

Kerala minister holds talks over nurse recruitment

3



44 migrants drown as boats capsize off Greek islands

7



Super Serena, Djokovic soar into fourth round

48



150 Fils

SALEH: LOW OIL CHANCE FOR ECONOMIC REFORMS

ABADI LAUDS KUWAITI FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO IRAQ



Min 07°
Max 21°



LYNCHBURG, Virginia: A woman shovels the sidewalk in front of her house as snow falls yesterday morning. —AP

MONSTER BLIZZARD HITS US

WASHINGTON: A massive blizzard began dumping snow on the southern and eastern United States yesterday, with mass flight cancellations, five states declaring states of emergency and more than 60 cm predicted for Washington alone. The National Weather Service said the winter storm could rank near the top 10 to ever hit the region. NWS meteorologist Paul Kocin compared it to "Snowmageddon," the first of two storms that "wiped out" Washington in 2010, but he said the weekend timing could help limit deaths and damage.

"It does have the potential to be an extremely dangerous storm that can affect more than 50 million people," said Louis Uccellini, director of the weather service. The snowfall, expected to continue from late yesterday into tomorrow, could easily cause more than \$1 billion in damage and paralyze the eastern third of the nation, he said. Uccellini said all the elements have come together to create a blizzard with brutally high winds, dangerous inland flooding, white-out conditions and even the possibility of thunder snow, when lightning strikes through a snowstorm.

Snowfall as heavy as 1 to 3 inches an hour could continue for 24 hours or more, Kocin said. In addition to Washington, 12 to 18 inches of snow was predicted for Philadelphia and 8 to 12 inches for New York. A state of emergency was declared in Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia and parts of other

states. Blizzard warnings or watches were in effect along the storm's path, from Arkansas through Tennessee and Kentucky to the mid-Atlantic states and as far north as New York.

Schools and government offices were closed, thousands of flights were canceled and millions of people stocked up on supplies. College basketball games and concerts in the region were postponed. All major airlines have issued waivers for travel over the weekend, allowing passengers to rebook onto earlier or later flights to avoid the storms. Flight tracking service FlightAware said airlines canceled more than 2,400 flights yesterday to, from or within the US, and another 2,400 were canceled for today. By tomorrow afternoon, airlines hope to be back to full schedule.

Washington's subway system said it will shut down entirely late yesterday night and remain closed through tomorrow. About 1,000 track workers will be deployed to keep New York City's subway system moving and 79 trains will have "scraper shoes" to reduce the icing on the rails. The federal government announced that its offices would be closing at noon yesterday. White House spokesman Josh Earnest said President Barack Obama would hunker down at the White House. The US Capitol Police said sledding on Capitol Hill, which only recently became legal after an act of Congress, would be welcome for the first time in decades, as long as conditions are safe. — AP

DAVOS, Switzerland: The sharp drop in the price of oil, the lifeblood of Gulf economies, is an opportunity to end subsidies and introduce reforms in the energy-rich region, ministers said yesterday. "With low prices... it is the right time" to cut subsidies on oil products, Kuwait's Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh said at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. In a panel on the future of economic reform in the Arab world, Saleh - also Kuwait's acting oil minister - said that record low oil prices would make the lifting of subsidies on fuel products easier on consumers.

"We saw an opportunity to have people do the right thing, which is to pay the right cost of energy," said Emirati energy minister Suhail Al-Mazrouei. "We need to rethink about major reforms that make our budgets independent from oil revenues," he added. After liberalizing fuel prices in June, Mazrouei said the United Arab Emirates is looking into lifting subsidies on other products and services, including on electricity. "That's not healthy," he said, speaking of gas sold to electricity providers at subsidized rates, stressing the need to "apply international prices".

The head of Bahrain's Economic Development Board, Khalid Al-Rumaihi, went further, describing the sharp drop in oil revenues as a "blessing in disguise", because it provides an "opportunity for reforms". He named fiscal reforms and widening the economic base in Gulf countries as potential outcomes of lower oil revenues, which represent the bulk of receipts for most Gulf countries.

Saleh argued that governments will need to formulate a way to help needy citizens when oil rebounds. "What if it goes up again? We'll have to look at rationalizing subsidies...to those who need" them, he said. Unlike Kuwait and UAE, Bahrain is a minor oil exporter. It recently cut subsidies on diesel and petrol. Kuwait began selling diesel and kerosene at market prices at the start of 2015, and on Thursday, HH the Amir announced plans to raise the prices of petrol, electricity and water.

Meanwhile, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi yesterday commended Kuwait's \$200 million financial assistance to help the country face its current crisis. Kuwait is the only Arab country that has lent a helping hand amid the current sensitive conditions Iraq is going through, Abadi told a panel session in Davos. — Agencies

KAC TO PROVIDE MODERN MEDICAL SERVICES ONBOARD

MANAMA: Kuwait Airways announced Thursday that it will equip its new planes with modern medical services, including connecting the plane with a medical system that enables the pilot to follow the health condition of any ill passenger with a medical center in Phoenix, Arizona. The new system follows the patient's condition and determines his/her treatment possibilities and procedures, Tareq Hamada, deputy manager for engineering service at KAC, stated to KUNA on the sidelines of the 4th Bahrain International Air Show 2016.

Through a linking device that examines the patient's blood pressure, sugar and heart, a physician will decide whether the situation requires onboard treatment or an urgent landing to save the patient, Hamada added. He said KAC has also equipped the new planes with advanced medical beds for ill passengers that can be installed without needing to remove the plane's seats, adding that the beds are also automated and can be directed and moved in different angles that are appropriate for each patient. — KUNA



BEIRUT: Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Dr Hilal Al-Sayer meets with Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Samir Mokbel. — KUNA



KRCS Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer with Kuwait News Agency bureau officials in Beirut.

KUWAIT KEEN TO HELP LEBANON ON REFUGEES' FILE: KRCS CHAIRMAN

BEIRUT: The visiting chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Dr Hilal Al-Sayer yesterday reiterated support to Lebanon regarding the Syrian refugees in the country. In a statement to KUNA following talks with Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Samir Mokbel, Sayer said that the KRCS would carry on with their efforts offering aid and relief supplies to the Syrian refugees.

He added that the meeting with Mokbel offered an opportunity to review the KRCS projects in Lebanon, as well as the role of all other Kuwaiti institutions to present assis-

tance to refugees there and in other states. Kuwait is the biggest supporter to more than a million of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Meanwhile, UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL) Philippe Lazzarini has commended Kuwait's support to the refugees. In a statement to KUNA after a meeting with Al-Sayer, Lazzarini appreciated Kuwait's response to humanitarian appeals. He pointed out that Kuwait had hosted three international pledging conferences for Syria over the past three years.

The meeting addressed the tragedy of the

Syrian refugees, at home and abroad, and their future humanitarian needs, he added.

Media's role

Earlier, Sayer emphasized the important role of media to convey, to the world, Kuwait's approach and mythology to humanitarianism.

Media is a key player in highlighting humanitarian work done by Kuwait, under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sayer said in a press statement yesterday. He

added media outlets are an essential partner that shed light on philanthropic work carried out not only by KRCS but also other organizations. Earlier this month, KRCS celebrated its 50th anniversary by launching a photography exhibition that displayed pictures covering years of activities since its establishment in 1966.

The exhibition was an effort of publicizing KRCS' illustrious works and underscoring Kuwait's firm commitment to humanitarian causes. KRCS will always be relentless in its efforts to serve the world of humanity. — KUNA

IOM CHIEF TOUTS AMIR'S HUMANITARIAN ROLE

GENEVA: Director-General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) William Lacy Swing yesterday hailed the international humanitarian role by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in light of the current serious humanitarian situation worldwide.

Speaking at a meeting with Kuwait's permanent delegate at the UN and International Organizations in Geneva Jamal Al-Ghuneim at the IOM headquarters, Swing voiced optimism at the donors conference due in London next month, saying it will be co-chaired by Kuwait, Germany, Britain and Norway. In this context, he lauded Kuwait's experience in the field of humanitarian activities and international confidence in the wisdom and leadership of His Highness the Amir. Meanwhile, Ambassador Ghuneim hailed close relations between Kuwait and the IOM, adding that bilateral cooperation has been expanded over the past three years. He appreciated periodical visits by the IOM chief to the State of Kuwait, pointing to Kuwait's relentless support to refugees and homeless people worldwide out of religious and humanitarian considerations. Kuwait and international humanitarian organizations have been making preparations and arrangements for the London donors conference, he added. — KUNA



GENEVA: Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) William Lacy Swing meets with Kuwait's permanent delegate at the UN and International Organizations in Geneva Jamal Al-Ghuneim. — KUNA



TOKYO: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Japan Abdulrahman Al-Otaibi meets Miyagi Prefecture Yoshihiro Murai. — KUNA

JAPAN'S QUAKE-HIT MIYAGI ESTABLISHES KUWAIT STUDY FUND

TOKYO: Governor of Japan's quake-hit Miyagi Prefecture Yoshihiro Murai announced the establishment of the 'Kuwait Friendship Tohoku Community Medical Study Fund' utilizing the heartwarming donation from Kuwait. The announcement was made during a meeting between the governor and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Japan Abdulrahman Al-Otaibi in Tokyo, the embassy said in a press release yesterday.

According to Murai, in line with its efforts to fill the need for doctors and medical facilities in the prefecture since the earthquake-

tsunami disaster in March 2011, the fund will provide financial support to Miyagi's students studying at a newly established Tohoku Medical and Pharmaceutical University.

Miyagi was one of the three hardest-hit northeastern prefectures by the Great East Japan Earthquake that left more than 18,000 people dead or missing. Soon after the disaster, Kuwait offered Japan a donation of 5 million barrels of crude oil, upon noble instructions by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The JPY 9 billion (\$76 million) study fund will use the JPY 16 billion (\$136 million) allo-

cated to Miyagi Prefecture from the sales revenues of the Kuwaiti crude oil donation.

At the meeting that was also attended by Embassy's Third Secretary Yousef Al-Tarkit and prefectural officials, Murai expressed gratitude to Kuwait for supporting reconstruction efforts in Miyagi and other affected areas in the aftermath of the disaster, and commended Kuwait's generosity towards Japan during that difficult period. The two sides also touched upon the reconstruction progress, and discussed matters concerning the bilateral relations between Kuwait and Japan. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kerala Minister KC Joseph speaks at the Indian embassy as (from left to right) NORKA Chief Executive Officer R S Kannan, NORKA Secretary Rani George, Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain and Subhashish Goldar look on.

KERALA MINISTER HOLDS TALKS IN KUWAIT ON NURSE RECRUITMENT

MOH DELEGATION TO VISIT INDIA NEXT MONTH

By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: A two-member delegation from Kuwait's Ministry of Health (MoH) will visit the Indian state of Kerala next month to follow up the agreement reached between Kuwait and India in October last year streamlining the recruitment of Indian nurses to Kuwait through three government agencies.

The delegation consisting of Dr Jamal Mansour Al-Harbi, assistant undersecretary for medical services affairs, and Dr Mahmoud Al-Abdulahadi, assistant undersecretary for legal affairs, will visit Kerala in February and hold talks with the minister and other officials on the modalities of effectively implementing the decision to keep private agents out of the recruitment process.

Addressing a meeting at the Indian embassy on Thursday evening, along with a visiting Indian delegation comprising Kerala's Minister of Non-Resident Keralites' Affairs KC Joseph, NORKA Secretary Rani George and NORKA Chief Executive Officer R S Kannan, Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain said the visiting minister and the delegation held a meeting with Dr Al-Harbi on Thursday morning.

Three agencies

The India government decided in March to route the recruitment of nurses through three government agencies - NORKA Roots, the field agency of the Non-Resident Keralites Affairs Department, Overseas Development and Employment Promotion Consultants (ODEPC), under the labor department of the state government, and the Overseas Manpower Corporation run by the Tamil Nadu government.

"Dr Al-Harbi reconfirmed to us that the MoH is fully committed to the agreement," the ambassador said. The MoH plans to recruit 1,000 Indian nurses this year who would be posted in specialized departments at various MoH hospitals such as intensive care units, neurosurgery, orthopedics, etc.

Elaborating on the system of recruitment, the ministry official conveyed to the delegation that the MoH would like to recruit qualified nurses from India with three years of

work experience. The candidates must be below the age of 35. The MoH would demand the three official recruiting agencies to review applications from three candidates before selecting one. The agencies must also conduct written tests prior to the interviews.

Addressing the meeting, the minister said he arrived in Kuwait as part of his visit to GCC countries to follow up the decision taken on the recruitment of nurses. He expressed happiness over the fruitful discussions the delegation held with Kuwaiti officials and applauded the ambassador for his initiative to take the process forward. At the same time, he voiced concerns over the delay in implementing the decision which was communicated by the Kerala government to the External Affairs Minister in Delhi.

"On an average, we used to send 300-400 nurses to the GCC countries every month. But after the 30th of April, 2015, only 870 nurses were recruited through NORKA to 18 ECR countries, including Kuwait, where emigration clearance has become mandatory for candidates following the new regulation. Indian embassies in these 18 countries must take the initiative to push employers to register through the official portal e-Migrate," the minister said.

Growing concern

"Today, there is a growing concern in Kerala. Despite having qualified nurses, we are losing in the job market since we are unable to recruit sufficient number of nurses for the ECR countries. We are keen to have the process expedited," he said. The minister said that the government has established an NRI Commission with a view to safeguarding the properties of the non-resident Keralites and ensuring the safety and security of their close relatives back home.

The meeting was attended by Indian Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Subashish Goldar and Second Secretary A K Srivastava. Several Indian community representatives also attended the meeting and participated in the interactive session that followed the minister's speech.



MADRID: Participants attend a meeting on tourism Development Policies and Strategies in the Middle East and North Africa. — KUNA

STABILITY KEY INGREDIENT FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: OFFICIALS

MADRID: Security and stability are key ingredients for tourism development worldwide, an Arab, Spanish Ministerial Round Table on Tourism Development Policies and Strategies in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region said late Thursday.

Held as part of the International Tourism Trade Fair (FITUR), which saw the participation of 164 countries, the round table focused on the future of tourism in MENA and how to tackle the various conflicts as well as an unclear economic future plaguing the region.

In the opening of the roundtable, Spanish Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Ignacio Ybanez Rubio said that like MENA, the Mediterranean region had been under a lot of security pressure recently, stressing that it was important to cooperate with various regional organizations to address the matter. Issues such as migration, unemployment, and the current dire state of the economy in the region required swift actions and solutions to bring tourism development to the forefront of the agendas of countries in the Mediterranean, said Rubio.

Meanwhile, Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Dr Taleb Rifai said that tourism in the Middle East had faced many security challenges throughout the years; however, the region always managed to revive its tourism industry despite the fact.



Spanish Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Ignacio Ybanez Rubio

Tourism in the Middle East had witness a three percent growth in 2015, said Dr Rifai. He noted that terrorism had indeed become a challenge to the development of tourism around the globe, but stressed that cooperation within the security domain amongst all nations will help to defeat terror.

Arab officials from Kuwait, the UAE, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Algeria shared similar views regarding the importance of countering terrorism as a tool to develop tourism in the MENA region, saying that this was an international obligation. The roundtable is organized by Casa Arabe (Arab House) and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). — KUNA

OIC MEETING MARKED WITH HIGH-LEVEL PARTICIPATION: SHEIKH SABAH AL-KHALED

FOREIGN MINISTERS REJECT IRAN'S REMARKS ON SAUDI RULINGS

JEDDAH: The extraordinary meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) Foreign Ministers was distinguished with participation of a large number of ministers due to the agenda crucial topics, Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said Thursday.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled chaired the emergency meeting, organized to focus on recent attacks on the Saudi embassy and consulate in Iran. Discussions were held in a cordial atmosphere, said Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled speaking after the meeting at a news conference with the OIC Secretary General Iyad Amin Madani.

The talks were held in a cordial atmosphere, in harmony with the OIC founding principles, such as maintaining good neighborly ties, states' mutual respect and cooperation, aspiration to cement bonds of brotherhood and solidarity among Islamic states, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said. Describing results of the OIC meeting as "rumbling and robust and extremely explicit," the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister said the final communiqué was backed by the 57 participating states, except for Iran which expressed reservations at the final statement. "Undoubtedly, the message was clear with respect of condemning Iran for its attacks on the Saudi diplomatic mission in Tehran and Mashhad," he said.

"Everybody has denounced the assaults on the Saudi Embassy in Tehran and its consulate in Mashhad however I wish to affirm that such a State that has managed to resist the world over its nuclear file for long years, and reach an agreement for it, can act similarly in dealing with the six neighboring Gulf states if it has desire to reach a solution."

In response to a question about the GCC future steps toward Iran, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled stated that Gulf states have interest to establish a normal relationship with a significant neighbor such as Iran, and this has been affirmed by the leaders and the ministers.

"We are advocates of peace and normal relations and defusing any tension in the region," Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said, stressing the GCC countries' aspiration to have normal relations with neighboring Iran.

Decades from instability

The region has suffered for decades from instability and it is about time that "our peoples enjoy security and stability," the Kuwait Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister said. However, he added, "we will not accept aggression, thus we are clear with respect of our relations with any state for they are based on international principles that have been recognized and applied for years.

"We had hoped that we would not reach this stage; that there would be no Gulf, Arab or Islamic meeting regarding tensions with an important neighbor such as Iran." Nevertheless, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled

expressed hope that the "strong message" emanating from the meeting would result in defusing tension in the Gulf.

In response to a question about mediation efforts between Tehran and Riyadh, he said that many states have expressed concern over the strains in the Saudi-Iranian relations. "But let us review the developments to determine the party that has caused this .. the explicit and direct attacks on the Saudi Embassy in Tehran

attacks on the Saudi diplomatic mission.

'Inflammatory' statements

The OIC Foreign Ministers had strongly rejected Iran's 'inflammatory' statements against judicial rulings in Saudi Arabia, particularly decisions against the perpetrators of terrorist crimes inside the Kingdom.

"Those statements are blatant interference in the internal affairs of the Kingdom

on Consular Relations of 1963, and the international law which guarantees the inviolability of diplomatic missions and imposes the immunity of and respect for diplomatic missions accredited to any country, said to the council's final communiqué Thursday.

These aggressions also contradict OIC Charter and the UN Charter, which call for resolving conflicts through peaceful means and abstaining from interfering in



JEDDAH: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs an extraordinary meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) Foreign Ministers. —KUNA

and the Consulate in Mashhad have been condemned by everybody," the minister said. Such go-between efforts must "be related to determining the culprit responsible for this tension," he stressed.

Regarding the statement by the head of the Iranian delegation during the meeting, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Seyed Abbas Araqchi informed the conferees about statements that had been made by the Supreme Guide of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ali Khamenei, President Hassan Rouhani and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who all expressed dissatisfaction with the

of Saudi Arabia and a contravention of the United Nations' Charter, the OIC Charter, and of all international covenants," OIC said in its final communiqué of the Council's extraordinary meeting Thursday.

The communiqué urged all member states and the international community to take serious and effective steps to prevent the occurrence and recurrence of such aggressions on diplomatic and consular missions in Iran in the future. The OIC foreign ministers council also condemn the recent attacks against Saudi missions in Tehran and Mashhad that violated the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961, the Vienna Convention

the internal affairs of countries, it added. The council expressed full support of the efforts exerted by Riyadh and all member-states in countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, regardless of its source and objectives.

It also confirmed support to Saudi legislative and legal measures to counter aggressions against its diplomatic and consular missions in Iran, reiterating statements by member and non-member states, UNSC, Arab League, GCC, and other regional and international organizations that strongly condemned recent assaults on Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran. —KUNA

PHONES IN CLASS: DISTRACTION OR VALID EDUCATIONAL TOOL?

KUWAIT: Probably most people would not bat an eye if they were told that smartphones have invaded almost every aspect of our lives. From programs that count calories consumption to social media applications that people check before they go to bed, smartphones have become an essential tool in this modern age.

Lecture halls of Kuwait University (KU) are no exception, with many students using their devices to sometimes capture an image of the studying material or have a distraction from whatever is being taught.

In various interviews with KUNA, professors and students have different views regarding the use of smartphones during lectures, with some being for the use of the technology while others expressing detest.

Respect

KU's social studies professor Dr Malak Al-Rashid said that smartphones should not dictate the course of the lecture, insisting that she rarely asks her students

to use their phones in any capacity to gather or provide information.

Dr Rashid stressed that before she started her lectures, she would set a number of rules that include setting phones on silent mode, deeming that as a crucial part of the respect between lecturers and students. However, Dr Rashid said that she was not totally against the concept of smartphones, revealing that her students could connect with her on e-mail or twitter account in case of emergencies or cancellation of lectures.

In a similar fashion, Professor of Psychology Dr Amthal Al-Howaila said that smartphones are useful tools to gather data and information; however, their place is not within lecture halls. Sometimes allowing the minimum usage of smartphones during a lecture could be beneficial for the studying material, but that rarely happens, said Dr Howaila, insisting that she never allows her students to chitchat on the phone whether in a text or an audio form during lecture time. She suggested the establishment of several guidelines that would make



use of the positive aspects of smartphone technologies, stressing that social media applications on the device could be used to regulate class sessions and disperse studying material.

No problem

Taking different tack, Professor of administration studies Dr Mohammad Al-Fahad said that there are no regulations preventing students from using

their smartphones during lectures; however, there are rules banning the use of such devices during exams. "As long as the students are using their phones to enhance their studying experience, I see no problem in using them," said Dr Fahad. On the students' part of the equation, Zahra Mahmoud Haydar said that she keeps away from her phone during lecture, preferring to set the smartphone on silent mode. She noted that this act enables her to be more focused on the subject of any given lecture and; thus, absorbing most of the information being delivered.

In contrast, Law student Faisal Al-Rashidi said that he usually uses his smartphone to dig out useful information during the course of the lecture, adding that this very act does not hinders his capacity to learn. According to what each lecturer wants, the use of smartphones is prohibited or allowed, said Rashidi who stresses that the current age of mass media makes it essential for students to use these devices as an educational tool. — KUNA

KUWAIT CHAIRS UNESCO'S ARAB GROUP FOR 2016

PARIS: The State of Kuwait was chosen to chair the Arab Group in the United Nations United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the year 2016, Kuwait's permanent delegate to UNESCO Dr Meshal Hayat announced yesterday. Within the UNESCO, "the Arab Group carries more weight on matters that are beneficial to Arab nations such as: culture, education, science and sociology," Hayat pointed out; hence, Kuwait will strive during its chairmanship to promote and enhance Arab coordination to achieve Arabs aspirations. The Arab Group's monthly meetings usually discusses preparations for various executive matters within the group and strive to see eye-to-eye on many issues that concerns Arab nation, he added.



Kuwait's permanent delegate to UNESCO Dr Meshal Hayat

In a Group's meeting, Hayat pointed out that committees on culture, human science, social science, education and communication were formed. It also tackled hosting few events with elite figures in the UNESCO, most importantly with UNESCO's Director-General Irina Bokova, to confer about Arab issues within this international organization. The Arab Group in the UNESCO aims at developing education methodologies, preserving cultural heritage, especially in countries that see conflict like: Iraq, Syria and Libya. Hayat hoped that all Arab aspirations would be met in 2016. "We are striving to intensify hosting seminars in the Arabic language as an attempt to highlight it, as it has been recognized as one of the six official languages in the United Nations," he said. UNESCO has chosen December 18 to celebrate "World Arab Language Day." — KUNA



KUWAIT: Amiri Diwan Advisor Mohammad Daifallah Sharar is seen during the inauguration of the Bahraini pavilion in Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad heritage village. — KUNA



BAHRAIN PAVILION IMPORTANT ADDITION TO GULF HERITAGE FESTIVAL: SHARAR

KUWAIT: The opening of the Bahraini pavilion is an important addition to the Gulf Heritage Festival, said general coordinator of the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad heritage village and Amiri Diwan Advisor Mohammad Daifallah Sharar said yesterday. Speaking to KUNA, Sharar said that he was very glad to have attended the opening of the Bahraini pavilion which marked the second participation of the fellow Gulf country in the festival.

The Bahraini pavilion host a number of traditional crafts in addition to historical



documents and photos featuring Bahrain in olden times. Sharar indicated that the UAE and Qatari will open their pavilion soon, affirming that the GCC states participation in the festival was an indication of how strong the relations were amongst the countries in the region.

The Gulf Heritage Festival, which began last November, is held in Kuwait for the sixth consecutive time under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The festival will conclude next March. — KUNA

EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON WARNS KUWAITIS AGAINST SNOWSTORM KUWAITIS UNHURT IN EGYPT BLAST

WASHINGTON/CAIRO: Kuwait's Embassy has advised all nationals and students in the United States to remain vigilant for a crippling snow storm that was likely to slam the US east coast as of yesterday. In a statement on Thursday, the Embassy called on all nationals to abide by the safety instructions of the local authorities in the US mid-Atlantic region.

The Embassy, as well as the medical and cultural offices, is in contact with the National Union of Kuwait Students-USA and the patients to ensure the safety of all nationals, the statement said. It asked those who might need help

not to hesitate to dial any of the following phone numbers: The Embassy: +12022620758. The Medical Office: +12023202415. The Military Office: +12028180666. The Cultural Office: +12023642104. US meteorologists forecast up to two feet of snow to fall in the eastern areas, particularly Washington, between Friday and Monday, which could cause power outages and cripple traffick.

Egypt's blast

In other news, the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Egypt Salem Al-Zamanan affirmed on

Thursday, in aftermath of a bomb blast in Al-Maryoutiah, Giza, that no Kuwaitis were hurt as a result of the incident.

Ambassador Al-Zamanan said in a statement that none of the Kuwaitis, including residents, students and tourists, was harmed by the explosion that happened when security forces raided a hideout for gunmen in Al-Maryoutiah. One security personnel was killed and 12 others were wounded in the security operation.

The Kuwaiti diplomatic mission in Egypt is reachable for any Kuwaiti citizen, seeking help

or inquiry, at the following phone numbers: 0020235712187/0020235712194/0020235714101. Authorities, earlier Thursday, said the security squad burst into an apartment building used as a hideout by the gunmen. An explosive device found during the raid accidentally detonated while being examined, inflicting the casualties.

Ballistics officers "dealt with the remaining explosives that were found in the dragnet," a security source said, also indicating that the scene was sealed off by the security forces. — KUNA



KUWAIT: A dead body lies on the ground after being recovered from the waters near the Ahmadi Port yesterday.

DEAD BODY FOUND NEAR AHMADI PORT

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Firefighters recovered a dead body found near the Ahmadi Port yesterday morning. A team from the Shuaiba Sea Fire Station had rushed to the scene after receiving a call at 8:30 am from Kuwait Oil Company workers reporting that they found a dead body floating in the waters near the port's northern harbor. The body was taken out of the water, and the man was pronounced dead on the scene. The victim was identified as 43-year-old Arab national. General Department of Criminal

Evidence officers took the body for an autopsy. Meanwhile, an investigation was opened to determine the circumstances which led to the man's death.

No injuries in fire

In other news, two firefighter units tackled a blaze reported at a restaurant outside Souq Sharq late Thursday night. Firefighters moved fast to evacuate the restaurants and battle the flames, which limited the fire's spread and helped record no casualties. An investigation was opened to reveal the causes of the fire.



Fire trucks drive near Souq Sharq where a fire was reported Thursday night.

PREMIER ORDERS HALT OF OFFICIALS' PRIVILEGES

KUWAIT: While the price of Kuwaiti oil continues to drop, breaking the \$20 barrier for the first time since 14 years by reaching \$19.14 in Tuesday trading, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah asked his ministers on Thursday to stop any financial privileges for senior officials at government departments, in addition to stopping any new financial incentives for employees until further notice. Sheikh Jaber ordered during the working breakfast he holds every Thursday with ministers to discuss the most important current issues, to implement the results of the meeting of HH the Amir with editors-in-chief on Wednesday, especially with regards to rationalizing public spending and reducing government expenses, in addition to

reducing the treatment abroad budget. A ministerial source said Sheikh Jaber asked his ministers concerned with subsidies and oil prices to complete the study of raising gasoline prices in cooperation with the supreme planning council during three months maximum, control market prices and prevent taking advantage of limited-income people. The source said there are two views on the period of completing the subsidies' study and raising fuel prices - the first needs six months to complete it, while the other agrees with the Cabinet to finish it within three months. The source said the Cabinet will dedicate its meeting next week to discuss the mechanism of the proposed plan in order to finish the study on raising gasoline prices. —Al-Jarida

WOMAN KILLED, SON INJURED IN CRASH

KUWAIT: A citizen was killed and her son injured in a car accident on Salmy road on Thursday. Police, fire and paramedics rushed to the scene and found the 44-year-old lady dead and her 15-year-old son severely injured. The woman's body was sent to the coroner while the injured boy was rushed to Jahra Hospital. Meanwhile, a 20-year-old citizen was killed during a collision between a bus and an ATV on Julaia road. A security source said that the collision trapped the youth, and his body was recovered by the coroner.

Out of control

Ahmadi police brought a citizen under control after he became hysterical at This family's flat in Fintas. The man, who seemed to be in an abnormal condition, began destroying things, so the family called the police. A report on the case was recorded, then the citizen was handed back to his family. Meanwhile, Fahaheel police arrested six Egyptians for exchanging blows in a Fahaheel street. They were all taken to the police station for further action.

Fugitive caught

Ahmadi security officers sent a citizen to the civil implementation department after he was arrested in Fahaheel and found to be wanted for five financial cases.

Forgery

Residency detectives sent a Somali man and a woman who claimed to be his mother to concerned authorities for forging official documents to complete residency procedures. The 21-year-old Somali had received a verdict against his mother to correct his sta-

tus and bring his passport because he was on a family visa, but police became suspicious. Investigations and inquiries about the Somali's sponsor and his two brothers revealed the woman was his maternal aunt, and carried out the residency procedures with forged documents, so all involved were sent to concerned authorities.

Employee insulted

A female citizen was transferred to Jahra Hospital before being sent to concerned authorities charged with insulting a public employee. Director of the Civil Implementation Department Col Nasser Al-Yahya said that the woman damaged the office of an officer and smashed its windows, then attempted suicide as she cut her fingers with the smashed glass after becoming hysterical.

Vice acts

Ahmadi security busted a party with vice acts in an area adjacent to 7th Ring Road near Dhafer. A security source said a citizen informed them about dancing and other indecent acts inside a camp. Eight young men were found but no women.

Contrabands possession

Policemen sent a citizen to Drugs Control General Department for questioning over his possession of liquor and gambling material. A security source said the citizen was arrested at a checkpoint at dawn after he attempted to avoid police by driving the wrong way. Police found him intoxicated, and found two liquor bottles inside along with gambling tools and KD 580. The suspect was taken to Salmyia police station. —Al-Rai, Al-Anbaa

LAWMAKER CRITICIZES REFERRING OLYMPIC COMMITTEE TO COURT

COMMITTEE FAILS TO FORESTALL SPORTS SUSPENSION: PAS

KUWAIT: Chairman of the parliament's youth and sports committee MP Abdullah Al-Maayouf criticized a decision taken by Information Minister and State Minister for Youth and Sports Sheikh Salman Al-Hamoud to refer Kuwait Olympic Committee to court. He described the government's move as 'surprising,' especially since the National Assembly had asked the committee to carry out an investigation on those who caused the suspension of sports activity at the international level.

Maayouf said the committee began its work according to the Assembly's request, but "we were surprised by the move of the information minister that warrants an explanation." He added that the committee will hold a meeting next week to take steps to answer the minister's move.

Maayouf wondered on how the information minister sent the Olympic committee and sports unions to the prosecution "while we are investigating the same case?" "How can we investigate federations that were sent to the prosecution, and if any federation is summoned, they will answer by saying 'we have been sent to the prosecution'. The main question is why the referral took place before the committee completed its report," Maayouf was quoted by Al-Rai yesterday.

Sports suspension

On Thursday, the Public Authority for Sports (PAS) said that the Kuwait Olympic Committee (KOC) has

failed to fulfill its 'assigned role' to forestall a resolution suspending Kuwaiti sports. In a press statement, PAS Deputy Director General Humoud Fulaiteh considered KOC the "major reason" for the suspension resolution. He cited "evidence" recorded in the last messages of, and meetings with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Lausanne, Switzerland. Fulaiteh's statement quashes recent remarks by president of the KOC and the Kuwait Football Association Sheikh Talal Fahd Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



MP Abdullah Al-Maayouf

Kuwaiti fans enjoy a high level of awareness and can differentiate between who embroiled the Kuwaiti sports and athletes for "purely personal interests" and who is seeking to uphold state sovereignty, and preserve its gains, as well as caring for the sports movement and youth, Fulaiteh noted in a statement carried by Kuwait News Agency (KUNA).

The IOC messages have demonstrated that the current sports dilemma was not caused by alleged contravention of the Kuwaiti sports laws with the international charters and systems, Fulaiteh said. According to an IOC letter dated October 22, 2015, the international body stated that its "intervention was prompted by a dispute between the Kuwaiti government and the Kuwaiti Olympic Movement," he said. Kuwaiti fans had full knowledge, substantiated by documents, about who sent all these complaints and laws to the IOC "unjustly and wrongly."

