called on them to "take the path that will benefit the region". Such comments, which mirror accusations Riyadh makes about Iran, infuriate Saudi officials who regard Rouhani as a smooth-talking cipher for

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and see no point engaging with him instead of his harder line superior.

They disdain the campaign by US President Barack Obama to bring Iran in from the cold, believing him pusillanimous in the face of what they see as Iranian aggression and guileless in accommodating Iran's moderates when Khamenei pulls the strings.

**Tumbling Stocks**

Between the full-page adverts Saudi companies had run in yesterday's newspapers to congratulate King Salman on the Islamic calendar anniversary of his becoming monarch, the opinion columns and cartoons despaired at Iran's comeback. The role of Western powers, particularly Riyadh's oldest ally the United States, in facilitating Tehran's relief from pariah status and their hopes of cashing in on Iran's newly opened economy did not go unremarked.

The Al-Jazirah daily's cartoonist showed an incarnation of American capitalism in striped trousers and top hat carrying a bottle marked "sanctions", from which emerged a genie in the guise of a Shiite militia fighter, his turban marked "Iran". When Salman visited Washington in September, the main focus of talks was the push by his powerful son, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, to win investment from American firms, an apparent riposte to Iran's overtures to Western companies.

Sunday's news that sanctions would indeed be lifted raised fears of a slide in oil prices below their existing low level of under \$30 a barrel as Iran immediately ordered an increase in output, while Saudi stocks fell by 5 percent. There could be no more pronounced contrast with the mood in Iran, freed from years of increasingly tough sanctions which have eroded its currency and allowed Saudi Arabia to eclipse its economy.

In 2000, Iran's gross domestic product was larger than Saudi Arabia's, according to International Monetary Fund data; now, the \$650 billion Saudi economy is much bigger than Iran at \$400 billion. That trend may now start reversing, altering how far each country can afford to mount political and military adventures overseas, and the extent to which they can use trade relations to build alliances with foreign powers.

Saudi Arabia's economy is slowing sharply because of low oil prices, which the entry of new Iranian crude into the market will intensify. Iran is looking forward to a trade and investment boom as sanctions are lifted; it has big non-oil sectors such as agriculture and car manufacturing that the Saudis lack.

**Wider Alarm**

The volatile nature of Saudi-Iranian relations, aggravated already this month by a diplomatic row following Riyadh's execution of a Shiite cleric, is causing alarm among world powers who fear things will get worse. This week a procession of top officials from around the world will visit Riyadh, including Chinese President Xi Jinping, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius and US Secretary of State John Kerry.

While they all have other business to discuss, the question of Saudi Arabia's handling of its rivalry with Iran, and the wider risks it entails, are likely to be addressed, with both Xi and Sharif planning also to visit Tehran. What they all fear is that if competition between the Middle East's foremost powers cannot be contained, it will complicate efforts to end wars and political struggles across the region or even break out into new fighting elsewhere.

Such concerns are only compounded by the sectarian lines along which the rivalry has become drawn, and the likelihood that hostility between Saudi Arabia and Iran will translate into religious competition that fuels militancy across the world. A letter signed by 140 Saudi clerics, including prominent names, calling on the government to beware what they termed Iran's "record of criminality and treachery" and to support regional Sunnis cannot have assuaged international alarm.

Neither can the tweet by Sheikh Saud Al-Shuraim, imam of the Grand Mosque in Makkah, using a derogatory term often employed by Arab Sunnis to describe Iranians and Shiites, after the sanctions were lifted. "There is no surprise in the alliance of the Safavids with the Jews and Christians against the Muslims, history witnessed this. But there is surprise at minds delaying their understanding of this truth until this moment," he wrote. —Reuters



## NEW ZEALAND DISMISS DOWNSIDE OF RECORD WIN

**WELLINGTON:** New Zealand have weighed up the impact of their record win over Pakistan in Sunday's Twenty20 and concluded the benefits far outweigh the downside. Martin Guptill and Kane Williamson's unbroken 171-run stand to win the match and level the series set a new record for the highest Twenty20 partnership. They eclipsed by one run the previous best of 170 set by South Africa's Graeme Smith and Loots Bosman against England in 2009. However, their dominance at the top of the New Zealand innings meant no time in the middle for anyone else in the battling

line-up with only one match left before the world T20 championship starts in India in March.

Guptill said Monday that winning was better than making sure everyone had batting time. "You don't really want to get out to give other people a go, do you?" he said. Guptill scored an unbeaten 87 from 58 deliveries as New Zealand beat Pakistan by 10 wickets in Hamilton. Pakistan won the opening match by 16 runs in Auckland, meaning the series is set for a decider in the third and final match in Wellington on Friday. Against Sri Lanka in two Twenty20 wins earlier

this month New Zealand lost four wickets in the first match and only one in the second, meaning limited opportunities for their middle order batsmen.

### 'Good for us'

"It can only be good for us that we're winning, not many wickets down," Guptill said. "Probably only three of us have had good long innings in the last three or four games. It's disappointing for the middle order but it can only be good for New Zealand cricket." New Zealand skipper Williamson, who scored 72 off 48 in partnership with Guptill, said

the record was nice but winning was better. "You can't have everything," he said. "It was a really good performance from the team all round. "An improved bowling effort on a pretty good batting track first, and then for Gup and myself to put a big partnership together was pleasing. "If you do things well then guys don't get bats, but they'll be preparing and training for the next game just as normal and I'm sure they'll be ready to go."

Pakistan spin bowling coach Mushtaq Ahmed said his bowlers were unable to find a way to break Guptill

and Williamson who were only separated in the first match by a run out. "There was a good combination between Guptill and Williamson because they've got a different style of game," he said. "I think maybe from a coaching point of view we can develop more variation in our bowling, a bit more smart fielding positions. That's the only thing. "If you can get one or two wickets, then it'll be a different ball game. It doesn't matter if you get 180 or 200 runs on the board, if you don't pick (up) wickets then the game will always be in the opposition hands."—AFP

## UNDER-PRESSURE DHONI GETS BOARD'S BACKING

**NEW DELHI:** Mahendra Singh Dhoni's job as India's limited-overs captain is safe despite the team's third successive one-day series defeat, the country's cricket board (BCCI) said yesterday. Speculation has been swirling over the future of the 34-year-old who quit tests in late 2014 but remains in charge of the team in shorter formats. The recent results, however, have not really enhanced the reputation of the man who led India to virtually every honor across formats. Under him, India lost their first ODI series in Bangladesh in June last year and went down to a visiting South African team in October. On Sunday, Dhoni's men succumbed to their third successive defeat in Australia who took an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series, chasing down big totals in Perth, Brisbane and Melbourne.

While some pundits believe test captain Virat Kohli should take over the limited-overs duties as well, BCCI secretary Anurag Thakur insisted Dhoni was the right man to lead India in shorter formats. "The kind of performance we have had from Dhoni and

the team under him in the last eight-nine years, I think it's unfair to question his leadership after just one series," Thakur told reporters. "Dhoni is one of the most successful captains of the country. Under him, we won the World Cup in 2007 (T20) and 2011 (ODI). Team India rose to number one both in tests and ODIs under his leadership.

"Unfortunately we lost all three matches so far, and we've noticed our bowling limitations too, not being able to defend big totals. "It's a concern and the selectors and team management would assess the performance keeping the Asia Cup and the Twenty20 World Cup in mind," Thakur said. Dhoni himself felt more than his captaincy, the team needed to look at the grey areas and how to fix them. "It's not about the leader. I'm there (now), somebody else will come later," the stumper-batsman said after the loss in Melbourne. "What is more important is to see the areas we are lacking in, the departments which have to improve when it comes to shorter formats."—Reuters



**BOSTON:** Dominick Cruz celebrates with the title belt after his win against TJ Dillashaw in a UFC bantamweight title match on Sunday, Jan 17, 2016. — AP



India's captain MS Dhoni

## LEDECKY SMASHES 800M FREE WORLD RECORD; PHELPS WINS

**LOS ANGELES:** Katie Ledecky crushed her own women's 800m freestyle world record on Sunday, clocking a stunning 8min 6.68sec to win at the Pro Swim meeting in Austin, Texas. The 18-year-old American obliterated the previous record of 8:07.39 that she set at the 2015 World Championships last August 8 in Kazan, Russia. "It was exciting," said Ledecky, who beat the water in triumph when she saw her time. "It's always exciting when you can get pushed along by a crowd like this in Austin."

She upstaged superstar Michael Phelps, who blazed to victory in the 200m individual medley to notch his first win over rival Ryan Lochte in the event since the 2012 London Olympics. Phelps, whose 18 Olympic gold medals include three in the 200m individual medley, powered through the final 25 meters of the closing freestyle leg to win in 1:58.00sec. Lochte, the current world record-holder in the event, held a narrow lead at every turn but settled for second in 1:58.43.

"Ryan and I have had a lot of great swims with one another," Phelps said. "Joking around with him beforehand, I kind of knew we were going to try to battle it out. I knew it would come down to the touch." Phelps finished the three-day meet with two victories—including his 100m butterfly win on Friday—and a fourth place finish in the 200m freestyle. "We have a cou-

ple more meets before (Olympic) trials. Hopefully I'll be better than this," said Phelps, adding that the lower-key meetings are a chance to assess not only his speed but also technical details such as turns as he continues a comeback aimed at adding to his Olympic legacy in Rio.

Ledecky, who was the youngest member of the US Olympic delegation in London four years ago, is on course to build her Games legacy as well. She now owns the eight fastest performances ever in the 800m free and nine of the top 10. She also holds the world record in the 400m free and the non-Olympic women's event of 1500m free. In Rio, Ledecky could line up in the 200m, 400m and 800m freestyles—and perhaps even the 100m free, in which she finished second in Austin this week.

"I was feeling good going into it," said Ledecky, who romped home with Becca Mann a distant second in 8:24.49. "Whenever I get going like that, I get into a good rhythm with my freestyle. My stroke just feels good the whole weekend once I have one or two really good freestyle swims." In other finals on the last night of the meet, Hungary's "Iron Lady" Katinka Hosszu pulled off a tough double, winning the 200m medley in 2:10.69 shortly after triumphing in 100m backstroke in 59.91. Singapore's Quah Zheng Wen won the men's 200m fly in 1:58.07, coming from fifth at the halfway mark to triumph.—AFP



**AUSTIN:** Katie Ledecky swims in the Women's 800 meter freestyle final during the Arena Pro Swim Series in Austin, Texas. — AFP

## CRUZ REGAINS THE UFC BANTAMWEIGHT TITLE

**BOSTON:** Dominick Cruz regained the UFC bantamweight title Sunday night, outpointing T.J. Dillashaw by split decision at the TD Garden. Cruz (21-1) received winning scores of 48-47 and 49-46, and the other judge scored the five-round bout 49-46 for Dillashaw (13-3). Forced to relinquish the title because of a series of knee injuries, Cruz fought for the first time since 2014 and the second time since 2011. Dillashaw was making his third title defense. "There's no such thing as rust," said Cruz, from San Diego. "Rust is only something you get when you don't train hard. I've seen fighters do what TJ does, but he's faster."

Cruz took down Dillashaw, from Denver, in each of the first four rounds and used his footwork to control the distance for most of the fight. "I'm very disappointed," Dillashaw said. "I felt like I was the aggressor and landed the bigger shots. I'm not a fan of his antics, but congratulations to him." Cruz took down Dillashaw once in the first round, grabbing a leg while Dillashaw was throwing a kick. Toward the end of the round, Cruz fought off a takedown attempt from Dillashaw.

Cruz used his foot speed in the second round, moving in and out of range to land punches. In the final minute of the round, he downed Dillashaw twice with double leg shots. Dillashaw landed two kicks to the head in the third, opening cuts on Cruz's lips and next to his left eye. Cruz still stayed out of range for most of the round and scored another double-leg takedown. Dillashaw sustained a cut along the left eye in the fourth, but scored his first takedown of the fight, slipping behind Cruz and forcing him to the mat.

In the fifth, Cruz kept circling. Late in the round, Dillashaw landed a knee to the midsection. In the co-main event, Eddie Alvarez outpointed former lightweight champion Anthony Pettis in a three-round fight. All three judges scored it 29-28, two for Alvarez (27-4) and one for Pettis (18-4). Both fighters spent the entire second round on their feet with Pettis defending two takedown attempts. In the first, Alvarez took down Pettis twice, once with a double leg and once with an inside triple. Bleeding from his nose in the third, Alvarez took down Pettis three



**BOSTON:** Dominick Cruz is upended by TJ Dillashaw in their bantamweight bout during UFC Fight Night 81 at TD Banknorth Garden 6 in Boston, Massachusetts. — AFP

times. Also on the main card, heavyweight Travis Browne stopped former NFL player Matt Mitrione in the third round, and lightweight Francisco Trinaldo won a three-round unani-

mous decision over Ross Pearson. Browne improved to 18-3-1, and Mitrione dropped to 9-5. Trinaldo improved to 17-4, and Pearson fell to 20-10 with one no-contest.—AP

## AUSTRALIA PICK POWERFUL T20 SQUAD TO FACE INDIA

**SYDNEY:** Australia yesterday named a powerful 17-man squad for the three-match Twenty20 international series against India this month, with an eye to the upcoming World T20. However, Test captain Steve Smith and his deputy David Warner will play only in the opening match in Adelaide on January 26 before sitting out the other games to prepare for the first ODI against New Zealand in Auckland on February 3. "Our choice of 17 for the KFC T20s gives us a chance to look at some options ahead of the ICC World Twenty20 in India," said national selector Rod Marsh. The tournament starts March 8 with the April 3 final in Kolkata. Australia have opted for experience and form for the India series, picking the stars of the Big Bash league with big-hitting Aaron Finch as captain. "Shane Watson has earned his recall to

Australian colors through a combination of his experience, especially in short-form cricket, the all-round package he offers and the fact he is bang in form at the moment, having put performances on the board for the Sydney Thunder," said Marsh. "Shaun Tait returns on the basis that he is the quickest bowler going around in Australia at the moment and he offers us that explosive option if we choose to use it." Chris Lynn, Travis Head and Andrew Tye have made irresistible cases for inclusion off the back of individual excellence in the KFC BBL and we are delighted to offer them the opportunity to push their claims for inclusion in the ICC World Twenty20," Marsh added.

"In terms of leg-spin, Cameron Boyce has once again impressed in domestic action and deserves his spot." The selectors said they regret-

ted not being able to find places for George Bailey and Mitchell Marsh but noted that the door remains open to the World Twenty20 squad. "We know what both those players are capable of, and both have significant experience of playing Twenty20 cricket in India," Marsh said. "But we want them to continue to press their cases for inclusion while we take this opportunity to look at other contenders." The second T20 takes place in Melbourne on January 29 while the final game will be in Sydney on January 31.

Australia squad include: Aaron Finch (capt), Scott Boland, Cameron Boyce, James Faulkner, John Hastings, Travis Head, Nathan Lyon, Chris Lynn, Glenn Maxwell, Shaun Marsh, Kane Richardson, Steve Smith, Shaun Tait, Andrew Tye, Matthew Wade, David Warner, Shane Watson.—AFP





# AFRICAN STRIKERS ON FORM IN EUROPE

**PARIS:** Rudy Gestede was on the mark for Aston Villa in England, while Cheikhou Kouyate had an outstanding match for West Ham. In France there were match-winning goals from Floyd Ayite at Bastia and Cheick Diabate at Bordeaux, and in Italy Jerry Mbakogu scored the winner for Carpi from the penalty spot.

**Rudy Gestede (Aston Villa) ENGLAND**

The Benin striker scored an equalizer 15 minutes from time for Aston Villa in their 1-1 draw with high-flying Leicester when, after coming on minutes earlier as a substitute, he got away with the ball bouncing off his arm and then benefited from a Robert Huth clearance that hit him in the groin before his deflected shot found its way into the net for his first goal since September. Unfortunately for Villa, the point gained was not enough to take them off the bottom of the table.

**Riyad Mahrez (Leicester City)**

He has been having a brilliant season as a key member of Leicester's unexpected push for the Premier League title but last weekend was one to forget for the Algeria winger. Minutes after the Foxes had gone 1-0 up at Villa Park, they were

awarded a penalty when his shot was blocked by the sliding Aly Cissokho's raised arm. Despite missing from the spot earlier this month Mahrez took the penalty himself, but his casual strike down the middle was too close to Mark Bunn and the Villa goalkeeper made the save.

**Yaya Toure (Manchester City)**

The Ivory Coast star suffered the indignity of being dropped to the bench but made his mark when he came on in the second half with a neat piece of play as City's best move of the match led to a third goal, and Sergio Agueiro's second of the match, in a 4-0 rout of Crystal Palace.

**Cheikhou Kouyate (West Ham)**

A forceful and aggressive display meant the Senegal star was the pick of West Ham's midfield in their 2-1 loss away to Newcastle. The London club may still have come away with a point if his late header had not been saved by Newcastle keeper Rob Elliot.

**Arthur Boka (Malaga) SPAIN**

Ivorian full-back Boka was sent-off for two bookable offences as Malaga's seven-game unbeaten run in La Liga came to an end in a 2-1 defeat at Sevilla.

**Floyd Ayite (Bastia) FRANCE**

Togo international Ayite scored three minutes after half-time to earn Bastia a 1-0 win at home to Montpellier. The winger headed home Florian Marange's cross for his fourth goal of the season.

**Cheick Diabate (Bordeaux)**

Mali striker Diabate struck the winner for Bordeaux for the second time in as many games as they beat Lille 1-0. The 27-year-old headed home a cross from Tunisian international Wahbi Khazri six minutes into the second half.

**Mohamed Salah (Roma) ITALY**

Coach Luciano Spalletti was back in charge of Roma after the sacking of Rudi Garcia and Salah's performance reflected the general malaise being felt at the Serie A club. The Egyptian winger was far from his best and, after Radja Nainggolan had given Roma a 1-0 lead, spurned the chance to double the hosts' advantage when he hit a wasted shot instead of offering up to Edin Dzeko, who was in a better position. It finished tied at 1-1.

**Jerry Mbakogu (Carpi)**

Carpi are in a battle against relegation



Jerry Mbakogu

but the league minnows were given a huge boost with a fourth win of the campaign thanks to Mbakogu's second-half penalty. Sampdoria's Joaquin Correa pulled the match level six minutes after

Lorenzo Lollo's opener for the hosts, and after a foul in the area Nigerian Mbakogu stepped up to beat Emiliano Viviano in the visiting goal to put Carpi ahead on 55 minutes.—AFP



**TOULOUSE:** Toulouse's Brazilian midfielder Somalia (right) vies with Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian midfielder Lucas Moura during the French L1 football match Toulouse vs Paris Saint-Germain at the Municipal stadium in Toulouse. —AFP

**FRENCH CUP PREVIEW**

## TOULOUSE OUT TO CLAIM PSG SCALP IN FRENCH CUP

**PARIS:** Toulouse will aim to thwart Paris Saint-Germain in their quest for a second straight domestic treble when the two sides meet for the second time in four days in the last 32 of the French Cup today. PSG left Toulouse with a narrow 1-0 win in Ligue 1 on Saturday courtesy of Zlatan Ibrahimovic's second-half strike, but Dominique Arribage's side were buoyed by their display against the runaway league leaders. "It won't be the same story tomorrow (Tuesday)," Arribage said at Monday's press conference. "It's up to us to rise to the occasion. We have plenty of hope because they know we could hang with them and beat them."

"We have to go to the Parc des Princes full of ambition. We're setting ourselves up for a good performance, we're not going there to concede five (goals) but that could happen." Laurent Blanc is likely to rest some

key players amid a congested fixture list which includes another meeting with Toulouse on January 27 in the semi-finals of the League Cup. PSG are set to embark on a run of seven matches in little over three weeks before hosting Chelsea in the first leg of their Champions League last-16 tie on February 16, and they would play another game before facing the Premier League champions should they advance on Tuesday. There are three other all-Ligue 1 ties, with record 10-time winners Marseille hosting Montpellier, 2014 champions Guingamp visiting Gazelec Ajaccio and Angers at home to 2013 winners Bordeaux, as a record 17 top-flight sides remain in the competition at this stage. Lyon will look to recover from Sunday's 1-0 defeat to bitter rivals Saint-Etienne when they travel to third-tier Chambly tomorrow, while Monaco go to second-tier Evian.—AFP

## LAW CHANGES TO 'SIMPLIFY' SOCCER

**LONDON:** Soccer always has been a relatively simple sport, governed by 17 laws largely unchanged since the 19th century, yet that template is now surrounded by 22,000 words of interpretations, creating anomalies the rulemakers want to streamline. Former Premier League referee David Elleray has spent 18 months revising the sport's global law-book and bringing it up to date for the first time since the last major re-working in the 1930s by future FIFA president Stanley Rous.

Elleray has examined incidents from minor infringements at grassroots level to a famous pre-match clash in the Premier League as well as canvassing opinion from the heads of refereeing in each of FIFA's six confederations.

"What we have tried to do is add some common sense, write in clearer language, tell referees to be more sensitive to the spirit of the game they are controlling, and bring all the laws up to date," he told reporters. "Most of these changes are really about common sense. Right now, especially with some situations, especially those that do not happen very often, the laws are a little crazy because they have been put together piecemeal over the years." Elleray said his goal was for fans to understand why referees make decisions, leading to more respect for officials, adding that there were no plans for referees to be fitted with microphones, as they are in rugby.

**Dry read**

The laws, first drawn up in 1863 when the world's oldest Football Association was formed in England, are a dry read and it is doubtful whether many fans or players will

have gone through them in detail. The power of their words, however, impact on every organized match, from a World Cup final to a Sunday League park game in London, Soweto or Miami, and provide the unifying link between all levels of the game. Unlike many other sports which have countless laws, there are only 17 in soccer, but Elleray had a mammoth task editing them and their interpretations down from 22,000 to 12,000 words.

As an example of where the modern game has left them behind, Elleray recalled the occasion when Roy Keane of Manchester United and Patrick Vieira of Arsenal nearly came to blows in the tunnel before a Premier League match at Highbury in 2005. "We all remember the famous Keane and Vieira exchange of words in the tunnel at Highbury. But if that had developed into a full-scale fight, what would you expect to happen to them?" he said. "You would expect them to have been red-carded and not allowed to play, but that is not the case."

