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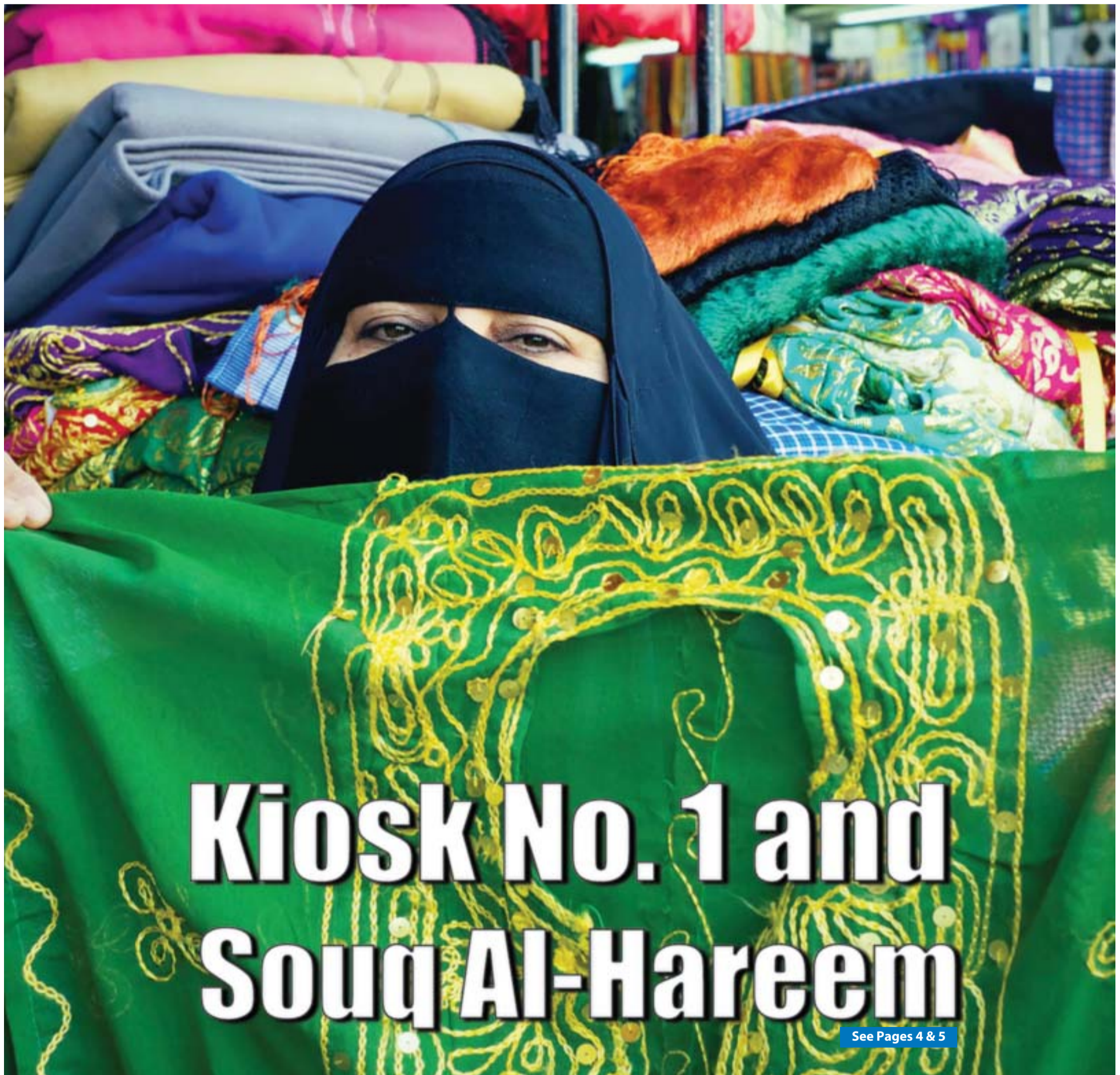
E-Cigs grow in popularity but without regulation



Putin 'probably approved' Litvinenko killing: Probe



Emotional farewell as Hewitt bows out



Kiosk No. 1 and Souq Al-Hareem

See Pages 4 & 5

Local Spotlight

TRAFFICKING IN BABIES

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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In a horrifying incident, police in Kuwait arrested an Asian woman involved with a gang specialized in trafficking in babies. Trafficking in children is a form of human trafficking, and its unclear exactly what fate awaited these babies or how they would lead lives without documents or other necessary paperwork. There is also fear that the babies were being trafficked for illicit purposes not to be sold to desperate would-be parents for adoption. Although security sources said that all the babies involved were born outside wedlock, this doesn't justify their act and they should be punished for their crime.

Police had the woman under surveillance for a while and she was arrested with one of the mothers and four newborn babies. The babies have been hospitalized. The suspect confessed to acting as a middleperson for her compatriots. She said she usually took the babies immediately after birth and sold them for KD 250 each to childless couples.

The fact that these babies were born outside wedlock facilitated the process, as no claims will be made by their parents. I guess their parents would not want to have anything to do with them and may even be involved in selling the babies and making quick cash out of their own flesh!

Several reports have been issued by the United Nations and organizations warning of the growing threat of organized crime in human trafficking, especially of women and children, and in the trade of human organs in recent years. This is a disgusting and shameful crime. Human trafficking has become the third largest illegal trade in the world after drug dealing and arms running.

Trafficking in babies must receive strict punishment, and should not be merely classified as kidnapping or any common crime because there are gangs and criminal organizations behind such evil acts. Luckily, this gang in Kuwait was arrested before harming the poor babies. The authorities must be on alert to prevent and detect new cases of human trafficking. The government must implement new laws for the protection of victims of trafficking and help them with full respect of their human rights.

TAKE IT IN YOUR STRIDE

By Shakir Reshamwala

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CASE STUDY 1: A university student stabbed in the head by four persons who chased his car. A man arrested for stabbing a fellow motorist in the hand and ramming his vehicle. A man beaten and shots fired at his car. Another motorist beaten, sworn at and threatened by a firearm. A truck driver run over by another. Scores of reports filed at police stations over blows exchanged, insults hurled and obscene gestures made.

The common thread linking these traffic incidents in Kuwait is dispute over the right of way. Yes, that's true - people are resorting to invectives and beating and even killing each other because of such a trivial reason. Road rage is for real, and it would've been understandable if motorists took offence if their rights were genuinely trampled upon, although even in such circumstances, violence is never the answer.

But on Kuwait's roads, right of way is roughly determined not by law but by bullying. Older cars always make way for newer cars, smaller vehicles move over for bigger ones, and drivers of some nationalities clear the path for those of other nationalities. Fall afoul of these unwritten rules of the road and you may be in for some serious headlight flashing, tailgating and honking, forcing you to quickly change lanes and invite the ire of other motorists.

CASE 2: A man taken to hospital after being stabbed, having his finger broken and beaten to unconsciousness. A fight between six people, some of them drunk, in a mall. A youth stabbed six times after being chased. A

man rushed to the ICU with a wound that required 20 stitches after being hit with an axe. Scores of reports filed at police stations over blows exchanged, insults hurled and obscene gestures made.

The common thread linking these crimes is again a stupid one - staring. Of course, everyone stares at each other in Kuwait. It is so common that you don't even feel the eyes boring into you anymore, probably because you too are busy staring at someone else. Again, staring can be benign, or it can be provocative. Prolonged harmless staring is usually met with a glare, which forces ogles to avert their gaze. Provocative staring on the other hand, that is

perceived to be mocking or leery, is one that can get you in trouble.

In fact, official crime statistics released a couple of years back said most bloody fights start with two or more parties accusing each other of staring at them.

The root cause of these incidents is related to the ego, which for many people in Kuwait, seems to be easily bruised.

CONCLUSION: The root cause of these incidents is related to the ego, which for many people in Kuwait, seems to be easily bruised. Fuelled by a heady mix of hormones, money and arrogance, people take offense for the slightest of slights, flying into rages and throwing juvenile tantrums, providing ample fodder for the crime pages.

I'm sure these energies can be channeled to more fruitful pursuits, so the next time someone overtakes you on the highway or stares at you at the mall, resist the urge to retaliate, take a deep breath and relax - you don't want to find yourself in jail, or as a news brief in the local dailies.

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: File photo shows a close up shot of an urban bee hive in Kuwait. Urban bee-keeping has become a popular pastime in Kuwait in recent years with many city dwellers keeping small apiaries in their gardens or on the rooftops of their buildings. Interested parties can learn more about urban beekeeping at an exhibition on the subject at Al Shaheed Park in Kuwait City through January 24. —Photo by Yasser Al Zayyat

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Umm Talal at her kiosk.

Kiosk No. 1 and the Souq Al-Hareem

Story and photos by Athoob A. Alshuaibi

One of only three female vendors left at the famed Souq Al-Hareem in Kuwait City, Umm Talal arrives early every morning to open her shop. Her assistants usually come a few minutes before, often to find that it's been vandalized by unknown persons, with hateful gifts of feces or urine left near the kiosk for the aging merchant.

Umm Talal has run this shop since she took it over from her mother. The souq which is located behind the Mubarakia Market has become quiet, not teeming with life as it was in its former glory, and who goes there usually comes for a particular purpose. The wafting odors of clorox and sterilisers coming from the forefront of the souq, where her kiosk is, overshadowed the scent of folk remedies, incense shops and the restaurants around.

"The three of us we are exposed to vandalism, Umm Ali and Umm Hussein and myself. I feel that someone wants to get us out of the market. In the past, there was a dishonest security guard that stole our merchandise. Also, we sometimes get vandalized by teenagers. Even on one National Day, some of them stole two Kuwaiti flags I had put them on the kiosk," she complained.

Souq Al-Hareem (The Women's Market) is narrow alleyway of kiosk in a side market next to the Souq Al Mubarakia in Kuwait City. At its high point, dozens of female vendors sold traditional clothing, Arabic Kohl (eyeliner), siwak (A teeth cleaning twig), dayrum (A plant used to beautify woman's gums and whiten their teeth), clothes and other accessories.

Umm Talal says that, today, the remaining three vendors bring traditional gowns from the UAE in addition to locally produced clothes. "Beside the traditional dresses, prayer robes, veils, and apparel for women and children specially designed for national holidays," she added.



Some products are made in India and China.



Traditional fancy dresses are highly demanded by schools during national holidays.

Umm Talal tells the story behind Kuwait's famous women's market

A disappearing heritage

Built in the 1950s under the patronage of the late Shaikha Mudhi Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, the kiosks were dedicated for Kuwait's female vendors only. Since 2012, the old market, under the superintendence of the Chairman of the Kuwait Voluntary Work Centre, Sheikha Amthal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, has been renovated and restored.

But despite its renovation, the souq has lost most of its vendors and remains under threat.

Under the souq's governing regulations, vendors may only be the female Kuwaiti owners themselves. Umm Talal believes that the main reason why Souq Al-Hareem is covered in a deep sleep is the fact that many of those ladies have grown older and can no longer manage the daily work hours or tasks needed to run the shops. Some subcontracted their kiosks to foreigners, which is illegal. There are 68 kiosks at Souq Al-Hareem. Only three are still occupied. "Many of those were closed down by the Municipality either for subcontracting or selling unpermitted materials," explained Umm Talal.

Vendors have also been harassed though it's unclear who is vandalizing the kiosks. Daily or regular visits from Municipality inspectors also seem to focus more on targeting the women's kiosks than other vendors in the same vicinity. The Municipality have denied the daily visits and said that inspectors check all the public markets in general once a week to ensure they are complied with regulations. The source mentioned that they have the authority to close any vendor if inspectors report a repetitive explicit and deliberate violation.

For one of the last remaining vendors, time is running out and with the closure of those shops might go the women's souq and its history forever. "I cannot imagine my life without coming here every day. Despite of all the harassments, I love my kiosk. But, at the same time, I don't know if my children are willing to take care of it after me though my daughter who's recently graduated from high school, tends to show some interests in entrepreneurship," Umm Talal concluded.



Their goods are only secured by cardboard, ropes and bricks while they're closed.



Helpers wash the sidewalk around the kiosk. The kiosk has been repeatedly targeted by vandals that often leave urine and feces to intimidate the female vendors.



The traditional thoub, a gown worn by Kuwaiti men, is her best seller.



The dayrum (right side of the box) is a plant used by women in the old days to whiten their teeth and beautify their gums.



Layers of clothes, accessories and beauty products hide under the cardboard.

INDIANS RECALL IRAQI INVASION AHEAD OF BOLLYWOOD RELEASE

AIRLIFTED TO SAFETY



Indian Bollywood actors Akshay Kumar and Nimrat Kaur address a press conference to promote their upcoming movie 'Airlift' in New Delhi on Jan 18, 2015. 'Airlift' is based on the world's biggest civil evacuation - that of Indians based in Kuwait during the Iraq-Kuwait war. The film is scheduled for release today. — AFP

By Priyanka Saligram

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on Aug 2, 1990 rewrote history on many levels. Iraq's occupation affected life of Kuwaitis and expats alike. Uncertainty and anxiety were rife and according to many human rights reports, Iraqi forces tortured and killed anyone suspected of opposing their regime, apart from looting homes abandoned in a hurry and generally indulging in large-scale destruction. The entire expat community in Kuwait at the time were also forced to leave with hundreds of thousands fleeing via Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

The conflict's political, economic and psychological angles have inspired many documentaries. Now a new Indian film is set to talk about something that nobody has ever broached before: The world's largest human evacuation.

World Record

Airlift is an edge-of-the-seat entertaining thriller. The story, based on a true event, is set in 1990 in Kuwait, the time of the Gulf War when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. The film has actor Akshay Kumar playing Ranjit Katyal, a well-to-do Indian businessman based in Kuwait. As the Iraqi troops move in and he and his family's lives are put in danger, Katyal becomes the man who helps evacuate 170,000 Indians from Kuwait and brings them back safely to India.

Katyal and his fellow Indian refugees travel thousands of kilometers to Amman, Jordan, where they find safe passage. From Amman, the

Indian government flew over 488 Air India commercial flights over a period of 59 days to bring all the Indian civilians back to India. Airlift focuses on this largest human evacuation in history, which has also found its way to the Guinness Book of World Records. In a cynical world, where one often wonders what their country has done for them, this is a stark reminder of what the country did, not for one or 10, but for 170,000 of its own.

Memory lane

For many Indians in Kuwait who survived the ordeal, this is almost like a trip down memory lane. Venkatraman*, a senior engineer who was with Kuwait's national carrier for more than 25 years recalled how the invasion was a very unfortunate incident in Kuwait's history. "When we reached office on that fateful day, we realized that the country was invaded and we couldn't leave in a hurry or do anything since the company was in possession of all our passports," he said.

Venkatraman said that they could hear missiles and random firing all over the country and while this was a period of unease, there was one saving grace: The attack occurred during the summer vacation - which meant many Kuwaiti as well as expat families were outside of the country. "We Indians were treated with a lot of respect by the Iraqi forces. During security checks on the road, one look at our civil IDs and they would say 'Hindi? Yallah, go'," he recalled.

He was one among the many Indians who went back to India via Jordan and has nothing but

praise for the Indian Embassy. "Hats off to the Indian Embassy staff! They helped all the nationalities out; not only in Kuwait, but also in Jordan, and it was one time when all of us were exceedingly proud of our country."

Ransacked and Plundered

Once Kuwait was liberated and the dust settled, Venkatraman's company called each of the employees individually and asked them to rejoin work. "Our company paid us our dues and this was very welcome, since we left most of our belongings in Kuwait in a hurry." On returning to his Salmiya flat, he saw that it had been ransacked and he had to refurnish from scratch, but despite everything, he has no regrets. "We should always be grateful to Kuwait, its government and Bush Sr for liberating the country. Except for some spurious elements who tried to exploit the situation, everything ended well," he said.

Rumors abound

Christopher*, another Indian expat and investment head at a renowned local bank for 38 years, said that rumors flew around quicker than bullets - and posed more danger than ammunition. "We were warned of chemical bombs and retaliatory attacks by the occupying forces and it didn't help that we heard missiles flying all the time," he recounted. Christopher and his wife had to convince their nervous 2 year-old toddler that uncollected garbage was being set on fire - and the blasts she heard were merely exploding soda cans. "Soldiers

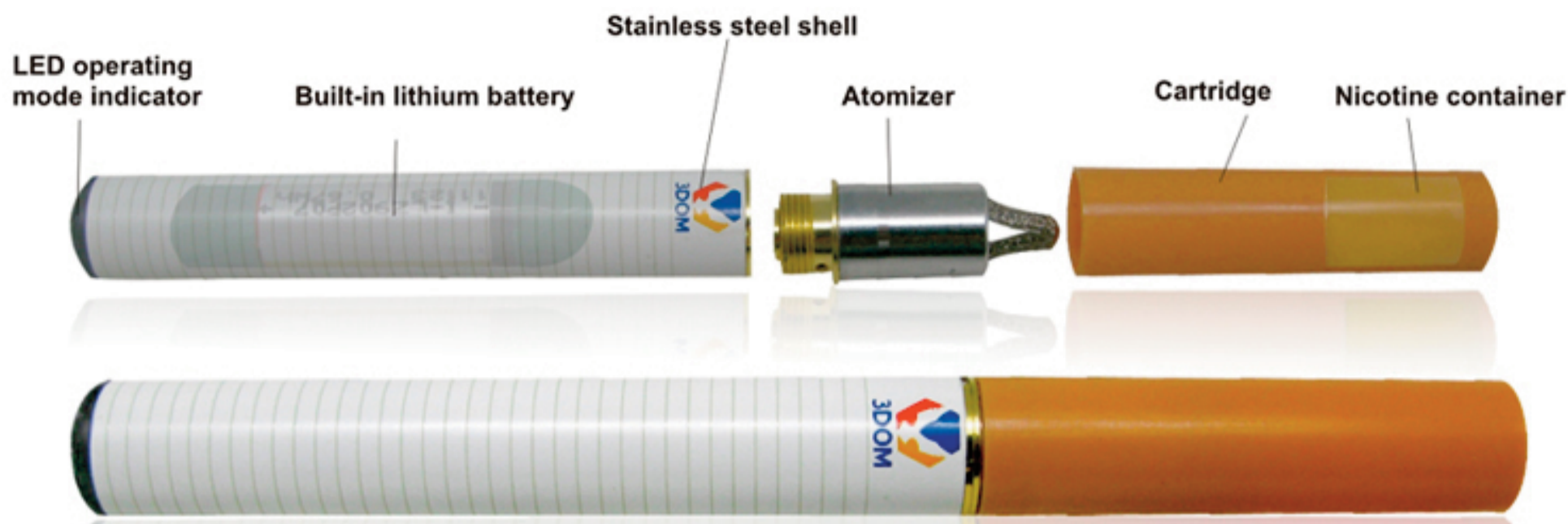
would come knocking at doors and it was a very trying time for us with a child. We had decided that whenever we had to go out to replenish resources, all three of us would go so that if something went wrong, we'd go down together," he said.

Water Cannons

While many of their compatriots ended in refugee camps near the border and faced a hard time, Christopher and family chose to go to Amman. Amman wasn't very easy as they had to face water cannons at the embassy while trying to get a visa. The authorities saw their drenched toddler with gastroenteritis and let them in. "We saw many Indians at the airport and then knew that a mass evacuation plan was in place," he said. They flew Air India where everyone was just glad to be on the flight and heading homewards. "There were rumors that people working in certain professions wouldn't be allowed on the flight, but thankfully, these weren't true," Christopher said. The Indian government even waived all their ticket fares out of goodwill and bore the entire expense of evacuating thousands of Indians.

After Kuwait was liberated, his boss contacted him and after paying his dues, offered him his previous job, which Christopher happily accepted and returned to Kuwait. "Since many oil wells were set ablaze, the entire place looked dark and gloomy with chemicals in the air... but we were just grateful and happy to be back home."

*Names changed on request



E-Cigs grow in popularity but without regulation

By Nawara Fattahova

As a growing number of public spaces - restaurants, shopping malls, hospitals, airports - are banning smoking, more and more people in Kuwait are turning to e-cigarettes (also called vapors) to satisfy their desire for nicotine. Some think that it will help them quit smoking regular cigarettes. Others view it as a bulwark against a possible cigarette price increase due to possible tax implementation. The American Lung Association notes that electronic cigarettes are an unknown quantity. They are still a new technology and as such unregulated by the US FDA. Indeed, many countries around the world do not regulate the 'vapors' and research on the potentially harmful effects remains in its infancy.

What's inside an e-cig?

Even so, as the ALA points out, "the main component of e-cigarettes is the e-liquid contained in cartridges. To create an e-liquid, nicotine is extracted from tobacco and mixed with a base (usually propylene glycol), and may also include flavorings, colorings and other chemicals." The problem is that because there is no regulation in Kuwait or elsewhere, it's impossible to know what chemicals exactly are in the e-cigarettes. There are also many different brands of e-cigarettes and it's unclear what chemicals are used in all the different brands. Some studies cited by the ALA have shown not only nicotine but also formaldehyde, an ingredient used in anti-freeze and other harmful chemicals in the e-cigarettes tested.

Expert opinions

Kuwait Times spoke to two cardiologists to get their opinion on this issue. Dr Bader Almahdi, Consultant Cardiologist at Al Seef Hospital, noted that it's difficult to make a judgment now on e-cigarettes or vaporizers as there isn't enough data yet. "The e-cigarette is a relatively new trend, since about 2004, so it hasn't even been in the market for 20 years. So we don't have results about the long-term effect of this device, which is not clear yet," he told Kuwait Times.

"No doubt that it badly affects the human body as it contains 30 chemical substances - some that are toxic, including nicotine. So the smoker is not avoiding the carcinogenic materials existing in regular cigarettes. An e-cigarette is based on a heating element and cartridge that vaporize flavors. It is not approved or licensed by the US Food and Drugs Administration (FDA), so it's on the same level as regular cigarettes. And what I know as a cardiologist is that it's harmful, as nicotine increases heartbeat and hypertension. So I'm warning smokers that they are not saving their health by replacing conventional cigarettes with e-cigarettes. At the end of the day, it's replacing one addiction with another," he concluded.

Harmful substances

Dr Khalid Al-Merry, International Cardiologist at Al Salam Hospital, agrees that the e-cigarette is harmful, yet he believes it might be less harmful than conventional cigarettes. "A regular cigarette contains more harmful substances such as tar and carbon dioxide, but the e-cigarette also includes nicotine and other substances that cause addiction. While the e-cigarette is based on vaporization, the conventional cigarette works by burning materials, which is worse. But the e-cigarette is not a treatment to quit smoking in any way. There are many better methods to avoid or quit smoking such as tablets approved by the FDA. So if people use e-cigarettes for this purpose, it will only delay better treatments to quit smoking. But addiction depends on the level of willpower, of course," he explained.

"It was noticed that the trend of smoking e-cigarette increased the number of adolescent smokers. Many youth believe that the e-cigarette is a toy and not a real cigarette and will prevent them from getting addicted. But in reality, they may easily shift to smoking conventional cigarettes. Statistics have shown an increase in the number of adolescent smokers using e-cigarettes. I would never prescribe it to any patient as a way to help him quit smoking," Merry told Kuwait Times.

And those who like them

Hussein, a 29 year old smoker started smoking e-cigarettes about two months ago after many of his friends and relatives shifted to this trend. "I was smoking a box or two per day for a couple of years, and when I started smoking the e-cigarette I was only smoking one single cigarette per day. But after a month I realized that its very expensive, as it cost me around KD 90. One 30 ml bottle cost KD 15 in Kuwait while I found it now online its much cheaper. Also the shop from where I used to buy it is telling me that it's not always available and I have to wait a week to order it for me. For this reason I'm not smoking it much now, and I'm again smoking cigarettes but less than before," he noted.

He is not convinced that the e-cigarette is more harmful than regular cigarette. "What I heard from doctors, each has a different opinion. I even did a search online and didn't find anything serious or worse than regular cigarettes. All my friends who were smoking shisha (a water pipe) stopped smoking it completely, while those smoking cigarettes either quit smoking totally or at least are smoking less. Also the e-cigarette is adjustable and the user can regulate the percentage of nicotine and strength of smoke. So he can make it very light or even without nicotine," added Hussein.

Ban or no ban?

There have been rumors of a ban of e-ciga-



The problem is that because there is no regulation in Kuwait or elsewhere, it's impossible to know what chemicals exactly are in the e-cigarettes.



rettes but nothing official. An inspector of the Ministry of Commerce told the Kuwait Times that the Ministry is not in charge and they didn't ban

the electronic cigarettes. But it seems that Customs at border points has listed it among items not allowed in Kuwait.

KUWAIT OIL LOST \$90 SINCE JUNE 2014

FUEL, ELECTRICITY SUBSIDIES TO BE SLASHED • GLOBAL OIL DEMAND MAY INCREASE IN 2016

The Gulf state has posted a budget surplus in each of the past 16 years, accumulating fiscal reserves in excess of \$600 billion



KUWAITI DIALECT RICH IN GEOGRAPHICAL DIVERSITY

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti dialect is rich with diversity in pronouncing one word in different ways and using different vocabulary to indicate one meaning based on the area. Depending on the dialect, Kuwaitis can tell where a person comes from, be it from the areas of Qibla, Al-Murqab or Sharq. For example, people from Sharq pronounce the word sugar as "shekar", while in Qibla it is pronounced "shakar".

There are different reasons that created such diversity in the Kuwaiti dialect, researcher Khaled Al-Rushaid said yesterday. The main occurrence was the spread of the plague in 1831, killing 90 percent of women then, while men survived as they were away for the pearl diving season, he said. Later on, the men married other women from neighboring countries, thus introducing new vocabularies and dialects in the country, Al-Rushaid explained.

The second reason was called "the year of hailag", where a famine drove many people in neighboring countries to settle in Sharq area. The newly-settled groups led Persian words like zoo-leya (carpet) and khaisha (a sack for rice or sugar) to blend in with the Kuwaiti dialect, he said. Moreover in 1930, an outbreak of smallpox spread in the country killing large numbers of citizens, leading people to marry from other countries again, the researcher added.

Meanwhile, upon the discovery of oil in the 30s of last century, Kuwait started bringing in foreign and Arab experts to work in the oil field. The foreigners introduced English words that Kuwaitis use up to this day, such as double, wire and ariel, Al-Rushaid said. The Indian language also played a role in adding vocabulary to the dialect, with words like tijoury (a safe), dairam (lipstick) among others. —KUNA

KUWAIT WEATHER TO REMAIN STABLE

KUWAIT: The weather will be stable for the upcoming days with average temperatures reaching between 21-26 degrees Celsius during daytime and between 7-12 C during early morning and evening, said a meteorologist yesterday.

Acting head of the Kuwait Meteorology center Sami Al-Othman said that the stable weather witnessed recently in Kuwait

was due to impact of the European high. The weather for today will be partly cloudy with minimum temperature expected 7-10 C, and 8-11 C later on Friday, said Al-Othman. On Saturday the weather will be warm in the morning and the temperatures between 24-26 C in the evening and the minimum temperature between 20-12. —KUNA

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti oil analyst said that Kuwaiti oil barrel has lost more than \$90 of its price, dropping below USD 20 for the first time since January 2002. Analyst Mohammad Al-Shatti said that the pumping of Iranian oil into the market, expected in February 2016, will have a negative effect on the price of oil this year.

He stated that the main reason for the weakness in oil prices was due to the increase in oil supplies which were from outside of OPEC. He added that the moderate winter season in the United States and Europe also contributed to the weakness in global oil demand, noting that the slowdown in Chinese economic also was a factor in the current price of oil.

In 2016, Al-Shatti predicted that global oil demand would increase by 1.25 million barrels per day while the supplies from outside of OPEC will fall for the first time in years by 480,000 barrels per day. The price, though expected to be low during most of 2016, will gradually increase in the fourth quarter especially for the Brent mix which is expected to hit between \$30-60 per barrel.

Kuwait's Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah told Editors-in-Chief including Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman-Alyan on Wednesday that the Gulf country plans to cut subsidies on fuel and power in a bid to

offset a fall in oil revenues. "We will lift subsidies and will raise the prices of petrol, electricity and water" and reduce subsidies for other services.

Kuwait is the only member of the six-nation energy-dependent Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that has not hiked the prices of petrol and power after income from oil plunged. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain have either hiked or liberalized fuel and power prices, saving billions of dollars. The Amir did not give any timeframe for the measures.

Last year, Kuwait liberalized the prices of diesel and kerosene. The government has allocated around \$7 billion in the 2015/2016 budget for fuel and power subsidies. A similar amount is earmarked for other forms of subsidies and social aid.

The Gulf state has posted a budget surplus in each of the past 16 years, accumulating fiscal reserves in excess of \$600 billion. But Kuwait is projecting a deficit of \$23 billion in this fiscal year, which ends March 31.

The price of oil, which contributes around 94 percent of Kuwait's revenues, has lost three quarters of its value since mid-2014. The price of Kuwaiti oil has slumped to just \$19 a barrel. The emirate has a native population of 1.3 million and is also home to about 2.9 million foreigners. —Agencies



KUWAIT SAYS STICKS TO F-18 JETS DESPITE APPROVAL DELAYS

MANAMA: Kuwait's air force is sticking to plans to purchase Boeing's F-18 Super Hornet to replace aging fighter jets, despite a lengthy congressional approval process in Washington that has frustrated industry players. "The Super Hornet is one of the best solutions for us," Abdullah Al-Foudary, commander of the Kuwait Air Force, said on the sidelines of an industry event in Bahrain. "We have the legacy F-18s that we have to find a solution for in 2030-2040."

US industry executives and military officials have grown increasingly concerned about delays in approving the sale of 28 Boeing F/A-18E/F fighter jets to Kuwait, a deal valued at around \$3 billion. The fighter planes are of increasing importance to Kuwait amid rising regional tensions. Kuwait, an ally of Saudi Arabia, is also part of the Saudi-led coalition against Yemen and is primarily supporting that effort with its air force and F/A-18s.

Al Foudary said the air force would play the most important role in addressing regional threats. "We have to set up priorities and buy new capabilities so

we can cope in this situation," he said.

Boeing must decide in coming weeks whether to start building the jets using its own funding to ensure that materials that take years to procure are on hand when needed. The company is likely to make that investment as a bridge to additional US Navy orders expected in fiscal 2018, according to a source familiar with the issue.

The company is anxiously awaiting the release of the Pentagon's fiscal 2017 budget plan on Feb. 9 to see if the Navy orders even a few jets in fiscal 2017, potentially through a separate war-spending supplement. US Navy Secretary Ray Mabus last week said foreign military sales helped ensure continued production of U.S. weapons systems, such as the Boeing Co F/A-18E/F fighter jet, and also helped the US military and its allies work seamlessly in joint military operations. But Mabus called for continued efforts to accelerate what he described as a slow and "torturous" approval process for military sales to foreign customers. —Reuters

TRUCK DRIVER ARRESTED FOR RELEASING HAZARDOUS LIQUID

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Environment police arrested a truck driver who emptied a tank full of dangerous liquid industrial waste near a farm in Sulaibiya. The illegal action contaminated the soil and air. The driver was sent to the public prosecution as the Environment Protection Authority took samples for further analysis.



Fire and petrol meet

Kuwait Fire Service Directorate held a meeting with senior officials of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) to discuss means of cooperation in regards to conditions of safety and fire prevention at the oil companies buildings while also discussing their existing and future projects.



Kuwaiti MP Salah Ashour

KUWAITI MP: OIC CONFERENCE TRIUMPH FOR MODERATION

BAGHDAD: The success of an upcoming conference of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states in the Iraqi capital Baghdad is tantamount "to the triumph of moderation," Kuwaiti MP Salah Ashour said yesterday.

Ashour made the remarks to KUNA as he was amongst a Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation taking part in the sessions of the 11th conference of Parliamentary Union of the OIC, which began on Wednesday and is chaired by Iraq.

"Holding this conference amidst trying times is a challenge in itself," Ashour said. "The success of this conference is akin to moderation toppling terrorism and extremism," he added.

"Given Iraq's crucial position in the region, it is apropos to hold the conference here," Ashour noted, calling on all OIC member states to partake in the conference.

He also called on all nations embroiled in conflict to join the negotiating table "to analyze all issues in a rational and practical way. Kuwait has endorsed all international laws that combat terrorism and has itself issued laws against terrorism and extremism," Ashour added. MP Seif Al-Azmi and Secretary General of the Kuwait National Assembly Allam Al-Kandari also make up the Kuwaiti delegation to the OIC Parliamentary Union conference. —KUNA

FAKE DETECTIVES ARRESTED

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Criminal detectives arrested two expats who committed several thefts and robberies, and posed as detectives. The total amount of their thefts is KD 46,500 along with 17 mobile phones. Salimiya detectives received a call about two unknown men breaking into an apartment, and told residents there they were detectives, then they stole gold worth KD 4,000 and KD 1,500 in cash then escaped.