International

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ISMIR, Turkey: People check bodies of migrants who drowned as they were trying to reach Greece at a port on Thursday. — AP

44 DROWN AS MIGRANT BOAT SINKS

VICTIMS NOT WEARING LIFEJACKETS • MANY CHILDREN AMONG DEAD

ATHENS: Forty-four people drowned after three refugee boats sank yesterday off Greece, as German Chancellor Angela Merkel sought to press Turkey to play a bigger part in resolving Europe's escalating migrant crisis. Despite wintry conditions, thousands of people fleeing war and misery are still embarking on the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean to seek a better life in Europe. In a stark illustration of the high cost of the voyage, Greek and Turkish coastguards recovered the bodies of 44 migrants - including 20 children - whose boats capsized on their way to Greece, officials said yesterday.

The Greek coastguard said they had rescued 74 people after two boats ran into trouble off the Greek Aegean islands of Farmakonisi and Kalolimnos in the early hours. But the toll could still rise as rescuers were still scouring the waters for people missing from the boat that capsized off Kalolimnos. Separately, the Turkish coastguard found the bodies of three children yesterday after a third boat sank near the seaside resort of Didim, the Dogan news agency reported.

Fishing vessels assisted the search and rescue operation which lasted hours. "They weren't wearing lifejackets, I don't understand. They couldn't swim," Michalis, a local fisherman, told Reuters. He rescued three migrants but one of them, a 50-year old man, later died in his small fishing boat. "The hospital is now full of dead people." Survivors said that more people were missing, he said. "There must have been a lot of people on board. It was one of those closed yachts with a small hatch. You can imagine what happened if it had a lot of people on board," the fisherman said.

Europe has been battling to resolve its biggest migration crisis since World War II. Latest confirmed figures from the International Organisation for Migration put the number of deaths in January alone at 113, a figure that included 15 of the latest 44 deaths. Germany and Turkey have emerged as crucial players in the crisis, and both Merkel and Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu will seek to drive a hard bargain in Berlin where the two countries' cabinets are meeting. The outcome of yesterday's talks is not only important for

Merkel, who faces intense pressure at home to impose a cap on Germany's refugee intake, but it will also have resonance across Europe where public opinion is hardening against a record asylum seeker influx.

'Not Asking for Money'

Merkel has so far resisted demands for a quota, after nearly 1.1 million asylum seekers arrived in Germany in 2015. She has instead promised a "tangible reduction" in new arrivals, and is counting on international efforts to deliver. Merkel won some backing from US President Barack Obama, who in a phone call late Thursday pledged to contribute "substantially" at a Syria donors' conference in February. At the Davos summit of business and political elite, US Secretary of State John Kerry also made a call for a 30-percent hike in international aid for refugees.

But Merkel is well aware of the pivotal role played by Turkey, which not only shares a border with war-torn Syria but is also a launchpad for thousands of migrants. Merkel asked Davutoglu to honour a deal with the EU to

reduce the number of migrants coming through, as between 2,000 and 3,000 people are still arriving daily in Greece from Turkey despite the Nov 29 accord. But the EU has yet to deliver on the deal either, with member states still squabbling over the financing for aid towards the 2.2 million Syrian refugees that Turkey is hosting.

Davutoglu Thursday said he would not even ask about the three billion euros (\$3.2 billion) promised by the EU but will demand concrete action instead. "We are not asking (for) money, we are not negotiating (for) money... For us, it's a humanitarian duty, therefore the problem is not financial assistance," Davutoglu said in Davos. "We hope the next steps will be concrete steps to address this issue," he said. Die Welt newspaper said "it is possible that Germany would promise additional bilateral funds". With the meeting coming on the heels of last week's attack in Istanbul that killed 10 German tourists, discussions will also inevitably focus on the international battle against the Islamic State group, Merkel's spokesman said. — AFP

IS CLAIMS KILLING EGYPTIAN POLICE

CAIRO: An Egyptian affiliate of the jihadist Islamic State group claimed responsibility yesterday for a bomb blast during a police raid on a Cairo apartment that killed seven people, including five policemen. Thursday's explosion in the Al-Haram district, near the pyramids, came as police raided a flat suspected to be a militant hideout and tried to defuse an explosive device, the interior ministry said on its Facebook page. The ministry blamed the banned Muslim Brotherhood movement of ousted presi-

dent Mohamed Morsi for the blast.

However, an Egyptian affiliate of IS said it lured the officers to the apartment, which was "rigged with bombs". "When the infidels entered, the bomb-rigged house was blown up," the Islamic State Egypt group said in a statement posted on jihadist websites. The interior ministry said a group of Brotherhood members had been using the apartment to manufacture explosives. The blast killed five policemen, one civilian and an unidentified man, a police official said

yesterday, updating an earlier toll.

The interior ministry posted pictures of the five dead policemen on its Facebook page. Thirteen other people were wounded in the blast, it added. Al-Haram has witnessed several attacks and gunfights since the army ousted Islamist leader Morsi in July 2013. The neighborhood is known to house many Morsi sympathizers and has been the scene of clashes between his supporters and security forces in the aftermath of his ouster by then army chief and now

President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi. It also houses several hotels used by tourists visiting Cairo because of its proximity to the world-famous pyramids.

Morsi was Egypt's first freely elected president and succeeded longtime autocrat Hosni Mubarak, who was driven from power after an 18-day popular uprising. On Monday, Egypt marks the fifth anniversary of the anti-Mubarak revolt, and Sisi has warned against any form of demonstration on that day. — AFP



MOGADISHU: A Somali man cries next to dead bodies on Lido beach yesterday following an overnight attack on a beachfront restaurant. — AFP

SHABAB KILL 'NEARLY 20' IN SOMALIA RESTAURANT

KENYA MOURNS WAR DEAD

MOGADISHU: Islamist Shabab gunmen killed around 20 people in a popular beachside restaurant in Somalia, police said yesterday, as neighboring Kenya mourned soldiers killed by the Al Qaeda-linked group last week. In the attack in Mogadishu, five gunmen detonated a bomb before storming the busy restaurant and spraying gunfire at terrified customers late on Thursday. "They killed nearly 20 people, including women and children," Somali police officer Mohamed Abdirahman said, describing it as a "barbaric and brutal attack against innocent civilians".

The Shabab, which is fighting to overthrow the internationally-backed government in Mogadishu, carries out regular attacks in the capital, as well as against African Union troops in the countryside. Somali Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Sharmarke condemned the "savage" attack. Last week the insurgents stormed a Kenyan army base at El-Adde in southwest Somalia, in the latest incident of an AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) base being overrun by the group.

A Shabab statement said that more than 100 Kenyan soldiers based at the

mission were killed and others captured. Kenya has so far refused to say how many of its soldiers were killed, injured or remain missing. Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta yesterday visited wounded soldiers recovering in hospital in the capital Nairobi and praised the "bravery and dedication" of the "fallen heroes" in an address to dignitaries and relatives of the dead and injured.

Huge Explosion

The Lido beach area in Mogadishu is full of restaurants, including upmarket establishments popular with business people and diaspora Somalis who have returned home to the city. After a huge explosion, gunmen burst into the restaurant on Thursday evening as diners were sitting down for their evening meal at the start of Somalia's weekend. "The fact that they have chosen this location during a weekend night shows how merciless the Shabab militants are," Abdirahman added. "They wanted to kill more civilians - but the security forces rescued most of the people."

The Al-Qaeda-linked Shabab claimed responsibility for the attack, in which four

of their gunmen were also killed, and one captured. "The mujahedeen fighters targeted the Lido Beach," the militants said on the group's Radio Andalus, calling it a "major operation against the enemy of Allah". Security minister Abdirazak Omar Mohamed told reporters that four of the attackers were shot dead by security forces. The minister added that one gunman was captured when security forces entered the building to end the attack. Survivors described the gunmen spraying those in the restaurant with automatic weapons.

Point Blank Range

Abdirahman Halane was close to the restaurant when the gunmen attacked, and said some of those killed were hit by an explosion as they tried to flee. "The gunmen entered the popular Lido Sea Food Restaurant from the back door and started shooting... a few minutes later there was a heavy explosion at the front gate while people were trying to escape," Halane said. "There was confusion, everybody started panicking, and some of them ran towards the gunmen and they were shot dead, I was lucky to escape," he said. — AFP

ISRAEL EVICTS SETTLERS FROM W BANK HOMES

HEBRON: Israeli security forces evicted dozens of Jewish settlers from two homes in the heart of the West Bank city of Hebron yesterday, a day after they had moved in. Dozens of settlers left the house yesterday morning, carrying their possessions and accompanied by Israeli border police, an AFP photographer on the scene said. Police later welded the doors of the homes shut, the photographer said. Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld confirmed 80 people had been removed from the homes, with the evacuation occurring without incident.

The buildings stand near a religious site known to Jews as the Cave of the Patriarchs and to Muslims as the Ibrahimi Mosque in the heart of the flashpoint southern West Bank city. The families had only moved in on Thursday after buying the homes from Palestinian families, the settlers said. Yishai Fleisher, a spokesman for the settler community in Hebron, told AFP the properties were vacant when they moved in. However, the move had not been coordinated with the Israeli security forces ahead of time.

He said the defense ministry said they would not examine the documentation showing they had bought the house until they left. "There was a request made by the defence minister to get the Jews out of the house," he said. In Hebron, where 500 Jewish settlers live protected by Israeli forces in a city of around 200,000 Palestinians, the expansion of the Jewish enclave is a fiercely contested matter. Under Palestinian law, it is illegal to sell homes to Israelis in the West Bank but a very small number still do so.

Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Yaalon would have to approve the settlers' move, which would in effect expand the boundaries of the Jewish area in Hebron. In a statement yesterday, Yaalon said the "squatters" were evicted as they had not followed legal procedures. "To be allowed to move into a house there is a certain number of actions that have to be taken so this is legal. None of these actions have been taken in this case," he said. Fleisher said they would submit the relevant paperwork in the coming days and were confident the Jewish families would be able to move back in relatively quickly. He said the Arab seller had been moved to "a safe house" to protect against recriminations. Three members of parliament from ruling parties announced yesterday they would not vote with the government again on any matter until the settlers were returned to the homes. — AFP



JERUSALEM: Palestinians carry placards bearing the portraits of 10 Palestinians whose bodies are still under Israeli custody during a demonstration demanding the release of the bodies and the release of Palestinian journalist Mohammed Al-Qiq from Israeli jails, in front of Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock mosque in the Al-Aqsa mosque compound yesterday. — AFP

TURKEY ALARMED BY 'RUSSIAN BUILD-UP' ON SYRIAN BORDER

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday expressed alarm over reports of a build-up of Russian troops in northern Syria near the Turkish border, saying such movements would not be tolerated. "We have said this from the beginning: we won't tolerate such formations (in northern Syria) along the area stretching from the Iraqi border up to the Mediterranean," Erdogan told reporters after Friday prayers in Istanbul. Britain-based monitor the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights had said that Russia had sent a number of engineers to the Syrian border town of Qamishli to strengthen the runway and

increase the capacity of an airport there.

Russia's reported move into Qamishli comes as Ankara and Moscow are experiencing their biggest crisis in years over the shooting down of a Russian war plane by Turkey on Nov 24. "We maintain our sensitivities on this issue," added Erdogan, citing reports that Russia had deployed some 200 soldiers and stating that he would raise the issue today in talks with visiting US Vice President Joe Biden. Observers have said that Russia, which has for years been at loggerheads with Turkey over the Syrian conflict, may want to refit the airport as a Russian base, as happened in Hmeimim in Latakia province.

Qamishli lies just south of the Turkish border town of Nusaybin. "I can say that Turkey is closely watching every military movement on its borders and especially the border with Syria," the government source told AFP, asking not to be named. The Turkish army has already reinforced security by digging trenches in the border zone, the Hurriyet daily said. It quoted Turkish security sources as saying that a Russian military delegation, headed by a general and including members of the Russian military intelligence service GRU, had flown into Qamishli on Jan 16 to inspect the airport.

Education Minister Nabi Avci, speaking

in parliament, claimed Russia's forces in Qamishli were working with both the regime as well as Kurdish militia of the Democratic Union Party (PYD). The People's Protection Units (YPG) have established control over much over the northern Syrian border region in the past months after pushing out Islamic State (IS) jihadists. But Ankara accuses the PYD and YPG of being the Syrian branch of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and has been alarmed by an apparent tightening of ties between Moscow and the Kurds after the plane downing. "For us, there is no difference between PYD, YPG, PKK or Daesh (IS)," said Erdogan. — AFP



KASSERINE, Tunisia: A young Tunisian who tried to commit suicide is carried by a member of the Tunisian army after witnesses said they saved his life in this central Tunisian city yesterday. — AFP

TUNISIA IMPOSES CURFEW AMID SPREADING UNREST

FIVE YEARS ON, 'ARAB SPRING' MODEL TESTED

TUNIS: Tunisia yesterday declared a nighttime curfew across the country after a wave of protests and clashes that constitute the most serious outbreak of social unrest since its 2011 revolution. Five years after the overthrow of longtime dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, street demonstrations against unemployment and poverty are again shaking the North African nation. Anger erupted over the death last Saturday of an unemployed young man who was electrocuted when he climbed an electricity pole while demonstrating in central Tunisia.

The unrest has spread around the country including to Tunis where shops were burnt and looted in one suburb. The interior ministry said the 8 pm to 5 am curfew was necessary to prevent damage to property and to ensure public safety. Prime Minister Habib Essid, on a visit to France, said that the situation "has been brought under control". President Beji Caid Essebsi was due to deliver a televised address to the nation on Friday evening, his office said, in what would be his first public remarks since the recent unrest began. Earlier yesterday, new clashes broke out in the central town of Sidi Bouzid between

stone-throwing protesters and police who fired tear gas, according to an AFP journalist. Authorities called for calm after 16 people were arrested on vandalism charges in a suburb of Tunis, the latest incident in almost a week of unrest. National Guard units clashed with individuals in balaclavas until early yesterday, an official said. An AFP journalist reported that two household appliance stores and a bank branch had been ransacked on the neighborhood's main street and a police post burnt. In central Tunisia, security forces have clashed with protesters in several towns, including in Kasserine where the unrest started, using tear gas and water cannons to disperse crowds. At least three police stations have been attacked over the past 24 hours and 42 members of the security forces wounded, the interior ministry said. "This is the most serious social crisis since 2011," independent analyst Selim Kharrat told AFP.

The unrest has echoes of the public anger unleashed by the death of a street vendor who set himself on fire in Dec 2010 in protest at unemployment and police harassment. That desperate act of defiance provided the spark for the uprising that overthrew Ben Ali

and inspired revolutions across the Arab world.

Social Exclusion, Inequality

The new spike in unrest has prompted Essid, who also attended the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland on Thursday, to cut short a European tour and return for an emergency meeting of his cabinet today. France on Friday pledged one billion euros (\$1.1 billion) in development aid to Tunisia over the next five years, after Essid held talks with French President Francois Hollande. The support to France's former colony, "aims to help poor regions and young people, putting the focus on employment," Hollande's office said. While Tunisia is hailed as a rare success story of the Arab Spring uprisings, the authorities have failed to resolve the problems of social exclusion and regional inequalities. Tunisia also faces jihadist violence that has devastated its vital tourism industry. Attacks claimed by the Islamic State group last year at the national museum and a beach resort killed a total of 60 people, all but one of them foreign tourists. An IS suicide bombing also killed 12 presidential guards in the capital in November. — AFP

BIDEN SLAMS TURKEY OVER MEDIA RIGHTS

ISTANBUL: US Vice President Joe Biden yesterday strongly criticized Turkey for failing to set the right "example" on freedom of expression, slamming the imprisonment of journalists and investigation of academics who criticized government policy. In a rebuke of rare vehemence for Washington's key NATO ally, Biden said Turkey's most recent record in freedom of expression under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is "not the kind of example that needs to be set".

Speaking at a meeting with civil society representatives in Istanbul, Biden said the United States wanted to see Turkey set a "strong example" for the whole region of what a "vibrant democracy" means. "The more Turkey succeeds, the stronger the message sent to the entire Middle East and parts of the world who are only beginning to grapple with the notion of freedom," said Biden. But he lamented recent developments in Turkey, which have seen the imprisonment since Nov 26 of the Cumhuriyet daily editor-in-chief Can Dunder and its Ankara bureau chief Erdem Gul on charges of revealing classified information.

Prosecutors have also launched a vast investigation into more than 1,200 academics who signed a petition criticizing the military crackdown in the Kurdish-dominated southeast. Some two dozen academics were detained for questioning and while all were released, they remain under investigation. The government has also gained notoriety for ordering blocks on YouTube, Twitter and other social networks during times of crisis.

"When the media are intimidated or imprisoned for critical reporting, when Internet freedom is curtailed and social media sites like YouTube or Twitter are shut down, and more than 1,000 academics are accused of treason simply by signing a petition, that's not the kind of example that needs to be set," said Biden. He added: "If you do not have the ability to express your own opinion to criticize policy... then your country is being robbed of opportunity."

'Proud of Dunder'

The six civil society representatives that Biden met in the talks included several prominent journalists who are known to be critical of Erdogan. In a separate encounter, Biden also met the wife and son of the imprisoned Cumhuriyet editor Can Dunder. "He (Biden) told me that I had a very brave father. He told me I had to be proud of him," the son, Ege Dunder, was quoted as saying by the Cihan news agency after the meeting. — AFP



ISTANBUL: US Vice President Joe Biden gives a press conference following a meeting with representatives of the civil society yesterday. — AFP

PANICKED EUROPE FACES DEMISE OVER REFUGEES

DAVOS, Switzerland: Time is running out to solve Europe's refugee crisis with the unity of the continent hanging in the balance, top officials at the elite World Economic Forum in Davos said yesterday. The waves of refugees still making their way to Europe has been a hot topic at the Swiss ski resort, with opinions ranging from calls for an ageing Europe to seize an opportunity to stork warnings of impending disaster.

"We have a few weeks to concretely deliver our options... otherwise you have country-by-country solutions (and that is) the beginning of the dismantling for sure," Emmanuel Macron, the French economy minister, told an audience of billionaires and business leaders. The never-ending flow of refugees to Europe from war-torn Syria and Iraq has handed the EU yet another crisis, following last year's debt battles with Greece and the face-off with Russia over Ukraine.

The confirmation that at least 44 migrants drowned off the coast of Turkey and Greece early on Friday cast its shadow over the usually upbeat Davos meetings. Macron's bleak assessment followed a warning by Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, who said Europe only had six to eight weeks left to solve the refugee problem. "When spring comes and the numbers quadruple, we cannot as the EU cope with the numbers any longer," Rutte said.

But Polish Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski

said his fellow Europeans had overlooked migration coming to Poland from war-torn Ukraine, a burden not adequately acknowledged in Brussels, the EU capital. "We are alone in handling this crisis," the eurosceptic Polish minister said, while adding that the refugees



DAVOS: US Secretary of State John Kerry addresses the assembly at the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting yesterday. —AFP

from Syria and Iraq, despite all the problems, were now safe. EU foreign affairs head Federica Mogherini warned against the hypocrisy displayed by some EU member states that on one hand urged European solutions, only to reject them later as too generous for

refugees. "We risk this cycle that countries ask for European responses, then they prevent these European responses from taking place," she said, warning against using the crisis for electoral purposes.

'Panic' in Europe

Mario Draghi, the powerful head of the European Central Bank, said the refugees could be an "opportunity" to stimulate economic growth, but it was too early to tell. "Our society will change, in which direction one can only guess," he said to a packed room in the Swiss ski resort. George Soros, the 85-year-old financier and one-time refugee, told a dinner of big players that the numbers of migrants were now dangerously high. "We have passed a tipping point where the influx reduces the capacity of the countries to assimilate or integrate the refugees," he said. "There is panic (in Europe)," he said darkly.

But Helene Rey, one of Europe's up-and-coming economists, said it was not too late. "It is an opportunity. You have to invest in the integration of refugees and you get a return on that investment down the road," said the French academic. This view was echoed by the International Monetary Fund that said in a report released in time for Davos: "In the long run, the economic impact will depend on the speed of integration of refugees into the labor market." —AFP

SPAIN LEFTWING COALITION COMES CLOSER OVER GOVT KING FELIPE CONCLUDES ROUND OF TALKS

MADRID: Prospects of a leftwing coalition government in Spain came closer yesterday as the Socialists and anti-austerity Podemos agreed to seek a deal to break a two-month political deadlock caused by an inconclusive parliamentary election. Such a combination remains uncertain but, after the leaders of both parties met King Felipe, it appeared far more likely than a centre-right/centre-left coalition proposed by acting Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, who won the Dec. 20 ballot.

"Spain can't afford to wait for Rajoy,"

that, whoever is put forward as candidate for prime minister, will trigger a two-month deadline for the formation of a government.

Still Fragmented

The ticking clock will also increase pressure on Sanchez, who would get the next shot as candidate, as a new national election would likely have to be held in May if he also failed to obtain a majority. Sanchez reiterated the socialists would vote against Rajoy and said they would try to reach a deal with Podemos and

Podemos won a combined 159 seats. That would put their coalition some way short of a majority in the 350-seat legislature, meaning they would also need several smaller leftist parties to agree on a joint program as well as backing from regional groups from the Basque Country and Catalonia. A major sticking point so far has been Podemos's promise to allow an independence referendum to go ahead in Catalonia, which the Socialist leader rejects.

But yesterday, the two parties softened their respective stances on that issue and insisted they rather wanted to focus on economic and social questions, with Iglesias stopping short of calling again for a plebiscite. December's election resulted in a fragmentation of Spain's political landscape unprecedented in the four decades since the country's return of democracy.

The PP and the Socialists, who have alternated in power over the last 40 years, came first and second with greatly reduced support while Podemos and a second newcomer party, centrist Ciudadanos, attracted significant support underpinned by a new generation of voters disillusioned with the old elite. If Sanchez fails to be voted in as prime minister, it is not clear yet whether Rajoy would try again or the parties would directly seek a new election within the following two months.

Ciudadanos leader Albert Rivera said on Thursday his party was ready to abstain in favour of Rajoy or Sanchez to avoid a new election and provide institutional stability at a time when the Spanish economy - the European Union's fifth-largest - is recovering from its worst crisis in decades. But he criticised Podemos on Friday for calling on other parties to recognize that Spain is a state formed by several nations, including Catalonia, whose regional government favors secession, raising doubts about a potential abstention. A majority of Spanish voters oppose holding another election and want parties to agree on a coalition government, a survey showed on Sunday. —Reuters



MADRID: Spanish King Felipe VI (left) looks at the leader of leftwing political party Podemos Pablo Iglesias before holding a meeting at the La Zarzuela Palace yesterday. —AFP

Podemos leader Pablo Iglesias told a news conference after the meeting. "We will talk of governments, teams and tasks (with the Socialists) and we will not debate with any red line". Rajoy, whose conservative PP party fell far short of an outright majority, is still expected to be invited to form a government by the king when they meet later. But most parties have already said they would reject Rajoy in a vote by lawmakers

other smaller groups to obtain a majority of "progressive forces". "We will wait for Mr Rajoy to present himself and if he fails, the socialist party will do what it needs to do to form a government of change," Sanchez told a news conference. "Socialist voters would not understand that Pablo Iglesias and I would not manage to find an understanding."

In December's election, the Socialists and



BERLIN: Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and German Chancellor Angela Merkel arrive for a news conference after a meeting at the Chancellery yesterday. —AFP

TURKEY AGREES TO 'DO EVERYTHING' TO CUT MIGRANT FLOWS

BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel said yesterday she had obtained a pledge from Turkey to "do everything" to cut the record number of migrants arriving in Europe. After talks with Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu in Berlin, Merkel told reporters they had signed a joint communique under which "the Turkish government will do everything to reduce the number of refugees" crossing into the European Union. "The Prime Minister emphasized the commitment of the Government of Turkey to undertaking all possible efforts to substantially reduce the number of irregular migrants in the near future," a statement released after a news conference said.

It added that Turkey "pledged to facilitate the readmission of irregular migrants not in need of protection". In exchange, Turkey could count on German support for easing by October EU visa requirements for Turkish nationals visiting the Schengen area. Merkel and Davutoglu "emphasized their commitment towards meaningfully advancing the negotiations between Turkey and the EU on visa liberalisation with a view to lifting the visa requirements for Turkish citizens to the Schengen area by October 2016", the statement said.

Yesterday's talks were key for Merkel, who faces intense pressure at home to impose a cap on Germany's refugee intake at a time when European public opinion is hardening against asylum seekers. Merkel has described Turkey, which not only shares a border with war-torn Syria but is also a launchpad for thousands of migrants, as crucial to any solution to the crisis. —AFP

KENYANS HONOR MUSLIM MAN WHO SAVED CHRISTIANS

NAIROBI: Kenyans are donating to the family of a Muslim man who was fatally wounded by Islamic extremists while shielding Christians during an attack on a bus. On Twitter the hashtag HeroSalah has been trending as some Kenyans fundraise for the family of Salah Farah, who died Sunday in a Nairobi hospital. On Tuesday, his body was flown to the northeastern town of Mandera for burial. "Salah's children and widow appreciate your support but that's not enough, his children need to go to school. Walk the talk," Mohamud Abbas said on Twitter. Ann McCreath wrote: "Important to support this #HeroSalah is a symbol of the Kenya we want." "Kenyan police chief Joseph Boinnet said: "He was a true hero. He died while protecting innocent Kenyans from terrorists." Farah, who was a teacher in the coastal town of Malindi, was among passengers on a bus from Mandera to Nairobi in December when they were attacked by Al-Shabab gunmen. When they were ordered to separate according to religion, he was among the Muslims who refused, to protect the Christians. He was shot in the hip. Kenyans are praising Farah on social media, saying his example should be emulated in a country facing a growing threat of Islamic extremism as Kenyans with ties to Al-Shabab, a Somali group, launch attacks in this country. —AP

UN COUNCIL URGES BURUNDI PRESIDENT TO END VIOLENCE

BUJUMBURA: UN Security Council ambassadors met Burundi's leaders yesterday to push peace efforts after another night of violence in the capital of the troubled central African nation. The visit is the council's second to Burundi in less than a year, with ambassadors set to deliver a face-to-face message to President Pierre Nkurunziza to take urgent action to stop the violence sparked by his re-election bid.

Council envoys are pushing for the government to hold talks with the opposition and agree to an international presence - such as a proposed 5,000-strong African Union force - to restore stability. However, Foreign Minister Alain Nyamitwe, speaking after meeting the envoys yesterday, said the government had "not changed our position" on the AU force. —AFP

CHECHENS RALLY IN SUPPORT OF PRO-KREMLIN LEADER

CROWDS DENOUNCE OPPONENTS AS ENEMIES

GROZNY, Russia: Tens of thousands of people yesterday staged a state-sponsored rally in the Chechen capital Grozny in support of strongman Ramzan Kadyrov, days after he caused a furore by vowing to destroy critics of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Kadyrov, who rules with an iron grip the North Caucasus region that was the scene of two sepa-

groups of overseeing torture, extrajudicial executions and corruption - came after he last week called liberal independent media "enemies of Russia" that seek to sow "chaos" in the Caucasus and beyond. The remarks caused an uproar and several people publicly criticized Kadyrov, with one local lawmaker in Siberia, Konstantin Senchenko, dubbing him "the shame of

dance at some 100,000 people, though authorities in regional police force said that more than 800,000 demonstrators had taken part in the rally. The entire population of Chechnya is about 1.4 million. Demonstrators chanted "We support Kadyrov", "our strength is our unity," among other slogans, and brandished portraits of Kadyrov and Putin, denouncing their opponents as enemies of the state.

Human rights activists say crowds at pro-Kremlin rallies are often boosted by large numbers of students and workers ordered to attend by state-run institutions. Opposition newspaper Novaya Gazeta published a scanned government order to state organizations to "ensure attendance of all employees in your organization" to the rally. It also quoted a university teacher as saying that state employees in Chechnya are forced to sign an undated dismissal request when they are hired, guaranteeing complete obedience due to risk of losing their job.

Several people who have challenged Kadyrov's grip on power have been killed in the past, including investigative reporter Anna Politkovskaya and rights activist Natalia Estemirova. Chechens are also thought to be behind the murder of opposition critic Boris Nemtsov, who was gunned down last February steps away from the Kremlin. Two suspects are reportedly linked to an armed squad answerable to Kadyrov. In January last year, hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets of the mainly Muslim region in a state-sponsored demonstration against the publication of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) cartoons in the wake of Islamist attacks in France. —AFP



GROZNY: People shout slogans as they hold up images of the head of the Chechen republic Ramzan Kadyrov during a rally yesterday. —AFP

ratist wars, penned a lengthy diatribe in pro-Kremlin daily Izvestiya this week against Putin's critics, calling them a "gang of jackals" who "dream of destroying our state."

The latest broadside by former rebel Kadyrov - accused by human rights

Russia" for amassing vast personal wealth and abusing his political post.

In response to the backlash Chechen authorities ordered a public demonstration of support yesterday for their Kremlin-backed leader. An AFP photographer at the scene estimated the atten-

SARKOZY WRITES MEA CULPA

PARIS: With little more than a year to go before presidential elections, French opposition leader Nicolas Sarkozy has admitted to some "regrets" over his time in power in a new book to be published Monday. Sarkozy, 60, faces an uphill struggle as he tries to see off more popular members of his party, The Republicans, in order to make a new bid for the presidency in May 2017. His new book, "France for Life", blames his defeat at the hands of Francois Hollande in 2012 on his failure to get tough on France's famously generous benefits and heavy taxes. "Today, I regret delaying some reforms that should have been made in the first days of my presidency," writes Sarkozy, who ran the country from 2007 to 2012. He admonishes himself for not challenging the 35-hour working week introduced by the Socialists in the late 1990s, or the "solidarity tax on fortunes" that targets the richest citizens but is accused by rightwing opponents of driving wealthy people out of the country.

Actor Gerard Depardieu and rock star Johnny Hallyday are among those who have left France in recent years to escape its hungry taxmen. Sarkozy also acknowledges his reputation for being short-tempered, regretting that he "gave into anger" on occasion, such as the time he was caught on camera mumbling "Get lost, you stupid b*****d" at a man who insulted him during an agricultural show.

The decision to go on a yachting holiday with a millionaire friend immediately after winning the election - a time when France was plunging into an economic crisis - also makes it onto the list of regrets. He now says he was trying to save his marriage, which soon ended in divorce and led to his much-publicised relationship with singer-model Carla Bruni, now his wife. "I should have anticipated better, and been more cautious, and put my new status as president before everything," he writes.

Return to Politics

Sarkozy makes no secret of his ambitions to return to the Elysee Palace. "With this book, Nicolas Sarkozy is not offering his memoirs, he is giving us a self-examination designed for an eventual return to power," the daily Le Figaro wrote yesterday. After his defeat in 2012, Sarkozy vowed to disappear from the public eye, saying he was done with politics. It took only two years for him to change his mind, returning to lead the UMP party - which he renamed The Republicans - and lining himself up for another possible run at the presidency in May 2017.

But while he remains popular with more rightwing sections of his party for his willingness to challenge some of France's tax-and-spend policies and his tough talk on immigration, he is a hate figure for more left-leaning voters. Opinion polls are not looking favourable for him, and he faces a tough primary against his party rivals at the end of the year. Only 21 percent of centre-right voters said they backed Sarkozy in a poll this week, way behind his main Republican rival, Bordeaux mayor Alain Juppe, on 45 percent.

Sarkozy has also been dogged by scandal since leaving office, and uses the new book to once again deny any knowledge of the "Bygmalion affair", a corruption scandal centred on claims that his party paid some of his campaign expenses to get around strict spending limits. The scandal involving PR firm Bygmalion has dogged Sarkozy since he went into opposition and led to charges against party leader Jean-Francois Cope. In the book, Sarkozy reiterates that he "knew nothing about this company (Bygmalion)," which is accused of orchestrating the budget fiddle. —AFP



PARIS: French President Francois Hollande (left) shakes hands with former French president and head of "Les Republicains" main opposition party Nicolas Sarkozy prior to a meeting yesterday. —AFP

ALASKA IS DIFFERENT, SAYS MOOSE HUNTER

WASHINGTON: When John Sturgeon's hovercraft broke down as he drove it in a remote river in Alaska in 2007, he had no idea his ordeal would end up in the US Supreme Court. Still, the moose hunter finds himself at the center of a legal conundrum that not only has traveled thousands of miles to Washington but has also flummoxed the judges of the nation's highest court. While Sturgeon was trying to fix his hovercraft on a shoal in the Nation River, he was approached by uniformed federal agents. They told him hovercraft were banned in all national parks because they were deemed too noisy.

Sturgeon, whose hovercraft was duly registered, was stunned. He argued that even though the river was in public land, it was not up to the federal government, but rather the state of Alaska, to decide if it was legal to use a hovercraft on the waterway. Sturgeon got a lawyer and showed he was willing to go the distance to prove he was right, filing appeal after appeal. Little by little, his determination won him admirers and support in this state dominated by Republicans.

Funds were raised to finance his fight. The state's two senators endorsed his cause. In a crowning achievement, the state of Alaska itself endorsed it. By way of context, in many states in America's great west, much land is owned by the federal government. That is a source of conflict with locals, who want to use the available resources rather than protect them.

Discontent in Oregon

By pure coincidence, the case went before the Supreme Court Wednesday as armed protesters in Oregon are occupying a nature reserve to denounce what they say is a thicket of federal regulations for local ranchers and farmers. In Alaska, the proportion of land under federal control is a whopping 61 percent. From the late 1950s through the 1970s, the government was under pressure to give back part of it - either to native Americans, to the state of Alaska or to private investors.