Elleray said under current regulations a referee cannot dismiss players in the tunnel because they are not yet on the field of play. That rule was drawn up before the two teams lined up next to each other ahead of a match. "In future what will happen is that those two players would not be allowed to play in the game, but both teams will still start with 11 men, using a substitute off the bench," he said after a meeting of the law-making International Football Association Board (IFAB) in London. "This is one example of where the laws have not kept up to date, and they need to change so we can protect the image of the game."—Reuters

# RECORD-SETTING HIGUAIN FIRES NAPOLI TITLE CHARGE

**MILAN:** Napoli coach Maurizio Sarri hailed Gonzalo Higuain as "the top striker in the world" but says the Argentinean can do more on his record-setting run towards Serie A's top scorer's award. "If he was a little more aggressive when going to the net, he'd score a lot more," Sarri said after Napoli moved two points clear of Juventus and four ahead of Inter Milan at the top of Serie A thanks to a 3-1 win against Sassuolo on Saturday. "But he's still the top striker in the world right now."

Higuain, who joined Napoli in time for the 2013 season after six seasons at Real Madrid, finished the previous two Serie A seasons with a tally of 18 goals (2015) and 17 (2014). Yet, in his first game of the second half of the season on Saturday, 'Pipito' hit his fifth brace from his last seven games to take his goals tally to 20 from 20 league games. There are still 18 games to play, so if he continues like this, the French-born Argentina international could rewrite the Serie A history books. The last two Capocannoniere (top scorer) awards were won with a total of 22 goals, Ciro Immobile finishing top in 2014 and Mauro Icardi and Luca Toni sharing last year's prize with the same tally.

Only the feats of Toni, who at 38 years old is playing possibly his last season with basement side Verona, can be used as any kind of yardstick. It took Toni 21 matches to hit 20 goals during the 2005-2006 campaign, when the then Fiorentina striker's 31-goal tally secured the top scorer's prize, earned him a call-up to his maiden World Cup and, after the final's penalty shootout against France, a World Cup winners' medal. Higuain has been on fire this season, as opposition coaches have noticed. "For 41 minutes my defenders made sure he didn't get a touch. Then on his first touch of the ball he showed all his class," said Sassuolo coach Eusebio Di Francesco said Saturday. "You don't need me to explain how good he is." Higuain's incentives this season are twofold.

He is keen to cement his place in Argentina's squad having fallen out of favor after missing his penalty in the shootout of the Copa America final against Chile last year. Chile went on to win 4-1 on penalties and Higuain, for the second time in a month, became the scapegoat. Weeks earlier, Higuain and Napoli goalkeeper Mariano Andujar were targeted by hard-line Napoli 'ultras' after the striker, after hitting a brace, missed a penalty in a 4-2 defeat to Lazio on the final day of the season. It cost Napoli a place in the qualifying round for the Champions League while Higuain's car was vandalized by disgruntled fans.

**Memories of Maradona**

Higuain was all set to start a third season at Napoli under the helm of Rafael Benitez, until the Spaniard's sacking paved the way for former Empoli coach Sarri to take over. After an inauspicious start that prompted club legend Diego Maradona to publicly lambast the track-suit wearing, chain-smoking Sarri, Napoli were soon into their stride. Since their opening day defeat to Sassuolo, Napoli have conceded defeat just once, to Bologna, to become bona fide title challengers in a championship dominated by Juventus the past four seasons. Although Sarri has worked his magic throughout the club, his close relationship with Higuain appears to be key. "If I'm honest, a lot of what I'm achieving at the moment is down to Sarri," Higuain said. "We try to encourage each other because we're both working for the same goal."

If Higuain maintains his current rhythm, he could exceed the all-time record of 36 goals, scored by Gino Rossetti for Torino in the 1928-29 season. Since Italy's top flight was contended by 20 clubs from the 2004-2005 season, the third time in the league's history, only Toni has come close to that figure. Perhaps more importantly, Higuain's goals could fire Napoli to their first title since 1990 when Maradona steered the 'Partenopei' to their second title after their historic triumph in 1987. In the meantime, being first on both fronts, says Higuain, is a "special feeling." "I can say it's definitely a special feeling being on top," Higuain said Saturday. "We're having a really positive spell at the moment and we have to capitalize as much as we can."—AFP



**NAPLES:** Napoli's Gonzalo Higuain celebrates after scoring his second goal during a Serie A soccer match between Napoli and Sassuolo, at the San Paolo stadium in Naples, Italy. — AP

## S AFRICAN STAR CELE KILLED AS CAR PLUNGES INTO RIVER

**JOHANNESBURG:** South African Premier League footballer Mondli Cele died Sunday after the car he was a passenger in plunged into a river near eastern city Pietermaritzburg. The tragedy occurred a few hours after the 27-year-old scored for Maritzburg United in a 3-3 Premiership thriller against famed Soweto club Orlando Pirates. Cele and another passenger died when the driver lost control of the car, a provincial transport department spokesman said.

A third passenger survived. "His character on and off the field was impeccable," said Maritzburg chairman Farook Kadodia, referring to 27-year-old midfielder Cele. Premier Soccer League spokesman Lux September said: "Mondli scored a beautiful goal and it was to be his last celebration." Cele was included in the preliminary South Africa squad for the 2015 Africa Cup of Nations in Equatorial Guinea, but did not make the final 23.

His death overshadowed a dramatic weekend of Premiership action highlighted by visiting Pirates coming from three goals behind to hold bottom club Maritzburg. Cele put United ahead after eight minutes at a packed 10,000-seat Harry Gwala Stadium by side-footing a cut-back past goalkeeper Brighton Mhlongo. Zimbabwean Evans Rusike, who created the opening goal, scored on 32 minutes and Ugandan Brian Onyango gave United a three-goal advantage soon after. Thabo Rakhale pulled one back within a minute and captain Thabo Matlaba set up a

thrilling second half by scoring a second goal for the Buccaneers early in the second half.

Rattled Maritzburg clung to the lead until 10 minutes from time when Kermit Erasmus equalized, and the visitors looked the likelier winners in frenetic climax of a memorable match. Maritzburg remain bottom, one point below Pretoria University, while 2015 CAF Confederation Cup runners-up Pirates lie 11th after a disastrous one-win-in-seven start to the season. At the other end of the table, a seesaw struggle for Premiership supremacy tilted back in favour of record six-time champions Mamelodi Sundowns. They won a home derby against Pretoria University 2-1 through goals from Zimbabwean Khama Billiat and Colombian Leonardo Castro to lead Mpumalanga Black Aces on goal difference.

Aces upset Wits 2-1 in Johannesburg thanks to a brace from veteran Zambia striker Collins Mbesuma, the leading Premiership scorer this season with 10 goals. Sundowns (plus 13 goal difference) and Aces (plus 11) have 30 points each one round before the halfway stage and Wits are a point behind. Defending champions Kaizer Chiefs stayed in touch, five points off the pace, with a 1-0 victory at Bloemfontein Celtic courtesy of a penalty converted by Zimbabwean Willard Katsande. Thobani Mncwango of Polokwane City became the first Premiership footballer to score more than twice in a game this season by grabbing four in a 4-1 triumph over SuperSport United.—AFP



Mondli Cele



MILAN: AC Milan's Ghanaian forward Kevin-Prince Boateng (center) celebrates after scoring a goal during the Serie A football match between AC Milan and Fiorentina at the San Siro Stadium in Milan on January 17, 2016. —AFP

## MILAN DENT FIORENTINA SERIE A TITLE HOPES

**MILAN:** Carlos Bacca and Kevin-Prince Boateng struck in either half as AC Milan dented Fiorentina's Serie A title hopes with a 2-0 win at the San Siro that ended their long wait for victory over La Viola. Seven-time European champions Milan had beaten the Florence-based side only once in their last nine league outings. But a superb opener from Bacca on four minutes upset the visitors' gameplan and Boateng, who re-signed for the club recently on a six-month loan deal, came off the bench to hit a well-taken second two minutes from the final whistle to wrap up the points.

Fiorentina's sixth defeat of the season proved costly, Paulo Sousa's men left in fourth place at six points behind leaders Napoli, four behind champions Juventus and two behind fellow challengers Inter Milan. Milan moved up two places to sixth to sit 12 points off the pace as they continue their bid for a place in next season's Champions League. Fiorentina looked

impressive as they zipped the ball around in the opening exchanges, although the stakes changed for the visitors after just four minutes. On a Milan counter, Giacomo Bonaventura held the ball up before releasing Bacca on a run which the Colombian finished by holding off his marker to fire past Ciprian Tatarusanu and into the far bottom corner.

Milan spurned the next chance when Keisuke Honda won possession in midfield and played a one-two with M'Baye Niang, but the Japanese forward's delivery into the box found no takers. Fiorentina should have levelled before the quarter hour when Josip Ilicic ran through unmarked on to Mario Suarez's ball, but the Slovenian was closed down and after offloading to Federico Bernardeschi the playmaker's snap shot was blocked. Milan were finding openings on the counter, with Bonaventura and M'Baye Niang showing plenty of pace on the wings.

After Milan 'keeper Gianluigi Donnarumma punched a corner to safety, Niang went on a long run that took him past his marker but his cross for Honda met traffic. Fiorentina striker Nikola Kalinic was unlucky not to make contact with Marcos Alonso's drive into the box, and the Croatian got his head to an Ilicic corner close to half-time but it glanced wide. Fiorentina resumed in more positive fashion after the break, although their promise soon fizzled out. A Borja Valero free-kick was nodded towards the far top corner by Nenad Tomovic but Donnarumma was alert to the danger. A long ball from Ilicic sent Kalinic on a promising counter but with Alessio Romagnoli in hot pursuit the Croatian fired wide of the target. Moments later, Kalinic headed a metre wide from Valero's cross as Donnarumma swung on to his post. Milan looked to have soaked up the pressure but struggled to convert their own half chances, Antonelli firing

straight at a thankful Tatarusanu after the ball fell kindly. Sousa boosted Fiorentina's attack when he replaced midfielder Mario Suarez with Giuseppe Rossi with 25 minutes to play. But Milan's changes proved decisive. Boateng came

on for Niang and moments after Mario Balotelli replaced Bacca to make his long-awaited return from injury, Boateng beat onrushing Tatarusanu to Juraj Kucka's long ball, rounded the 'keeper and slotted it home from 12 yards. —AFP

### Italy Serie A results/standings

**MILAN:** Italian Serie A table on Sunday (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Napoli	20	13	5	2	41	16	44	Torino	19	7	4	8	26	25	25
Juventus	20	13	3	4	37	15	42	Atalanta	20	7	4	9	21	24	25
Inter Milan	20	12	4	4	25	13	40	Udinese	20	7	3	10	18	31	24
Fiorentina	20	12	2	6	37	21	38	Sampdoria	20	6	5	9	29	32	23
Roma	20	9	8	3	37	23	35	Bologna	20	7	2	11	22	27	23
AC Milan	20	9	5	6	27	23	32	Genoa	20	6	4	10	23	26	22
Sassuolo	19	8	7	4	24	20	31	Palermo	20	6	3	11	19	33	21
Empoli	20	9	4	7	25	24	31	Carpi	20	4	5	11	19	35	17
Lazio	20	8	4	8	25	29	28	Frosinone	20	4	3	13	22	45	15
Chievo	20	7	6	7	26	22	27	Verona	20	0	9	11	13	32	9

## WENGER OPTIMISTIC OVER OZIL'S RETURN

**STOKE-ON-TRENT:** Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger hopes playmaker Mesut Ozil will be fit to face Chelsea after the German was forced to miss Sunday's goalless draw at Stoke with a foot injury. Ozil is well clear at the top of the Premier League's 'assists' charts with 16, compared to nine for his nearest challenger, Manchester City's Kevin de Bruyne. And Wenger hopes the 27-year-old will overcome the injury in order to face the struggling Premier League champions at the Emirates Stadium next weekend after conceding he was missed during a stalemate in the Potteries.

"There is no team in the world that wouldn't miss Ozil," Wenger said. "We are used to having him there. If we had Mesut, it would have been a different game (against Stoke). "Ozil has an inflammation of the foot. On Saturday morning he was not very well and he was already not 100 percent at Liverpool," the veteran French boss added. "I decided to leave him out but I think he should be back for next Sunday." Ozil's absence left Arsenal laboring at the Britannia Stadium, where they managed just three shots on target and found Stoke goalkeeper Jack Butland equal to them.

A point was enough to take the north London club back to the top of the table as they edged clear of Leicester City on goal difference, but it was another afternoon of frustration in the Potteries for Wenger. His side have now failed to win at Stoke's home in six attempts—a sequence that dates back to February 2010. And he provoked a pointed response from Stoke manager Mark Hughes by claiming the home team had been "physical" and "direct". "Overall it was a battle—an old fashioned Stoke battle

because they made the game very physical," said Wenger. "The crowd was up for it, the players were up for it. They went for a very direct game and we had to show a physical response, solidarity, fighting spirit, togetherness, which we did."

But a clearly annoyed Hughes responded: "I've just heard Arsene say he was a bit surprised that we went direct. "I'm not quite sure what game he's been watching. "I don't think there was a yellow card. I don't know why the physical aspect of the game has to be mentioned. "I thought it was a good football game with both teams trying to play and win a key Premier League game." Arsenal's last victory at the Britannia Stadium was a 3-1 success that became infamous for the sickening broken leg suffered by Gunners midfielder Aaron Ramsey, who was again singled out for some unsavoury abuse by Potters fans during his 250th Arsenal appearance.

The bad blood from the injury and Ramsey's refusal to accept Ryan Shawcross's apology for the challenge that caused it remains for Stoke fans, who taunted Ramsey throughout Sunday's match with boos and a chant about the damage caused to his leg. Wenger said: "I have no influence on it and I don't know what generally you should do about it. "When people get together, sometimes they forget their individual responsibility. "Maybe when you go home and watch it on television you are less proud. "I focus on the game. I shut my ears—I think that's best way to deal with it." A draw kept Stoke seventh in the table and Hughes hopes to have record signing Xherdan Shaqiri back from a hamstring injury in time for Saturday's trip to Leicester. —AFP



SAINT-ETIENNE: Saint-Etienne's Norwegian forward Alexander Soderlund (left) vies for the ball with Lyon's French defender Mapou Yanga-Mbiwa during the French L1 football match between Saint-Etienne (ASSE) and Lyon (OL) on January 17, 2016. —AFP

## SAINT-ETIENNE REIGNITE THEIR QUEST FOR EUROPE FOOTBALL

**PARIS:** Saint-Etienne reignited their quest for European football with a 1-0 win over bitter rivals Lyon in Sunday's feisty Rhone-Alpes derby, while Marseille continued their impressive away form in Ligue 1 with a 3-1 victory at Caen. Norway striker Alexander Soderlund marked his home debut with the decisive goal 14 minutes from time at the Stade Geoffroy-Guichard to leave Saint-Etienne just two points off the Champions League places.

For Lyon, who exited the League Cup in mid-week following a 2-1 defeat at holders Paris Saint-Germain, this latest loss simply yielded another disappointment in a season full of setbacks. "We had a 10-second lapse of concentration for which we paid dearly," rued Lyon coach Bruno Genesio. "We conceded a goal from out of nothing. It's really disappointing. "We were up against a goalkeeper who made saves at key moments. I think we also lacked aggression in front of goal, we could've come back at the end if we'd been a bit more adventurous."

Both sides had entered Sunday's clash level on 29 points and looking to keep in touch with the European places, and it was Lyon who largely bossed the first half. On-loan striker Jean-Christophe Bahebeck tried to catch out Lyon goalkeeper Anthony Lopes with an early free-kick, but the visitors were on top after that as Stephane Ruffier twice thwarted Rachid Ghezzal, the second stop a stunning low save just before the break. Ruffier then palmed away a Clement Grenier free-kick after half-time, before the crossbar came to Saint-Etienne's rescue as Ghezzal's

cross was diverted towards his own goal by Kevin Theophile-Catherine.

But it was the hosts who made the breakthrough on 76 minutes when a stray pass from Corentin Tolisso was pounced upon by Kevin Monnet-Paquet, who slipped in Soderlund for the Norwegian to notch his first goal for his new club. Earlier, Marseille snapped a four-match winless run in the league as they claimed a fifth victory in six away games. Marseille arrived at the Stade Michel d'Ornano unbeaten in seven league matches, although they had drawn their last four outings, and grabbed a 12th-minute lead when goal-line technology was used to determine that Michy Batshuayi's shot had crossed the line after coming back off the post.

Batshuayi should have added a second with the goal at his mercy a few minutes later, but the Belgian atoned for that miss by setting up Georges-Kevin Nkoudou to steer in Marseille's

second on the hour. Ronny Rodelin pulled one back for the hosts after beating Steve Mandanda to a free-kick, but Bouna Sarr erased any hopes of a comeback as he volleyed home Alaixys Romao's inviting cross on 83 minutes. The victory pushed Marseille up to eighth, five points adrift of third-place Angers, with Caen dropping to seventh. Monaco moved back into second place in the table after winning 2-0 at Lorient to stretch their unbeaten run in the league to eight games. Thomas Lemar gave Monaco a 53rd-minute lead in Brittany before Joao Moutinho curled home an exquisite free-kick to leave Leonardo Jardim's men 21 points behind runaway leaders Paris Saint-Germain. PSG recorded their ninth consecutive win in all competitions and extended their club record unbeaten league run to 30 matches dating back to last March as Zlatan Ibrahimovic's 73rd-minute strike was enough for them to see off Toulouse 1-0 on Saturday. —AFP

### French League results/standings

**PARIS:** French Ligue 1 table after Sunday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Paris SG	21	18	3	0	51	9	57	Nantes	21	7	7	7	18	20	28
Monaco	21	9	9	3	29	25	36	Lorient	21	6	9	6	29	30	27
Angers	21	9	7	5	20	13	34	Gazélec Ajaccio	21	6	8	7	24	26	26
Nice	21	9	6	6	35	25	33	Lille	21	5	10	6	16	15	25
Saint-Etienne	21	10	2	9	24	24	32	Bastia	21	7	4	10	21	26	25
Rennes	21	7	10	4	31	25	31	Montpellier	21	6	4	11	22	27	22
Caen	21	9	3	9	22	27	30	Reims	21	5	7	9	22	29	22
Marseille	21	7	8	6	31	22	29	Guingamp	21	5	6	10	19	29	21
Lyon	21	8	5	8	27	25	29	Toulouse	21	4	8	9	24	35	20
Bordeaux	21	7	8	6	25	28	29	Troyes	21	0	8	13	13	43	8



Arsenal's German midfielder Mesut Ozil

# Sports

**Cruz regains the UFC title; outpunches Dillashaw**



**Manning shines as Broncos down gritty Steelers 23-16**



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MILAN DENT FIORENTINA SERIE A TITLE HOPES

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MELBOURNE: Serena Williams of the US plays a backhand return during her women's singles match against Italy's Camila Giorgi (inset) on day one of the 2016 Australian Open tennis tournament yesterday. — AFP

## DJOKOVIC, SERENA STAR AT SCANDAL-HIT OPEN

QUICKFIRE FEDERER; SIZZLING SHARAPOVA BLOWS AWAY RIVALS

MELBOURNE: Defending champions Novak Djokovic and Serena Williams raced into the Australian Open second round yesterday as the year's first Grand Slam was rocked by claims of widespread match-fixing in tennis. Former winners Roger Federer and Maria Sharapova also progressed smoothly on a day of high temperatures at Melbourne Park, where one ballboy felt faint and had to be helped from the court.

Djokovic's main opponent was the 35 Celsius (95 Fahrenheit) heat as, cooling himself with ice vests on the change-overs, the top seed dispatched Korean rising star Chung Hyeon 6-3, 6-2, 6-4. "You try to stay composed, not get carried away by heat, get distracted," said the Serb, who was forced out of the 2009 quarter-finals as he struggled with the heat. "Of course, there were some long rallies, long exchanges that got both of us a little bit short on

air. But I think physically I was really good on the court."

Williams also made a positive return to competitive tennis, four months after a heartbreaking defeat in the US Open semi-finals ended her bid for a rare calendar-year Grand Slam. Showing no discomfort from the swollen knee which forced her out of this month's Hopman Cup mixed-team tournament, Williams toughed it out 6-4, 7-5 against Italy's Camila Giorgi. "I haven't played a competitive match in a really long time so it was good for me to come out here and get through it," Williams said. "I was able to stay in it and stay calm and that is what matters most."

Williams, 34, is seeking an Open-era record-equaling 22nd Grand Slam title, while Djokovic can become only the second man to win six Australian Open crowns after Roy Emerson. Federer was also untroubled in his 6-2, 6-1, 6-2 win over Georgia's Nicoloz Basilashvili as he continued

his quest for a record-extending 18th Grand Slam title. Sharapova, the women's winner in 2008, beat Japan's Nao Hibino 6-1, 6-3 in just 73 minutes in her first match of the year after a forearm injury forced her out of the Brisbane International. "I'm feeling really good, which is a positive. I'm just happy to finish off today and be able to get ready for the next one," said the Russian.

**'No cover-up'**

Kei Nishikori, Tomas Berdych and Australia's Nick Kyrgios also went through without significant problems, while Caroline Wozniacki, Sloane Stephens, Sara Errani and Ivo Karlovic became the first seeds to fall. Spain's Carla Suarez earned applause when she helped a ballboy from the court as he swooned in high temperatures during her win over Viktorija Golubic. However, the day was overshadowed

by a report which said top-50 players, including Grand Slam champions, had repeatedly been suspected of match-fixing without facing action.

Three suspect matches were at Wimbledon, and eight of the players under suspicion were due to take to the courts for the Australian Open, the BBC and BuzzFeed claimed. Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) chief Chris Kermode rejected any suggestion that match-fixing evidence had been covered up or ignored. "The Tennis Integrity Unit and the tennis authorities absolutely reject any suggestion that evidence of match-fixing has been suppressed for any reason or isn't being thoroughly investigated," Kermode told reporters. "And while the BBC and BuzzFeed reports mainly refer to events from about 10 years ago, we will investigate any new information, and we always do." — AFP

## BARCELONA HAMMER 10-MAN BILBAO 6-0

NO CHANGE AT THE TOP IN SPAIN AS BIG 3 CRUISE

MADRID: Atletico Madrid maintained a two-point lead in La Liga with a 3-0 victory at Las Palmas and Barcelona and Real Madrid stayed hard on their heels with thumping wins over Athletic Bilbao and Sporting Gijon on Sunday. A rare goal from Atletico fullback Filipe Luis and a second-half Antoine

Griezmann double lifted Diego Simeone's side to 47 points from 20 matches. Lionel Messi, who presented the fifth FIFA Ballon d'Or he won this week to fans before kickoff at the Nou Camp, struck from the spot to set Barca on their way to a 6-0 success against 10-man Bilbao, with La Liga top scorer Luis Suarez netting a hat-trick. Bilbao conceded the early penalty when goalkeeper Gorka Iraizoz felled Suarez and was shown a straight red card and Barca put the Basque club to the sword.