Detectives gathered information that led them to the identity of the thieves after they attempted to rob a flat in Mangaf area. The two were arrested in cooperation and coordination with criminal evidence department. The men confessed to robbing an exchange company in Salhiya area after making employees believe they were from the municipality and stole KD 15,000 at knife point. They also confessed to committing four other crimes in Salmiya, Andalus and Sharq areas, breaking into flats and screaming at residents to scare them, and in this way were able to steal KD 16,000 as well as 17 mobile phones.

Residency violator nabbed

Rabiya police sent a Somali in violation of residency law to violators follow up department at the instructions of its director General Brig Saud Al-Khader.

Tea boy busted for bribery

Residency detectives arrested a tea boy, who works at the nationality and travel documents department for bribery, as he offered a detective KD 500 to free a detainee.

Abandoned cars removed

Kuwait municipality's road occupancy supervision department carried out a campaign at Salmy scrap yard resulting in the removal of 52 abandoned vehicles.



MARINE HERITAGE FEST CONCLUDES ACTIVITIES

KUWAIT: The ending ceremony for the marine heritage festival was held at the fishermen Diwaniya late Wednesday, under the auspices of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. During the ceremony, Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah presented the winners from Kuwait and the Gulf region with prizes. Meanwhile, Chairman of the festival's committee Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah gave a speech at the event, where he thanked the Kuwaiti leadership for sponsoring and supporting the event. —KUNA

ILLEGAL SHACK DWELLERS ARRESTED, OWNERS FINED

KUWAIT: Capital police arrested 18 wanted men of various nationalities on top of several building overlooking Mubarakiya markets. It was found out they were living in sheet metal shacks illegally constructed on top of some of the market's buildings and illegally rented out to expats. Building owners were cited for using roofs for places to live and reside.

MPA AIMS TO BAN FEMALE WORKERS IN MALE-ONLY AREAS

By Mishal Al-Salama

KUWAIT: Acting Director General of Manpower Public Authority (MPA), Ahmad Al-Mousa issued a decision banning the issuance of work permits for females who work in areas that serve men only, especially in cafes, health clubs, barbershops or hazardous industries. Meanwhile the decision bans men from working in women's only areas including beauty saloons, women health clubs as well as selling women's intimate clothes.

The number of parliament by-elections candidates for the third constituency reached 45, including a lone woman, bearing in mind is that today is the last day of registration. Candidate Abdelmonem Al-Fuzaie said competition must be fair to serve the country and its citizens, and lauded the government's performance and its decisions.

He said there are some issues that should be tackled and wondered about decisions of the housing authority as they distributed lands of 400 meters squared north of Kuwait and Mulaa area while lands in Jahra were of 500 meters squared, and considered that a contradiction. Al-Fuzaie spoke of vehicles insurance and said the citizen is burdened by bureaucracy when an accident takes place and waits for so long before he receives his dues.

Meanwhile candidate Fahad Al-Tawell said "I am running for parliament at the request of several residents in the constituency, adding that he does not have an election program, but "an election duty that I must perform." Meanwhile, candidate Waleed Hussein said there must be a ministry for crises and catastrophes, to care for economic issues and natural catastrophes.

Friday Times International

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 2016

Syria picks UN envoy as chief negotiator for peace talks



Rouhani enters Iran election row over barred candidates



US celebrities back 'Dump Trump' campaign



RIYADH: A picture made available by the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) yesterday shows Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz (R) and Chinese President Xi Jinping (L) performing a traditional dance with swords best known as 'Arda' as part of a welcoming ceremony at the Murabba Palace in Riyadh. — AFP

SAUDI-IRAN DISPUTE SCUTTLES YEMEN PEACE TALKS

DUBAI/CAIRO: Worsening enmity between rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran is jeopardizing peace prospects in Yemen where a nine-month-old war has given Islamist militants a foothold in Riyadh's backyard.

Yemen's principal warring factions—fighters loyal to the ousted Saudi-backed Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi who are battling the Iran-allied Houthi militia and loyalists of former president Ali Abdullah Saleh—held talks last month in Switzerland to try to end a war that has killed some 6,000 people.

They were due to meet again on Jan. 14 in a bid to seal a lasting peace. But the Riyadh government cut diplomatic ties with Shi'ite Iran in a row sparked by Saudi Arabia's execution of Saudi Shi'ite cleric Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr on Jan 2.

Shortly after the row in which the Saudi embassy in Tehran was stormed, the UN-brokered talks between the two opposing sides were postponed, with no clear date set to resume.

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 Shi'ite militias that Riyadh says have inflamed sectarian violence.

For the Al Saud dynasty, the recent nuclear deal was a double blow, freeing Iran from sanctions it

believed helped check its regional ambitions and raising the spectre of better ties between Tehran and Washington, Riyadh's ally. While Yemen's government has long been mired in conflict with Islamist militants, secessionists and tribal fighters, its war coincides with unprecedented turmoil in the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia's campaign in Yemen marks the first time it has openly confronted what it sees as Iranian regional expansionism. As long as the war rages in Yemen, there is more space for militants to gain territory as they exploit the security vacuum.

Islamic State and Al-Qaeda have both emerged in Yemeni regions where they had not previously been present before Saudi Arabia entered the conflict and a Saudi-led coalition began bombing the Houthis in March 2015. Saudi Arabia and Iran blame each other for Yemen's conflict, further embittering a regional rivalry between the two nations being played out from Syria to Iraq and Lebanon to Bahrain.

"The situation in the region will probably harden the Saudis' position against the Houthis - who they view as Iranian proxies," said April Longley Alley, senior Arabian Peninsula analyst for the International Crisis Group.

In turn, she said, that could empower "more messianic trends within the Houthi movement

that see events in the region as the beginning of the end for the Saudi monarchy".

"EXISTENTIAL NECESSITY" FOR SAUDI

On the battlefield in Yemen the struggle is deadlocked. Despite Saudi-led air strikes, the Houthis firmly control Sanaa. Hadi's fighters, backed by mostly Emirati and Saudi forces, have taken control of the now de facto capital - the southern port city of Aden.

A senior diplomat following Yemen said that for the Saudis, the success of the Yemen war was "an existential necessity." "From what I see on the ground, the Houthis and Saleh are losing more and more, but there are limits to that. The Houthis are invincible in the north," he said, adding this means the likelihood that either side will stop fighting is unlikely.

The United States, which backs the UN-sponsored peace talks, is a major supplier of weapons to Saudi Arabia and US officials say intelligence-sharing with Riyadh about potential targets in Yemen has been boosted since March.

Coinciding with Saudi Arabia's cutting ties with Iran, the Saudi-led coalition intensified air strikes on Houthi positions. Days after the break-off, Tehran accused Saudi Arabia of bombing its embassy in Yemen's capital of Sanaa, an accusa-

tion vigorously denied by Riyadh. Eyewitnesses and residents on the ground also said there was no damage to the embassy.

Pro-Saudi commentators suspected Iran aired the accusation to divert attention from the attack on Riyadh's embassy in Tehran by protesters enraged at the Shi'ite cleric's execution.

The clash showed just how quickly rhetoric from the marbled offices in Tehran and Riyadh plays out on the ground in Yemen, stiffening positions among proxies and halting progress in ending a war that has displaced tens of thousands.

Mokhtar Al-Rahbi, Hadi's press secretary, told Reuters the attacks on the Saudi mission had served to harden the views of Sunni Gulf Arab countries, many of whom downgraded their ties in some manner with Iran, against the government in Tehran.

"Iran will find itself solitary, fighting everyone and this will reflect on the Yemen crisis because Iran will now have to give some concessions in Yemen ... in return for some flexibility in the positions of Gulf countries." Rahbi also blamed Iran for the failure of the UN-brokered peace talks to bear fruit, because the Houthis had "procrastinated" on carrying out key demands. The latest round of talks in December took place amid a precarious and widely violated truce. — Reuters

SECRET SYRIA NETWORK SAVES LIVES WITH AIR RAID WARNINGS

BEIRUT: In Syria's coastal Latakia province, Abu Mohammad sends a warning from his phone to a secret network of colleagues: "Caution: A Russian plane just took off in your direction."

Moments later, activists in a rebel-held area in northwestern Syria sound warning sirens that prompt civilians to take cover before incoming air raids. The message, sent via the mobile application WhatsApp, is part of an effort by a network of civilian and rebel coordinators across Syria who call themselves "the monitors". From positions near government-held military airports, they use messaging services or walkie-talkies depending on Internet coverage to warn activists, medics, and rebels about incoming aerial attacks. They track flight paths and try to decipher communication codes to warn them that Syrian or Russian military aircraft are headed their way.

Fearing retribution from forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, "the monitors" will not divulge their names or locations. But Abu Mohammad agreed to speak to AFP using a pseudonym. He says he is based near a Syrian army position in the regime stronghold of Latakia, and describes dodging artillery and Russian reconnaissance drones to keep an eye on outgoing warplanes.

His job has become even more complicated since September 30, when long-time regime ally Russia began an air campaign in support of the government.

Russia operates military aircraft from Latakia's seaside military airport of Hmeimim, where thousands of its troops are also based. "I know when the plane takes off, and as soon as it does, I tell people that a plane is coming towards them," he tells AFP. "As soon as the news reaches

people, they either hide in their bomb shelters, or some people hide in underground tunnels."

Walkie-talkies in minarets

Rights groups have regularly accused Assad's regime of indiscriminate aerial bombardment of rebel-held territory since the conflict began with anti-government protests in March 2011. Russia has also been accused of causing civilian casualties in its strikes, though it denies the claims and says it is targeting the Islamic State group and other "terrorists".

Another monitor in Latakia, Abu Omro, says he and his colleagues are loosely organised into units and the network is not affiliated with a specific rebel group. "The idea is to protect people, and rebels, from the planes and the shelling... These monitors are really necessary," he told AFP over

WhatsApp, which is popular across the Middle East.

The monitors operate like a chain: when a Russian plane takes off from Hmeimim, the spotter warns counterparts in the provinces where the plane is heading, who in turn contact activists and rebels there. Activists who rely on the monitors say the warnings are essential.

In the central province of Homs, activist Hassaan Abu Nuh is on alert for messages about warplanes headed to his town of Talbisseh, which is regularly bombed by Russian and Syrian government planes.

Even before the Russian campaign began, activists had begun trying to find ways to minimize casualties in air strikes. "When the regime began using warplanes and helicopters on cities, people started thinking of ways to warn civilians," he told AFP via the Internet. —AFP

PAN-ISLAMIC BODY URGES DE-ESCALATION IN SAUDI-IRAN DISPUTE

JEDDAH: The world's largest Muslim body called for a de-escalation of tensions between regional rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran, telling member countries that unity was required to eradicate terrorism.

The pan-Islamic Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which is based in the Saudi city of Jeddah, appeared to take a balanced response to the Riyadh-Tehran crisis after the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council both took stridently pro-Saudi positions.

The dispute escalated after Riyadh's execution of a prominent Shi'ite Muslim cleric, which led Iranian protesters to storm Saudi missions in Tehran and Mashhad. Riyadh cut its diplomatic ties with Tehran in response. Other Gulf countries took varying measures to downgrade ties with Iran.

Without naming Saudi Arabia and Iran, OIC Secretary General Iyad Madani, a Saudi, said that the continued strains in relations between some member countries was contributing to "deepening the fractures in the Islamic political entity".

Warning against widening sectarian tensions, he said the attacks against Saudi Arabia's diplomatic missions had "breached diplomatic norms".

"This situation turns us from effectively addressing the true challenges that threaten the future of our member states and their peoples," he said, before going on to name recent attacks by suspected Islamist militants in Afghanistan, Turkey, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Libya and Mali.

Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir, who spoke at the emergency OIC meeting which Riyadh had called for, said the attack on the kingdom's diplomatic missions was not an isolated incident, and that Tehran had done very little to end them.

"It is the responsibility of the host government to take measures, not to issue statements aim at deflecting blame more than offering practical protection to diplomatic missions," Jubeir said, according to state news agency SPA. Iran's deputy foreign minister Abbas Araqchi told Reuters on the sidelines of the meeting: "My hope is after this conference tension is not escalated, I hope the conference plays its role to deescalate the situation. It's very much hoped by OIC. But apparently some specific countries do not like that. They prefer tension. But tension is in favour of nobody." —Reuters

SYRIA PICKS UN ENVOY AS CHIEF NEGOTIATOR FOR PEACE TALKS

TALKS SCHEDULED FOR JAN 25 IN GENEVA

DAMASCUS: Syria's UN envoy will be the regime's chief negotiator in upcoming peace talks, a government source said yesterday as a dispute over the opposition's representatives threatened to delay the negotiations. The latest bid to end the Syrian war through indirect talks between the government and opposition was scheduled to begin on January 25 in Geneva.

But a disagreement over which parts of the opposition will be present, and who will represent them, is posing new obstacles. Syria's ambassador to the United Nations, Bashar Al-Jaafari, will be the government's chief negotiator, with Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Al-Moqdad heading the delegation, the Syrian government source said.

Jaafari also served as the regime's chief negotiator in a previous round of peace talks in Geneva in 2014. The Al-Watan daily, which is close to the government, said the delegation would also include several senior lawyers and other foreign ministry officials.

On Wednesday, the main coalition of opposition bodies, the so-called High Negotiations Committee, announced its own delegation to the talks.

But its decision to name a member of the Jaish Al-Islam rebel group as its chief negotiator has drawn criticism both from some of its own members, and opposition figures excluded from the coalition.

The National Coordinating Committee for Democratic Change, a key opposition

body still present in Damascus, said it was "not acceptable" for the delegation's chief negotiator to come from the armed opposition. "This sends the wrong political message to the Syrian people," it said in a statement.

And Haytham Manna, an opposition figure who does not belong to the High Negotiations Committee, accused it of including "war criminals" in its delegation.

He told AFP it was "impossible" for him to participate in an opposition del-

egation with figures like Mohamed Alloush, whose Jaish al-Islam group is active mostly around Damascus.

'Provocative step'

Damascus has not responded officially, but Al-Watan said "observers" deemed Alloush's appointment "a provocative step with the sole goal of thwarting any possible dialogue".

issue in Zurich on Wednesday.

The newspaper said Lavrov had proposed a joint delegation, with half the members chosen by Moscow—a close ally of President Bashar al-Assad — and the rest by the High Negotiations Committee.

The daily said Kerry would now raise the proposal with Saudi officials, who have pushed back against the atten-



WENEVA: Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal al-Moqdad gesturing as he speaks during a press conference at the United Nations Offices in Geneva. —AFP

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Wednesday reiterated that Moscow viewed the Jaish Al-Islam group and the powerful Ahrar al-Sham rebel organisation as "terrorist" groups. There is also disagreement about whether the opposition will be represented by one or two delegations.

The High Negotiations Committee insists it must be the sole opposition representative, but other opposition figures and Syria's Kurds have been excluded from its ranks and also want to participate in the talks. Al-Watan said that Lavrov and US Secretary of State John Kerry had discussed the

dance of other opposition figures at the talks. It reported that Kerry would warn that Moscow was ready to insist two opposition delegations attend the talks.

The High Negotiations Committee said Wednesday it would not attend the Geneva talks if another delegation was added. It also said negotiations were impossible if civilians continued to face regime strikes and siege tactics.

According to Al-Watan, the UN's special envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, will travel to Riyadh for talks on Sunday and hold a press conference on the Geneva talks on Monday. —AFP

REFUGEES CROSS AFTER MACEDONIA REOPENS GREEK BORDER

IDOMENI, Greece: After a night on the Greek-Macedonian frontier in sub-zero temperatures, some 2,000 mainly Syrian refugees yesterday resumed their tortuous trek to northern Europe that was temporarily blocked by a border closure by Skopje. "I'm very happy the problem is resolved," said 19-year old Imad. "I want to go to Germany to study".

Imad and some 1,200 other conflict refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan had just spent the night in heated tents operated by aid groups.

Though cramped and stifling with the scent of body odour, the tents were nonetheless preferable to sleeping on parked buses—which is exactly what

another 600 refugees had to do for lack of available space. Macedonia this week decided to close its border with Greece, and only reopened it yesterday for refugees wishing to go to Germany or Austria.

"The border crossing for migrants near (the Macedonian border town of) Gevgelija opened early this morning, but only those migrants whose Greek registration papers show their final destination as Germany or Austria can enter," a senior police official in Skopje told AFP.

Greek police lend a hand by duly adding 'Germany' or 'Austria' to the refugees' registration papers. By midday, some 400 people had crossed the border.

"It's a temporary procedure to reduce pressure on the camp, which can only accommodate 1,500 people at most," a Greek police source said. Aid groups had warned that their resources had been stretched to capacity, raising fears for the fate of families with small children already suffering from colds.

Wood fires are burning in barrels outside the tents, and benches have been brought up so the refugees don't have to sit on the freezing soil.

"If this flow continues there is no possibility for accommodation," said Antonis Rigas, head of the local Doctors Without Borders mission to the Greek side of the frontier. "It gets very cold at night. Early

this morning the temperature was minus seven Celsius (19 Fahrenheit)," he said. Leading children's charities have warned that young refugees were at serious risk from the bitterly cold Balkan weather, as figures showed 31,000 refugees and economic migrants had arrived in Greece already this year.

Among them is Bashar Darwish, a guitarist with Syrian rock group Khebez Dawlem, three of whose bandmates have already reached Berlin.

"I want to rejoin them and continue giving concerts," he says. "Our songs are about war, xenophobia, racism. We are people with the same problems and concerns as Europeans," he says. —AFP

ROUHANI ENTERS IRAN ELECTION ROW OVER BARRED CANDIDATES

EXCLUSION COULD UNDERMINE VOTE'S LEGITIMACY

TEHRAN: Iran's president has criticized moves by a powerful committee to exclude thousands of candidates, mostly reformists, from next month's parliamentary election, saying yesterday the decision could undermine the vote's legitimacy.

Hassan Rouhani openly questioned the actions of the Guardian Council, a conservative-dominated panel that vets all prospective lawmakers, after it said Monday that 60 percent of 12,000 election hopefuls had been excluded.

Reformists, largely sidelined from Iranian politics since the disputed 2009 re-

elections, they go to the parliament," Rouhani said, laughing but then scorning such a prospect.

"No official without the vote of the people would be legitimate. Executors and observers should pay attention that the law is respected."

Rouhani's intervention came after the Guardian Council said only 40 percent of all candidates had been deemed eligible. The reformist camp, which disputed Ahmadinejad's re-election as president seven years ago, alleging widespread fraud, largely ignored the country's last

time camp in parliament.

His remarks underscored tension about the elections following the nuclear agreement his government struck with the United States and five other major world powers.

Urges rethink

Iran's president was elected in a landslide having pledged to end the nuclear crisis, which peaked during Ahmadinejad's tenure when sanctions bit ever deeper, crippling Iran's economy.

But the July 14 nuclear deal finally lifted those sanctions on Saturday and Rouhani is seeking to build momentum for domestic reforms, a prospect more likely if there are fewer hardline conservative MPs to block his legislation.

Some lawmakers fiercely opposed Iran's concessions that led to the nuclear deal, despite the long-running talks having the backing of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Those rejected from running in next month's vote can appeal. The Guardian Council will publish a final list of approved candidates on February 4. In pushing for a rethink over the exclusions, Rouhani drew a contrast between parliamentary representation for Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians and other religious minorities in Iran, against larger groups.

"They are 10,000, 20,000," he said. "Yet there is a faction in this country with seven or 10 million," he added, again alluding to reformists.

The president said he had asked Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri as well as the interior and intelligence ministers, who often assist the Guardian Council in fact-finding on candidates, to consult further, regarding the rejections.

Rouhani insisted the government didn't back any political faction but it wanted more dialogue to ensure "impartiality and a sound rivalry" at the polls. "As the leader said a very vibrant and lively election with long queues at the ballot boxes" is desirable, Rouhani added, referring to Khamenei.

On Wednesday, Khamenei, 76, urged a strong turnout, arguing that those "who approve of the system, its interests and national values" should be elected. —AFP



TEHRAN: A handout picture provided by the office of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani shows him (C, background) delivering a speech to provincial governors in Tehran yesterday. —AFP

election of hardline conservative president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, bore the brunt of the vetting, with just one percent of its hopefuls winning approval. Speaking in Tehran, Rouhani was warmly applauded when he suggested the public would see through steps that could amount to favoritism, saying it would dent the ballot's competitiveness.

"It is called the House of the Nation, not the house of one faction," he told an audience of provincial governors, implying that not only conservatives should contest the election for seats in parliament.

"If there is one faction and the other is not there, they don't need the February 26

legislative polls in 2012, meaning it has few MPs.

But the movement has regrouped since Rouhani, a moderate cleric, took office in 2013, raising hopes of a comeback. The election vetting process has been contentious for months and on Monday the Guardian Council revealed its initial list. Only 30 reformists from 3,000 applicants were approved, according to the movement's officials. The poll, following Iran's nuclear deal with world powers, is widely seen as an opportunity for reformists and moderates close to Rouhani to make gains against a currently dominant conserva-

TUNISIA POLICE, RIOTERS CLASH IN MORE JOB PROTESTS

KASSERINE: Tunisian police firing tear gas clashed with hundreds of protesters who tried to storm local government buildings in several towns yesterday in the third day of rioting over jobs, resident said.

At least one policeman has been killed in some of the worst protests in Tunisia since the 2011 uprising that toppled autocrat Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali. That triggered a series of "Arab Spring" revolts in the region that swept long-standing leaders from power.

Several thousands of youths demonstrated yesterday outside the local government office in Kasserine, the impoverished central town where protests began this week after a young man killed himself after apparently being refused a public job. Police fired tear gas to disperse protesters trying to storm local government buildings in other towns, Jendouba, Beja and Skira, and in Sidi Bouzid, where youths chanted "Jobs or Another Revolution," according to state media and local residents.

President Beji Caid Essebsi's government announced on Wednesday it would seek to hire more than 6,000 young unemployed people from Kasserine, and start construction projects. On Thursday hundreds came to sign up for work, but tensions were still high.

"I've been out of work for 13 years, and I am a qualified technician. We are not looking for handouts just our right to work," protester Mohamed Mдини told Reuters in Kasserine where crowds were angrily chanting, "Work, Freedom, Dignity."

The protests have evoked memories of the suicide of a struggling young market vendor in December 2010 that became a catalyst for the Tunisian 2011 "Arab Spring" uprising which inspired angry mass protests across the Arab world. Tunisia has been held up as a model for democratic progress since that uprising with free elections and a modern constitution. The country managed to mostly avoid the violent upheaval in other countries that toppled long-standing leaders.

But for many Tunisians, the revolution has not delivered on economic promises. Jobs, high living costs and a lack of opportunities remain the priority for many young Tunisians.

Three major Islamist militant attacks in Tunisia last year have also hit the economy hard, especially the tourism industry which is a key source of revenue and employment.

Unemployment rose to 15.3 percent in 2015 compared with 12 percent in 2010, driven by weak growth and a decline in investment coupled with a rise in the number of university graduates, who comprise one-third of jobless Tunisians. —Reuters

PUTIN 'PROBABLY APPROVED' LITVINENKO KILLING: UK PROBE CAMERON'S OFFICE CALLS FINDINGS 'EXTREMELY DISTURBING'

LONDON: Russian President Vladimir Putin "probably approved" the killing of ex-spy Alexander Litvinenko in London, a British inquiry into his agonizing death by radiation poisoning found yesterday.

Litvinenko, a prominent Kremlin critic, died in 2006 aged 43, three weeks after drinking tea laced with radioactive polonium at an upmarket London hotel. Andrei Lugovoi and Dmitri Kovtun, two Russians identified as prime suspects by British police, probably carried out the poisoning

under the instruction of Russian security services, the inquiry said. Prime Minister David Cameron's office called the findings "extremely disturbing" but the government did not announce sanctions in response, instead summoning Moscow's ambassador to London for talks. It did, however, impose asset freezes on the two alleged perpetrators named by the inquiry.

There were cries of "Yes!" at the High Court in London as the main findings were read out. Litvinenko's wife Marina, dressed

in black and accompanied by her 21-year-old son Anatoly, embraced supporters afterwards. She has spent years pushing for a public inquiry to be held and had called for sanctions against Russia and a travel ban on Putin.

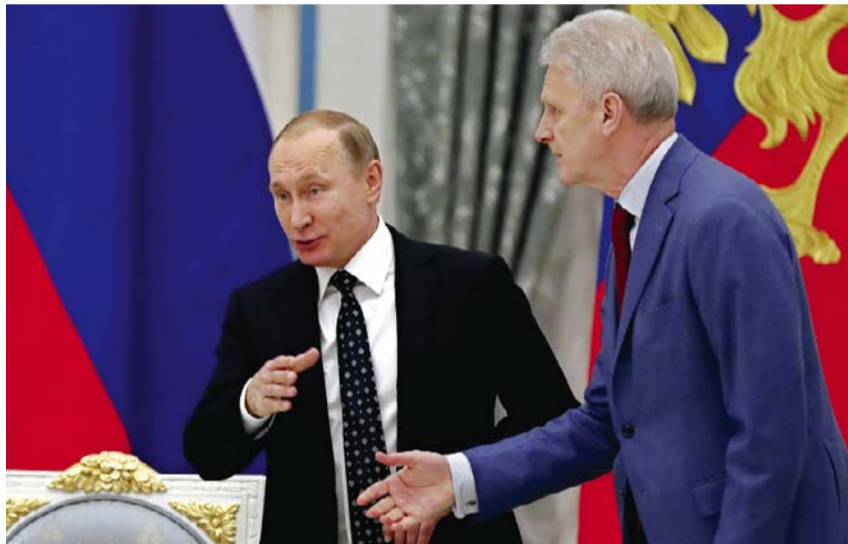
"I'm very pleased that the words my husband spoke on his deathbed when he accused Mr Putin of his murder have been proved true in an English court," she told reporters outside the court. She told AFP after the hearing: "I can't say it is what I hoped for but I really appreciate it."

Russia dismissed the findings, calling the inquiry "politically motivated". "We had no reason to expect that the final findings of the politically motivated and extremely non-transparent process... would suddenly become objective and unbiased," foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said in a statement. Lugovoi, now a far-right, pro-Putin lawmaker in Russia, described it as "absurd".

'Acting for a state body'

Judge Robert Owen, the inquiry's chairman, said he was "sure" that Lugovoi and Kovtun placed polonium-210 in the teapot at the Millennium Hotel's Pine Bar, where they met Litvinenko on November 1, 2006. "The FSB operation to kill Litvinenko was probably approved by Mr (Nikolai) Patrushev and also by President Putin," the report said.

Patrushev is a former director of the FSB, the successor organization to the Soviet-era KGB spy agency, and has been a key security official since 2008. — AFP



MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin (left) shakes hands with Andrei Fursenko (right), Aide to the President and former Minister of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, during the meeting of the Presidential Council for Science and Education at the Kremlin in Moscow yesterday. — AFP

TOP TURKISH TYCOON DIES OF HEART ATTACK AGED 55

ISTANBUL: The chief executive of Turkey's biggest industrial conglomerate Koc Holding, Mustafa Koc, died suddenly aged 55 yesterday following a heart attack, an Istanbul hospital said.

"We lost Mustafa Koc despite all efforts by doctors as a result of a heart attack he had at his home," the American Hospital in Istanbul said in a statement. Turkish television reports said Koc had suffered the heart attack during a morning workout. The company also confirmed his death in a statement.

Koc was the leader of the third generation of one of Turkey's biggest industrial dynasties, founded by his grandfather Vehbi Koc in the 1920s. Under Vehbi Koc and his son Rahmi, the Koc conglomerate expanded to become the most important of the holding companies that dominate Turkish industry, with diverse interests in energy, banking and the automobile sector.

It owns Turkey's single largest industrial enterprise, the Tupras oil refining group, as well as prominent household goods maker Arcelik and the Yapi Kredi Bank. It also has a thriving auto industry joint venture with Ford (Ford Otosan), and with Fiat (TOFAS). Mustafa Koc took over as chief executive of Koc Holding in 2003. He is survived by his father Rahmi Koc, 85. Vehbi Koc died in 1996 aged 94.

'Great loss for Turkey'

Turkey's family-run conglomerates-including Koc and other groups like Sabanci Holding—are the mainstays of the Turkish economy with interests in every sector. Koc Holding and some 100 subsidiaries alone account for around nine percent of Turkish exports and eight percent of its GDP. The family is one of the richest in Turkey: according to 2015 estimates by the Turkish edition of Forbes magazine, Mustafa Koc had a fortune of over \$1 billion. Rahmi Koc has a fortune of \$2.5 billion while Rahmi Koc's sister Suna Kirac has estimated wealth of \$2.2 billion. — AFP



ISTANBUL: Mustafa Koc, chief executive of Turkey's biggest industrial conglomerate Koc Holding during an event in Istanbul. — AFP



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LE MANS: Drivers are stuck in a traffic jam on the highway as French farmers block the access to Le Mans to protest against falling prices of dairy and meat products yesterday in Le Mans, north western France. The sign reads: "Le Foll you are mad, so we are blocking. —AFP

EU MUST AVOID BRITISH EXIT, NOT AT ANY PRICE: FRANCE

THREAT OF EUROPEAN SPLIT LOOMS LARGE

DAVOS: France said yesterday that a British exit from the European Union would be a tragedy, but warned that Britain's demands for reform could not be met at any price. British Prime Minister David Cameron has said he wants a deal on his EU reform demands by February so that he can campaign to stay in the bloc ahead of a referendum on membership, which he has promised to hold by the end of 2017.

A British EU exit would be "a very bad thing," French Prime Minister Manuel Valls told reporters at an annual gathering of billionaires and political leaders in the snow-blanketed Swiss ski resort of Davos, where discussions have turned to the spectre of a so-called Brexit.

"There needs to be a deal, but not at any price," the French prime minister said.

"Anything that allows us to simplify the organization of Europe, yes. Anything that throws into doubt the foundations of the European project or the eurozone, no." Valls' rather downbeat assessment contrasted with more positive noises from his German and Dutch counterparts in Davos yesterday. Cameron's most hotly contested proposal is a four-year ban on top-up benefits for EU migrants working in Britain, which critics say is discriminatory and threatens freedom of

movement in the EU.

The British leader, who is to speak at Davos later in the day, also wants the EU to give Britain safeguards against more political integration, to protect countries that do not use the euro currency and to boost economic competitiveness.

Threat of European split

The French premier said the EU faced multiple pressures including from terrorism, refugee flows and the risk of a British exit, "which could lead to a fracturing of the European project, and not in a few years or decades, but in the next few months". Valls said the British leader is unlikely to win over fellow EU leaders by the time of their February 18-19 summit in Brussels, at which France will be represented by President Francois Hollande.

Negotiations on London's demands only started a short time ago, Valls said, though he still hoped a solution could be found in February. During a debate at Davos, Valls said it would be a "tragedy" if Britain were to leave the EU.

In Paris, Hollande said he would be "particularly vigilant" during talks with Britain to ensure the eurozone was not affected. "The British government has made its demands... nothing

is insurmountable so long as the founding principles of the union are preserved," Hollande told a gathering of French ambassadors.

A European Union spokesman in Brussels said the "clear intention" was to strike a deal with London in the February meeting and no other summit had been scheduled.

Top European officials say a deal is still possible by then. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, whose country holds the bloc's rotating presidency, said in the same debate in Davos that he was "fairly optimistic" of a positive outcome at the February summit.

'It would be a disaster'

"I am convinced that during the council in February we will reach a fair deal with Britain and a fair deal for the 27 others," European Commission head Jean-Claude Juncker told a news conference in Strasbourg the previous day.

Germany warned of the danger a Brexit would present to the EU. "I hope that the British will stay in Europe and with us," German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble said in Davos.

"It would be a disaster otherwise," he said. —AFP

GERMAN MINISTER HAILS BERLIN'S HELP IN FIGHT AGAINST IS

INCIRLIK, Turkey: German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen yesterday visited a contingent of German troops stationed at a Turkish air base as part of the coalition to defeat Islamic State (IS), hailing their contribution in the fight against the jihadists in Syria.

Six German Tornado reconnaissance

planes have been carrying out flights since January 8 from the Incirlik base in southern Turkey, as well as an Airbus refuelling plane. Von der Leyen told reporters at the base that the Tornados had already carried out over 30 flights, while the tanker plane had flown 40 times to supply German but also French,

British and Italian planes.

"It's very good that the contingent has set itself up so quickly," said Van der Leyen. "The reconnaissance results that the Tornados deliver are of an extraordinarily high quality," she said. "We are thus making our contribution to thwarting the expansion of IS." —AFP

DANISH MIGRANT BILL UNDER FIRE AT UN

GENEVA: The UN's top human rights body took Denmark to task yesterday that its treatment of asylum seekers, with diplomats voicing alarm over rising xenophobia and a plan to seize valuables from migrants.