Some of this territory has nonetheless remained inside national parks in a complicated patchwork and

with a hybrid status. A case like Sturgeon's was just waiting to emerge at some point or another. During Wednesday's session in the Supreme Court, the moose hunter's arguments grabbed the attention of several conservative judges, who are always wary of encroaching federal powers.

Wild, immense Alaska - four times the size of California - has peculiarities that cannot be ignored, Sturgeon's lawyers said. "Alaska's waters are used in ways that are different from the lower 48," said Ruth Botstein, the assistant attorney general for Alaska, using the term Alaskans employ to refer to the rest of the US, except for Hawaii. "In the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge, there are three villages of less than one hundred people that are hundreds of miles from any road. And this is common in Alaska," explained Botstein, who filed an amicus curiae brief with the court in support of Sturgeon. Legal experts said the court may choose to side with Alaska and place new limits on federal land management. — AFP

News

in brief

ALABAMA CARRIES OUT FIRST DEATH PENALTY SINCE 2013

TAMPA: The state of Alabama on Thursday executed a 44-year-old man convicted of raping and murdering a woman in 1992, a prison official said, the first execution in that state since 2013. Christopher Brooks was pronounced dead from lethal injection at 6:38 pm CST at the state's death chamber in Atmore, prison spokesman Bob Horton said. Brooks' was the third US execution of the year, coming just one day after an execution in Texas. There were no complications with the execution, the spokesman said. This was the first time Alabama used a new three-drug protocol that includes midazolam, a sedative that has drawn national scrutiny after several botched executions. Brooks gave a brief statement before he died, thanking family members, Horton said. "I hope this brings closure to everyone," Brooks said, according to Horton. Brooks was sentenced to death for bludgeoning 23-year-old Jo Deann Campbell to death in her apartment. The pair had previously met as summer camp counselors in New York.

Two Gitmo inmates sent to Bosnia, Montenegro

WASHINGTON: The Pentagon on Thursday announced the transfer of another two inmates from the Guantanamo Bay military prison, bringing the controversial facility's remaining population down to 91. Tariq Mahmoud Ahmed Al-Sawah was sent to Bosnia, while Abd al-Aziz Abduh Abdallah Ali Al-Suwaydi was transferred to Montenegro, the Pentagon said. According to their leaked prisoner files, Sawah is a citizen of Egypt and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Suwaydi is from Yemen. The transfers mark another step as the administration of US President Barack Obama struggles to close the facility. About 780 inmates have been held there since it opened in Jan 2002. Inmates are kept without recourse to the regular US legal processes and some likely will die in prison without ever being convicted of a crime.

Colombian drug lord pleads guilty in US

NEW YORK: For the third time in 15 months, a Colombian drug kingpin pleaded guilty on Thursday to US charges that he conspired to manufacture and distribute hundreds of tons of cocaine annually that he trafficked throughout the world. The plea in Manhattan federal court clears the way for sentencing Daniel Barrera, who authorities say was one of the most prolific drug traffickers of the last two decades before his capture in Venezuela in 2012 following years in hiding. Barrera, also known as "Loco" (Crazy), was extradited from Colombia in July 2013 to face three indictments filed in federal courts in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Miami, and pleaded guilty in 2014 in the New York cases. In court, Barrera pleaded guilty to two counts, admitting that from 1992 to 2010 he agreed with others "to manufacture several tons of cocaine to import into the United States".

US RACE SHOWS EVOLVING GENDER ROLES IN POLITICS

DIFFERENT KIND OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

DES MOINES, Iowa: Carly Fiorina has a husband who quit his career to further hers. Chris Christie boasts of his wife being the family's top earner. Hillary Clinton is looking to get back into the White House, but this time as president. In the 2016 presidential campaign, a modern take on gender roles is increasingly on display in both parties.

With two women running for president, a number of high-powered career spouses in the mix and an increased focus on policies to support two-income families, 2016 is shaping up as a different kind of election, said Anne Marie Slaughter, who four years ago wrote a popular essay in *The Atlantic* on why she left a job in the State Department to spend more time with her family. "I think what is changing is, this is the year of the family," said Slaughter, now president and CEO of New America, a Washington-based nonprofit. And that means more attention on "how you support the family with policies for women and men."

While more women have been running at a state and local level, this is the first time both parties have a woman running in a serious way. This gives former Michigan Gov Jennifer Granholm reason to hope decisions about running for office are no longer just being made "based on one's plumbing". Compared with her 2008 run, heavy on national security, Clinton this time has heavily stressed issues that are meant to appeal to women and families: Healthcare, pay equality, education, child care, family leave. She says "these aren't just women's issues, they are economic issues that drive growth and affect all Americans."

This is murky territory for Clinton. She has a long record as an advocate of women's advancement and speaks often and passionately about her baby granddaughter. But her potential Republican rivals have raised questions not only about her husband's past infidelities but about how she might have contributed to efforts to discredit some of the women known or alleged to have been involved with him. Donald Trump flatly accused her of enabling Bill Clinton's philandering.



MANCHESTER, New Hampshire: In this May 8, 2015 file photo, Frank Fiorina, husband of Republican presidential candidate Carly Fiorina, listens as she speaks with a guest. — AP

Among Republicans, Florida Sen Marco Rubio has proposed increasing the child tax credit and creating a tax credit for employers that provide family leave. Rep Paul Ryan asserted his need for family time when agreeing to become House speaker. Christie says voters are meeting a new generation of candidates with "different types of marriages and different types of relationships than people in the generation before. It really is necessitated by the increasing role and prominence of women in the workforce and by necessity, too."

Shift

Dianne Bystrom, director of the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics at Iowa State University, said that in recent years there has been a shift in both how female candidates talk about their personal lives and family-oriented policies. The political reasons are clear. "The Democrats have to mobilize the base and the Republicans have to whittle away at the women's vote," said Debbie Walsh, director of the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University.

Support from women, who typically lean toward Democrats, was vital for President Barack Obama, who won re-election in 2012 with 55 percent of female voters, while Republican opponent Mitt Romney won 52 percent of men, according to exit polls analyzed by Walsh's center. Obama won about the same percentage of women in 2008 as he did in 2012.

The two-career marriages on display in the campaign are in keeping with the rise of women in the workforce. About 58 percent of working-age women were employed in 2012, compared with 38 percent in 1963, federal statistics show. Mothers work at even higher rates - with about 70 percent of women with children under 18 working.

Christie's wife, Mary Pat Christie, was a former Wall Street executive who out-earned him for most of their marriage. Heidi Cruz, wife of Texas Sen Ted Cruz, is on leave from her job at Goldman Sachs. Jane Sanders is a key adviser to husband Bernie Sanders. And Fiorina's husband, Frank, was a corporate executive until he retired early to support her high-powered career. —AP

PAK UNIVERSITY ATTACKERS VOW TO TARGET SCHOOLS

TWO POLICEMEN SHOT DEAD

ISLAMABAD: The Taliban faction behind a massacre at a university in northwest Pakistan this week issued a video message yesterday vowing to target schools throughout the country, calling them "nurseries" for people who challenge Allah's law. The video, which spread rapidly on Facebook but was not released on official media accounts for the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistani (TTP), shows Khalifa Umar Mansoor, whose faction claimed responsibility for the attack on Bacha Khan university Wednesday. Heavily armed gunmen stormed the campus in Charsadda in north-

west Pakistan, killing 21 people in an attack that had chilling echoes of a 2014 assault on a school in nearby Peshawar, also claimed by Mansoor's faction. The rampage threatened to shatter the sense of security growing in the troubled region a year after the Peshawar attack, which left more than 150 people dead - mostly children.

In the video issued yesterday, Mansoor said his faction had attacked the university "because this is the place where lawyers are made, this is the place that produces military officers, this is the place that produces members of the parliament, all of whom

challenge Allah's sovereignty". Flanked by armed extremists wearing masks, he said that instead of targeting professional soldiers, "we will target the nurseries that produce these people". "We will continue to attack schools, colleges and universities across Pakistan as these are the foundations that produce apostates. We will target and demolish the foundations," he said.

Another commander confirmed the release of the video. Mansoor issued a similar video in the wake of the Peshawar attack on Dec 16, 2014, Pakistan's deadliest ever extremist assault. He said schools like the one in Peshawar, which is some 50 km from Charsadda, were "preparing those generals, brigadiers and majors who killed and arrested so many fighters". "If our women and children died as martyrs your children will not escape. If you attack us we will take revenge for the innocents," he said in the video message, also posted online.

Soft Targets

Security forces were still deployed in Charsadda yesterday, while in Peshawar, two policemen were shot dead at a checkpoint by unknown gunmen. Analysts have said the Taliban sent a message of impunity with Wednesday's attack, that a national crackdown on extremism has failed and they can hit targets at will. They are targeting schools because the killing of young people "brings a lot of pain, despondency and hopelessness", Peshawar-based senior analyst and retired brigadier Saad Khan told AFP this week. —AFP



NEW DELHI: Indian police detain National Students Union of India (NSUI) students during a protest yesterday, after a student was found hanged at a university hostel. —AFP

MODI PAYS TEARY TRIBUTE TO DALIT

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid an emotional tribute yesterday to a young scholar from India's lowest Dalit caste who committed suicide last week, a death some have blamed on social discrimination. Modi said India had "lost a son" when Rohith Vemula, a 26-year-old doctoral student, was found hanged Sunday after he was barred from some parts of Hyderabad University campus. "It is sad when there is news that a young son of my country, Rohith, was compelled to commit suicide... India has lost a son," a visibly emotional Modi said as he paused to fight back tears.

"Reason can be on one side, politics on the other, but the truth is that a mother has lost her son and I feel the family's pain very well," the premier said in a speech at a university in the northern city of Lucknow. Television footage showed university students dragging out protesters who shouted anti-Modi insults during his address.

Vemula was one of five students, all Dalits, who were suspended by the university after they were accused of assaulting the head of a rightwing student political group - a charge they denied. His suicide has triggered protests in Hyderabad and in the Indian capital New Delhi by protesters who said the students were punished because of their social status. Dalits, formerly known as untouchables, are frequent victims of violence and prejudice in many Indian states, with cases of discrimination against them often treated as a low priority by local authorities. There are approximately 180 million Dalits among India's 1.25 billion population. The government said yesterday it had set up a judicial panel to investigate Vemula's death. —AFP



PESHAWAR: Security guards stand alert around schools and colleges on Thursday following an attack on Bacha Khan University. —AP

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'CORRUPT' CHINESE OFFICIALS SEIZED NEARLY \$1 BILLION

BEIJING: Chinese officials convicted in President Xi Jinping's sprawling anti-corruption drive have embezzled or misused nearly \$1 billion in public funds, a new report has found. Official graft causes widespread public anger in China, and since taking over as the ruling Communist Party's leader in 2012 Xi has overseen a much-publicized campaign against the scourge. But critics say there is a lack of transparency around the drive and that it has been used to settle political scores.

ChinaFile, a publication of the Asia Society in New York, has tallied nearly 1,500 publicly announced targets of the campaign, and has released a searchable database. It shows that 231 officials have been convicted and sentenced in Chinese courts since Xi came to power - only a fraction of those put under investigation by the Communist Party, which operates its own discipline system outside judicial supervision.

Chinese courts - which are controlled by the party and have a conviction rate of more than 99.9 percent - found that they embezzled or misused more than 6.3 billion yuan (nearly \$1 billion), according to the verdicts against them, the database shows. The documents included details such as one official spending 200,000 yuan of public funds on jade jewellery, and another attempting to hide 30 million stolen yuan in his mistress' gardening company. Xi pledged to target both high-ranking "tigers" and low-level "flies" in his drive.

The governor of populous Sichuan province became the latest to fall, provincial authorities said yesterday, after he resigned over allegations he had committed "severe disciplinary violations" - generally a euphemism for corruption. Wei Hong was reportedly a close friend of China's hugely influential former security chief Zhou Yongkang, by far the most senior figure brought down in the anti-graft campaign and for whom Sichuan was a power base. —AFP

LAOS PICKS NEW PARTY LEADERS AS TOP BOSSES EXIT

HANOI: Laos' Communist Party chose veteran Bounnhang Vorachit to be its new leader yesterday and elected a new 11-member politburo at the end of a five-yearly congress that saw the exits of several high-profile politicians. Bounnhang, the current vice president, won the leadership vote and five new faces joined the elite politburo as outgoing party chief and president, Choummaly Sayasone, Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong and two deputy premiers made way.

The selection of Bounnhang, 78, was anticipated by experts, who see a continuation of a status quo in which power is tightly controlled by the party while pursuing strong economic expansion, which has averaged 7.8 percent since 2011. Bounnhang is now one of the last remaining members of the revolutionary generation in the higher echelons of a party that has run Laos for four decades. He topped the list of a new 77-member central committee announced on Friday.

Second on the list and re-elected to the politburo was National Assembly chairwoman and former central bank governor Pany Yathotu, suggesting her rise in the party hierarchy to be a possible prime minister, according to Martin Stuart-Fox, a Laos expert and retired professor of the University of Queensland. The prime minister and cabinet posts are expected to be announced later in the year. "The most significant promotion has been Madame Pany," Stuart-Fox said, adding she was now "a very powerful figure".

He said major policy changes from the new leadership were unlikely. Laos has close political ties to communist Vietnam and mirrors its political system. Both countries are holding their five-yearly congresses this week. Communist neighbor China has been vying aggressively for influence on Laos, however, providing scholarships, aid, loans and infrastructure investment to a fledgling \$12-billion economy 862 times smaller than its own. —Reuters

DPRK ARRESTS US STUDENT FOR 'HOSTILE ACTIVITIES'

PARK WANTS N KOREA TALKS - WITHOUT N KOREA

SEOUL: North Korea said yesterday it had arrested a US student who, under orders from Washington, had engaged in unspecified "hostile activities" after entering the country on a tourist visa. The detention comes at a sensitive time, with the United States taking a leading role in international efforts to secure tough sanctions on North Korea over its latest nuclear test. The student, identified as Frederick Otto Warmbier from the University of Virginia, had entered North Korea as a tourist "in order to shake the foundation of the DPRK's unity under the direction of the US government", the North's official KCNA news agency said, using the official acronym for North Korea. "He was arrested while carrying out anti-DPRK hostile activities and is now under investigation," it added.

The term "hostile activities" is a catch-all accusation that has been levelled at numerous detained foreigners in the past - covering a range of possible charges from spying to illicit missionary work. The latest arrest comes months after the North released a South Korean man studying at New York University. Arrested in April for illegal entry, Joo Won-Moon, a 21-year-old with permanent US residency, was freed in October through the border truce village of Panmunjom on the inter-Korean frontier. Unlike some other foreign citizens detained in the North, Joo was never put on trial. The United States has no diplomatic or consular relations with the North, and the Swedish Embassy in Pyongyang provides limited consular services to US citizens detained there.

New Solution

Meanwhile, South Korean President Park Geun-Hye yesterday offered a "creative" solution to stalled six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program - cut Pyongyang from the



TOKYO: Marzuki Darusman, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in North Korea, speaks before the press in Tokyo yesterday. Darusman is here on a five-day visit to Japan to exchange views with Japanese officials and family members of Japanese abductees by North Korea. Darusman said harsh human rights conditions in North Korea have barely changed and its leader Kim Jong Un should be held criminally responsible, adding that his repeated requests to visit North Korea during six years as special rapporteur have never gone through. —AFP

equation and make them five-party negotiations instead. "We should find various and creative approaches, including attempting to hold five-way talks excluding North Korea," Park said during a policy briefing with top ministers.

The six-party talks, involving the two Koreas, the United States, Japan, Russia and China, began in 2003 as an effort to dismantle North Korea's nuclear program in exchange for aid. The North quit the dialogue process in

2009, ostensibly to protest sanctions imposed after a long-range rocket test. The following month it conducted its second nuclear test. North Korea's main ally, China, has repeatedly pushed for the talks' resumption, but Park said the North's fourth nuclear test on Jan 6 underlined Pyongyang's rejection of denuclearization as a bargaining chip. "Even if the talks are resumed, their effectiveness would certainly be called into question," she said. —Agencies

MYANMAR FREES PRISONERS

YANGON: Myanmar began releasing the first of about 100 prisoners yesterday, many of them political detainees, days before a parliament dominated by democracy champion Aung San Suu Kyi's party sits for the first time after an election win in November. The freeing of some political prisoners by the outgoing administration of President Thein Sein comes after US Assistant Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged Myanmar to free all political prisoners during a visit on Monday.

The amnesty gives a last-minute boost to the legacy of Thein Sein, whose semi-civilian government in 2011 replaced a junta that had run Myanmar for 49 years, ushering in a series of political and economic reforms. "There were 52 political prisoners among those released today," said Bo Kyi, joint secretary of political prisoner watchdog Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP). According to Bo Kyi, this leaves 77 political prisoners behind bars and 408 awaiting trial.

Zaw Htay, a director at the president's office, said on his Facebook page that 102 prisoners would be freed. It was unclear how many had already been freed and whether all of them were political prisoners. Zaw Htay also said that 77 death sentences would be reduced to life imprisonments. Phillip Blackwood, a New Zealand citizen jailed in Yangon's notorious Insein prison in March for two and a half years for insulting religion, was also due to be freed, according to his family.

He had used a psychedelic image of Buddha wearing headphones to promote a party at a Yangon bar in a case that threw a spotlight on the country's hardline Buddhist nationalists who championed the harsh sentencing. "We've been told he will be released within the next few days or it could be up to a week," said Angela Blackwood, the prisoner's mother, when contacted by



YANGON: Released political prisoners shout slogans in front of Insein prison upon their release from detention yesterday. —AFP

phone. It was unclear whether two Myanmar citizens jailed along with Blackwood would be released.

Myanmar's incarceration of more than 2,000 journalists, activists, politicians and even comedians during decades of military rule was a key factor behind Western sanctions. "While we recognize this as an important step, we remain concerned that there are still many individuals who remain jailed or on trial for simply exercising their right to freely express themselves," the US Embassy in Yangon said in a statement, calling for their release. —Reuters

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 2016



Christine Lagarde to run
for second IMF term

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MOSCOW: People walk past an exchange office screen showing the currency exchange rates of the Russian ruble, US dollar and euro in Moscow yesterday. — AP

OIL REBOUNDS ABOVE \$30 ON ECB MOVE

IRAN SEES GREECE AS CONDUIT FOR RE-ENTERING EUROPE'S OIL MARKET

LONDON: Oil surged above \$30 yesterday after the European Central Bank signalled more stimulus, and after key crude producer Saudi Arabia labelled current ultra-low price levels as "irrational". However, analysts expect the stubborn global oil supply glut which sparked this week's 12-year lows to limit gains heading into the weekend.

In London midday deals, Brent North Sea crude for delivery in March rebounded \$1.61 to \$30.86 per barrel compared with the close on Thursday. US benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) for March rallied \$1.41 to \$30.94 a barrel. Global equities and crude oil prices began rebounding Thursday after the European Central Bank said there were "no limits" to the stimulus measures it might take to boost the eurozone economy.

ECB boss Mario Draghi highlighted concerns about the impact of plunging equity and oil prices on already weak inflation and pledged the bank would reconsider its monetary policy at its March policy meeting. In response, Brent piled on almost five percent and WTI jumped more than four per-

cent on Thursday. Oil prices also rebounded as a key report showed US inventories rose by less than expected last week. Crude futures turned higher also as OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia declared this week's oil price levels as "irrational".

"The price itself is irrational," Khalid al-Falih, chairman of state-owned oil firm Saudi Aramco, said at the World Economic Forum in the Swiss ski resort Davos. "I do feel that the market has overshot on the low side and that it is inevitable (that it will) start turning up," he said. "Where will we be by year-end? I don't know but certainly I would bet that it is going to be higher than where we are today."

In both June and December last year, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries—which pumps about 40 percent of the world's oil—refused to slash output. The Saudi-backed policy is aimed at pushing oil prices lower to squeeze less-competitive players, including US shale producers, out of the market. The two main oil contracts remain close to 12-year lows owing to a supply glut and weak demand.

Iranian ambition

Iran believes Greece can be a conduit for re-entering Europe's oil market following the lifting of international sanctions, Greece's energy minister said yesterday after meeting Iran's deputy oil minister in Athens. Panos Skourletis said he had held talks with Amir Hossein Zamaninia about Greece restarting oil purchases from Iran.

Hellenic Petroleum, Greece's biggest oil refiner, was a major buyer of Iranian crude, which accounted for about 20 percent of the southeast European country's annual crude oil imports before sanctions were imposed on Tehran in 2011. "They (Iran) are positively disposed towards Greece and think that Greece can be the European conduit for them to re-enter the market," Skourletis told Reuters, saying the two countries had traditionally enjoyed close relations.

The two ministers also attended wider talks between officials from Hellenic Petroleum and the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) yesterday, a meeting whose arrangement was reported by

Reuters on Jan. 18. Hellenic Petroleum is estimated to owe Iran around \$550-600 million for oil it bought before the sanctions but was unable to pay for when the international embargo was imposed.

Skourletis said the two sides agreed Hellenic Petroleum could settle its debt now the sanctions were easing, and was optimistic a mutually acceptable deal could be reached.

"They said that the debt (settlement) can open the way so that our cooperation is boosted," he said, adding Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras was due to visit Iran early next month. Iran used to sell as much as 800,000 barrels per day (bpd) to European refiners in Italy, Spain and Greece before the sanctions over its nuclear program were imposed.

Tehran ordered a 500,000-bpd increase in its oil output, of which 200,000 bpd will go to Europe, after the sanctions were lifted on Saturday. But European companies and trading houses are not rushing to buy the oil because of legal uncertainties over the lifting of sanctions that are likely to take weeks to clarify. — Reuters



ETIHAD AIRWAYS NAMED BUSINESS AIRLINE OF THE YEAR

KUWAIT: Etihad Airways has been named Business Airline of the Year at the 2016 Business Travel Awards. The ceremony was held last night at the Grosvenor House Hotel on London's Park Lane. The Business Travel Awards recognise the extraordinary achievements of the most deserving organisations and individuals in the business travel industry.

The awards, organised by Buying Business Travel Magazine in the United Kingdom, were voted for by an independent panel of travel experts. It is the first time that the national airline of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has won the award, adding to a list of prestigious accolades recently collected by the airline, including the 'Innovation in Travel Award' at the Globe Travel Awards, held in London last week.

James Harrison, Etihad Airways' General Manager UK, said: "It is fantastic to gain the recognition of the UK travel industry and to win the coveted Business Airline of the Year award.

"The UK is a significant market for the airline and this year is especially important as we celebrate ten years of the

hugely successful Manchester - Abu Dhabi route. In 2016 we will also commence a third daily A380 service from London Heathrow, which features the highly-acclaimed The Residence. We are looking forward to providing even greater convenience and connectivity for our guests in the year ahead."

The coveted award was presented to Etihad Airways for its superior inflight services, which include the revolutionary new cabins and products recently introduced on the airline's flagship fleet of Airbus A380s and Boeing 787 Dreamliners, in addition to the award-winning cabins on its existing modern longhaul fleet of Airbus A330/A340 and Boeing 777 family aircraft.

The new industry-leading cabins are the result of a seven-year research and development program at the airline's Innovation Centre in Abu Dhabi, led by the Etihad Design Consortium.

Etihad Airways benchmarks itself against the world's leading hotels and hospitality establishments and employs a unique, varied and highly skilled crew complement on all its longhaul services, including London Savoy-trained

Butlers for guests staying in The Residence on its A380 fleet, Chefs in First Class, Food and Beverage Managers in Business Class and the celebrated Flying Nannies, who are trained by the famous Norland College in the UK, and who are available to assist families travelling with young children.

In the United Kingdom, the airline operates luxurious Premium Lounges at London Heathrow and Manchester, in addition to its flagship Premium Lounges and Arrivals Lounge in Abu Dhabi, and dedicated Premium Lounges in Frankfurt, Dublin, Paris, Sydney, Washington, D.C. and New York JFK.

Etihad Airways currently operates six daily services into the UK, with direct routes to London Heathrow, Manchester and Edinburgh, which launched on 8 June last year. London Heathrow was chosen as the first destination for the airline's ground-breaking Airbus A380 fleet, which was introduced into service at the end of 2014, featuring The Residence - the world's only private three-room cabin on a commercial aircraft, nine First Apartments, 70 Business Studios and 415 Economy Smart Seats.



PHILIPPINES SAYS WELL-PLACED TO WEATHER CHINA SLOWDOWN

DAVOS: The Philippines cannot escape some impact from China's slowdown but is less exposed than many emerging markets and has a good chance of growing its economy by 7 percent in 2016, the country's finance minister said yesterday. "No one is immune. When China sneezes, lots of countries get a cold," Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima told Reuters on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos.

"Fortunately for us, because of our own problems in the past, we were rather latecomers in connecting ourselves to China and the rest of the world. In a sense, this is a blessing in disguise." As a result, trade between China and the Philippines is still relatively immature, limiting the downside impact from China's current woes and offering upside for future ties.

Meanwhile, strong domestic consumption, remittances from overseas workers and a thriving business process outsourcing sector have made the economy one of the world's fastest-growing.

Full-year gross domestic product (GDP) data is due next week and will show robust growth, Purisima said. "Whatever happens I think it will be 5.7 percent or upwards," he said.

For 2016 Purisima is "cautiously optimistic" of achieving 7 percent. That would be at the lower end of the government's aspirational target of 7-8 percent, reflecting pressures from the slowdown in China. "The challenge is to bring it up to the 7 percent level because that's when we really have a good chance of addressing issues of poverty," he said.

The Philippines received a vote of confidence earlier on Friday from South Korean ratings agency NICE Investors Service, which upgraded its credit rating by a notch.

It was the 24th positive credit rating action during the six-year rule of President Benigno Aquino and Purisima said it reflected the economic reforms the administration had made.

A rating of investment grade or above from a range of agencies make it well-placed to tap international markets, although it is currently relying mainly on domestic borrowing to finance its budget. Purisima said the aim was to go to the international bond market "in the first quarter" of 2016 but there were no immediate plans to issue a yuan-denominated so-called "panda" bond. —AFP

LUFTHANSA, CABIN STAFF AGREE TO ARBITRATION, NO STRIKES BEFORE JUNE

FRANKFURT: Passengers flying with German airline Lufthansa can hope for a reduced risk of strikes at least until June, after management and cabin crews agreed to take their current dispute to arbitration yesterday. Lufthansa and the cabin crews' union UFO "have agreed to arbitration," the airline said in a statement.

"Arbitration talks will run until June 30. During this period, a commitment has been made not to take part in any industrial action," the statement said.

Nevertheless, the strike risk has not been banished altogether, because Lufthansa is also involved in a separate dispute with its pilots' union Cockpit.

Cabin staff staged the longest walkout in Lufthansa's history with a seven-day stoppage in November, during which 4,700 flights scrapped and 550,000 passengers grounded. The dispute erupted nearly two years ago when management sought to cut costs, saying the current retirement system was too expensive to maintain.

The union however wants the status quo to remain. The former Social Democrat president of the regional state of Brandenburg, Matthias Platzeck, will arbitrate the talks.

But the two sides struck a deal for a 2.2-percent pay rise for Lufthansa's 19,000 flight attendants from January 2016, as well as a one-off payment of 3,000 euros (\$3,250) for last year, the airline said.

The arbitration will now focus on early retirement provisions and working conditions. At the end of November, Lufthansa reached a wage deal for its 30,000 ground staff. Lufthansa, which also owns Swiss and Austrian Airlines, is battling to bring down costs in a bid to survive competition from low-cost rivals such as EasyJet and Ryanair. —AFP

PORTUGAL AIMS TO CUT BUDGET DEFICIT TO 2.6% OF GDP

LISBON: Portugal's government said yesterday it aims to cut the country's budget deficit to 2.6 percent of GDP this year, a more aggressive plan than expected due to European Union pressure. The Socialist Party-led government, which took office in November, also projected economic growth of 2.1 percent in 2016, a higher figure than forecast by Portugal's central bank and the European Commission, the latter of which expects expansion of 1.7 percent. "This is a responsible budget that supports growth and employment, and which ensures the rigour of the public accounts," Finance Minister Mario Centeno told a news conference. The deficit target is more aggressive than the 2.8 percent of GDP target previously set by the socialists, but Prime Minister Antonio Costa admitted Wednesday that Brussels had pushed for "extra effort" from Lisbon.

The country's deficit in 2015 is expected to be 4.2 percent of GDP, according to an estimate from the Portuguese debt agency. Portugal received a massive international bailout in 2011 that saved it from defaulting, but in return the country had to introduce a string of austerity measures. In four years, more than 78,000 public sector jobs were cut—more than 10 percent of a total of 650,000. Since coming to power, Costa's government has sought to pull off a tricky balancing act, satisfying both Brussels and placating discontent on the left over the years of cutbacks. —AFP



DAVOS: EU foreign affairs head Federica Mogherini (R) and French Finance Minister Emmanuel Macron attend a session at the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in Davos, yesterday. —AFP

CHRISTINE LAGARDE TO RUN FOR SECOND IMF TERM

FRENCH CHIEF WINNING STRONG BACKING FROM ACROSS EUROPE

PARIS: Christine Lagarde announced yesterday that she will run for a second term at the head of the International Monetary Fund, after winning strong backing from across Europe.

"Yes, I am running for a second mandate," the former French finance minister confirmed in an interview with France 2 television. "I've had the honor of receiving support since the opening of the procedure," she said, pointing in particular to endorsements from France, Britain, Germany and China.

British finance minister George Osborne on Thursday tweeted that he was "delighted to nominate" her for a new term. He described the 60-year-old as "an outstanding leader with (the) vision and acumen to steer (the) global economy in years ahead". The German finance ministry said Lagarde had proven to be a "far-sighted and successful crisis manager in difficult times." US Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew refrained from a formal endorsement, but expressed strong approval of her performance.

"I think she has done a great job," he said at the World Economic Forum in Davos. Lagarde noted that the United States customarily waits until the end of the election process before backing a candidate, but pointed to recent expressions of support from Washington.

"The words of the US Vice President (Joe Biden) the other day in his public intervention were very glowing—almost embarrassing—and the treasury secretary has said he hopes to enjoy working with me," she told France 2.



PARIS: International Monetary Fund managing director Christine Lagarde attending an OECD meeting in Paris. —AFP

"I think it is difficult for the United States to do much more this stage." With her term coming to an end in July, the IMF formally began accepting nominations on Thursday for who will guide the global crisis lender for the next five years.

Could face trial in France

After leading the IMF through one of its most difficult challenges—the rescue of the eurozone from meltdown and in particular Greece's debt crisis—Lagarde has garnered deep respect in the global financial community.

Lagarde can count two recent personal successes as head of the Washington-based institution. She was deeply involved in the decision to add the Chinese yuan to the IMF's basket of reserve currencies, a highly symbolic move appreciated by Beijing as it seeks greater recognition for the world's second-largest economy.

She can also cheer the passage by the US Congress of long-stalled IMF reforms that will double the Fund's financial resources and, above all, give more power to the major emerging-market countries.

Her plans to run again nonetheless face a potential hurdle: she could stand trial in France over her role in a banking scandal that pre-dates her arrival at the IMF. In December, judges placed her under formal investigation in the long-running affair of former Adidas boss Bernard Tapie, who received a large state payout for his dispute with a state bank during her time as finance minister. —AFP

CHINA OFFICIAL SAYS NO PLANS TO DEVALUE YUAN

SHANGHAI: China has no intention to devalue its currency, the country's vice president Li Yuanhao has said, following a sudden drop in the value of the yuan that spooked global markets this month. Beijing guided the unit down by setting its daily fix lower for eight consecutive sessions, representing a 1.4 percent fall, before returning to stability. "The fluctuations in the currency market are a result of market forces and the Chinese government has no intention and no policy to devalue its currency," Li told Bloomberg News in an interview on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos Thursday.

The falls raised worries of a creeping

devaluation, as it echoed moves in mid-August when China adjusted the yuan down nearly five percent over a week, and spurred fears Beijing is pursuing a currency war to help boost its flagging exports. "Recently there have been some fluctuations in China's economy, its equity and foreign exchange markets and this has triggered some overreaction from the international community," said Li, the highest-ranking Chinese official attending the annual meeting. "I hope the rest of the world can boost confidence and have more confidence in China."

China's economy grew 6.9 percent in 2015, the slowest rate since 1990, the government said on Tuesday. For this year, Li

said, "some moderation in the growth rate is consistent with the law of economics". Capital is flowing out of China on worries over the weak economy, though the State Administration of Foreign Exchange said Thursday that the impact could be controlled.

Wall Street giant Goldman Sachs estimates there was a foreign exchange outflow from China of \$97 billion in December, according to a research report.

China's benchmark Shanghai stock index has already lost about a fifth of its value this year, closing at a more than one-year low Thursday, on worries over the economy and the government's ability to stave off a "hard landing". A stock

market rout last year saw Beijing launch an unprecedented rescue package, widely criticised as being heavy-handed, which included state-backed funds buying up shares. But an official at China's securities regulator defended the moves, saying the government was trying to act as a market maker. "The Chinese government intervened, and some people from outside China think what the Chinese government is trying to do is to bolster the market to boost the shares of the market," China Securities Regulatory Commission vice chairman Fang Xinghai told Bloomberg.