The Spanish and European champions, who have a game in hand over their main rivals, are two points behind Atletico in second, with Real a further two points adrift in third. Real continued their serene progress under new coach Zinedine Zidane when Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema scored twice apiece in a 5-1 destruction of Gijon. Gareth Bale, who was forced off with a suspected calf strain just before halftime at the Bernabeu, had opened the scoring. Atletico initially struggled for control at Las Palmas before Filipe Luis drilled a shot into the corner. Spain playmaker Koke sent Griezmann clear to make it 2-0 and the pair combined again to complete the scoring a minute from time.

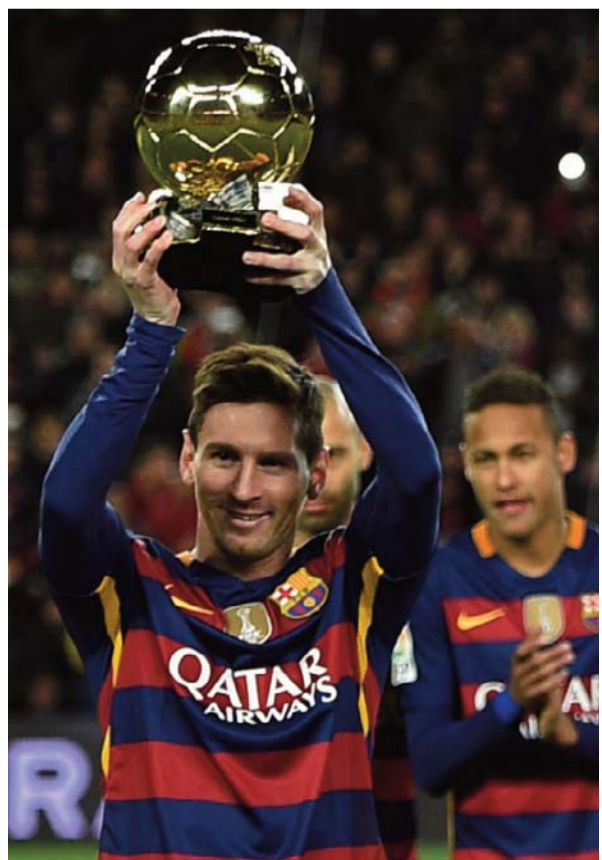
**Fantastic start**

Bilbao never looked like troubling Barca once they went a man down and Neymar made it 2-0 when he lifted the ball over substitute keeper Iago Herrerin. Suarez struck two minutes into the second half after exchanging passes with Neymar and the Brazil forward set up Ivan Rakitic to make it 4-0 in the 62nd minute. Suarez netted his second seven minutes later from Arda's pass and completed his treble to move clear at the top of the scoring chart on 18 goals, two more than Ronaldo and Benzema. "The sending off changed things completely and we were able to take advantage during the rest of the game," Suarez, clutching a match ball, told Spanish television.

"I'm going to put this in the museum once I get it signed by my team mates," added the Uruguay striker. Real tore into promoted Gijon in Zidane's second game in charge and were 4-0 ahead inside the first



BARCELONA: FC Barcelona's Luis Suarez (second right) heads the ball to score against Athletic Bilbao during a Spanish La Liga soccer match at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona on Sunday, Jan 17, 2016. — AP



BARCELONA: Barcelona's Argentinean forward Lionel Messi poses with his fifth Ballon d'Or trophy before the Spanish league football match FC Barcelona vs Athletic Club Bilbao at the Camp Nou stadium on January 17, 2016. — AFP

**Spanish League results/standings**

MADRID: Spanish La Liga table after Sunday's games (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Atletico Madrid	20	15	2	3	30	8	47
Barcelona	19	14	3	2	50	15	45
Real Madrid	20	13	4	3	57	19	43
Villarreal	20	12	4	4	26	16	40
Celta Vigo	20	10	4	6	32	30	34
Sevilla	20	9	5	6	28	22	32
Eibar	19	8	6	5	27	20	30
Deportivo	20	6	10	4	27	24	28
Athletic Bilbao	20	8	4	8	27	28	28
Getafe	20	7	5	8	24	28	26
Valencia	20	5	9	6	25	21	24
Malaga	20	6	6	8	15	17	24
Real Sociedad	20	5	6	9	23	28	21
Espanyol	20	6	3	11	18	33	21
Real Betis	20	5	6	9	13	28	21
Las Palmas	20	4	6	10	19	30	18
Granada	19	4	5	10	20	36	17
Rayo Vallecano	20	4	4	12	23	45	16
Sporting Gijon	19	4	3	12	17	34	15
Levante	20	3	5	12	17	36	14

20 minutes. After Bale had headed in a corner, Ronaldo smashed in a second. Bale then crossed for Benzema to score with an acrobatic volley, Ronaldo turned in a Dani Carvajal centre and Benzema got his second to make it 5-0 four minutes before the break. It was another morale-boosting performance following the sacking of the unpopular Rafa Benitez, under whom they failed to impress against any of their main rivals.

The victory may have come at a cost, however, as Benzema was also forced off after hurting his foot in a collision with team mate James Rodriguez. Zidane said Bale would need a scan to determine the extent of the injury, while Benzema had suffered a knock that was probably less serious. "It's been a fantastic start because it's not easy to score five goals twice in a row," Zidane told a news conference. "We're only at the beginning though and what we want is to win at least one trophy at the end of the season." Gary Neville's disappointing start as Valencia coach continued when the ambitious Singapore-owned club drew 2-2 at home to lowly Rayo Vallecano and slipped to 11th, prompting more rumblings of discontent from the fans. — Reuters

# Kuwait Times BUSINESS

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Shell ditches major Abu Dhabi gas field project

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NESPRESSO LAUNCHES PROFESSIONAL BARISTA MACHINE, THE AGUILA 220

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TEHRAN: Vehicles driving on a street in front of the Azadi Tower in the capital Tehran yesterday. — AFP

## OPEC SEES OIL MARKET REBALANCING IN 2016

### IRAN ORDERS OIL OUTPUT BOOST, UAE SEES 'HARM'

**LONDON:** OPEC forecast yesterday that oil supply from non-member countries will post a larger-than-expected decline this year due to the collapse in prices, boosting the need for crude from the producer group. Supply outside the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) would decline by 660,000 barrels per day (bpd) in 2016, led by the United States, OPEC said in a report. Last month, OPEC predicted a drop of 380,000 bpd.

"The analysis indicates that 2016 will be a supply-driven market. It will also be the year when the rebalancing process starts," OPEC said. "Non-OPEC marginal barrel production in the next six months will be sensitive to sustained low oil prices."

A drop in non-OPEC supply would reduce a supply glut which has prompted oil prices to collapse to below \$28 a barrel, the lowest since 2003. OPEC's 2014 strategy shift to defend market share and not prices helped deepen the decline. The price drop has started to slow the development of relatively expen-

sive supply sources such as US shale oil and forced companies to delay or cancel billions of dollars worth of projects, putting some future supplies at risk.

US output will average 13.50 million bpd this year, the report said, down 380,000 bpd from 2015 and the largest drop outside OPEC. Output is also vulnerable in places such as the North Sea, Latin America and Canada, OPEC said. But OPEC's report makes no mention of the supply impact of the lifting of Western sanctions on member-country Iran, which yesterday said it was increasing output by 500,000 bpd - which would fill most of the hole left by non-OPEC members.

The United Arab Emirates' energy minister, in the first comment by a Gulf OPEC member about Iran since most sanctions were lifted on Tehran, said anyone increasing output during the current oversupply would worsen the situation.

For now, OPEC said it pumped less oil in December, reducing the excess in the market.

Production including returning OPEC member Indonesia fell by 210,000 bpd to 32.18 million bpd in December, the report said, citing secondary sources. The report points to a 530,000-bpd supply surplus this year if the group keeps pumping at December's rate, down from 860,000 bpd implied in last month's report. OPEC left its 2016 global oil demand growth forecast little changed, predicting global demand would rise by 1.26 million bpd, marking a slowdown from 1.54 million bpd in 2015.

#### Iran boosts output

Iran has ordered a rise in oil output by 500,000 barrels a day following the lifting of sanctions, official media reported, but fellow OPEC member the United Arab Emirates said any extra crude would delay the market's recovery.

Iranian officials have said repeatedly in recent days that they were ready to raise output by half a million barrels per day, pouring

more supply into a market glut that has routed global crude prices. Tehran has not outlined what this would mean for exports but has also pledged to boost production further in the coming months. Oman, which is not a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), said it was not worried by the prospect of extra Iranian supply because the market was already awash with oil but said it was ready to cut output. Oil prices hit their lowest since 2003 yesterday as the market braced for additional Iranian exports, but later turned positive. Benchmark Brent crude was trading at around \$29.25 at 1220 GMT.

"Iran is able to increase its oil production by 500,000 barrels a day after the lifting of sanctions, and the order to increase production was issued today," Deputy Oil Minister Rokneddin Javadi, who also heads the National Iranian Oil Company, was quoted as saying by Iran's Shana news agency.

The United States and European Union on

Saturday revoked sanctions that had cut Iran's oil exports by about 2 million barrels per day (bpd) since their pre-sanctions 2011 peak to little more than 1 million bpd. In the first comment by a Gulf OPEC member about Iran since sanctions were lifted, UAE Suhail bin Mohammed Al-Mazroui said that any new production coming into the market would delay the rebalancing of the market and "that's the bad news".

"Does Iran have the right to do so? Yes because they are a member of OPEC. Is it going to help the situation? No," Mazroui told reporters on the sidelines of a conference in Abu Dhabi. Oman was ready to cut output by between five and 10 percent to stabilize the oil market and urged all producers should do the same, Omani Oil Minister Mohammad bin Hamad Al-Rumhy said. On Sunday, the head of Italy's Eni SpA said Iran would need to attract \$150 billion to become a major producer, and that "is not something that can be done in a second". — Reuters

## GULF MARKETS STABILIZE, DUBAI, QATAR PARE GAINS

### MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

**DUBAI:** Gulf stock markets stabilized yesterday after registering heavy losses the previous few days, but the mood remained nervous after Brent oil briefly slumped below \$28 a barrel to its lowest level since 2003. The Saudi benchmark, which had tumbled 5.4 percent on Sunday, flip-flopped between positive and negative territory before closing 0.1 percent higher.

Saudi Basic Industries Corp, the kingdom's largest company by market value, fell as low as 60.00 riyals after reporting a 29.4 percent drop in fourth-quarter net profit caused by lower prices for its products, missing analysts' forecasts. But it came off its low to close at 63.00 riyals, a 3.5 percent decline. National Shipping Co (Bahri), the exclusive oil shipper for oil giant Saudi Aramco, fell 10 percent in a second day of heavy trade. Bahri had gained 5.9 percent on Sunday before reporting a huge jump in fourth-quarter net profit that exceeded analysts' forecasts.

Most other oil-linked stocks also retreated as petrochemical companies' earnings were weak and crude prices continued to test fresh lows. But the banking sector, the largest sector by value on the exchange, firmed with Riyad Bank rising 1.4 percent. The kingdom's fourth-largest lender by assets said it had reached a preliminary agreement to sell land in the second largest city, Jeddah, for 202.5 million riyals (\$54 million).

The Kuwait index retreated 0.9 percent to 5,055 points. Saudi Electricity Co jumped 5.8 percent. The largest utility company in the Gulf reported a loss of 1.45 billion riyals in the three months to Dec. 31, compared with a loss of 1.8 billion riyals in the same period a year earlier. Analysts polled by Reuters had estimated SEC would lose 1.4 billion riyals. "The

year-on-year improvement in net income is because of the impact of the one-off losses in the fourth quarter of 2014," NCB Capital said in a note.

Some bargain-hunters bought mid-cap stocks that had tumbled this year. Knowledge Economic City and Emaar Economic City, developers of new urban areas in the kingdom, rose 2.4 and 5.5 percent respectively. Egypt's main index rebounded 3.1 percent, trimming this year's losses to 15.2 percent as most stocks advanced more than 1.0 percent. Foreign fund managers, who have been aggressively cashing out of Cairo's market, remained net sellers yesterday, bourse data showed. But local and regional investors bought on dips.

The two most traded stocks were Orascom Telecom and investment firm Qalaa Holdings, which surged 5.8 and 8.3 percent.

#### UAE, QATAR

Dubai's index could not sustain an early rebound, closing 0.3 percent down at 2,678 points, off its intra-day high of 2,756. Gainers outnumbered losers 20 to 11, however. Builders Arabtec and Drake & Scull advanced 1.9 percent and 2.5 percent; Drake had hit a record low on Sunday. Gulf General Investment, an industrial conglomerate, was the top gainer, surging 6.6 percent in unusually heavy trade. Emirates NBD closed 0.9 percent higher at 6.50 dirhams, well off its high of 6.85 dirhams. Dubai's largest lender posted a 74 percent rise in fourth-quarter net profit to 2.13 billion dirhams (\$579.9 million); analysts at Beltone Financial and HSBC had forecast 1.31 billion dirhams and 1.71 billion dirhams. It also recommended a higher annual dividend. — Reuters

## RUSSIAN RUBLE HITS A YEAR LOW AS OIL PRICES WEAKEN

**MOSCOW:** The Russian ruble, battered by weak oil prices, yesterday dropped to new low and broke an all-time record against the euro. The national currency was down 1.8 percent at 79 rubles to the dollar by 5 pm Moscow time (1400GMT), its lowest mid-trading level since December 2014.

The ruble fell to an all-time low against the euro as the Central Bank

set the official exchange rate at over 85 rubles to the euro yesterday. Oil, the mainstay of the Russian economy, recently plummeted to under \$30 a barrel, a 13-year low. The ruble is also under pressure from economic sanctions that the West imposed on Russia for its involvement in the Ukraine crisis. Russia is running a budget deficit of 3 percent of GDP this year, and the government is looking to cut 10 per-

cent from the federal budget which was drafted with oil prices of \$50 a barrel in mind. All Russian ministries are expected to present their proposed cuts by the end of the month with a view of cutting 500 billion rubles (\$6.3 billion) in government expenses, Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said. Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, in televised comments yesterday, said that the — AP



MOSCOW: People walk at a street passing an exchange booth in Moscow, Russia yesterday. The Russian ruble, battered by weak oil prices yesterday dropped to new low and broke an all-time record against the euro. — AP



## CHINA'S CHIEF STOCK REGULATOR HAS OFFERED TO RESIGN

**BEIJING:** Xiao Gang, the embattled head of China's securities regulator, has offered to resign, sources said, after perceived mismanagement wiped more than \$5 trillion off the value of the Shanghai and Shenzhen stock markets since they peaked last June. The 57-year-old chairman of the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) tendered his resignation last week after his brainchild - a "circuit breaker" mechanism to limit stock market losses - was blamed for exacerbating a sharp sell-off, a source with ties to the leadership and a financial industry source told Reuters.

The "circuit breaker" was deactivated on Jan 7, just three days after its introduction. "The (Communist Party) central (leadership) is extremely unhappy with Xiao Gang. It is certain he will change jobs," the source close to the leadership said, adding it was unclear where he would go next.

"Xiao Gang handed in his resignation last week," said the financial industry source. Both sources requested anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media. It's unclear whether Xiao's resignation offer has been accepted by the central government. The CSRC did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Xiao's term does not formally expire until end-2018. Before taking over at the CSRC in 2013, Xiao was chairman of the country's fourth-biggest lender, Bank of China Ltd for a decade.

### MARKET MELTDOWN

On Saturday, Xiao gave a speech at an annual meeting in which he said the stock market rout highlighted the problems facing the CSRC's regulatory mechanisms. "The abnormal stock market volatility has revealed an immature market, inexperienced investors, an imperfect trading system and inappropriate supervision mechanisms," he said.

The abrupt suspension of the "circuit breaker" followed a flurry of measures by the CSRC last year - including halting short selling and banning share sales by major shareholders - in a bid to stabilise markets after major indexes plunged more than 40 percent in the summer.

Indexes later rebounded around 25 percent from their August lows, but have this month dropped back into bear market territory - usually a reference to a market's 20 percent slide from its last cyclical peak. The turbulent start to 2016, with currency and stock markets tumbling, has stoked concerns that Beijing's policymakers are fumbling as China heads towards its slowest annual growth in a quarter of a century. China is expected to report its weakest quarterly economic growth in nearly seven years on Tuesday, putting policymakers under more pressure to take bolder steps.

### SHORT-LISTED

The party's Organisation Department, or personnel ministry, has short-listed three candidates to succeed Xiao, the sources said. Xiang Junbo, who turns 59 this month and is chairman of the China Insurance Regulatory Commission (CIRC), is the leading candidate, they said. The CIRC declined immediate comment. Another candidate is Huang Qifan, 63, mayor of the southwestern metropolis of Chongqing, who is also tipped to become secretary-general of the State Council, or cabinet, and may concurrently serve as CSRC chairman, the sources said.

If confirmed as cabinet secretary-general, Premier Li Keqiang's right-hand man, Huang would have to tackle a stalling economy and market turbulence as well as oversee the entire spectrum of portfolios: from industry to agriculture, energy, the environment, state planning and technology, according to a Reuters report last week.

The identity of the third short-listed candidate is not known. "The Organization Department has sounded out all three candidates and completed background checks," said the source with leadership ties.

Xiao, Xiang and Huang could not be reached for comment. The benchmark Shanghai Composite Index, the share market most closely watched by Chinese investors, last week fell below the lows seen during last year's crash, closing on Friday at 2,900 points - its weakest close since December 2014. The index rose 0.4 percent yesterday. —Reuters



**PARIS:** French President Francois Hollande delivers his speech as he presents his New Year greetings to Employment and Union forces at the Economic, Social and Environmental Council in Paris, yesterday. —AP

## FRENCH PRESIDENT DECLARES ECONOMIC EMERGENCY

FRANCE TO SPEND OVER 2BN EUROS TO FIGHT UNEMPLOYMENT

**PARIS:** French President Francois Hollande has declared what he called "a state of economic emergency" and says it's time to redefine France's economic and social model.

Hollande laid out a series of proposed economic measures yesterday in an annual speech to business leaders to boost long-stagnant French growth and reduce chronic unemployment. The first measures he proposed are relatively modest, and he said they would not "put into question" the 35-hour workweek. He did not seek to assume any new emergency powers.

### Joblessness

Hollande stressed the urgency of updating France's labor-friendly business model in a fast-moving, increasingly globalized and online economy. The measures included a loosening of some worker-friendly measures to encourage companies to hire, and new training for half a million workers.

Hollande also pledged yesterday to spend more than 2.0 billion euros (\$2.2 billion) on a package of measures to fight the stubbornly high unemployment that has dogged his four years in power. Hollande said France was in "a state of economic emergency" and needed new measures urgently, but he promised that they would not come from tax rises. These two billion euros will not be financed through extra taxes of any kind. They will be financed by savings," Hollande said in a speech to business leaders.

One billion euros will be spent on training schemes for unemployed people. Joblessness, which stands at around 10 percent or 3.57 million people in the eurozone's second-largest economy, was the "only issue which ranks above security for the French people," the president said. Hollande, a Socialist, said France needed to "increase the pace of reforms" and innovation was "key" to getting people back to work. "France must also increase training, education and the level of qualifications

of its workers," he said. Under the new measures to stimulate recruitment, companies employing fewer than 250 people will receive a 2,000-euro bonus for each new employee with a contract of more than six months, under certain conditions. Hollande dismissed suggestions that he was trying to "artificially" reduce unemployment as he prepares for a bid to secure re-election in the 2017 presidential election, but the new measures were greeted with scorn by the opposition.

"What planet are Francois Hollande and his government living on if they think it is enough to pay a company that takes someone on a cheque of 1,000 or 2,000 euros?" said Guillaume Larrive, of the right-wing Republicans led by former president Nicolas Sarkozy.

After several years of sluggish growth, the French economy took another blow with the jihadist attacks in November that killed 130 people, which slowed activity in the fourth quarter. —Agencies



**SHANGHAI:** Two men stand at the bund near the Huangpu river across the Pudong New Financial district, in Shanghai yesterday. —AFP

## SPAIN GROWTH SEEN ROBUST AMID POLITICAL DEADLOCK

**MADRID:** A political logjam in Spain expected to last at least several months is set to slow the pace of economic reforms sharply, storing up obstacles for growth in a country seeking to extend a recovery from deep crisis. With the 2016 budget already passed and a strong economic tailwind from record low oil prices and interest rates, Spanish politicians have little or no pressure to reach a deal on a coalition government following inconclusive elections.

Just shy of a month on from the vote, the eurozone's fourth largest economy has no settled government nor any sign of getting one soon. In the meantime, the pile of reforms many see as essential to furthering the turnaround - including changing the way regions are financed, overhauling the social security system and further fixes for the job market - is building up fast.

Some analysts believe that at best, a return to political stability in the months ahead, including via fresh elections, could allow for more policy adjustments, but only in 2017. This would come after economic legislation already took a backseat last year in the run-up to the Dec. 20 election.

The centre-right People's Party of acting Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy - which passed landmark bills, including a reduction of firing costs in 2012 that was lauded by many economists but contested by progressive parties - steered clear of divisive reforms at the end of the year after the spending cuts it imposed during the recession alienated many voters.

"The momentum for reforms is not there even if there were a stable government," said Yvan Mamalet, a senior economist at Societe Generale. "We do not see any significant reforms in 2016." Yet economic measures to help companies get back on their feet after insolvency or to launch start-ups more easily, coupled with an education overhaul to kick-start Spain's perennially weak productivity levels, could make a difference. More reforms could push Spain's potential long term growth prospects to an annual rate of 2 percent, rather than the 1 percent projected by Societe Generale, Mamalet said.