In the Human Rights Council's first review of Denmark's rights record since 2011, a number of the 87 country representatives who took the floor decried the Scandinavian country's recent tightening of its migration policies as it struggles to deal with record numbers of asylum seekers.

US representative Keith Harper was among those who voiced alarm over a bill expected to pass through the Danish parliament allowing the confiscation of migrants' valuables, among other measures. "We note with concern the bill pending in the Danish parliament that would permit the Danish authorities to search the belongings of asylum seekers and seize cash and certain objects of value," he told the council.

Egyptian representative Mohamed Elmolla also blasted the bill, stressing that "confiscating valuable belongings to cover refugees' expenses (is) in clear violation of their rights under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

Gross misunderstandings

But Danish Foreign Minister Kristian Jensen insisted the international outcry over the bill was due to "gross misunderstandings." "The Danish welfare state is based upon the very simple principle that the state will provide and pay for those unable to take care of themselves, not for those who are able," he told the council.

"This simple principle applies for Danes seeking unemployment benefits, as well as to asylum seekers," he said, explaining the reasoning behind the plan to seize asylum seekers' cash exceeding 10,000 kroner (1,340 euros, \$1,450), as well as any individual items valued at more than 10,000 kroner to help pay for their housing and benefits during the asylum process.

Wedding rings and other items of sentimental value are exempt, he stressed. In Copenhagen yesterday, the Danish lawmakers gave a final nod to the bill, guaranteeing that Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen's minority right-wing government will win a January 26 parliamentary vote.

In Geneva, diplomats also raised concerns about other aspects of the bill, including measures making it harder for some asylum seekers to obtain family reunifications and residency permits.

And many decried a perceived increase in xenophobic and racist discourse in Denmark.

Veronika Bard, representing neighboring Sweden voiced understanding over the challenges Denmark was facing, but said her country was "concerned about the tendency of public discourse in Denmark to be prejudiced towards migrants, sometimes even amounting to hate speech." —AFP

PROTEST IN MOLDOVA AFTER PREMIER HASTILY SWORN

CHISINAU: At least 8,000 people protested in the Moldovan capital yesterday against the appointment of Prime Minister Pavel Filip, whose hasty swearing-in ceremony at midnight also prompted a government spokesman to resign. Parliament appointed Filip in hopes of ending months of political stalemate after the previous government was toppled in a no-confidence vote in October.

But the move has caused a backlash from opposition lawmakers and prompted a series of protests from citizens unhappy with Filip's close ties to a prominent oligarch. There is widespread anger at Moldova's ruling elites after a \$1 billion banking fraud plunged the country into crisis last year.

The repeated protests threaten to derail Filip's chances of running a stable government, at a time when Moldova sees its economy sinking and is trying to negotiate new funding from overseas lenders, including the International Monetary Fund.

"I don't see the advantages of Filip's government and there are lots of minuses. He was approved without any public support," said analyst Nicolai Tveatkov. "(The government) is temporary and one cannot speak of achieving political stability." A small group of demonstrators broke into the parliament building on Wednesday demanding new elections, clashing with riot police. Underscoring the sense of chaos, the spokesman of President Nicolae Timofti later resigned. —Reuters



DETROIT: President Obama gets out of 2017 Chevrolet Bolt EV, an all-electric vehicle with an estimated range of 200 miles on a single charge, while touring the North American International Auto Show in Detroit. — AP photos

OBAMA TOURS AUTO SHOW, PLEDGES HELP FOR FLINT'S WATER CRISIS

'I WANT PEOPLE TO REMEMBER HOW FAR WE'VE COME'

DETROIT: President Barack Obama on Wednesday hailed the revival of the nation's auto industry while acknowledging the water crisis in nearby Flint, Michigan, saying the detection of high levels of lead serve as a reminder that the government can't shortchange basic services. Speaking to auto workers after taking in the North American International Auto Show, Obama said, "I know that if I was a parent up there, I

health and safety of people and clearly the system here broke down," he said. CBS released a clip of the interview on Wednesday.

Nation's attention

Obama sought to highlight how his administration extended the industry a financial lifeline during the heart of the Great Recession even as many others called for the government to focus its resources elsewhere. He said the outcome of his administration's bet is evident through a much-improved economy. Consumers bought nearly 17.5 million vehicles last year, a record. "What's true of Detroit is true of the country," he said. "I want people to remember how far we've come."

Obama spoke at the UAW-GM Center for Human Resources, the national headquarters of the joint relationship between the United Auto Workers and General Motors. His visit took place as longstanding problems with Flint's drinking water have begun to capture the nation's attention. Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder asked Obama on Wednesday to reconsider his denial of a federal disaster declaration to address the crisis, saying its severity poses an "imminent and long-term threat" to residents. Obama declared an emergency - qualifying the city for \$5 million - but determined that it is not a disaster based on the legal requirement that such additional relief is intended for natural events, fires, floods or explosions.

White House spokesman Eric Schultz said "primary responsibility" rests with state and local officials but that Obama would do what he can to help. In his appeal letter, Snyder called it a "narrow reading" and likened the crisis to a flood, "given that qualities within the water, over a long term, flood and damaged the city's infrastructure in ways that were not immediately or easily detectable." He also said the state and city cannot meet all the needs of Flint residents. The presi-

dent spent nearly an hour at the auto show, looking at crash avoidance technology from ZF TRW and sitting in a 2017 Chevy Bolt EV, an all-electric car that will be available late this year. He also looked at a new Chrysler Pacifica minivan.

"You guys remember, 'Get Shorty,' right?" Obama said to reporters and photographers. "It's cool driving a minivan." Obama had lunch at a brewery with Mayor Mike Duggan, a GM employee and others, then stopped at watch maker Shinola before heading to the show. The White House wanted to shine the spotlight on Detroit, but Flint's problems have intervened. The crisis began in 2014 when a state-appointed emergency manager switched Flint from Detroit water to Flint River water to save money. The corrosive water caused lead to leach from old pipes. Flint returned to the Detroit system in October after elevated lead levels were discovered in children. — AP



DETROIT: US President Barack Obama speaks at the United Auto Workers-General Motors Center for Human Resources.

would be beside myself that my kid's health could be at risk." He met with Flint's mayor the day before and promised federal help.

"What is inexplicable and inexcusable is once people figured out there was a problem and that there was lead in the water, the notion that immediately families weren't notified, things weren't shut down, that shouldn't happen anywhere," Obama told CBS News in an interview scheduled for broadcast on Sunday. "It's also an indication of sometimes we downplay the role that an effective government has to play in protecting public

MEXICAN STATE LAWMAKER TO BE QUESTIONED ABOUT 'EL CHAPO'

MEXICO CITY: A state lawmaker from Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman's home of Sinaloa has been brought in to speak to investigators about her relationship with the recently recaptured drug lord, Mexico's attorney general's office said late Wednesday. Federal police were transporting Lucero Guadalupe Sanchez to Mexico City for questioning regarding an investigation into her alleged use of fraudulent documents to visit Guzman in April in the maximum security prison he would escape from a couple of months later.

The lawmaker has not been charged with any crime, but she resigned her position with the opposition National Action Party on Wednesday. On Monday, El Universal newspaper published an interview with Attorney General Arely Gomez in which she said the government believed Sanchez spent New Year's Eve with Guzman in Sinaloa. Guzman, of the Sinaloa cartel, was captured Jan. 8 after his second escape from a Mexican maximum-security prison. — AP

US CELEBRITIES BACK 'DUMP TRUMP' CAMPAIGN

NEW YORK: Prominent actors, writers and thinkers joined a "Stop Hate Dump Trump" campaign to denounce the billionaire Republican presidential frontrunner, saying he is a threat to the United States. Actors Harry Belafonte, Kerry Washington and Jane Fonda, filmmaker Jonathan Demme and intellectual Noam Chomsky are among those lending their support to the drive to prevent Donald Trump getting into the White House. "We are offering Americans a chance to be heard and engage in action, as Trump's campaign gains momentum even as he increases his hateful and divisive rhetoric," said playwright Eve Ensler, one of three cofounders.

"We also intend to put the media and political institutions on notice that they are accountable for normalizing Trump's extremism by treating it as entertainment, by giving it inordinate and unequal air time and by refusing to investigate, interrogate or condemn it appropriately." Trump announced his bid for the White House last June, dominating the news cycle of the presidential race ever since with insults slamming Mexicans and illegal immigrants, and a call for a ban on Muslims entering the United States.

The website said it united people as diverse as worker movement leaders, actors, teachers, farmers, students, poets and heads of companies. "We believe Trump is a grave threat to democracy, freedom, human rights, equality and the welfare of our country and all our people," the campaign said. "History has shown us what happens when people refuse to stand against hate-filled leaders. We pledge ourselves to speak out in every way possible against the politics of hate and exclusion he represents." Nearly 1,200 people had added their signatures to the campaign within hours of it going live on Wednesday. Jodie Evans, a documentary film producer and cofounder of the anti-war organization Code Pink, said the initiative had arisen out of a conversation with Ensler and said the celebrity endorsements had come from their friends. "The media is pushing the hate of Donald Trump like it's a reality show," she told AFP. The third cofounder is law professor Kimberle Crenshaw. — AFP

US IMMIGRATION CASE COULD SET LIMITS ON PRESIDENTIAL POWER

WASHINGTON: The US Supreme Court challenge to President Barack Obama's immigration policies could have an impact far beyond determining whether millions of undocumented immigrants can remain in the country. The case has the potential to constrain the power of Obama's successor to bypass Congress and act alone. Should Obama's order blocking deportations for certain immigrants be invalidated by the justices, the decision could hamper future presidents' ability to craft policy through executive fiat, legal experts told Reuters.

"The question is not the merits of the immigration issue," said T. Gerald Treece, a constitutional law professor at the South Texas College of Law in Houston. "The question is what the president's power is." The high court said Tuesday it would hear the lawsuit brought by 26 states that seeks to overturn Obama's 2014 executive order that shields more than 4 million immigrants in the country illegally from deportation proceedings.

The Democratic Obama White House, vexed by a hostile, Republican-controlled Congress, has employed the president's executive authority with increasing fre-

quency. In addition to the executive order on deportations, Obama has acted alone to alter provisions of the Affordable Care Act, limit carbon emissions to combat climate change and toughen the requirements on firearms merchants. Should Obama lose before the Supreme Court, the case could tie the hands of a future president to act in similar ways.

Federal immigration

The immigration case likely will be argued before the Supreme Court in April, with a decision handed down at the end of June, guaranteeing that presidential power will be a front-burner issue as the race for the White House intensifies. In taking the case, the justices indicated they will consider whether Obama violated not just federal immigration statutes but the Constitution as well, raising the possibility that the court could articulate a forward-looking principle that limits the reach of a president's executive authority - particularly with regard to domestic issues. Presidents historically enjoy more freedom to act unilaterally when it comes to foreign affairs. — Reuters

SCIENTISTS ID NEW GENUS OF TREE FROGS LONG THOUGHT EXTINCT

‘FROGS HAVE BEEN AROUND FOR 350 MILLION YEARS’

NEW DELHI: For more than a century, two mysterious tree frog specimens collected by a British naturalist in 1870 and housed at the Natural History Museum in London were assumed to be part of a vanished species, never again found in the wild. Until now. A group of scientists, led by renowned Indian biologist Sathyabhama Das Biju, has rediscovered the frogs and also identified them as part of a new genus - one step higher than a species on the taxonomic ranking. Not only have they found the frogs in abundance in northeast Indian jungles, they believe they could also be living across a wide swathe of Asia from China to Thailand.

“This is an exciting find, but it doesn’t mean the frogs are safe,” Biju said, adding that he hopes the discovery leads to more awareness of the dangers of unfettered development to the animals. The frogs were found at high altitudes in four northeast Indian states, underlining the rain-soaked region’s role as a biodiversity hotspot. Some of the forest areas where Biju’s team collected frogs in 2007 and 2008 were already slashed and burned by 2014 for agricultural development. The region’s tropical forests are quickly disappearing because of programs to cut trees, plant rice, expand human settlements and build roads.

Industrial growth amid a decade-long economic boom has also increased pollution, to which frogs are particularly vulnerable. That same sensitivity to climate and water quality makes them perfect environmental barometers, putting them at risk when ecological systems go awry. Of the more than 7,000 amphibian species known globally, about 32 percent are threatened with extinction, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature. “This frog is facing extreme stress in these areas, and could be pushed to extinction simply from habitat loss,” Biju said. “We’re lucky in a way to have found it before that happens, but we’re all worried.”

Collected specimens

Finding the frogs was an accident. The team had been searching the forest floor for other amphibians in 2007 when, one night, “we heard a full musical orchestra coming from the treetops. It was magical. Of course we had to investigate,” Biju said. For the study of the new frog genus, *Frankixalus*, published Wednesday by the Public Library of Science journal PLOS ONE, Biju and his doctoral students teamed up with researchers from the central Indian state of Pune, Sri Lanka, Brussels and the American Museum of Natural History.



NEW DELHI: In this 2007 photo provided by biologist SD Biju, a *Frankixalus jerdonii*, belonging to a newly found genus of frogs, sits on the branch of a tree. — AP photos



NEW DELHI: Preserved tadpoles of a frog named *Frankixalus jerdonii*, a new genus of frogs, are seen at Systematics Lab at the University of Delhi, Department of Environmental Studies.

They looked at the frogs’ behavior, collected specimens and described their outer appearance and skeletal features. But it wasn’t until they had sequenced the frogs’ genetic code that they confirmed it as a new genus, and surprisingly found another DNA match from a single tadpole specimen reported recently under a mistaken identity in China. The frogs had long been considered lost to science, with the first - and only - previously known specimens collected in 1870 by British naturalist T.C. Jerdon in the forests of Darjeeling. Over decades, the frogs were reclassified at least four times in cases of incorrect identity as scientists drew conclusions from their enlarged snouts or the webbing between their toes. Biju believes the frogs remained hidden from science so long because of their secretive lifestyle living in tree holes at heights up to 6 meters (20 feet) above ground. Most tree frogs live in shrubs or tree holes closer to the ground. But other experts suggest that, while the uniquely high habitat does make them hard to find, the frogs probably remained in obscurity simply because there are so few scientists working in the remote region.

More species

“This part of Southeast Asia, in particular, is

poorly inventoried,” said James Hanken, a biology professor and director of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University. Given the habitat threats and alarming rate of extinctions worldwide, he said the “remarkable” tree frog find “points out that we may be losing even more species than we know or can fully document.” “It doesn’t in any way offset the tragic losses represented by global amphibian extinction,” said Hanken, who was not involved in the tree frog study.

Biju’s team named the new frog genus *Frankixalus* after herpetologist Franky Bossuyt, who was Biju’s adviser when he was a student at the Vrije Universiteit in Brussels. Only two species within the genus have been identified, including the *Frankixalus jerdonii* first described in the 19th century. The scientists are still trying to confirm whether a second collected species was mistakenly named within another genus of tree frogs. There are now 18 tree frog genera known worldwide. The study documents the tree frogs’ unusual maternal behavior, with the females laying fertilized eggs in a tree hole filled with water, and then returning at regular intervals after the tadpoles hatch to feed them with unfertilized eggs. — AP

MAHARASHTRA IS FIRST STATE TO GIVE SURROGACY MOTHERS MATERNITY BENEFITS

MUMBAI: Western India’s Maharashtra has become the first state to extend full maternity benefits to women who have babies using a surrogate mother, a state official said. All women in government jobs who have a baby using a surrogate mother can now take 180 days of maternity leave, putting them on an equal footing with women who conceive naturally, the official said. The leave can only be taken once.

Surrogate mothers usually hand over the babies to the clinic or the genetic mother a few days after giving birth. “It doesn’t make a difference whether the child is conceived natu-

rally or through a surrogate - the woman still has to look after the child,” said BJ Gaddekar, a deputy secretary in the state’s finance department. “We want to treat them equally.” India opened up to commercial surrogacy in 2002, and is among just a handful of countries and a few US states where women can be paid to carry another’s genetic child through a process of in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) and embryo transfer.

Surrogacy motherhood remains a sensitive topic, and the government last year banned foreigners from using Indian surrogates, hurting India’s

lucrative \$400-million-a-year business with over 3,000 fertility clinics. Most women’s rights groups in India are critical of the surrogacy industry, saying fertility clinics are nothing more than “baby factories” for the rich.

But Sakina Bohura at Akshara Centre, a non-profit focused on gender rights in Mumbai, said the Maharashtra decision would help women who are forced to opt for surrogacy in order to have children. “It’s a recognition that surrogacy is a valid choice for these women,” she said. “It’s a very progressive stance by the Maharashtra government.” — Reuters

MRINALINI SARABHAI, LEGENDARY INDIAN CLASSICAL DANCER, DIES

NEW DELHI: Legendary Indian classical dancer, Mrinalini Sarabhai, has died from complications related to old age, her family said. She was 98. Sarabhai was admitted to a hospital in the western Indian city of Ahmedabad with an infection, her son Kartikeya Sarabhai said. She died in the hospital yesterday after her condition deteriorated overnight. “My mother Mrinalini Sarabhai has just left for her eternal dance,” her daughter and noted classical Indian dancer Mallika Sarabhai said in a Facebook post.

After training in dance, including a stint at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, she returned to India and began her career as a dancer of the classical Indian dance form, Bharatanatyam. In 1948, Sarabhai set up an institute of dance in Ahmedabad where she trained thousands of dancers and choreographers. — AP

LGBT INDIANS TO DRIVE TAXIS IN MUMBAI, SIGN OF SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE

MUMBAI: Mumbai's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens will soon be able to drive private taxis in the city, in a sign of the increasing acceptance of the marginalized community in India's commercial capital. A project launched by Wings Travels and community organization Humsafar Trust will train up to 300 members of the LGBT community to drive cabs in the city. The service, to be called Wings Rainbow, may then be expanded nationwide.

"The LGBT community, especially transgenders, have very few economic opportunities because of the huge stigma that they still face," said Pallav Patankar, director of programs at Humsafar Trust in Mumbai. "We hope that this will set the ball rolling and that it will open up other such opportunities for them." India's Supreme Court recognized transgender as a legal third gender in April 2014 and, in a landmark judgment lauded by human rights groups, called on the government to ensure their equal treatment.

Despite this, sexual minorities - especially transgender people who are more visible - have been driven to the fringes of society into begging and sex work, and face discrimination in jobs and basic services such as health and education. Wings Travels can place about 1,500 LGBT drivers in its taxi fleet nationwide, said Arun Kharat, the company's founder and director. The travel and car rental company also operates a taxi service that employs retired army personnel and one with female drivers for women passengers. "Driving a taxi is a way for these marginalized people who may not get so many opportunities to gain respectability and independence," Kharat said. —Reuters



CHARSADDA, Pakistan: A relative of a 2014 Peshawar school attack victim shows her son's pictures to a student victim (left) of the Bacha Khan University attack at a hospital in Charsadda yesterday. —AFP

INDIAN MILLIONAIRE JAILED FOR LIFE FOR SECURITY GUARD MURDER

NEW DELHI: An Indian court yesterday sentenced a millionaire businessman to life in jail for murder after he rammed his SUV into a security guard for being slow in opening a gate, a prosecutor said. Muhammad Nisham, 39, was convicted on Wednesday for pinning the guard against a wall with his Hummer over a delay in opening the gate of his apartment complex in the southern state of Kerala. "The court awarded life sentence for the murder and 24 years in jail for other offences," the public prosecutor involved in the case, CP Udayabhanu, told AFP.

"He is a repeat offender and we are satisfied with the judgment," Bhanu said. Nisham was also fined eight million rupees (\$117,600), half of which he must donate to the victim's family. The 50-year-old guard, Chandarabose, was left with multiple injuries in the assault last January and died after suffering a cardiac arrest in the hospital where he was receiving treatment. Prosecutors had told the court that Nisham pursued the guard into the complex with his Hummer and squeezed him against a wall before getting out and beating him with an iron rod.

It is not the first time Nisham has made headlines. He faces a separate criminal case for allowing his nine-year-old son to drive a Ferrari in 2013, which caused outrage after he uploaded a video onto Youtube. Nisham made his fortune from beedis, the hugely popular hand-rolled Indian cigarette packed with tobacco leaves, and also owns hotel and jewelry businesses in the Middle East. He reportedly has a passion for luxury cars and owns a large fleet of them. —AFP

AFGHAN ROCKET KILLS THREE IN NW PAKISTAN

PESHAWAR, Pakistan: A rocket fired from Afghanistan hit a shop in a restive Pakistani tribal region close to the Afghan border yesterday, killing three people, officials said. The incident happened in Angoor Adda Bazaar in the South Waziristan tribal district, one of the seven semi-autonomous regions where the Pakistani military has been battling Taliban and Al-Qaeda linked militants for more than a decade. "One of the two rockets fired from Afghanistan's Birmal town hit a bread shop, killing three Afghan nationals who were residents of South Waziristan," a senior military official told AFP. —AFP

TALEBAN SEND MESSAGE OF IMPUNITY WITH SCHOOL MASSACRE 'STAFF AND STUDENTS WERE MARTYRED AGAIN'

ISLAMABAD: As grieving Pakistani parents lament the government's failure to keep their children safe, analysts say the Taliban have sent a message with their latest campus massacre—a national crackdown on extremism has failed and they can hit targets at will. The rampage at Bacha Khan university left 21 people dead Wednesday and shattered the sense of security growing in the troubled northwest, a year after Pakistan's deadliest ever extremist attack, a 2014 assault on a school in nearby Peshawar.

The chilling similarities between the two atrocities starkly underscored the failings of a government- and military-led initiative launched in the wake of the strike on the army-run school. "It happened again," said Zaheeruddin, father of Kashan Zaheer, a ninth grade student who was wounded in the assault which saw Taliban gunmen storm the Peshawar school and kill more than 150 people, most of them children, a year ago. "Staff and students were martyred again. The government has failed. It has not been able to provide us security." The Peshawar attack, carried out by the same Taliban faction that claimed the latest strike in nearby Charsadda, prompted the military to intensify an offensive in tribal areas where jihadists had operated with impunity.

The military says it has killed thousands in the campaign and swept others over the porous border into Afghanistan. The government launched a much-vaunted National Action Plan to combat extremism, including the cre-

ation of military courts and the resumption of executions after a six-year moratorium. Together the initiatives are credited with making 2015 the least deadly in terms of militant attacks since the formation of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistani (TTP) in 2007. But the Bacha Khan attack was a message, said Peshawar-based senior analyst and retired brigadier Saad Khan—that despite the pressure "they can hit any target".

The killing of young people "brings a lot of pain, despondency and hopelessness, and that arouses emotions against the government, the same government which claimed it had broken the back of the terrorists," he said. Defence and security analyst Talat Masood said the government and military had failed to follow through. "This is the same pattern. They are looking for soft targets and it is simply impossible to provide security to the soft targets, especially those near the border (with Afghanistan)," he told AFP. "Pakistan needs to do a lot more."

Selective crackdown

Among the criticism is that little has been done about key issues including oversight of Pakistan's thousands of Islamic seminaries, widely seen as breeding grounds for intolerance. The resumption of hangings has been particularly controversial, with rights activists saying that the majority of the more than 300 people executed in the past year were not linked to extremism. And observers such as the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies argue that execution is no deterrent for militants

who are already prepared to die for their cause.

Pakistan's reaction to a recent attack on an Indian air base also highlighted what is viewed as a practice of only cracking down on certain types of radicals, tolerating militants it deems useful to its aims, such as those targeting arch-rival India. Islamabad moved swiftly against Jaish-e-Mohammad, the group believed by Delhi to be behind the attack on the base in Pathankot that left seven dead, detaining some of its leadership and sealing its offices. But media commentators expressed wry surprise that the group had any offices still open for the government to seal, seeing as it had been banned in 2002.

'We are not safe'

For those who survived the 2014 attack, described as Pakistan's 9/11 for the way it united the country in shock and outrage, "sequels" such as Wednesday's university assault are making their courage waver. Ajun Khan lost his only son, Asfand, a tenth grader, in the Peshawar school massacre. "We understand their pain, we understand how one feels when one sends his son to school or university and later receives his dead body," Khan said of the families of the latest strike.

Khan said parents of the Peshawar victims are meeting on Thursday to express their sympathy and to chalk out a strategy—such as compulsory military training for all civilians. "We are not safe, even parents do not feel safe, we are worried about the future," he said. "It is now the people's war." —AFP



BANDUNG, Indonesia: This handout photo released by the Presidential Palace shows Indonesian President Joko Widodo (left) placing his signature on a memorial while attending a groundbreaking ceremony of the country's first high-speed railway in Bandung yesterday. — AFP

INDONESIA KICKS OFF CONSTRUCTION OF FIRST BULLET TRAIN

JAKARTA: Indonesian President Joko Widodo broke ground yesterday on the country's first ever bullet train line, heralding the project as a symbol of "major cooperation" with China. The controversial \$5.6 billion project sparked a fierce bidding war between China and Japan as the two Asian powerhouses jostle to build key infrastructure projects in Indonesia and

the wider region. Widodo kicked off the first construction phase at a tea plantation in West Java, where one of the stations along the line will be situated.

"Send my regards to (Chinese) President Xi Jinping," Widodo said at the event, attended by Chinese officials. "This is a (sign of) major cooperation between Indonesia and China,"

he added, calling for the two trading partners to further expanded ties in other industries. The bullet train should in theory be able to travel up to 350 kilometers an hour (220 miles per hour) between the sprawling capital Jakarta and the mountain-fringed city of Bandung, about 160 kilometers (100 miles) away.

It is a key project for Widodo, who has pledged to overhaul the archipelago's rickety infrastructure in a bid to attract investors and boost growth in Southeast Asia's largest economy, which last year dipped below five percent. Last year Jakarta asked for proposals from investors for the ambitious project, with China and Japan bidding so intensely a senior minister likened Indonesia to a pretty girl being courted by many admirers.

After a chaotic bidding process, China was awarded the contract-infuriating Japan, which was long expected to build the track given its high-speed rail expertise. Indonesia lacks a mass-transport system, forcing its increasingly affluent 250 million people to rely heavily on private transport, resulting in grinding traffic in the biggest cities. Widodo said he hoped the high-speed railway would spur demand for future public transport alternatives in other parts of Indonesia, as well as speed up the movement of people and goods between cities, helping economic growth. Construction of the line is expected to finish by 2018, and it should be operational the following year. — AFP

S KOREAN ACQUITTED FOR FOLLOWING NORTH ON TWITTER

SEOUL: A South Korean court said yesterday it had acquitted a man of sympathizing with North Korea for following its Twitter account, arguing that simply reading Pyongyang's social media posts did not violate Seoul's security laws. Seoul prosecutors earlier charged the 73-year-old journalist, identified only by his surname Lee, with "distributing" materials that praised the communist North by following Pyongyang's official Twitter account, @uriminzok.

Lee was, however, found guilty of supporting the North in his own blog postings and was sentenced to a one-year jail term, suspended for two years. South Korea's National Security Laws, enacted in 1948 to protect the fledgling state from infiltration by the communist North, ban its citizens from praising or sympathizing with Pyongyang.

Domestic critics and international rights groups argue that the law is open to abuse and stifles free speech, but officials insist it is justified by the continued threat from the nuclear-armed North. The Seoul Western District Court ruled that, because Lee only followed North Korea on Twitter and did not re-tweet or mention any of the posts on his own account, he had not broken the law. "It can't be said that he 'distributed' those posts as they were only shown on Lee's own account and were not shown to other people, such as Lee's followers," the court said in a statement. North Korea joined the global social media networks in 2010 and has posted more than 17,500 tweets since then, mostly criticizing its major foes—South Korea and the US—and praising its ruling Kim family. Its Twitter account has over 18,500 followers. — AFP

CHINA BUSTS CHILD TRAFFICKING RING, RECOVERS 15 INFANTS

SHANGHAI: Police in China have broken a child trafficking ring that they say had been selling children from the remote southwest to buyers near the coast 2,000 km (1,245 miles) away for as little as about \$3,000, the state news agency Xinhua has reported. Police caught 78 suspects and rescued 15 infants, the report late on Wednesday said. Xinhua said police spotted a suspicious couple in September that traveled frequently between the mountainous town of Liangshan in Sichuan province and the city of Linyi in Shandong province near the coast.

"The wife purchased infants in Liangshan, and transported them to Linyi. The husband was responsible for seeking buyers in the city," it said, quoting the findings of the investigation. Baby boys were sold for 50,000-60,000 yuan (\$7,600-\$9,120), while girls were sold for 20,000-30,000 yuan, Xinhua quoted police as saying. The rescued infants were being cared for by a local civil affairs department. Doctors had taken blood samples to help find their biological parents, Xinhua reported.

The investigation was continuing but Xinhua did not give further details. Child trafficking is rampant in China, where population control policies, although recently relaxed, have bolstered a traditional bias for male offspring, seen as the main support for elderly parents and heirs to the family name, and have resulted in abortions, killings or abandonment of girls. The imbalance has created criminal demand for abducted or bought baby boys, but also for baby girls destined to be future brides attracting rich dowries. — Reuters

JAPAN'S NHK CLEARED IN TAIWAN 'HUMAN ZOO' DEFAMATION CASE

TOKYO: Japanese broadcaster NHK did not defame a Taiwanese woman by using the term "human zoo" to refer to a century-old event involving her father, the country's supreme court ruled yesterday. The court overturned a lower bench's finding that had ordered the publically-funded broadcaster to pay a million yen (\$8,500) damages over a 2009 program. The broadcast examined the "Japan-Britain Exhibition" held in London in 1910 to which Japan took several members of Taiwan's aboriginal population, including the woman's father, as exhibits.

Taiwan was a Japanese colony at the time, and the practice of exhibiting the little-known peoples of far-flung territories was a common one among Western imperial powers. In November 2013, Tokyo High Court ordered NHK to pay damages to the woman, a member of the island's Paiwan ethnic group, for defaming her by using the term, with the presiding judge reportedly saying the expression had a "serious discriminatory meaning". The woman argued that the term "human zoo" implied the Paiwan people were uncivilized, but that some of those who took part in the exhibition did so out of pride that they were representing their indigenous group.

But yesterday, the Supreme Court said it "cannot accept the judgment", according to a ruling posted on its website. The purpose of the program was to describe "the fact that Japan followed the example of what was called a 'human zoo' carried out by Western powers to advertise their efforts to civilize barbaric and inferior people in their colonies." "It is unreasonable to think that a general audience would regard the plaintiff's father as a person who should be treated as an animal in a zoo, thus the program did not degrade the social reputation" of the Taiwanese woman, it said. Japan emerged from self-imposed isolation in the middle of the 19th century and historians say it took on colonies partly as an attempt to establish itself as an imperial power and to mitigate the self-perceived risk of being taken over by a Western country. — AFP

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 2016

Lifestyle

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Dancers perform during the celebration of the 'Parachicos' traditional festivity in Chiapa de Corzo, Chiapas State, Mexican on January 20, 2016. The 'Parachicos' is a celebration with pre-Hispanic origins, according to the municipality of Chiapa de Corzo. — AFP

Dolphin circus sparks animal cruelty debate in Central Asia



Indian Khasi tribal villagers wash utensils in a restaurant in the village of Mawlynnong in the north-eastern state of Meghalaya. —AFP photos



An Indian Khasi tribal villager dries clothes outside her home in the village of Mawlynnong.

'India's cleanest village' clings on to its serenity

In the tiny hamlet of Mawlynnong in India's far north east, plastic is banned and spotless paths are lined with flowers-but its reputation as Asia's cleanest village has proved a mixed blessing. Until 2003 no tourists visited the remote community of 500 inhabitants high in the mountains of Meghalaya state, which had no roads and was accessible only by foot.

Home to the Khasi tribal people, Mawlynnong is famous for being a rare matrilineal society, where property and wealth are passed on from the mother to her youngest daughter and children take their mother's surname. In recent years the village has become known for another reason-its exceptional cleanliness, far removed from the noise and dirt of India's big cities.

Bamboo dustbins stand at every corner, volunteers sweep the streets at regular intervals and large signs order visitors to throw away plastic packaging: littering is sternly frowned upon. "We clean every day because our grandparents and our ancestors have taught us how to clean the village and the surrounding area, because it's good for our health," said Banian Mawroh, a teenager sitting at the entrance of her small but gleaming family home.

After the village built its first road 12 years ago, a journalist from Discover India travel mag-



A group of Indian tourists eat at a restaurant.

azine wrote a now-infamous article naming it the cleanest village in Asia. The trickle of tourists became a flood, with visitors now reaching 250 a day in high season, swelling the village's population by 50 percent. But the accolades have brought several downsides. "Now there is noise pollution. I've talked to the village council which has written to the government to build a new parking lot further away," said Rishot

Khongthohrem, 51, a guesthouse owner.