"But what we are trying to do is to give more liquidity to the market." — AFP



TOKYO: Pedestrians walk past a share prices board showing the numbers from various world stock markets in Tokyo yesterday. Tokyo stocks opened sharply higher yesterday, following overnight gains on Wall Street and in Europe on hints of additional European Central Bank stimulus and a rise in oil prices from 12-year lows. — AFP

CHINA SHARES END HIGHER ON GLOBAL STIMULUS HOPES

HINTS OF ECB, BOJ EASING OFFER RELIEF TO OIL, GLOBAL SHARES

SHANGHAI: China's fragile shares ended higher yesterday, in a relatively muted response to hints of more policy stimulus in Europe and Japan that prompted a robust rally in battered oil prices and equities elsewhere.

While Japan's Nikkei jumped nearly 6 percent and Brent crude was up more than 5 percent, the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index managed a rise of just 1.25 percent, following sharp losses on Thursday. The CSI300 index of the largest listed companies in Shanghai and Shenzhen closed up 1 percent.

The indexes veered between positive and negative territory during the day, with little volume behind the trade. The Shanghai Composite did at least end the week marginally higher than it began, for the first time in 2016, but not the CSI300.

Investors appear increasingly reluctant to risk their money on China's fickle markets, which have slumped about 17 percent so far this year, and morning gains have often turned to losses by close of day as traders quickly take profits.

Highlighting the lack of faith in the mar-

kets, trading volumes in January have been about a third of typical levels last year, which only exaggerates price movements. On Thursday, Vice President Li Yuanhao sought to reassure investors that Beijing would use regulations to prevent volatility in a market that was "not yet mature".

"An excessively fluctuating market is a market of speculation where only the few will gain the most benefit when most people suffer," Li, who is attending the World Economic Forum in Davos, said in an interview with Bloomberg.

Measured by actions rather than words, regulators' attempts to curb volatility, notably a new circuit breaker mechanism that was ditched after three days of violent falls, have conspicuously failed.

The stock markets and China's yuan currency have come under pressure as a raft of economic indicators have confirmed the country's declining growth, putting the world's second-largest economy at the top of global investors' worry list along with plunging crude oil prices.

There were some rare nuggets of good news on Friday, with data showing a pick-up

in lending to China's property market, and that urban unemployment was unchanged at 4.05 percent, comfortably below the government's target. But most economists believe China's real jobless rate is higher.

Concerns about another near-term yuan devaluation are slowly fading as the People's Bank of China (PBOC) has steered a steady course for the currency daily midpoint fix in recent weeks. But currency markets remain puzzled over the formula the central bank is using to determine its value and say spot yuan will remain under pressure as the economy continues to cool.

Yesterday's fix was again barely changed at 6.5572 per dollar. The spot yuan clung tightly to its previous close, as it has all week, while offshore it weakened slightly to 6.6076, 0.4 percent adrift from the onshore rate.

European and US markets took heart after European Central Bank President Mario Draghi dropped a heavy hint that more stimulus could come as early as March. His comments sliced 1 percent from the euro as markets quickly priced in a rate cut for March, three months ahead of previous forecasts. — Reuters

GOLD RETREATS AS EQUITIES RALLY

LONDON: Gold fell yesterday as hints of more monetary stimulus from the European Central Bank weighed on the euro and pushed European shares up 3.2 percent, denting appetite for alternative assets, while oil rebounded. Benchmark Brent crude, whose slide to 12-year lows this week fuelled risk aversion, bounced 6.2 percent yesterday as traders cashed in on record short positions.

That fed into better appetite for assets seen as higher risk, such as stocks, and weighed on gold.

Spot gold was down 0.4 percent at \$1,097.10 an ounce at 1235 GMT, while US gold futures for February delivery were down 90 cents an ounce at \$1,097.30. "Gold has eased off from its \$1,100 mark as the president of the ECB spurred some appetite for riskier assets," Naem Aslam, chief market analyst at Ava Trade, said. "The \$1,100 mark is an important number with respect to any bull strength for the metal, and we need to stay above this number to fortify more demand."

ECB President Mario Draghi said on Thursday that fading growth and inflation prospects will force the bank to review its policy stance in March, a strong signal that more easing could be coming within months. His comments lifted the dollar 0.4 percent against the euro and prompted a rally in beleaguered stock markets.

"With equity markets remaining bid and oil continuing to squeeze higher, gold is likely to come under pressure and could test towards \$1,085 in the short term," MKS said in a note. Gold prices rallied to two-month highs at \$1,112.00 earlier this month as oil prices plunged and heavy selling of equities in China spilled over into the global markets. Gold benefited from the risk aversion among investors that sank stocks and crude oil, although slow physical demand from major consumers China and India kept a lid on price gains. — Reuters

RUSSIAN RUBLE BOUNCES BACK AFTER OIL PRICE RISE

MOSCOW: Russia's battered ruble yesterday bounced back after a rise in crude prices, recovering ground a day after it slumped to an all-time low against the dollar. The Russian currency stood at 80.3 against the dollar, up from Thursday's 82.63 ruble to the greenback, as oil prices rose from 12-year lows. The country's RTS dollar-denominated index meanwhile was up 5.30 percent at 0930 GMT. Earlier this week, the ruble fell to a record low against the dollar, dipping below the 85-ruble mark and standing at 93 against the euro. Russia-whose energy-reliant economy has already been pushed into recession by low oil prices and Western sanctions over Ukraine-has been rocked by the fresh fall in oil prices and officials have come under increasing pressure to react.

In a bid to calm the markets, central bank chief Elvira Nabiullina insisted at a finance ministry meeting Friday that the authorities were "closely following" the situation on and have the tools to ward off instability. "We have all the means to be proactive and prevent threats to financial stability in advance," Elvira Nabiullina was quoted as saying by the RIA Novosti news agency.

The slump in the ruble earlier in the week had sparked "nervousness" among officials, Kommersant daily reported, and the central bank on Thursday summoned bank chiefs for an unexpected late-night meeting. She also cancelled her trip to the Davos economic forum, where she was to speak yesterday. The government, which is facing an increasingly difficult struggle to keep public discontent in check while trying to balance the books, said Friday it was preparing an anti-crisis plan. — AFP

SLOWER GLOBAL ECONOMY HITS GE EARNINGS IN 2015

NEW YORK: A slowing global economy and major corporate adjustments pushed General Electric into a loss in 2015, but the US industrial giant reported firm gains for the fourth quarter yesterday.

GE said sales fell 1.3 percent in the quarter to \$30.5 billion and costs surged but tax and other benefits helped it turn in a 22.3 percent gain in net earnings at \$6.3 billion.

Sales revenues were also down in

the year, by 0.9 percent to \$105.8 billion, while rising expenses, the costs of restructuring and taking over part of France's power equipment company Alstom gave GE a \$6.1 billion loss, after \$15.2 billion in profits in 2014. Revenues and profits in the fourth quarter were strong in its aviation division, where it provides aircraft engines and other equipment. Transportation—mainly railway equipment—was also solid.

But its power generation, renewable

energy and oil and gas divisions all sagged. "GE executed well in a slow-growth environment," said chief executive Jeffrey Immelt in a statement.

"We recognize that the first few weeks of 2016 have been especially volatile. However, our orders in the fourth quarter grew one percent organically and our backlog grew to \$315 billion with Alstom. We believe in the strength of our business model and that there is enough growth out there

to deliver in 2016."

The company reiterated its earnings targets for 2016 despite the turmoil and slowing in major emerging economies that have been key markets. It forecast 2-4 percent growth in its core businesses and expansion of margins. "In a time of uncertain global conditions, we have the unique ability to invest through cycles and use the diversity of our portfolio to our advantage," Immelt said. — AFP



YANGON: Vendors wait for customers at a vegetable wholesale market in Yangon early yesterday. — AFP

UKRAINE STICKS RUSSIA WITH MASSIVE GAS BILL

GAZPROM CHARGED WITH UNDERPAYING KIEV

KIEV: Ukraine yesterday stepped up its economic warfare with Russia by demanding a mult-billion-dollar payment from the Gazprom gas giant for allegedly underpaying Kiev for its fuel transits to European states. The gesture is largely symbolic because Russia has dismissed similar Ukrainian claims. But it underscores the severe tensions between the two neighbors and potentially complicates the resolution of a litany of existing trade disputes.

The westward-leaning former Soviet country's Anti-Monopoly Committee said Gazprom had two months to pay 86 billion hryvnias (\$3.5 billion / 3.2 billion euros) for abusing the "monopoly status" it enjoys on gas transits through Ukraine.

The committee's deputy chief Mariya Nyzhnyk said the sum represented 30 percent of the price for natural gas that passed through the country over the past five years.

"Another complication is that these violations are continuing today," Ukrainian media quoted Nyzhnyk as saying. There was no immediate response from either Russian officials or Gazprom.

Ukraine's decades-old pipelines account for about 15 percent of all gas imported by the European Union—its members reliant on Russia for about a third if their outside supplies.

Some of Gazprom's EU clients saw their deliveries limited in 2006 and 2010 when the state-run behemoth—long accused of raising the rates of neighbors who want to ease their dependence on Moscow—halted supplies to Ukraine over price disputes.

Kiev's announcement came just three days after Gazprom itself demanded the payment of a previously-undisclosed \$2.55 billion bill for the July to September period of 2015.

Ukraine has been weaning itself off Russian energy imports and purchased almost no gas from its eastern neighbor in the period mentioned by Gazprom.

But the Russian firm said the amount it was after fell under the take-or-pay scheme that requires clients to reimburse Gazprom for any contracted gas they failed to purchase in a specific timeframe. Russia's latest charge brings to nearly \$32 billion the bill it claims is due by Kiev.

Ukraine's Naftogaz state energy com-

pany is itself seeking nearly \$26 billion from Gazprom in a Stockholm arbitration court.

50% transit rate hike Kiev authorities have vowed repeatedly not to halt shipments to Europe despite its multiplying disputes with Gazprom. Ukraine is reliant on EU backing in its struggle with pro-Moscow insurgents in its industrial east—a 21-month conflict Russia denies either plotting or backing in retaliation for Kiev's decision to anchor its future with the West. But its cash-starved economy also needs proceeds from Russian gas shipments that Moscow intends to limit by expanding pipelines that already bypass Ukraine. Kiev this month raised the price it wants Gazprom to pay for its transits by 50 percent. Ukrainian Energy Minister Volodymyr Demchshyn said on Wednesday that Russia had simply ignored Kiev's move.

"So now will meet in Stockholm," he said in reference to the arbitration court. The Swedish tribunal had not yet examined the issue and it remains unclear when—or if—any ruling will be issued on the counter-suits. — AFP

COLOMBIA FOCUSED ON SPENDING CUTS, REDUCING CA GAP: FM

DAVOS: Colombia's finance minister Mauricio Cardenas said yesterday the government was focused on cutting the country's large current account deficit though he admitted that oil's latest price fall could make that job harder in 2016. "The No 1 economic priority for the government is to reduce the current account deficit," Cardenas told Reuters on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, noting that the deficit last year had been 6.5 percent of gross domestic product.

"That's something we need to correct, we understand a large current account deficit is something markets do not like," he said but added: "The deficit last year was with average \$53 (per barrel) Brent. With oil at \$30 that tends to increase and that's something we need to correct."

"How do you cut? We need to reduce domestic absorption and that we intend to do by either cutting government expenditure or raising interest rates," Cardenas added.

Oil is Colombia's top export and source of foreign exchange, accounting for around a fifth of national income. Economic growth is expected to slow this year to around 3.2 percent, from 4.6 percent last year. The central bank began raising interest rates last September and hiked them to 5.75 percent in December. Colombia's drive to boost exports has however suffered from the slowdown across Latin America, as countries such as Brazil and Venezuela remain in recession.

Cardenas said that while this year's budget envisages a \$55 crude price, that is based on receipts from 2015 and the \$30 Brent price would be relevant only for next year's budget.

"That essentially means there will be no rents coming from the oil sector to the government, we will be adjusting to zero contribution from the oil sector to government revenues," the minister added. However he said the budget deficit would not be impacted because of a fiscal rule that stipulates a deficit cap of 3.6 percent of GDP. "Fiscal consolidation is a must...We just have to cut expenditure to make sure we meet fiscal deficit targets. That's something fixed on our economic landscape," he added. — Reuters



TOKYO: Japan's Economy and Fiscal Policy Minister Akira Amari bows at the beginning of his policy speech during a plenary session of the House of Representatives at the Diet in Tokyo yesterday. Amari, Japan's top negotiator for a huge trans-Pacific trade deal was accused of corruption, piling pressure on Prime Minister Shinzo Abe ahead of parliamentary elections this year. — AFP

OIL PRICES CAST SHADOW OVER EUROZONE INFLATION: ECB

DRAGHI TO REVIEW MONETARY STANCE AT MARCH MEETING

FRANKFURT: Falling oil prices are weighing on the outlook for inflation in the euro area this year, but the European Central Bank's stimulus measures and the gradual economic recovery will drive inflation higher again next year, an ECB survey showed yesterday.

According to the ECB's regular quarterly survey of professional forecasters, eurozone inflation is expected to average 0.7 percent this year, but then pick up to 1.4 percent in 2017 and 1.6 percent in 2018, moving closer to the central bank's target of just under two percent.

In a previous survey in the fourth quarter of last year, forecasters had been pencilling in an inflation rate of 1.0 percent for 2016 and 1.5 percent for 2017. "In the short term, respondents expect a strong dampening impact on inflation from the latest oil price developments," the ECB wrote.

"However, most respondents continue to envisage a strong pick-up in infla-

tion in 2016 and 2017 ... shaped by the ongoing expansion of economic activity and supported by the monetary policy stance," it explained. "The weaker euro exchange rate in 2015 is expected to exert some upward pressure on inflation in 2016 as well," it added.

The ECB sees an inflation rate of close to but just under 2.0 percent as conducive to healthy economic growth. And while the central bank held policy unchanged at its first rate-setting meeting of this year on Thursday, ECB chief Mario Draghi said it would review that monetary stance at the next meeting in March if inflation continues to remain stubbornly low.

Turning to the growth outlook for the 19 countries that share the euro, the survey saw no change in experts' growth forecasts.

"Real gross domestic product growth expectations are unchanged," the ECB said. "Respondents forecast growth in private consumption and

investment as the main drivers of the ongoing economic expansion," it said. Domestic demand would be strengthened by the low level of interest rates, as well as by the current low level of energy prices, "which is supporting the disposable income of households and profit margins of companies," the ECB said.

The ECB Survey of Professional Forecasters (SPF) collects the views of experts affiliated with financial or non-financial institutions based within the European Union.

While the ECB insists that the survey results do not represent the views of its staff and decision-making bodies, the SPF survey usually provides an indication of where the ECB's own forecasts-scheduled for release on March 10 — are headed.

The latest survey was conducted between January 5 and 11 and there were 57 respondents, the ECB said. — AFP

EUROZONE BUSINESS ACTIVITY SLOWS SHARPLY IN JANUARY

BRUSSELS: Eurozone private sector business activity slowed sharply in January against a backdrop of volatile financial markets and uncertainty about the global outlook, a key survey showed yesterday. Data monitoring company Markit said its closely watched Composite Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) fell to 53.5 points in January from 54.3 in December, hitting an 11-month low. The reading was still well above the 50-point boom-or-bust line, showing the 19-nation eurozone economy continued to expand overall.

Markit chief economist Chris Williamson said "the cooling of business activity at the start of 2016 is a disappointment but not surprising given the uncertainty caused by the financial market volatility seen so far this year." "It would be wrong to get too worried," Williamson said, saying the report was consistent with overall quarterly growth of 0.3-0.4 percent.

According to the latest official data available, the eurozone expanded 0.3 percent in the three months to September, after 0.4 percent in the second quarter.

Williamson said business confidence appeared to be improving, and employment prospects were resilient. For the services sector, which accounts for about two-thirds of all activity in a developed economy, Markit said its January PMI fell to 53.6 points from 54.2 in December.

The manufacturing sector PMI dropped to 52.3 points from 53.2. A sharp slowdown in China, the world's second largest economy, has spooked markets and stoked doubts over the outlook. European Central Bank head Mario Draghi said Thursday "downside risks" had increased and he was ready to do everything required to keep the eurozone economy on track. Analysts said Friday's PMI report added to the concern but the gloom should not be overdone.

Howard Archer at IHS Global Insight said the figures were weaker than expected "and raise concern that heightened global economic uncertainty and financial market turmoil are weighing down on a relatively fragile Eurozone cyclical upturn." "Nevertheless, the (reports) ... are far from disastrous and they still show reasonable new business growth, rising backlogs of work and decent employment growth," Archer said in a note. — AFP

BRITISH RETAIL SALES FALL ON MILD WEATHER

LONDON: Britain's retail sales sank in December by the biggest amount in more than a year as unseasonably mild weather conditions hit clothing demand over Christmas, official data showed yesterday. Sales by volume dropped 1.0 percent last month compared with November, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement. That was the largest drop since September 2014 and was worse than market expectations for a 0.3-percent decline.

"Most worryingly, this fall took place during the crucial Christmas season," said Helal Miah, investment research analyst at The Share Centre. "It seems that the unusually warm weather disrupted consumers shopping habits and discounting hurt the retailers' revenues."

Retail sales had jumped by 1.3 percent in November, helped by buying on 'Black Friday' when items are heavily discounted in the run-up to Christmas. — AFP



TEMPI: Farmers block a main national road with their tractors yesterday at Tempi, some 380km north of Athens, as farmers protest against a disputed pension reform planned by the Greek government. — AFP

VENEZUELA MINISTERS SHUN HEARING ON ECONOMIC CRISIS

CARACAS: Venezuelan government ministers refused Thursday to go before their opposition rivals for a key legislative hearing on economic emergency measures in the crisis-hit nation, officials said.

The opposition-controlled National Assembly is due by Friday to vote on a bid by President Nicolas Maduro to decree a state of economic emergency in the oil-rich South American state.

His economic ministers were set to defend the measures in the assembly, but pulled out in the last minute saying they would only participate if it was

closed to the media, said the opposition speaker of the congress, Henry Ramos Allup.

He said that Vice-President Aristobulo Isturiz told him "they would not come to this afternoon's session where they were to answer written questions from members of a special commission, if the session was public with media present."

The leader of the pro-government bloc in the assembly, Hector Rodriguez, earlier said members of Maduro's economic cabinet "will not take part" in the session.

He accused the center-right opposition, which this month took control of the assembly for the first time in 17 years, of trying to turn the session into a "show."

"Now is not the time for political calculations, it not the time for a show, but to face up responsibly to the historic moment we are living through and move forward alongside the president," Rodriguez said. Ramos said the opposition lawmakers in the congress refused to hold the session without the media, and the assembly would make a decision

on the decree on Friday. The decree, issued last Friday, would give Maduro 60 days of extraordinary powers to combat a deep recession and triple-digit inflation.

It allows for the administration to commandeer private companies' resources, impose currency controls and take "other social, economic or political measures deemed fitting."

With Venezuela in a spiraling economic crisis, the opposition has vowed to force changes to Maduro's economic policies, but nevertheless promised to study the decree. — AFP

SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 2016

Kuwait Times

Weekender

www.kuwaittimes.net



African superheroes: 'You don't have to be white to save the world'

SEE PAGE 27

A model presents a creation by Margiela during the men's Fashion Week for the 2016-2017 Fall/Winter collection in Paris. — AFP



LL Cool J insists the Grammy Awards won't be a 'wake'

The 48-year-old hip hop star - who is to present the ceremony for the fifth consecutive year on February 15 - has reassured fans that there will be tributes to late stars, who will surely include David Bowie and Motorhead's Lemmy, but there has to be a "balance" during the event. He said: "It has to be addressed, and it will be. Remember, there has to be a balance. There are still artists nominated for Grammys. They deserve to have an enjoyable time. We don't want it to be a wake." As well as looking forward to the Grammys, LL - whose name stands for Ladies Love Cool James - was busy accepting his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on Thursday, and admitted he was "grateful" for the recognition. He told 'Entertainment Tonight': "It's kind of surreal. "I'm very grateful. These are the things you dream of as a kid, you know? I'm just really grateful this day has come." The star recently admitted he was "honored" to have been asked to host his fifth Grammy Awards and cannot wait for an "incredible night" at the ceremony, which takes place at Los Angeles' Staples Center on February 15. He explained: "The performances and moments that take place on the Grammy stage are awesome in so many ways for the audience and artists alike. "I'm honored once again to host Music's Biggest Night as we celebrate the talented music creators of today. It's going to be an incredible night and I'm excited to share this experience with the world."

Krasinski said he 'bulked up' to keep wife happy

The 36-year-old American actor tied the knot with Emily Blunt in July 2010 after a two-year romance and he readily admits he's a lucky guy to be married to such a beautiful Brit. John claims the reason he accepted a role as a US Navy SEAL in new war movie '13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi' was to get in shape to keep Emily interested in him. During an appearance on 'The Jonathan Ross Show', he quipped: "Yes I married Emily - I know what you're thinking, 'What?! That guy got her?' It's true, it's true. Why do you think I bulked up? I had to earn it!" John also spoke about the couple's 23-year-old month daughter Hazel and revealed she has picked up her mother's British accent. The former 'Office' star said: "We have an amazing daughter named Hazel and she definitely is picking up on her mom's accent which I think is adorable especially at Christmas - the whole Santa, Father Christmas thing like blew her mind ...



She has a British accent for some things." Although John has been hitting the gym very hard in recent months - losing 21 per cent of his body fat for '13 Hours: The Secret

Soldiers of Benghazi' - Emily preferred him "doughy". Speaking about his new torso, he previously said: "She hates it. She would way prefer to have doughy guy back."



Beyoncé to release her new album in 2016

The R&B megastar has reportedly completed her sixth solo LP and wants to drop it on a surprise date, just like she did with her last self-titled studio collection. The rumored date for the album - and a world tour in support of the record - to be announced on February 7, the same day she is due to perform with Coldplay at the Super Bowl half-time show. A source exclusively told The Sun newspaper: "Beyoncé has totally relaxed her schedule and pushed back her album, which is now complete and ready to go. It was wrapped up at the end of 2015 but she held off on a release ... Now Adele's

sales are starting to die down, Beyoncé is ready to drop her album at any time. But there's a very strong chance the announcement could happen during the Super Bowl next month." Beyoncé is believed to have worked with a host of big names on her LP, including Sia, Clean Bandit, Naughty Boy and Future. As well as making her own album, the 34-year-old singer did feature on two songs, 'Hymn for the Weekend' and 'Up&Up', on Coldplay's last album 'A Head Full of Dreams'. Beyoncé and her husband Jay Z are close friends with the band's frontman Chris Martin.

Hardy says having kids 'got his act together'

The 'Legend' actor - who has struggled with alcohol and drug addiction in the past and once reportedly said he would've sold his mother "for a rock of crack" cocaine - changed his life after the birth of his son Louis, seven, who he has with ex-girlfriend Rachael Speed. Tom - who also has a three-month-old child with wife Charlotte Riley - said: "I wouldn't say it saved my life, but it definitely changed my life. "That was when the penny dropped that there was no longer very much time for me to think about myself any more - about what I might like to do or who I want to be - because there is somebody now on the planet who really needs me to get my act together and focus on something that is more important than me. "And when I go home, I am not Tommy the actor, I am Tommy the dad, largely because my chil-



dren aren't allowed to watch any of my films yet. My older son really wants to watch 'Mad Max', but I've told him that he can't - he's got to watch the Harry Potter films first!" During his younger years, Tom struggled with drugs and started taking hallucinogens at the age of 13, while three years later he was taking crack cocaine and drinking alcohol. The star has had a very busy few years, filming latest Hollywood blockbuster 'The Revenant', starring as notorious gangsters, twins Ronnie and Reggie Kray, in 'Legend' and also starred as Max Rockatansky in 'Mad Max: Fury Road', and he admits all the work has left him "quite tired". He added to the Daily Mail newspaper: "I'm a very lucky boy! "I have had a lot of opportunities to do some very interesting movies lately, so I've been working very hard. The downside is that I am quite tired right now."



Witherspoon
'disappointed'
at Academy Awards
nominations

The 'Hot Pursuit' star is just one of a long line of actors and actresses unhappy about the lack of diversity in the nods for the Oscars, which takes place next month, and has called for a "more diverse voting membership" ahead of next year's ceremony. She wrote on Facebook: "I really appreciated this article in TIME on the lack of racial and gender diversity in this

year's Oscar nominations. "So disappointed that some of 2015's best films, filmmakers and performances were not recognized... Nothing can diminish the quality of their work, but these filmmakers deserve recognition. As an Academy member, I would love to see a more diverse voting membership. (sic)" Meanwhile, other stars have confirmed they will not be

attending the ceremony include Will Smith, his wife Jada Pinkett Smith and filmmaker Spike Lee. When asked if he was attending, Will said: "No, my wife's not going. It would be awkward for me to show up with Charlize [Theron]. "We've discussed it. We're part of this community, but at this current time, we're uncomfortable to stand there and say that this is OK."

Mariah Carey and James Packer are engaged



The Australian billionaire and the 'Without You' hitmaker may have only been dating for less than 12 months but they are set to tie the knot after he reportedly got down on one knee in her hometown on Thursday. A source told E! News: "They fell head over heels in love with one another. It's crazy how perfect they are together, they both know it and couldn't be happier. "As soon as their friendship turned romantic, they have wanted to spend every moment together. They have a connection that is unparalleled; it's been a very beautiful experience for them both. If you spend even

five minutes with them, you can't help but believe in true love. "They are just very cute together, they like doing sweet things for one another. They want to make each other happy." Meanwhile, James - who is said to have splashed out on a 35 carat diamond engagement ring - was recently praised by his bride-to-be. She gushed: "He's a great person. He's just an incredible guy. He really is a good person, and that's hard to find. "I think anybody that's a friend of his would say the same thing, if not more, so I can't say enough nice things about him. He's just a spectacular guy."

Kylie has grown more 'introverted'

The 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star used to keep friends and family entertained with her "crazy" antics, but these days she finds it difficult just making small talk with people. She said: "I'm not a shy person and when I was younger I was so crazy."Every time my mum would have people over, I'd make everyone come in and watch me do my dance moves."It was so wild. And I feel like growing up in the spotlight, it just made me a more introverted person. Now I can't walk in a room and talk to people." "It's weird. I'm super-reserved and introverted but I know everyone knows who I am." And the 18-year-old drama queen - who has an on/off relationship with rapper Tyga - admits she feels a lot of pressure to always be in a good mood when she's out in public. She explained to Elle magazine: "I don't know if people like me but they have an idea of me and it's a lot of pressure to go up to someone and be like, 'Hey, what's up?' "Or if you act even a little



tired that day, people think you're a bitch. It's just... I don't know. I just keep it to myself." — Bangshowbiz

Jack Black desperate to see a ghost before he dies

The 'Goosebumps' actor - who plays RL Stine, the creator of spooky book series, in the movie - admitted he was more wary of girls than ghouls during his younger years and would still love to see a spirit and a UFO before he meets his maker. He said: "I never saw a ghost when I was a kid. I was more scared of girls. "I'd have loved to have seen a ghost."It's on my bucket list: 'See a ghost.' It's right behind: 'See a UFO.' "The 46-year-old

star has always been interested in the paranormal and once played a prank on his pals using a Ouija board. He added to SFX magazine: "One time I invited a few of my friends over for a Ouija board experiment."I had rigged the whole room with little invisible wires that I would pull to make it seem like spirits were in the room. "That was my deal. I was kind of a charlatan. "I always wanted to make the other kids think that magic was real."



Looking for diversity, Hollywood could turn on the TV



In this image released by Fox, Taraji P. Henson as Cookie Lyon appears in a scene from "Empire." — AP photos



In this image released by ABC, Viola Davis appears in a scene from "How To Get Away With Murder."



This image released by Columbia Pictures shows Will Smith in a scene from, "Concussion."

As Hollywood continues to be battered by a backlash to the lack of diversity in the Oscar nominations and in the film industry at large, it doesn't have to look far for inspiration: Just turn on the TV. Where the movies have lagged, television has recently exploded with diversity across the dial.

Now, the film industry will be playing catch-up to the small screen, where some of the most talented people of color have turned for greater artistic freedom and the chance to tell more varied stories that don't require capes or marketability in China. Many previous Oscar nominees are already there.

Ava DuVernay, director of last year's best picture-nominee "Selma," is currently at work on "Queen Sugar," a drama series for Oprah Winfrey's OWN. John Ridley, the Oscar-winning screenwriter of "12 Years a Slave," is in the second season of his acclaimed ABC series, "American Crime." Forest Whitaker, who won best actor for 2006's "The Last King of Scotland," is part of a "Roots" remake for A&E. Two-time Oscar nominee Viola Davis is on Shonda Rhimes' "How to Get Away With Murder" for ABC. "TV cares about its audience," says Davis, who in September became the first African-American to win an Emmy for best actress in a drama. "TV wants to cater to the demographics of what is America."

More nimble medium

Television is a faster, more nimble medium than film, where movies regularly take years to make; but it also has some structural advantages. Power in Hollywood is still largely held by the six major studios and a handful of other large production companies. In television, there's a veritable ocean of opportunity, including cable and streaming networks with deep pockets and a willingness for riskier material. Though the television landscape was less diverse just a few years ago, it's — for now — flush with the likes of Lee Daniels' "Empire," Aziz Ansari's "Master of None" and Jill Soloway's "Transparent."

"How you fill up the volume is by writing more narratives," said Davis. "And the narratives have got to be varied. Everything can't be the same. And therefore, it gives people the opportunity to come in and show what they can do." To compete in an increasingly crowded media landscape, studios now bankroll fewer films and instead focus on bigger blockbusters that can sell tickets around the globe. It's a strategy that has been largely



In this image released by ABC, Regina King, left, and Andre Benjamin appear in a scene from "American Crime."

working (2015 set a record of \$11.1 billion at the box office), but it has put a stranglehold on distinct voices, of any color, who find little daylight between hulking franchises.

As a producer, Whitaker twice found rejection at the studios before raising money independently for 2013's "Fruitvale Station" (the

breakout debut of director Ryan Coogler and star Michael B. Jordan, who reteamed for the Oscar-overlooked "Creed") and Rick Famuyiwa's 2015 teen comedy "Dope." "We're taking a leap on stories that maybe somebody else says they just don't get," Whitaker said when releasing "Dope." New streaming



This photo provided by Netflix shows, Idris Elba in the Netflix original film, "Beasts of No Nation."

platforms have provided new avenues for some filmmakers. Spike Lee, who has said he won't attend the Oscars, found a home for his latest film, the gang violence takedown "Chi-Raq," with Amazon. The child soldier drama "Beasts of No Nation," which provided the much-praised but un-nominated performance by Idris Elba, came from Netflix.

'Recognizing diversity'

"We must do a better job of cultivating and recognizing diversity," Chris Dodd, chairman of the Motion Picture Association of America, said Wednesday. "The film community is better served when a wider array of voices is celebrated." But in today's homogenous Hollywood, variety of any kind is hard to come by. Incremental change is often measured in the makeup of franchises.

Two of 2015's most popular films — "Furious 7" and "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" — grossed more than \$1 billion with casts that came closer to reflecting American society and moviegoers than blockbusters of the past did. After years of white superheroes, Marvel has enlisted Coogler to direct its "Black Panther" movie. But Darnel Hunt, head of UCLA's Ralph J Bunche Center for African American studies, cautions against viewing gestures of diversity as representations of deeper progress.

"I don't think most of the public is aware of what goes on behind the scenes and how exclusionary the business really is — particularly if you see people of color on screen, which you do increasingly see on television," says Hunt. "But if you look behind the scenes, you don't see nearly as much diversity."

Hunt co-authors UCLA's annual Hollywood Diversity Report and year after year, the results have been damning. Though minorities make up nearly 40 percent of the US population, they receive only 17 percent of the lead roles in theatrical films. Hollywood executives are 94 percent white and almost entirely male. Though TV has made some strides in front of the camera, its board rooms and writers' rooms (not to mention late-night TV hosts) remain largely white and male, too. "We are light years away. The lack of nominations was, to me, almost a perfect reflection of what the industry looks like," says Hunt. "TV seems more open because they're making a lot more TV, so there are more opportunities for women and minorities. But not in the key decision-making positions." — AP

Sunny Leone determined to take on Bollywood



This photo taken on January 15, 2016 shows Bollywood actress Sunny Leone posing after finishing an interview with a news channel in Mumbai. —AFP

Bollywood actress Sunny Leone has long faced the wrath of India's social conservatives for her porn-star past, but she remains determined to carve a career in Hindi movies even as fresh controversy erupted this week. Canadian-born Leone, whose adult films include "Descent into Bondage" and "Costumed Damsels in Distress", said making the transition to Indian cinema had been difficult but she now felt at home in Bollywood.

"When I first got into the industry it was definitely not a good feeling when people are not so happy about your choices in life," Leone told AFP during an interview in Mumbai. "But as time has gone by, especially over the last six months, I've gotten to know and I've gotten to meet some amazing celebrities and it's a journey," she added.

The 34-year-old, the most searched celebrity on Google in the country for the last three years, has often drawn controversy in deeply conservative and religious India. This week social media erupted in sympathy for Leone after she calmly faced down what many felt was a misogynistic grilling about her past by Bhupendra Chaubey on his top-rating TV show, during which he even suggested she was linked to the increase in India's pornography viewing. But in a testament to the increasing acceptance of her by the Bollywood establishment, big name stars such as Aamir Khan, Rishi Kapoor, and Anushka Sharma, took to Twitter to voice support for Leone.