A redesign of Spain's lopsided system of financing its autonomous communities, meanwhile, would allow some of the country's difficulties in meeting spending targets. It was put off by Rajoy's party until 2016 but could now be

kicked even further down the road

"(Regional financing) is an urgent matter, the system is faulty and needs to be addressed," said Angel de la Fuente, an economist at Madrid-based think tank Fedea.

### FEW INCENTIVES

It is not all bleak. Without further changes this year, Spain's economy is still expected to get through 2016 in resilient form. But that may further reduce any incentive for reforms in the short term.

Improving tax revenues, for instance, have taken some of the heat off the regional financing dilemma, which revolves around how such income is distributed, Fedea's De la Fuente said.

Meanwhile solid consumer spending should push firms to hire, chipping away at an eye-wateringly high unemployment rate of over 20 percent. A weak euro is drawing more tourists than ever to Spain's beaches, and a stimulus plan from the European Central Bank is keeping borrowing costs in check.

"There are a number of factors that for now can offset any slowdown in investment growth or any instability," said Miguel Cardoso, Chief Economist for Spain at BBVA, which sees output expanding by 2.7 percent in 2016, slightly less than in 2015. "The economic reforms that were brought in over recent years that can sustain growth in the coming quarters, and there is also the ECB's bond buying program," he added. But the political deadlock could end up taking its toll, especially if it remains unclear for a prolonged period which way economic policy is going.

Some in business circles fear a reversal of the most recent labor legislation as promised by the Socialist party or leftist newcomer Podemos. At the same time Spain is still under scrutiny from the European Commission over how it can go further on the jobs front and reduce employers' abuse of temporary contracts, a problem that is also dragging on productivity.

Even a quicker resolution to the political impasse than expected by most may not advance the economic agenda. The demands of parties trying to partner up could likely take precedence, Fedea's De la Fuente said. An independence drive in Catalonia, where a separatist local government is promoting a roadmap to secession, will also be high on the list of issues to tackle. —Reuters

## INDIA'S NALCO REVIVES \$2BN IRAN SMELTER COMPLEX PLAN

**NEW DELHI:** India's national aluminum company NALCO will soon send an official team to Iran to explore setting up a smelter complex worth about \$2 billion, its boss said, as world powers lift sanctions on Iran that had made negotiations difficult.

NALCO Chairman Tapan Kumar Chand told Reuters yesterday that the ending of sanctions on Iran in return for the country's curbs on its nuclear program could help the company finally move ahead with its long-held goal to set up a smelter there to make use of cheap gas resources.

"It's a major bottleneck which has been cleared," Chand said. "As far as Iran is concerned they have already informed us that they are ready to receive the team." Cash-rich NALCO will also visit Oman and Qatar in the next two months to work out the best place to set up a 500,000-tonnes-per-year smelter and an associated power plant in the Middle East.

Balvinder Kumar, the secretary of the mines ministry that controls NALCO, said the company's interest was at a preliminary stage though it should invest aggressively to expand wherever possible.

### SHARE BUYBACK

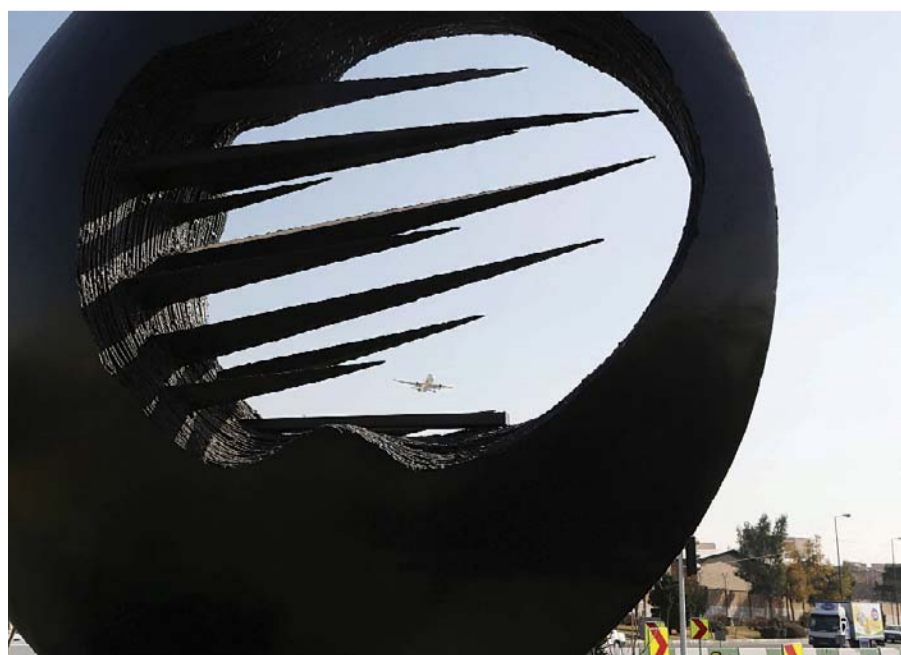
NALCO is trying to push back on a finance ministry request to buy back 25 percent of its shares from the gov-

ernment, part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's asset sales plan which looks set to fall well short of its goal this fiscal year. The company has agreed to repurchase 10 percent but says it also needs money for expansion - including the Middle East project - and to diversify into sectors such as nuclear energy.

NALCO is a rare Indian aluminum company managing to make money despite a sharp drop in the metal's prices and rising imports from China that have badly hurt private competitors such as Vedanta Ltd and Hindalco. One factor is its easy access to raw materials such as bauxite, an aluminium ore. As a result, NALCO enjoys total liquid reserves of about 120 billion rupees (\$1.77 billion), around half of that in cash, Kumar said.

The finance ministry, which has managed to raise less than a fifth of the roughly \$10 billion it had projected in divestments for 2015-2016, now wants NALCO to shell out about 32.5 billion rupees (\$481 million) to buy back shares out of the 89 percent holding the government has in the company.

"We're working on the 10 percent but a call on the rest will be taken by the board," Chairman Chand said, adding the buyback demand comes amid the fall in aluminium prices, eroding profitability and the need to have funds to grow. —Reuters



**TEHRAN:** A passenger plane is seen through a sculpture as it prepares to land at Mehrabad airport in the Iranian capital Tehran yesterday. —AFP

## TATA STEEL TO CUT 1,050 MORE JOBS IN BRITAIN

**LONDON:** Indian steel giant Tata Steel will cut 1,050 more jobs in Britain, a trade union said yesterday, following thousands of cuts in the industry announced last year. Tata Steel is planning to cut 750 jobs at its Port Talbot site in Wales and 300 more at other plants around the country, the steel union Community said. Tata Steel has 4,000 people at Port Talbot, which also employs 3,000 contractors and temporary workers. "It is yet another chapter of the UK's ongoing steel crisis and the lack of a proper government response," Community said in a statement. Contacted by AFP, Tata Steel declined to comment. Britain's steel sector is in crisis and there have been thousands of layoffs in recent months, with companies blaming high energy costs and cheap Chinese imports. Tata Steel in October announced 1,200 job cuts in Britain. It also said in December that it was in talks with investment fund Greycapital to sell some of its European assets, employing a total of 4,700 people. —AFP

## FOR RENT

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EUROZONE BANKS PUT A LID ON RISE IN SHARES

LONDON: Eurozone banks weighed on European stocks yesterday after news that the European Central Bank was scrutinizing some non-performing loans, although oil and gas companies supported the broader market.

Portugues fell 4-6 percent. Italy provided many of the sector's top fallers, with Banco Monte Paschi down 13 percent, and Banco Popolare, UniCredit and Mediobanca down 4-7 percent.

Italian banks outperformed their peers last year, but brokers are starting to turn more negative on the sector. Bank stocks weighed on the euro zone-only Euro STOXX 50, which fell 0.3 percent, underperforming the pan-European FTSEurofirst 300, up 0.1 percent at 1,298.63.

Spain's Banco de Sabadell, France's Credit Agricole and Portugal's Banco Comercial

drop in European shares driven by weak oil prices and concerns over China. "This week's ECB meeting might highlight that the ECB has some options available, we doubt that this will be sufficient to stop the downward pressure in the medium term," strategists at RBC said in a note.

The FTSEurofirst 300 edged up from its lowest level in more than a year, helped partly by a slight recovery in oil & gas firms. Energy was the top sectoral riser, up 1.6 percent, after both Brent and US crude turned positive having hit their lowest levels since 2003 after

sanctions on Iran were lifted. Top climber overall was Adidas, up 8.4 percent, after it appointed Henkel's Kasper Rorsted as CEO. Henkel's shares fell 4.5 percent. Mobile telecoms gear maker Ericsson rose 4.2 percent after Norddea Markets raised its rating on the stock to "buy."

Insurer CNP climbed after Nomura raised its recommendation on CNP to "buy" from "neutral", but French supermarket retailer Casino fell 7.5 percent after ratings agency Standard & Poor's threatened to downgrade its debt to junk status.

lower in the afternoon, Sydney shedding 0.7 percent by the end and Wellington 1.1 percent lower. There were also sharp losses in Manila and Jakarta. But Shanghai again swung in and out of positive territory, having plunged almost nine percent last week. The benchmark index ended 0.4 percent lower. Energy firms were among the big losers, with CNOOC in Hong Kong down four percent and PetroChina shedding 0.5 percent.

Sydney-listed mining giant BHP Billiton was 2.9 percent lower and Woodside Petroleum retreated 2.6 percent. Inpex slipped 1.5 percent in Tokyo. The Chinese market was given some support by the People's Bank of China's decision to increase the yuan's rate against the dollar. Its recent weakness has been a key contributor to a rout in global markets that has characterized the start of 2016.

In a bid to prevent cash outflows which have also hit the yuan, the PBOC said yesterday it would require foreign banks to hold reserves of the currency. Overseas lenders have until now been set a reserve requirement ratio-the amount of depositor funds they must keep aside-of zero. —Agencies

Asian extends losses

Oil prices plunged below \$28 a barrel early yesterday, hitting energy firms and extending losses across Asian markets after sanctions were lifted against Iran, allowing the key producer to resume crude exports. While the decision to free Tehran of the strict embargoes had been well telegraphed, the news hammered Middle East equities Sunday, which were already under pressure as the price of oil sits at 12-year lows.

Most Asian equities followed suit, with Tokyo closing down 1.1 percent near one-year lows, Hong Kong one percent

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report. Monday 18 January 2016. Table with columns: Index, Change, Closing, Last Closing, High, Low, Volume, Value (KWD), Number of Trades. Includes sub-sections for Trades, Security, and various market categories like Basic Materials, Industrials, Consumer Goods, etc.

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report. At 02:00 PM Previous Day. Table with columns: Index, Previous Close, Last Price, Change, Daily Performance %, Yearly Performance %. Includes sub-sections for Global Stock Indices, MENA Stock Indices, Global Currencies Exchange Rate, MENA Currencies Exchange Rate, Global Interest Rates, Global Bond Yields, and Commodities.

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





**KUWAIT:** The First Trading Company, one of Mutawa Alkazi Group of companies, launches the latest cars of BAIC Motor Group at the Auto-Moto 16 Exhibition at 360 Mall. The exhibition began with a ribbon cutting and the announcement of BAIC Motor in Kuwait by Chief Executive Officer of Mutawa Alkazi Company, Omar Sulaiman Alkazi, Vice President of BAIC Motor in the Middle East and North Africa Sun Zhiyong, BAIC GCC Manager Gao Yunfei, Sales Manager Jiang Dong, and General Manager of New Car Sales at Mutawa Alkazi Company Ahmad Abulhuda. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



# MUTAWA ALKAZI GROUP LAUNCHES BAIC MOTOR AT AUTO-MOTO 16 EXHIBITION IN 360 MALL

## FIRST TRADING COMPANY IS BAIC AGENT IN KUWAIT

**KUWAIT:** The First Trading Company, one of Mutawa Alkazi Group of companies, launched the latest cars of BAIC Motor Group at the Auto-Moto 16 Exhibition which was held under the patronage of the Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Sheikh Salman Al-Homoud Al-Sabah. A large number of people attended the ceremony at the 360 Mall including several modern car lovers.

The exhibition began with cutting of ribbon and the announcement of BAIC Motor in Kuwait by Chief Executive Officer of Mutawa Alkazi Company, Omar Sulaiman Alkazi, Vice President of BAIC Motor in the Middle East and North Africa Sun Zhiyong, BAIC GCC Manager Gao Yunfei, Sales Manager Jiang Dong, and General Manager of New Car Sales at Mutawa Alkazi Company Ahmad Abulhuda with the participation of attendees who expressed their admiration of the car and its praiseworthy specs.

The company's CEO Omar Suleiman Alkazi initiated his speech by thanking the Minister of information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Hammud Al-Sabah on the sponsorship of (Auto-Moto 16) event. Then he welcomed the crowd for their participation and attendance at the launching ceremony of BAIC MOTOR new cars.

Alkazi continued by talking about the partnership between The First Trading Company and BAIC set motor car as the leading automaker in China and the world, adding to the consecutive successes achieved by the company, not only in China but also in Asia and Africa. It is reaching for Europe and America, and increasing sales growth and increased demand for their products. He mentioned some cars specification as one of the most powerful and safest car, the most trusted and reliable dependable with many models. In addition, Alkazi especially talked about X65 model which has 4 cylinder engine, turbocharged engines equivalent to the 6 cylinder,

2.0 L capacity 177 horsepower, with a six-speed automatic transmission and manual use ability which gives it more power with economic advantage that doesn't exist in a lot of other cars.

### SAFE AND POWERFUL

Alkazi also noted some of the advantages and specification of X 65 BAIK new car like its basic safety factors as high-strength steel which is up to 95 percent in the passenger compartment. In addition, using the finest materials and passing the most durability and maximum resilience tests, which gives her strength in confronting the dangers of the road however diverse and varied with the strength of the front body and its streamlining, as well as independent suspension system that improves the vehicle performance can be controlled easily and wheels of 17 inch aluminums, As well as having a dual front and sides airbags, SRS side air curtains also to provide all aspects of safety, PEPS system to enter and run a car without a key.

### ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

Alkazi gave elaborated about the modern techniques; vehicle interior contains computer screen technology advanced and integrated. It is also has 7-inch screen, DVD player with LCD touch screen. Moreover, it is equipped with a camera to see 360 degrees as well as a GPS navigation system. Furthermore, it has ample and comfortable seats made of leather, and the driver's seat is adjusted electrically in eight directions, plus more specifications and features.

Alkazi added: In order to keep BAIC X65 model in the forefront it was manufactured with integration and filled with sophisticated gadgets from all sides, power sunroof, and tinted glass panoramic. Also the front lights are Xenon with LED. The taillights are also LED high lighting. The vehicle has adjustable side

mirrors which are electrically folding, turn signals with camera. It comes in a wide range of colors to satisfy all the wishes of clients with different tastes and desires, such as black, grey, silver, white, dark green, Burgundy and orange and blue. BAIC X65 model embodies all the concepts of grace and luxury in one affordable for everyone.

### INTEGRATED SERVICES

As for maintenance and parts availability Alkazi assured that the company provides all original spare parts and in suitable prices for its customers. Maintenance and repair centers of Al-Mutawa Alkazi are spread in Al-Ahmadi and Shuwaikh. These centers are supervised by elite group of senior engineers and technicians highly experienced and qualified to perform all maintenance and repairs quickly and with high accuracy. This all is for ensuring secure and reliable driving. There is a special section for paintwork and smithery which contains the latest German ovens to ensure quality work and achieve the best results.

### PARTNERSHIP AND CONFIDENCE

Alkazi, during the ceremony, expressed his joy and pride on the partnership with BAIC car set, as well as the trust of the customers earned by the company in Kuwait. This relationship of trust goes for years where the company provided the best products from cars and engines, and provided exceptional driving experience to guarantee their comfort and pleasure on the road, and in different weather conditions and natural. Alkazi invited the audience to discover the advantages of the vehicle up close and enjoy its advantages and special specifications, wishing everyone success in choosing the car that suits them and check their wishes always. He concluded his speech by thanking everyone for attending this ceremony.

The vice president of BAIC in North Africa and the Middle East, Mr. Sun Zhiyong

expressed his gratitude for his presence at the launch of BAIC Motor Groups's new X65 in Kuwait today. He was glad for the announcement of new X65 BAIC car in front of a wonderful crowd of car enthusiasts. Mr. Sun also expressed his pride in the partnership with Mutawa Alkazi Group, which is considered one of the oldest car companies in Kuwait. It is known by its good reputation and extensive experience in the field of cars and engines for decades, and its services to clients, during sale and after sale services such as repairing and maintenance.

The company makes sure to provide spare parts in suitable prices with guaranteed quality maintenance.

He talked about group BAIC motor, which achieved consecutive successes and sequential and continuous development since 55 years, until it got to be one of the top five cars in China. He noted that the number of personnel cadres and workers which corresponds to 90,000 employees, and its main offices in Beijing, and has many factories distributed throughout China. Office design is located in the Italian city of Turin.

### QUALITY AND PROFESSIONALISM

Sun noted that the group has certain characteristics in its work and production; many quality properties and exceptional professionalism, along with much of the extensive experience gained as a result of partnerships with many leading car manufacturers in the world, starting with the Swedish Saab and Hyundai, Korean, German, Mercedes-Benz company, where the company launched the so-called partnership project (Beijing Benz) with car makers Daimler to manufacture Mercedes Benz C class and E class and off-road vehicles GLK purpose marketed and sold in the Chinese market, as well as import many vehicles components of global suppliers with high reputation in the motor industry (BOSH and DURR) German.

### HIGH SALES

Sun talked about the sale of the car and he said they have risen dramatically in recent years as a result of the demands increased due to high quality and specifications as well as appropriate pricing that could make many of those wishing to acquire a great car is possible either in China or abroad. The company sold more than two million four hundred thousand cars in 2014, making them occupy fifth place in the automotive sector in terms of revenue and profits, it won third place in terms of value Brand level China. Today BAIC set ranked 207 on the Fortune Global 500.

### PERFECT AND BALANCED PERFORMANCE

Sun described BAIC X65 car as a magnificent car in everything, it gives the driver unrivalled pleasure and dynamically balanced for the driver and his companions, as well as it has luxury features which makes everyone admire her excellent performance. It gives us strength to go anywhere not worrying safety because security has better and richer benefits and specifications of safety factors, quality manufacturing, it has a striking exterior and sophisticated design, for gourmets seeking excellence in the acquisition vehicle is perfect in every way.

During the launching of BAIC ceremony the program had many segments and surprises that entertained the audience by distributing valuable gifts and entertainment. The innovative Osama Fuda played a significant role in the introduction and added an atmosphere of fun and pleasure to the audience by asking questions to the public about Mutawa Alkazi Group and its history, from cars to its customers and its distribution in Kuwait. In addition to maintenance centers, as well as about BAIC models cars and its industry, and the winners received valuable and variety of prizes.





## ROBOTS, NEW WORKING WAYS TO COST 5 MILLION JOBS BY 2020: DAVOS STUDY

**DAVOS/MUNICH:** Disruptive labor market changes, including the rise of robots and artificial intelligence, will result in a net loss of 5.1 million jobs over the next five years in 15 leading countries, according to an analysis published in Davos yesterday. The projection by the World Economic Forum (WEF), which is holding its annual meeting in the Swiss ski resort this week, assumes a total loss of 7.1 million jobs, offset by a gain of 2 million new positions.

The 15 economies covered by the survey account for approximately 65 percent of the world's total workforce. The assessment highlights the challenges posed by modern technologies that are automating and making redundant multiple human tasks, from manufacturing to healthcare.

With the International Labor Organization, part of the United Nations, already forecasting an increase in global unemployment of 11 million by 2020, the

size of the additional job losses is sobering. Two-thirds of the projected losses are expected to fall in the office and administrative sectors as smart machines take over more routine tasks, according to latest findings, which are based on a global survey of personnel and strategy executives.

The WEF has made "the fourth industrial revolution" - a topic covering robotics, nanotechnology, 3D printing and biotechnology - the official theme of this year's Davos meeting, which runs from Jan. 20 to 23. The "Future of Jobs" report concluded that jobs would be displaced in every industry, although the impact would vary considerably, with the biggest negative losses likely to be in healthcare, reflecting the rise of telemedicine, followed by energy and financial services.

At the same time, however, there will be a growing demand for certain skilled workers, including data analysts and specialist

sales representatives. Women will be the biggest losers as their jobs are often concentrated in low-growth or declining areas such as sales, office and administrative roles, the report said. While men will see approximately one job gained for every three lost over the next five years, women face more than five jobs lost for every one gained.

#### Losing jobs to machines

Another international survey published yesterday has found four out of ten young people believe machines will be able to do their jobs within a decade. Nearly half of young workers surveyed in Western countries said their education did not prepare them to do their jobs.

The skills gap is especially pronounced in Europe, according to a poll of 9,000 16- to 25-year-olds in nine of the world's biggest nations commissioned by Indian

business and software services firm Infosys.

Almost 80 percent globally said they had to learn new skills not taught them in school and that rapid technology change - the threat of being overtaken by robots or smart systems - required constant learning of fresh skills to compensate.

The study surveyed around 1,000 young people each in Australia, Brazil, Britain, China, France, Germany, India and the United States, as well as South Africa, where a smaller sample of 700 was polled.

Infosys Chief Executive Vishal Sikka said technologies have evolved far faster than what was thought possible even 10 years ago, while the educational system remains wedded to practices initially designed for agrarian societies 300 years ago. "We must transition away from our past; shift the focus from learning what we already know to an education focused on exploring what hasn't happened yet," he said in response to

the findings. Globally, while almost two-thirds of those queried said they felt positive about their job prospects, those in developing markets Brazil, China, India and South Africa were far more optimistic than their peers in developed markets.

While in India, 60 percent said they think they have the skills needed for their careers, just a quarter were similarly optimistic in France, the poll found. The survey also showed that the level of confidence which young people had in their technical skills correlated with their beliefs in their future career prospects.