Deepak Laloo, a former official of the Meghalaya Tourism Development Forum, advised the village in the early stages of its tourism development but fears for the impact of the visitor influx. "There's no more privacy. A woman is washing her clothes, she's being photographed," he said. "That social bond which binds the village together is disintegrating," he said.

Cholera outbreak

Mawlynnong's concern for hygiene emerged about 130 years ago when an outbreak of cholera struck. With no medical facilities in the village, cleanliness was seen as vital to prevent the spread of disease. "Christian missionaries told our ancestors: you can protect yourself from the plague (cholera) only if you maintain good hygiene, be it at home, with food, on your land, in the village, or for your body," Khongthohrem said. Mawlynnong maintained its fastidious habits and has gone on to other achievements, eradicating open defecation-prevalent across much of rural India-with toilets for each of its approximately 95 households.

The village has even been hailed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in an autumn radio address imploring Indians to erase the poor national image of rubbish-strewn highways and monuments under his Clean India campaign. "I was amazed to know that there is such a village in remote north-east, Meghalaya which is so passionately carrying the mission of cleanliness for years," he said. While the pristine village is proud of its achievements, some believe it must limit visitor numbers to protect the wellbeing of its inhabitants. "They must learn to regulate the number of tourists and to say no at some point," tourism expert Laloo said. — AFP

'Star Wars: Episode VIII' release delayed to Dec 2017

There is a disturbance in the force. The release of "Star Wars: Episode VIII" has been delayed from May 2017 to Dec. 15, 2017, the Walt Disney Co announced Wednesday. The date change postpones the next "Star Wars" installment set to follow the box-office hit "The Force Awakens." Though "Star Wars" was once synonymous with the summer blockbuster, the date change means that the franchise will again look to dominate movie theaters in the holiday season. It has proven a lucrative match for "The Force Awakens," which has made a record \$861 million domestically and \$1.88 billion globally in five weeks of release.

Disney offered no reason for the delay, but rumors have recently swirled that writer-director Rian Johnson ("Looper"), who is taking over for JJ Abrams, is rewriting the script. Production is set to begin next month in London. In the interim, Gareth Edwards' "Star Wars" spin-off "Rogue One" is due out Dec 16 this year. With prominent release dates now staked out by studios years in



This photo provided by Disney shows Daisy Ridley as Rey, left, and John Boyega as Finn, in a scene from the new film, "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," directed by JJ Abrams. — AP

advance for their largest franchises, the impact of the switch immediately caused ripples.

The new date sets up a potential but unlikely head-to-head between "Star Wars" and "Avatar." James Cameron's "Avatar 2" had been planned for Christmas 2017, though few expect 20th Century Fox to hit that date with the much-delayed "Avatar" sequel. A spokesman for Fox didn't immediately respond to an email Wednesday. One movie definitely affected is Steven Spielberg's "Ready Player One," a science-fiction release for Warner Bros. It's scheduled for the same Dec 15 weekend in 2017.

Disney moved one of its other billion-dollar franchises, "Pirates of the Caribbean," to May 26, 2017. The Johnny Depp series returns with "Dead Men Tell No Tales."

At the same time, Sony Pictures moved two of its biggest movies into summer 2017. The next "Spider-Man," starring Tom Holland and directed by Jon Watts, shifted up three weeks to July 28, 2017. Jake Kasdan's "Jumanji" remake shifted from Christmas 2016 to July 28, 2017. — AP



A dolphin jumping through a loop held by his trainer who rides a Beluga during a performance of the Russia-based Moscow Dolphinarium in Bishkek. —AFP photos

Dolphin circus sparks animal cruelty debate in Central Asia

Inside a travelling aquatic circus in Kyrgyzstan's capital Bishkek, whoops and cheers go up as a dolphin leaps out of a pool and slam-dunks a ball through a basketball net. Hundreds of people packed inside the Moscow Travelling Dolphinarium to watch dolphins and beluga whales perform acrobatic stunts, against a painted backdrop of blue skies and palm trees. A blonde female announcer dressed as a sailor spurs on the animals like champion athletes. "A real sportsman doesn't give up so easily," she booms as a beluga named Dandy leaps out of the water but fails to whack a ball hanging on a string with his tail.

But he does not fluff up his second attempt. "And he's got it this time!" the presenter shouts as the crowd roars in approval over a soundtrack of blaring rock and Russian pop ballads. While the New Year's show wowed crowds in landlocked Kyrgyzstan, it also fuelled a long-running debate in former Soviet states about cruelty to animals. Travelling dolphinariums are banned across much of the world but remain popular in the ex-Soviet bloc where forms of circus entertainment prohibited in the West, such as acts with wild animals like lions and bears, continue to thrive despite concerns about animal welfare.

Yet opposition to animal abuse has grown in recent times, with local activists using the Internet to gather data and mobilize opposition to practices they say involve animal cruelty or stress. Before the Moscow dolphin circus rolled into town, 1,500 people signed an online petition imploring Kyrgyzstan's President Almazbek Atambayev to ban it. On opening night, a group of protesters picketed the performance with posters featuring drawings of weeping dolphins, some of them by children. "Why has this dolphin circus ended up in Kyrgyzstan? Because it has nowhere else to go and we are a poor country with lax legislation," Anna Kirilenko of BIOM, an environmentalist non-profit organization



A Beluga during a performance of the Russia-based Moscow Dolphinarium.

based in Bishkek, told AFP.

Authorities in Bishkek however defended the show. "Dolphins love to be touched. Training and performances are a form of play for dolphins...they were born in captivity and thus would not survive in the wild," the mayor's office said in a statement. Video footage secretly recorded by citizen journalists showing a circus whale in the Russian city of Perm being kept in a small metal container for days on end has been used by activists to press their case. A representative of the Moscow Travelling Dolphinarium denied any connection between the circus and the whale in Perm, saying the company never toured in Russia outside the capital.

Shooting stray dogs

Animal abuse is a recurring theme in Kyrgyzstan—the second-poorest country to emerge from the breakup of the Soviet

Union. In 2011, authorities in Bishkek announced plans to shoot around 10,000 stray dogs, sparking an international outcry and a number of petitions demanding the creatures be spared. The government defended the shootings, arguing that housing the dogs or organizing a program of mass sterilization was too costly. Neighboring Tajikistan also has a sometimes unsavory reputation on animal welfare.

For many years, a white-bearded man patrolled the streets of the capital Dushanbe with a sad-looking muzzled bear, offering rides to passers-by. Both he and his bear died in 2013. The stress and discomfort suffered by aquatic mammals in travelling circuses has attracted particular attention. In 2010, a beluga whale called Dale died from heart problems in Kazakhstan while touring with a Russian circus. Dale's circus partner lost interest in performing tricks after his death and disappeared from the show shortly afterwards, Kazakh media reported.

'Worst of the worst'

"These travelling dolphin circuses are the worst of the worst in terms of cruelty," said Richard O'Barry, founder of the US-based Dolphin Project that campaigns against dolphin captivity. "They haul dolphins and whales around in a truck. They live in a coffin-sized box. Then they milk as much money out of them before they die from stress-related diseases." O'Barry once trained dolphins for the US television show Flipper but turned his back on such displays after the dolphin that most often played the lead character died in what O'Barry believes was a suicide triggered by depression. These days, he cautions against what he calls "the born in captivity argument" used by dolphin circus owners to justify their shows. "Very little research has been done on this subject," O'Barry told AFP. "Many of these dolphins probably were born in the wild." —AFP

Philanthropists hand Lithuania world-class modern art museum



Lithuanian painter Patricija Jurskaityte poses for a picture in Vilnius. — AFP photos

Local philanthropists are teaming up with a world-renowned architect to hand Lithuania's capital Vilnius its first modern art museum, with doors due to open in early 2019. Designed by Daniel Libeskind, the author of Berlin's landmark Jewish Museum and New York's National September 11 Memorial and Museum, the Vilnius venue will feature Lithuanian art from the Soviet-era 1960s through to the present day.

A model of the future museum reveals a striking angular white concrete cube with a diagonal passageway and a large mirrored outer terrace at the back. "It is not my largest project, it is one of the smallest," Libeskind said of the venue, the first of its kind in the Baltic states. "It's a museum for people. It is



The wooden model of Modern and Contemporary Art Center by architect Daniel Libeskind in Vilnius.

not just for art lovers, but for families, for kids. People just enjoy the public space, then will enter the museum and then get also interested in all the contents." Philanthropist Viktoras Butkus is spending 8.5 million euros (\$9.2 million) on the museum and its unique collection. Part of a vibrant crop of post-Soviet era entrepreneurs, Butkus earned his fortune in 2010 by selling his stake in Fermentas, an enzymes producer for biotechnology companies.

Rich collection

"Since Lithuania regained independence in 1991 ... neither museums nor collectors have bought works from this period" due to a lack of funding, he told AFP, referring to the period spanning the Soviet and post-Soviet era. "A whole piece of our country's culture has thus disappeared" in galleries, companies or abroad, added Butkus, who is financing the museum along with wife Danguole. Butkus has collected about 4,000 works of art, mostly over the past six years. They include paintings by surrealist Mikalojus Povilas Vilutis, by Augustinas Savickas—vaguely reminiscent of Chagall—as well as sculptures by Ruta Jusonyte.

The collection also includes videos and snapshots documenting the development of Lithuanian photography. Danguole took art history courses to gear up for the project. "They are the first to buy art not officially sanctioned by the state from the late Soviet era," says art historian Erika Grigoraviciene, adding that the Butkuses have compiled "one of the richest collections of the period". "There are interesting paintings by artists exposed to solitude, despair, anger," she added. "We noticed that there were many such works created after 1990, but galleries and museums did not have the money to buy them." —AFP

Exaggerated proportions kick off Paris menswear shows



Models present creations by Valentino during men's Fashion Week for the Fall/Winter 2016/2017 collection in Paris. —AP/AFP photos

icy winds and empty seats defined the first day of the menswear shows at Paris Fashion Week - with heightened security following November's deadly attacks in the French capital. Some front-row celebrities were no-shows but they ended up missing out on top-notch creativity for the fall-winter 2016-17 season - with exaggerated proportions featuring in Valentino and Raf Simons. Here are the highlights of Wednesday's catwalk collections.



VALENTINO

Designers Pierpaolo Piccioli and Maria Grazia Chiuri did away with the military styles that have peppered the nascent menswear aesthetic. Wednesday's show - in the magnificent 18th-century Hotel Salomon de Rothschild town house - was all the better for moving Valentino in a welcome creative direction. Sixties' styles began the proceedings soberly enough - what the designers humorously called "existential blandness." Graphic monochrome turtlenecks were paired nicely with long black coats with elongated, oversize proportions, or tight-fitting double-breasted pea coats with skinny pants. But then flashes of punk - like some blown-up black-and-white check plaid on a statement coat - demonstrated that this collection was not going to remain sober all the way through. True enough, embroidered pearls in Native American patterns served as sumptuous decorations on a series of enviable retro coats that showcased the house's famed couture roots.

And then the designers really let their hair down in a tribal-bohemian finale - which showcased perhaps too many looks. Ponchos rubbed shoulders with embroidered feather motifs, and bold tectonic patterns on coats had fashionistas pulling out their smartphone cameras.

French federation tightens show security

France's fashion federation is ratcheting up security at ready-to-wear shows during the menswear and haute couture week, as the country still reels from some of the worst attacks on French soil in peacetime. The federation said it is collaborating with authorities in enforcing a national state of emergency until Feb 26 - a move, it admits, "might generate some constraints for the guests." Designer Franck Sorbier urged industry professionals to bring the bare minimum and banned big bags while designer Elie Saab warned that people will be searched and refused entry without ID. The Paris fashion season is always a huge operation for French authorities, who have to

divert traffic to accommodate the traveling circus of fashionistas that try to see over 70 official shows.

Raf Simons goes back to school

It was a back to school with a dash of the 1980's for Raf Simons, who's been making ripples since October last year for resigning as Christian Dior's creative director. At his Wednesday night menswear show, the Belgian designer showed that he has retained a sense of humor - at least for his eponymous label. "Gargantuan" could be a better word than "oversized" to describe the surreally exaggerated proportions of Simons' russet and blue college sweaters and striped high school cardigans in his fall-winter 2016 show. Skinny models sported skinny black drainpipes, further contrasting the oversized shapes. Collars were nibbled away as if a bored school kid had got hungry ahead of lunch break. There were some clever moments of fashion fusion - large, floppy cuffs that might readily be associated with slouchy high school adolescents at times evoked Asiatic styles, which also feature long, sweeping cuffs. Most looks were, of course, unwearable. But Simons is a fashion "intellectual" more interested in ideas than practicality.



Models present creations by Lemaire.



Lemaire feels the blues

It was a study in blue for former Hermes designer Christophe Lemaire's eponymous label. The focused 31-piece collection artfully experimented with some beautiful hues on loose silhouettes- such as blue gray, Prussian blue, navy and true indigo. Elegance was the name of the game, with sumptuous, timeless fabrics on a cape, a sophisticated neck tie or loose silky buttoned-

up shirts riffing nicely off the timeless stone cloisters where the show was held. But Lemaire is an "it" designer now, and casual sneakers with white soles and pants and jack-

ets with a sheen gave this collection a contemporary feel.

Paris fashion goes digital

Paris fashion organizers are

making it easier in the digital age to follow shows and trends. Starting this month, the federation has launched a new smartphone app called "Paris Fashion Week" to

Models present creations by Walter Van Beirendonck.

help fashion followers know where and when catwalk shows are occurring. It also offers insight into up-and-coming designers showcased in a fashion fair called Designers Apartment that runs alongside the main fashion week. In addition, the "New Now" function tells users in which shops specific garments from some 30 brands can be purchased as they hit the shops. — AP



Easy tips for making a tastier (and healthier) TURKEY CHILI

By Melissa D' Arabian

Everyone has a favorite chili recipe, and this is the time of year to break out yours, invite over some friends and yell at football players on TV. Maybe it's time to try a new, healthier recipe, too? Chili is classic American comfort food, so we automatically assume that it can't be healthy. But since it is so darned tasty, it's worth the price of admission to try. And while I'm not against the occasional indulgence, I also love a recipe that manages to be both comforting and healthy.

Enter my game day turkey chili. Stay with me, here. This will not be your typical turkey chili because I have a few tricks up my sleeve. Don't get me wrong, I love a good turkey chili. But they do occupy a special place in the stratified chili eco-system. Put them in a chili competition and you'll see they land well below the fatty brisket chilies that feature tiny puddles of tasty melted fat that pleasantly coat the palate. Turkey chili, if I'm honest, has been relegated to the "at least it's hot" status for too long.

Here are my tricks. First, make it a red chili. White chili step aside for a moment. The red part comes from tomato, which is healthy, and frankly just feels like comfort food. Second, skip the salt. Instead, use soy sauce directly on the meat after cooking it.

This is perhaps the greatest tip I can give you regarding ground turkey! White-ish meat in a deep red chili looks a little strange. You

are reminded that you are eating The Healthy Turkey Chili.

But deepen that meat color just a little with the soy sauce and you are back in the land of Real Meaty Chili. The soy sauce also adds tons of rich, savory meaty flavor, a big benefit for a meat that can taste a little flat. Final tip: Add a bit of unsweetened cocoa powder, which deepens both the color and the flavor. This is turkey chili done right! And so, 2016 is off to a good start Game Day Turkey Chili.

Preparation

In a Dutch oven or other large, heavy pot over medium-high, heat 1 teaspoon of the oil. Add the turkey and cook, breaking it up, until cooked through, about 7 minutes. Sprinkle the turkey with the soy sauce and smoked paprika, then mix until well-coated. Continue to cook until any moisture in the pot is gone, about 3 minutes. Spoon the meat out of the pan and set aside.

Return the pot to the heat and add the remaining oil. Add the onion and red pepper, then cook until tender, about 5 minutes. Increase the heat to high, then add the beer to deglaze the pan, scraping the bottom to loosen any stuck bits. Simmer for 2 minutes. Return the meat to the pot, along with the beans, tomato sauce, crushed tomatoes, chili powder, cayenne and cocoa powder. Bring to a simmer. Reduce the heat to low, then simmer for 30 minutes. Serve with hot sauce, yogurt, scallions and cheese on the side.

INGREDIENTS

Start to finish: 45 minutes; serves 8
2 teaspoons vegetable oil, divided
1 pound lean ground turkey
2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
2 teaspoons smoked paprika
1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
1 red bell pepper, cored and finely chopped
1 12-ounce light beer
2 15-ounce cans low-sodium black beans, drained and rinsed
1 14-ounce can low-sodium tomato sauce
2 14-ounce cans crushed tomatoes
2 tablespoons chili powder
Dash of cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon cocoa powder
Hot sauce, to taste
Plain low-fat Greek yogurt, to serve
Chopped scallions, to serve
Shredded cheddar or Mexican cheese, to serve



CHILI SHRIMP

recipe reflects China and India

By Meera Sodha

When it comes to food, India and China have more in common than you might think. Both harbor a deep love of ear-tingling chilies, vast quantities of garlic and seafood. That's probably why Chinese food has found its way into the hearts of Indians. All across India, from Goa to Pondicherry, you'll find entire sections of Indian restaurant menus dedicated to Chinese dishes, many of which have achieved cult status, including "manchow soup," "hakka noodles" and "Manchurian chicken."

But these dishes also have been endlessly adapted so they now are distorted versions of the originals and more Indian than Chinese. Still, they are loved fiercely and cooked regularly in Indian kitchens. Among the most special of dishes and perfect for celebrating the Chinese New Year is this signature Indo-Chinese dish - chili jumbo shrimp, which is made using bird's eye chilies, soy sauce, ginger and garlic.

The shrimp are juicy, bright and enlivening, the heat of the chilies working perfectly against the natural sweetness of the

seafood. I love to serve these after a soup or dumpling course alongside egg noodles or rice fried quickly in a little sesame oil and a side of salted and steamed greens, such as broccoli or bok choy.

Whatever you choose to serve them with, they will sit harmoniously alongside other Chinese dishes. Best of all, they can be cooked in a matter of minutes, leaving you more time to celebrate with family and friends.

Preparation

In a mortar and pestle or with a spice grinder, roughly grind the cumin seeds to a coarse powder. In a large skillet over medium, heat the oil. Add the cumin, garlic, chilies, pepper, sugar and salt. Cook, stirring, for 2 minutes, then add the tomato puree, soy sauce and all but a small amount of the ginger and scallions. Cook for another 2 minutes. Increase the heat to high and add the shrimp. Cook, stirring, for 3 minutes, or until the shrimp turn from grey to pink. Remove from the heat. Transfer to a serving dish and sprinkle with the remaining ginger and scallions.

INGREDIENTS

Start to finish: 20 minutes

Servings: 4

" 2 teaspoons cumin seeds

" 2 tablespoons canola oil

" 5 cloves garlic, crushed

" 2 to 3 red bird's eye, serrano or habanero chilies, finely chopped

" 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper

" 1 teaspoon sugar

" 2/3 teaspoon salt

" 2 tablespoons tomato puree

" 2 tablespoons dark or regular soy sauce

" 1 1/2-inch chunk fresh ginger, cut into matchsticks

" 8 scallions, white and green parts, finely chopped

" 1 1/2 pounds raw jumbo shrimp, shells removed

Definitive Robert De Niro movies

This weekend, Robert De Niro torments his soon-to-be-wed grandson (Zac Efron) in the new comedy "Dirty Grandpa" - and while we'd imagine odds are against it joining the ranks of De Niro's many critically acclaimed classics, this still seems like a great excuse to take a fond look back at some of his proudest movie moments. With so many distinguished entries in his lengthy filmography, it was hard to narrow things down, but even if it presented us with some tough choices, this is one list of definitive films that truly lives up to its name.



THE DEER HUNTER (1978)

De Niro picked up a Best Supporting Actor Academy Award nomination for his work in *The Deer Hunter* - one of nine nominations the film received against five wins, including Best Picture - continuing a critically acclaimed run that included his Oscar-winning appearances in *The Godfather Part II* and *Raging Bull*. Like those films, *The Deer Hunter* is a challenging, confrontational drama that poses uncomfortable questions in

occasionally quite uncomfortable ways, using its main characters (played by De Niro, Christopher Walken, and John Savage) to grapple with the ghosts of the Vietnam War and the uncertain economic climate in late '70s America. "It has no more moral intelligence than the Clint Eastwood action pictures," argued Pauline Kael for the *New Yorker*, "yet it's an astonishing piece of work, an uneasy mixture of violent pulp and grandiosity, with an enraptured view of common life - poetry of the commonplace."



THE GODFATHER, PART II (1974)

1972's *The Godfather* was an instant classic, taking home three Academy Awards (including Best Picture) and earning universal critical acclaim - so even if *The Godfather Part II* had been an absolute failure, Francis Ford Coppola would have deserved credit for extreme chutzpah. Happily for all of us, this turned out to be the rare case where there was another film's worth of story to tell. Working with *Godfather* author Mario Puzo, Coppola managed to add a prequel to the original (starring De Niro as a younger version of Vito Corleone) while continuing its story, and the result was a Best Supporting Actor Oscar for De Niro - and one of the very few must-see sequels in American film. "It has an even broader scope than the original," observed Jeffrey M Anderson for the *San Francisco Examiner*, "but does not fail in its depiction of small, intimate moments and surprising emotional reveals."

TAXI DRIVER (1976)



Deeply unsettling and unrelentingly bleak, *Taxi Driver* captivated critics and audiences - and earned four Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture and Best Actor - by plunging viewers into the waking nightmare of alienation, obsession, and violence experienced by its central character, troubled loner Travis Bickle. Not exactly family fare, in other words, but a film that very much reflected the disillusionment and general unease of its time - and that remains painfully relevant after several decades, as noted by the *Apollo Guide's* Dan Jardine: "Its themes of urban decay, anomie and violence which infuse the impending sense of doom at the heart of this film still hang like black clouds over many cities today."

GOODFELLAS (1990)



De Niro reunited with Martin Scorsese - as well as his Raging Bull and Once Upon a Time in America costar, Joe Pesci - for this masterfully frenetic look at life in the Mafia through the eyes of Henry Hill (Ray Liotta), a one-time mobster who rose through the ranks as a young man before famously turning informant in the early '80s. Scorsese employed a stellar ensemble cast for Goodfellas, including a number of future stars (among them Samuel L. Jackson), but the movie's real draw came from the terrible true story at its center, and how convincingly the seductive pull of the criminal lifestyle was portrayed. "You walk away," wrote Richard Schickel for TIME Magazine, "tantalized by a view into the darkest part of yourself, glad that that part is still behind bars."

HEAT (1995)

The ensemble heist thriller that most ensemble heist thrillers wish they were, Michael Mann's Heat would have been noteworthy even if all it did was bring Robert De Niro and Al Pacino together for a few scenes. Happily, the movie's much more than that: Mann juggles his incredible cast (which also included Val Kilmer, Natalie Portman, Ashley Judd, and Jon Voight) as deftly as he manages the many moving parts in a storyline pitting a dogged cop who's sacrificed his family for his career (Pacino) against a notorious criminal (De Niro), topping the whole thing off with stellar cinematography that makes Los Angeles look positively incredible. "Just when it seemed that the only hope for crime movies lay in the post-modernist artifice of films like Pulp Fiction, Mann reinvests the genre with brooding, modernist conviction," applauded Newsweek's David Ansen. "This one sticks to your gut." - (www.rottentomatoes.com)



RAGING BULL (1980)

Aviscerally violent, ruthlessly gripping, adrenaline-soaked depiction of one man's self-destructive spiral, Raging Bull represents what can happen when a star believes in a project enough to fight for it - and when a director believes he's down to his last chance at redemption, not only as a filmmaker but as a human being. De Niro won a Best Actor Oscar for his mesmerizing turn as real-life boxer Jake LaMotta, and it's easy to understand why - even without the 70 pounds he packed on to play LaMotta's post-retirement years, his commitment to the role is impossible to miss. Just as impressive is Scorsese's work, which earned him a Best Director nomination (and the film a Best Picture nomination); this is a movie that presents a protagonist who is essentially unlikeable and wholly relatable in equal measure, and dares the viewer to look away. As Amy Taubin wrote for the Village Voice, "The most obvious basis for the film's claim to greatness lies in Scorsese's devastating critique of the very codes of masculinity that shaped him as a filmmaker, and in Robert De Niro's performance, through which that critique is made flesh."



ONCE UPON A TIME IN AMERICA (1984)

Director Sergio Leone pursued Once Upon a Time in America through over a decade of development after falling in love with the source material, Harry Grey's novel The Hoods, and at one point envisioned completing it as a pair of three-hour films - a fittingly expansive running time for the epic saga of a group of Jewish kids who rise from penny-ante hoods in 1920s Manhattan and later grow up to become key figures among the city's organized crime element. Portraying main character David "Noodles" Aaronson, De Niro anchored a solid ensemble cast that also included James Woods and Elizabeth McGovern, but none of them were enough to overcome the array of edits faced by the film after Leone turned it in to the studio - including the American edit, which rearranged the storyline into chronological order and trimmed the whole thing down under two hours and 20 minutes. In more recent years, a restored 251-minute version has seen release, finally allowing audiences to experience a closer approximation of its director's vision. As John Hartl wrote for Film.com, "Seeing what Leone always intended is like getting your dirty glasses washed."



Friday Times

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 2016

Travel



48 Hours in Ho Chi Minh City

Welcome to one of Asia's most compelling cities. Ho Chi Minh City is the energetic commercial hub of modern Vietnam, with wide boulevards, grand colonial buildings, fascinating cultural sights, and a vibrant tangle of narrow laneways - all framed by a kinetic river of traffic. From noodle breakfasts to temple visits, art tours and cocktails with a view, here's how to make the most of two days in former Saigon.



Day One

Morning

Pull up a stool at Ben Thanh market for a hearty breakfast of herb-laden pho (noodle soup) and ca phe sua da (iced coffee with milk). From Ben Thanh's iconic clock tower, it's a short stroll to Ho Chi Minh City's Fine Arts Museum, a building displaying the elegant architecture of French colonial times. Conduct your own exploration of the galleries, which showcase centuries-old statuary and contemporary art inspired by the tragedy of war. Or visit with expat Sophie Hughes, who runs in-depth four-hour tours of the city's art scene. From the heritage of the Fine Arts Museum, continue to the soaring modernity of the 68-storey Bitexco Financial Tower. Ascend to the 48th-floor Saigon Skydeck for views of the impetuous growth of

Vietnam's economic capital. From the tower, make your way north along the Saigon River to the 3A Alternative Art Area. Crammed with cafes, galleries and retailers, the hip laneways are also punctuated with colourful street art. Cool down with a Tra Mojito (iced lemon and mint tea) at the Plantrip Cha teahouse.

Afternoon

Continue along bustling Ly Tu Trong to Ho Chi Minh City's commercial hub and have lunch at the Secret Garden - negotiate your way down an alley and up six flights of rickety stairs to this outdoor restaurant atop an art deco apartment building. A few chickens peck away happily in the restaurant's rooftop herb garden, views extend across the city, and the home-style Vietnamese food is rustic and full of flavour. The fresh sodas are excellent - try the zingy ginger and lemongrass. After lunch, walk about 350m to the colonial red-brick ele-

gance of Notre Dame Cathedral. Across from the cathedral, check out the interior of Ho Chi Minh City's glorious Central Post Office, which was built between 1886 and 1891. Highlights of the Gustave Eiffel-designed building include wall-covering historic maps of the city. Then continue across 30/4 Park to the nearby Reunification Palace, which is accessed by walking through iron gates that were cast aside by Communist tanks when the city fell to the North Vietnamese Army on 30 April 1975. Four decades on, the building's 1960s architecture and memory-packed halls make for one of the city's most intriguing attractions. Don't miss the basement, a labyrinth of tunnels filled with maps, situation rooms and 1960s telecommunications gear.

Evening

It's now time for someone else to do the work, so jump on the back of a motorbike or

scooter on a tour to explore the city after dark - coursing through the neon-lit excitement of Saigon's evening traffic could be the most fun you'll ever have on two wheels. Both Vespa Adventure and XO Tours incorporate lots of street food into their nightly adventures. A highlight is grilled seafood and ice-cold 333 beer in the District 2 neighbourhood; your two-wheeled discovery of the city could also include raucous rock clubs or bohemian music cafes. For a final nightcap, adjourn to one of the city's exciting rooftop bars. Check out the 21st-century innovation of Air 360, or the river views from the M Bar at Hotel Majestic.

Day Two

Morning

In previous centuries, the bustling Chinese quarter of Cholon was a separate settlement, but the district southwest of central HCMC is now an integral part of the city's modern sprawl.



30
Travel

Friday Times

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 2016



Begin your second day by having another local breakfast, this time with the friendly stallholders at Cholon's Binh Tay market, before negotiating the surrounding urban maze. Streets are fragrant with medicinal herbs, storefronts are festooned with Chinese-language signs, and Taoist and Buddhist temples stand near 19th-century Catholic churches. Explore almost five centuries of Cholon history and architecture on a Heritage Tour with long-term city resident Tim Doling, or create your own walking trail to discover the most interesting of the area's many temples. Slowly burning coils of fragrant incense frame Thien Hau Pagoda, dedicated to the Chinese goddess of seafarers; and nearby at Phuoc An Hoi Quan Pagoda a riot of red, gold, green and yellow creates one of the city's most beautiful and ornate temples.

Afternoon

Lunch back in central Saigon at Propaganda bistro - overlooking 30/4 Park and serving regional dishes from across the country - then continue about 1km west to the War Remnants Museum. The human

tragedy of the decades of conflict that racked Vietnam in the 20th century is rendered in poignant and often confronting detail here, but visiting this museum is essential. Be sure

to venture upstairs to see the Requiem Exhibition, a striking showcase of images taken by legendary war photographers killed in the conflict, and see if your country is repre-

sented in the ground-floor collection of posters and photographs supporting the anti-war movement. After visiting this compelling museum, continue to the city's lush Botanic Gardens for some quiet reflection.

Evening

Begin with craft beer at the Pasteur Street Brewing Company - some of their brews use local ingredients such as Dalat coffee or rambutan and lemongrass - before trying the classy southeast Asian flavours at restaurant and bar The Racha Room. For a more raffish experience, crowd in with locals at the quirky and loads-of-fun Quan Ut Ut. With a name roughly translating to 'Oink Oink Cafe', this easygoing riverside eatery serves up slow-cooked American barbecue with a Vietnamese spin. From the energetic good times of Quan Ut Ut, it's just a short hop across the river to District 4 and two of the city's best after-dark venues. Cargo plays host to live music from around the region; while nearby at The Observatory, DJs and other performers raise the roof on a regular basis.



WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

90's Songs 2

Find and circle all of the 1990's songs that are hidden in the grid.
The remaining letters spell an additional song.