'Penthouse Pet' to Bollywood

A subsequent video on Facebook of Leone expressing her gratitude for the support has been viewed more than a million times. The actress, whose real name is Karenjit Kaur Vohra, was born in Ontario, Canada to Indian Sikh immigrants in 1981.

She moved to India five years ago after a successful career as a porn actress, which included being named "Penthouse Pet of the Year" in 2003. She got her first break in India in 2011 when she appeared on Celebrity Big Brother-inspired local reality TV show "Bigg Boss" before making her Bollywood debut the following year. Leone has now appeared in more than eight Indian movies and is set to star in a risqu new comedy called "Mastizaade" (meaning "born out of mischief" in Hindi) which will hit screens on January 29.

At a film studio in the north of Mumbai, home to Bollywood, Leone is clearly proud of the progress her career is making. "When I came here there were a lot of people who didn't want me here and there were a lot of people who had lots of crazy things to say about me," she said. "But I have so many more fans who care about me, that like me, that like the movies that I've put out, or songs or photo shoots. I've had more supporters than I've had haters."

Leone admits one of her toughest moments was when a woman filed a police complaint against her in Mumbai last year for "promoting obscenity and destroying Indian culture and society".

Police are obliged to register a case when such complaints are made and there have been reports of others. "It's definitely something that did affect me. It was not fun at all," Leone said of the complaint. "Hopefully situations like that don't come up again because I'm not a part of that world anymore and I don't think it's fair to bring up things that have no merit at this point in time in my life."

'See me differently'

Leone said she feels social attitudes are shifting, with the next generation craving more of the risqu films on offer in the West. Apart from Leone's "Mastizaade", Bollywood is set to release two more with similar themes: "Kya Kool Hain Hum 3" (loosely translated as "How Cool Are We") and "Great Grand Masti" ("Great Grand Mischief").

Some commentators have complained that "Mastizaade"-in which Leone plays the sexy bikini-clad Laila and the bespectacled geek Lily-objectifies women. She advises those who feel that way: "Just don't watch the film", adding that the "movie's for adults only, it is adult humor." But Leone is wary about being typecast and says she has lined up a couple of more serious roles.

"I think that transition also takes time and with each movie it's different," she explained. "Is there sex appeal? Is there glamour? Yes of course but in the next couple of movies we'll find out if people like seeing me in a different way." — AFP

Emotional cancer drama 'Other People' opens Sundance

There is no joy in watching Molly Shannon die for 97 minutes, especially in a movie that's not really her story. That's not a spoiler. Her character's death is the opening frame of "Other People," the feature directorial debut of Chris Kelly, who has written for "Saturday Night Live" and "Broad City." The film, which follows a family across the year their mother is dying of cancer, opened the Sundance Film Festival on Thursday night to a packed crowd at the Eccles Theatre.

The opening night film has a scattered history and can range from Oscar-worthy ("Whiplash") to Razzie-ready ("The Bronze"). "Other People" doesn't fit into either extreme, but instead languishes in that murky middle territory where there is promise, emotional truth and comedic prowess, but there's also clunky character development, banal clichés and little insight in the end.

That first scene sets the tone. It opens on a family of four (Jesse Plemons, Bradley Whitford, Maude Apatow and Madisen Beaty) sobbing over their dead mother's body. Then a phone rings. Then it goes to the answering machine. Then the woman, calling to offer her sympathies, pauses to order some takeout.

That Kelly embraces humor and comedy within this terribly sad situation is one of the film's strongest attributes. Dramas, especially of the cancer variety, too often languish in the melancholy. Kelly, who was drawing on his own experiences in writing this script, said that shifting from laughter to sadness was just how life was for him and his family. "I remem-



This image provided by courtesy of the Sundance Institute shows, Jesse Plemons, left, and Molly Shannon, in a scene from the film, "Other People," directed by Chris Kelly. — AP

ber laughing so hard and then going to fill out end of life paperwork," Kelly said after the screening.

But "Other People" has a protagonist problem. The film focuses not on the one dying, but on the eldest son David (Plemons) - a gay, 28-year-old struggling TV writer who has left New York and his long-term boyfriend to live with his family in Sacramento, California. While Plemons is a likable actor, watching the

(slight) emotional journey of a deeply selfish person is not the most fulfilling exercise - especially when underlying issues with his unsupportive father (Whitford) aren't really explored. It makes his arc feel uncomfortably trite for the subject matter.

Shannon gives a strong, truthful performance as Joanne, and it's devastating to watch her whittle away while trying to retain some sense of dignity and spirit. At the audience

Q&A, the "Saturday Night Live" veteran talked about how she actually started out as a dramatic actress in her New York University days.

But the big scene stealer was the young actor J.J. Totah ("Glee"), who in one scene gyrates and twerks along to a pop song dressed in a long blond wig and skintight sequins. "Boy, girl, not determined yet...It's OK to be whoever the heck you are," said Totah. — AP



A detail from "Party Hat Diabolique" by Lisa Kokin.



"A Harlem Hangover," by Beau McCall simulating a spilled wine bottle, is on display for The Button Show at the Rush Arts Gallery. — AP photos

Buttons

as contemporary art, re-imagined in NYC exhibition

There's no denying buttons are an important clothing item, but can they rise to the level of art? A new exhibition at a Manhattan gallery proves they can. In the hands of 11 artists, the everyday, mundane objects are used to create sculptures, portraits and amazing wearable art - some political, personal or whimsical.

Each artist is "pushing buttons" beyond their normal use and re-imagines and repurposes them as an artistic medium in contemporary art, said Peter "Souleo" Wright, curator of "The Button Show" at Rush Arts Gallery in Chelsea. "What I tried to do with this show was look at artists who were elevating that level of craft and making pol-

pedestal and a long ribbon of buttons cascades into a pool of ruby red buttons on the floor.

The Harlem artist's technique involves lining his object with an identical button and then adding a second layer of buttons of varying shapes, sizes and texture for a three-dimension-



A bust of a dog by San Francisco-based artist Lisa Kokin.

al effect. The stitching that holds them together becomes an integral part of his design. In another piece, a school desk becomes a statement on his childhood Catholic school experience, where punishment was physical and doled out with a ruler. He's covered the surface entirely in wood-tone buttons, with wads of gum (piles of pink buttons) stuck to the underside. Several darker-colored buttons start to spell out the alphabet, but abruptly end in a sassy - unprintable - phrase. "The school chair is my site of pain, reflection, healing and holy revenge," he said.

Highly personal

A bulls eye made up of yardsticks and rulers



The inside of a button covered bathtub.

appears above the desk, decorated with letter buttons that spell out phrases like "what goes on in class, stays in class." For San Francisco-based artist Lisa Kokin, buttons are highly personal. When her father, an upholsterer, died in

2001, she created his portrait completely of buttons. Until then, they had made only cameos in her largely textile-based works.

The memorial to her father led to other button portraits, including those of activists Rosa Parks and Cesar Chavez. For her sculptures, like a bust of her pet dog Chico that's in the show, she builds a chicken wire structure that she covers in an assortment of old and new buttons. A lacy-like stitch ties them together, adding texture and transparency.

"Every button is stitched to its neighbor to form a low-tech, pixelated composition," she says. "The further back one stands, the more decipherable the image becomes. It is as though I am painting with buttons." Others use buttons as embellishments, as artist Amalia Amaki, of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, does in her work using old photographs. And Los Angeles artist Camilla Taylor applied them to a trio of large other-worldly headless creatures with spindly legs. The exhibition runs through March 12. It's presented by the Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation, founded in 1995 by hip-hop producer Russell Simmons and his brothers Danny and Joseph "Rev. Run" Simmons. — AP



Curator Peter "Souleo" Wright poses for a portrait.

ished, well-executed works that can stand next to a painting ... because of the amount of detail and precision in the work," added the curator. In "A Harlem Hangover," Beau McCall simulates a spilled wine bottle. It lies on its side on a high



"World Spinnin' on a 45" on display.

African superheroes: 'You don't have to be white to save the world'



Illustrators work on various projects at the Comic Republic office in Lagos.



An illustrator looks at a sketch at the Comic Republic office.

In the first issue of "Aje", a Nigerian comic offering a new breed of superheroes strictly from Africa, university student Teni casts a curse on her boyfriend in a rush of jealous rage and purple lightning. "Koni dara fun o ni yi aye (it will never be better for you in this life)," snarls Teni in Yoruba, a language and one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Teni is the creation of Jide Martins, the founder of Comic Republic, one of a handful of comic startups making African superheroes to rival Iron Man, Batman and Spiderman. Unlike Storm, a beloved X-Men superhero who is a dual citizen of the United States and the fictional country Wakanda, the superheroes Martins brings to life are born and bred in Africa-and fight there too.

"In university, I started wondering what it would be like if Superman came to Nigeria," Martins told AFP at his flat in Lagos, where his dining room doubles as a studio for his team of young illustrators. "People are trying to break away from the norm and find new things to aspire to," Martins said. "You don't have to be white to save the world."

Names and spandex

In 2013, Martins, a slim 37-year-old with a freckled nose and goatee beard, published his first issue of Guardian Prime, a hero wearing a forest green and snow white super-suit in the colors of the Nigerian flag. Since then, readership has swelled from 100 an issue to over 28,000.

Despite the 30-plus page comic books being free and only available as a digital download, Martins is able to generate enough money through advertising and spin-off projects, including educational booklets on malaria featuring his characters, to keep the business running.

"People had this idea that African comics had to be with people in traditional clothes, but I don't agree with that," Martins said. "Let them have Nigerian names, saving people in Nigeria, but let's put them in spandex." Martins isn't the only one realizing the potential of the burgeoning African superhero industry, which adapts the continent's long tradition of voodoo and the occult for a modern-day audience.

Roye Okupe is the creator of E.X.O.-The Legend of Wale Williams, a graphic novel set in Lagoon City, a futuristic Lagos riddled with corruption and besieged by an extremist insurrection. Okupe, a 30-year-old who grew



The team of illustrators meets. — AFP photos

up in the Nigerian megacity of 20 million people, saw a market for an African character grounded in reality. "You're probably not able to name five African superheroes off the top of your head," Okupe said from Washington, where he is based. "And as much as I love Black Panther, he's from a fictional African country."

At a time when superheroes dominate the international box office, Okupe says Nigerians

are uniquely poised to offer alternatives to the waspy roster of Clark Kents and Peter Parkers. "Ten years ago if you released a superhero from Nigeria, I don't think anybody would care," Okupe said. "But now that it's a popular industry, people want diversity."

'Long overdue'

For scholars on comic books, African superheroes are an inevitable reaction to a

predominantly white cast of caped crusaders. "I think it's long overdue," said Ronald Jackson, co-editor of the 2013 book "Black Comics: Politics of Race and Representation".

"As we begin to appreciate other identities, we're going to become increasingly more embracing of the kind of images coming out of African comics. "What you don't always see front and centre are major spin-offs in terms of movies and television shows. I think that may be the next step for African comics."

Back in the Comic Republic studio, the team of illustrators-all under 30 hope that one day their characters will appear on the silver screen.

They're betting that their African cast, including witches stronger than the Jedi warriors in "Star Wars", will be more than enough to keep international audiences excited. "You hear about Greek gods like Zeus but no one has heard of Shango, the god of lightning in Yoruba," 23-year-old illustrator Tobe Ezeogu said. "It's a different take to what people are used to." Along with Aje and Guardian Prime, Martins and his team have created Avonome, who goes into the spiritual world to fight battles, and Eru, a lecturer at the University of Lagos whose alter ego is modeled on the Yoruba god of fear. "We're shocked at the way people have received the comics," Martins said. "It's been amazing." —AFP



An illustrator works on a sketch.



P A R I S
Fashion Week



Models present the creations of Margiela during the men's Fashion Week for the 2016-2017 Fall/Winter collection in Paris. — AFP photos



Models present the creations of Junya Watanabe Man during the men's Fashion Week Fall/Winter 2016/2017 collection. — AFP photos

OFFERING THE SUPREME PERFORMANCE OF THE D5 IN A COMPACT, LIGHTWEIGHT BODY D500: NIKON'S FLAGSHIP DX-FORMAT DSLR CAMERA

KUWAIT: Nikon Middle East FZE is pleased to announce the release of the D500, a DX-format DSLR camera that packs the incredible performance of the D5, Nikon's flagship FX-format model, into an agile body.

The D500 incorporates the same powerful 153-point AF system as the D5, ensuring precise subject acquisition even during high-speed continuous shooting at approx. 10 fps. It supports 4K UHD movies, meeting the demands of multimedia professionals, while the new EXPEED 5 image-processing engine enables it to deliver high-quality images and movies and realizes a wide sensitivity range from ISO 100 to 51200, expandable to Hi 5 (ISO 1640000 equivalent).

The D500 combines the agility of the DX system with superior usability. It employs a touch-screen, tilting monitor, and features SnapBridge support, which enhances the value of your images via constant wireless connection with a smart device. The camera is compatible with the newly released MB-D17 Multi-Power Battery Pack (optional), which can be used with various types of battery.

D500 Primary Features

1. Powerful 153-point AF achieves superior subject acquisition performance across a wide range of situations

The D500's Multi-CAM 20K autofocus sensor module offers a dense configuration of 153 focus points (99 cross sensors) that covers an extremely wide portion of the image area, meaning that even fast-moving subjects can be acquired precisely. AF capability is extended down to -4 EV* with the central point and -3 EV* with all other points, making AF usable even in extremely low light or when shooting low-contrast subjects. A newly employed AF engine and 180K-pixel RGB sensor also contribute to achieving exceptional AF performance in a variety of scenes.

*ISO 100, 20°C/68°F

2. High-speed continuous shooting at approx. 10 fps for up to 200 shots (14-bit



lossless compressed RAW)

The D500 delivers high-speed continuous shooting at approx. 10 fps*1 for up to 200 shots in JPEG and in 14-bit lossless compressed RAW, without any drop in shooting speed. Even moving subjects can be tracked accurately across a wide field of view at this rapid rate, taking advantage of the camera's stable viewfinder image and a widest-ever diagonal viewing angle*

2 of approx. 30.8°.

1 Approximate frame rates for a fully charged EN-EL15 Rechargeable Li-ion Battery, using continuous-servo AF, a shutter speed of 1/250 s or faster, and with other settings at default values

2 As of January 5, 2016, among D-SLR cameras using an APS-C size image sensor. Based on Nikon research

3. Unique benefits of a compact DX system - added agility in telephoto shooting

Nikon's DX-format D500 provides an angle of view equivalent to that of a lens with an approx. 1.5 longer focal length*1.

This permits telephoto shooting using smaller, lighter lenses with a shorter focal length, while taking advantage of performance that rivals the D5 FX-format flagship model. The camera's agility is also enhanced by the kit lens, AF-S DX NIKKOR 16-80mm f/2.8-4E ED VR, the lightweight 5 ϕ normal zoom lens, which weighs only approx. 1340 g/2 lb 15.3 oz*2 when attached to the D500.

1 35mm-format equivalent

2 Including battery, XQD memory card and lens

4. 4K UHD video, suitable for professional productions

The D500 can record 4K UHD (3840 2160)/30p/25p/24p as well as 1080/60p video for up to 29 min. 59 s*1, with simultaneous output via HDMI available. It is also possible to generate 4K UHD time-lapse movies within the camera. In Full HD or HD mode, the D500's electronic Vibration Reduction function*2 reduces the effects of camera shake in the horizontal, vertical and rotational directions during hand-held movie recording, while Active D-Lighting preserves details in highlights and shadows to capture footage with natural brightness.

1 Recorded in separate files

2 Image area will be slightly smaller in DX-based movie format

5. New EXPEED 5 image-processing engine achieves sensitivity up to ISO 51200, expandable to Hi 5 (equivalent to ISO 1640000)

The D500's new EXPEED 5 image-processing engine, as used in the D5, delivers standard ISO sensitivity from 100 to 51200, expandable down to Lo 1 (ISO 50 equivalent) and up to Hi 5 (ISO 1640000 equivalent). It can capture exceptionally high-definition images, while effectively reducing noise even at high ISO settings. The new 180K-pixel RGB sensor (approx. 180,000 pixels) further improves the performance of the camera's Advanced Scene Recognition System, and its flicker reduction for still images reduces exposure variations even under flickering light sources.

6. Touch-screen, tilting 8-cm/3.2-in. high-resolution monitor ensures more comfortable shooting for professionals and advanced amateurs



NEW NIKON SPEEDLIGHT SB-5000 ILLUMINATING A PHOTOGRAPHER'S VISION

KUWAIT: The first Speedlight from Nikon to be equipped with a radio control function is engineered with the latest high-output, multi-functional features for photographers

Middle East & Africa - Expanding the potential of every photographer's artistic engagement and experiment with lighting is the new Nikon Speedlight SB-5000 announced by Nikon Middle East FZE today. Enabled with radio-controlled Advanced Wireless Lighting function, and a cooling system that enables more than 100 continuous full-power flashes, this Speedlight is a compelling addition to the Nikon ecosystem.



"Conventional optical control can be complicated at times, and photographers may spend more time fixing up their camera than taking photos, just to get their lighting conditions right. The new Speedlight SB-5000 resolves that, saves time, and enhances creative lighting flexibility with its radio-controlled Advanced Wireless Lighting function*1 and new intuitive control panel," said Takashi Yoshida, Managing Director, Nikon Middle East FZE. "A compact Speedlight with a cooling system to enable up to 120 consecutive flashes at 5-second intervals, it delivers the desired control into every professional photographer's hands and in any lighting requirements."

Speedlight SB-5000 Primary Features

* Minimal complexity, additional creativity

Ideal lighting condition is among the key prerequisites to a photography session in the studio, or even on location. Yet when remote flash units are positioned behind objects or at greater distances, or should ambient lighting be too bright, numerous adjustments will be required. The SB-5000's radio-controlled Advanced Wireless Lighting (AWL)*1 function eliminates such hassles to give photographers their choice lighting positions and exposures*2. A high output flash with guide numbers of 34.5 in FX-format and 41 in DX-format further provides a wider flexibility in preferred coverage.

* Reduce downtime and accelerate productivity

Speeding up efficiency is a new cooling system that cools the flash head, preventing overheating and significantly increasing the number of continuous flashes.

* Smart design for practicality

Photographers are able to fiddle less with controls and instead, have the liberty to enjoy their shooting assignment with the refinement of controls. A number of functions are assigned to the rotary multi selector and 'OK' button, while the 'i' button provides a convenient access to frequently-used functions.

Automatic adjustments of the zoom head position to match a lens focal length*4 also comes easy with the power zoom function. This Speedlight also presents optimal angle of flash coverage from an automatic switching of the zoom head position as it detects a camera's image area setting of FX- or DX-format. Rounding up design functionality of the significantly compact and small Speedlight, is a bounce capability of the flash head to tilt down to 7° or up to 90°, and a horizontal rotation of 180° to the left and right.

1 Compatible with Nikon D5 and later cameras.

2 Wireless Remote Controller WR-R10 and WR Adapter WR-A10 (both available separately) required. WR-R10 firmware must be updated to enable support for radio-controlled Advanced Wireless Lighting (refer to Nikon's website for more information)

3 At ISO 100, m/ft, 35mm zoom head position, standard illumination pattern

4 For FX-format, Standard illumination pattern: 24-200 mm (14 mm with the built-in wide panel in place). For DX-format, Standard illumination pattern: 16-200 mm (10 mm with the built-in wide panel in place)

Availability

The new Nikon Speedlight SB-5000 will be available in Kuwait during the last week of March -2016

POOR LABOURERS PAYING PRICE FOR INDIA'S CHEAP CAR BOOM

FARIDABAD: In a dingy factory in the sprawling industrial hub of Manesar in northern India, a plastic moulding machine malfunctioned, mangling Visheshwar Prasad Singh's right hand as he made parts for a supplier to the country's major automakers.

Singh was one of thousands of poor labourers, many temporary, who toil for 12 hours a day making auto parts for as little as \$3-a-day to feed India's cheap car boom.

"I had no training to use the machine and was asked to operate it one day," said the 51-year-old, who made parts for Ranee Polymers, supplying to Honda Motor Co and Yamaha Motor Co. Doctors reattached his hand, but after 14 months and three operations it remains near-paralysed.

The plant manager at Ranee Polymers said the company did not allow workers to operate machines without proper training. There were only one to two accidents a year at the plant, which employs 250 people,

R.K. Rana said. Honda Cars India, which sources from Ranee, was not aware of the accident as it did not occur when making parts for the company, a spokeswoman said, adding that audits of incidents impacting safety or supplies were conducted.

Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India said a spokesman was not available to comment. India Yamaha Motor did not respond. Car makers such as Maruti Suzuki India and Hyundai Motor see huge growth in India, set to become the world's third-largest auto market by 2020 as millions buy their first new car. Price tags can be as low as \$3,000 for a new Tata Motors Nano mini-car.

India is also becoming a low-cost export hub for global car makers such as General Motors and Ford Motor.

Consultant McKinsey estimates India's auto parts sector will grow five-fold to about \$200 billion by 2026, with exports rising to \$80 billion from \$11 billion.

As the sector expands, some of the work

is sub-contracted out to small factories operating on paper-thin margins, where poor contract workers often have little or no access to safety equipment or health benefits, industry experts say.

"Undoubtedly, the workforce of suppliers, especially at the bottom of the chain, are paying for the growth in the auto industry," said Puneet Gupta, associate director at consultant IHS Automotive. But with more focus on quality and with India becoming an export hub working conditions would improve, he added.

Car makers say they conduct audits at their main suppliers, but it is not possible to check all the smaller companies that may be outsourced work. A Maruti spokesman said the company conducts safety and quality audits at its 400 direct suppliers and shares best shopfloor practices, including those related to safety and working conditions. Ford India and Hyundai, which manufacture cars in the southern state of Tamil

Nadu, far from the Manesar hub, did not respond to an email seeking comment.

LACK OF TRAINING, INSPECTIONS

A report by non-profit organisations Agrasar and Safe in India on safeguarding workers in the auto hub of Gurgaon and Manesar, outside Delhi, said most accidents occurred due to lack of training and safety inspections and poor machine maintenance. The region - some 50 km (31 miles) south of the capital and home to top car maker Maruti Suzuki along with hundreds of small factories - employs 80,000 workers, but there are only about 35 to 40 inspectors in total to monitor all industries in the area.

A senior official in the state labour department said inspections happened once a year, or when a worker reported an accident - the leading cause of which was violations of safety rules such as having sensors or guards on machines, he said. — Reuters

SCIENTISTS URGE WORLD TO STOP KILLER ROBOTS

RULES NEEDED TO PREVENT DEVELOPMENT OF SUCH WEAPONS

DAVOS: The world must act quickly to avert a future in which autonomous robots with artificial intelligence roam the battlefields killing humans, scientists and arms experts warned at an elite gathering in the Swiss Alps. Rules must be agreed to prevent the development of such weapons, they said at a January 19-23 meeting of billionaires, scientists and political leaders in the snow-covered ski resort of Davos.

Angela Kane, the German UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs from 2012-2015, said the world had been slow to take pre-emptive measures to protect humanity from the lethal technology.

"It may be too late," she told a debate in Davos. "There are many countries and many representatives in the international community that really do not understand what is involved. This development is something that is limited to a certain number of advanced countries," Kane said.

The deployment of autonomous weapons would represent a dangerous new era in warfare, scientists said. "We are not talking about drones, where a human pilot is controlling the drone," said Stuart Russell, professor of computer science at University of California, Berkeley.

"We are talking about autonomous weapons, which means that there is no one behind it. AI: artificial intelligence weapons," he told a forum in Davos. "Very precisely, weapons that can locate and attack targets without human intervention."

Robot chaos on battlefield

Russell said he did not foresee a day in which robots fight the wars for humans and at the end of the day one side says: "OK you won, so you can have all our women."

But some 1,000 science and technology chiefs including British physicist Stephen Hawking, said in an open letter last July that the development of weapons with a degree of autonomous decision-making capacity could be feasible within years, not decades. They called for a ban on offensive



DAVOS: A robot holds a newspaper during a demonstration during the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in Davos yesterday. The world must act quickly to avert a future in which autonomous robots with artificial intelligence roam the battlefields killing humans, scientists and arms experts warned at an elite gathering in the Swiss Alps. — AFP

autonomous weapons that are beyond meaningful human control, warning that the world risked sliding into an artificial intelligence arms race and raising alarm over the risks of such weapons falling into the hands of violent extremists. "The question is can these machines follow the rules of war?" Russell said.

'Beyond comprehension'

How, for an example, could an autonomous weapon differentiate between civilians, soldiers, resistance fighters and rebels? How could it know that it should not kill a pilot who has ejected from a plane and is parachuting to the ground?

"I am against robots for ethical reasons but I do not believe ethical arguments will win the day. I believe strategic arguments will win the day," Russell said.

The United States had renounced biologi-

cal weapons because of the risk that one day they could be deployed by "almost anybody", he said. "I hope this will happen with robots."

Alan Winfield, professor of electronic engineering at the University of the West of England, warned that removing humans from battlefield decision-making would have grave consequences. "It means that humans are deprived of moral responsibility," Winfield said. Moreover, the reaction of the robots may be hard to predict, he said: "When you put a robot in a chaotic environment, it behaves chaotically."

Roger Carr, chairman of the British aerospace and defence group BAE, agreed.

"If you remove ethics and judgement and morality from human endeavor whether it is in peace or war, you will take humanity to another level which is beyond our comprehension," Carr warned. — AFP

ANONYMOUS MESSAGING APP STIRS CONTROVERSY IN ISRAEL

TEL AVIV: A new Israeli app launched by a company with investors including Will.i.am and Nicki Minaj has been accused of encouraging teen bullying and Internet trolls. The Blindspot app allows users to send anonymous messages, photos and videos to their contacts without the receiver being able to trace it.

It has shot towards the top of the charts in Israel but caused controversy with politicians and campaigners calling for it to be banned as it could feed online bullying. A committee of the Israeli parliament on Monday criticised the app, which the company says has had over half a million downloads since it was launched in late December. The brother of the country's most famous model, Bar Refaeli, is one of the figures involved in Blindspot, which is due to be launched in the United States and Europe in the coming months.

The launch of Blindspot, owned by an Israeli firm, has been accompanied by the largest campaign for a new app in the country's recent history, said Moran Bar, CEO of the Israeli blog Geektime.

Adverts showing a yellow smiley face with one eye covered by an eye patch adorn billboards across Tel Aviv and on major highways. The app is a key part of the Shellanoo Group, which is funded in part by investments from global celebrities, including music stars Will.i.am and Nicki Minaj, as well as Russian billionaire and owner of Chelsea football club Roman Abramovich.

The app works like other social networking channels such as Whatsapp, with users able to chat, send pictures and videos. But the identity of the sender remains anonymous.

'A lot of sexual harassment'

Adam Shafir, a reporter on an Israeli technology television show, said there had already been cases of bullying. He pointed to similar anonymous apps such as Secret, which was eventually closed down after a campaign against it. "You have a lot of sexual harassment-guys send girls remarks about their bodies, about the things they would like to do to them," he said. "And then there are specific threats, people saying things like 'I will kill you.'" The company says there are sufficient checks and balances, with users able to block people and flag threats. Messages deemed serious enough are passed onto police.

But Israeli parliament member Merav Ben Ari said she was concerned that young people would be bullied and could even commit suicide. "If you are going to say something nice, you wouldn't send it anonymously," she said. A survey late last year found that around one in five teenagers has experienced bullying online, with a fifth of those considering suicide. In Israel last summer, a civil servant committed suicide after a post on Facebook accusing him of racism went viral—a claim he denied.

'It's the future'

Shafir highlighted the case of a couple who were travelling in Europe when they received a message on Blindspot. "The wife got messages saying her husband is cheating on her," he said.

"The man denies he is cheating, but this can destroy marriages." David Strauss, a spokesman for Blindspot's parent company, admitted they had received around 300 emails from the irate husband. "But we are just the platform," he said. On Monday, the technology committee in Israel's parliament met to discuss the app. — AFP



00:20 Manhunt: Search For A Killer
 01:10 Fast N' Loud
 02:00 Street Outlaws
 02:50 Engine Addict With Jimmy De Ville
 03:40 How Machines Work
 06:00 Misfit Garage
 10:10 Gold Rush
 11:50 Catching Monsters
 12:40 The Liquidator
 14:45 Storage Wars Canada
 15:10 Storage Wars Canada
 16:50 Alaskan Bush People
 17:40 Alaska: The Last Frontier
 18:30 Mythbusters
 19:20 The Carbonaro Effect
 19:45 The Carbonaro Effect
 20:10 You Have Been Warned
 21:00 Alaskan Bush People
 21:50 Alaska: The Last Frontier
 22:40 Railroad Alaska
 23:30 Superhuman Science
 23:55 Superhuman Science

09:45 Jessie
 10:10 I Love Violetta
 10:25 Full Out
 12:00 Violetta Recipes
 12:20 Jessie
 13:10 Liv And Maddie
 14:00 Austin & Ally
 14:30 Austin & Ally
 14:55 Lolirock
 15:20 I Didn't Do It
 16:10 Best Friends Whenever
 17:00 Girl Meets World
 17:50 I Love Violetta
 18:00 Home On The Range
 19:30 Gravity Falls
 19:55 Dog With A Blog
 20:20 Mako Mermaids
 20:45 Good Luck Charlie
 21:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place
 22:00 Binny And The Ghost
 22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 23:10 Wolfblood



00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 01:00 Ching's Amazing Asia
 02:00 Jenny Morris Cooks The Riviera
 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 Amazing Wedding Cakes
 10:00 The Kitchen
 12:00 Chopped
 13:00 Guy's Big Bite
 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 17:00 Chopped
 18:00 Siba's Table
 18:30 Siba's Table
 19:00 Staten Island Cakes
 20:00 Chopped
 21:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 21:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 22:00 Man v Food
 22:30 Man v Food
 23:00 BBQ Crawl

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 The Muppets
 18:30 Dr. Ken
 19:30 Life In Pieces
 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
 22:00 Saturday Night Live
 23:00 The Big C
 23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers

16:00 The Voice
 17:00 Resurrection
 18:00 Shark Tank
 19:00 Supernatural
 20:00 Resurrection
 21:00 Shark Tank
 22:00 Satisfaction
 23:00 Blood & Oil

12:00 You Again
 14:00 Beethoven's Treasure Tail
 16:00 The Love Punch
 18:00 Cas & Dylan
 20:00 Save The Date
 22:00 Borat



00:00 Hitman
 02:00 Crush (2013)
 04:00 Outpost: Rise Of The Spetsnaz
 06:00 The Malay Chronicles: Bloodlines
 08:00 Days Of Thunder
 10:00 Hours
 12:00 The Marine 4: The Moving Target
 14:00 Abandoned Mine
 16:00 Days Of Thunder
 18:00 Hours
 20:00 Android Cop
 22:00 The Scorpion King 4: Quest For Power



01:15 One Chance-PG15
 03:00 Blood Ties-PG15
 05:15 Still Mine-PG15
 07:00 Romeo & Juliet-PG15
 09:00 I Will Follow You Into The Dark
 11:00 Still Mine-PG15
 13:00 One Chance-PG15
 15:00 Grand Central-PG15
 17:00 I Will Follow You Into The Dark
 19:00 Decoding Annie Parker-PG15
 21:00 Go For Sisters-PG15
 23:30 Mall-18



00:00 Salem
 01:00 Grey's Anatomy
 02:00 Dominion
 03:00 Top Gear (US)
 04:00 American Idol
 07:00 Drop Dead Diva
 08:00 Witches Of East End
 09:00 American Idol
 11:00 Drop Dead Diva
 12:00 Dominion
 13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
 14:00 Witches Of East End
 16:00 Live Good Morning America
 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
 18:00 Witches Of East End
 19:00 Grey's Anatomy
 20:00 Stitches
 21:00 Heroes Reborn
 22:00 The Blacklist
 23:00 Minority Report



00:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
 01:00 Good Morning America
 03:00 Satisfaction
 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



00:00 Crush (2013)-PG15
 02:00 Outpost: Rise Of The Spetsnaz-PG15
 04:00 The Malay Chronicles: Bloodlines-PG15
 06:00 Days Of Thunder-PG15
 08:00 Hours-PG15
 10:00 The Marine 4: The Moving Target-PG15
 12:00 Abandoned Mine-PG15
 14:00 Days Of Thunder-PG15
 16:00 Hours-PG15
 18:00 Android Cop-PG15
 20:00 The Scorpion King 4: Quest For Power-PG15
 22:00 American Heist-18



01:30 What Dreams May Come
 03:30 Thank You For Smoking
 05:15 Tea With Mussolini
 09:30 Upside Down
 11:30 Tea With Mussolini
 13:30 Heaven's Gate
 17:00 Upside Down
 19:00 To Write Love On Her Arms
 21:00 71
 23:00 Tusk



00:00 John Tucker Must Die
 02:00 You Again
 04:00 Space Dogs
 06:00 No Clue
 08:00 The Love Punch
 10:00 Space Dogs

01:00 Syrup-PG15
 03:00 The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies-PG
 05:30 Knight Rusty-PG
 07:00 Draft Day-PG15
 09:00 Red Sky-PG15
 11:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles-
 13:00 Earth To Echo-PG
 14:45 Salinger-PG15
 17:00 Red Sky-PG15
 19:00 Taken 3-PG15
 21:00 The Atticus Institute-PG15
 23:00 The Wedding Ringer-18