The survey was conducted by London-based ICM Unlimited. It was released ahead of the annual World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland, which is focused on what it describes as the "Fourth Industrial Revolution," the broad social and economic shifts taking place due to disruptive digital technologies. — Reuters

## KUWAIT OIL COMPANY OPTS FOR CISCO SECURITY SOLUTIONS FOR HIGH-SECURITY NETWORK

**KUWAIT:** Cisco yesterday announced that Kuwait Oil Company has selected Cisco(r) security solutions for its network hardware refresh. Kuwait Oil has installed Cisco Network Admission Control (NAC), a powerful, easy-to-deploy admission control and compliance enforcement component of the Cisco TrustSec(r) solution.

With comprehensive security features, in-band or out-of-band deployment options, user authentication tools, bandwidth and traffic filtering controls,

management to control user access - whoever, wherever and from whatever device.

Also integrated into Kuwait Oil's network will be the Cisco Identity Services Engine, which helps conquer enterprise mobility challenges and safeguard the evolving network. It is a security policy management and control platform that automates and simplifies access control and security compliance for wired, wireless and VPN connectivity. The Identity Services Engine offers an easy onboarding experience, so that personal devices can be secured and granted access through a simple self-service portal. The Identity Services Engine is primarily used to provide highly secure access and guest access, support bring-your-own-device (BYOD) initiatives, and enforce usage policies in conjunction with Cisco TrustSec technology.

#### Executive Quotes:

Abdulsalam Al-Matrouk, Senior Engineer Telecommunications, Kuwait Oil Company:

"The number of devices and applications accessing Kuwait Oil Company's network both inside and outside our firewall has been steadily growing, thereby creating more attack vectors for hackers to exploit. Cisco's broad set of solutions covering the broadest set of attack vectors, leveraging both global and local intelligence, met our company needs perfectly. Cyber-attacks are getting increasingly sophisticated and discreet and are driven by financial or political gain. The good news is that the O&G organizations like ours can put measures in place to counter attacks."

Ziad Salameh, Managing Director and General Manager Gulf, Levant and Pakistan and Middle East Services Leader, Cisco:

"We applaud the Kuwait Oil Company for putting security at the forefront of its agenda. Cisco has been helping securing countries, cities and businesses of all sizes for decades, and we understand the rapidly changing security landscape. Our continued investment in software, data analytics and threat intelligence along with our assessment, monitoring, response and operational capabilities offer advanced threat protection across the entire attack continuum."



Abdulsalam Al-Matrouk

Network Admission Control is a comprehensive offering for controlling and securing networks.

It will help Kuwait Oil to implement security, access and compliance policies through a central management point rather than configure policies throughout the network on individual devices.

The Cisco Annual Security Report 2015 notes that malware encounters are on the rise in the energy, oil and gas sectors. Maintaining network security and operational efficiency in today's distributed enterprise networks demands new technology. A more holistic approach to network access security incorporates:

- \* Accurate identification of every user and device
- \* Easy onboarding, provisioning and securing of all devices
- \* Centralized, context-aware policy



**BOSTON:** In this Friday, Jan 15, 2016, photo, an iPad with a Boston Symphony Orchestra interactive program is displayed on the conductor's stand at Symphony Hall in Boston. — AP

## TECH AT THE SYMPHONY: BOSTON ORCHESTRA LOANING PATRONS IPADS

**BOSTON:** A night at the symphony usually means silencing cellphones and mobile devices before the music starts. But as part of an effort to draw in a younger audience, the Boston Symphony Orchestra is loaning select patrons iPads loaded with content specific to each performance.

They will be able to view sheet music for the pieces being played, video interviews with musicians, podcasts about the composers and analysis on the works themselves. They will also get a close-up view of the conductor from the musicians' point of view from video monitors set up in the hall.

The storied orchestra, which was founded in 1881, is the first to offer audience members use of customized iPads, according to Kim Noltemy, the group's chief operating and communications officer. But other orchestras are also trying to incorporate technology.

The Philadelphia Orchestra is among a handful that has developed its own mobile application to let audience members follow along with program notes, like translations of vocal parts, in real time from their personal devices.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic rolled out "VAN Beethoven," a customized van that gave residents last fall a chance to enjoy a performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony using virtual reality headsets. And the Sacramento Philharmonic and Opera, Virginia Symphony Orchestra are among those offering "tweet seats," specially designated sections where concertgoers are encouraged to interact on Twitter

with a concert official as they gave running commentary during select performances.

#### Changing expectations

Jesse Rosen, president and CEO of the League of American Orchestras, an approximately 800-member group based in New York, says orchestras are trying to appeal to a new generation's changing expectations for the concert experience.

"It's about enhancing the visual experience of listening to a symphony orchestra," he says. "It's also about making the experience more intimate and creating a more visible contact between the performer and the audience, which is something younger audiences really seem to value." The Boston orchestra is rolling out the iPads as part of a broader effort to draw patrons, particularly younger ones, to their underperforming Friday concerts.

During "Casual Fridays," symphony tickets are being offered at significantly lower prices, ranging from \$25 to \$45, down from as much as \$145, patrons are being encouraged to dress casually, and the hall is hosting pre- and post-concert receptions with live music, snacks and a cash bar.

The first performance was Jan. 15; two others have so far been scheduled for Feb 12 and March 18. Efforts to appeal to new audiences are not without opposition from symphony traditionalists. "There's been resistance all along to screens in concert halls," observes Rosen, of the League of American Orchestras.

#### More engaged

Jeremy Rothman, vice president for artistic planning at the Philadelphia Orchestra, says concerns over its LiveNote app, which debuted this season at select concerts, have diminished as concertgoers and musicians alike saw the technology in action.

The app, he says, has helped some patrons become more informed and therefore more engaged in the performance while the app's design-grayscale text on a black background-minimizes the impact on others. "No one is more concerned about preserving the live concert experience as we are," Rothman says. "This is absolutely at the core of what we do. So we asked a lot of the really hard questions up front and are continuing to listen to feedback now that we've put it in people's hands."

In Boston, Noltemy says the symphony orchestra has taken steps to make sure it isn't alienating its core audience. For now, the iPads will be offered only to the 110 people seated in the rear orchestra. That section is under the balcony overhang, she notes, helping limit the impact of screen glow on other audience members.

The devices will also be on a dim setting, and patrons will be given headphones to tune into the video and audio segments. "We'd prefer people watch the iPad podcasts before the concert during the pre-concert reception," Noltemy says. "But, as you can imagine, we have no control over that." — AP

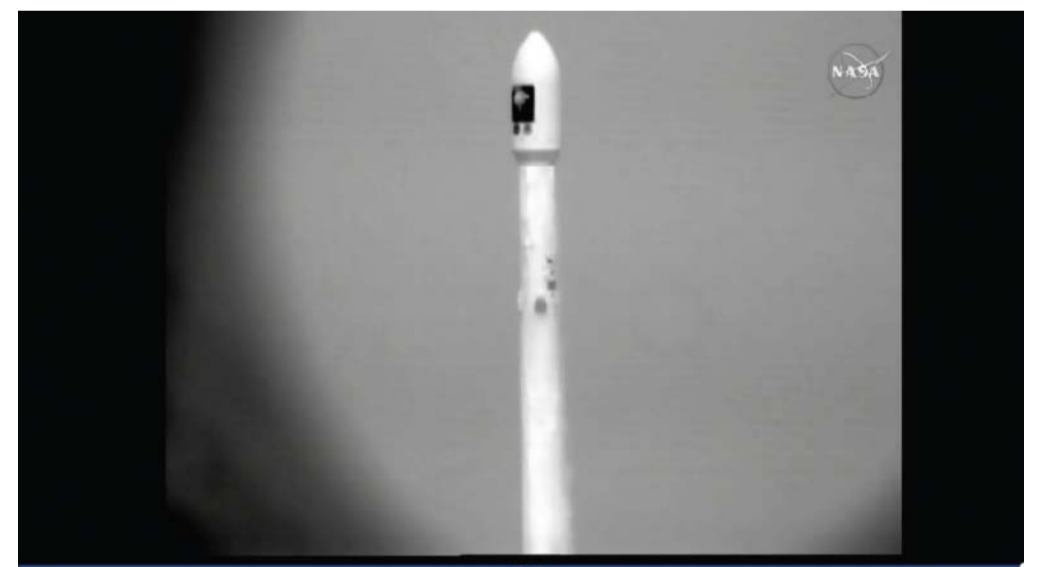
## SPACEX FAILS TO STICK OCEAN LANDING AFTER SATELLITE LAUNCH

**LOS ANGELES:** SpaceX's unmanned Falcon 9 rocket broke apart Sunday as it tried to land on a floating platform in the Pacific, marking the fourth such failure in the company's bid to recycle rockets. However, the primary mission of the launch from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California went as planned, propelling into orbit a \$180 million US-French satellite called Jason-3 to study sea level rise.

"Well, at least the pieces were bigger this time!" Elon Musk, the CEO of the California-based company, wrote on Twitter. SpaceX is trying to land its rockets back on Earth in order to re-use the parts in the future, trying to make spaceflight cheaper and more sustainable than before.

The firm succeeded in landing its Falcon 9 first stage-the long towering portion of the rocket-on solid ground at Cape Canaveral, Florida in December. Even though an ocean landing is more difficult, SpaceX wants to perfect the technique because ship landings "are needed for high velocity missions," Musk tweeted. "Definitely harder to land on a ship," he added after the latest foible. "Similar to an aircraft carrier vs land: much smaller target area, that's also translating and rotating."

Currently, expensive rocket components are jettisoned into the ocean after launch, wasting hundreds of millions of dollars. Competitor Blue Origin, headed by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, succeeded in landing a suborbital rocket in November. However, no other company has attempted the ocean landing that SpaceX is trying to achieve. In the end, the problem on Sunday was not due to high speed or a turbulent ocean, but came down to a leg on the rocket that did not lock out as anticipated. "So it



**VANDEMBERG AIR FORCE BASE:** In this NASA TV image, the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket is seen at the Vandenberg Air Force Base Space Launch Complex 4 East with the Jason-3 spacecraft onboard, during launch, January 17, 2016, in California. — AFP

tipped over after landing," Musk said. SpaceX said the rocket landed within 1.3 meters (yards) of the dromedary's center.

#### Oceans satellite

There was no hitch in the launch itself, and the blast off at 10:42 am of the rocket and satellite went flawlessly. The satellite aims to offer a more precise look at how global warming and sea level rise affect wind speeds and currents as close as 0.6 miles (one kilometer) from shore, whereas past satellites were limited to about 10 times that distance from the coast.

The technology will monitor global sea surface heights, tropical cyclones and help support seasonal and coastal forecasts. During a five-year mission, its data will also be used to aid fisheries management and research into human impacts on the world's oceans.

The satellite is the fruit of a four-way partnership between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the US space agency NASA, the French space agency CNES (Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales) and the European Organization for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT). — AFP

## UKRAINE WARNS OF MORE MALWARE ATTACKS AFTER KIEV AIRPORT HIT

**KIEV:** Ukraine's Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-UA) warned yesterday of the threat of possible further virus attacks after malware was found in the IT system of Kiev's main airport over the weekend. "Attention to all system administrators... We recommend a check

of log-files and information traffic," CERT-UA said. A virus, similar to one which attacked three Ukrainian power firms in late December, was detected in a computer workstation of the IT network of Kiev's main airport Boryspil, according to the airport's press service. — Reuters



# 'WISH' ANNOUNCES BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS FORUM AND REPORT FOR 2016 CONFERENCE

**DOHA:** The World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH), a global initiative of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), announced that a 'Behavioural Insights' Forum will be held during its 2016 conference on the 29th and 30th November in Doha, Qatar. The Behavioural Insights Forum will present ground breaking, evidence-based research showing how citizen's health can be maintained and improved through better understanding and application of the latest evidence on the factors which influence behaviour, led by a UK government-owned social purpose company, The Behavioural Insights Team.

Using a broad definition of health, the report will cover three main areas: quality of life and wellbeing, public health, and delivery of healthcare. It will further demonstrate how behavioural insights can be applied at the macro level of high-level policies and system design, as well as at the micro level of experimentation, in order to achieve incremental improvements for the benefit of societies.

WISH, an initiative of QF, is closely aligned with the mission of reinforcing Qatar's pioneering role as an emerging centre for healthcare innovation while also unlocking human potential. In addition, WISH serves as a key platform for the dissemination of healthcare innovation and best practices, and brings together thousands of high-level policymakers, academics, and professionals. David Halpern, Chief Executive of the Behavioural Insights Team and Board Director, and chair of the forum said, "Behavioural factors - such as around diet, smoking, and accidents - now account for the majority of healthy years of life lost. Within medical practice, behavioural factors also loom large in the transmission of infectious disease, medical adherence, and clinical errors. Yet these behavioural factors have received comparatively little attention, and the behavioural models within the medical community remain surprisingly undeveloped."

"This forum and report will draw out the practical implications in recent advances in behavioural

science for medical commissioners and practitioners for prevention, treatment and well-being," added Halpern. The report will also present a shortlist of the interventions that have the most potential, while stressing the importance of continually testing new ideas and adapting to the results they generate. Commenting on the announcement, WISH's CEO Egbert Schillings said: "As with previous summits, WISH seeks to present pioneering and comprehensive scientific research that provides answers to some of the toughest questions facing the healthcare sector today."

### Healthcare challenges

The Behavioural Insights Forum will no doubt be an important component in the body of research that will be presented at the 2016 conference. The WISH 2016 Summit will feature six ground breaking research forums that highlight and address some of the world's most pressing healthcare challenges. In addition to Behavioural Insights, the forums will

generate interdisciplinary, evidence-based reports on topics including Autism, Cardiovascular Disease, Healthy Populations, the Economic Benefits of Investing in Health, and Precision Medicine. Internationally renowned experts will chair the forums. For the first time, WISH will also report on its on-going impact locally and globally on issues previously highlighted at the Summit, such as Diabetes, Accountable Care, and Patient Safety. Along with new health policy research forums, the summit will also feature innovation showcases from around the world that shape the design, delivery, and financing of care, as well as a cohort of young innovators; emerging health care leaders under the age of 30, whose contributions to global health deserve wider recognition. The second WISH Summit was held in February 2015, bringing together more than 1,200 delegates from 93 countries to discuss and debate practical, lasting, and innovative solutions to global healthcare challenges.



**NEW YORK:** A worker wearing a contamination suit was carted up to a Dubois County farm, Friday, Jan 15, 2016, that was confirmed to be the location of the first case of bird flu in the United States in June. —AP

## US DEPLOYS NEWLY MINTED BIRD FLU PLAN TO PROTECT HUMANS, POULTRY

**CHICAGO:** US farm and health officials are racing to assess the threat that a type of bird flu never before seen in the country poses to humans and poultry, employing emergency plans drawn up in the wake of a devastating outbreak in birds last year. The federal government sprang into action on Friday after confirmation overnight that the virus had hit an Indiana turkey farm, alerting other states to the danger and putting workers who might have been exposed to the virus under surveillance. Last year's outbreak led to the deaths of more than 48 million chickens and turkeys, either killed by the virus or culled to contain it. No cases were reported in humans.

Strains similar to the new virus, known as H7N8, have on rare occasions made people ill and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state officials aim to reduce the risk of human infection. They also want to blunt the impact on the poultry industry, which suffered billions of dollars in losses in last year's outbreak. Egg supplies shrank and prices surged to record highs. "We are hopeful that as we respond very quickly to this virus that we can get it contained and hopefully not see an extensive outbreak like we did last year," said TJ Myers, an associate deputy administrator for the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Even if the response is fast, the government's ability to contain the disease is far from certain.

Officials have never dealt with this strain before, and wild birds are thought to spread the disease to farms through feces dropped from the air, making infections difficult to prevent. US officials have taken to heart lessons from last year's outbreak, when USDA workers could not always kill infected flocks fast enough to contain the virus. Workers are now trying to cull sick flocks within 24 hours of diagnoses, following a goal the agency set in the autumn. Most turkeys at the infected farm were killed within a day, but it was 29 hours before all were dead, said Denise Derrer, spokeswoman for the Indiana State Board of Animal Health. No human infections associated with the new strain have ever been reported, according to the USDA.

### Especially deadly to poultry

Still, people who interacted with infected turkeys were quickly placed under a new monitoring plan developed in response to last year's outbreak. Michael Jung, a medical officer at the CDC, told Reuters. The agency also plans to conduct lab tests and animal studies of the virus. Similar H7 viruses - which share the same surface proteins - have caused problems in people ranging from mild, flu-like symptoms to serious respiratory illness, Jung said. "We know very little about this particular virus because we haven't seen it, but we want to take as many precautions as we can to prevent any human infections," he said. —Reuters

## BABY APE RECOVERS AFTER ORDEAL IN INDONESIA, FINDS NEW PLAYMATE

**JAKARTA:** A baby orangutan found abandoned and almost dead has made a swift recovery at an Indonesian rescue center, and has been filmed playing happily with another young ape. Gito was discovered dumped in a cardboard box in August under the baking sun on the Indonesian part of Borneo island, with rescuers initially believing the primate was dead due to his "mummified" appearance. A team from International Animal Rescue (IAR) picked up the endangered Bornean orangutan, who had been kept as a pet by a local village head, and rushed him to their center.

Gito—who is less than a year old—was suffering from multiple ailments but has recovered strongly, and was recently released from quarantine and introduced to another male baby orangutan, Asoka. New footage released by IAR showed their first encounter, with the apes appearing wary when initially introduced at the orangutan rehabilitation center on Borneo. However, it was not long before the pair were playing happily together on a wooden climbing frame.

Asoka was also rescued on Borneo several months ago after a villager found him abandoned in the jungle and handed the ape over to IAR, although he was in a far better condition than Gito. Gito is doing much better than when he was found suffering from dehydration, malnutrition and a skin infection, but his caregivers warn there is a long road ahead.

IAR program director for Indonesia, Carmele Llano Sanchez, said Gito would still need to take part in "jungle school"—a scheme designed to prepare orangutans for life in the wild—before he could be released. "It's going to take five to seven years before he is ready to be released into the wild," she told AFP. Bornean orangutans are classified as endangered species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and are protected under Indonesian law. But their jungle habitats are being destroyed by the rapid expansion of palm oil and pulp and paper plantations, while locals view the apes as pests and sometimes target them. Hundreds of Bornean primates were also rescued last year as massive, smog-belching forest fires ravaged the island. The fires, started to clear land for plantations, are an annual occurrence, but in 2015 were the worst for some years.—AFP



**JAKARTA:** Gito, a baby orangutan, receives treatment following his rescue. —AFP photos



**JAKARTA:** Gito inside a box following his rescue.

# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

248 33 199





Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem  
فهد علي المخيزيم

استشاري أطفال  
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The Roudhat Al-Riqqa Kindergarten organized an awareness day on the service of people with special needs and their families. Khazna Al-Hadhrani, psychologist and programs' coordinator at the Kuwait Autism Center gave a lecture on how to diagnose autism, as well as best ways to provide care for autistic children and assistance to their families.



## KDMCA KUWAIT CHAPTER UNVEILS 2016 CALENDAR

Kuravilangad Deva Matha College Alumni Association (KDMCA) Kuwait Chapter Calendar - 2016 was released on the 30th December 2015 by Anit Peter (CEO- Bluestar Logistics, Kuwait). Anit Peter handed over the unveiled copy of the Calendar to Raju Zacharias, Advisory Board Chairman of KDMCA. Shri KJ John (President), Shri Jose Mathew (Secretary), Shri Shaju Bharathan (Treasurer) and senior members of KDMCA Shri Boby Patani, Jojo Alunkal, Jayash John, Boby Joseph, Vins Sebastian were also present on the occasion.

## NSS KUWAIT'S MANNAM BIRTH ANNIVERSARY ON JANUARY 22

The 139th birth anniversary of Bharath Kesari Mannathu Padmanabhan will be celebrated by Nair Service Society (NSS) Kuwait January 22, 2016 (Friday) at Marina Hall, Touristic Park, Abbasiya from 5.30 pm onwards. Mannaathu Padmanabhan was a social reformer, freedom fighter and was the founder of

Nair Service Society, Kerala. The chief guest of the occasion will be Sreekumaran Thampi, eminent music director, lyricist, script writer and film director. The function will be inaugurated by Sunil Jain, Ambassador of India to Kuwait. There will be a very colorful cultural evening with dance and music performances by talented artists from Kerala.

Bharathanatyam performance by Paris Laxmi, actress and well-known Bharathanatyam dancer, will be a great attraction of the event. Kalamandalam Sunil, the talented Kathakali artist from Kerala will be performing 'Poothanamoksham'. The musical treat will be served by the trio Sachin Warriar, Malavika with their melodious voices and Asianet fame Anoop with his keyboard talents. Kalabhavan Satheesh will entertain you with his comedy numbers. Entry is restricted through invitations only.



## INDIAN EMBASSY ON AMNESTY TO RESIDENCY VIOLATORS IN KUWAIT

On 10 January 2016, the Ministry of Interior, Kuwait has announced special dispensation (partial amnesty) for all illegal residents in Kuwait. As per the announcement, residency violators will be allowed to pay their fines and either legalize their status or leave the country without being black-listed. But this would apply to those who voluntarily participate in the above scheme and that the Residency Affairs Departments across the country are ready to receive violators in order to rectify their legal status, for payment of fines for leaving the country.

1) There are approximately 28,000 Indians illegally staying in Kuwait due to residency/visa violations. All Indian illegal residents are urged to avail the above dispensation to either legalize their status or leave the country after payment of fines without being black-listed. They should contact the concerned Residency Affairs Department of Kuwait with available documents to rectify their status or for payment of

2) The Embassy is ready to provide all necessary assistance to all those seeking the above special dispensation by issuing Emergency Certificates (travel document) expeditiously if required by the local authorities who are processing their documents under above scheme. The requirement for issue of Emergency certificate is as under:

- (a) Prescribed format for issue of EC (copy enclosed)
  - (b) Three recent passport size photograph;
  - (c) A copy of the passport (relevant pages)
  - (d) Payment of KD 5,000 consular fee for EC
- 3) For any query/clarification in the matter, please contact Shri AK Srivastava, Second Secretary (PIC/CW) Tel. No. 22531716 and Mobile No. 97229914 or Shri BK Sinha, Assistant (CW) at Mobile No. 97164067 and Mr. Mohammad Ashfaq Durrani, Local Staff member, Mobile-66680031.