L M E V E I L E B A R B I E G I R L O
L O E V O L S S E L D N E L I N G E R
O T E M O T I O N S S I D E T S I W T
V O Y U A P P N B W G B A Y B A B Y G
E W E Y N L O U G E I V G N O L M W Y
I N N D U D R B M Y E S L C D Y S E D
S P O S A C E A Y D S L E L I T R A O
L H H E S P J R I N A A R H R P N K B
R I L O F O A R S W N O T O T G E B O
I L N T T U S C R T W I N N E I T O N
G L R T H T N E S Y A G K R A O S O P
R Y E U E I D K R E E N O S O F P M O
E G C L N N S A D N V U D F N M O B T
M Y R Y O A N K O A S O U I O U O A S
M A U W A I W U I L F N L U N G N S T
U D S I D W G A A S K I T L I G M T N
S O H R O H Y M Y Y S H E M A N A I A
H T O O M S O M A L I A B D G E N C C
N D O W N T O W N T R A I N A I R I S

- AGAIN
BABY, BABY
BAILAMOS
BARBIE GIRL
BELIEVE
BOOMBASTIC
CAN'T STOP
CRUSH
DANGEROUS
DOWNTOWN TRAIN
EMOTIONS
ENDLESS LOVE
- EPIC
ESCAPADE
FANTASY
FUNKDAFIED
GETTO JAM
HONEY
IRIS
LET'S RIDE
LINGER
LONGVIEW
LOVE IS
MOTOWNPHILLY
- MOUTH
MY WAY
NAME
NO SCRUBS
NOBODY
ORDINARY WORLD
PLUSH
REAL LOVE
RUNAWAY
SLAM
SMOOTH
SPOONMAN
- STAY
STRONG ENOUGH
SUMMER GIRLS
THE SIGN
THIS KISS
TODAY
TOO FUNKY
TWISTED
UNDERSTANDING
UNSKINNY BOP
WEAK
WONDERWALL

Yesterday's Solution

Computer Jargon 2

J P T O U M I I D T W I N A B I X I M
C E E R R S N U C A C H E E B S U N E
D V M E A O R O R M V R P R Y T N P D O
B A O K E M O G E G A A I A E E I U I O
O S I G U P I H W W J W I R I T I M
W I A I O N G S P E N C S D D I A A E D
N O C H B R E S S A A S R M F R N O
L T O T A R M A R O N A S L E R C U
O K N W E I S O N I R O H I E
A S S F A R P E P E I E R P P I H M
D E W Q A U J T L A B R I T E
R O O V R C S U S I I C E N R E N
S I R D T O I I T C I O U D I F C T
E I N E P R O M P T E U O I N P S
R V I Y N S U I T E U O O H E D U O O
V E W A E S C S R I T O C L S T O O
E R M R M U L T I M E D I A I B I S S
R E G I T A B Y I E R U R A O B Y E R

- ASCII
BANDWIDTH
BIOS
BUG
CACHE
CHIP
COPY
CPU
CRASH
CYBERSPACE
DATABASE
DESKTOP
- DISK
DOCUMENT
DOWNLOAD
DRIVER
EMOTICON
ETHERNET
FAQ
FIREWIRE
FONT
FREWARE
GIGABYTE
HACKER
- HARDWARE
INPUT
JAVA
JPEG
KEYBOARD
LINUX
MENU
MODEM
MULTIMEDIA
NETIQUETTE
OPEN
- PASSWORD
PCI
PERIPHERAL
PORT
PRINTER
REBOOT
RESOLUTION
SAVE
SCROLL
SERVER
SMILEY
- SOUNDCARD
SPYWARE
TERAFLOP
TROJAN HORSE
UPLOAD
USB
USERNAME
VIRUS
WEB BROWSER
WINDOWS
ZIP FILE

The hidden word is: MICROPROCESSOR

Daily SuDoku

				7			5
4				5	3		
1			9	8			
5	6			1		9	
	9		8			2	4
				6	9		1
		2	4				6
9			7				

very hard

CROSSWORD 1145

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15				16						17			
18				19					20				
21				22				23	24				
	25				26	27	28						
29	30		31			32				33	34	35	36
37		38			39		40						
41			42		43		44				45		
46			47		48		49			50			
51					52				53				
54				55			56					57	
			58			59	60		61	62			
63	64	65		66	67		68				69	70	
71				72		73			74				
75				76				77		78			
79				80							81		

ACROSS

1. Periodic shedding of the cuticle in arthropods or the outer skin in reptiles.
5. Minute blackish gregarious flies destructive to mushrooms and seedlings.
11. Informal terms for a mother.
15. South American armadillo with three bands of bony plates.
16. A large building at an airport where aircraft can be stored and maintained.
17. (Roman mythology) God of love.
18. A Russian river.
19. Relating to or near the ulna.
21. Disgraceful gossip about the private lives of other people.
23. A tray for making cubes of ice in a refrigerator.
25. Water frozen in the solid state.
26. Of a cask or barrel.
29. (Sumerian) Goddess personifying earth.
31. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
32. Affected manners intended to impress others.
33. Other than what is under consideration or implied.
37. How long something has existed.
40. Soft light-colored wood of any of various linden trees.
41. Either of two saclike respiratory organs in the chest of vertebrates.
43. Type genus of the Ranidae.
45. The sound made by corvine birds.
46. East Indian tree bearing a profusion of intense vermilion velvet-textured blooms and yielding a yellow dye.
48. To some (great or small) extent.
51. Native to Egypt but cultivated widely for its aromatic seeds and the oil from them used medicinally and as a flavoring in cookery.
52. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
53. Swiss mathematician (1707-1783).
54. A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
56. A state in southeastern United States.
57. A doctor's degree in religion.
58. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
59. A master's degree in business.
63. A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.
66. A metric unit of length equal to one thousandth of a meter.

Yesterday's Solution

4	7	2	9	1	6	5	8	3
1	6	8	7	3	5	9	4	2
9	3	5	4	2	8	7	1	6
8	4	9	6	7	2	1	3	5
7	2	1	5	8	3	4	6	9
6	5	3	1	4	9	8	2	7
3	9	6	8	5	1	2	7	4
5	1	4	2	6	7	3	9	8
2	8	7	3	9	4	6	5	1

medium

68. A flask that holds spirits.
71. A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.
74. Genus of tropical plants with creeping rootstocks and small umbellate flowers.
75. Extremely pleasing.
76. Having deserted a cause or principle.
78. A rotating disk shaped to convert circular into linear motion.
79. A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
80. Of or relating to Aram or to its inhabitants or their culture or their language.
81. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. A master's degree in library science.
2. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
3. An island of central Hawaii.
4. A psychological state induced by (or as if induced by) a magical incantation.
5. Any branch of Shinto other than Kokka.
6. South African plant widely cultivated for its showy pure white spathe and yellow spadix.
7. A hotel providing overnight lodging for travelers.
8. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
9. (plural) Rare collector's items.
10. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
11. (New Testament) Disciple of Jesus.
12. An independent ruler or chieftain (especially in Africa or Arabia).
13. Among the largest bony fish.
14. Showily imitative of art or artists.
20. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
22. Lacking or deprive of the sense of hearing wholly or in part.
24. Any of various trees or shrubs of the genus Cassia having pinnately compound leaves and usually yellow flowers followed by long seedpods.
27. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
28. A ribbon used as a decoration.
30. Large herbivorous tropical American arboreal lizards with a spiny crest along the back.
34. Relating to or applicable to or concerned with the administration of a city or town or district rather than a larger area.
35. Wet through and through.
36. Third son of Elizabeth II (born in 1964).
38. (Sumerian) God of the air and king of the Sumerian gods.
39. Cook and make edible by putting in a hot oven.
42. (New Testament) One of the three sages from the east who came bearing gifts for the infant Jesus.
44. Mild form of diabetes mellitus that develops gradually in adults.
47. Fastener consisting of a resinous composition that is plastic when warm.
49. Small family of usually tropical butterflies.
50. A major waterfall in southern Africa.
55. A slight convexity (as of the surface of a road).
60. God of wealth and love.
61. Many times at short intervals.
62. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
64. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
65. A French abbot.
67. An island northwest of Wales.
69. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
70. God of love and erotic desire.
72. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
73. A recurring sleep state during which dreaming occurs.
77. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.

Yesterday's Solution

A	B	O		C	O	M	P	L	E	C	T		T	O	E
M	A	C		A	C	H	R	O	M	I	A		A	D	D
A	B	C		S	T	O	O	G	E		E	M	B	E	D
H	E	A	D	E	R		P	E	E		N	A	I	R	A
		M	O	R	O	S	E			R	A	I	L	S	
C	C		U	N	I	O	N			B	A	A		A	G
A	H	A	B			L	E	A	S	E		Y	A	L	U
S	A	L	T	I	N	E		B	A	D		A	N	I	L
A	D	P		C	A	M	P		C		G		T	E	A
B	A	H	R	A	I	N	I			E	A	S	I	N	G
A	R	A	U	C	A		Q	U	E	B	E	C			
			P	O	S	E	U	R		B	A	R	A	K	A
A	K	E	E			V	A	L	E	T		U	S	E	D
I	N	S	E	C	T	A	N		X	I		B	A	B	A
R	I	O		P	I	N	C	T	A	D	A		N	A	N
S	T	P		U	N	S	E	A	M	E	D		A	B	A



00:20 Misfit Garage

01:10 What On Earth?

02:00 Uneearthed

02:50 Treasure Quest: Snake Island

03:40 Storage Hunters UK

04:05 The Liquidator

04:30 Storage Wars Canada

05:00 What Happened Next?

05:30 How Machines Work

06:00 Mythbusters

06:50 The Carbonaro Effect

07:15 The Carbonaro Effect

07:40 You Have Been Warned

08:30 Bear's Wild Weekend With Stephen Fry

09:20 Dual Survival

10:10 River Monsters

11:00 What On Earth?

11:50 Uneearthed

12:40 Treasure Quest: Snake Island

13:30 Misfit Garage

14:20 Street Outlaws

15:10 Engine Addict With Jimmy De Ville


16:00 Alaskan Bush People

21:00 Fast N' Loud

21:50 Street Outlaws

22:40 Engine Addict With Jimmy De Ville

23:30 Extreme Smuggling



00:35 Mythbusters

01:20 How It's Made: Dream Cars

01:44 How It's Made: Dream Cars

02:08 How The Universe Works

02:55 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

03:42 How The Universe Works

04:29 Mythbusters

05:16 How The Universe Works

06:03 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

06:50 Prototype This

07:37 How Do They Do It?

08:00 How Do They Do It?

08:23 Mythbusters

09:08 How The Universe Works

09:53 Prototype This

10:38 How It's Made: Dream Cars

11:00 How It's Made: Dream Cars

11:23 Invent It Rich

12:08 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

12:53 Prototype This

13:38 Mythbusters

14:23 How It's Made: Dream Cars

14:46 How It's Made: Dream Cars

15:10 How The Universe Works

15:57 Invent It Rich

16:44 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

17:31 Prototype This

18:18 How The Universe Works

19:05 Mythbusters

19:50 Strangest Weather On Earth

20:40 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?


21:25 How It's Made: Dream Cars

21:50 How It's Made: Dream Cars

22:15 How The Universe Works

23:00 Strangest Weather On Earth

23:45 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?



00:40 Who On Earth Did I Marry?

01:05 Who On Earth Did I Marry?

01:30 The Haunted

02:20 Ghost Lab

03:10 Deadly Affairs

04:00 Swamp Murders

04:45 Who On Earth Did I Marry?

05:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry?

05:30 The Haunted

06:20 Deadly Affairs

07:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones

08:00 Dr G: Medical Examiner

08:50 On The Case With Paula Zahn

09:40 Fatal Encounters

10:30 Murder Shift

11:20 Deadly Affairs

12:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones

13:00 The Will

13:50 I Almost Got Away With It

14:40 California Investigator



15:05 Dr G: Medical Examiner

15:55 Fatal Encounters

16:45 On The Case With Paula Zahn

17:35 Murder Shift

18:25 I Almost Got Away With It

19:15 The Will

20:05 Deadly Affairs

20:55 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones

21:45 California Investigator

22:10 Who On Earth...

22:35 Who On Earth...

23:00 Serial Killers

23:50 Deadly Devotion



00:00 Violetta

00:45 The Hive

00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

01:40 Wolfblood

02:05 Wolfblood

02:30 Violetta

03:15 The Hive

03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

03:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

04:10 Wolfblood

04:35 Wolfblood

05:00 Violetta

05:45 The Hive

05:50 Mouk

06:00 Lolirock

06:25 Sofia The First

06:50 That's So Raven

07:15 Gravity Falls

07:40 Jessie

08:05 Shake It Up

08:30 Shake It Up

08:55 That's So Raven

09:20 That's So Raven

09:45 Austin & Ally

10:10 Austin & Ally

10:35 A.N.T. Farm

11:00 A.N.T. Farm

11:25 Jessie

11:50 Jessie

12:20 Hank Zipzer

12:45 Fish Hooks

13:10 Good Luck Charlie

13:35 I Didn't Do It

14:00 Dog With A Blog

14:30 H2O

14:55 Girl Meets World

15:20 Liv And Maddie

15:45 Jessie

16:10 Violetta

17:00 I Love Violetta

17:10 Full Out



18:40 I Didn't Do It

19:05 First Class Chefs

19:30 Violetta

20:20 I Love Violetta

20:30 Home On The Range

21:47 The Good Dinosaur Movie Special

22:00 Binny And The Ghost

22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

23:10 Wolfblood

23:35 Wolfblood



00:00 Christina Milian Turned Up

00:55 The Grace Helbig Show

01:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

02:20 E! News

03:15 Giuliana & Bill

04:10 Ryan Seacrest With The Kardashians

05:05 E! Entertainment Special

06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

07:50 Style Star

08:20 E! News

09:15 Giuliana & Bill

11:10 The Grace Helbig Show

12:05 E! News

13:05 Christina Milian Turned Up

14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

15:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

16:00 Dash Dolls

18:00 E! News

19:00 Hollywood Cycle

20:00 WAGs

21:00 Fashion Bloggers

22:00 E! News

23:00 House Of DVF



00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

01:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers

02:00 Dinner At Tiffani's

03:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin

04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

05:00 Guy's Grocery Games

06:00 Chopped

07:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin

08:00 Chopped

09:00 Grandma's Secret Cookbook



09:30 Grandma's Secret Cookbook

10:00 The Kitchen

11:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics

11:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics

12:00 Chopped

13:00 Guy's Big Bite

13:30 Guy's Big Bite

14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

15:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin

15:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin

16:00 Chopped

17:00 The Kitchen

18:00 Siba's Table

18:30 Grandma's Secret Cookbook

19:00 Chopped

20:00 Guy's Grocery Games

21:00 Ching's Amazing Asia

21:30 Ching's Amazing Asia

22:00 Jenny Morris Cooks The Riviera

22:30 Jenny Morris Cooks The Riviera

23:00 The Freshman Class

23:30 The Freshman Class



00:10 Pick Me!

01:05 Emmerdale

01:30 Coach Trip

02:00 Coronation Street

02:30 Murdoch Mysteries

03:25 The Jonathan Ross Show

04:20 The Chase: Celebrity Specials

05:15 The Chase

06:10 Cook Me The Money

07:05 Coach Trip

07:30 The Jonathan Ross Show

08:25 The Chase: Celebrity Specials

09:20 Murdoch Mysteries

10:15 The Chase

11:10 Coach Trip

11:35 Pick Me!

12:30 Cook Me The Money

13:25 Emmerdale

13:50 Emmerdale

14:20 Coronation Street

14:45 Murdoch Mysteries

15:35 The Chase: Celebrity Specials

16:30 Grantchester

17:25 Code Of A Killer

18:20 Cook Me The Money

19:10 Coronation Street

19:35 The Chase: Celebrity Specials

20:30 Grantchester

21:25 Code Of A Killer

22:20 Coronation Street

22:50 Emmerdale

23:15 Emmerdale

23:40 Coach Trip



02:30 The Big C

04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon

05:30 Young & Hungry

06:00 Til Death

07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers

08:30 Young & Hungry

11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon

12:00 Til Death

13:00 Young & Hungry

16:30 Til Death

17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers

18:00 Fresh Off The Boat

18:30 Black-ish

19:00 Parks And Recreation

19:30 Baby Daddy

20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon

22:30 Girls

23:00 The Big C

23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers



00:00 Secrets And Lies

01:00 Blindspot

02:00 Empire

03:00 Secrets And Lies

04:00 Secrets And Lies

05:00 American Idol

06:00 White Collar

07:00 Drop Dead Diva

08:00 Witches Of East End

09:00 American Idol

10:00 White Collar

11:00 Drop Dead Diva

12:00 Top Gear (US)

13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show

14:00 Witches Of East End

15:00 Live Good Morning America

17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show

18:00 Witches Of East End

19:00 American Idol

21:00 Grey's Anatomy

22:00 Dominion

23:00 The Strain



00:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show

01:00 Good Morning America

03:00 Downton Abbey

04:00 Blood & Oil

05:00 Good Morning America



07:00 Top Gear (UK)

08:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show

09:00 Supernatural

10:00 Top Gear (UK)

11:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show

12:00 Resurrection

13:00 Shark Tank

14:00 Supernatural

15:00 Survivor: Cambodia

16:00 The Voice

18:00 Shark Tank

19:00 Supernatural

20:00 Resurrection

21:00 Shark Tank

22:00 Satisfaction

23:00 Blood & Oil



00:30 Inside

02:15 Truth Or Die

04:00 The Italian Job (2003)

06:00 Age Of Dinosaurs

08:00 The Hulk

10:30 Percy Jackson And The Lightning Thief


12:45 The Perfect Storm

15:00 The Malay Chronicles: Bloodlines

17:15 The Hulk

19:45 Percy Jackson And The Lightning Thief

22:00 Battle Of The Damned



00:15 Truth Or Die-PG15

02:00 The Italian Job (2003)-PG15

04:00 Age Of Dinosaurs-PG15

06:00 The Hulk-PG15

08:30 Percy Jackson And The Lightning Thief-PG15

10:45 The Perfect Storm-PG15

13:00 The Malay Chronicles: Bloodlines-PG15

15:15 The Hulk-PG15

17:45 Percy Jackson And The Lightning Thief-PG15

20:00 Battle Of The Damned-PG15

22:00 Hitman-18



00:00 No Way Jose

02:00 How To Lose A Guy In 10 Days

04:00 Planet 51

06:00 Down To Earth

08:00 No Clue

10:00 Planet 51

12:00 How To Lose A Guy In 10 Days

14:00 Space Dogs

16:00 No Clue

18:00 You Again

20:00 The Foot Fist Way

22:00 Hot Tub Time Machine 2



00:45 Sunshine On Leith-PG15

02:30 The Railway Man-PG15

04:30 Mandela: Long Walk To Freedom-PG15

07:00 Paranoia-PG15

09:00 Romeo & Juliet-PG15

11:00 Mandela: Long Walk To Freedom-PG15

13:30 The Railway Man-PG15

15:30 Still Mine-PG15

17:30 Romeo & Juliet-PG15

19:30 Blood Ties-PG15

21:45 Zulu-PG15

23:30 Enemy-18



00:00 Twice Born

02:30 Where Angels Fear To Tread

04:30 The Alamo

07:00 The Invisible Woman

09:00 What Dreams May Come

11:00 The Alamo

15:30 Tea With Mussolini

17:30 What Dreams May Come

19:30 Thank You For Smoking

21:15 We Gotta Get Out Of This Place

23:00 American Hustle



THE HOBBIT- THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES ON OSN MOVIES HD

osn MOVIES HD

- 01:15 The Guest-PG
- 03:00 Northpole-PG
- 05:00 The Single Moms Club-PG15
- 07:00 The Signal-PG15
- 09:00 The Boxrolls-PG
- 11:00 Knight Rusty-PG
- 12:30 The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies-PG
- 15:00 Draft Day-PG15
- 17:00 The Boxrolls-PG
- 19:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles-PG15
- 21:00 The Cobbler-PG15
- 23:00 Project Almanac-PG15

osn MOVIES HD KIDS

- 01:00 Krazzy Planet
- 02:45 Pororo: The Racing Adventure
- 04:30 Moomins And The Comet Chase
- 06:00 Vampire Dog
- 08:00 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
- 10:00 Dinosaur Island
- 11:30 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure
- 13:00 Pororo: The Racing Adventure
- 14:30 The Adventures Of Don Quixote
- 16:00 Ernest & Celestine
- 18:00 Dinosaur Island
- 20:00 Captain Sabertooth And The Treasure Of Lama Rama
- 22:00 The Adventures Of Don Quixote
- 23:30 Marvel's Ultimate Avengers I

osn MOVIES HD PREMIERE

- 00:00 Ouija-PG15
- 02:00 The Package-PG15
- 04:00 Tales Of The Night-PG
- 06:00 Marvel's Hulk vs. Thor & Wolverine-PG
- 08:00 Metallica: Through The Never
- 10:00 Happy Feet-PG
- 12:00 Last Vegas-PG15
- 14:00 In My Dreams-PG15
- 16:00 Metallica: Through The Never
- 18:00 The Factory-PG15
- 20:00 Whiplash-PG15
- 21:45 Riddick-18
- 23:45 Fifty Shades Of Grey-R



- 03:05 The Falcon And The Snowman
- 05:15 Punks
- 06:50 Mannequin
- 08:20 Seven Years In Tibet
- 10:35 Eight Men Out
- 12:35 Charge Of The Light Brigade
- 14:40 Still Life: A Three Pines Mystery
- 16:10 True Heart
- 17:40 Teen Witch
- 19:10 Punks
- 20:45 Big Screen
- 21:00 Improptu
- 22:45 Sirens
- 00:20 Desperately Seeking Susan
- 02:05 American Dragons



- 03:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover
- 04:00 Private Crimes
- 04:30 Private Crimes
- 05:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
- 07:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 08:00 Surveillance Oz
- 10:00 I Killed My BFF
- 11:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 12:00 Crime Stories
- 13:00 Homicide Hunter
- 14:00 After The First 48
- 15:00 I Killed My BFF
- 16:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 17:00 Crime Stories
- 18:00 The First 48
- 19:00 After The First 48
- 20:00 Homicide Hunter
- 21:00 Crime Stories
- 22:00 Crimes That Shook Britain



HITMAN ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

- 23:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
- 00:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
- 01:00 My Crazy Ex
- 02:00 I Was Possessed



- 03:05 Calimero
- 03:20 Zou
- 03:30 Loopdidoo
- 03:45 Art Attack
- 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:20 Calimero
- 04:35 Zou
- 04:45 Loopdidoo
- 05:00 Art Attack
- 05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:35 Calimero
- 05:50 Zou
- 06:00 Loopdidoo
- 06:15 Art Attack
- 06:35 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:50 Calimero
- 07:00 Zou
- 07:20 Loopdidoo
- 07:35 Art Attack
- 08:00 Calimero
- 08:10 Zou
- 08:25 Loopdidoo
- 08:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 09:05 Sofia The First
- 09:30 Miles From Tomorrow
- 09:55 The Hive
- 10:05 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 10:35 Doc McStuffins
- 11:00 Sofia The First
- 11:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 12:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 12:25 Special Agent Oso
- 12:40 The Hive
- 12:50 Handy Manny
- 13:15 Jungle Junction
- 13:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 14:00 Sofia The First
- 14:25 Doc McStuffins
- 14:50 Henry Hugglemonster
- 15:15 Zou
- 15:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 15:55 Loopdidoo
- 16:10 Miles From Tomorrow
- 16:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 17:00 Sofia The First
- 17:25 Jungle Cubs

- 17:50 Aladdin
- 18:15 Gummi Bears
- 18:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 19:05 Miles From Tomorrow
- 19:30 Sofia The First
- 19:55 Doc McStuffins
- 20:15 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 20:45 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 21:05 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 21:35 Sofia The First
- 22:00 Jungle Cubs
- 22:25 Aladdin
- 22:50 Gummi Bears
- 23:20 Lilo And Stitch
- 23:45 Cars Toons
- 23:50 Zou
- 00:05 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:20 Calimero
- 00:35 Zou
- 00:50 Loopdidoo
- 01:05 Art Attack
- 01:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:45 Calimero
- 02:00 Zou
- 02:15 Loopdidoo



- 07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 07:25 K. C. Undercover
- 07:50 Supa Strikas
- 08:15 Lab Rats
- 08:40 Annedroids
- 09:10 Kirby Buckets
- 09:35 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
- 10:00 Rocket Monkeys
- 10:25 Ultimate Spider-Man
- 10:50 Boyster
- 11:20 Boyster
- 11:45 Pair Of Kings
- 12:10 Pair Of Kings
- 12:35 Lab Rats
- 13:00 Lab Rats
- 13:30 Phineas And Ferb
- 13:55 Phineas And Ferb
- 14:20 Kickin' It
- 14:45 Kickin' It
- 15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 15:15 Rocket Monkeys
- 15:40 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
- 16:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 16:30 Kirby Buckets
- 16:55 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything

- 17:25 K. C. Undercover
- 17:50 Supa Strikas
- 18:15 Lab Rats
- 18:40 Mighty Med
- 19:10 Annedroids
- 19:35 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 20:00 Kirby Buckets
- 20:25 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 20:55 K. C. Undercover
- 21:20 Supa Strikas
- 21:45 Lab Rats
- 22:10 Mighty Med
- 22:40 Super Matrak
- 23:05 Super Matrak
- 23:30 Boyster



- 03:00 Leepu & Pitbull
- 04:00 American Daredevils
- 05:00 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
- 05:50 American Pickers
- 06:45 Down East Dickering
- 07:35 Storage Wars: Best Of
- 08:00 Duck Dynasty
- 08:25 Counting Cars
- 09:15 Mountain Men
- 10:05 Shipping Wars
- 11:00 Leepu & Pitbull
- 12:00 Counting Cars
- 13:00 American Pickers
- 14:00 Storage Wars
- 14:30 Storage Wars
- 15:00 Pawn Stars
- 15:30 Pawn Stars
- 16:00 Ice Road Truckers
- 17:00 Counting Cars
- 17:30 Counting Cars
- 18:00 Leepu & Pitbull
- 19:00 American Pickers
- 20:00 Storage Wars
- 20:30 Storage Wars
- 21:00 Search For The Lost Giants
- 22:00 Pawn Stars
- 22:30 Pawn Stars
- 23:00 Outlaw Chronicles: Hells Angels
- 00:00 Pawn Stars
- 00:30 Pawn Stars
- 01:00 American Pickers
- 02:00 Outlaw Chronicles: Hells Angels

nickelodeon HD

- 03:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 03:48 Henry Danger
- 04:12 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
- 04:36 The Haunted Hathaways
- 05:00 Winx Club
- 05:24 Henry Danger
- 05:48 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
- 06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
- 07:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 07:48 Sanjay And Craig
- 08:12 Harvey Beaks
- 08:36 Breadwinners
- 09:00 Get Blake
- 09:24 Rabbids Invasion
- 09:48 Henry Danger
- 10:12 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
- 10:36 The Haunted Hathaways
- 11:00 Winx Club
- 11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
- 12:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 13:00 Breadwinners
- 13:48 Get Blake
- 14:12 Rabbids Invasion
- 14:36 100 Things To Do Before High School
- 15:00 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
- 15:24 Harvey Beaks
- 15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
- 16:12 Harvey Beaks
- 17:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
- 17:48 Harvey Beaks
- 18:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
- 18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
- 19:00 100 Things To Do Before High School
- 19:24 100 Things To Do Before High School
- 21:24 Breadwinners
- 22:12 Sanjay And Craig
- 23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
- 23:48 Henry Danger
- 00:12 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
- 00:36 Max & Shred
- 01:00 100 Things To Do Before High School
- 01:24 Sanjay And Craig
- 02:12 SpongeBob SquarePants



- 03:00 Hamlet
- 04:50 Discovering: Hamlet
- 05:40 This Way Out
- 06:00 The Red Road

- 07:00 Rake
- 08:00 Waiting For Charlotte
- 08:55 Sensation: The Story Of The Who's Tommy
- 10:00 The Odds
- 11:30 Hopscotch
- 13:15 Vernon, Florida
- 14:15 Discovering: Lennon
- 15:05 Rolling Stones: Crossfire Hurricane
- 17:00 The Journey
- 18:40 Manito
- 19:55 Writers' Room
- 20:25 The Odds
- 21:55 Adonis
- 22:05 Rolling Stones: Crossfire Hurricane
- 00:00 Theatreland
- 00:30 Hollywood's Best Film Directors
- 01:00 The Wolfpack
- 02:35 Manito



- 03:40 World's Worst Mum
- 04:30 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 05:00 Little People, Big World
- 05:30 Cake Boss
- 06:00 Say Yes To The Dress Äi Bridesmaids
- 06:25 Cake Boss
- 08:05 Perfect Look
- 09:45 Catwalk 30+
- 10:35 Curvy Brides
- 11:25 Say Yes To The Dress Äi Bridesmaids
- 13:30 Oprah's Master Class
- 14:20 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 15:10 Little People, Big World
- 17:15 Dare To Wear
- 18:05 Say Yes To The Dress: The Big Day
- 18:55 Cake Boss
- 19:20 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 20:10 7 Little Johnstons
- 21:00 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 21:25 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 21:50 7 Little Johnstons
- 22:40 Long Island Medium
- 23:05 Too Ugly For Love?
- 23:55 Too Ugly For Love?
- 00:45 The Day I Almost Died
- 01:35 An Hour To Save Your Life
- 02:25 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners:...



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Testy energy could leave you feeling emotionally blocked and frustrated by the end of this day. Do not try to push too hard-you would only be going against the flow of things if you do. This is a great time for planning, designing or preparation. Any ideas to increase business or to make working easier, etc., should be written down for later. Take the driver's position and really become involved with your part in the business progress. At home this evening, you may have a friend drop in to visit you, and he or she may bring a friend. You draw emotional sustenance from your friends and you enjoy a relaxed social life. Real friends don't care if your socks don't match, so if you are not entertaining, enjoy a movie or dinner away from home with your friends.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

A greater appreciation for things of value and the idea of value itself is in order. This could be a period of great material gain; it is certainly a time when material things have a great deal of importance for you. This is a very lucky day for making plans or decisions and finding your way through just about any problem. You feel successful and able to handle difficult situations. Good advice from a guide or older person may be helpful-listen, it may mean a raise. This is a good day. Being more closely involved with another person may well become your highest priority this evening. Marriage, contracts and partnerships are seen as keys to success and happiness and they have plenty of lessons to teach you. You enjoy companionship this evening.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You have the right amount of passion to pour into practical and career decisions now. You may appear commanding and assertive. Adjust your requirements or dreams to rely more upon yourself and less upon others when making important choices. Be patient with and around authority figures today. You will be finding some shrewd ways of making yourself heard. Obtaining and exchanging information is most important to you. You may find much of the afternoon is occupied with neighbors and friends playing cards, popping popcorn and visiting with each other. Personal conversations become most important. Through your words of encouragement, you could make some positive changes in many people's lives.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

By taking charge of your life and showing reliability, you can easily gain the respect and admiration that you have been wanting to achieve from others. At this time, career or vocational decisions are best made from the planning viewpoint. You could be most persuasive with others. The situation today is a natural for self-expression and encourages many creative ideas. Put your mind to work and take care of any details that you may have this afternoon-mental discipline should come easily. Problems and obstacles that have previously been difficult should soon find the easy explanations you have been looking for so hard. Family, home, relatives and real estate play a bigger part in your life this year. You and your family may be looking for a new home.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Before you sign on the bottom line, check out the document! Your very own personal luck is back! You may see some relief soon on the financial front. Be careful with your power as you could persuade someone to do something they really do not want to do-then you will have regrets. You are at ease and comfortable in most situations. Be consistent with your actions so as not to confuse yourself or others. When asked to participate in anything . . . Express the need to think about it and then return an answer soon. Your true freedom comes from responsible awareness. It is good that you naturally gravitate to highly motivated people. Pay attention, there is someone that will help you carry out some of your goals this year.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Just when you thought you had the finances under control some unexpected cost comes to your attention. This seems to happen occasionally anyway so you are prepared. This could mean new tires or a plumbing repair. The problem will be solved in a short time so do not become too absorbed or concerned. If you have been setting money aside for those thin times, you have been wise. You are more ambitious now and you are open to new ideas for financial improvements. You have wonderful ideas for advertising or simplifying some work methods. Write these suggestions in a businesslike manner and seek an influential person to review your ideas. Tonight there is time to play, go to a movie, count the stars, sing or just enjoy the evening.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You use your creative ideas to pull yourself out of a sluggish morning. In the workplace you are pleased . . . You may discover where a continuing problem had its beginning. Now it is time to work on ways in which this reoccurring situation can be stopped. This is, obviously, not a good time for social events-your mood is intent and you want answers. You can greatly reduce stress by taking the appropriate breaks. Walking during your break time may help you to think through the process of your day-or if needed, a distraction from the work. If you have employees working with you, you will teach them to take on the construction crew attitude: create, improve, always upward and forward. This evening is a good time to enjoy a movie.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This is a great time to be with others and to work together in a sense of cooperation. You may also be in demand for special types of jobs. This day may be such a day. There is some sort of settlement from a generous partner or an inheritance coming your way-but there may be a wait. Do not get deeper in debt just now. Now that the holidays are over, it still may take a little while before you really feel secure in your finances. You enjoy life and you enrich others with your positive attitude and, more than that, you will succeed at whatever you set out to accomplish. Clear decisions affecting others could be made at this time. Although there are signs of trouble with a love relationship, the trouble may be solved before the end of the evening-patience wins.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may be in a position of leadership this morning. It may prove favorable for you to pace yourself today. Some changes that you would like to see happen may take a little longer than you expected. Some particular situation may affect you in a very direct manner. Two people look out a window . . . One sees mud, but the other sees the sky. This is a time during which everything you do may seem to be slowed and require more effort than usual-your optimism is good. Patience with yourself and others is important. Because you expect good things from others, you receive the same input; support is easy to find among friends. Some past investment will begin to pay off soon-be patient. You and your loved one can enjoy a happy evening.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may be helping or guiding a new co-worker through some important matters at work today. Life seems to go your way just now and your sense of goals can be very clear-take a look. You enjoy your work and others could learn from just observing you. Your attitude is that your work is fun. Difficulties, blocks and all manner of hot spots may be discovered and worked through-you are able to view all the aspects. Family happily occupies most of your time this afternoon. You may find yourself running errands or just enjoying a home-cooked meal with family members telling you about their day. You like to support and help your family with the activities that are enjoyable. Enjoy your own creative abilities-you might find some new talents.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

The stars are on your side today . . . Professionally speaking, everything falls into place. The universe has been testing you-positive things are on the horizon in many areas of your life. It is possible you made a job change last year and the time of testing is just about complete. Your identity is evolving and at no time is the growth more obvious than now. You are able to see yourself in a new light and may decide to purchase finer suits for the workplace. Anything that seems like pressure from close relationships is more for your benefit-it would be wise to just go with the flow. Ask yourself if you know the truth about any particular situation; you are learning very well. There is harmony this evening and a party may evolve.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

If you are involved in a work project, the accomplishments will be numerous. Letting machines do the work for you seems to be the future push in the work industry. People demand automated, fast and not do-it-yourself sort of toys. Eventually our transportation methods will far surpass the current ones. There is room for you in the invention industry or in the imagination department. Think outside of the box, so to speak, and start inventing. You may decide to shop later today because of a sale in the newspapers. You may also find some wonderful opportunities to spend money on products that will aid your creative ideas. Plenty of rest, nurturing, fun and good nutrition this evening will ease tensions of this very busy day.