00:35 Mythbusters
 01:20 How It's Made: Dream Cars
 01:44 How It's Made: Dream Cars
 02:08 Strangest Weather On Earth
 02:55 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
 03:42 How The Universe Works
 04:29 Mythbusters
 05:16 Strangest Weather On Earth
 06:03 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
 06:50 Prototype This
 07:37 How Do They Do It?
 08:00 How Do They Do It?
 08:23 How It's Made: Dream Cars
 12:08 Prototype This
 15:57 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
 19:50 Strangest Weather On Earth
 23:45 How The Universe Works

00:00 House Of DVF
 00:55 The Grace Helbig Show
 01:25 Hollywood Cycle
 02:20 E! News
 03:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 04:10 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 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
 11:10 New Money
 11:35 New Money
 12:05 E! News
 13:05 Stewarts And Hamiltons
 14:05 Hollywood Cycle
 15:00 Hollywood Cycle
 16:00 WAGs
 17:00 WAGs
 18:00 E! News
 19:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 20:00 Dash Dolls
 21:00 Christina Milian Turned Up
 22:00 E! News
 23:00 The Soup
 23:30 Sex With Brody



00:10 Vera
 02:00 Emmerdale
 04:45 Coronation Street
 07:05 Coach Trip
 07:30 Pick Me!
 09:20 The Jonathan Ross Show
 10:20 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
 11:20 Grantchester
 12:15 Safe House
 13:10 Vera
 15:00 Endeavour
 16:45 The Jonathan Ross Show
 17:40 Grantchester
 18:35 Coach Trip
 19:00 Endeavour
 20:45 The Jonathan Ross Show
 21:40 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
 22:30 Coach Trip



02:30 The Big C
 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon



00:40 Who On Earth...
 01:30 The Haunted
 02:20 Ghost Lab
 03:10 Serial Killers
 04:00 Deadly Devotion
 04:45 Who On Earth...
 05:30 The Haunted
 06:20 Deadly Affairs
 07:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
 08:00 Fatal Encounters
 08:50 Disappeared
 10:30 On The Case With Paula Zahn
 12:10 The Will
 13:50 California Investigator
 14:40 Dr. G: Medical Examiner
 15:30 On The Case With Paula Zahn
 17:10 Disappeared
 18:50 California Investigator
 19:40 Deadly Affairs
 23:00 Swamp Murders
 23:50 Deadly Women



00:00 Violetta
 00:45 The Hive
 00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 01:40 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
 08:55 That's So Raven



THE SCORPION KING 4: QUEST FOR POWER ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 2016

OSN MOVIES HD

KIDS

- 01:00 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
- 02:45 Captain Sabertooth And The Treasure Of Lama Rama
- 04:30 The Adventures Of Don Quixote
- 06:00 Worms
- 08:00 The Elf Who Stole Christmas
- 09:30 Mostly Ghostly: Have You Met My Ghoulfriend
- 11:15 Ernest & Celestine
- 12:45 Captain Sabertooth And The Treasure Of Lama Rama
- 14:30 Marco Macaco
- 16:00 Tarzan
- 18:00 Mostly Ghostly: Have You Met My Ghoulfriend
- 20:00 Snow Queen
- 22:00 Marco Macaco
- 23:45 Tarzan

OSN MOVIES HD

PREMIERE

- 02:00 Metallica: Through The Never
- 04:00 Happy Feet-PG
- 06:00 In My Dreams-PG15
- 08:00 Le Weekend-PG15
- 10:00 Bad Parents-PG15
- 12:00 The Factory-PG15
- 14:00 August: Osage County-PG15
- 16:15 Le Weekend-PG15
- 18:00 Stonehearst Asylum-PG15
- 20:00 Blackhat-PG15
- 22:15 Gone Girl-18



- 03:45 Foxes
- 05:30 The People That Time Forgot
- 07:00 Still Life: A Three Pines Mystery
- 08:30 Puckoon
- 09:55 True Heart
- 11:25 Robinson Crusoe
- 12:55 Follow That Dream
- 14:45 Little Sister
- 16:20 The Watsons Go To Birmingham
- 17:50 Impromptu
- 19:35 Puckoon
- 21:00 Fear The Walking Dead
- 22:00 Breaking Bad
- 23:00 Desperately Seeking Susan
- 00:45 The Heavenly Kid
- 02:15 High Spirits



- 03:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 04:00 Crime Stories
- 05:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
- 07:00 I Killed My BFF
- 08:00 After The First 48
- 10:00 The FBI Files
- 12:00 I Didn't Do It
- 15:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 20:00 Killers
- 23:00 Born To Kill
- 01:00 The Haunting Of...
- 02:00 Celebrity Ghost Stories



- 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



AMERICAN HEIST ON OSN MOVIES ACTON HD

- 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 Captain Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 12:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 12:25 Sofia The First
- 12:50 Sofia The First
- 13:15 Sofia The First
- 13:35 Sofia The First
- 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
- 02:30 Art Attack
- 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 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 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 10:00 Supa Strikas
- 10:25 Supa Strikas
- 10:50 Supa Strikas
- 11:20 Supa Strikas
- 11:45 Supa Strikas
- 12:10 Supa Strikas
- 12:35 Supa Strikas
- 13:00 A Goofy Movie
- 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
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- 19:35 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
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- 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
- 00:00 Programmes Start At 7:00am KSA
- 03:00 Pawn Stars
- 03:30 Pawn Stars
- 04:00 American Pickers
- 05:00 Search For The Lost Giants
- 05:50 American Pickers
- 06:45 Down East Dickering
- 07:35 Storage Wars: Best Of
- 08:00 American Restoration
- 08:25 Ultimate Wheels
- 09:15 The Legend Of Shelby The Swamp Man
- 09:40 The Legend Of Shelby The Swamp Man
- 10:05 American Pickers
- 11:00 Mountain Men
- 12:00 Ax Men
- 13:00 Barry'd Treasure
- 13:30 Barry'd Treasure
- 14:00 Leepu & Pitbull
- 15:00 Counting Cars
- 15:30 Counting Cars
- 16:00 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
- 17:00 Pawn Stars
- 17:30 Pawn Stars
- 18:00 Pawn Stars
- 18:30 Pawn Stars
- 19:00 Pawn Stars
- 19:30 Pawn Stars
- 20:00 Search For The Lost Giants
- 21:00 Ax Men
- 22:00 Swamp People
- 23:00 Storage Wars: Best Of
- 23:30 Storage Wars
- 00:00 Outlaw Chronicles: Hells Angels
- 01:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 02:00 Search For The Lost Giants
- 19:24 Max & Shred
- 19:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
- 20:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
- 20:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 21:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 21:24 Breadwinners
- 21:48 Breadwinners
- 22:12 Sanjay And Craig
- 22:36 Sanjay And Craig
- 23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
- 23:24 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
- 01:48 Sanjay And Craig
- 02:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
- 02:36 SpongeBob SquarePants

nickelodeon HD

- 03:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 03:24 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
- 06:36 SpongeBob SquarePants
- 07:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 07:24 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
- 11:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
- 12:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 12:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 13:00 Breadwinners
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- 17:00 Sanjay And Craig
- 17:24 Harvey Beaks
- 17:48 Breadwinners
- 18:12 Henry Danger
- 18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
- 19:00 100 Things To Do Before High School



- 03:50 The Journey
- 05:30 No Maps In These Territories
- 07:00 The Wolfpack
- 08:35 Movie Talk
- 09:00 Iconoclasts
- 10:00 Choking Man
- 11:20 The Sunshine Boy
- 13:10 Print The Legend
- 14:50 Miss Firecracker
- 16:30 Choking Man
- 17:50 Mary Is Happy, Mary Is Happy
- 20:00 The Sunshine Boy
- 21:50 Ben Lee: Catch My Disease
- 23:20 Print The Legend
- 01:00 Kumiko, The Treasure Hunter
- 02:50 Miss Firecracker



- 03:15 My Strange Addiction
- 03:40 My Strange Addiction
- 04:05 World's Worst Mum
- 05:00 World's Worst Mum
- 06:00 Say Yes To The Dress: Ñi Bridesmaids
- 06:25 Say Yes To The Dress: The Big Day
- 07:15 My Giant Life
- 08:05 Perfect Look
- 08:55 Perfect Look
- 09:45 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners...
- 10:35 7 Little Johnstons
- 11:25 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 11:50 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 12:15 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 12:40 Jon & Kate Plus 8



- 00:50 River Monsters
- 01:45 Call Of The Wildman
- 02:10 Call Of The Wildman
- 02:40 River Monsters
- 03:35 Tanked
- 04:25 The Lion Man
- 05:15 Gator Boys
- 06:02 Treehouse Masters
- 06:49 River Monsters
- 07:36 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:00 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:25 Treehouse Masters
- 09:15 Treehouse Masters
- 12:55 Snake Sheila
- 13:20 Snake Sheila
- 13:50 Lion Man: One World African Safari
- 14:20 Lion Man: One World African Safari
- 14:45 Safari Sisters
- 15:10 Safari Sisters
- 15:40 Secret Creatures Of Jao
- 16:10 Secret Creatures Of Jao
- 16:35 Natural World
- 17:30 The Lion Man
- 17:55 The Lion Man
- 18:25 Wild Things With Dominic Monaghan
- 19:20 Africa's Trees Of Life
- 20:15 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 21:10 River Monsters
- 22:05 Dog Rescuers
- 23:00 Africa's Trees Of Life



The International Women Group (IWG) recently held a farewell party for Rzeyeva Sevinj, the wife of the outgoing Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Kuwait. — Photos by Joseph Shagra





MARRIOTT HOTELS IN KUWAIT LAUNCH WIDE RANGE OF ACCOMMODATION, DINING OFFERS

Marriott Hotels in Kuwait are offering their guests exclusive deals and benefits this winter season. The exciting array of accommodation offers and dining promotions include the perfect weekend escape which offers GCC nationals and residents discounts of up to 30 percent on rooms and suites at JW Marriott Kuwait City, Courtyard by Marriott Kuwait and Residence Inn by Marriott Kuwait City. In addition, the package also includes complimentary buffet breakfast, free WiFi, and free meals for children under 6 years old and 50 percent discount for kids between 6 and 12 years old.

To add to the exclusive benefits, guests can enjoy free access to the swimming pool and health club. Free valet parking and shared airport transfers will also be available along with early check-in and late check-out subject to availability. It is also worthy to note that JW Marriott Hotel Kuwait and Courtyard by Marriott Kuwait have a direct exclusive entrance to "Salhia" and "Arraya" Shopping Malls, where guests can shop between an array of world-class retail brands.

A superb dining experience can be enjoyed at the "Terrace Grill" Restaurant at JW Marriott Kuwait throughout the month of January with a wide range of promotions, including the "Ladies Night" every Tuesday from 07:00 pm to 11:00 pm. The Ladies Night

has been introduced to allow women to unwind with family and friends and enjoy complimentary mouth-watering appetizers or desserts with each main course purchased. Moreover, the "Tea Lounge" at the hotel has launched the "Strawberry Promotion", where guests can indulge in a wide selection of sweets and cakes made of strawberry such as Choco Strawberry Kisses, Strawberry Breton, Strawberry Cheese Cake, Strawberry Posset, Strawberry Panna Cotta and a lot more.

Furthermore, guests at the Courtyard Hotel Kuwait can enjoy the freshest sushi and sashimi in elegant and relaxed surroundings at "Sushi" Restaurant, and benefit from a 20 percent discount daily from 7pm to 8pm. In addition, Soul and Spice Indian Restaurant at the hotel invites guests to try its newly launched Biryani promotion. The new menu features the freshest ingredients in a wide array of delectable Biryani based dishes, tastefully prepared to reflect the authentic cooking style of our Indian chefs.

George Aoun, Cluster General Manager at Kuwait Marriott Hotels said, "With everything from the finest dining to value-oriented hotels and ultimate shopping experience under one roof, our goal is to offer great value for money deals and the highest level of customer service to our guests."



MORE THAN 1,000 TESTED FOR TUBERCULOSIS IN ALABAMA

MARION: Tuberculosis, a global scourge, has mostly been eradicated in the United States, but minorities and poor people who lack regular health care remain vulnerable. Marion, the town where Coretta Scott King was raised, is just that kind of community: the seat of Alabama's poorest county, where 47 percent live in poverty and the per-capita annual income is just \$13,000.

Spurred by two tuberculosis deaths last year, Alabama public health officials tried reaching out in Marion, and were mostly ignored or turned away. Many people seemed suspicious and unenthusiastic about providing blood samples to the government. Efforts in late 2014 to trace the contacts of people who did test positive were stymied; few in the town of 3,600 seemed eager to tell on their neighbors.

"We had a very, very poor turnout. Our turnout was so bad, we actually had people throwing beer bottles at us," said Pam Barrett, director of the Alabama Department of Public Health division for tuberculosis control.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has long called for targeting the fight against tuberculosis where the disease remains most prevalent, among poor and minority populations. The airborne bacterial infection spreads when people live in unhealthy conditions in close proximity and get little health care. Blacks and Hispanics are eight times more likely to carry it than whites are, according to the CDC.

"While most people think of TB as a disease that does not affect the US, Marion, Alabama is experiencing a TB outbreak that is worse than in many developing countries," the UN Special Envoy on Tuberculosis, Eric P. Goosby, said in a statement Wednesday. "Unfortunately, in many areas of the country, funding for community education and outreach on TB by local health departments is scarce or non-existent."

The deaths in 2015 and another in 2011 justified a more proactive response. Using grant money from the CDC, the local health department decided to pay \$20 to anyone who comes in for a blood test, another \$20 for returning three days later to get the result, an additional \$20 for keeping an appointment for a chest X-ray if necessary, and \$100 if a patient told to take medication completes the treatment.

The cash made all the difference: In the last two weeks, more than 1,000 people - a tenth of Perry County's residents - have gotten tested, and public health officials found what they feared: an outbreak at a scale unseen in years. The tests showed that 20 people have had the disease since 2014, and 47 others have latent infections. All will now get treatment to reduce the likelihood of spreading the bacteria.

Confirmed cases of tuberculosis disease reached a national low of 9,421 cases in 2014, or 2.96 cases per 100,000 people, according to the CDC. The tests in Marion uncovered an infection rate much higher than state and national norms, said Alabama state health officer Tom Miller. "We've had TB throughout the state here and there, it's always been very restricted - one or two cases," Miller said. "But to this magnitude? Not that I'm familiar with."

Tuberculosis typically attacks the lungs and spreads when a person carrying the bacteria coughs, sneezes, speaks or sings and people nearby inhale the bacteria, according to the CDC. Symptoms include a persistent cough, chest pain, fatigue, weight loss and night sweats. But tuberculosis can live in the body without immediately making a person sick, and people with latent infections can't spread tuberculosis unless their immune systems fail to control the bacteria. —AP



RAFAH: In this Sunday, Jan 10, 2016 photo, Palestinian owner of the South Jungle Zoo, Mohammed Ouida, shows mummified animals that died from hunger and Israeli strikes at the Jungle Zoo. —AP

ANIMALS AT GAZA'S ZOOS DIE OF HUNGER, DISEASES

'THE TIGER HAS NOT EATEN FOR FOUR OR FIVE DAYS'

RAFAH: The African tiger at the zoo in southern Gaza Strip was emaciated, its belly shrunken and its striped coat hanging loose. It strode nervously up and down its cage. "I swear to God the tiger has not eaten for four or five days," said Mohammed Ouida, the owner of South Jungle Zoo. "It needs 100 shekels (about \$20) of food a day."

Once bustling with families bringing their children to see lions, monkeys, crocodiles and ostriches, the zoo is mostly empty now, and Ouida can't generate enough cash to feed his animals. The same story is playing out across Gaza's six makeshift zoos. Years of conflict, cold winters, long-standing negligence and outbreaks of disease have killed many animals in captivity.

Even in better times, there has often been little awareness of animal welfare in Gaza. In 2013, for instance, two lion cubs died shortly after birth because zoo workers in northern Gaza did not know how to care for them. In another renowned scene captured on film, Gazans used a crane to lift a camel over the border fence from Egypt into Gaza as the animal twitched in the air in agony. South Jungle has even turned to taxidermy to keep its deceased animals on exhibit.

Steadily deteriorated

Conditions in Gaza, home to 1.8 million people, have steadily deteriorated since Hamas, an Islamic militant group sworn to Israel's destruction, seized control of the territory in 2007 and prompted an Israeli and Egyptian blockade. The loss of one of Gaza's few allies, former Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi, who was ousted by the military in 2013 after protests against his

rule, and a 2014 war with Israel have hit the territory especially hard. Unemployment is estimated by World Bank to stand at 43 percent, and Gazans suffer shortages of many goods, including electricity and cooking gas.

Over the past two years, Egypt has also shut its borders with Gaza, preventing Gazans from leaving the territory, and blocked smuggling tunnels. The closure has not only stopped new animals from arriving, but also deprived Hamas of major smuggling tax revenues. Cash-strapped Hamas has struggled to pay the salaries of its 40,000 employees.

"People have a hard time finding food, much less the animals," lamented Ouida, noting that half of the remaining 20 or so animals and birds in his zoo are ill because he also can't afford a veterinarian. Vets used to check his animals every two months.

Since the zoo opened in 2007, Ouida and his brothers have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars into their business. They once employed 30 workers, and ran a cafeteria serving families and school trippers. These days, Ouida works at a gravel quarry and his two brothers drive a taxi. Only two of them still show up at South Jungle.

The zoo's problems began during a 50-day war between Israel and Hamas in 2014. The zoo was not directly hit, but neither Ouida nor his brothers could reach the site to feed the animals. The African tiger's mate starved to death.

Stuffed and stacked

Of the six ostriches, only one is still alive. The lions and the only llama died in

December. There are no more crocodiles. The dead animals are primitively stuffed and stacked in a corner of the zoo. Most of Gaza's zoos are private business ventures, set up by owners who lack experience in caring for animals in captivity.

"Basically, it's improvisation by some citizens," said Zakaria al-Kafarna, veterinary official at the Hamas Agriculture Ministry, which only provides immunizations for livestock, not wild animals. The effect of conflict and years of negligence is also evident at Al-Bisan Zoo, built by Hamas in northern Gaza. It was badly damaged during the 2014 war, when more than 80 animals and birds died.

A wildcat, two monkeys and a falcon fell sick and died in December. The animals looked hungry and neglected, and were shivering from cold during a recent visit. The zoo opened in 2007 as part of a Hamas built complex that also had swimming pools, soccer pitches and gardens. The complex was destroyed in fighting with Israel. No one visits anymore, and Hamas provides little money to care for the animals.

"Nobody is paying attention (to the zoo) because of the blockade and the situation. They don't take care of the animals at all," said Mohammed Abu Safia, of the zoo's administration. In 2014, an animal welfare organization evacuated three scrawny lions from Al-Bisan to Jordan. Last summer, the same charity, Four Paws International, helped send two lion cubs to a safe sanctuary in Jordan after Ouida, the South Jungle Zoo owner, sold them. Ouida says he would be "thankful" for any outside help. "I'm waiting for someone to buy the zoo or for the animals to die," he said. —AP

SIERRA LEONE HAS 2ND RESURGENT EBOLA CASE



FREETOWN: A woman has her temperature taken as part of Ebola prevention before entering the Macauley government hospital. — AP

FREETOWN: A second case of Ebola emerged in Sierra Leone after health officials thought the epidemic was over, with a close relative of the first victim testing positive for the virus that has killed more than 11,000 people, authorities said Thursday.

About 150 of the first victim's contacts have been under monitoring, and the new patient had been in quarantine. Health Ministry spokesman Sidi Yaya Tunis said the new patient was one of the people who prepared the initial victim's body for burial. The 22-year-old died in mid-January, and relatives were allowed to hold a traditional funeral as authorities at the time did not suspect she had died from Ebola.

Ebola is spread through direct contact with the bodily fluids of victims, and corpses are especially contagious. Traditional funerals in the region where mourners touch the body were a major source of

virus transmission during the epidemic in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea.

The new cases in Sierra Leone have marked a major setback for the region, as virus transmission had previously appeared to have stopped. Even in announcing the apparent end of the outbreak, though, World Health Organization officials had warned that additional "flare-ups" of new cases were still possible.

However, Sierra Leone's new cases are particularly worrying to experts because no one identified the first victim as an Ebola patient, and burial precautions were not taken to prevent further infections. There also had not been any known cases in Sierra Leone for two months, and it is still not known exactly how the 22-year-old contracted the virus. —AP

ZIKA VIRUS PANIC OVER BIRTH DEFECTS IN LATIN AMERICA

SAO PAULO: With the sting of a mosquito bite and a fever, many pregnant women may not know that they caught the Zika virus-until it strikes their unborn child. But thousands of cases of birth defects linked to the disease over recent months are now sowing alarm in the United States and in Latin America.

Babies have been born with abnormally smaller heads, a condition doctors call microcephaly, which often causes brain damage. The scare has struck hardest in Brazil, which hosts the summer Olympic Games in August. It is one of 14 Latin American and Caribbean countries that the United States has warned pregnant women not to visit because of the Zika risk.

"I am very afraid," said Jacinta Silva Goes, a 39-year-old cleaning lady in Sao Paulo who is expecting her third child. "For the moment I am not using mosquito repellent because the doctor has not told me to. He has not spoken to me about Zika," she said.

Pregnancy postponement advised

Zika used to be thought just a poor relation of dengue, another mosquito-borne virus. The World Health Organization (WHO) says it is transmitted by the same mosquito that spreads dengue, chikungunya and yellow fever. But the WHO this week noted a surge in cases of microcephaly in Brazil, the country most affected by the current epidemic.

It stressed that "the causal link between Zika infection and microcephaly has not yet been proven," though the rise in cases is striking. In the past year there were 3,530 cases of microcephaly reported, compared to a yearly average of 163 over the four preceding years.

Scientists from Brazil's Fiocruz Institute and Parana Catholic University published a study of a case that showed the virus had passed from an infected woman to her baby through the placenta. Goes says she feels uninformed about how to protect herself against Zika. "I can't decide by myself to take anything until the doctor tells me to because it could be dangerous."

But across the vast region of Latin America, citizens and officials have taken a variety of measures in response to the scare. The price of mosquito repellent has risen in Brazil. In the Peruvian capital Lima, authorities disinfected a big cemetery for fear that Zika-bearing mosquitos were breeding in the flower pots. In Colombia the government simply advised couples to avoid pregnancy until at least June. El Salvador, which has reported more than 5,500 cases, said avoid getting pregnant until 2017. —AFP

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PAGE



Kuwait Times
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
د. فهد علي المخيزيم
Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

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



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (21/01/2016 TO 27/01/2016)

SHARQIA-1 LOST IN THE SUN LOST IN THE SUN DARKNESS DESCENDS DARKNESS DESCENDS LOST IN THE SUN DARKNESS DESCENDS LOST IN THE SUN	12:15 PM 2:30 PM 4:30 PM 6:30 PM 8:30 PM 10:30 PM 12:30 AM	THE 5TH WAVE THE BOY THE 5TH WAVE THE BOY	5:45 PM 8:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:45 AM	RIDE ALONG 2 THE 5TH WAVE RIDE ALONG 2 THE 5TH WAVE RIDE ALONG 2	3:45 PM 5:45 PM 8:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:45 AM
SHARQIA-2 MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic RIDE ALONG 2 MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic THE 5TH WAVE MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	12:15 PM 2:00 PM 3:45 PM 6:45 PM 9:15 PM 12:15 AM	MARINA-1 LOST IN THE SUN THE 5TH WAVE OUR BRAND IS CRISIS LOST IN THE SUN THE 5TH WAVE OUR BRAND IS CRISIS LOST IN THE SUN	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 3:45 PM 6:00 PM 8:00 PM 10:15 PM 12:30 AM	AL-KOUT.3 OUR BRAND IS CRISIS LOST IN THE SUN OUR BRAND IS CRISIS LOST IN THE SUN OUR BRAND IS CRISIS LOST IN THE SUN	12:45 PM 3:00 PM 5:15 PM 7:45 PM 9:45 PM 12:30 AM
SHARQIA-3 RIDE ALONG 2 THE BOY RIDE ALONG 2 RIDE ALONG 2 THE BOY RIDE ALONG 2 THE BOY	1:00 PM 2:45 PM 4:45 PM 6:45 PM 8:45 PM 10:45 PM 12:45 AM	MARINA-2 RIDE ALONG 2 RIDE ALONG 2 THE REVENANT RIDE ALONG 2 THE REVENANT RIDE ALONG 2	12:00 PM 2:00 PM 4:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:00 PM 12:05 AM	AL-KOUT.4 DARKNESS DESCENDS THE REVENANT DARKNESS DESCENDS THE REVENANT DARKNESS DESCENDS DARKNESS DESCENDS	12:00 PM 2:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 10:00 PM 12:05 AM
MUHALAB-1 DARKNESS DESCENDS KUNG FU STYLE DILWALE - Hindi DICTATOR - Telugu OUR BRAND IS CRISIS DARKNESS DESCENDS DARKNESS DESCENDS OUR BRAND IS CRISIS	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 3:30 PM 3:30 PM 6:30 PM 8:45 PM 10:45 PM 12:45 AM	MARINA-3 MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic KUNG FU STYLE KUNG FU STYLE MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	12:30 PM 1:30 PM 3:30 PM 5:45 PM 8:45 PM 11:45 PM	BAIRAQ-1 MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	11:45 AM 2:45 PM 5:45 PM 8:45 PM 11:45 PM
MUHALAB-2 RIDE ALONG 2 RIDE ALONG 2 THE REVENANT SOGGADE CHINNI NAYANA - Telugu RIDE ALONG 2 RIDE ALONG 2 RIDE ALONG 2 RIDE ALONG 2	12:00 PM 2:00 PM 4:00 PM 4:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:00 PM 11:00 PM 1:00 AM	AVENUES-1 KUNG FU STYLE THE 5TH WAVE THE 5TH WAVE TWO COUNTRIES - Malayalam THE 5TH WAVE THE 5TH WAVE	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 4:00 PM 6:30 PM 9:30 PM 12:15 AM	BAIRAQ-2 THE 5TH WAVE KUNG FU STYLE FRI RIDE ALONG 2 NO FRI THE 5TH WAVE RIDE ALONG 2 THE 5TH WAVE RIDE ALONG 2 THE 5TH WAVE	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 1:45 PM 3:30 PM 6:00 PM 7:45 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM
MUHALAB-3 MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	11:45 AM 2:45 PM 5:45 PM 8:45 PM 11:45 PM	AVENUES-2 DARKNESS DESCENDS DARKNESS DESCENDS DARKNESS DESCENDS DARKNESS DESCENDS DARKNESS DESCENDS DARKNESS DESCENDS	12:00 PM 2:15 PM 4:30 PM 6:45 PM 9:00 PM 11:30 PM	BAIRAQ-3 OUR BRAND IS CRISIS OUR BRAND IS CRISIS DILWALE - Hindi THE BOY OUR BRAND IS CRISIS THE BOY	12:00 PM 2:30 PM 5:00 PM 8:00 PM 10:00 PM 12:05 AM
FANAR-1 OUR BRAND IS CRISIS OUR BRAND IS CRISIS OUR BRAND IS CRISIS THE REVENANT OUR BRAND IS CRISIS THE REVENANT	11:45 AM 2:00 PM 4:15 PM 6:30 PM 9:30 PM 11:45 PM	AVENUES-3 OUR BRAND IS CRISIS OUR BRAND IS CRISIS OUR BRAND IS CRISIS OUR BRAND IS CRISIS OUR BRAND IS CRISIS OUR BRAND IS CRISIS	1:00 PM 1:30 PM 3:45 PM 6:15 PM 8:45 PM 11:15 PM	PLAZA RIDE ALONG 2 TWO COUNTRIES - Malayalam RAJINI MURUGAN - Tamil THU+FRI MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic NO THU+FRI	4:30 PM 6:30 PM 9:30 PM 9:30 PM
FANAR-2 DARKNESS DESCENDS DARKNESS DESCENDS DILWALE - Hindi DICTATOR - Telugu DARKNESS DESCENDS DARKNESS DESCENDS DARKNESS DESCENDS	1:00 PM 3:00 PM 5:00 PM 5:00 PM 8:00 PM 10:00 PM 12:05 AM	360°-1 RIDE ALONG 2 RIDE ALONG 2 RIDE ALONG 2 RIDE ALONG 2 RIDE ALONG 2 RIDE ALONG 2	11:45 AM 1:45 PM 3:45 PM 5:45 PM 7:45 PM 9:45 PM 11:45 PM	LAILA RIDE ALONG 2 THE 5TH WAVE MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic RIDE ALONG 2	3:45 PM 5:30 PM 8:00 PM 10:45 PM
FANAR-3 RIDE ALONG 2 RIDE ALONG 2 KUNG FU STYLE RIDE ALONG 2 RIDE ALONG 2 RIDE ALONG 2 RIDE ALONG 2	12:30 PM 2:30 PM 4:30 PM 6:30 PM 8:30 PM 10:30 PM 12:30 AM	360°-2 KUNG FU STYLE KUNG FU STYLE KUNG FU STYLE DILWALE - Hindi DILWALE - Hindi THE BOY	12:15 PM 2:15 PM 4:15 PM 6:15 PM 9:30 PM 12:30 AM	AJIAL.1 TWO COUNTRIES - Malayalam TWO COUNTRIES - Malayalam TWO COUNTRIES - Malayalam	3:45 PM 6:45 PM 9:45 PM
FANAR-4 MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic RIDE ALONG 2 MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	12:15 PM 1:30 PM 3:15 PM 6:15 PM 9:15 PM 12:15 AM	360°-3 DARKNESS DESCENDS DARKNESS DESCENDS DARKNESS DESCENDS DARKNESS DESCENDS DARKNESS DESCENDS DARKNESS DESCENDS	1:00 PM 3:15 PM 5:30 PM 7:45 PM 10:00 PM 12:15 AM	AJIAL.2 GETHU-Tamil CHARLIE - Malayalam GETHU-Tamil	5:00 PM 7:30 PM 10:00 PM
FANAR-5 THE BOY THE BOY THE BOY	11:45 AM 1:45 PM 3:45 PM	AL-KOUT.1 MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic RIDE ALONG 2 MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic	12:15 PM 1:30 PM 3:15 PM 6:15 PM 9:15 PM 12:15 AM	AJIAL.3 NANNAKU PREMATHO-Telugu FRI CHARLIE - Malayalam NO FRI DICTATOR - Telugu DICTATOR - Telugu	3:45 PM 7:00 PM 10:00 PM
		AL-KOUT.2 RIDE ALONG 2 THE 5TH WAVE	11:30 AM 1:30 PM	AJIAL.4 RAJINI MURUGAN - Tamil RAJINI MURUGAN - Tamil RAJINI MURUGAN - Tamil NO THU+FRI SOGGADE CHINNI NAYANA - Telugu	3:30 PM 6:30 PM 9:30 PM 9:30 PM

URGENTLY NEEDED
Educator/ Babysitter
for a Toddler 4-6 hours/day
Must have experience as educator for toddlers, strong preference for Native English speaker.
Please call:
51647992

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 112

Prayer timings

Fajr:	05:19
Shorook	06:42
Duhr:	12:00
Asr:	14:58
Maghrib:	17:18
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



Flight Schedule

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

In case you are not travelling, your proper cancellation of bookings will help other passengers use seats

Arrival Flights on Saturday 23/1/2016

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	415	Sohag	00:05
KLM	413	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:20
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55
RJA	642	Amman	01:05
THY	772	Istanbul	01:05
MSR	614	Cairo	01:20
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30
DLH	635	Doha	01:35
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:45
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30
PGT	5737	Istanbul	02:50
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55
FDB	067	Dubai	03:05
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10
QTR	1076	Doha	03:15
KKK	6507	Istanbul	03:20
THY	5422	Istanbul	03:25
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:25
JZR	503	Luxor	04:25
AGY	680	Alexandria	04:30
PGT	5620	Istanbul	04:35
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55
FDB	5061	Dubai	06:30
BAW	157	London	06:40
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50
KAC	412	Manila/Bangkok	07:20
QTR	1086	Doha	07:40
FDB	053	Dubai	07:45
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50
KAC	206	Islamabad	08:25
KAC	344	Chennai	08:30
KAC	352	Kochi	08:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:20
KAC	416	Jakarta/Kuala Lumpur	09:20
JZR	327	Al Najaf	09:20
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25
FBA	833	Al Najaf	09:30
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
JZR	1329	Al Najaf	09:40
MRJ	4813	Tehran	10:00
OMA	641	Muscat	10:05
THY	6676	Istanbul	10:25
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
UAE	873	Dubai	11:05
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:15
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30
AGY	684	Sohag	11:35
IAW	157	Al Najaf	11:50
NIA	151	Cairo	11:55
KAC	204	Lahore	12:20
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50
JZR	241	Amman	12:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
FBA	831	Al Najaf	13:30
JZR	779	Jeddah	13:35
KNE	460	Riyadh	13:50
KAC	382	Delhi	13:50
MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	13:55
KAC	672	Dubai	14:00
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10
FDB	057	Dubai	14:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	14:45
JZR	175	Dubai	14:45
KAC	512	Mashhad	14:50
KAC	788	Jeddah	14:50
KNE	462	Madinah	14:55
IZG	4167	Mashhad	14:55
GFA	221	Bahrain	15:00
IRM	1186	Tehran	15:00
KNE	472	Jeddah	15:05
NIA	251	Alexandria	15:30
OMA	645	Muscat	15:30
KAC	562	Amman	15:40
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:45
JAD	301	Amman	15:55
JZR	535	Cairo	16:10
QTR	1072	Doha	16:10
FDB	051	Dubai	16:30
JZR	357	Mashhad	16:30
JZR	257	Beirut	16:30
KNE	474	Jeddah	16:35
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	16:40
RJA	640	Amman	16:55
KAC	542	Cairo	16:55
SYR	341	Damascus	17:00
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
KAC	540	Bahrain el-Sheikh	17:45
KNE	470	Jeddah	17:45
JZR	325	Al Najaf	17:50
JZR	777	Jeddah	17:55
KAC	118	New York	17:55