## KERALITES PAY HOMAGE TO KM ABDU RAHEEM

In a solemn function organized by KIG, leaders from various leading Malayalee organizations and their associates paid their tributes to K M Abdu Raheem sahib, who has died last week at the age of 79. The outpouring of love, gratitude and fond memories which the packed audience of Pravasi auditorium at Abbasiya had witnessed was a testimony to the way K M Abdu Raheem Sahib touched so many lives in Kuwait with his sincere services.

A towering personality, visionary thinker, teacher, writer, orator, philanthropist, legendary social worker, K M Abdu Raheem Sahib was all these and so much more. In a prolific expatriate life in Kuwait spanning more than three and half decades, he took leadership role in the formation of various organizations such as Malayali Samajam, United Malayali Organization (UMO), Federation of Indian Muslim Association (FIMA), Kerala Islamic Group, Cultural Association of Muslim Youth (CAMY) and Friday Forum.

He was not just a President of Malayali Samajam and UMO and KIG but he earned enormous respect and social capital through his humility, support for humanitarian causes, bridging various communities together under one unified umbrella and commitment towards grassroots creativity and innovation. He shared this capital with everybody who came in contact with him. K M Abdu Raheem Sahib had an extraordinary ability to make most ordinary people in his company.

The Amazing part is that he found time for the younger generation and he worked closely with them to foster their innate talents and made their services available to the society. He maintained intimate relationship with eminent Kuwaitis and Philanthropists like Abu Bader, Nadir Al Nouri, Dr Abdul Rahman Al Sumaith, Abdul Qader Al Ajeel, Dr Nasser Al Sanea, Dr Hassan Hath Houth, Professor Abubacker Sayeed among others and was a founding member of

Islam Presentation Committee (IPC).

The Indian community witnessed his leadership quality during the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait in 1990. With his sincere efforts he did so much in bringing confidence, arranging food, burying the dead, registering Indians through the center arranged in Salmiya Indian community school. He helped many sick and pregnant ladies by finding a place in the aircraft of former foreign minister IK Gujaral and thus making their evacuation easy.

Taking leadership role, he spent days and nights along with other KIG volunteers in the dusty and crowded 'no mans land' in Amman - arranging the controlled and coordinated evacuation of Indians through Amman. To Speed up the evacuation by getting more aircraft he even utilized his personal relationship with then MP KP Unni Krishnan of Badagara constituency who came there personally to oversee the arrangements.



## AL MULLA EXCHANGE MAKING HEADLINES



Al Mulla International Exchange, the premier Exchange company in Kuwait is making headlines in Kuwait by organizing their first edition of 'Al Mulla Exchange Champions Trophy'. With a lineup of 32 Teams, the tournament looks to provide an even platform for teams to compete in a very healthy and competitive environment. The tournament has been touted as one of the best in terms of prize money and team line up in Kuwait. Unlike other tournaments in Kuwait, there are no registration fees to pay to play in the tournament. The tournament is being conducted at the Sulaiybiya Cricketing Grounds opposite to Agility.

The tournament was inaugurated by Hormuzda Davar, Director of Trading, and Manufacturing & Financial Services at Al Mulla Group. Also attending the inaugural function was Rajesh Gairola, Divisional General Manager of Al Mulla Exchanges. Speaking on the occasion, Davar said 'Al Mulla Exchange believes in contributing to the community at large and we cannot underestimate the power of cricket in shaping the millions of people around the world. We hope that this tournament will provide a good platform to the teams to perform and bring out a healthy competition.' He concluded by wishing the best team to win.





## EXCITING START OF THE YEAR AT JUMEIRAH BEACH HOTEL & SPA



**J**umeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa has an exciting range of activities for a luxurious start to the year with friends and family. General Manager, Hakan Petek said: "As we mark another successful year and begin 2016, we continue to raise the bar in creating exceptional experiences through our activities and offers that deliver memorable experiences for our guests."

The luxurious landmark property's popular restaurants have an abundance of offers this month. Olio, with authentic Italian cuisine, presents a selection of fresh homemade pastas in the special La Pasta Fresca four-course set menu. Pepper steakhouse, offers meat lovers a chance to delight in an à la carte menu of tenderized gourmet cuts from the USA throughout the month. Garden Café, the main venue for international delights, is seasoning the month with the return of Mexican-themed buffet every Tuesday. Devoted to luxurious pampering and complete rejuvenation, Talise Spa has special gift vouchers for an ultimate relaxation experience. Also newly available are unique Wellness and Detox packages designed for optimal wellbeing and revitalization.



## MARINA HOTEL KUWAIT TAILORS A SPECIAL WEEKEND PACKAGE



**M**arina Hotel Kuwait has customized an attractive and indulgent weekend package for residents and locals in Kuwait. At a location where luxury meets modernity, and where an attractive sea view, works harmoniously together with the latest technological systems, guests are invited to enjoy their weekends in style in the midst of absolute comfort. With a multitude of facilities and services, guests can break the daily routine and enjoy some peace of mind with a choice of room packages. Perfect for a short break or a weekend getaway, guests can choose from any of the superior rooms and enjoy state-of-the-art facilities the hotel offers without missing out on other activities including shopping, wellness, sports and much more.

They can further enjoy the vibrant white sands of the private beach along with the three pools and the pool bar - all not far away from the ultimate shopping destination, Marina Mall. The package offers special rates for weekenders in the superior rooms at a rate starting from KD 88 which includes a buffet breakfast, free access to the hotel's health club, beach and pool area. Guests and their families can experience a luxurious escape after an exhaustive week and indulge themselves with a complimentary buffet breakfast for two persons at the Six Palms Restaurant.

Guests whose taste palates crave for unique and diverse cuisines can watch authentic innovations spring to life for lunch

and dinner at the renowned Atlantis Restaurant with the finest dishes from around the world and views of the Arabian Sea. The package also includes a 20% discount on buffet lunch and dinner for guests dining at the Atlantis Restaurant. Within close proximity to Marina Mall, one of the best shopping malls in

Kuwait, and the Marina Crescent, which houses a variety international restaurants and coffee shops, Marina Hotel is an ideal location for family leisure. The award winning hotel is the destination to be for its dedication to a unique guest experience and high standard of service quality.



## MCDONALD'S #BIGMACMOMENT

**F**ollowing the unveiling of the newest members of the Big Mac family - the Mini Mac and the Grand Mac, McDonald's Kuwait continues its celebration with the Big Mac Moment competition. In honor of its signature sandwich, McDonald's invites customers to

express their love of the Big Mac and showcase their video-making skills, for a chance to win an all-paid-trip to Barcelona to meet Neymar Jr, the professional Brazilian football star of FC Barcelona.

To enter the competition, customers must submit a video expressing the way they celebrate any of their achievements whilst featuring the iconic Big Mac sandwich. Videos must be uploaded to [www.mcdonaldsarabia.com](http://www.mcdonaldsarabia.com). Moreover, customers can share their submission on social media using #BigMacMoment. "What better way is there to celebrate the Big Mac, than by offering diners a once in a lifetime experience to meet one of today's biggest football icons. We invite all our customers across Kuwait to be as creative as they can, have fun and make their own videos showing their Big Mac Moments, for a chance to win this exciting trip to Barcelona," commented Sherif Coutry, Marketing Director at McDonald's Kuwait.

Coutry further commented, "Winners will be chose via random draw, therefore the more videos that they submit, the more chances that they have to win. We look forward to seeing all the submissions and we wish all participants the best of luck." The Big Mac Moment competition will be running until February 26. Details regarding the Big Mac Moment and how to submit the videos are available on [McDonaldsArabia.com](http://McDonaldsArabia.com).



## THE SULTAN CENTER NOW OFFERS PAPER BAGS ACROSS ITS STORES



**I**n and around Kuwait plastic bags can be seen along the sides of roads, in the desert, on trees, outside people's houses. They litter our beaches and threaten marine life. As part of The Sultan Centre's (TSC) ongoing commitment to the community and safeguarding the environment, TSC has recently launched a new initiative in its stores whereby shoppers are given the option to choose plastic bags or paper bags (at a nominal charge). Not only are paper bags stronger than plastic bags, they are made from a renewable resource and they are easily recyclable, which makes them environmentally friendly.

TSC is committed to protecting the environment. Not only is it important for our generation, it's about taking care of care of the environment for generations to come. TSC's reduce, reuse and recycle initiative aims to keep as many recyclable materials out of landfills as possible. Essentially, the goal is to minimize waste, and offering paper bags throughout their stores will go a long way in serving that purpose.

Tom Hammer, CEO of Retail at The Sultan Center, said: "We actively listen to our customers and want to engage them in our eco-friendly initiatives. Our customers have told us they want the option of having their groceries packed in paper bags. Many of our shoppers are environmentally conscious and they want to reduce plastic usage. As part of giving back to the community in which we operate, we're always on the lookout for ways in which we can help protect the environment."

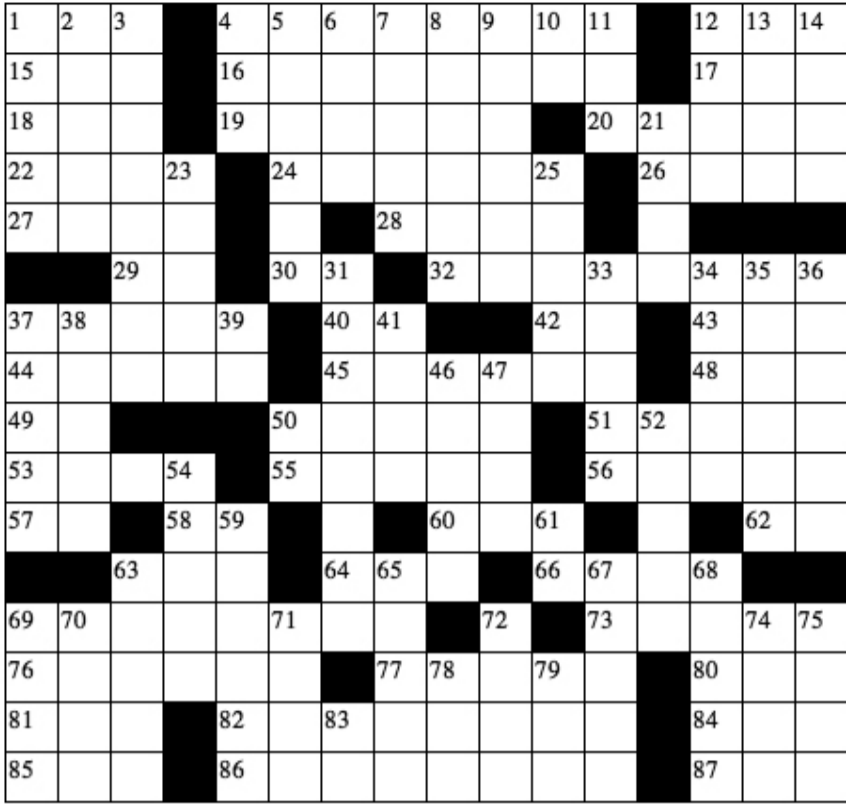
This new initiative falls in line with our goal to reduce our ecological footprint. We are giving our customers a choice: plastic or paper. In either case, the most important thing is to recycle those bags so they don't end up in the sea, beaches, streets, and landfills, or become litter." Just a few small lifestyle changes can go a long way in making a big difference for the environment. TSC is working together with its customers to make an even greater impact by making it easier for them to incorporate sustainable choices into their daily lives.







CROSSWORD 1142



ACROSS

- The state of matter distinguished from the solid and liquid states by.
- An imaginary place of great wealth and opportunity.
- North American republic containing 50 states - 48 conterminous states in North America plus Alaska in northwest North America and the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean.
- A member of the Siouan people inhabiting the valleys of the Platte and Missouri rivers in Nebraska.
- The act of removing the contents of something.
- A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
- (Sumerian) Sun god.
- A person who holds a commissioned rank in the United States Navy or Coast Guard.
- A religious doctrine that is proclaimed as true without proof.
- Rock that in its molten form (as magma) issues from volcanos.
- Smeared thickly.
- Marked by the reception of pay.
- A small amount of residue.
- A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.
- A silvery soft wax metallic element of the alkali metal group.
- A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
- Increased pressure in the eyeball due to obstruction of the outflow of aqueous humor.
- (Jungian psychology) The inner self (not the external persona) that is in touch with the unconscious.
- A gray lustrous metallic element of the rare earth group.
- A bachelor's degree in science.
- Cleaning implement consisting of absorbent material fastened to a handle.
- The unit of measurement for the proportion of gold in an alloy.
- A person who is rejected (from society or home).
- A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
- The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
- Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- The formation of frost or ice on a surface.
- A river that rises in central Germany and flows north to join the Elbe River.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- A person who announces and plays popular recorded music.
- Relating to or characteristic of or occurring on the sea or ships.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- (informal) Of the highest quality.
- Set down according to a plan.
- The brightest star in the sky.
- Bottle that has a narrow neck.
- United States prizefighter who lost his world heavyweight championship to Cassius Clay in 1964 (1932-1970).
- A unit of elastance equal to the reciprocal of a farad.
- Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
- A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of Bahrain or its people or language.
- A barrier constructed to contain the flow of water or to keep out the sea.
- Slightly insane.

DOWN

- An additional tax on certain kinds of income that has already been taxed.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- United States paleontologist and popularizer of science (born in 1941).
- Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- Something of sentimental value.
- (Old Testament) Adam's wife in Judeo-Christian mythology.
- The capital and largest city of England.
- Any orchid of the genus *Disa*.
- State of disgrace resulting from detestable behavior.
- A motley assortment of things.
- Anneal or toughen by a process of gradually heating and cooling.
- The district occupied entirely by the city of Washington.
- An unabridged dictionary constructed on historical principles.
- The capital and largest city of Mongolia.
- The language of the nomadic Lapp people in northern Scandinavia and the Kola Peninsula.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
- Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
- Any of numerous low-growing cushion-forming plants of the genus *Draba* having rosette-forming leaves and terminal racemes of small flowers with scapose or leafy stems.
- Surpassing what is common or usual or expected.
- Goddess of dawn.
- A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
- A state of individual psychological well-being based upon a sense of confidence and usefulness and purpose.
- South American cavy.
- Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
- A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
- (New Testament) The sages who visited Jesus and Mary and Joseph shortly after Jesus was born.
- A liquid preparation used on wet hair to it a tint.
- English prelate noted for his pessimistic sermons and articles (1860-1954).
- A heavy brittle diamagnetic trivalent metallic element (resembles arsenic and antimony chemically).
- Of or relating to a speaker of the Tamil language or the language itself.
- Declare or acknowledge to be true.
- English writer of macabre short stories (1863-1943).
- A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- Take back what one has said.
- A small unit serving as the nucleus of a larger political movement.
- A linguistic element added to a word to produce an inflected or derived form v 1.
- (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
- A river in northern England that flows southeast through West Yorkshire.
- Relatively small fast-moving cloth.
- A native or inhabitant of Great Britain.
- Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- God of love and erotic desire.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
- A unit of power equal to 746 watts.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

A busy day at work brings about plenty of opportunities to make mistakes, be slowed by interruptions and have difficult communications. Your positive attitude and focus creates a most successful day, from which others could learn. It is moneymaking time and you should see results from your hard work. You could feel great support from the people around you for whatever you need to accomplish now. You enjoy an enticing meal and a finely set table for your meals-consider low-fat, smaller meals. Place a few orange slices beside half of a baked chicken and a few string beans, a salad and you will have a gourmet meal! We are talking healthy and beautiful now, you are on the right track; stay creative.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You have a great deal of compassion for others and you are valued for your ability to act and get things done. This is a time when you can expect a little encouragement. Whatever support you need will be available to you, when you need it. There is a feeling that anything is possible if you set your sights high enough. This afternoon it is time to convene with nature. When you leave work you might enjoy visiting a pet or nature store-perhaps meeting with someone in your family to shop and enjoy each other's company. You make every effort to be with each person in your family-young or not. Family is very important to you and you teach that to the other members. Close relationships offer a potential for growth.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You might like to ignore responsibilities and do some socializing, but realities may demand that you tend to business and forget your friends for the moment. You have practical ideas and you are able to lend a helping hand when someone needs it. You may receive some recognition or special attention regarding your particular skills and abilities in the workplace today. This is a great time to reflect and understand your own situation, just how you feel about yourself. Emotions in particular, or the feelings of those around you, may be very clear. You could be helping children through a puppet or mime class this afternoon. This evening there are new and unusual ways of appreciating and loving. You may discover something new about love.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Someone you helped yesterday may be helping you today. Communicating and getting your message across to others is at a high just now. Your timing should be perfect and those around you should find you most natural and receptive. This is a time of good fortune when things open up in a very positive way. Situations are almost custom-made and it is easy to see how to proceed with your plans. There are plenty of opportunities where choices of expression are concerned-you may find yourself able to do almost anything. You may enjoy probing into your own psyche. Learning tools that make communication easier are fascinating.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You should be enjoying some lifestyle changes at this time. You have a unique way of dressing and others are supportive and fascinated by your ability to coordinate colors and patterns that would not otherwise have been considered. You enjoy where you are in your life at this time and you look forward to new and better, always improving and growing. You work hard to be self-sufficient and to have self-sufficient kids. It is important to you that they have good judgment. There is a relationship you have with an older person that is like a mentor relationship-open your mind to hearing what is being said to you.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may find co-workers and friends understand your position or situation and they are supportive of your efforts at this time. There is optimism as well as a tendency to take chances towards gaining new work opportunities. If you are actively working on your life's progress now, you will see some positive results. Stay in the moment and do not worry about things you cannot control. The preparations you have been making for your future are about to pay off now. Observe people today, imagine them in different situations and try not to laugh. You may find yourself being put to good use by your friends this afternoon. Rent a comedy video this evening and take some time with your loved one or even by yourself, to refurbish your energies.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

There is something that you may suspect is worth checking out in the work world. This could mean a new way to invest or ideas for a presentation. Some of your work classification could be changed now. Your drive to succeed is strong. You can feel the trends of the times and you will make the right moves to improve your finances as well. This is a time to get ahead by taking action. Everything comes about to reveal you at your most elegant, particularly in social situations. Turn a negative situation into a positive one by helping another with little chores and distancing your emotions. There is a chance to understand those around you and to have a special time with someone you love. You will have an opportunity to renew a friendship very soon.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Business or career projects may need adjustments now. With so many things on your mind just now, it may be hard to concentrate on routine matters. However, this is where your accomplishments are today: concentration and continuing your routine. To get the best results in financial affairs you need to be less concerned about security and more willing to take risks. Never would anyone be wise to suggest gambling. Your instincts are strong-you know just what to do. High-tech equipment impinges on the domestic environment. An eccentric relative attracts some attention and you prove helpful. Later this evening you may decide to enjoy some relaxing entertainment; movies, books or any other healthy form of escape could prove enjoyable.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Intuition hits again today and you can log your thoughts in that notebook of yours. Your talents or the way in which you perform your work will pay off well at this time. You will have authority figures watching as you successfully deal with problems at work. An urge for social interactions with your friends may have to be put on hold just now as you are much more intensely focused on accomplishing a particular goal. You may find yourself working into the early evening hours. You certainly will not be bored with any part of the day and there are plenty of opportunities to use your mind and your creativity. There is time for you and a loved one to break away for a little relaxation, perhaps to enjoy an evening at a new restaurant.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Temporary obstacles appear this morning. However, you have a lot of optimism to see yourself through most situations. You are willing to put a great deal of effort into a work project and you are creative in your ability to find quick results. Your creative mind allows you to excel in the most interesting areas of science. With a couple of accomplishments, you gain respect from the people with whom you work. You will work now on reducing your debts. Being able to provide monetary relief from unplanned financial situations decreases the stress level. A family, living debt-free, is never faced with the fear of the consequences that come from being in debt during thin times.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Your schedule presents a lot of motivation to get everything scheduled and organized. Someone may ask if you need help and you are flattered. The routine you move through each day works well but does not seem to be a fast as it could be. You may promise yourself to chart out a new plan on paper to see how the steps will work. You are excited by new concepts, inventions and ideas. Today you will gain some insight that will help you in your work. A co-worker may call you later this afternoon and tell you of a change in thinking; you see a positive outcome. A lover or child who is bright and articulate plays a bigger role in your life. You may be teaching this person how to investigate, to research or to expand on his or her own personal talents.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are the one to catch any mistakes today at work and there may be a few. If you have doubts about calculations-go back and check it out when you can; perhaps crosscheck with someone. This is a great time to be with others and to work together. You may be sought after as just the person for a particular job. Your business expertise is in high focus. You could be most persuasive with others and persuasive in your communications. Your involvement in a neighborhood activity proves successful. Instead of allowing others to dump all the work on your back today, you seem to have learned to allocate the jobs to others. Good for you! A young person becomes independent this evening. This is the direction of your goals, now let go!

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

Weather

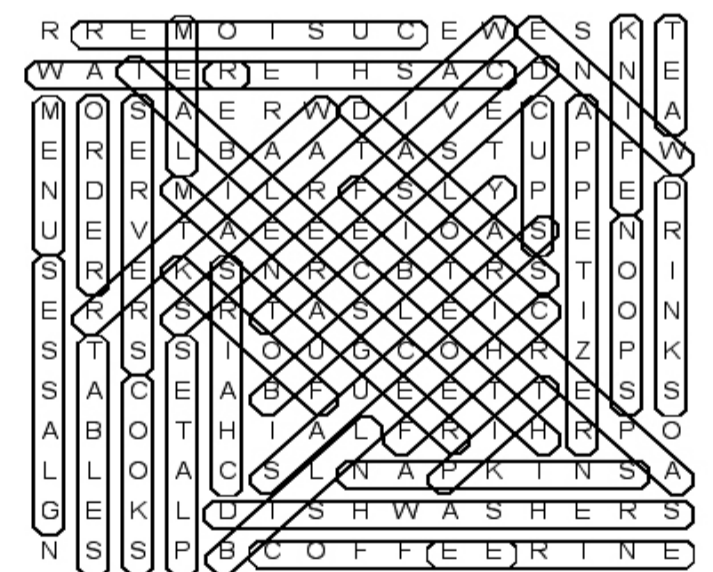
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional weather word.