COUNTRY CODES

Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antiga	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Bahamas	001242	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahrain	00973	Martinique	00596
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritania	00222
Barbados	001246	Mauritius	00230
Belarus	00375	Mayotte	00269
Belgium	0032	Mexico	0052
Belize	00501	Micronesia	00691
Benin	00229	Moldova	00373
Bermuda	001441	Monaco	00377
Bhutan	00975	Mongolia	00976
Bolivia	00591	Montserrat	001664
Bosnia	00387	Morocco	00212
Botswana	00267	Mozambique	00258
Brazil	0055	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brunei	00673	Namibia	00264
Bulgaria	00359	Nepal	00977
Burkina	00226	Netherlands	0031
Burundi	00257	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Cambodia	00855	New Caledonia	00687
Cameroon	00237	New Zealand	0064
Canada	001	Nicaragua	00505
Cape Verde	00238	Niger	00227
Cayman Islands	001345	Nigeria	00234
Central African	00236	Niue	00683
Chad	00235	Norfolk Island	00672
Chile	0056	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
China	0086	North Korea	00850
Colombia	0057	Norway	0047
Comoros	00269	Oman	00968
Congo	00242	Pakistan	0092
Cook Islands	00682	Palau	00680
Costa Rica	00506	Panama	00507
Croatia	00385	Papua New Guinea	00675
Cuba	0053	Paraguay	00595
Cyprus	00357	Peru	0051
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Philippines	0063
Czech Republic	00420	Poland	0048
Denmark	0045	Portugal	00351
Diego Garcia	00246	Puerto Rico	001787
Djibouti	00253	Qatar	00974
Dominica	001767	Romania	0040
Dominican Republic	001809	Russian Federation	007
Ecuador	00593	Rwanda	00250
Egypt	0020	Saint Helena	00290
El Salvador	00503	Saint Kitts	001869
England (UK)	0044	Saint Lucia	001758
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Pierre	00508
Eritrea	00291	Saint Vincent	001784
Estonia	00372	Samoa US	00684
Ethiopia	00251	Samoa West	00685
Falkland Islands	00500	San Marino	00378
Faroe Islands	00298	Sao Tone	00239
Fiji	00679	Saudi Arabia	00966
Finland	00358	Scotland (UK)	0044
France	0033	Senegal	00221
French Guiana	00594	Seychelles	00284
French Polynesia	00689	Sierra Leone	00232
Gabon	00241	Singapore	0065
Gambia	00220	Slovakia	00421
Georgia	00995	Slovenia	00386
Germany	0049	Solomon Islands	00677
Ghana	00233	Somalia	00252
Gibraltar	00350	South Africa	0027
Greece	0030	South Korea	0082
Greenland	00299	Spain	0034
Grenada	001473	Sri Lanka	0094
Guadeloupe	00590	Sudan	00249
Guam	001671	Suriname	00597
Guatemala	00502	Swaziland	00268
Guinea	00224	Sweden	0046
Guyana	00592	Switzerland	0041
Haiti	00509	Syria	00963
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Serbia	00381
Honduras	00504	Taiwan	00886
Hong Kong	00852	Tanzania	00255
Hungary	0036	Thailand	0066
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Toga	00228
Iceland	00354	Tonga	00676
India	0091	Tokelau	00690
Indian Ocean	00873	Trinidad	001868
Indonesia	0062	Tunisia	00216
Iran	0098	Turkey	0090
Iraq	00964	Tuvalu	00688
Ireland	00353	Uganda	00256
Italy	0039	Ukraine	00380
Ivory Coast	00225	United Arab Emirates	00976
Jamaica	001876	United Kingdom	0044
Japan	0081	Uruguay	00598
Jordan	00962	USA	001
Kazakhstan	007	Uzbekistan	00998
Kenya	00254	Vanuatu	00678
Kiribati	00686	Venezuela	00582
Kuwait	00965	Vietnam	0084
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Laos	00856	Virgin Islands US	001340
Latvia	00371	Wales (UK)	0044
Lebanon	00961	Yemen	00967
Liberia	00231	Yugoslavia	00381
Libya	00218	Zambia	00260
		Zimbabwe	00263

ABANDON COAL, OIL OR FACE CLIMATE DISASTER

SCIENTISTS, BUSINESS CHIEFS AND ANALYSTS WARN AT DAVOS

DAVOS: Humanity must stop burning coal, oil and gas to power the global economy or face an irreversible climate catastrophe, scientists, business chiefs and analysts warned at an elite gathering in the Swiss Alps. Barely five weeks after the world hailed a 195-nation Paris accord to stop global warming, plummeting oil prices have thrown into perspective the challenge of bringing about its promised energy revolution. Crude oil prices this week plunged to fresh 12-year lows under \$27, slammed by gloomy economic forecasts, China's slowdown and abundant crude supplies.

"The economics at these prices will mean that it is very cost effective to use oil rather than renewables which are still very expensive at these prices," said IHS chief economist Nariman Behravesh. Governments would need to take drastic action, for example by imposing a carbon tax, he told AFP at the January 19-23 annual meeting of the rich and powerful in the snow-blanketed ski resort of Davos, casting doubt, however, on whether it would be possible to do so on a global scale. The post-2020 Paris Agreement, reached December 12, aimed to avert the most calamitous effects of climate change: severe droughts, floods

and storms, and rising seas that would engulf islands and coastal areas populated by hundreds of millions of people.

Catastrophic tipping points

The Paris accord set a target of limiting warming of the planet to "well below" 2.0 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) compared with the Industrial Revolution, while aiming for an even more ambitious goal of 1.5 degrees. To do so, emissions of greenhouse gases will need to peak "as soon as possible", followed by rapid reductions, the agreement stated. "Science indicates that if we can come close to 1.5 C it allows us to avoid what we call catastrophic tipping points," said Johan Rockstrom, executive director of the Stockholm Resilience Centre.

"We could avoid irreversible melting of the Greenland ice sheet-seven meters of sea level rise. We could avoid irreversible methane release from thawing permafrost," he added. "This would allow us to stay in the adaptation realm rather than the catastrophic disaster realm." Already, Rockstrom said, disruption to the Earth's climate system was evident in the unprecedented impact of the 2015-2016 El Nino weather pattern, which is associated with a



LIANYUNGANG: An excavator moves coal onto a truck at a coal port in Lianyungang, eastern China's Jiangsu province. — AFP

sustained period of warming in the central and eastern tropical Pacific and can spark deadly and costly climate extremes.

Solar power gets cheaper

To avoid the worst, mankind would have to protect the oceans and the planet's ecosystem including its forests, in addition to slashing heat-trapping greenhouse gas emissions, he said. "Why? because the biosphere-nature to put it simply-takes up 4.5 gigatonnes, actually half of our emissions of carbon dioxide."

Renewable energies may start to win the financial argument, however, said Ratul Puri, chairman of Hindustan Power. The cost of solar energy had plunged by about 25 percent in the past decade, he said, increasing its lure in India, which relies heavily on coal to power its economic development. "There will be a need for a balance because renewables including solar are intermittent in nature, and therefore any grid system as it is designed out needs to have a balanced approach," Puri said. — AFP

1,175 RHINOS KILLED BY POACHERS IN S AFRICA

PRETORIA: Nearly 1,200 rhinos were killed by poachers in South Africa last year, officials said yesterday, a slight decrease on 2014, but another year of carnage fuelled by Asian-led demand for their horn.

Fewer than 100 rhinos were poached in 2008, since when numbers have rocketed. A record 1,215 were killed in 2014. The slaughter has been driven by demand for their horn in countries such as China and Vietnam, where they are prized for their purported medicinal properties. The horn is composed mainly of keratin, the same component as in human nails, but it is sold in powdered form as a supposed cure for cancer and other diseases.

"By the end of December 2015, the number of poached rhinos was 1,175," Environmental Affairs Minister Edna Molewa told reporters, hailing the figure as a success. "The onslaught against our rhino has continued unabated, which has necessitated we step up our efforts. "We are very pleased to announce that for the first time for a decade the poaching situation has stabilized... This is very good news and very good cause for optimism." The soaring price of rhino horn and the poaching crisis has sparked a debate on whether to legalize sales in an attempt to stifle the lucrative black market trade. Legally dehorning a rhino would see a farm owner put the animal under anesthesia, then saw off the horn.

A South African judge in November lifted a domestic ban on trade in rhino horn, alarming conservationists. The government lost an appeal against the decision on Wednesday, but said it would go to the Supreme Court of Appeal. "It is hard to see any positive conservation benefits from lifting the moratorium on domestic trade in rhino horn," Colman O'Criodain, wildlife trade expert at the WWF, said. "There is no domestic demand for rhino horn in South Africa, so it is inconceivable that anyone would buy it-unless they intend to sell it abroad illegally or they are speculating that international trade will be legalized." — AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times






Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM



Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St. 1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B - Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368



Kuwait

CINEMA

SHARQIA-1

LOST IN THE SUN

12:15 PM

LOST IN THE SUN

2:30 PM

DARKNESS DESCENDS

4:30 PM

DARKNESS DESCENDS

6:30 PM

LOST IN THE SUN

8:30 PM

DARKNESS DESCENDS

10:30 PM

LOST IN THE SUN

12:30 AM

SHARQIA-2

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

12:15 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

2:00 PM

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

3:45 PM

THE 5TH WAVE

6:45 PM

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

9:15 PM

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

12:15 AM

SHARQIA-3

RIDE ALONG 2

1:00 PM

THE BOY

2:45 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

4:45 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

6:45 PM

THE BOY

8:45 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

10:45 PM

THE BOY

12:45 AM

MUHALAB-1

DARKNESS DESCENDS

11:30 AM

KUNG FU STYLE

1:30 PM

DILWALE - Hindi

3:30 PM

DICTATOR - Telugu

3:30 PM

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

6:30 PM

DARKNESS DESCENDS

8:45 PM

DARKNESS DESCENDS

10:45 PM

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

12:45 AM

MUHALAB-2

RIDE ALONG 2

12:00 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

2:00 PM

THE REVENANT

4:00 PM

SOGGADE CHINNI NAYANA -Telugu

4:00 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

7:00 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

9:00 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

11:00 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

1:00 AM

MUHALAB-3

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

11:45 AM

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

2:45 PM

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

5:45 PM

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

8:45 PM

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

11:45 PM

FANAR-1

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

11:45 AM

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

2:00 PM

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

4:15 PM

THE REVENANT

6:30 PM

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

9:30 PM

THE REVENANT

11:45 PM

FANAR-2

DARKNESS DESCENDS

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DICTATOR - Telugu

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DARKNESS DESCENDS

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DARKNESS DESCENDS

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FANAR-3

RIDE ALONG 2

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RIDE ALONG 2

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KUNG FU STYLE

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RIDE ALONG 2

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RIDE ALONG 2

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FANAR-4

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

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RIDE ALONG 2

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MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

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MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

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MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

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MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

12:15 AM

FANAR-5

THE BOY

11:45 AM

THE BOY

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THE BOY

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THE 5TH WAVE

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THE 5TH WAVE

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12:45 AM

MARINA-1

LOST IN THE SUN

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THE 5TH WAVE

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OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

3:45 PM

LOST IN THE SUN

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THE 5TH WAVE

8:00 PM

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

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MARINA-2

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THE REVENANT

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THE REVENANT

9:00 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

12:05 AM

MARINA-3

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

12:30 PM

KUNG FU STYLE

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KUNG FU STYLE

3:30 PM

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

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MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

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MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

11:45 PM

AVENUES-1

KUNG FU STYLE

11:30 AM

THE 5TH WAVE

1:30 PM

THE 5TH WAVE

4:00 PM

TWO COUNTRIES - Malayalam

6:30 PM

THE 5TH WAVE

9:30 PM

THE 5TH WAVE

12:15 AM

AVENUES-2

DARKNESS DESCENDS

12:00 PM

DARKNESS DESCENDS

2:15 PM

DARKNESS DESCENDS

4:30 PM

DARKNESS DESCENDS

6:45 PM

DARKNESS DESCENDS

9:00 PM

DARKNESS DESCENDS

11:30 PM

AVENUES-3

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

1:00 PM

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

1:30 PM

FRI

3:45 PM

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

6:15 PM

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

8:45 PM

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

11:15 PM

360°- 1

RIDE ALONG 2

11:45 AM

RIDE ALONG 2

1:45 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

3:45 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

5:45 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

7:45 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

9:45 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

11:45 PM

360°- 2

KUNG FU STYLE

12:15 PM

KUNG FU STYLE

2:15 PM

KUNG FU STYLE

4:15 PM

DILWALE - Hindi

6:15 PM

DILWALE - Hindi

9:30 PM

THE BOY

12:30 AM

360°- 3

DARKNESS DESCENDS

1:00 PM

DARKNESS DESCENDS

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DARKNESS DESCENDS

5:30 PM

DARKNESS DESCENDS

7:45 PM

DARKNESS DESCENDS

10:00 PM

DARKNESS DESCENDS

12:15 AM

AL-KOUT.1

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

12:15 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

1:30 PM

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

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MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

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MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

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MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

12:15 AM

AL-KOUT.2

RIDE ALONG 2

11:30 AM

THE 5TH WAVE

1:30 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

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THE 5TH WAVE

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RIDE ALONG 2

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THE 5TH WAVE

10:15 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

12:45 AM

AL-KOUT.3

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

12:45 PM

LOST IN THE SUN

3:00 PM

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

5:15 PM

LOST IN THE SUN

7:45 PM

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

9:45 PM

LOST IN THE SUN

12:30 AM

AL-KOUT.4

DARKNESS DESCENDS

12:00 PM

THE REVENANT

2:00 PM

DARKNESS DESCENDS

5:00 PM

THE REVENANT

7:00 PM

DARKNESS DESCENDS

10:00 PM

DARKNESS DESCENDS

12:05 AM

BAIRAQ-1

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

11:45 AM

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

2:45 PM

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

5:45 PM

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

8:45 PM

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

11:45 PM

BAIRAQ-2

THE 5TH WAVE

11:30 AM

KUNG FU STYLE

1:30 PM

FRI

3:45 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

6:30 PM

NO FRI

9:30 PM

THE 5TH WAVE

12:15 AM

BAIRAQ-3

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

12:00 PM

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

2:30 PM

DILWALE - Hindi

5:00 PM

THE BOY

8:00 PM

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS

10:00 PM

THE BOY

12:05 AM

PLAZA

RIDE ALONG 2

4:30 PM

TWO COUNTRIES - Malayalam

6:30 PM

RAJINI MURUGAN -Tamil

9:30 PM

THU+FRI

11:45 PM

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

1:45 PM

NO THU+FRI

3:45 PM

LAILA

RIDE ALONG 2

3:45 PM

THE 5TH WAVE

5:30 PM

MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic

8:00 PM

RIDE ALONG 2

10:45 PM

AJIAL.1

TWO COUNTRIES - Malayalam

3:45 PM

TWO COUNTRIES - Malayalam

6:45 PM

TWO COUNTRIES - Malayalam

9:45 PM

AJIAL.2

GETHU-Tamil

5:00 PM

CHARLIE- Malayalam

7:30 PM

GETHU-Tamil

10:00 PM

AJIAL.3

NANNAKU PREMATHO-Telugu

3:45 PM

FRI

6:30 PM

CHARLIE- Malayalam

9:30 PM

NO FRI

11:45 PM

DICTATOR - Telugu

1:30 PM

DICTATOR - Telugu

3:15 PM

AJIAL.4

RAJINI MURUGAN -Tamil

3:30 PM

RAJINI MURUGAN -Tamil

6:30 PM

RAJINI MURUGAN -Tamil

9:30 PM

NO THU+FRI

11:45 PM

SOGGADE CHINNI NAYANA -Telugu

1:30 PM


THE PUBLIC AUTHORITY
FOR CIVIL INFORMATION

Automated enquiry
about the Civil ID card is
1889988

CHANGE OF NAME

I Syed Abbas Ali S/o Syed Nazeeruddin holder of Indian Passport No. G2275319 Marathi Str, Akkayapalli R.V. Nagar, Kadapa, hereby changed my name to Syed Abbas Ali Syed Nazeeruddin. (C 5114) 22-1-2016

EMERGENCY

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Prayer timings

Fajr:

05:19

Shorook

06:42

Duhr:

12:00

Asr:

14:57

Maghrib:

17:17

Isha:

18:38



Hospitals

Sabah Hospital

24812000

Amiri Hospital

22450005

Maternity Hospital

24843100

Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital

25312700

Chest Hospital

24849400

Farwaniya Hospital

24892010

Adan Hospital

23940620

Ibn Sina Hospital

24840300

Al-Razi Hospital

24846000

Physiotherapy Hospital

24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center

25716707

Rawda

22517733

Adaliya

22517144

Khaldiya

24848075

Kaifan

24849807

Shamiya

24848913

Shuwaikh

24814507

Abdullah Salem

22549134

Nuzha

22526804

Industrial Shuwaikh

24814764

Qadsiya

22515088

Dasmah

22532265

Bneid Al-Gar

22531908

Shaab

22518752

Qibla

22459381

Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 2016



NBK reports net profits of KD 282.2m for FY 2015

TSIPRAS SET FOR SCHAEUBLE SHOWDOWN AT DAVOS FORUM Page 39

Page 38

OIL PRICES FALL NEAR 2003 LOWS

OIL GLUT, WEAKENING ECONOMIC GROWTH KEEP OUTLOOK BLEAK

LONDON: Oil fell yesterday, turning back towards 12-year lows on persistent concerns about oversupply and the outlook for demand. Oil futures have hit their lowest levels since 2003 this week as investors worry that a glut of crude is combining with slowing demand due to economic weakness, especially in China.

Benchmark Brent was down 21 cents at \$27.67 a barrel by 1206 GMT. Brent has lost 26 percent in January, on track for its biggest monthly fall since 2008.

Front-month West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures traded at \$28.00 per barrel, down 35 cents from their previous close. Broad market sentiment remained bearish as producers around the world pump 1 million to 2 million barrels of crude every day in excess of demand, creating a huge overhang of stored oil.

Iran's return to the oil market this month added to the glut, after the lifting of international sanctions aimed at discouraging the country from obtaining nuclear weapons.

"There are worries surrounding demand and oversupply," said Hans van Cleef, senior energy economist at ABN Amro in Amsterdam. He said weaker demand in the Middle East, which has been hit by lower oil prices, could add fuel to the sell-off and there was little to stop crude falling to \$20 per barrel. Indicating the glut may grow further, Iraq's Oil Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi told Reuters the country's southern region planned to increase output by up to 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) this year to over 4 million bpd.

Concerns are also growing that China's economy could slow further and cut demand in the world's second-largest oil consumer. "Lower commodity and oil prices reflect weakening demand," HSBC said yesterday. Meanwhile, Venezuela has requested that OPEC hold an emergency meeting to discuss steps to prop up oil prices, although delegates from other members of the producer group said such a gathering was unlikely.

Investors will watch for data from the Energy Information Administration at 1600 GMT for more detail on the extent of oversupply in the United States.

Analysts expect crude stocks to have risen by 2.8 million barrels in the week ended Jan. 15, according to a poll of eight analysts. Data from the American Petroleum Institute, a US industry group, showed crude inventories rose by 4.6 million barrels. —Reuters

SAUDI TO GRANT FIRST LICENSE IN AIRLINE LIBERALIZATION

MANAMA: Saudi Gulf Airlines is set to obtain regulatory approvals to launch flights within the kingdom by the end of March, a top official at Saudi Arabia's aviation watchdog said yesterday. Should the license be granted to the privately-owned airline, it would be the first to be awarded under plans to liberalize the kingdom's aviation market. "We expect them to fly end of March, early April," Abdulhakim Altamimi, assistant president for safety, security and air transport at the General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA), told Reuters on the sidelines of the Bahrain Airshow. Only national carrier Saudi Arabian Airlines and budget operator National Air Services currently serve a domestic market of about 27 million people. Foreign carriers can only fly in and out of Saudi Arabia and not within the country.

The Saudi authorities began accepting applications to operate internal flights back in 2012, although the process of granting licenses has been slow: Qatar Airways, through its subsidiary Al Maha Airways, was one such applicant but red tape has delayed its launch. Saudi Gulf Airlines' launch has also been delayed. It had hoped to commence operations last November with four A320 single-aisle planes. The carrier is now in the final regulatory stages of checking manuals for standard operating procedures and flying the necessary 100 hours with a GACA inspector, Altamimi said. —Reuters



The Lucky Winner of the 2015 BMW X6 in the 7th and Final Draw of "Double Your Winning with Al-Dawli Cards" Campaign



Kuwait International Bank has revealed the name of the lucky winner of the 2015 BMW X6 in its 7th and final draw of "Double Your Winning with Al-Dawli Cards" campaign that was held on January 13th, 2016 at 360 Mall. The draw was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, bank employees as well as the mall visitors and guests.

The winner is Mohamad Adel Abdula Alzaabi. He will receive his car keys in a special event that will be organized by the bank. Moreover, the 2nd prize winners Ms. / Rehab Mahrous Abdelhafiz Abdelnasser and Mr. / Ahmed Fadel Abbas Haider

have won trips to Malaysia and Muscat respectively for 3 nights inclusive of accommodation.

The final draw comes to conclude the series of draws held by the bank from July 2015 till January 2016, where several clients won cash prizes and air tickets to many exceptional destinations. Moreover, various entertaining activities and exciting contests were held during the draw and winners walked away with instant gifts and prizes.

Commenting on this occasion, the AGM-Retail Banking Division - E-Banking and Alternative Channels Division at KIB, Waleed Al Qattan, congratulated the lucky winner on behalf of the bank and stressed on the great success of the cards usage campaign that gave the opportunity to its cardholders to enter the draws and win valuable prizes. He added that through this promotional campaign, the bank objectives were successfully met on various levels; one of them was rewarding the bank's Credit and Prepaid Visa Cardholders with prizes and best-in-class benefits when using their cards locally and abroad.

Al-Qattan declared that Al-Dawli Cards offer a suite of exceptional features and privileges, as well as the highest level of safety for the customers' peace of mind. One of the cards is the "Visa Platinum Card" that provides numerous offers and discounts, in addition to the Gold and Classic "Al Moyassira Visa Credit Card" and finally the Gold and Classic "Al Momayaza Visa Card". He said that clients can apply for Al-Dawli Cards by visiting the nearest branch, and if they are interested in learning more about the cards' features and the Bank's Islamic services and products, they can visit the website www.kib.com.kw or contact the "Al-Dawli Weyak" service on 1866866.

NBK REPORTS NET PROFITS OF KD 282.2M FOR FY 2015

PROFITS GREW 7.8% Y-O-Y • TOTAL ASSETS GREW 8.3% Y-O-Y

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) reported net profits of KD 282.2 million (\$ 929.7 million) for the year 2015 compared with KD 261.8 million (\$ 862.6 million) in 2014, growing 7.8 percent year-on-year.

Total assets as of year-end 2015 reached KD 23.6 billion (\$ 77.8 billion) up 8.3 percent compared to year-end 2014, while total shareholders' equity increased by 3.8 percent to KD 2.6 billion (\$ 8.6 billion). Customer loans and advances reached KD 13.6 billion (\$ 44.6 billion) as of year-end 2015, growing by 13.8 percent year-on-year, while customer deposits grew by 7.1 percent during the same period to reach KD 12.1 billion (\$ 39.7 billion) as of year-end 2015.

NBK continued to improve its asset quality ratios with NPL/Gross Loans ratio dropping to 1.34 percent as of year-end 2015 down from 1.50 percent a year earlier, and NPL coverage ratio increasing to 322 percent, up from 276 percent at year-end 2014.

NBK Board of Directors has proposed the distribution of 30 fils per share cash dividend, representing 30 percent of the nominal share value. The board has also proposed the distribution of a 5 percent bonus shares (5 shares for every 100 shares) for the year 2015.

Nasser Al-Sayer, NBK's Chairman, said "NBK continued delivering solid growth and healthy performance in 2015. Net profits in 2015 reached KD 282.2 million, 7.8 percent year-on-year growth. This is a testimony to NBK's strong financial position, its market leadership and successful conservative strategy that the Bank has adopted since its founding in 1952".

Al-Sayer added that the solid results in 2015 reflect the Group's focus on core banking businesses. During 2015, net operating income grew by 10.2 percent year-on-year to KD 728.8 million confirming NBK's strong domestic and regional market positions.

"2015 was a year of deliverables for NBK, where we saw a confirmation of our earlier view that Kuwait is moving into a new era of economic development. Activity is picking up as the Government continues to deliver on the awarding and execution of mega projects. This has reflected positively on the growth trends of NBK's operating income. During the year, several multi-billion dollar development projects have been awarded where NBK played a major role in their financing. With the size of our balance sheet, regional & international presence and relationships, we proved to be the largest beneficiary of the growing government expenditure,

impact of lower oil prices relatively less compared to other regional economies. The government has affirmed in several occasions its commitment to continue with its capital expenditure plan mainly on infrastructure projects which we believe will relatively contain the impact of a period of lower oil prices on the operating environment in Kuwait."

Isam Al-Sager, NBK's Group Chief Executive Officer said; the solid results of NBK confirm the Bank's resilience and its ability to continue to grow and progress. "We continue to emphasize on the Group's strategy focusing on market leadership domestically and strong positioning regionally, all serving our efforts for better diversification and balancing of sources of income".

"Domestically, NBK continues to defend its market share, achieving growth in all business lines. The acquisition of a 58.4 percent stake in Boubyan Bank in 2012 was a long



Isam Al-Sager

term strategic move by NBK to strengthen its domestic market position. Boubyan Bank continues to acquire market share and its contribution to NBK Group profits is becoming more material."

Al-Sager also added that regional and international operations remained very lucrative supporting

the bank's income diversification strategy. NBK Group generated 27 percent of the year's profits from its branches, associates and subsidiaries outside Kuwait affirming the banks' successful strategy of regional and international diversification.

Earlier during the year NBK concluded its exit from International Bank of Qatar (IBQ) selling its 30 percent stake when attempts to raise it to a controlling stake were not successful. We have achieved good returns on our investment in IBQ over the years and this exit will strengthen our position to seize better opportunities when present in Qatar as the Qatari market remains important for us." Al-Sager added.

Al-Sager also highlighted that the Egyptian market remains a key market for the growth of NBK on the back of improving business sentiment and political stability. "Egypt continues to offer an exceptional growth opportunity and we generally target strengthening our position in the Egyptian market in the coming period. In an effort to achieve unification and integration at the Group level, we recently rebranded our Egyptian subsidiary NBK-Egypt".

During 2015, NBK boosted its capital base through issuing \$ 700 million Additional Tier-1 (AT-1) securities and KD 125 million of Tier 2 subordinated bonds. The issuances are used to improve NBK's capital as per Basel III requirements and the directives of the Central Bank of Kuwait and both issuances were highly received by investors attracting two times subscription in both instances. As of end-December 2015, NBK's capital adequacy ratio (CAR) reached 16.8 percent exceeding regulatory requirements.

NBK continues to enjoy collectively the highest ratings among all banks in the Middle East from the three international rating agencies Moody's, Fitch Ratings and Standard and Poor's. The Bank's ratings are supported by its high capitalization, prudent lending policies, and its disciplined approach to risk management, in addition to its highly recognized and very stable management team. NBK was also named among Global Finance's list of the 50 safest banks in the world for the tenth consecutive time.

NBK enjoys the widest banking presence with a local and international network reaching 4 continents. NBK's international presence spans many of the world's leading financial centers including New York, Europe, GCC, Middle East, Singapore as well as China (Shanghai).



Nasser Musaead Al-Sayer

leveraging the high growth opportunity in the project finance business," Al-Sayer highlighted.

Al-Sayer also added that "Despite the large drop in oil prices over the past year, our outlook for the Kuwaiti economy remains positive. Kuwait has ample liquidity and substantial buffers making the



- Al-Sayer: NBK continues delivering strong performance reflecting the strength of its financial position, its high asset quality and conservative strategy
- FY 2015 profits primarily reflect high volume growth and strong operating income
- 2015 saw remarkable growth for NBK driven by the accelerated pace of project execution as the infrastructure spending gains momentum
- We remain confident in Kuwait's economic outlook as the country's financial position is very solid enabling it to pursue its expansionary policies
- NBK led the financing of several mega projects affirming the Bank's capabilities and expertise in arranging such large transactions
- Al-Sager: NBK continues strengthening its market leadership position and affirming its strategy of income diversification both domestically and regionally
- NBK achieved growth in all business lines and continued to reap the benefits of its ownership in Boubyan Bank
- Total assets grew by 8.3% YoY to KD 23.6 billion and shareholders' equity by 3.8% YoY to KD 2.6 billion
- Customer loans and advances reached KD 13.6 billion, up 13.8% YoY and customer deposits reached KD 12.1 billion, up 7.1% YoY
- NPL ratio declined to 1.34% and NPL coverage reached 322%
- The Board has proposed cash dividends of 30 fils per share and 5% bonus shares

News

in brief

Gulf Air to get 16 Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners

MANAMA: Gulf Air will secure 16 Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners under a restructured order worth \$4.2 billion, the Bahraini carrier said in a statement yesterday. The 787-9s are scheduled to be delivered from the second quarter of 2018 and will replace 16 Boeing 787-8s which had been ordered previously, according to the statement which did not give details about the previous order. Bahrain's national carrier has gone through a lengthy restructuring which aims to return the loss-making airline to profit. It reported an annual loss of 62.7 million dinars (\$166.3 million) for 2014, down from a loss of 93.3 million dinars in 2013.

Egyptian Refining Co to start production

CAIRO: The Egyptian Refining Company, a subsidiary of one of Egypt's largest investment companies Qalaa Holdings, will start production at its \$3.7 billion oil refinery in the first quarter of 2017, managing director Mohammed Saad said. The refinery, which has a capacity to produce 4.2 million tons of refined products annually, the largest in Egypt, will start trial production by the end of 2016, Saad said. "We have completed so far 80 percent of the construction work and we will complete the rest in November then start trial operations before we start production in the first quarter of 2017," he said. Qalaa owns 19 percent of the Egyptian Refining Company (ERC), which will convert lowest value fuel oil into middle and light distillates that Egypt needs for its domestic consumption.

Saudi to issue 20bn riyals of bonds

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's government has contacted local banks to sell them local currency bonds worth 20 billion riyals (\$5.3 billion), which will be allocated next week, the Maaal financial website reported yesterday, citing unnamed sources. The pricing, tenor and other details of the bonds were not disclosed. The government has been issuing 20 billion riyals of domestic bonds every month for the last several months, to help cover a budget deficit created by low oil prices. The last issue was in mid-December.

Oman to establish first budget airline

DUBAI: Oman plans to establish its first budget airline to boost tourism as the plunge in global oil prices encourages the country to diversify its economy beyond oil and gas production. Muscat National Development and Investment Co (MNDIC) - a venture involving the Muscat municipal government and several state funds including the State General Reserve Fund, Oman's top sovereign wealth fund - said it had been awarded an air services operator licence by the Public Authority for Civil Aviation. The airline will help meet Oman's strong air traffic demand, expected to grow 40 percent by 2019, and complement its real estate and entertainment projects, MNDIC's chief executive Khalid bin Hilal Al-Yahmadi said in a statement seen yesterday. He did not reveal a time frame for establishing the airline or describe its plans to obtain planes.



DAVOS: (L -R) French Prime Minister Manuel Valls, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, Eni company Chairman of the Board, Emma Marcegaglia and German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble attend a session at the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in Davos yesterday. —AFP

TSIPRAS SET FOR SCHAEUBLE SHOWDOWN AT DAVOS FORUM

GREEK PM STILL HOPEFUL OF REVIVING SOCIAL REFORMS

DAVOS: Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras readied to lock horns with his eurozone foe German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble yesterday in what is certain to be one of the headline events at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Leftist leader Tsipras burst on to the international scene a year ago, winning elections on a promise to face down Greece's eurozone creditors which triggered six months of turbulent negotiations that nearly saw Athens thrown out of the euro.

Twelve months to the week since he was elected, the 41-year-old premier is in Davos brushing shoulders with bankers and billionaires after caving to the eurozone leaders last July by agreeing a drastic third bailout in return for major reforms his government had until then resisted.