SVA	500	Jeddah	18:00
UAE	875	Dubai	18:00
KAC	502	Beirut	18:00
FDB	063	Dubai	18:05
UAL	982	IAD	18:15
JZR	177	Dubai	18:20
IRM	1180	Mashhad	18:45
ABY	123	Sharjah	18:45
QTR	1080	Doha	18:55
IRA	669	Mashhad	18:55
KAC	742	Dammam	19:05
KAC	614	Bahrain	19:10
IRM	1188	Mashhad	19:15
KAC	774	Riyadh	19:25
GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30
CLX	856	Luxembourg	19:35
KAC	176	Geneva/Frankfurt	19:35
KAC	618	Doha	19:35
KAC	104	London	19:40
KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
MSR	618	Alexandria	20:05
KNE	480	Taif	20:10
JZR	189	Dubai	20:15
FDB	061	Dubai	20:20
OMA	647	Muscat	20:20
KAC	786	Jeddah	20:30
ABY	121	Sharjah	20:35
FDB	5053	Dubai	20:50
DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:55
JAI	572	Mumbai	20:55
MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
ALK	229	Colombo	21:25
UAE	859	Dubai	21:40
GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45
KAC	676	Dubai	21:45
QTR	1082	Doha	22:00
KLM	415	Amsterdam	22:05
AIC	987	Chennai/Hyderabad	22:25
ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:25
KAC	564	Amman	22:25
FDB	059	Dubai	22:30
JZR	185	Dubai	23:15
UAL	981	Bahrain	23:25
FDB	071	Dubai	23:45
THY	764	Istanbul	23:50
JAI	574	Mumbai	23:55
MSC	403	Asyut	23:55
JZR	125	Bahrain	23:55

Departure Flights on Saturday 23/1/2016

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
JZR	528	Asyut	00:05
BBC	044	Dhaka	00:10
PIA	240	Sialkot	00:40
FDB	072	Dubai	00:40
MSC	502	Alexandria	00:55
JAI	573	Mumbai	00:55
MSC	416	Sohag	01:00
KLM	413	Amsterdam	01:35
KAC	283	Dhaka	02:10
MSR	615	Cairo	02:20
THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
SAI	442	Lahore	02:30
DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:35
ETH	621	Addis Ababa	02:45
KAC	203	Lahore	03:05
KAC	381	Delhi	03:30
UAE	854	Dubai	03:45
PGT	859	Istanbul	03:55
OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
FDB	068	Dubai	04:00
PGT	5738	Istanbul	04:00
MSR	613	Cairo	04:10
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:15
KKK	6508	Istanbul	04:20
THY	5423	Istanbul	04:55
QTR	1077	Doha	05:00
THY	765	Istanbul	05:15
AGY	685	Sohag	05:30
JZR	326	Al Najaf	05:55
JZR	1328	Al Najaf	06:15
PGT	5621	Istanbul	06:25
FDB	070	Dubai	06:30
JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
RJA	643	Amman	07:05
THY	771	Istanbul	07:05
FDB	5062	Dubai	07:10
GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
JZR	240	Amman	07:15
JZR	778	Jeddah	07:55
KAC	511	Mashhad	08:30
FDB	054	Dubai	08:30
QTR	1087	Doha	08:40
BAW	156	London	08:45
JZR	256	Beirut	09:05
KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
JZR	534	Cairo	09:15
KAC	787	Jeddah	09:25
ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
KAC	101	London/New York	09:55
KAC	541	Cairo	09:55
UAE	856	Dubai	09:55

KAC	561	Amman	10:00
JZR	174	Dubai	10:10
ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:25
KAC	501	Beirut	10:30
JZR	356	Mashhad	10:30
FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
FBA	834	Al Najaf	10:45
KAC	165	Rome/Paris	11:00
QTR	1071	Doha	11:00
OMA	642	Muscat	11:05
GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
KAC	539	Sharm el-Sheikh	11:25
MRJ	4814	Mashhad	11:30
THY	6677	Istanbul	11:55
RBG	554	Alexandria	12:00
JZR	776	Jeddah	12:20
UAE	874	Dubai	12:30
AGY	681	Asyut	12:35
NIA	152	Cairo	12:55
IAW	158	Al Najaf	13:05
FDB	076	Dubai	13:10
MSC	402	Alexandria	13:30
JZR	176	Dubai	13:45
MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
JZR	324	Al Najaf	14:25
FBA	832	Al Najaf	14:40
KNE	481	Taif	14:50
MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	14:55
KAC	785	Jeddah	15:00
KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
FDB	058	Dubai	15:10
QTR	1079	Doha	15:10
JZR	188	Dubai	15:40
KAC	617	Doha	15:45
GFA	222	Bahrain	15:45
KAC	613	Bahrain	15:50
KAC	773	Riyadh	15:50
KAC	741	Dammam	15:55
IZG	4168	Mashhad	15:55
KNE	463	Madinah	16:00
KNE	473	Jeddah	16:05
IRM	1187	Tehran	16:15
ABY	128	Sharjah	16:25
OMA	646	Muscat	16:30
NIA	252	Alexandria	16:30
JAD	302	Amman	16:40
KAC	563	Amman	16:45
KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
JZR	266	Beirut	17:05
KNE	475	Jeddah	17:25
ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	17:30
FDB	052	Dubai	17:35
QTR	1073	Doha	17:40
JZR	538	Cairo	17:45
UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
RJA	641	Amman	17:55
SYR	342	Damascus	18:00
SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	184	Dubai	18:40
KNE	471	Jeddah	18:45
JZR	238	Amman	18:50
JZR	554	Alexandria	19:10
FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
ABY	124	Sharjah	19:25
UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
SVA	505	Jeddah	19:30
UAL	982	Bahrain	19:30
IRA	666	Esfahan	19:55
IRM	1181	Mashhad	20:00
GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
IRM	1189	Mashhad	20:30
KAC	353	BLR	20:40
KAC	361	Colombo	20:45
KAC	351	Kochi	20:50
QTR	1081	Doha	20:50
KAC	543	Cairo	20:55
JZR	124	Bahrain	21:05
CLX	857	Hong Kong	21:05
MSR	607	Luxor	21:05
KAC	331	Trivandrum	21:10
KNE	461	Riyadh	21:10
ABY	122	Sharjah	21:15
OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
FDB	062	Dubai	21:20
DLH	634	Doha	21:45
DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
FDB	5054	Dubai	21:50
JAI	571	Mumbai	21:55
KAC	301	Mumbai	22:10
ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
KAC	345	Ahmedabad	23:00
QTR	1083	Doha	23:05
KLM	415	Dammam/Amsterdam	23:05
KAC	205	Islamabad	23:10
ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:15
KAC	411	Bangkok/Manila	23:35
FDB	060	Dubai	23:35

Word Search Puzzles

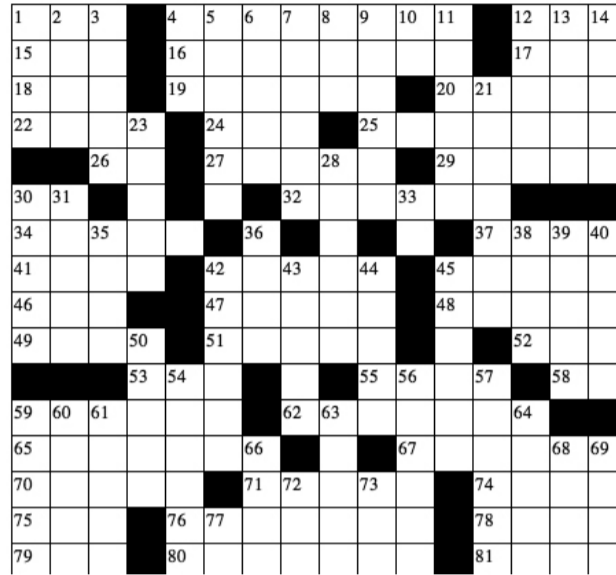
Movies: Science Fiction 2

Find and circle all of the Science Fiction movies that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the title of an additional Science Fiction movie.

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

- AEON FLUX
- ALIEN NATION
- ALIENS
- ARMAGEDDON
- AVATAR
- CLOVERFIELD
- DARK STAR
- DEATH RACE
- DEJA VU
- DONNIE DARKO
- FLATLINERS
- FREEJACK
- FREQUENCY GAMER
- GODZILLA
- HULK
- INCEPTION
- IRON MAN
- JUMPER
- KING KONG
- KNOWING
- MEN IN BLACK
- MIMIC
- MOON
- OUTBREAK
- OUTLAND
- PANDORUM
- PREDATOR
- PUSH
- RED PLANET
- ROLLERBALL
- SCANNERS
- SERENITY
- SIGNS
- SLEEPER
- SLITHER
- SPECIES
- SPHERE
- STAR TREK
- SUNSHINE
- SUPERMAN
- THE ABYSS
- TIMECOP
- TIMECRIMES
- TRANSFORMERS
- WATCHMEN
- ZARDOZ

CROSSWORD 1146



ACROSS

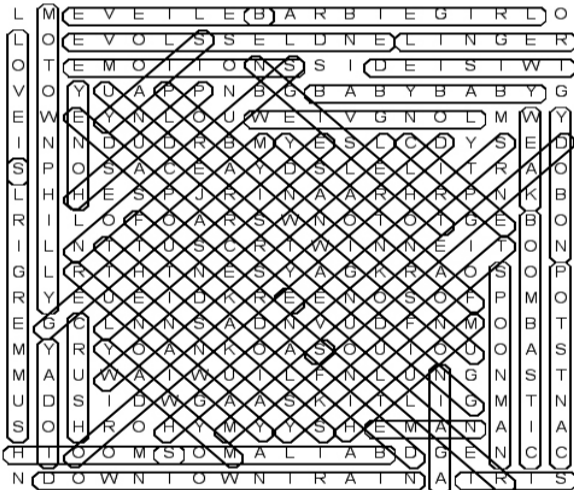
- ACROSS1. (Roman mythology) Goddess of abundance and fertility.
- 4. Narrow French stick loaf.
- 12. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
- 15. One-thousandth of an equivalent.
- 16. Rewarded or rewardable by a bounty.
- 17. Term of address for a man.
- 18. A Kwa language spoken by the Yoruba people in southwestern Nigeria.
- 19. The ruler of a Muslim country (especially of the former Ottoman Empire).
- 20. An iconic mental representation.
- 22. Not far distant in time or space or degree or circumstances.
- 24. The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
- 25. Having had the bones removed.
- 26. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- 27. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
- 29. An extensive grassy and nearly treeless plain (especially in Latin America).
- 30. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- 32. Having or surrounded by walls or walls of a specified kind.
- 34. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- 37. The elapsed time it takes for light (or radio signals) to travel between the Earth and a celestial object.
- 41. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
- 46. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
- 47. Nocturnal badger-like carnivore of wooded regions of Africa and southern Asia.
- 48. A woman of refinement.
- 49. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
- 51. The univalent hydrocarbon radical C2H5 derived from ethane by the removal of one hydrogen atom.
- 52. The compass point midway between east and southeast.
- 53. A theory of strong interactions between elementary particles (including the interaction that binds protons and neutrons in the nucleus).
- 55. Slightly open.
- 58. A public promotion of some product or service.

DOWN

- 59. (Greek mythology) One of the three Graces.
- 62. A Nilo-Saharan language spoken in parts of Chad.
- 65. The ball-shaped capsule containing the vertebrate eye.
- 67. Shrub bearing oval-fruited kumquats.
- 70. Depressing in character or appearance.
- 71. Twining perennial North American plants.
- 74. Type genus of the family Unionidae.
- 75. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
- 76. That can be given a date.
- 78. Containing or filled with salt.
- 79. Marked by skill in deception.
- 80. Of or relating to the Iberian peninsula or its inhabitants.
- 81. A town and port in northwestern Israel in the eastern Mediterranean.
- 1. A strategically located monarchy on the southern and eastern coasts of the Arabian Peninsula.
- 2. A Chinese breed of small short-legged dogs with a long silky coat and broad flat muzzle.
- 3. Short and fat.
- 4. (computer science) A computer that is running software that allows users to leave messages and access information of general interest.
- 5. Wild sheep of northern Africa.
- 6. A Russian prison camp for political prisoners.
- 7. Become or cause to become soft or liquid.
- 8. The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- 9. English translator and Protestant martyr.
- 10. A brittle silver-white metalloid element that is related to selenium and sulfur.
- 11. Suitable for use as food.
- 12. (Hindu) A manner of sitting (as in the practice of Yoga).
- 13. German chemist who did research on high-speed chemical reactions (born in 1927).
- 14. Any system of principles or beliefs.
- 21. A landlocked republic in eastern Europe.
- 23. The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
- 28. Having many worn or threadbare spots in the nap.
- 31. Hungarian composer of light operas (1870-1948).
- 33. 30 to 300 kilohertz.
- 35. A Chadic language spoken in northern Nigeria.
- 36. An informal conversation.
- 38. English tennis player who won many women's singles titles (born in 1945).
- 39. The sacred city of Lamaism.
- 40. Regularly spaced in time.
- 42. Of or relating to a creed.
- 43. An autonomous area in northeastern Greece that is the site of several Greek Orthodox monasteries founded in the tenth century.
- 44. Muslim name for God.
- 45. A member of the Semitic speaking people of northern Ethiopia.
- 50. Jordan's port.
- 54. United States poet and critic (1916-1986).
- 56. Roman Catholic theologian (1585-1638).
- 57. A port city in southwestern Croatia on the Adriatic.
- 60. Relating to or associated with or comprising a convolution of the brain.
- 61. Openly distrustful and unwilling to confide.
- 63. (law) A defense by an accused person purporting to show that he or she could not have committed the crime in question.
- 64. Indian religious leader who founded Sikhism (1469-1538).
- 66. Being or occurring at an advanced period of time or after a usual or expected time.
- 68. Resembling milk in color or cloudiness.
- 69. A tiny or scarcely detectable amount.
- 72. (in golf) The standard number of strokes set for each hole on a golf course, or for the entire course.
- 73. Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
- 77. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.

Yesterday's Solution

90's Songs 2



- AGAIN
- BABY, BABY
- BAILAMOS
- BARBIE GIRL
- BELIEVE
- BOOMBASTIC
- CAN'T STOP
- CRUSH
- DANGEROUS
- DOWNTOWN TRAIN
- EMOTIONS
- ENDLESS LOVE
- EPIC
- ESCAPADE
- FANTASY
- FUNKYFIED
- 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

The hidden song title is: LOSING MY RELIGION

Daily SuDoku

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

hard

Yesterday's Solution

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

very hard

Yesterday's Solution

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

CHAMPIONS TOULON BATTLE EURO EXIT FEARS

PARIS: Defending European Cup champions Toulon may be looking at quitting France for the English Premiership but their most pressing concern is avoiding an exit from Europe this weekend. The mega-rich French giants, whose controversial owner Mourad Boudjellal said he wants his team to play in the English top flight, travel to Bath today in their final Pool 5 game on top of the table with a one-point lead over Wasps. But they are living on their nerves in a tournament they have dominated for the last three years, needing a match-winning try from Australia wing Drew Mitchell after the final buzzer to beat Wasps 15-11 last week.

With only the five group winners guaranteed places in the quarter-finals, Toulon can't afford to slip up at Bath despite the English team playing only for pride with no chance of making the knockout rounds. A defeat for them and a win for Wasps, who host rock-bottom Leinster, would leave the French side needing to

secure a last-eight spot as one of the three best runners-up. "It's going to be a very difficult game in Bath. All we want to do is keep on improving and start to find a way to win games away from home," said Toulon's Australian fly-half Quade Cooper.

Wasps would have wrapped up Pool 5 had they won in France last week, but now they must try and avoid slipping to a second successive home defeat in the tournament having lost 25-23 to Bath in their last Ricoh Arena outing. "A few of the boys needed picking up after the game at Toulon because they were so disappointed. I was heartbroken for them," admitted Wasps director of rugby Dai Young. Wasps crushed Leinster 33-6 in Dublin in their clubs' first meeting, but the Irish side are desperate to avoid finishing last in their pool for the first time in 21 years of European competition. Top spot in Pool 2 is also still up for grabs with Welsh side Ospreys leading last year's runners-up Clermont by two points.

Spirit not superstars

Ospreys go to Exeter buoyed by a stunning 21-13 win over Clermont last week, overturning a seven-point half-time deficit in the process. "We probably haven't got as many glittering individuals as other European teams have got, but what we have got is a massive team ethic and a massive spirit," said coach Steve Tandy. Ospreys will be sweating on the fitness of Welsh international fly-half Dan Biggar who limped out of last week's match with a thigh injury.

The Welsh side will travel to Exeter boosted by veteran lock Alun-Wyn Jones pledging his future to the Ospreys by resigning his national dual contract this week. Clermont face fellow Top 14 side Bordeaux without flanker Viktor Koleishvili who has been banned for 14 weeks for pushing the referee during the loss at the Ospreys. The remaining three pools have already been wrapped up with Saracens clinching Pool 1, Racing 92

claiming Pool 3 while Leicester are guaranteed top spot in Pool 4. Saracens and Leicester are the only teams with perfect records of five wins in five games.

Ulster, second in Pool 1 with 13 points and the 1999 champions, have only a slim chance of taking a best runners-up spot and they host Oyonnax today having recovered from a 23-0 half-time deficit to beat the French side 24-23 in their first meeting. Northampton, second in Pool 3 on 14 points, go to Wales to meet the Scarlets who have the second worst record of the 20 teams in the tournament. Scarlets suffered a club record European defeat when Racing 92 thrashed them 64-14 last time out while Northampton stayed alive with a 19-15 victory over Glasgow. Stade Francais also have 14 points in second spot in Pool 4, a massive nine behind the Tigers who they host in Paris. French champions Stade lost 26-13 at Munster last week. — AFP

SULLIVAN SIZZLES IN ABU DHABI TO BOOST RYDER CUP'S HOPES

ABU DHABI: Former supermarket worker Andy Sullivan did his hopes of playing in this year's Ryder Cup no harm with a second successive 67 at the Abu Dhabi Championship yesterday watched closely by his playing partner and European captain Darren Clarke. Sullivan has gone from stacking shelves as an amateur to world number 37 and a current place among Europe's automatic Ryder Cup picks after a sizzling year that included three tour wins and maximum points at last week's Eurasia Cup.

The stocky Englishman continued his fine form in Abu Dhabi, moving to 10 under after two rounds to be clubhouse leader, a performance Sullivan said was helped by relentless ribbing from Clarke. "We've both got a similar sense of humor and he just enjoys taking the mick out of the short fat guy," Sullivan told reporters. Clarke was captain as Europe's team beat Asia 18.5 to 5.5 last week, Sullivan winning all three of his matches including a 4&3 singles victory over world number 28 Thongchai Jaidee.

"Last week was just a little taste of what the Ryder Cup is going to be like," Sullivan said. "I've used the momentum from last week to really try and kick on." He succeeded in Abu Dhabi, shrugging off a near-three hour fog delay to sink birdies on his opening three holes. Sullivan picked up another shot at his 10th but also carded two bogeys before ending as he begun with three successive birdies including a 30-foot downhill putt at the last. "We played a lot together last year and I'm forever egging him on, trying to help him. He's playing great," Clarke said.

The Northern Irishman likened Sullivan to former US Masters champion Ian Woosnam, describing the 28-year-old as the complete package. "A lot of the young kids hit it as hard and as far as they can and then go for there, whereas Sully's hitting a fade off one tee, a draw off the next," Clarke said. "I love playing with people like that. He's a proper shot-maker. Combine that with the fact he's a really, really good kid and that's even better." Such praise should make Sullivan confident of earning a ticket to Minnesota in September, although he is not complacent. "There are a lot of good guys not in the rankings yet who will be pushing hard so I know I've got to keep my foot to the gas," Sullivan said. — Reuters



AL-DAWLI SPONSORS KUWAITI RACER NASSER AL-KHADRA

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank announced its strategic sponsorship of the Kuwaiti racer Nasser Faisal Al-Khadra to participate in the upcoming motorcycle racing championships that are scheduled to be held locally and globally, as part of its leading social responsibility program that aims at supporting the community, especially the Kuwaiti youth.

On this occasion, the Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najia affirmed Al-Dawli's continuous commitment to supporting the community's various initiatives, and the youth activities in particular whether educational, cultural or sports that play a vital role in building a physically and mentally bal-

anced young generation who helps in establishing highly-developed societies.

Najia is sincerely proud of supporting the talented racer, Nasser Al-Khadra who not only does he participate in the regional motorcycle racing championships, but also in the speed boat and auto races in which he achieved competitive milestones. "We strongly believe in his potential and capability of achieving triumphant scores that would raise the name of the country and Kuwait's flag high in many tournaments and championships worldwide", he stated.

Najia added that Al-Khadra has started his motorcycle racing journey since 1990, where he participated in the Open Track

Days at Bahrain International Circuit for two years, in addition to Qatar SuperBike Championship at the Losail International Circuit for two consecutive years, in which he got the fastest Kuwaiti racer title in 14 races per season and won the third place in the tournament. Nasser Al-Khadra is the CEO of the Sons of Kuwait Association that consists of 50 Harley-Davidson riders. "We constantly strive to support and encourage the various Kuwaiti initiatives that come in line with our corporate social responsibilities towards the society by serving different sectors such as education, sports, charity, youth, cultural and others", Najia concluded.

AUSTRALIA'S O'DONNELL SETS NEW ONE HOUR RECORD

ADELAIDE: Australian cyclist Bridie O'Donnell broke the world hour distance record for women yesterday, eclipsing the previous one by more than 600 meters. Cycling Australia confirmed on Twitter that O'Donnell had "set a new #UCIHourRecord of 46.882km" for the gruelling velodrome event. "I can't believe I broke a world record," the 41-year-old said after getting off her bike and hoisting it above

her head at the Super-Drome in Adelaide.

The previous record for distance ridden in 60 minutes by a woman was 46.274 kilometers set by American Molly Shaffer Van Houweling in Mexico in September. O'Donnell said she had been nervous the day before the event, but had felt a lot more "calm and ready" as she prepared to race yesterday. She kept to her plans for pacing

herself for the sprint against the clock, and said she focused on what she was doing despite the pain. "How you feel is kind of irrelevant, you just have to have confidence in the plan," she said.

O'Donnell, a doctor, has represented Australia at three UCI Road World Championships but said it was a matter of finding the right event for her. "I wanted to do something great," she said, adding that she felt the record

was a good start. Ahead of the event, she said that her bid was as much psychological as physical. "It's about planning and preparation and logistics and training and then certainly enacting the plan the best way you can," she told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Van Houweling was among the first to congratulate the Australian, tweeting: "Very impressive new #UCIHourRecord". — AFP

LIGHTNING END CHICAGO'S FRANCHISE-RECORD

TAMPA: Nikita Kucherov broke a second-period tie with his 20th goal and the streaking Tampa Bay Lightning ended Chicago's franchise-record 12-game winning streak with a 2-1 win victory over the defending Stanley Cup champions on Thursday. The win was the seventh straight for the Lightning - one away from a team record - and gave the defending Eastern Conference champions a split of the season series with the Blackhawks, who won last year's Stanley Cup final against Tampa Bay in six games. Ben Bishop had 17 saves as the Blackhawks were held to a season-low 18 shots. Corey Crawford stopped 31 shots to keep the Blackhawks in the game, but it wasn't enough to extend a career-best nine-game winning streak for the Chicago goaltender. Anton Stralman scored in the first period and Victor Hedman had two assists for the Lightning. Artem Anisimov scored Chicago's lone goal in the opening minute of the game.

WILD 3, KINGS 0

Zach Parise scored Minnesota's first power-play goal in January, Darcy Kuemper made 32 saves in his seventh career shutout and the Wild snapped their five-game losing streak. Erik Haula added a short-handed goal for the Wild, who pulled out of their tailspin with a gritty effort against the Pacific Division leaders. Charlie Coyle scored on a break-away during a solid offensive performance by a team that had scored just one goal in its previous nine periods. Jonathan Quick stopped 25 shots for the Kings, who lost in regulation for just the third time in 13 games since Christmas. Los Angeles was shut out for just the second time in 43 games since the opening week of the season.

CANUCKS 4, BRUINS 2

Daniel Sedin became the Vancouver Canucks' career leader in goals with 348, scoring twice in the third period of a victory over the Boston Bruins. Sedin tucked the rebound of Christopher Tanev's shot past Tuukka Rask for the eventual winner with 12:57 remaining. He also scored into an empty net in the final minute. Sedin scored two goals in Vancouver's 3-2 overtime win against Florida on Jan 11 to tie Markus Naslund for the franchise lead, but went scoreless in four straight games before Thursday. Sven Baertschi and Alexandre Burrows also scored for Vancouver, and Jacob Markstrom made 28 saves. Brad Marchand and Jimmy Hayes scored for Boston, while Rask stopped 23 shots in his 300th career NHL game.

DEVILS 6, SENATORS 3

Travis Zajac had a goal and three assists, Kyle Palmieri scored twice, and the New Jersey Devils scored five times in the first period in a victory over the Ottawa Senators. Joseph Blandisi scored his first NHL goal and had two assists. Lee Stempniak and Adam Henrique also scored to help the Devils win their third straight and improve to 6-1-1 in their last eight games against the Senators. Cory Schneider stopped 29 shots for New Jersey. Mika Zibanejad, Mike Hoffman and Cody Ceci scored for Ottawa, which had won two straight.



NEW JERSEY: Joseph Blandisi #64 of the New Jersey Devils scores his first NHL goal against Craig Anderson #41 of the Ottawa Senators during the first period at the Prudential Center on January 21, 2016 in Newark. — AFP

PENGUINS 4, FLYERS 3

Phil Kessel scored twice and Sidney Crosby had a goal and an assist as the Pittsburgh Penguins beat the Philadelphia Flyers to end an eight-game winless streak against their cross-state rival. Crosby continued his five-game point streak for the Penguins, who defeated the Flyers for the first time since Oct 17, 2013. Phil Kessel scored his 13th and 14th goals of the season and Trevor Daley scored his fourth for the Penguins. Jakub Voracek extended his seven-game point streak against Pittsburgh with his sixth goal of the season. Claude Giroux and Brayden Schenn also scored.

FLAMES 4, BLUE JACKETS 2

Rookie Sam Bennett scored twice and Johnny Gaudreau had the tiebreaking goal to lead the Calgary Flames past the league-worst Columbus Blue Jackets. Michael Frolik also scored as Calgary improved to 6-7-1 since a seven-game winning streak in early December. Mark Giordano and Mikael Backlund each added two assists, and Karri Ramo stopped 27 shots. Scott Hartnell and Brandon Dubinsky scored for Columbus, which lost Sergei Bobrovsky to another lower-body injury. Playing his second game since missing 17 with a groin injury, Bobrovsky left with 8:30 remaining in

the second period after allowing two goals on 13 shots.

HURRICANES 1, MAPLE LEAFS 0, OT

Jordan Staal scored on a rebound in overtime, Eddie Lack stopped 31 shots and the Carolina Hurricanes downed the Toronto Maple Leafs. Staal started the play with a rush up the ice and beat his man to the net to chip in the ricochet off a shot from Justin Faulk at 2:54 of the extra period. Pierre-Alexandre Parenteau had Toronto's first real chance to score on a goal-mouth scramble while on the power play midway through the period, but couldn't get a good shot on a Lack rebound. James Reimer stopped 39 shots.

PREDATORS 4, JETS 1

Ryan Johansen kept up his hot play since being traded with a goal and an assist to lead the Nashville Predators over the Winnipeg Jets 4-1 on Thursday night. Johansen has four goals and nine points in seven games since his trade from Columbus on Jan 6. Craig Smith, James Neal and Calle Jarnkrok, with an empty-netter, also scored for the Predators. Nikolaj Ehlers scored his ninth goal of the season for Winnipeg, which has dropped two straight to start its six-game homestand.

STARS 3, OILERS 1

Jamie Benn scored his 27th goal, and the Dallas Stars beat the Edmonton Oilers to end a season-high four-game losing streak. Dallas' Jason Spezza scored in the first period and assisted on Jyrki Jokipakka's goal in the second. Antti Niemi, who made 23 saves, allowed goals by Teddy Purcell on the power play in the second period and Nail Yakupov with 3:03 remaining in the game. Cam Talbot had 32 saves for Edmonton, which had scored eight goals in splitting the first two games of their three-game trip, but managed only 25 shots on goal against Dallas.

SHARKS 3, COYOTES 2

Tommy Wingels and Chris Tierney scored first-period goals, Martin Jones stopped 23 shots and the San Jose Sharks beat the slumping Arizona Coyotes. Patrick Marleau added an empty-net goal as the Sharks extended their points streak to a season-best seven games and moved ahead of the Coyotes into second place in the Pacific Division. On a night when Arizona honored Shane Doan for recently breaking the franchise's career mark for goals, the captain assisted on Brad Richardson's third-period score. But the Coyotes have managed just four goals in an 0-3-1 stretch. — AP

NFL PREVIEW

PANTHERS' SUPER BOWL RULE - DON'T TALK ABOUT SUPER BOWL

WASHINGTON: Carolina and Arizona, NFL teams seeking a first Super Bowl triumph, meet Sunday to decide which will advance to next month's championship spectacle, with both adopting a business as usual attitude. The host Panthers, who went 15-1 in the regular season and downed Seattle 31-24 last week in the playoffs, have the NFL's longest active home win streak at 12 games and are favored against Arizona, which edged Green Bay 26-20 in overtime last weekend for quarterback Carson Palmer's first playoff victory.

Sunday's National Conference championship winner advances to face the American Conference winner, either Denver or defending Super Bowl champion New England, in two weeks in California. The loser sees a premature end to an otherwise stellar season. That's why the Panthers, who were only a 20-13 loss to Atlanta from a perfect regular season, don't want to hear the words Super Bowl just yet.

"We don't even like people talking about the Super Bowl. We're not there yet," Carolina safety Tre Boston said. "We know what's ahead of us. We know what we have to go through to get what we want. When we win, next week, we'll talk about the Super Bowl. But now we're focused on the (conference) championship." Palmer and the Cardinals are also trying to keep their game-week routine as they did through a 13-3 campaign. "As big as this game is, you can't make it bigger than it is," Palmer said. "This is a regular-season game in my mind. It's win or go home. There's a ton of implications behind it, but I'm not studying extra film or taking extra reps at practice. We're not doing extra meetings. We've got a pretty good recipe that wins games. We've been doing it for a long time and we're going to stick with our recipe."

Historic Heisman clash

Palmer and Carolina's Cam Newton will become the first former Heisman Trophy

winners to meet in the NFL playoffs. Palmer won the trophy symbolic of the best collegiate American football player in 2002 while Newton took it in 2010. "I used to dream of being in this type of position," Newton said. "This is why you play football games. I idolized the quarterbacks who would be in these positions and just dream, man, I hope and pray that I get the opportunity to (play in a Super Bowl)."

The Panthers lead the all-time rivalry with the Cardinals 9-5 and they have split two playoff meetings, the most recent a 27-16 Carolina victory in last season's playoffs. Carolina will try to pressure Palmer defensively and use the NFL's second-ranked running attack to take advantage of an Arizona defense that allowed an average of 127 rushing yards a game over their past three starts. Newton offers a run-pass threat that adds another layer to the Cardinals' defensive woes while Arizona receiver Larry Fitzgerald has evolved his game to become a unique threat as a

receiver and facilitator for others to get open.

The Panthers' only Super Bowl trip was in 2004 when they lost to New England. Two years later, they lost at Seattle in the conference final and they have not been this close in a decade. "It wouldn't do me any good to talk about the next game if we don't get there," Panthers coach Ron Rivera said. "We understand this game is a big game. We understand this is an opportunity for us to move forward, but we've got to win, first." The Cardinals reached their only Super Bowl in 2009, losing to Pittsburgh. Their only NFL crown came back in 1947 when the club was based in Chicago. That's why they focus on history a bit more recent. "I was telling some younger guys, 'Man, if you eat Burger King every Tuesday, go do it,'" Cardinals cornerback Jerraud Powers said. "Don't change what you do on your routine because whatever you've been doing is the reason we're at this point now." — AFP

SPURS SCORCH SUNS

BALANCED CAVS CRUISE PAST CLIPPERS

PHOENIX: Kawhi Leonard scored 21 points to lead the San Antonio Spurs past the Phoenix Suns 117-89 on Thursday night for their 12th straight victory. Leonard, selected as an All-Star starter for first time in his career earlier in the day, scored eight of his points in the third quarter for San Antonio. Boban Marjanovic added 17 points and 13 rebounds, and Jonathon Simmons had 13 points. Having already tied the best start in team history, the Spurs moved to 37-6 and kept pace with the 2010-11 team, which also had a 37-6 mark. They got 66 points from their bench. The Spurs cruised despite missing starters Tony Parker and Tim Duncan. Parker had right hip soreness and Duncan was given the night off to rest. Devin

Booker's 24 points led the Suns, who lost their sixth straight and 15th in 16 games.