- |            |           |           |             |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| BAROMETER  | FLOOD     | ICE       | STORM       |
| BLIZZARD   | FLURRIES  | LIGHTNING | SUNNY       |
| CELSIUS    | FOG       | MIST      | TEMPERATURE |
| CLOUDS     | FORECAST  | MONSOON   | THERMOMETER |
| COLD       | FREEZE    | OVERCAST  | THUNDER     |
| CYCLONE    | FROST     | RAIN      | TORNADO     |
| DOWNPOUR   | HAIL      | SHOWER    | TSUNAMI     |
| DRIZZLE    | HOT       | SLEET     | TYPHOON     |
| DROUGHT    | HUMIDITY  | SNOW      | VISIBILITY  |
| FAHRENHEIT | HURRICANE | SQUALL    | WINDY       |

Yesterday's Solution

Restaurant



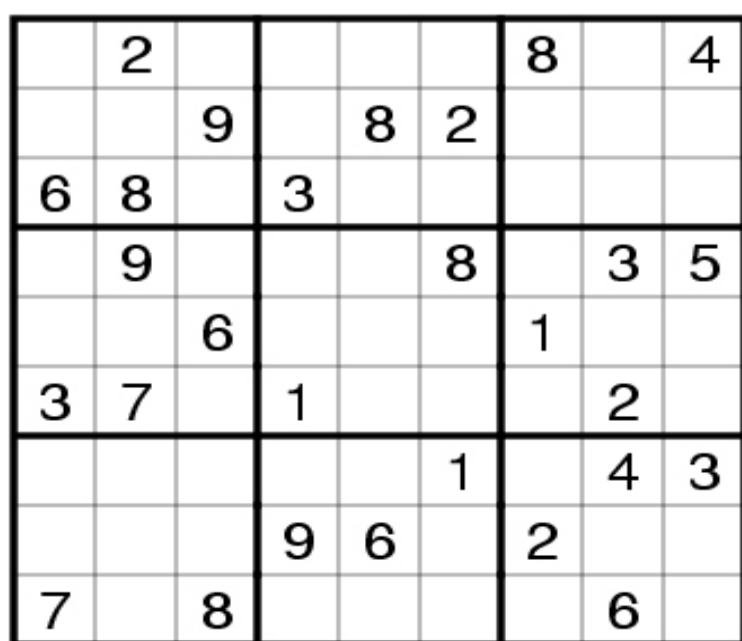
- |           |             |         |            |
|-----------|-------------|---------|------------|
| APERITIF  | CUPS        | MANAGER | SPOON      |
| APPETIZER | CUSTOMER    | MEAL    | TABLECLOTH |
| BILL      | DESSERT     | MENU    | TABLES     |
| BUSBOY    | DISHWASHERS | NAPKINS | TEA        |
| CASHIER   | DRINKS      | ORDER   | TIP        |
| CHAIRS    | ENTREE      | PLATES  | WAITER     |
| CHEF      | FORK        | SALAD   | WAITRESS   |
| COFFEE    | GLASSES     | SAUCERS | WATER      |
| COOKS     | KNIFE       | SERVERS | WINE       |

The hidden word is: RESERVATION

Yesterday's Solution

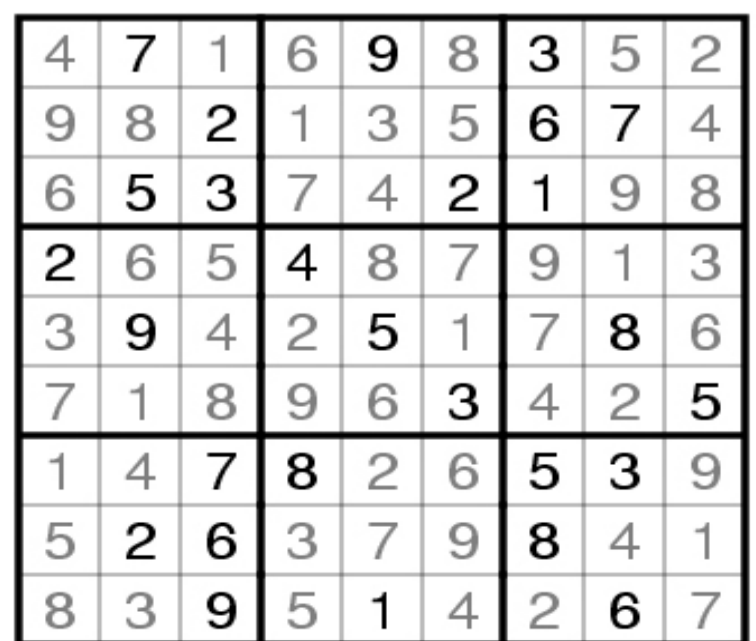


Daily SuDoku



hard

Yesterday's Solution



very hard



# Kuwaiti experience highlighted in Boumedjeria's maiden book

By Hassan Abdel Bari

Spending only a year in Kuwait to study Arabic at Kuwait University's language center, French activist and writer of Algerian origin Farida Boumedjeria seems to have had such a wonderful experience, that she keeps remembering it and even highlighted this experience in her first book published in Paris - Lignes De Foi, Lignes Devie (Lines of Faith, Lines of Life).



The title of her book resonates like an echo coming from the deepest part of her soul, mainly because she is a woman, but also as her work reveals a testimony and a narrative with particular tendencies. She uses both the genre of autobiography and the makeup of stories inspired by real facts in order to direct attention to the ills of society. In her own way, Boumedjeria proclaims her fight against indifference and in favor of "better living together" against the confusion that is increasingly worrying the Muslim community, namely regarding topics that involve headscarves and

Islamophobia. Throughout the pages of her book, she welcomes her readers into a religious journey, filled with astonishing and moving memories that she recalls. All the energy she puts into her fight against negative ideas is felt, as she draws from her divine nectar, precious treasure and endless sources. She speaks about her fervor and prayers to God with modesty, but also with openness regarding the events in her life, her feelings, her studies, her trip to Kuwait to learn literary Arabic and her wonderful meeting with Fatima.

### Original style

The author reveals her personality and explains, as a coach, why learning can occur at any age, and why we should never give up or lose hope. This book was conceived as a guide for good practices and written in an original style, as a source of inspiration for those who would like to focus on the way they should live their lives. Racism often stems from ignorance, prejudice and stereotypes, since we humans fear differences. We defend ourselves by resorting to distrust or even brutality against other human beings whose appearance, tradition, culture or religion do not match ours. Seeing today's difficult context, it is important to encourage goodwill regarding actions, to actively participate in the structure of a human society, of a multicultural France where communication is possible and essential.

Boumedjeria's strong temperament enables her to express her indignation, but also her joys, thanks to the tip of her pen and the buttons of her keyboard. Indeed, Boumedjeria writes a lot! In her own way, she proclaims her fight against indifference and in favor of "better living together". While the strength that leads her and the conviction and faith to which she holds are part of her inspiration, the ink of her thoughts is as brilliant as the timeless spaces where the divine spirit reigns, as luminous as the Kuwaiti landscapes that dazzled her, that are as pure as the sand of the desert where little princes meet.



### Anti-Muslim acts

"The situation has become dramatic in France, as anti-Muslim acts are now increasing throughout the planet as if we are responsible for all human tragedies", Boumedjeria told Kuwait Times, noting that no one should be held responsible for the actions of others and that some French citizens do not make any distinction between the majority of Muslim believers, who hold a humanist message and respect cohabitation with other beliefs, and the violent practices of a minority of adherents. She allocates a considerable proportion of her book to counter the Islamophobia prevailing in France as well as throughout Europe and the world.

On the other hand, Boumedjeria highly appreciated her stay in Kuwait, and in her book, describes the trip as "wonderful" due to "warm welcome of Kuwaitis, the serenity, the diversity and the tolerance of this magnificent country". She even added a full section at the end of the book with photos showing her cultural participations in Kuwait. During her stay in Kuwait as a KU student, she took part in two international events bringing together students from various countries worldwide.

Boumedjeria also notes that her Charity organization, Acreamana, organized two events with KU's petroleum engineering students at Khaldiya campus and at KU's women campus in Kaifan in 2012. Boumedjeria's fascination with Kuwait is very clear in the preface dedicated to KU's language center's acting director Ibrahim Nasser, language teachers Khaled Al-Fadhli and Yaqoub. The dedication also shows gratitude to the Kuwaiti government for hosting her and sending her for umrah. She thanked the Embassy of France in Kuwait and many of her friends at KU's female dormitory in Kaifan. In conclusion, Boumedjeria stressed that she intends to translate her book into both Arabic and English in order to allow more Arabic (namely Kuwaiti) and non-Arabic readers to benefit from her experience.

# Penn tells '60 Minutes' he was 'Stunned' by El Chapo Meeting

Millions of people were surprised that actor Sean Penn was able to meet with escaped Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman for an article that would make its way into the pages of Rolling Stone. Sean Penn was one of them. In an interview with CBS News anchor Charlie Rose on "60 Minutes" Sunday evening, the actor told Rose that he assumed Mexican officials were aware of what he was doing, and that the meeting was indeed a risk for Guzman as well as himself. "I was - I was stunned - that - that - that he would risk - our trip. I was stunned," Penn said in the interview, according to a transcript provided by CBS News. "I was baffled by his will to see us," Penn added later on in the talk.

Guzman was free after escaping one of Mexico's most secure prisons last July, making Penn's visit to see him exceedingly dangerous, and, some have charged, something that skirts the borders of journalist ethics. Among the reactions to the Rolling Stone article, published online January 9, were questions over whether Penn should have pressed for more answers regarding Guzman's many crimes and the effects his distribution of narcotics had on those who bought them.



In this file photo, Sean Penn arrives at the 5th Annual Sean Penn & Friends HELP HAITI HOME Gala Benefiting at the Montage Hotel on in Beverly Hills, Calif. — AP

But the actor rebuked the notion that he did not press Guzman harder on his transgressions. "I think the policy of the war on drugs, which so deeply affects all of our lives, seems not to change. It seems to be so unmovable. And it occurs to me that often, because we want to simplify the problem, and we want to look at a black hat and put our resources into focusing on the bad guy and na- and- and- and I understand that. I absolutely understand justice and- and the rule of law," Penn said.

"And so I do what I call experiential journalism. I don't have to be the one that reports on the alleged murders or the amount of narcotics that are brought in. I go and I spend time in the company of another human being, which everyone is. And I make an observation and try to parallel that, try to balance that with the focus that we- that I believe we- we tend to put too much emphasis on."

### Illuminate discussion

The actor, known for his roles in such film as "Fast Times at Ridgemont High," "Mystic River," "Milk" and "Dead Man Walking," acknowledged he gained access to "El Chapo" under the condition

that the escaped convict would be able to kill the article if he didn't like what was written about him. "What was brokered for me to have the interview with El Chapo was that I would finish the article, send it to him, and if he said no, then that was no harm, no foul to any reader," Penn said. Penn believes he failed to accomplish his goals, which was to talk about the US government's war on drugs. "We all want this drug problem to stop."

And if you are in the moral right, or on the far left, just as many of your children are doing these drugs, just as many of your brothers and sisters, your mothers and fathers, the teachers at school, are doing these drugs. Just as many," he said. "And how much time have they spent in the last week since this article came (SIC) out, talking about that? 1- 1%? I think that'd be generous." Even so, Penn said he has no regrets about his actions, and was simply trying to offer readers a look at a hard-to-reach figure in order to illuminate discussion around a heated issue. "I'm really sad about the state of journalism in our country," he told Rose. "It has been an incredible hypocrisy and an incredible - lesson in just how much they don't know and how disserved we are." — Reuters



The new album of David Bowie is on display at a record shop in London, Monday, Jan 11, 2016. — AP

# Bowie's 'Blackstar' debuts at No 1, his first chart-topper

David Bowie's last album, "Blackstar," debuted number one on the Billboard charts, the first chart-topper for the late musician. Since it was released two days before Bowie died of cancer on Jan 10, "Blackstar" has sold 174,000 copies, according to Nielsen Music. It's the best sales week for Bowie since Nielsen began electronically tracking music purchases in 1991.

Bowie dislodged the previous No 1, Adele's "25," which slipped to No 2 after seven weeks on top. The 2002 compilation "Best of Bowie" also rocketed up the charts to No 4 with 94,000 units sold. Altogether, 10 Bowie albums landed on the Billboard 200, which measures sales and streams. The 1972 classic "The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars" rose to No 21. — AP

# 'High School Musical' stars reunite for 10th anniversary

The stars of "High School Musical" are reuniting for a 10th-anniversary tribute to the TV movie. Actors Vanessa Hudgens, Ashley Tisdale, Lucas Gabeel, Corbin Bleu and Monique Coleman share memories of the movie when it airs again at 8 pm EST tomorrow on the Disney Channel. Zac Efron, who played Troy opposite Hudgens' Gabriella, couldn't attend the pre-taped group reunion because it conflicted with promotion of his movie "Dirty Grandpa," a channel spokesman said. Efron recorded separate remarks that will be included in the broadcast.

The "High School Musical" reprise comes during a wave of TV musical popularity. NBC has aired a series of live musicals and is aiming to put "Hairspray" on in December, while Fox is showing a live production of "Grease" on Jan. 31 and ABC has plans for a "Dirty Dancing" TV movie. The Disney movie and its sequel, "High School Musical 2," will be repeated on Thursday and on Sunday, Jan 24, on Disney Channel. The Freeform cable channel will show "High School Musical" on Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 23 and 24. — AP





Steve Golin, left, and the cast and crew of "Spotlight" accept the award for best picture at the 21st annual Critics' Choice Awards. — AP photos



From left, Courtney Eaton, Riley Keough, Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, and Zoe Kravitz accept the award for best director on behalf of George Miller for "Mad Max: Fury Road".

# 'Spotlight,' DiCaprio, Larson win at Critics' Choice Awards



Amy Schumer accepts the Critics' Choice MVP award.



Alicia Vikander accepts the award for best supporting actress for "The Danish Girl".



Sylvester Stallone accepts the award for best supporting actor for "Creed".



Rami Malek accepts the award for best actor in a drama series for "Mr Robot".



Josh Singer poses in the press room with the award for original screenplay for "Spotlight", which he accepted on behalf of himself and Tom McCarthy.

The investigative journalism drama "Spotlight" won the top prize at the Critics' Choice Awards on Sunday, while awards favorites Brie Larson and Leonardo DiCaprio won the top acting prizes for "Room" and "The Revenant." Both actors won Golden Globe Awards and are considered front-runners for the Academy Awards, too.

"Mad Max: Fury Road" was the most nominated film of the evening with 13 nominations from the Broadcast Film Critics' Association. While it lost out for the top prize, it did win a number of awards, including Best Director for George Miller, best action movie, and best action movie actor and actress for Tom Hardy and Charlize Theron.

The financial crisis dramedy "The Big Short," meanwhile, won for best comedy and best comedic actor for star Christian Bale, who kissed both his wife and director Adam McKay on his way up to the stage to accept his award. Both were up for best picture Oscar heavyweights like "Spotlight," "The Revenant" and "The Martian," as well as "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," which was added after initial nominees were announced and went home empty handed on Sunday.

"Star Wars" director JJ Abrams was in attendance to present the Genius Award to Industrial Light & Magic, which Chief Creative Officer John Knoll accepted. But it was "Spotlight's" night in the end. The film also picked up Best Acting Ensemble, winning out over films like "Straight Outta Compton" and "The Hateful Eight." It was the only award that N.W.A biopic "Straight Outta Compton" was up for at the show, but the film was on everyone's minds on the blue carpet and in the early moments of the evening after it received only one Academy Award nomination for screenwriting just days earlier.

**Lack of diversity**  
"They got snubbed, but there are lots of other great films that got snubbed as well," said Neil Brown Jr before the show began. Brown Jr played DJ Yella in the film which has picked up its share Guild nominations this season. "Just everybody talking about it is enough of an Oscar for us," he added. The lack of diversity this awards season came into focus on Thursday when there were once again no actors of color among the Academy Awards nominees. On Saturday, Jada

Pinkett Smith even posited on Twitter that perhaps people of color should refrain from participating in the Oscars altogether.

"We are rarely recognized for our artistic accomplishments," Smith wrote. "Black-ish" star Anthony Anderson joked early on about the lack of diversity at the Oscars. "A lot of actors who win



Bradley James, left, holds the microphone for Jacob Tremblay as he accepts the award for best young actor/actress for "Room".

the Critics' Choice go on to win the Academy Award," said Anderson when presenting an early award with co-star Tracee Ellis Ross. "For you, Tracy, that means only half of you gets to go to the awards." While Anderson was joking about Ross's mixed race background, the Critics' Choice Awards winners do often reflect who will go on to win the Oscar, making the ceremony an interesting barometer for the season as everyone gears up for the Guild Awards and, eventually, the Oscars on Feb 28.

**Harshly criticized**  
Sylvester Stallone followed his Golden Globes coup by winning best supporting actor for his reprising his role as Rocky Balboa in "Creed." "Before I get into any more trouble I want to say thank you to my director Ryan Coogler. He is a genius. He really made it all happen," Stallone said. He also called co-star Michael B Jordan a "great talent." At the Golden Globe Awards, Stallone forgot to thank his co-star and director during the televised portion of the evening and was harshly criticized for the oversight. He has since apologized for the mistake. Alicia Vikander won best supporting actress for "The Danish Girl" and also accepted the best sci-fi film award for "Ex Machina."

The Critics' Choice Awards do get stars to turn out in droves, like Matt Damon, who did not end



Christian Bale accepts the award for best actor in a comedy for "The Big Short".

up winning anything. This year some of the big winners of the evening failed to come out, though, like Brie Larson, who is shooting "Kong: Skull Island" in Hawaii, and Leonardo DiCaprio, who is promoting "The Revenant" in Europe. DiCaprio accepted his award via a pre-taped speech. This is the first year the Critics' Choice Awards has combined movies and television nominees into one ceremony, similar to the Golden Globes.

**Irreverence and sincerity**  
Big television winners in the acting categories include Jeffrey Tambor for "Transparent," Idris Elba for "Luther," and Rachel Bloom for "Crazy Ex-Girlfriend." " Fargo" won for best limited series and earned Kirsten Dunst a best actress in a limited series award too. Aziz Ansari's "Master of None" won for best comedy series, while "Mr Robot" picked up the best dramatic series award, as well as best actor for Rami Malek and best supporting actor for Christian Slater. Host TJ Miller, who stars on the HBO show "Silicon Valley" hosted the show, which straddles a delicate line of irreverence and sincerity. It's not quite the Golden Globes, but it's not of the Academy's caliber just yet.

"Celebrities, don't worry. I'm not going to Ricky Gervais this thing," Miller said at the beginning of the show. "Trainwreck" director Judd Apatow wasn't afraid to let his true feelings shine through, though.

When presenting the previously announced MVP award to "Trainwreck" star and writer Amy Schumer, he joked that the only way to get her there was to make up an award just for her. "Somebody already told us we lost best comedy to 'Carol,'" Apatow laughed. "Trainwreck" did lose best comedy in the end - not to "Carol," but to "The Big Short." Schumer, however, did win for best actress in a comedy. — AP



Sir Patrick Stewart, left, looks on as Christian Slater, from third left, Chad Hamilton, Portia Doubleday, Steve Golin, Rami Malik, Carly Chaikin, and Sam Esmail accept the award for best drama series for "Mr Robot".



Adam McKay, right, and the cast and crew of "The Big Short" accept the award for best comedy.

## Winners List

**BEST PICTURE:** "Spotlight"  
**ACTOR:** Leonardo DiCaprio - The Revenant  
**ACTRESS:** Brie Larson - Room  
**DIRECTOR:** George Miller - Mad Max: Fury Road  
**COMEDY:** The Big Short  
**ACTOR IN A COMEDY:** Christian Bale - The Big Short  
**ACTRESS IN A COMEDY:** Amy Schumer - Trainwreck  
**SUPPORTING ACTRESS:** Alicia Vikander - The Danish Girl  
**SUPPORTING ACTOR:** Sylvester Stallone - Creed  
**ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY:** Josh Singer and Tom McCarthy - Spotlight  
**ADAPTED SCREENPLAY:** Charles Randolph and Adam McKay - The  
**ACTING ENSEMBLE:** Spotlight  
**YOUNG ACTOR/ACTRESS:** Jacob Tremblay - Room  
**SCI-FI/HORROR MOVIE:** Ex Machina  
**ACTION MOVIE:** Mad Max: Fury Road  
**ANIMATED FEATURE:** Inside Out  
**ACTOR IN AN ACTION MOVIE:** Tom Hardy - Mad Max: Fury Road  
**ACTRESS IN AN ACTION MOVIE:** Charlize Theron - Mad Max: Fury Road  
**CINEMATOGRAPHY:** The Revenant - Emmanuel Lubezki  
**PRODUCTION DESIGN:** Mad Max: Fury Road - Colin Gibson  
**EDITING:** Mad Max: Fury Road - Margaret Sixel  
**COSTUME DESIGN:** Mad Max: Fury Road - Jenny Beavan  
**HAIR & MAKEUP:** Mad Max: Fury Road  
**VISUAL EFFECTS:** Mad Max: Fury Road  
**SONG:** Furious 7 - See You Again  
**FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM:** Son of Saul  
**DOCUMENTARY FEATURE:** Amy  
**SCORE:** The Hateful Eight - Ennio Morricone

**TELEVISION:**  
**COMEDY SERIES:** Master of None - Netflix  
**DRAMA SERIES:** Mr Robot - USA  
**ACTOR IN A DRAMA SERIES:** Rami Malek - Mr Robot - USA  
**ACTRESS IN A DRAMA SERIES:** Carrie Coon - The Leftovers - HBO  
**ACTOR IN A COMEDY SERIES:** Jeffrey Tambor - Transparent - Amazon  
**ACTRESS IN A COMEDY SERIES:** Rachel Bloom - Crazy Ex-Girlfriend  
**BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR IN A COMEDY SERIES:** Andre Braugher, Brooklyn Nine-Nine  
**SUPPORTING ACTRESS IN A COMEDY SERIES:** Mayim Bialik - The Big Bang Theory  
**MOVIE MADE FOR TELEVISION OR LIMITED SERIES:** Fargo - FX  
**ACTOR IN A MOVIE MADE FOR TELEVISION OR LIMITED SERIES:** Idris Elba - Luther - BBC America  
**ACTRESS IN A MOVIE MADE FOR TELEVISION OR LIMITED SERIES:** Kirsten Dunst - Fargo - FX  
**SUPPORTING ACTOR IN A DRAMA SERIES:** Christian Slater - Mr Robot - USA  
**SUPPORTING ACTRESS IN A DRAMA SERIES:** Constance Zimmer - UnREAL - Lifetime  
**GUEST ACTOR/ACTRESS IN A DRAMA SERIES:** Margo Martindale - The Good Wife - CBS  
**REALITY SHOW - COMPETITION:** The Voice - NBC  
**SUPPORTING ACTOR IN A MOVIE MADE FOR TELEVISION OR LIMITED SERIES:** Jesse Plemons - Fargo - FX  
**SUPPORTING ACTRESS IN A MOVIE MADE FOR TELEVISION OR LIMITED SERIES:** Jean Smart - Fargo - FX  
**GUEST ACTOR/ACTRESS IN A COMEDY SERIES:** Timothy Olyphant - The Grinder - Fox  
**ANIMATION SERIES:** BoJack Horseman - Netflix  
**REALITY SHOW HOST:** James Lipton - Inside the Actors  
**TALK SHOW:** Last Week Tonight with John Oliver - HBO  
**UNSTRUCTURED REALITY SHOW:** Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown -

**CNN OTHER AWARDS:**  
**MVP AWARD:** Amy Schumer  
**GENIUS AWARD:** Industrial Light and Magic — Reuters

# Missoni, Ferragamo splash color during Milan Fashion Week



The worlds of music, fashion and art continued their long collaboration on the menswear runways of Milan Fashion Week on Sunday. Missoni creative director Angela Missoni says collaborations between the art world and fashion, which her father pioneered decades ago, have become ever more natural. "There are fewer taboos between art and fashion. Today there is a mingling of all that is contemporary," Missoni said last week at an event marking the closure of show at a contemporary art museum in nearby Gallarate, where the family business was born, exploring her parents' artistic



inspiration throughout the decades. Some highlights from Sunday's shows, including menswear previews for next fall and winter by Missoni, Salvatore Ferragamo, Bottega Veneta and Prada.