"Talking with Sigmar Gabriel at Davos, we stressed the importance of reviving the economy with socially just reforms," Tsipras said in a tweet, after meeting with Germany's vice-chancellor on the sidelines of the forum on Wednesday.

He also met with European Economics Affairs Commissioner Pierre Moscovici and US Vice President Joe Biden. "The leaders agreed on the importance of moving forward as quickly as possible on Greece's economic reforms, including serious discussions with creditors on debt relief," the White House said in a statement after the talks with Biden.

Later on Thursday Tsipras sits on a panel with Germany's powerful finance minister Schaeuble who negotiated hard against Tsipras and his flamboyant then-finance minister Yanis Varoufakis during an epic battle of wills last year.

More pension reforms

The duel between Greece and its 18 eurozone partners ended at a July summit with Tsipras signing up to a 84 billion euro bailout that saved Athens from default.

Also present at the panel on Thursday will be France's reform-minded Prime Minister Manuel Valls and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, who currently leads the EU's six-month rotating presidency.

Moscovici told AFP on Wednesday that Greece's latest proposal to cut the cost of its pension system is ambitious but still falls short of creditors' demands. Greece spends a greater percentage of its GDP on pensions than any other EU country, and has proposed a wide-ranging plan that has been broadly welcomed by creditors though caveats remain.

"This plan is global and has an ambition that is clearly greater than what has been done in the past," Moscovici said. "But that said, we believe that serious discussions are still needed to fix the right parameters," he added.

Greece must save 1.8 billion euros from state spending on pensions under the three-year bailout that is overseen by the European Commission, the EU's bailout fund, the European Central Bank and the IMF in July.

Those reforms are necessary in order for creditors to then open talks about reducing Greece's huge debt, a key demand of both Tsipras and the International Monetary Fund that is worried about the country's debt load. —AFP

SAUDI'S STC WOULD BE HAPPY WITH 50% OF KUWAIT'S VIVA

DUBAI: The chief executive of Saudi Telecom (STC) believes that owning 50 percent of Kuwaiti affiliate Viva would be reasonable, he told Saudi-owned television channel Al-Arabiya yesterday.

The kingdom's leading telecommunications operator holds 26 percent of Viva but announced in November it would launch a voluntary tender offer to acquire up to

100 percent of the Kuwaiti firm.

However, its offer price of 1 dinar (\$3.29) per share was dismissed as "not fair" by Viva's board last month. STC still went ahead at the same price with the tender, which is due to close on Jan 31. "I think that the total of 50 percent is considered reasonable in Viva," Khaled al-Biyari told the television channel in an interview on the sidelines of the

Davos gathering.

STC on Wednesday reported a 20 percent drop in fourth-quarter profit as the benefits of higher revenue were wiped out by rising service costs and expenses. The Saudi firm's shares were trading 0.9 percent higher at 1005 GMT. Viva's shares closed flat at 0.99 dinars in Kuwait. —Reuters

DJIBOUTI SIGNS BANKING, TRADE DEALS WITH CHINA

DJIBOUTI: Djibouti's president has signed agreements with China to set up a trade zone and establishing a legal framework to let Chinese banks operate in the tiny Horn of Africa nation, the latest move to deepen ties with Beijing. China said last year that its military was in talks to build logistics facilities in Djibouti, a country of just 876,000 people which wants to build up its role as an international port and already hosts U.S. and French military bases.

The free zone for trade and business would cover an area of 48 sq km (19 sq miles). In a statement, President Ismail Omar Guelleh said he wanted the first phase, covering 1.5 sq km, to be operational before the end of 2016. Another agreement aimed to expand Djibouti's role for transshipment of goods in trade between China and the world, the statement said. This would mean cargo coming to Djibouti - which is on a body of water linking the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden - and then being reloaded for other destinations.

It also said the president had signed an agreement for "the implementation of a legal framework" for Chinese banks to operate in Djibouti. It gave few further details about the role those banks would play or when such banks would operate.

The statement did not say who signed the deal on behalf of China. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said he also did not know who signed the agreement, or give any details, but he added that the two countries continued to "deepen political mutual trust" and had vibrant trade ties and personnel exchanges.

Separately, the World Food Program on Wednesday also announced the opening of a new Horn of Africa logistics base in Djibouti, which borders Eritrea, Ethiopia and the breakaway Somali region of Somaliland. "We are opening this facility at a critical time, when Djibouti is playing a key role in our responses to several major crises in the region, including the conflicts in South Sudan and Yemen and the drought in Ethiopia worsened by El Nino," Valerie Guarnieri, WFP's Regional Director for East and Central Africa. WFP said about a quarter of the people that it assists worldwide live in countries that will be supported by the Djibouti hub. — Reuters

OMAN TO SPEED UP GAS IMPORT PLANS FROM IRAN POST-SANCTIONS

DUBAI: Oman expects speedier completion of a planned pipeline to import natural gas from Iran now that international sanctions against Tehran have been lifted, the energy minister of the Gulf sultanate said yesterday.

Iran sits on one of the world's largest gas reserves, which Oman has been eyeing as it hopes to feed energy-intensive industries and liquefied natural gas (LNG) export plants.

Price disagreements, Western sanctions that have stunted Iranian energy projects and US pressure on Oman to find other suppliers have prevented real progress on the pipeline project.

In 2013, the two countries signed an agreement on gas supplies to Oman in a deal valued at \$60 billion over 25 years. Since then, however, the project - which includes building a subsea pipeline - has stalled.

"I am very optimistic that now the sanctions have been lifted, the gas pipeline project will move in a faster track than before," Oman Energy Minister Mohammed bin Hamad Al Rumhy told Reuters by telephone. "We were facing lots of difficulties. Now we can order compressors, we can order pipes, seek consultancy help, we can talk to banks about financing. Things have changed."

Rumhy was speaking during a visit by Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh to Muscat.

"We think we can finish the FEED (front-end engineering design) in five months' time," Rumhy said. "So we are giving ourselves by the end of Q2 to finish the FEED and hopefully by the end of the year or Q1 next (year) to start the EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) work, which will take us two years, (to) 2017-2018," he said, adding that Oman hopes to start receiving Iranian gas by 2019.

The plan is to use Iranian gas for domestic needs as well as exporting it to global markets after having it liquefied in Oman, Rumhy said. — Reuters



DAVOS: Chinese Central Leading Group for Financial and Economic's Fang Xinghai (right) gestures next to International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Christine Lagarde during a session at the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in Davos yesterday. — AFP

IMF OPENS NOMINATIONS FOR MANAGING DIRECTOR'S POST

LAGARDE SEEN LEADING CANDIDATE DESPITE TRIAL IN FRANCE

DEUTSCHE BANK'S DISASTROUS YEAR SENDS SHARES CRASHING

FRANKFURT: Shares in Deutsche Bank plunged more than nine percent on the stock exchange yesterday following a disastrous performance last year, highlighting the magnitude of the task facing its new chief executive John Cryan.

Deutsche Bank shares plunged 9.5 percent to an intraday low of 16.03 euros in late morning trade, the biggest loser on the blue-chip DAX 30 index. Late Wednesday, Deutsche Bank said it expected an overall loss of 6.7 billion euros (\$7.3 billion) for 2015 as a result of a total 12 billion euros in charges, the lion's share of which was made up of litigation costs.

Deutsche Bank is currently mired in a tangle of around 6,000 lawsuits. In May, it was fined a record \$2.5 billion for its involvement in rigging interest rates.

It has also faced probes by Swiss authorities for suspected price fixing on the precious metals market, and US investigators have looked at its Moscow branch on suspicion of possible involvement in money laundering. The group's new chief John Cryan-who took up his position last July-has pledged a sweeping culture change within the bank, but investors are worried that the litigation costs will still hit profitability for years to come.

For Barclays analyst, Kiri Vijayarajah, it was Deutsche Bank's poor fourth-quarter performance that was the main factor behind the plummet in the share price yesterday. "The charges are in line with expectations. But revenues and underlying profits are weaker than expected," he said.

In the fourth quarter alone, Deutsche Bank said it expects a fourth-quarter loss of 2.1 billion euros, weighed down by "challenging market conditions." "We weren't particularly surprised by the additional burdens," said LBBW analyst Ingo Frommen.

"Only a small part of the restructuring costs had been booked so far. And it was clear that the litigation cases have not been resolved yet."

But "the combination of charges relating to litigation and restructuring on the one hand and the weak profits on the other lead to a record loss that was more disastrous than we'd already been expecting," said Thorsten Wenzel of DZ Bank. In addition to write-downs totalling 5.8 billion euros due to tougher regulations on capital requirements, Deutsche also took charges on assets such as its almost 20-percent stake in China's Hua Xia Bank, pushing it deeper into the red. — AFP

WASHINGTON: The IMF yesterday opens formal nominations for the next term of managing director, with incumbent Christine Lagarde seen as the leading candidate despite possibly facing a trial in France. The International Monetary Fund said nominations for the five-year term to run the global crisis bank beginning in July will close on February 10.

After a review of the candidates, the IMF executive board aims to have decided on a candidate by March 3. Lagarde, the former French finance minister who has overseen the IMF through the challenging eurozone bailouts and is widely respected in the global financial community, has not said directly that she wants to renew her position.

But she said several times in the past year that she is open to it. Asked about staying on at the annual IMF global meeting in Lima, Peru last October, she said: "I'm certainly open to the fact that it would not be my last annual meeting. But this is not for me to decide."

She already has the support of Britain and Germany. British finance minister George Osborne yesterday tweeted that he was "delighted to nominate @Lagarde for (the) new term as head of IMF". He described her as "an outstanding leader with vision and acumen to steer global economy in years ahead".

German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schauble also backed Lagarde's candidacy. She had proven to be a "far-sighted and successful crisis manager in difficult times," the German finance ministry in Berlin said in a statement.

Lagarde had "contributed substantially to the IMF's high standing," the statement added.

Lagarde easily won a contest with several developing country candidates to take over the IMF in 2011 as Europe was sinking deep into economic crisis. But her win came amid criticisms that the IMF's top job should not be locked down by a European, as it has since the institution was created in 1944. Lagarde's renewal also faces a personal legal challenge: she could stand trial in France over her role in a banking scandal that predates her arrival at the IMF.

In December investigating judges placed her under formal investigation in the long-running affair of Bernard Tapie, who received a substantial state payout for his dispute with a state bank during her time as finance minister.

Lagarde has said she would fight the trial order, and the IMF executive board at the time reiterated its confidence in her. On Wednesday the French press reported that Paris could support Ivory Coast-born French banker Tidjane Thiam as a replacement if she were not to run. But Thiam told US TV channel CNBC that he would not speculate on taking the job and that he was focused on his position as chief executive at Credit Suisse. He told CNBC that Lagarde had done "a phenomenal job" at the IMF. — AFP

ECB HOLDS KEY RATES UNCHANGED

FRANKFURT: The European Central Bank yesterday left its key interest rates unchanged at its first policy meeting of the year, despite current volatility on the world's financial markets owing to concerns about the slowing Chinese economy.

As widely expected, the ECB held its main "refi" borrowing rate at 0.05 percent, where it has been since September 2014. And it also left its other two lending rates—the marginal lending rate and the deposit rate—unchanged at 0.30 percent and minus 0.30 percent respectively.

ECB chief Mario Draghi was scheduled to explain the reasoning behind the latest decision at his regular post-meeting news

conference. Analysts said they expected him to keep the door open for more stimulus later, in the face of recent financial market turmoil.

At its last meeting in December, the ECB cut its key "deposit" rate by a modest 0.10 percentage point to minus 0.30 percent and extended the length of its asset purchase program known as quantitative easing or QE by six months to March 2017.

At the same time, the ECB held its other two key rates—the refi and marginal lending rates—unchanged at 0.05 percent and 0.30 percent respectively, where they have been for more than a year.

Nevertheless, the measures were widely

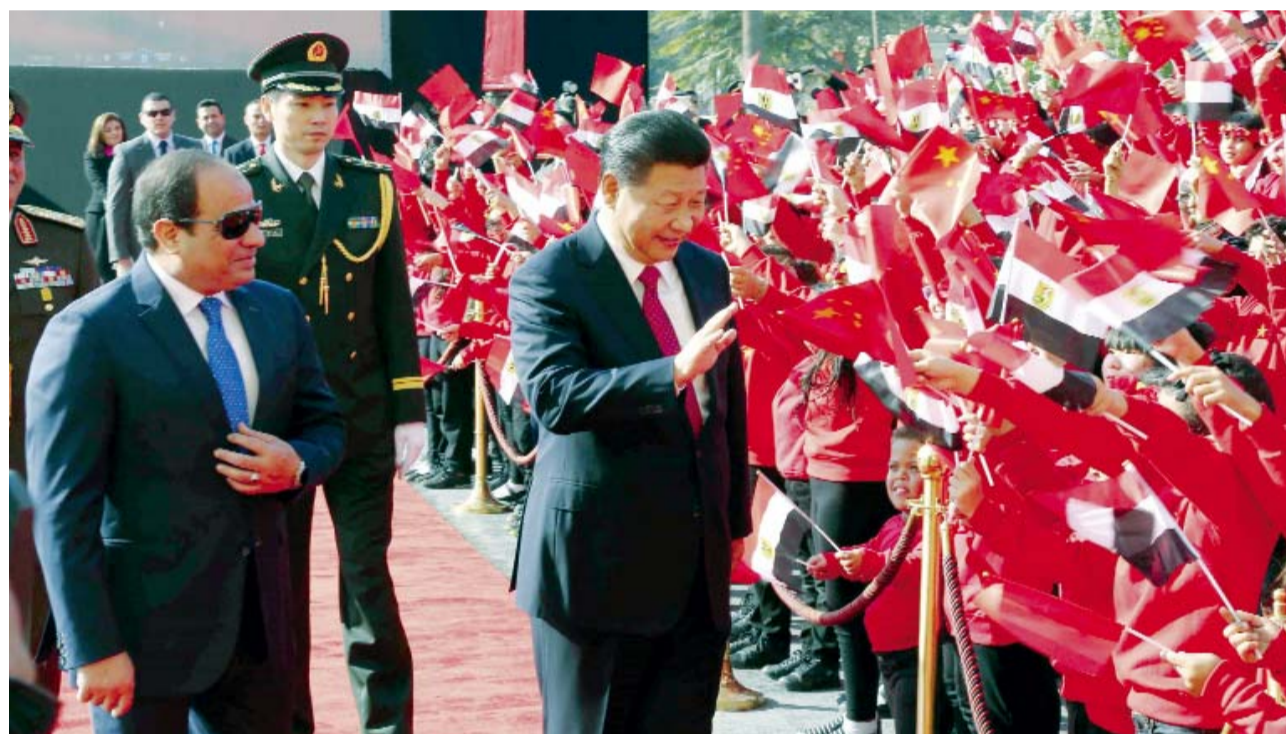
seen as too timid, particularly as comments from top ECB officials had fuelled speculation beforehand that it was preparing to aggressively ramp up its bond-buying program and further loosen monetary policy to inject some vim into a eurozone beset by years of torpid growth and stagnant inflation.

In the wake of the widespread disappointment over the moves, ECB watchers suggested that any sudden announcement of new measures this week would dent the central bank's credibility.

'Door still open'

But ECB chief Mario Draghi "will never-

theless surely indicate that the door is still open to further easing in the coming months," Cates said. "Market-based inflation expectations are still far too low for comfort and could become even further unhinged should the oil price continue its descent. Downside risks to the growth outlook have obviously increased as well as a result of the recent financial market instability." Oxford Economics economist Ben May agreed. "Markets will be looking for signs as to whether the renewed fall in the oil price, ongoing concerns about China and financial market weakness will see the dovish contingent of the governing council regaining the upper hand," he argued. — AFP



CAIRO: Chinese President Xi Jinping (right) and Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi (left) greeted by children during a welcome ceremony in the Egyptian capital Cairo. — AFP

XI SIGNS EGYPT DEALS AS CHINA LOOKS TO BOOST MIDEAST CLOUT

\$14BN DEALS ALSO INCLUDE ELECTRICITY AND TRANSPORTATION

CAIRO: Chinese President Xi Jinping signed a slew of trade deals with Egypt's leader yesterday as part of a regional tour aimed at bolstering Beijing's economic ties and clout in the Middle East. After arriving late Wednesday from Saudi Arabia, Xi held talks with Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi and was to address the Cairo-based Arab League. State television broadcast live the signing of 21 bilateral agreements at a presidential palace in the presence of the two leaders.

Earlier yesterday state-run newspaper Al-Ahram reported that the deals were worth \$14 billion in the electricity, transportation, agriculture, civil aviation and housing sectors.

In an article in Al-Ahram ahead of his visit, Xi expressed China's backing for Egypt running its affairs without outside interference.

"China supports the people of Egypt in making independent choices for the future of their own country," he wrote. He also said China supported Egypt "playing an active role in regional and international affairs".

Xi's regional tour, his first to the Middle

East as president, will take him next to Iran. Beijing has long taken a backseat to other diplomatic players in the Middle East but analysts say the region is crucial to Xi's signature foreign policy initiative-known as "One Belt One Road"-touted as a revival of ancient Silk Road trade routes.

China, the world's second-largest economy, also relies heavily on oil and gas imported from the energy-rich Middle East. Xi's visit to Egypt comes just ahead of the January 25 anniversary of the 2011 revolution that toppled longtime Egyptian autocrat Hosni Mubarak.

Saudi-Iran row

Mubarak's ouster was followed by unrest and eventually a military overthrow of his Islamist successor Mohamed Morsi, the country's first freely elected president, by then-army chief Sisi.

As well as addressing the Arab League, Xi was to visit Egypt's newly convened parliament, which was sworn in earlier this month after elections dominated by pro-government candidates. In Saudi Arabia, Xi met with King Salman and oversaw the opening

of a joint-venture oil refinery in the Yanbu Industrial City on the Red Sea.

Saudi Arabia is China's biggest global supplier of crude. Few details have emerged of Xi's talks with leaders in Riyadh but he had been expected to seek to ease tensions between Saudi Arabia, the region's main Sunni power, and Shiite rival Iran.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its Sunni Arab allies broke diplomatic ties with Tehran earlier this month after protesters angry over Riyadh's execution of a prominent Shiite cleric ransacked Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran. Iran and Saudi Arabia back opposing sides in a range of Middle East conflicts, including in Syria and Yemen, and there are fears the row could derail diplomatic efforts to resolve them.

Xi was expected today in Iran, just days after sanctions were lifted when Tehran implemented its historic nuclear deal with world powers. China, with the United States, Britain, France, Germany and Russia, was among the countries that reached the agreement with Iran in July to curtail its nuclear activities in exchange for ending international sanctions. — AFP

IRAQ OIL EXPORTS AT RECORD, UNAFFECTED BY IRAN'S RETURN

BAGHDAD: Iraq's plan to increase oil output this year will go ahead, with exports running in January at a record level and unaffected by Iran's return to the market, Iraqi Oil Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi told Reuters yesterday.

Iraq, OPEC's second-largest producer, expects output from the country's southern region to increase by up to 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) this year to over 4 million bpd, he said during an interview in Baghdad. Iraq also produces oil from the north but revenues from those sales go to the Kurdish self-ruled region, not the central government in Baghdad. The north produces more than 600,000 bpd.

Iraq will be offering competitive prices to market its additional crude output, the minister said, adding that it had made contracts with Chinese refineries covering all of 2016. "In fact, we in Iraq are not short of contracts," he said. "Until now, the demand on our oil is more than our offer, even with the return of Iran."

The United States, the European Union and the United Nations lifted most sanctions on Iran last week, removing restrictions on Iranian oil sales under a deal in which Tehran agreed to curbs on its nuclear program. "Iraqi oil will remain cheap for China," Abdul Mahdi said.

"Our 2016 term contracts are fully booked."

The average cost of extraction in southern Iraq is about \$10 per barrel, he said.

Crude prices have sunk to below \$30 a barrel, from more than \$100 two years ago, amid a global glut fuelled mainly by rising production of North American shale oil.

EMERGENCY OPEC MEETING?

Saudi Arabia, OPEC's top producer, led a move by the organization to preserve its market share, rejecting calls by some members including Algeria and Venezuela to cut output in order to boost prices. Lifting oil prices now would require the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and non-OPEC nations to agree on curbing output by about 1.5 million bpd, the Iraqi minister said.

Iraq would support an emergency meeting of OPEC if the group could agree on curbing output in coordination with non-OPEC producers, he added.

An agreement should include "OPEC and non-OPEC because now everybody is affected", he said, indicating he would back an Algerian proposal made in a previous meeting of the organisation to shave 5 percent off global output. "We should all agree on a certain level of production cut: 5 percent of global production will be very good; even less than that should be acceptable," he said. "A 1.5-million-barrels cut from markets will significantly affect prices."

If such an agreement were impossible, OPEC should refrain from holding any extraordinary meeting in order not to depress prices further, he said.

"We are ready to attend on condition that everybody attends and there should be an agreement," he said. "We will send a wrong message if we go and meet and come out with a negative result that will further negatively affect prices." — Reuters

MCILROY EDGES SPIETH IN ABU DHABI

ABU DHABI: Rory McIlroy won the opening skirmish of his much anticipated battle with Jordan Spieth, edging the world number one by two shots on his first competitive outing of the year at the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship yesterday. The world number three from Northern Ireland posted a first round six-under par 66 to lie two shots behind American amateur Bryson DeChambeau (64) with Henrik Stenson of Sweden in second after a 65.

McIlroy made two bogeys but compensated with eight birdies. Spieth, who uncharacteristically missed a couple of short putts, also had two bogeys in his

round of 68. World number six Rickie Fowler, the third player in the morning feature group, opened with a two-under par 70. McIlroy is playing his first tournament of 2016 - after a gap of almost two months since winning the DP World Tour Championship in Dubai in November - but showed no signs of ring rustiness as he opened with two straight birdies on the 1h and 11th holes after starting on the back nine of the golf course.

However, the putter took some time to warm up as he dropped two shots on his first nine - on the 13th and 17th holes - both because of three-putts.

Spieth, who won the Tournament of Champions on the PGA Tour a couple of weeks ago, needed six holes to make his first birdie, but then added six more. The two bogeys came on the second and fifth holes, but the defending Masters and US Open champion seemed most frustrated by a missed birdie putt from four feet on the eighth hole. Stenson, who had a surgery done on his right knee in December, had said his first challenge would be to walk the 18 holes this week.

But with his iron play on song, the 39-year-old Swede had absolutely no trouble throughout the day. The world

number five, who holds the course record of 62 in Abu Dhabi, closed with a bogey after failing to make an up-and-down from the bunker on the ninth hole, but that was his only blemish. He looked set for the first round lead until DeChambeau, who eagled the par 5 8th hole, grabbed top spot with a birdie, his seventh, at the last. England's Richard Bland came in with a 67 which included a lone bogey in his penultimate hole, the 17th of the course. Three-time Abu Dhabi champion Martin Kaymer, who lost a 10-shot lead over the last 10 holes on the final day last year, made a decent start with a three-under par 69. — AFP

BLUES DOWN RED WINGS

DETROIT: Brian Elliott stopped 29 shots, Dmitri Jaskin scored a key third-period goal, and the St Louis Blues beat the Detroit Red Wings 2-1 Wednesday night. Ty Rattie also scored for St Louis. Elliott came within 2:13 of becoming the first goalie in 69 games to shut out the Red Wings, but Henrik Zetterberg spoiled his bid with a power-play goal through Justin Abdelkader's screen. Detroit pulled Petr Mrazek with two minutes left, but their momentum was destroyed when Dylan Larkin took a penalty with 58 seconds to play. Mrazek finished with 18 saves.

AVALANCHE 2, SABRES 1

Francois Beauchemin scored a go-ahead goal with 31.7 seconds left in the third period to lift the Avalanche past the Sabres. Alex Tanguay had a goal and an assist and Semyon Varlamov had 27 saves for Colorado. Beauchemin also had an assist. The Avalanche, who scored twice in the third, went ahead when Beauchemin's shot from the point went off Sabres defenseman Mark Pysyk and beat goalie Robin Lehner high for his sixth of the season. Buffalo's loss spoiled the return of Ryan O'Reilly, who played six seasons in Colorado and was facing his former team for the first time since being traded in the offseason.

DUCKS 3, WILD 1

Rickard Rackell scored the go-ahead goal with 6:19 left in the third period and rookie John Gibson made 25 saves to lead the Ducks. Chris Stewart also scored for the Ducks, who are 11-2-0 in their last 13 games against Minnesota. Jakob Silfverberg added an empty-netter with 49 seconds remaining. Jarret Stoll scored for the Wild, who have lost five in a row. Devan Dubnyk stopped 24 shots. — AP



LOS ANGELES: Dallas Stars center Vernon Fiddler (right) tries to get a shot in on Los Angeles Kings goalie Jonathan Quick during the third period of an NHL hockey game in Los Angeles. The Kings won 3-2. — AP

BILLS HIRE FIRST FULL-TIME FEMALE ASSISTANT COACH

BUFFALO: The Buffalo Bills promoted Kathryn Smith to be one of their special teams coaches, making her the first full-time female member of an NFL coaching staff. The team announced the move in a release Wednesday night. Smith was an administrative assistant this season for Bills assistant coaches under Rex Ryan, with whom she has worked for seven years. She spent the previous 12 seasons working for the New York Jets in various capacities, including as player personnel assistant from 2007-13. Ryan became Jets coach in 2009. Smith served as Ryan's assis-

tant in 2014, his final season in New York before he was fired and then hired by the Bills. In her new role as special teams quality control coach, Smith will assist special teams coordinator Danny Crossman and his assistant Eric Smith.

"She certainly deserves this promotion based on her knowledge and strong commitment, just to name a couple of her outstanding qualities," Ryan said in a statement released by the team. "She has proven that she's ready for the next step, so I'm excited and proud for her with this opportunity." Smith becomes the lat-

est female assistant to break the gender barrier in North America's major professional sports. She follows in the footsteps of Jen Welter, who last summer served a six-week training camp internship coaching inside linebackers for the Arizona Cardinals. In August 2014, former WNBA player Becky Hammon was hired to San Antonio Spurs coach Gregg Popovich's staff, becoming the NBA's first full-time paid female assistant coach.

Last month, the Seattle Mariners hired Amanda Hopkins as an area scout. In announc-

ing the hiring, the team said Hopkins is believed to be the first female hired as a full-time scout by a Major League Baseball team since the 1950s. In promoting Smith, Ryan said he consulted with Cardinals coach Bruce Arians. "You can see the success some of these young ladies are having in the coaching profession, such as the young lady that is an assistant to coach Popovich at the San Antonio Spurs, and realize how exciting this is for women like Kathryn Smith as well as the Bills organization," Ryan said. — AP

CAVS BOUNCE BACK; WARRIORS MARCH ON

NEW YORK: Kevin Love had 17 points and 18 rebounds, and the Cleveland Cavaliers bounced back from their embarrassing performance against Golden State with a 91-78 victory over the Brooklyn Nets on Wednesday night. LeBron James also had 17 points and neither forward played in the fourth quarter, a welcome rest with a home game against the Los Angeles Clippers on Thursday. More importantly for the Cavs, it was a welcome performance after they were crushed 132-98 on Monday in the NBA Finals rematch.

WARRIORS 125, BULLS 94

Stephen Curry scored 25 points, and Golden State made it look easy again in beating Chicago. Curry tied a season high with 11 assists and grabbed seven rebounds. Klay Thompson added 20 points. Harrison Barnes scored 19, and the defending champions simply outclassed Chicago after embarrassing LeBron James and the Cavaliers in Cleveland on Monday night. The Warriors built a big lead in the first quarter and never were threatened after that, improving their league-best road record to 20-4. Derrick Rose scored 29 and Jimmy Butler added 23 points.

PISTONS 123, ROCKETS 114

Kentavious Caldwell-Pope and Marcus Morris each scored 22 points and Detroit beat Houston despite Andre Drummond setting an NBA record by missing 23 free throws. Drummond set a career high and franchise record by attempting 36 free throws on a night he was intentionally fouled 21 times. The previous record for most misses was 22, set by Wilt Chamberlain on Dec 1, 1967. The Hack-A-Shaq tactic allowed the Rockets to take the lead in the third quarter when they did it 12 straight times, but it didn't help them close the gap in the fourth when Drummond went out for good with 5 1/2 minutes left after seven hacks in the quarter and Detroit leading 107-94. James Harden had his first triple-double of the season and seventh of his career with 33 points, a career-high 17 rebounds and 14 assists in the loss. Drummond finished with 17 points and 11 rebounds.

THUNDER 109, HORNETS 95

Kevin Durant scored 26 points to help Oklahoma City beat Charlotte for its sixth straight win. Russell Westbrook collected 16 points, 15 assists, eight rebounds and five steals in 27 minutes before sitting out the fourth quarter because the Thunder were in control. Steven Adams had 10 points and 10 rebounds for the Thunder, who have won 21 of their past 25 games. Kyle Singler added a season-high 11 points. Charlotte's Kemba Walker, who scored 52 points Monday in a win over Utah, led the Hornets with 21 points. Jeremy Lin scored 16 points.

KINGS 112, LAKERS 93

DeMarcus Cousins had 36 points and 16 rebounds, and Rajon Rondo added 11 points and 17 assists in the Kings' sixth consecutive victory over the Lakers. Rudy Gay scored 16 points for the Kings, who have won three straight and six of nine. Cousins continued his tear through 2016 with another brutally effective performance, scoring at least 29 points for the eighth time in the Kings' nine games in January. Kobe Bryant scored just two of his 15 points after halftime and Brandon Bass had a season-high 18 for the Lakers, who have lost four straight and eight of nine to drop to 9-35.

HAWKS 104, TRAIL BLAZERS 98

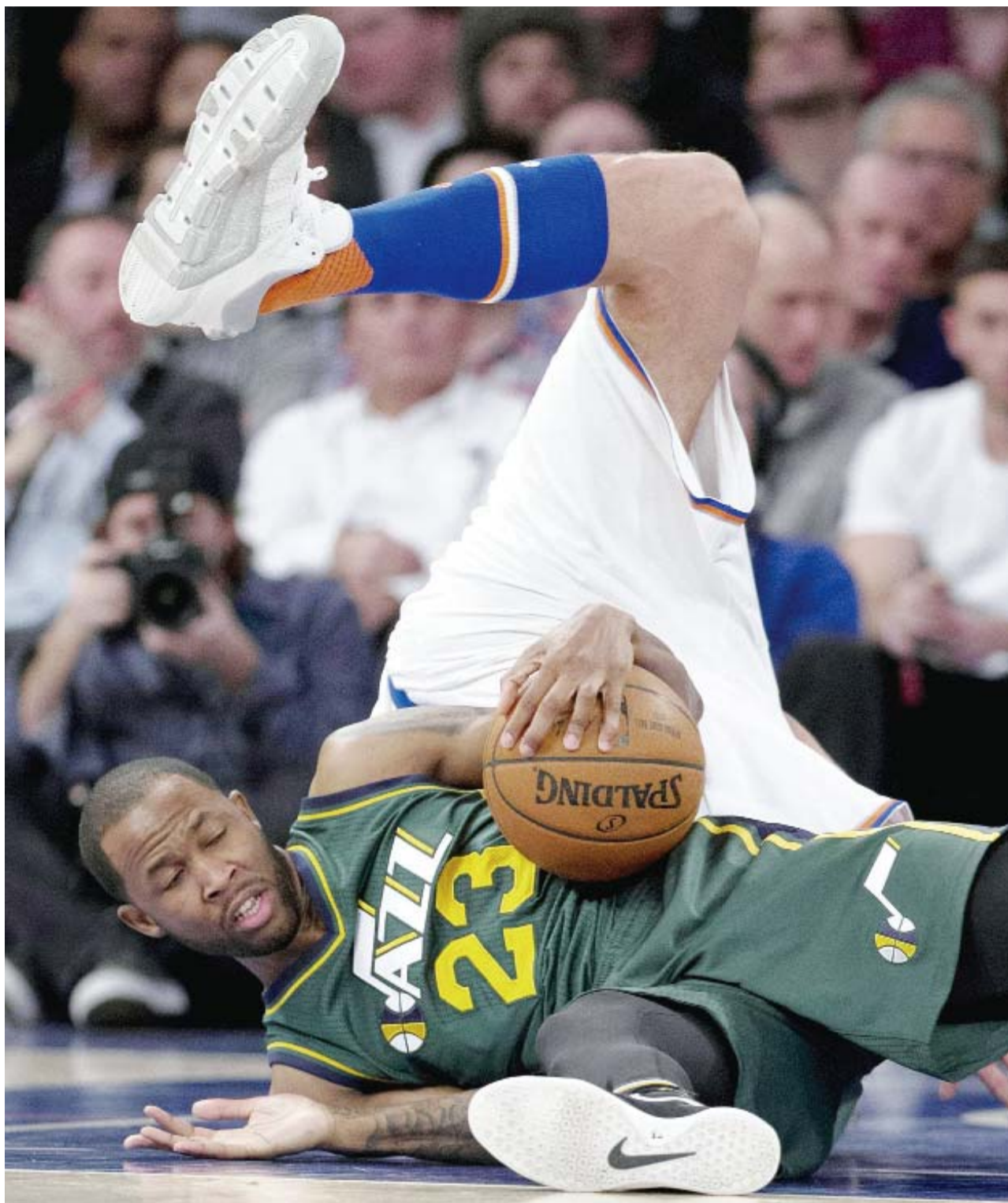
Paul Millsap had 23 points and nine rebounds, leading Atlanta to its third straight win. Kent Bazemore also had 23 points for the Hawks, who have won four straight against the Blazers. CJ McCollum had 28 points for Portland, which trailed by as many as 13 points in the first half but came all the way to grab an 84-79 lead after Meyers Leonard's 3-pointer with 8:10 left. Kyle Korver wrestled back the lead for the Hawks with his first 3-pointer of the game, before Millsap's 3-pointer and Al Horford's jumper stretched Atlanta's lead to 98-92 with 1:53 left. Portland couldn't catch up.

KNICKS 118, JAZZ 111, OT

Carmelo Anthony had 30 points, nine assists and seven rebounds, leading New York to an overtime victory over Utah. Robin Lopez added 22 points and 12 rebounds for New York, which trailed by as many as 12 in the second half and by eight entering the fourth quarter. Derrick Williams scored 18 points, and rookie Kristaps Porzingis had 16. Rodney Hood led Utah with 29 points, and Gordon Hayward finished with 27.

MAVERICKS 106, TIMBERWOLVES 94, OT

Chandler Parsons scored seven of his game-high 30 points in overtime as short-handed Dallas rallied to beat Minnesota. The Mavericks, playing without Dirk Nowitzki, shook off a 10-point,



NEW YORK: Utah Jazz forward Chris Johnson (23) hangs onto the ball as New York Knicks center Robin Lopez trips over him during the third quarter of an NBA basketball game on Wednesday, Jan 20, 2016. — AP

fourth-quarter deficit and a career game from Timberwolves rookie Karl-Anthony Towns to win in their fourth consecutive overtime game at home. After trailing for much of the second half, Dallas was never behind in overtime. Parsons hit the biggest shot of the extra period, a 3-pointer with 2:36 to play to give Dallas a 98-93 lead. With 1:25 to go, Devin Harris made a three-point play to extend the lead to eight. With Nowitzki (right knee) and Kevin Garnett (rest) watching from their respective benches in suits, the 2015 first overall pick Towns had 27 points and career highs with 17 rebounds and six blocks for Minnesota. Andrew Wiggins added 23 points for the Wolves.

WIZARDS 106, HEAT 87

John Wall had 18 points and 10 assists and Bradley Beal added 18 more as Washington Wizards sent injury-ravaged Miami to its sixth loss in seven games. Miami played without Dwyane Wade, who was scratched with shoulder soreness about a half-hour before the game. Halfway through the second quarter, starting center Hassan Whiteside abruptly fell to the floor and with a strained left oblique and did not return to the game. Down to nine players, 33-year-old Amare Stoudemire scored a season-high 11 points in 21 minutes - six more than he had played in his previous 14 games this

season. One of the Heat's remaining players, Luol Deng, who had scored 16 points, left the floor with 2:25 remaining, holding a towel to his face.

RAPTORS 115, CELTICS 109

DeMar DeRozan scored 34 points and Jonas Valanciunas had his eighth double-double with 19 points and 12 rebounds as Toronto won its season-high sixth straight game. Luis Scola chipped in with 18 points and Kyle Lowry added 14 for the Raptors. Boston guard Isaiah Thomas had his fifth double-double of the season with 21 points and 10 assists. Avery Bradley added another 19 points for the Celtics.

76ERS 96, MAGIC 87

Jahlil Okafor scored 20 points, Ish Smith had 13 points and 11 assists and Philadelphia beat Orlando. Hollis Thompson added 17 points and Isaiah Canaan scored 15 for Philadelphia, which has won two of three to get to six wins on the season. Elfrid Payton led Orlando with 21 points and 10 assists, but the Magic were lethargic all night defensively and lost for the eighth time in nine games. Nikola Vucevic had 15 points and 11 rebounds, and Tobias Harris added 15 points and 10 boards. — AP

GUARDIOLA UNSURE OF BAYERN'S LEVEL AS HAMBURG CLASH LOOMS

BERLIN: Bayern Munich coach Pep Guardiola admits he is unsure of his team's form ahead of today's Bundesliga match at Hamburg in the wake of their shock defeat at Karlsruhe. Bayern lost 2-1 at second division Karlsruhe last Saturday in their final warm-up before facing Hamburg away in the first German league match of 2016.

And Guardiola admits it will take him a few matches to discover just how good Bayern are following the four-week winter break. "I don't know at which level my team is playing at right now, we will need three or four games before I know that," he said in Thursday's press conference.

"I probably won't even know after the game in Hamburg." Having announced he will leave Bayern in June, Guardiola's team is currently eight points clear in the Bundesliga table and bidding to become the first club to win the German league title four years in a row. Guardiola has said he wants to coach in England's Premier League next season. He knows his three-year tenure at Bayern will be judged on whether he can repeat the 2013 treble of Champions League, German Cup and Bundesliga titles, achieved by his predecessor Jupp Heynckes.

Guardiola, 45, has won five titles so far with the German giants, but is under pressure to win the Champions League with his side having exited the tournament at the semi-final stage for the last two seasons. "I can live with that. Perhaps we will win the Champions League," he said. "Jupp Heynckes and Ottmar Hitzfeld (who coached Bayern to the 2001 Champions League title), will always be more important to the club than me. "They are German and were here longer than me. "I know the pressure from my time at Barcelona, so I can live with it."

Bayern will need no reminding of their 4-1 drubbing at the hands of last season's runners-up Wolfsburg at exactly the same stage of last season. Having last beaten the Bavarian giants in September 2009, mid-table Hamburg are expected to take the game to Bayern, as they did in their shock 3-1 home win over Borussia Dortmund last November. "I'm sure they will attack, just as they did against Dortmund," said Guardiola. Bayern will be at near full strength with only World Cup winner Mario Goetze, wingers Franck Ribery, defenders Medhi Benatia and Rafinha all "needing more time" to get over injuries. —AFP



BEAUVAIS: Chambly's midfielder Yann Le Picard (left) vies with Lyon's French forward Aldo Kalulu Kyatengwa (center) during the French Cup football match between Chambly and Lyon at Pierre Brisson Stadium in Beauvais on January 20, 2016. —AFP

MARSEILLE JOIN MONACO AND LYON IN FRENCH CUP LAST 16

PARIS: Marseille eased into the last 16 of the French Cup on Wednesday with a 2-0 victory over Montpellier, while Lyon and Monaco also progressed after beating lower-level opposition. Record 10-time winners Marseille grabbed a fortuitous first-half lead at the Stade Velodrome when Georges-Kevin Nkoudou's scuffed shot hit Ramy Bensebaini and trickled into the net for an own goal. Brice Dja Djedje then added a second on 55 minutes to seal Marseille's passage into the next round, with the draw to be conducted on Thursday.

Earlier, Lyon beat third-tier Chambly 2-0. Bruno Genesio's side took control of their tie on a freezing evening in Beauvais with two goals from Maxwell

Cornet and Mathieu Valbuena in the space of two minutes midway through the first half. "In the Cup, you have to move on. Bearing in mind the playing conditions, it was a decent performance," said Lyon coach Genesio. "We managed to score quickly and that's important in these types of contests. We know these matches can sometimes be a trap and I want to salute the attitude of my players." In Annecy, Monaco were taken to extra time by second-tier Evian before the principality side prevailed 3-1. Lacina Traore headed in just before half-time to give Monaco the lead, but the hosts hit back through Morgan Kamin to force extra time.

However, goals from Mario Pasalic (103) and Helder Costa (119) ensured

Monaco advanced to the next round. Fourth-division Treissac stunned Lille as they knocked out the six-time champions on penalties following a 1-1 draw. Troyes, still winless in Ligue 1 this season, moved into the last 16 following a 3-1 win over fourth-tier Concarneau, while Nantes beat Mantes 1-0 and Lorient saw off Boulogne 3-1, both after extra time. On Tuesday, Paris Saint-Germain remained on course to defend their domestic treble as Zlatan Ibrahimovic converted an 88th-minute penalty in a 2-1 win over Toulouse at the Parc des Princes. Toulouse had taken an 11th-minute lead through Swiss international Francois Moubandje before David Luiz leveled for PSG early in the second half. —AFP

TRANSFER SPENDING HITS A NEW RECORD \$4.18 BILLION

ZURICH: Transfer spending around the world hit a record \$4.18 billion in 2015 and has grown by nearly half in five years, FIFA said yesterday. With television and sponsorship money rocketing, there were an all-time high 13,558 transfers in 2015, up 3.1% on the previous year, said FIFA's Global Transfer Market report which monitored 6,500 clubs around the world. Some \$4.18 billion (3.83 billion euros) in transfers were registered by FIFA, up 2.6% on 2014 and more than 44% higher than 2011 spending. English Premier League clubs are still the main spenders but China's Super League is showing the biggest growth, the report said. According to the Deloitte consultancy, English clubs spent \$1.2 billion (1.1 billion euros) in the summer transfer window last year.

Bale record fee

Meanwhile, Welsh star Gareth Bale joined Real Madrid in 2013 for a world record fee in excess of 100 million euros (\$109 million, £77 million), a leaked report reveals. Whistleblowing website Football Leaks posted a copy of the agreement between Madrid and Tottenham Hotspur online on Wednesday. The deal allowed Madrid the option of paying 91,589,842 euros in one lump sum within 15 days of the transfer, or 99,743,542 euros in four installments over three years.

Madrid also agreed to pay a solidarity fee of 1,015,875 euros and forego any outstanding payments on the transfer of Dutch midfielder Rafael Van der Vaart to Tottenham from Madrid in 2013. Numerous Spanish media outlets reported Madrid had taken up the four installment option. Real Madrid refused to comment when contact-

ed by AFP on Thursday. However, Bale's agent Jonathan Barnett called for an investigation into how the documents came to be leaked.

"There should be an inquiry and an independent investigation because it's outrageous," he told The Telegraph. "There also needs to be an apology from the Football Association to the clubs and the player. "I think it's disgraceful that people can get hold of this sort of stuff. It shows complete disregard for both clubs and the player." Real have long maintained Bale only cost 91 million euros. Indeed another provision of the contract states Madrid would cite that figure to the media, whilst Tottenham wouldn't release any statement regarding the transfer fee.

In exchange, Madrid agreed to ensure Bale wouldn't make any "negative or derogatory comments" regarding Tottenham and their chairman

Daniel Levy. Madrid were reluctant to announce a world record fee to appease Bale's teammate and three-time World Player of the Year Cristiano Ronaldo, whose move from Manchester United to Madrid for 94 million euros in 2009 was the previous record. Bale has consistently been linked with a move back to England with United among those rumoured to be interested.

However, according to the agreement, Tottenham have a right of first refusal should Madrid sell Bale back to the Premier League before 2019. Bale enjoyed a stellar first season in Madrid, scoring in the finals as Real won the Champions League and Copa del Rey against rivals Atletico Madrid and Barcelona respectively. However, after a poor second season, the 26-year-old has been hampered by injuries so far this year. —Agencies

MESSI, SUAREZ-LESS BARCA EDGE TOWARDS CUP SEMIS

ATLETICO, CELTA VIGO PLAY GOALLESS DRAW

MADRID: Atletico Madrid and Celta Vigo played to a 0-0 draw and Barcelona defeated Athletic Bilbao 2-1 in the quarterfinals of the Copa del Rey on Wednesday. Barcelona got the away victory but Aritz Aduriz's late goal kept Athletic alive going into next week's second leg at the Camp Nou. Atletico and Celta will play the return match at the Vicente Calderon Stadium in Madrid, where Atletico has won its last nine matches.

Atletico relied on solid defending to keep the hosts from scoring, but Diego Simeone's team failed to take its chances on counterattacks. Celta nearly scored in the 82nd but Gabi Fernandez cleared the ball just in front of the goal line to maintain the deadlock. "It was an open match, but they had more ball possession," Simeone said. "Now any draw other than 0-0 will benefit them. We need the victory at any cost."

The sides had met in the Spanish league just 10 days ago, with Atletico winning 2-0

in Vigo. Atletico Madrid leads the Spanish league with 47 points from 20 games. Barcelona is two points behind from 19 games. Celta is fifth with 34 points, also from 20 games. Barcelona was set for a 2-0 win at the San Mames in Bilbao, but Aduriz found the net in the 89th after Barcelona defender Dani Alves failed to clear a ball from inside the area. Athletic almost equalized a couple of minutes later after a ball deflected in front of the goal, but Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen made a good save to secure the win.

Munir El Haddadi gave Barcelona the lead in the 18th after a cross by Ivan Rakitic, and Brazil striker Neymar increased the lead in the 25th after a long ball sent into the area. "Athletic pressured a lot," Barcelona coach Luis Enrique said. "It was complicated, but I'm satisfied with the result despite conceding the late goal." The Catalan club got the win - its fifth in a row - despite playing

without Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez. Messi was rested after receiving a knock on his right leg in the Spanish league game against Athletic over the weekend, while Suarez served the last of his a two-game suspension for insulting Espanyol opponents in the first leg of the round of 16 of the Copa del Rey.

Suarez, the Spanish league's top scorer with 18 goals, netted a hat trick in Barcelona's 6-0 rout of Athletic in the league on Sunday. The Basque club played that game with 10 men after goalkeeper Gorka Iraizoz was sent off for a foul that prompted a penalty kick to Barcelona in the fourth minute. The quarterfinal matchup is a rematch of last year's final in the Copa del Rey, which Barcelona won 3-1. The teams also met in the Spanish Super Cup final a few weeks later, when Bilbao came out on top to win its first major title in more than 30 years. — AP

GAY CLUB BOSS URGES PLAYERS TO 'DECLARE THEIR HOMOSEXUALITY'

MILAN: The gay president of an Italian fifth division club has called for Serie A players and officials to 'declare their homosexuality', as the furor over Napoli coach Maurizio Sarri's gay slurs rumbled yesterday. Sarri has steered Napoli to the top of Italy's top flight and the side are firmly in title contention 26 years after winning their last 'scudetto'. But the 57-year-old hit the headlines for all the wrong reasons on Tuesday when he called Inter Milan coach Roberto Mancini a 'poof' during a heated dispute after his side's quarter-final Cup defeat to the Nerazzurri.

Sarri, who now risks a two-game touchline ban, claimed the slurs were said in the heat of the moment. But the controversy has overshadowed Napoli's brilliant first half of the season and left Sarri, who has transformed Napoli from also-rans to title contenders, with egg on his face. Alessandro Cecchi Paone, the president of fifth division side Positano, close to Naples, labeled Sarri's slurs as "offensive and homophobic" and suggested Napoli organise a benefit match between the sides to help spread awareness of the issue.

But Paone said gay players, coaches or officials could make a bigger impact by coming out themselves. The 54-year-old announced he was gay 18 months ago and said he has earned nothing but respect. "Everyone gives me credit for having the courage to admit I was gay. Now would be the time, in Serie A, for a coach, player or official to come to terms with his own homosexuality and become an example to follow," Paone said in Gazzetta dello Sport. "Mancini has jolted a climate that effectively prevents players from declaring their homosexuality because these kinds of homophobic incidents, that I see all the time in the minor leagues, don't get the publicity they deserve."

While Sarri awaits the announcement of a possible ban that could hamper his side's campaign, his rant has highlighted arguably the last big taboo in football. In 2009 Gareth Thomas, at the time Wales's most-capped rugby union player, admitted he was gay while still actively playing. Yet gay footballers remain a rarity at the top level of the sport. Englishman Justin Fashanu was the first professional footballer in Britain to admit his sexuality, in 1990, but committed suicide eight years later, aged 37.

Last year former Aston Villa, West Ham and Everton midfielder Thomas Hitzlsperger announced he was gay, claiming: "I've never been ashamed of the way I am." In 2015 reports that two Premier League stars, one of whom was allegedly an England international, were on the verge of announcing their 'coming out' dominated headlines in Britain's tabloids. But currently, there are no known openly gay footballers in the English and Scottish professional leagues.

Homosexuality in Italian football also remains taboo, although Juventus midfielder Claudio Marchisio won fans among the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual) community several years ago when he said it was "not fair" homosexuals should be accepted elsewhere and not in football. He told the Italian edition of Vogue magazine in June 2012: "If someone comes out at their place of work, thankfully now it no longer causes controversy. "But if you do that at a football training camp, the reaction wouldn't be the same. It is not fair." Paone, meanwhile, said his candor on the subject has only boosted his club's chance on the pitch. "Things are going great, I have great relations with the players and there's no problem about me going into the dressing room," he added. "What's more, the team is playing even better." — AFP

HOLDERS JUVENTUS SET-UP INTER CLASH

LICHTSTEINER SENDS JUVE INTO CUP SEMI-FINALS

ROME: Defending champions Juventus will take on Inter Milan for a place in the Italian Cup final after edging Lazio 1-0 in the quarter-finals Wednesday with goalline technology summoned to clarify the winning goal. On the back of 10 wins in a row in Serie A, Juventus grabbed the only goal of the night in the 66th minute at the Stadio Olimpico.

Swiss international Stephan Lichtsteiner, a former Lazio star, was in the right place at the right time to nudge the ball over the line after a fierce drive from Simone Zaza had come off the crossbar. Lazio's Albanian goalkeeper Etrit Berisha thought he had done enough to thwart Lichtsteiner's close-range rebound but goalline technology showed the ball had just crossed the line. "It will be a wonderful semi-final, you have to face the biggest clubs to reach the end, but right now we are focused on this weekend's meeting with Roma in the league," said Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri.

On Tuesday, Inter had defeated Napoli 2-0 in a match overshadowed by an ugly row between rival coaches Roberto Mancini and Maurizio Sarri. Mancini blasted Napoli counterpart Sarri a "racist" and claimed his rival called him a "poof". Mancini and Sarri clashed on the touchline after Adem Ljajic killed off the quarter-final tie at the San Paolo stadium in Naples in injury time to add to Stevan Jovetic's opener. "Maurizio Sarri is a racist and men like him have no place in football," fumed Mancini to RAI TV after the game. "He used racist words. He started insulting me and then shouted at me, calling me a poof."

Mancini said Sarri had used the words "frocio" and "finocchio", both pejorative terms meaning homosexual. Sarri brushed off the exchange as part and parcel of the game. "I've seen and heard worse on a pitch," he said. "I hope that in the cold light of day, Mancini will also change his point of view. "In my words, there was no form of discrimination, I have nothing against homosexuals. I've apologized to Mancini, for me everything's ok." The other semi-final will be between third-division Alessandria and AC Milan. — AFP



ROME: Juventus' Paul Pogba (left) and Lazio's Stefan Radu jump for the ball during an Italian Cup soccer match between Lazio and Juventus, at Rome's Olympic Stadium on Wednesday, Jan 20, 2016. — AP

GLOVES OFF AS ADIDAS FORGET TO CECH ADDRESS

LONDON: Petr Cech's stunning form with Arsenal appears to have gone unnoticed by his sponsors Adidas, who delivered a pair of new goalkeeper gloves to the training ground of his former club Chelsea. The Czech Republic international, 33, spent 11 very successful years with Chelsea, notably winning

four Premier League titles and the 2012 Champions League, before crossing London to join Arsenal during the close season. He was expecting a new pair of gloves to be delivered ahead of Sunday's match between the clubs at the Emirates Stadium, only for Chelsea

to their Cobham training base in error.

Asked on Thursday if he would check Cech's new gloves for signs of skulduggery, Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger replied: "He's big enough to check his own gloves. 'I think he has enough gloves. These kind of mistakes can happen. I consider him now as a real

Arsenal player who looks to me as if he's been here forever. 'He has adapted so well and integrated to team spirit. This kind of incident is an accident.' Arsenal are currently top of the table on goal difference from Leicester City, with defending champions Chelsea 19 points off the pace in 14th place. — AFP



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's Sheyi Ojo (right) fights for the ball against Exeter's Will Hoskins during the English FA Cup third-round replay soccer match between Liverpool and Exeter at Anfield Stadium, Liverpool on Wednesday Jan 20, 2016. — AP

SPURS OUST LEICESTER

LIVERPOOL BEAT LOWLY EXETER IN FA CUP

LONDON: Son Heung-min's thunderous finish helped Tottenham Hotspur secure a 2-0 victory at Leicester City and Liverpool eased past fourth-tier Exeter City 3-0 in FA Cup third-round replays on Wednesday. Son, who rifled home the opening goal after 39 minutes, set up Nacer Chadli for the second with a beautiful pass in the second half as the eight-times Cup winners eased through against surprise Premier League high-flyers Leicester. Liverpool scored early through Joe Allen, but then made heavy weather of their lower league opponents and did not add to their lead until substitute Sheyi Ojo curled home superbly.

Joao Teixeira rounded off a comfortable victory for Juergen Klopp's side with a neat near-post finish eight minutes from time. After the first meeting between Tottenham and Leicester had ended in a thrilling 2-2 draw and with both teams harboring hopes of challenging for the Premier League title, their managers showed where the FA Cup ranks in their priorities. Both made a raft of changes to the sides they fielded at the weekend and left out their

principal attacking weapons, with Jamie Vardy warming the Leicester bench for most of the match and Harry Kane starting on the sidelines for Spurs.

The game began at a pedestrian pace and only sprang to life after 39 minutes when Son finished emphatically, thumping the ball into the top corner past Kasper Schmeichel as the Leicester defence retreated. Demarai Gray tested Spurs keeper Michel Vorm at the start of the second half with a curling effort, but Leicester struggled to find any momentum and fell further behind after 66 minutes. The ball found its way through to Son, who slid a perfectly-weighted through ball for Chadli to calmly finish past Schmeichel and round off a pleasing display for Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino.

"The performance was fantastic," he told the BBC. "We played well from the beginning to the end. I think we deserved this victory." Liverpool manager Klopp introduced a smattering of experience to the side that drew 2-2 at Exeter, in the shape of Allen, Jose Enrique and Christian Benteke, but it was still populated mostly by acade-

my graduates. One of those, Brad Smith, made a telling contribution as seven-times winners Liverpool took the lead after 10 minutes. The 21-year-old Australian exchanged passes with Benteke and drilled his low cross into the box for Allen to side-foot home.

The second half was as one-sided as the first and with a similar outcome as Liverpool pressed and dominated but failed to find the killer blow. While the hosts' struggles to extend their advantage added to the tension inside Anfield, the second goal was worth waiting for as Ojo strolled into the area before beautifully curling his finish into the roof of the net. That effectively ended any hopes of an upset and was swiftly followed by a third goal as Teixeira was fed through by Benteke and calmly slotted home, allowing Klopp to sing the praises of his young players. "They showed they are talented with really big skills," he told BT Sport. Spurs travel to third-tier Colchester United in the fourth round and Liverpool host Premier League rivals West Ham United. — Reuters

ARSENAL'S DUO SANCHEZ, OZIL IN LINE FOR CHELSEA

LONDON: Arsenal's key creators Mesut Ozil and Alexis Sanchez could both return from injury for Sunday's Premier League clash with champions Chelsea, manager Arsene Wenger said yesterday. German playmaker Ozil missed last weekend's 0-0 draw at Stoke City with a minor foot injury, but Wenger said that he would be available for the London derby at the Emirates Stadium. Wenger is also hopeful that Sanchez will be able to feature for the first time since succumbing to a hamstring problem at Norwich City on November 29, although the Chilean is not certain to be involved. "The good news is that Ozil certainly will be available," Wenger told his pre-game press conference at the Arsenal training ground.

"Sanchez, the next two days will be decisive, but this time, I think he will make it for selection." On Sanchez, Wenger added: "The doubt is about him having been out for a long time, and the risk of a setback. 'To be clear on all the tests is one thing. To be clear after training is another. The intensity of a big game you can never replicate in training, but you can make the risk minimal. 'I'm cautious with him because we cannot afford a setback, which would mean a very long period out. We don't want to take this risk. The signs he's shown in training this week are positive."

Wenger said that midfielder Francis Coquelin had returned to full training yesterday following a knee injury. Striker Danny Welbeck (knee) is due back in training next week and midfielder Tomas Rosicky is scheduled to play for Arsenal's under-21 side on Friday as he pursues his recovery from a knee injury of his own. Arsenal top the table on goal difference from Leicester City, with Manchester City a point back in third place. Chelsea are 19 points adrift in 14th. Wenger also said that he would happily help UK Anti-doping after the agency's chief executive, Nicole Sapstead, said on Wednesday that she wanted to speak to him about comments he has made about doping in the past.

Wenger, 66, said in November that football had a doping problem and accused European governing body UEFA of not doing enough to stamp it out. "I have more desire than time, but I'm more than happy to help if I can in clarifying things for people who want to fight against doping," he said yesterday. "I've said what I have to say. In football, in our job, we look like we want to tackle the problem now. For a long period it looks to me like we didn't. 'I am available. We have to tackle doping and fight against it, you and me. I am not thinking I can do more than people responsible to do that, but if they need to talk to me, I'm available." He added: "I'm sure that not one club in England is trying to dope its players." — AFP

EMOTIONAL FAREWELL AS HEWITT BOWS OUT

MURRAY DISARMS GROTH WITH MASTERLY DISPLAY

MELBOURNE: Lleyton Hewitt bade an emotional farewell under the Australian Open floodlights yesterday as David Ferrer snuffed out any chance of fairytale final flourish from the local hero. After world number two Andy Murray had trampled on home sensibilities by mauling Australian Sam Groth to reach the third round, the Rod Laver Arena crowd settled in to watch former world number one Hewitt try to extend his illustrious singles career for at least another two days.

Eighth-seeded Spaniard Ferrer played the villain to perfection, however, ending the two-times grand slam champion's record 20th campaign at Melbourne Park with an emphatic 6-2 6-4 6-4 victory. Not that renowned street-fighter Hewitt went with a whimper. He fought to the last even when defeat was inevitable. "Every time I play out here at Rod Laver Arena, it's like a second home," the 34-year-old Adelaide native told the fans after a typically pugna-cious display in which he cursed a line judge and mouthed off at the chair umpire. "Playing for Australia has always been my biggest honor ... I feel fortunate to finish here."

The scandal over alleged match-fixing in tennis that has clouded the tournament's opening days lingered on though with even Hewitt being quizzed about online speculation that some of his past matches had been implicated. "Good luck taking me on with it," he said angrily at the post-match media conference, his three children sitting beside him. "It's disappointing. Throwing my name out there with it makes the whole thing a farce." Hewitt's sentiments echoed those of world number one Novak Djokovic, who on Wednesday was moved to deny any wrongdoing after an Italian newspaper report said a 2007 match he lost at the Paris Masters was fixed.

NO DISTRACTIONS

There were no distractions for Murray though as he ruthlessly demolished big-serving Groth 6-0 6-4 6-1 as the top seeds sailed through on a day of bright sunshine. The 2014 champion and fourth seed Stanislas Wawrinka swatted away Czech veteran Radek Stepanek in the twilight, while women's third seed Garbine Muguruza and two-times champion Victoria Azarenka also charged into the third round. Rafa Nadal's first-round exit to



MELBOURNE: Australia's Lleyton Hewitt (center) gestures as he walks off court with family members after his defeat in the men's singles match against Spain's David Ferrer on day four of the 2016 Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. —AFP

Fernando Verdasco punched a hole in the bottom half of the draw, but four-times finalist Murray was not about to join the fallen Spaniard. He disarmed Groth, the world's fastest recorded server, with a clinical returning game, showing his guile by lobbing the 6-ft-4in (1.93m) Australian repeatedly when he lumbered forward in desperation.

Murray has trounced both his first round opponents and Portuguese 32nd seed Joao Sousa is next in the firing line. Since her back-to-back titles at Melbourne Park in 2012-13, two injury-blighted years have kept Azarenka from claiming a third but the powerful Belarusian is looking dangerous. The former world number one, seeded 14th here, hammered Montenegro's Danka Kovinic 6-1 6-2 at Margaret Court Arena to set up a match with Naomi Osaka and offered some chilling words for the Japanese qualifier. "I'm feeling in the best shape body-wise, you know, spirit-wise, everything-wise," Azarenka told reporters.

She remains on course for a mouth-watering fourth-round clash with Spanish Wimbledon runner-up Muguruza, who crushed Belgian Kirsten Flipkens 6-4 6-2. Wawrinka eased past 37-year-old qualifier Stepanek 6-2 6-3 6-4 in the Hisense Arena and the Swiss next faces another Czech in Lukas Rosol. Thirteenth seed Milos Raonic continued to shape as a dark horse, beating Tommy Robredo 7-6(5) 7-6(5) 7-5. Underlining the fickle nature of grand slams, Nadal's first-round slayer and compatriot Fernando Verdasco exited after a hard-fought four-set loss to pint-sized Israeli Dudi Sela.

The on-court drama spilled into the stands early in the day at Rod Laver Arena, where a spectator was injured in a tumble down the stairs during former French Open champion Ana Ivanovic's 6-3 6-3 win over Anastasija Sevastova. She faces big-hitting American youngster Madison Keys next in a meaty third-round clash. Teenager Osaka gave a bow to thrilled Japanese fans after dumping 18th seed Elina Svitolina 6-4 6-4, continuing her impressive main draw debut at a grand slam. Born to a Haitian father and raised in the US, Osaka remains a curiosity in her mother's country but a show-court appearance against Azarenka could change all that. "I always think that they're surprised that I'm Japanese," the frizzy-haired 18-year-old shrugged with an American accent. —Reuters

TEEN QUALIFIER OSAKA FEELS JAPANESE LOVE

MELBOURNE: Teenage qualifier Naomi Osaka gave a bow to the crowd after moving into the Australian Open third round yesterday, in a gesture to the hordes of Japanese fans supporting her. It was a nice touch from a player who is enjoying an amazing Grand Slam debut and who represents the Asian nation yet understands virtually no Japanese. "I'm trying to study Japanese but I get really nervous when I hear it," she said.

"It's really fast. Sometimes it sounds like they're rapping, so then I'm just like, 'Oh my god-I didn't hear the first part of the question.' Then I look like an idiot, and I don't want to look like an idiot." Eighteen-year-old Osaka, the daughter of a Japanese mother and Haitian father, she moved to New York as a young child and mostly trains in Florida. Her dad reportedly preferred to see the dual passport-holder play under the Japanese flag rather than the United States, and she has been embraced by Japan. —AFP

WHEN EVEN WATCHING TENNIS IS 'DANGEROUS'

MELBOURNE: Playing tennis carries its risks but at this year's Australian Open, watching has been even more dangerous after a series of medical emergencies in the opening few days. Several players were struggling with injury in the build-up to the season's first Grand Slam, but so far it's the spectators and ball kids who have had more problems in Melbourne. Yesterday, Ana Ivanovic was shaken after an elderly fan was badly hurt in a fall on some steps in Rod Laver Arena, in worrying scenes which held up play for 30 minutes. "I was really shaking, because the sound of the lady falling was really loud. I could hear it," said the former world number one, who looked on anxiously before the spectator was finally stretchered away. The incident came after Bernard Tomic was left fearing for a spectator's life after she suffered a seizure during his first-round match against Denis Istomin. In dramatic scenes, an anti-allergy shot was quickly passed through the crowd and eventually the patron was taken out of the venue, with the worst of the danger past.

Tomic said it was difficult to know how to react as a player, watching somebody in clear danger but also then having to refocus on one of the biggest matches of the season. "Potentially someone's dying and

we're not sure what's going on. You know, we had 15 minutes' gap between that service game then only to play one point," he said afterwards. "You know, at one stage I was looking directly at the lady. It was not a good moment to be in for me. I felt very, very sad. I really hope she's okay." French former finalist Jo-Wilfried Tsonga also showed his caring side when he assisted a dazed and tearful ball girl after she had been struck in the face with a ball.

Realizing the girl was in trouble, the Frenchman took her by the arm, took the balls from her hand and led her from the court—an act of kindness which drew warm applause. "I saw she was in trouble," the modest Tsonga said later. "It was normal to help her out of the stadium. I hope she's okay." "To be honest I didn't do anything special." It mirrored a situation earlier in the tournament, when Spain's Carla Suarez spotted a ball boy swooning in the intense heat, and led him from the court, again to applause. Perversely, injuries to players have been relatively few, although Argentina's Diego Schwartzman also fell victim to the heat when he was stretchered away from his opening match with severe cramps. —AFP



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PORTLAND: Portland Trail Blazers guard CJ McCollum (right) passes the ball away from Atlanta Hawks forward Kent Bazemore during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Portland, Ore on Wednesday, Jan 20, 2016. — AP

Cavs bounce back; Warriors march on