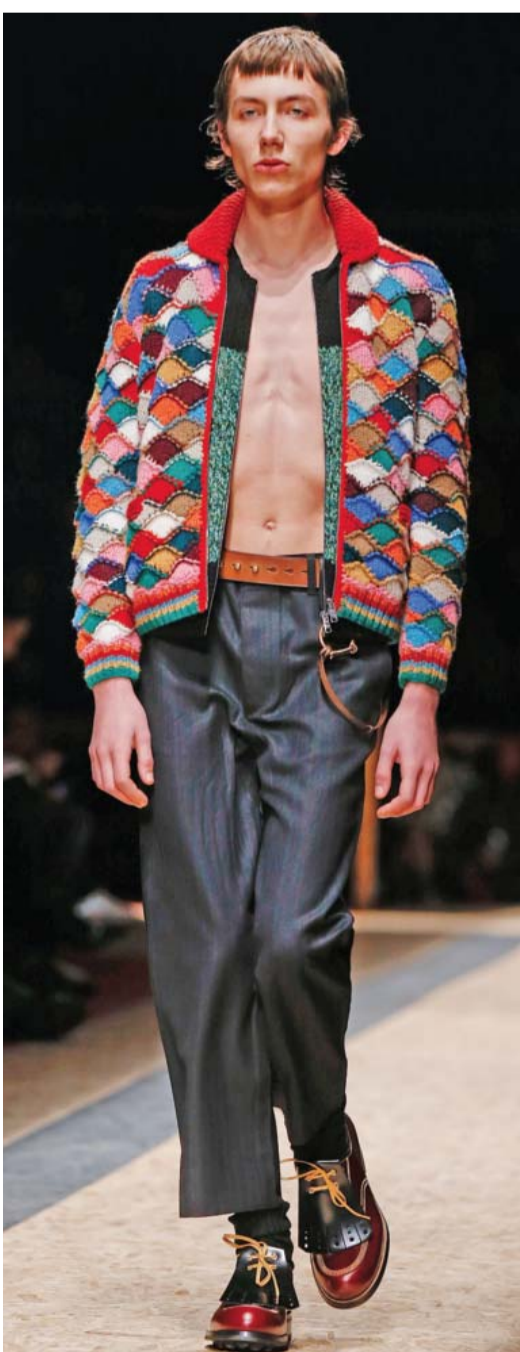
### Himalaya trekking

Angela Missoni trekked metaphorically into the Himalayas on her global search for menswear inspiration, returning with a backpack full of energy-enhancing tassels, contemplative mirrors and colors ranging from orange sunsets to deep sky blues. Missoni, creative director of the family-run fashion house, said the looks interpret the 1970s rock star who sought meaning in the world's highest mountains. Models trampled dried leaves on the frigid, wind-swept outdoor runway, while the fashion crowd gratefully wrapped themselves in felt blankets left expressly on their seats.

The looks featured the fashion house's famed knitwear adorned with tassels and mirrored details, creating a breastplate effect. The pieces were layered with heavier sweaters, sweeping blanket coats or anoraks, and worn chiefly with cargo pants, often in practical knit. Motifs included padded circular patterns on both tops and matching trousers, creating both warmth and harmony. Backpacks and garment bags created for Missoni by Porter, the Japanese luggage and accessories maker, while Italian footwear manufacturer customized its classic hiking boot with Missoni patterns.



Models present creations for fashion house Missoni during the Men Fall - Winter 2016 / 2017 collection shows at the Milan's Fashion Week. —AP/AFP photos



Models present creations for fashion house Prada.





Models present creations for fashion house Prada.

**A mariner's tale**  
Miuccia Prada is taking fashion on a sea voyage back in time to explore the human condition, contemplating such present-day crises as the unrelenting flows of migrants arriving in Europe by sea. Prada's looks for next season are seafaring, but nothing of the jolly mariner. The mood was somber and melancholy,

printed shirts - one showing Nina Simone dancing with a Medieval knight while a Roman senator wrestles a friar, while another featured fantastical animals.

Prada topped the looks with sailor caps, and hung clusters of keys on chains at the waist and neat little square boxed purses tucked in their pockets.

As she has done in recent seasons, Prada mixed in female looks, including a few serious numbers that suggest reluctantly mourning sea widows: a snug wrapped black dress worn with argyle tights, and a calf-length dark velvet frock with a plunging neckline. "Sometimes you feel that the history didn't change so much, if you are pessimistic," Prada said backstage. "I am not pessimistic. There is something to think about, something about the past."

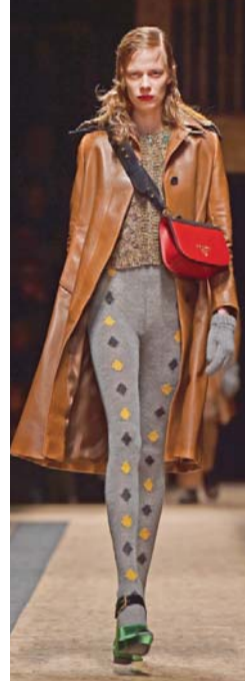
**Clashing, popping patterns**

Color and pattern enliven Ferragamo menswear looks for the next cold weather season. Creative director Massimiliano Giornetti made traditional houndstooth, chevron, check and plaid prints the bedrock of the collection - with black and white evolving into technicolor, not unlike the film industry of yesteryear.

He then deconstructed the patterns, and popped them with color - bold reds, oranges, russet and blues - and clashed them with modern

graphic motifs, such as swimming fish, a candlestick or an arrow-pierced heart. Scarves were the accessory of choice, worn bandanna-like over sweaters for a casual effect or knotted at the neck under a shirt collar for a more sophisticated look. Ferragamo's suits, double- and single-breasts,

**Milan**  
Fashion Week



and also deeply romantic, as the designer said she wanted "to reflect what is happening now with what is happening in history. To see if we have something to learn." For the venue, her theater was transformed into a sort of town square, where people of all walks of life meet, she said.

Sturdy coats and capes, in black, navy, tan and white, had weather-worn collars and lapels, which were deconstructed and then detached. Trousers were cropped and cuffed, footwear had leather fringe. Prada lightened the mood with

were worn with printed silken shirts with a tie cut from the same cloth, creating a dressy camouflage. The look was sometimes finished with a contrasting silken scarf peeking from beneath the collar. The silk was so fine and the colors so calming that it never looked busy. Overcoats were enriched with fur, shearing or velvet collars. Pants are slim and taper at the ankle to reveal the Andy Warhol-inspired paint-spattered shoe.



Models present creations for fashion house Salvatore Ferragamo.

# Milan Fashion Week



### Discreet detailing

Bottega Veneta creative director Tomas Maier gave some rock 'n' roll edge to a decidedly wintery wardrobe. Amid the tweeds and wools, plaids and checks, the German designer incorporated stage-worthy statements, from velvet double-breasted suits that catch the light in burgundy and a deep peacock blue, to leather trousers with eye-catching zippers all the way down the front of the leg, silken Henley shirts with tuxedo ruffle details and long scarves, silken and woolen both, that added drama with every step.

Maier joined other Milan designers in tipping his hat to music and fashion icon David Bowie with the occasional felt brimmed chapeau to create an aura of mystery. The overall silhouette of the collection was long and lean, something Bowie could have worn well, with pants that gently flair at the square-toed boot and elegant coat lengths below the knee. Details set the pieces apart, including diagonal buckle to close the collar on cashmere overcoats to the coated tweed wool coat that had an eye-catching sheen. Maier said in his notes that the collection has "no tricks, nothing ostentatious. It is very discreet."

### Save Venice

British designer Vivienne Westwood is imploring the world to "be specific." By that she means to be specific about what needs to be changed, part of her runway activism. For her latest menswear preview show, Westwood added a plea to save Venice from cruise ships. To drive the point home, the invitation featured a reproduction of a painting of the canal city's historic canals with an enormous cruise ship hulking in the background.

Westwood's collection was nothing if not eclectic, including loose-fitting pinstriped suits, sheer open-backed sweaters, a dramatic hooded burgundy cape, and a silvery dress worn suggesting a knight's chainmail over a turtleneck sweater. The designer paid tribute to Bowie, playing "Starman" for the finale. —AP



Models present creations for fashion house Bottega Veneta.

## Fashion full-circle: Derek Zoolander hits cover of Vogue



It was 15 years ago that Ben Stiller's Derek Zoolander first unleashed his signature Blue Steel fashion face on an unsuspecting public, and a lot has changed. Mega-model Gigi Hadid was kindergarten age. Netflix didn't exist, let alone selfies. So why bother taking on "Zoolander 2," the upcoming quirky sequel to his long-ago quirky "Zoolander?" Because, why not, especially now that the actual fashion world is laughing out loud. With a few more wrinkles, Stiller's not-so-bright supermodel hit the February cover of Vogue with actual beauty and co-star Penelope Cruz. The cover and an inside photo spread were shot by actual photographer phenom Annie Leibovitz.

Stiller tells the magazine of his first go-round with Owen Wilson at his side: "We were on our own - both in the fashion world and with the studio, too. They were just like, 'We don't quite know what this is.'" That was before Zoolander and Wilson's Hansel crashed the Valentino show at Paris Fashion Week last year, bringing the usual jaded crowd to its feet as they strutted down the runway. The first comedy wasn't a runaway success, released less than three weeks after the September 11 attacks, though it eventually turned a profit. Thanks to DVDs and cable, it developed a loyal following.

So what can we expect this time? There's Cruz, for one, as Valentina Valencia, a motorcycle happy Interpol agent in the fashion division. "I'm one of those people who's seen the first 'Zoolander' four or five times," she tells Vogue in the issue that hits newsstands Jan 26. "I've done comedy in Spain, in my own language, but I've always said I want to do more comedies in English. I do all these intense dramas, and all my characters are always suffering. For many reasons I need to once in a while do a crazy comedy." Stiller's crossing fingers, joking: "There's that saying - 'They want a sequel until they get one.'" —AP



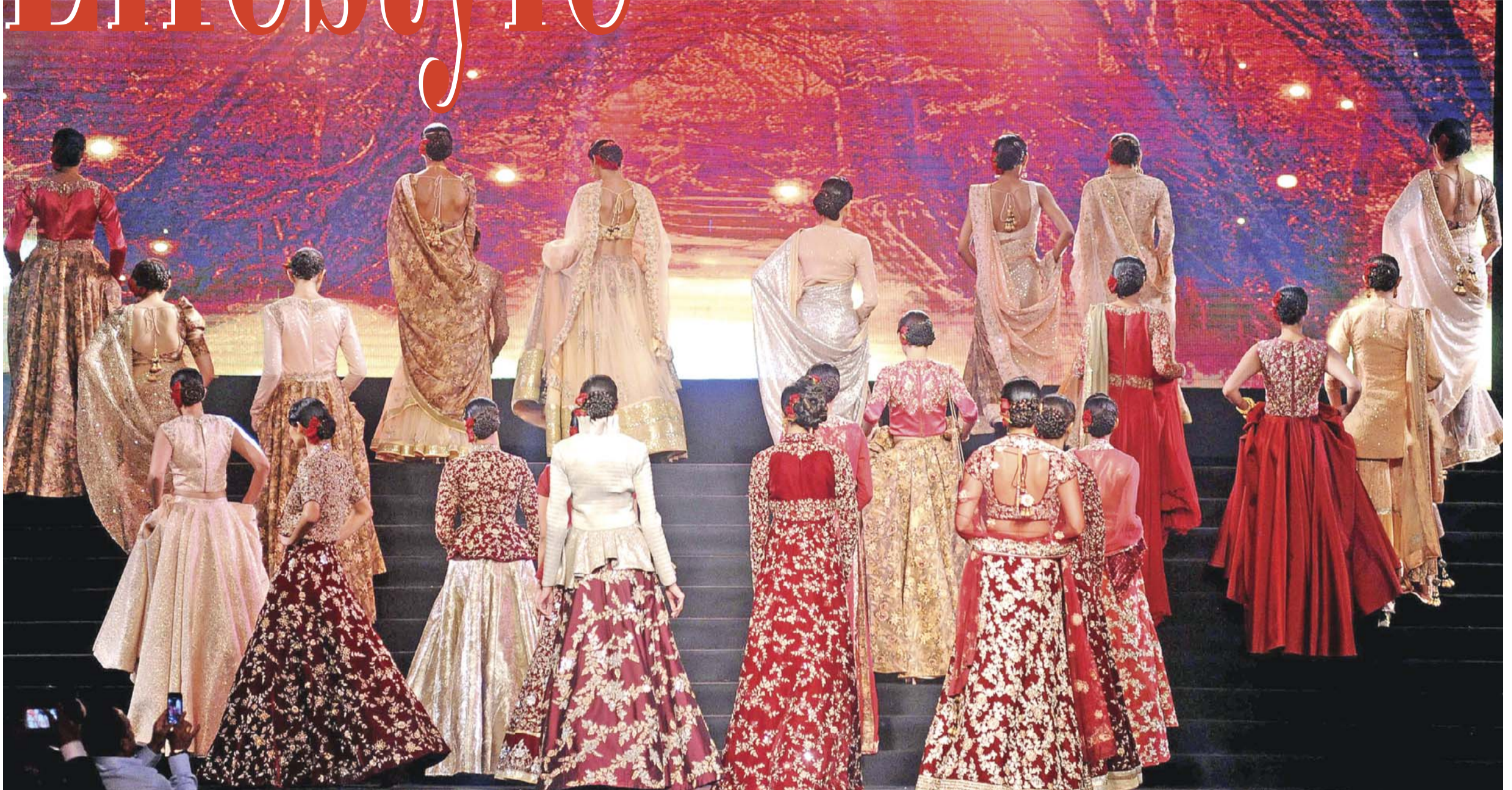
Models present creations for fashion house Vivienne Westwood.

# Lifestyle

TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2016

'Spotlight' wins Best Picture at Critics, Choice Awards

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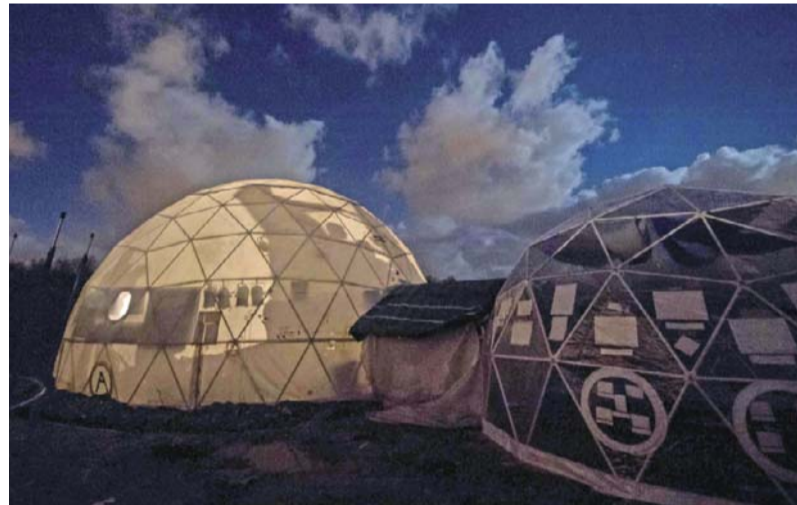


Indian models showcase creations by designer Vikram Phadnis during a fashion show in Mumbai. — AFP

## Calais migrant camp gets its own Jungala Radio station



This file photo shows migrants listening to a guitarist performing in a makeshift theatre, in the so-called "Jungle" migrant camp in Calais, northern France.



A makeshift theatre, where migrants take part in theatre and music lessons, in the so-called "Jungle" migrant camp.



Migrants listening to a guitarist performing in a makeshift theatre, in the so-called "Jungle" migrant camp. — AFP photos

### New York deal to limit horse-drawn carriage rides



A horse drawn carriage carrying tourists passing outside of Central Park. — AFP

New York reached a deal late Sunday that will almost halve the number of horses licensed to perform carriage rides in Central Park after the mayor called them inhumane to animals. The agreement, which will keep the industry alive, comes after Mayor Bill de Blasio promised two years ago to abolish the rides popular with tourists, loved-up couples and immortalized in movies. The deal, which will start to come into effect from June 1 and take three years to be fully implemented, will reduce from 180 to 110 the number of licensed horses by December 1, the city council said.

The ultimate goal is to reduce the number to 95 and to give 75 horses a long-term home in Central Park stables, therefore banning public horse rides on the streets of Manhattan. "We are pleased to have reached an agreement in concept on the future of New York's horse carriage industry," said the mayor's office said. "We look

forward to working together on the final details of this legislation and getting this passed," it added in a statement.

The agreement demands that by October 1 2018 stables will be established in Central Park to house 68 carriages and 75 horses, the city council said. Horses not at work must be on furlough outside the city, and no carriage can operate for longer than nine hours a day by December 1.

NYClass, one of the groups demanding a ban on carriage rides, has collected more than 35,800 signatures in an online petition. The petition calls the carriage horse industry "cruel, inhumane and unsafe" and demands the horses to be retired to sanctuaries. "Horses do not belong in a congested, urban setting where they constantly breathe exhaust while dodging dangerous traffic," it says. The group was not immediately reachable for comment to the deal. — AFP

In the heart of the Calais migrant shantytown in northern France known as the "Jungle", a cover of Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" rings out from the ramshackle headquarters of the camp's very own radio station. Hashemi, a Syrian in his 20s, is editing his first program for Jungala Radio, a music show featuring performances by artists from the sprawling camp in northern France. It's a chance to lighten the mood at a time when freezing temperatures have made conditions in the camp even grimmer for the thousands trapped here, looking for a way to reach Britain from the port city.

"I'm trying to find the voice and the feelings of the refugees," says Hashemi, giving only his first name. "I want to share what is happening here with the whole world." Jungala Radio launched its first program on New Year's Day via Facebook and Soundcloud and is gradually building a team of producers and journalists from the camp community. One of their budding hacks is a 15-year-old Iraqi Kurd who has been living in the Jungle for three months.

He is enthusiastically hunting out interviews with one of the recorders bought by Radio Jungala via a crowd-funding campaign, though he says it is a tough gig. "I like learning new things, but this is difficult. When I have to ask people questions, I feel a bit embarrassed," he says with a smile. But the boy, who wished to remain anonymous, remains determined to make the most of his time in the camp, having already helped out in an aid distribution center where he could practice his English and make friends. "Everyone wants to go to the UK, but it's very hard and we need something to do while we wait," says the teenager, who learned his English watching Harry Potter and Hollywood action movies with his older brother in Kurdistan.

#### Desperate frustration

As the French and British authorities tighten security around the port, and smuggling aboard lorries and trains has become ever-more difficult, the Jungle has taken on a more permanent feel. A high street of shops, restaurants—even a nightclub and barber shop—have sprung up as tents have been replaced by semi-permanent wooden shacks. But the Jungle is still a place of filth, boredom and desperate frustration, so vol-

unteers and charity workers try to take the edge off with entertainment and education.

Next door to the well-stocked Jungle library, a volunteer is struggling to teach some basic French to a small group of Sudanese and Afghans—a sign that at least some people in the camp are now considering asylum in France rather than Britain. The young volunteer shows heroic patience as she tries to explain the word "bienvenue" ("welcome") — a word that her pupils have rarely heard since arriving in Europe.

#### Mental well-being

On the other side of the camp, a young Afghan is on stage in the large white dome of the Good Chance Theatre, giving an impromptu song and dance performance while a visiting British artist jams on the guitar. Since launching a few months ago, the theatre has evolved in surprising ways—such as the Eritrean circus troupe that came to teach and practice their tricks and backflips a few times a week. A member of the Iranian national kung fu team gave lessons here

for a while, and his mantle has been taken up by another karate expert from the camp.

"We don't shape what goes on, and we don't dictate whether you come to confront your situation or escape from it, or just to have a bit of fun," says Joe Robertson, one of two British friends who helped set up the theatre. "Many people have come here who are down," adds his co-organizer Joe Murphy. "Being part of a creative theatre community has turned them around and given them a role to play, which is hugely important for their mental well-being."

Back at Radio Jungala, Hashemi is putting the finishing touches to his music show with the help of Ciaran, a 22-year-old media graduate from Britain who helped launch the initiative. "We are only here for tech support and constructive criticism. We want the people here to take ownership and control of it," says Ciaran. Hashemi says he loves his new job. "I never thought of doing radio in my life, but now I hope to do more," he says. "I'm just trying to be the best that I can." — AFP



Migrants taking part in theatre and music lessons in a makeshift theatre, in the so-called 'Jungle' migrant camp.