CAVALIERS 115, CLIPPERS 102

LeBron James had 22 points and 12 assists, J.R. Smith made six 3-pointers and the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Los Angeles Clippers. Kevin Love added 18 points and 16 rebounds for the Cavs, playing their first home game since being embarrassed in a 34-point loss to Golden State on Monday in a rematch of last year's NBA Finals. They bounced back with a win at Brooklyn on Wednesday before beating the Clippers, who came in 11-1 in their past 12. Kyrie Irving had 21 points for Cleveland, which has won 13 of 14 against Los Angeles. Chris Paul scored 30 for Los

Angeles, which made only six 3-pointers after knocking down 22 on Monday against Houston. The Clippers were again without star forward Blake Griffin (torn quadriceps).

PELICANS 115, PISTONS 99

Anthony Davis scored 32 points and the New Orleans Pelicans beat the Detroit Pistons for their fourth victory in five games. Tyreke Evans had 22 points and 10 assists for the Pelicans, who raced to a 72-53 halftime lead and never allowed Detroit to get closer than nine points the rest of the way. The game was the first for New Orleans since starting shooting guard Eric Gordon was ruled out for 4-to-6 weeks with a broken ring finger on his shooting hand.



PHOENIX: San Antonio Spurs forward Kawhi Leonard (right) drives on Phoenix Suns forward TJ Warren in the first quarter during an NBA basketball game on Thursday, Jan 21, 2016. — AP

Norris Cole was moved into the starting lineup and responded with 12 points, eight rebounds and seven assists. Andre Drummond had 19 points and 22 rebounds for Detroit.

Paul Millsap had 14 points and 14 rebounds for Atlanta, which had its three-game win streak broken.

GRIZZLIES 102, NUGGETS 101

Marc Gasol had 27 points, including a go-ahead three-point play with 12.2 seconds left, and the Memphis Grizzlies beat the Denver Nuggets. Mike Conley had 20 points as the Grizzlies won their fourth in a row in front of NBA Commissioner Adam Silver. With Memphis trailing by one, Gasol hit a driving layup and was fouled. His free throw put Memphis ahead 100-98. Danilo Gallinari, who led Denver with 17 points, missed a 3-pointer with 3.9 seconds left and Conley followed with two free throws. — AP

KINGS 91, HAWKS 88

DeMarcus Cousins had 24 points and 15 rebounds to help the Sacramento Kings beat Atlanta for their fourth straight win and first against the Hawks in nearly eight years. Rajon Rondo made a clutch basket in the fourth quarter and had his fifth triple-double of the season with 11 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds for the Kings. Sacramento had dropped 15 straight games to Atlanta since a 119-107 victory Feb 20, 2008.

NBA results/standings

Cleveland 115, LA Clippers 102; New Orleans 115, Detroit 99; Memphis 102, Denver 101; Sacramento 91, Atlanta 88; San Antonio 117, Phoenix 89.

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Toronto	27	15	.643	-
Boston	22	21	.512	5.5
NY Knicks	22	22	.500	6
Brooklyn	11	32	.256	16.5
Philadelphia	6	38	.136	22

Central Division

Cleveland	30	11	.732	-
Chicago	24	17	.585	6
Indiana	23	19	.548	7.5
Detroit	23	20	.535	8
Milwaukee	19	25	.432	12.5

Southeast Division

Atlanta	26	18	.591	-
Miami	23	20	.535	2.5
Washington	20	21	.488	4.5
Orlando	20	21	.488	4.5
Charlotte	19	23	.452	6

Western Conference

Northwest Division

Oklahoma City	32	12	.727	-
Utah	18	24	.429	13
Portland	19	26	.422	13.5
Denver	16	27	.372	15.5
Minnesota	13	31	.295	19

Pacific Division

Golden State	39	4	.907	-
LA Clippers	27	15	.643	11.5
Sacramento	19	23	.452	19.5
Phoenix	13	31	.295	26.5
LA Lakers	9	35	.205	30.5

Southwest Division

San Antonio	37	6	.860	-
Memphis	25	19	.568	12.5
Dallas	25	19	.568	12.5
Houston	22	22	.500	15.5
New Orleans	15	27	.357	21.5

SPANISH LEAGUE PREVIEW

MESSI FIT FOR BARCELONA RETURN IN MALAGA

MADRID: Lionel Messi is expected to be fit as Barcelona make the tricky trip to Malaga today looking to move back to the top of La Liga. Messi missed Wednesday's 2-1 Copa del Rey win at Athletic Bilbao due to a hamstring problem that forced him off at half-time in a 6-0 rout of the same opponents last weekend, but returned to training on Thursday. Barca will also have Luis Suarez back after he completed a two-game Cup ban in midweek as they look to exact revenge on the only side that stopped the European champions from scoring in their two meetings last season.

Malaga took four points from a possible six against Barca in La Liga last season and were only defeated 1-0 thanks to Thomas Vermaelen's late strike when the two sides met at the Camp Nou earlier this campaign. "We need to rest well because against Malaga we have had difficult games," said Barca midfielder Ivan Rakitic. "We need to have a lot of respect for them." Malaga have already aided Barca's title challenge this year by holding Real Madrid to a 0-0 draw at the Santiago Bernabeu back in September and beating Atletico Madrid 1-0 last month. "We have played great games against those high in the table this year and last season," Malaga midfielder Ignacio Camacho told the club's website. "We need to play a very complete game to take any points."

The hosts will be without Nordin Amrabat, though, after the Moroccan international completed his move to Watford on Monday. Barca will be debilitated by the absence of defenders Gerard Pique and Jordi Alba through suspension and injury respectively. Zinedine Zidane faces his toughest test yet as Real Madrid boss when his side travel to Real Betis on Sunday, but Los Blancos are still heavy

favorites to deliver another convincing win. Madrid have scored five times in disposing of Deportivo la Coruna and Sporting Gijon at home in Zidane's two games in charge since replacing Rafael Benitez earlier this month.

The Frenchman will be without Gareth Bale, who suffered the recurrence of a calf problem that will keep him out for up to three weeks against Sporting, but otherwise has a fully-fit squad to choose from. In contrast to Real's free-scoring form, Betis haven't scored in seven consecutive games as part of a 10-game winless run. However, they did pick up an impressive point away to high-flying Villarreal under new boss Juan Merino. "I am sure that if we continue like we did against Villarreal we will have chances," said Merino. "I have said to the squad to not be anxious, the goal will come."

Should they be deposed by Barcelona on Saturday,

Atletico Madrid can return to the top of the table ahead of their trip to the Camp Nou next weekend when they host Sevilla on Sunday. Atletico have won nine of their last 10 league games, but showed signs of fatigue in laboring to a 0-0 draw at Celta Vigo in the first-leg of their Copa del Rey quarter-final on Wednesday. "We knew that every game will demand more effort and work, but that is part of the responsibility of dealing with the demands of every game. Now we need to rest, eat well and prepare for the upcoming games," said Atletico boss Diego Simeone. Valencia boss Gary Neville goes in search of his first La Liga win at the seventh attempt when Los Che visit Deportivo la Coruna. And Chinese magnate Chen Yansheng will oversee his new club after completing a takeover of Espanyol as Villarreal look to strengthen their position in fourth at Cornellà-El Prat. — AFP

Spanish La Liga table

MADRID: Spanish La Liga table before this weekend's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Atletico Madrid	20	15	2	3	30	8	47	Valencia	20	5	9	6	25	21	24
Barcelona	19	14	3	2	50	15	45	Malaga	20	6	6	8	15	17	24
Real Madrid	20	13	4	3	57	19	43	Real Sociedad	20	5	6	9	23	28	21
Villarreal	20	12	4	4	26	16	40	Espanyol	20	6	3	11	18	33	21
Celta Vigo	20	10	4	6	32	30	34	Real Betis	20	5	6	9	13	28	21
Eibar	20	9	6	5	32	21	33	Las Palmas	20	4	6	10	19	30	18
Sevilla	20	9	5	6	28	22	32	Granada	20	4	5	11	21	41	17
Deportivo La Coruna	20	6	10	4	27	24	28	Rayo Vallecano	20	4	4	12	23	45	16
Athletic Bilbao	20	8	4	8	27	28	28	Sporting Gijon	19	4	3	12	17	34	15
Getafe	20	7	5	8	24	28	26	Levante	20	3	5	12	17	36	14

STRIKER GRIFFITHS TARGETS CELTIC'S SCORING RECORD

GLASGOW: Celtic striker Leigh Griffiths has already set his sights on a new scoring target after notching up a half-century of goals for the Scottish champions. It took the 25-year-old just two years and only 60 starts to reach 50 goals for the Glasgow giants—the quickest any Celtic striker has reached that total in the modern era. Griffiths' feat is even more remarkable considering he was out of favor with manager Ronny Deila for much of last season and was strongly linked with a loan exit. However, the former Wolves and Hibernian striker's hard work and perseverance in training has now paid off spectacularly with Griffiths' hat-trick in Tuesday's 8-1 thrashing of Hamilton taking him to 27 goals for the season.

Griffiths is now looking to surpass the 32 goals Kris Commons scored in the 2013/14 season and in current form this could spell bad news for today's opponents St Johnstone. "In the first half of last season I wasn't playing and there was talk of me going on loan but it shows just how hard I have worked to get back in the side," Griffiths said. "I haven't scored 50 goals wherever I have been. I finished top scorer last season and now I want to hit the 30-mark and try and beat Kris's record."

"It's the players around me and huge credit to them for putting the chances on a plate for me to put them away. It's testament to them. "I'm feeling confident, I'm playing well and it's down to my team-mates and the opportunities they make for me. I just try and hit the target as much as I can." More worrying for today's opponents St Johnstone, who are without a win in their past five matches, was the warning from Celtic winger Gary Mackay-Steven that the Hoops' 8-1 humbling of Hamilton was a statement of intent from the Scottish champions. "We've all seen in the last few home games we haven't scored too many goals."

Teams have come and made it really hard for us so we were determined to get that early goal as the game might open up after that," Mackay-Steven said. "We just took confidence from it and carried it on so it was really enjoyable. We feel we can go on a good run now and hopefully take teams apart like we did against Hamilton. We feel we can do that to anyone on our day." Celtic could find their six-point lead at the top of the table reduced to just three points by the time they take to the pitch today if Aberdeen can win away to Dundee. — AFP

ITALIAN LEAGUE PREVIEW

JUVE TARGET TOP SPOT, EMBATTLED SARRI LEADS NAPOLI TO SAMPDORIA

MILAN: Juventus host struggling Roma looking to capitalize on a potential slip by embattled Napoli that could see the Old Lady snatch the lead of Serie A for the first time this season. Juve's catastrophic start is well behind them and the champions moved up to second at just two points behind Napoli after registering their 10th consecutive league win in a 4-0 rout of Udinese last weekend.

And the Turin giants will be looking to cash in on the hangover Napoli have suffered since their coach, Maurizio Sarri, was caught on camera in a homophobic rant at Inter Milan counterpart Roberto Mancini following Inter's Italian Cup quarter-final win in midweek. Sarri on Thursday was hit with a two-game Cup ban and a 20,000-euro fine, and although his players have rallied behind him, rivals teams will be all too ready to pounce.

Sampdoria's flamboyant president Massimo Ferrero, for one, has already fanned the flames, hitting out at the leniency of Sarri's sanction in comparison to his own punishment for disparaging remarks aimed at Inter Milan chief Erick Thohir. In 2014, Thohir, who is

from Indonesia, was labelled a "slant-eyed baby doll" and a "Filipino" by Ferrero, a film producer who never misses a chance to snatch his share of the spotlight. Speaking to Sampdoria TV, Ferrero said: "It's like my old grandfather used to say: two weights, two measures. I made a geographical mistake and I got a heavy sentence. "He (Sarri) said a lot more and got two games. What is happening?"

Ferrero added: "On Sunday, we'll take the game to them because when the lads decide they want to win a game, we can beat anybody." Sampdoria have lost their last two outings, at home to Juventus and away to Carpi, but the Genoa-based club fancy their chances. Sarri has been through the ringer in the past few days, prompting the league leaders' Brazilian midfielder Jorginho to stand up in the 57-year-old Italian's defense. "He (Sarri) is a decent man and it's not fair to hammer him relentlessly like this," said Jorginho. "We're all behind the coach. He apologized, and we've all moved on, the most important thing now is Sampdoria."

Napoli's off-field troubles could turn in Juve's favor, days after the league and Cup champions booked their place in the semi-finals of the Cup thanks to a 1-0 win over Lazio. Massimiliano Allegri's men will aim to make it 11 wins in succession at home to a Roma side that was held to a 1-1 draw by still-winless basement side Verona in the capital last week in Luciano Spalletti's first game back in charge. "It will be a tough game," said Allegri. "But we're going through a positive period, and we want to keep it going." Roma have slipped to fifth at nine points behind Napoli, striker Edin Dzeko is struggling to score and fleet-footed Ivorian forward Gervinho is rumored to be on his way out. Hardly the ideal situation ahead of a visit to Juventus. "Every time we play for Juventus we should be prepared to spit blood to honor this jersey," said Juve defender Leonardo Bonucci. Inter, four points adrift in third place, host struggling Carpi at the San Siro looking for their first win in three games having suffered a shock defeat to Sassuolo and drawn at Atalanta in their past two outings. — AFP

Italian Serie A table

MILAN: Italian Serie A table ahead of weekend games (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

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

KLOPP STRIVES TO KEEP LIVERPOOL FRESH

NORWICH: Liverpool continue their marathon season at Norwich today with manager Jurgen Klopp again ready to juggle his resources. The Reds' trip to Carrow Road will be their 35th game of the campaign, although the Premier League is only just past the half-way mark. Liverpool are still in the Europa League, the FA Cup and next Tuesday face Stoke in the second leg of their League Cup semi-final.

That workload has fully extended Klopp's squad, which he is hoping to strengthen with the capture of Brazilian striker Alex Teixeira from Shakhtar Donetsk. Klopp fielded a side containing several members of Liverpool's under-21 squad for their 3-0 FA Cup third round replay win over Exeter on Wednesday. But while the rookies impressed, including 18-year-old winger Sheyi Ojo, who became the youngest FA Cup goalscorer in Liverpool's history, they will be heading back to the bench as Klopp restores his senior players to league duty. "We'll work with them," said Klopp. "We can't bring them all in the Premier

League every week. "We need to keep them here and work with them. Football is not just individual development, you have to show you can develop as a team." Goalkeeper Simon Mignolet, fresh from signing a new five-year contract at Anfield, played against fourth tier Exeter as one of five senior players in the lineup. Midfielder Joe Allen was also given a run out and having scored only twice in the past two years, made it two goals in two games as Liverpool set up a fourth-round meeting with West Ham. Before that, they will be looking to build on a 1-0 aggregate lead against Stoke with a place in the Wembley final against Manchester City or Everton at stake.

Momentum

And Allen, who has rebuffed interest from former club Swansea, is delighted to be challenging on several fronts, with a top-six finish in the Premier League and a guaranteed return to Europe still also a target. "We've got a foot in all the competi-

tions and that's what you want as players, you want to be fighting on all fronts," Allen said. "Hopefully we can build a bit of momentum now in the second half of the season and let's see what happens." Ninth-placed Liverpool have failed to win any of their last three league games, though, and need to bounce back against relegation-threatened Norwich when Klopp will be looking for his returning big guns to fire. Liverpool will give fitness checks to defenders Dejan Lovren and Martin Skrtel, as well as forward Philippe Coutinho who has been out for four games with a hamstring injury. Norwich have slipped back towards the bottom three after successive league defeats that left them two points and two places above the relegation zone. The performance in last weekend's 3-0 defeat at Bournemouth was in stark contrast to the form Norwich had shown at the end of December when they won three of their four games. Canaries boss Alex Neil has responded by bring in midfielder Steven Naismith from Everton and former Wolfsburg defender Timm Klose. —AFP

PRESSURE ON PEP GUARDIOLA TO SIGN OFF WITH SILVERWARE

BERLIN: Pep Guardiola enters the final four months of his three-year reign as Bayern Munich coach yesterday with the Spaniard under pressure to sign off with the treble. Bayern kick-off the second-half of the season at Hamburg with an eight point lead in the table and if things continue Guardiola will end the Bundesliga season on May 14 with the Bavarians having become the first club to win the German league title four times in a row. But his tenure will be judged by whether he repeats the 2013 treble of Champions League, German League and Bundesliga titles, achieved by his predecessor Jupp Heynckes.

For the last two seasons under Guardiola, Bayern has exited the Champions League at the semi-final stage and they are desperate to at least reach this year's final in Milan on May 28, then win the title. "Our goal is to play successful football. For us, that means having three titles at the end of the season. But we know that will be difficult," said Bayern's captain Philipp Lahm as they prepare to face Juventus in the last 16 of Europe next month. Guardiola's announcement last month that he is leaving at the end of the season, probably to coach in England, will make it that bit harder to win the Champions League title, according to former Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld.

No easy task

"If a coach announces in December that he will leave half a year later, it doesn't make the task any easier," Hitzfeld, who coached Bayern to the 2001 Champions League title, told Kicker. Hitzfeld says Guardiola must pay attention to discipline within the Bayern squad, especially after they developed a habit of losing matches in the previous seasons once the league title was won. But the veteran coach is convinced Guardiola will achieve his goal. "He won't rest, because his big goal is to say goodbye with success," added Hitzfeld, with 'success', in this context, meaning the European title. Guardiola knows only the treble-or at least the European crown for the sixth time in the club's history-will truly quench the Bavarians' thirst for silverware after 'only' winning the Bundesliga title last season and achieving the league and cup double in 2014. "I know that people want us to win the Champions League and if we don't manage it, we will have failed," said the 45-year-old, who will be succeeded by Carlo Ancelotti next season. But the Spaniard got animated on Thursday when asked if it was the "triple or nothing" as far as his Bayern farewell is concerned. "No, no, no!" said Guardiola. "I would immediately sign on the dotted line if I was offered the same second half to the season as we have had in the previous years."

Accept and respect

Lahm says he "accepts and respects" Guardiola's decision: "we get on well and it is fun to work with Guardiola, but since I was six years old I have seen coaches come and go". However, Dutch winger Arjen Robben had a different opinion of the Spaniard's decision. "I am annoyed about it, it's a real pity and a shame," the Netherlands captain told Dutch television while forwards Thomas Mueller and Robert Lewandowski have both said they plan to bid farewell to Guardiola with trophies. Guardiola's future lies in England-with Manchester City widely tipped to be his future employers-but he has not ruled out a return to Germany as he looks to keep his options open. —AFP



VALENCIA: Valencia's Argentinean forward Pablo Piatti (center) dribbles the ball during the Spanish Copa del Rey (King's Cup) football match Valencia CF vs UD Las Palmas at the Mestalla stadium in Valencia on January 21, 2016. —AFP

VALENCIA HELD BY LAS PALMAS

SEVILLA SEE OFF SECOND DIVISION MIRANDES 2-0

MADRID: Valencia's struggles under new coach Gary Neville continued when they had to come from behind to rescue a 1-1 draw in their King's Cup quarter-final first leg at home to Las Palmas on Thursday. Former Manchester United and England defender Neville took over at the Singapore-owned club last month after Nuno Espirito Santo was sacked but has yet to land a win in La Liga in six attempts.

Valencia fell behind in the 38th minute at the Mestalla when midfielder Wilfried Zaha headed the ball past goalkeeper Mathew Ryan and into his own net at a free kick. Paco Alcacer leveled in the 61st minute with a well-struck shot from just outside the penalty area but the home side were unable to make sustained late pressure count. Alvaro Negredo fluffed a great chance in the third minute of added time when he failed to connect cleanly with a Jose Luis Gaya centre, leaving Las Palmas with an advantage for next week's return leg in the Canary Islands. "When you draw a game at home you are always disappointed," Neville told a news conference. "But if we play like we did today again we will win matches."

Veteran Juan Carlos Valeron, who played against Neville in the Champions League more than a decade ago when the midfielder was at Deportivo La Coruna, said it was a great result for Las Palmas

who are 16th in La Liga. "We'll try to make the most of it in the return and being able to keep the tie alive was very important for us," added the 40-year-old former Spain international who was in the Las Palmas side that knocked Valencia out of the King's Cup in 1997. Sevilla, the five-times winners who last lifted the trophy in 2010, gained the upper hand over Mirandes, the only non-La Liga team left in the competition, when they beat the second division side 2-0.

Midfielder Steven N'Zonzi netted for the Europa League holders in the 20th minute at the Sanchez Pizjuan and substitute Vitolo struck from close range in the fourth minute of added time. On Wednesday, holders Barcelona made smooth progress in their bid for a fourth Cup triumph in eight years when Munir el Haddadi and Neymar struck in a 2-1 victory at Athletic Bilbao. Barca have beaten Bilbao three times in the final since 2009, including last season, and the Spanish and European champions made light of the absence of Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez to gain the upper hand ahead of the return game at the Nou Camp. Celta Vigo, who have never won Spain's domestic knockout competition, kept alive their hopes when they held Atletico Madrid, the 2013 winners and La Liga leaders, to a 0-0 draw at their Balaidos stadium in Galicia. —Reuters

CITY URGED TO THRIVE IN CHALLENGING TITLE RACE

LONDON: Manuel Pellegrini expects another difficult test of Manchester City's ability to win a "different" Premier League title race when they face top-six challengers West Ham today. The Hammers were unbeaten in eight league games before losing at Newcastle last week and are sixth in the table. Slaven Bilic's side have been something of a surprise package in a season which has seen the traditional heavyweights struggle to impose themselves on the title race, with Leicester currently behind leaders Arsenal only on goal difference.

Pellegrini's team brushed aside a Crystal Palace side enjoying one of their best top-flight seasons last weekend with a comfortable 4-0 home win. But City, a point behind the leaders in third place, were beaten at home by the Hammers in September and manager Pellegrini knows they can't take any result for granted at Upton Park this weekend. "I don't know if the word is sur-

prised. Most of the teams in the Premier League have very good players," Pellegrini said when asked about the strong performances of several unheralded teams this season. "If you have good players and a good performance as a team I think everyone can beat another team. The difference is very slight between one team and another. "That gives more importance to the Premier League. We are not only talking about Crystal Palace and West Ham, but I think Leicester are the same way and Everton." City play Everton in the second leg of their League Cup semi-final next Wednesday, trailing 2-1 from the first meeting. They were also unable to beat the Merseysiders in the league just over a week ago when the sides drew 0-0 at Eastlands.

Different league

City are unbeaten in five league games but have just 43 points-half the total they managed when winning the title in 2014.

They are unlikely to match the 86 points they managed then or the 89 they accrued when winning the league two years earlier. Pellegrini expects a lower total to become champions this season, but he won't mind as long as City finish top. "This is not a normal league. In the last 10 leagues the team who has won it has got over 80 points - maybe that won't happen this time," he said. "So it's a different league and it's not a case of our team wasting the opportunity to win it. It's a strong league. "If you win it, it's because you were the best team. It doesn't matter how many points."

City will be strengthened by the return of midfielder Fernandinho following injury and defender Eliaquim Mangala is also back in the squad. Captain Vincent Kompany, midfielder Samir Nasri and striker Wilfried Bony are all still out. West Ham's impressive run of form since the end of November-last weekend's defeat at Newcastle was their first loss in 10 games-

has moved Bilic's side up to sixth and prompted talk of a top four challenge. Bilic's dealings in the transfer market this month could determine whether they can sustain their challenge, although the Hammers boss has denied he is interested in signing striker Daniel Sturridge from Liverpool.

Sam Byram, the young right-back, has arrived from Leeds, but Bilic concedes the defender has been bought with next season in mind while Mauro Zarate and Nikica Jelavic could leave the club. Zarate is expected to complete a move to Fiorentina and Bilic admits he will move to bring in a forward if Jelavic leaves as well. "We are not panicking. We know that we have a couple of players that are injured," he said. "On the other hand there are a couple of players that may leave the club. "Maybe Zarate, maybe Jelavic and if that happens, and it may happen, then we are going to try and get one striker." — AFP

MAN UTD NASCENT TITLE HOPES FACE SAINTS TEST

MANCHESTER: Manchester United will be looking to improve on their recent home record against Southampton today to give further credence to their unlikely challenge for the Premier League title. Since Southampton's return to the top flight in 2012, United have beaten them only once in three attempts at Old Trafford, a 2-1 win three years ago this month. Wayne Rooney scored both of United's goals that day and his current form has revitalized United's season, taken the heat off manager Louis van Gaal and kept the team in touch with the league pace-setters. Rooney has scored five goals in his last four games, including last Sunday's winner in a 1-0 victory at Liverpool, which took United to within seven points of joint-leaders Arsenal and Leicester City.

After the win at Anfield, Van Gaal declared that his side can still win the league for the first time since 2013. But they will need to improve on their general level of performance and will no doubt be under pressure again today with many supporters unimpressed by Van Gaal's management and playing style. Midfielder Juan Mata, left out of the of the starting line-up for the last two games, admits the team has to do better, but believes that there is still an opportunity to push for the top.

"I hope this win (at Liverpool) will give us a boost of confidence and help us play better and keep getting results in order to move up the table," said Mata, who scored the decisive goal in United's 3-2 win at Southampton in September. "There's a long way to go and there is no team who is showing a great consistency, so everything is still open. For the moment, we have to stay focused and keep the same men-

talities in our next game against Southampton. "They have got two convincing wins in the last two games so we must be careful." United may have Bastian Schweinsteiger back from a knee injury that has kept him out for two games to partner ex-Southampton player Morgan Schneiderlin in midfield.

Austin set for debut

Auxiliary full-back Ashley Young is a doubt with a knock picked up in the win at Liverpool, but Phil Jones could return to increase Van Gaal's defensive options. Last weekend's 3-0 victory over West Bromwich Albion moved Southampton back into the top half of the table and helped draw a line under a testing period last month. James Ward-Prowse, the midfielder, spoke confidently after that game about reviving the club's bid to claim a place in the Europa League for a second successive season.

The arrival of striker Charlie Austin from Queen Park Rangers has only added to the growing optimism at St Mary's. Austin, 26, has joined Saints in a 4 million (\$5.7 million, 5.2 million euros) transfer and manager Ronald Koeman is set to hand the forward his debut at Old Trafford. "His fitness is OK," Koeman said. "I was a little bit worried about his fitness, because he came out from a hamstring injury, but he showed his quality, he showed his fitness this week, and normally he will be part of the team for today." However, Koeman has concerns over the fitness of striker Graziano Pelle and left-back Matt Targett. "We have some small problems with players like Graziano, if he is really fit to be part of the team," the Dutchman added. "Matthew Targett had some little stiffness about last weekend, we have our final session, then we make those kind of decisions." — AFP

English Premier League table

LONDON: English Premier League table ahead of the weekend matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Arsenal	22	13	5	4	37	21	44	Everton	22	6	11	5	39	32	29
Leicester	22	12	8	2	39	26	44	Watford	22	8	5	9	25	25	29
Man City	22	13	4	5	43	21	43	West Brom	22	7	6	9	22	30	27
Tottenham	22	10	9	3	38	18	39	Chelsea	22	6	7	9	31	34	25
Man Utd	22	10	7	5	28	20	37	Bournemouth	22	6	6	10	26	37	24
West Ham	22	9	8	5	34	26	35	Norwich	22	6	5	11	24	38	23
Stoke	22	9	6	7	24	22	33	Swansea	22	5	7	10	20	30	22
Crystal Palace	22	9	4	9	23	24	31	Newcastle	22	5	6	11	24	39	21
Liverpool	22	8	7	7	25	28	31	Sunderland	22	5	3	14	27	45	18
Southampton	22	8	6	8	31	24	30	Aston Villa	22	2	6	14	18	38	12

WENGER WARY OF CHELSEA THREAT

LONDON: Arsene Wenger has warned Arsenal not to underestimate troubled Chelsea as the Premier League leaders bid to end their long barren run against their London rivals. The Gunners' 1-0 win over Chelsea in the Community Shield in August was Wenger's first success against his arch rival Jose Mourinho in 14 attempts. But that victory in the Wembley sunshine proved a false dawn for Arsenal in their attempt to end Chelsea's stranglehold over their derby showdowns.

Wenger's men were beaten 2-0 at Stamford Bridge in September in one of the few highlights of a miserable campaign for Chelsea, who have since parted company with Mourinho and are now under the interim stewardship of Guus Hiddink heading into tomorrow's clash at the

Emirates Stadium. That loss meant Arsenal have failed to win any of their last eight league meetings with Chelsea dating back to their previous success in October 2011 and, even more remarkably, they have been unable to muster a single goal in the last five of those matches.

Even in the plush surroundings of their own Emirates Stadium, Arsenal have found it impossible to banish the Blues, with no victories in their last five meetings in all competitions since their previous home win against Chelsea in December 2010. So, although Arsenal sit top of the table while spluttering champions Chelsea are languishing four points above the relegation zone in 14th place, Wenger has suffered enough against the west Londoners to know not to take victory for granted. —AFP



Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Norwich City V Liverpool	15:45
beIN SPORTS	
Leicester City V Stoke City	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Sunderland V Bournemouth	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Watford V Newcastle United	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Crystal Palace V Tottenham	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Man United V Southampton	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
West Bromwich V Aston Villa	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
West Ham United V Man City	20:30
beIN SPORTS	

SPANISH LEAGUE

Malaga V Barcelona	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Espanyol V Villarreal	20:15
beIN SPORTS	
Granada V Getafe	22:30
Sunday	
Rayo Vallecano V Celta de Vigo	0:05
beIN SPORTS	

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE

Frosinone V Atalanta	20:00
beIN SPORTS	
Empoli V AC Milan	22:45
beIN SPORTS	

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

FC Koln V Stuttgart	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Bayer 04 V Leverkusen	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Ingolstadt V FSV Mainz	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Hertha Berlin V Augsburg	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Hannover V Darmstadt	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Monchengladbach V Dortmund	20:30
beIN SPORTS	

FRENCH LEAGUE

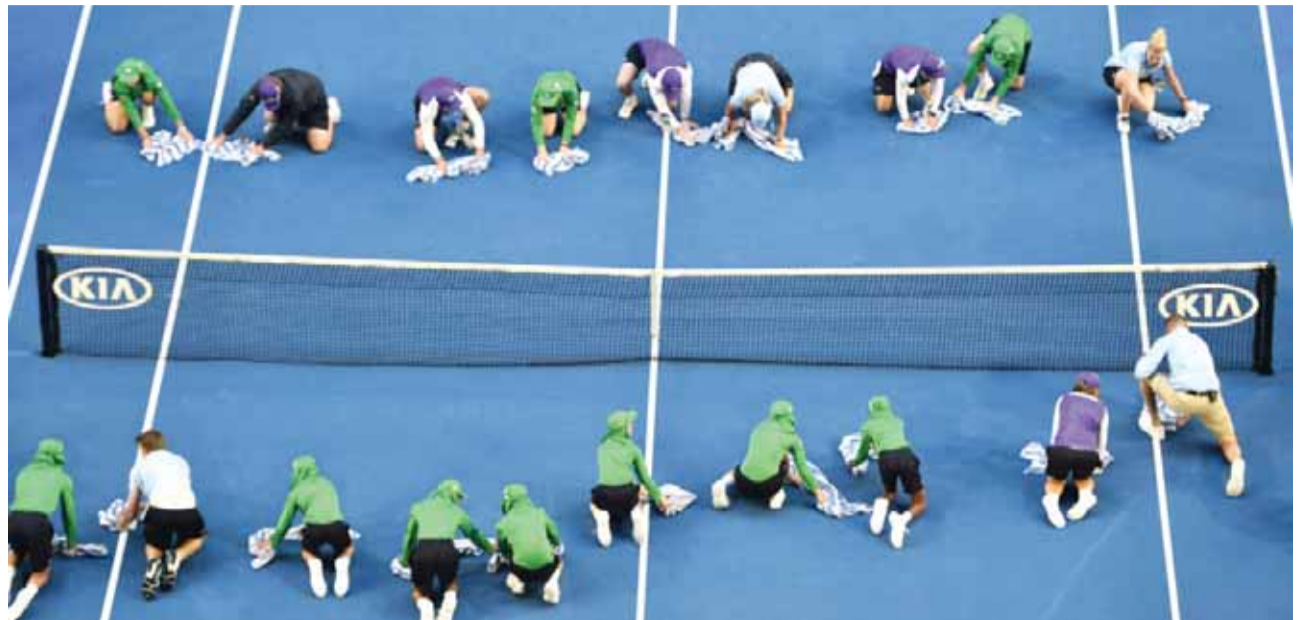
PSG V Angers	19:00
beIN SPORTS	
Nantes V Girondins	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Lille OSC V Troyes	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Guingamp V Bastia	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Montpellier HSC V Caen	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
OGC Nice V Lorient	22:00
beIN SPORTS	

NO KIDS, BUT MILLIONS IN BANK, SHARAPOVA HAS NO REGRETS

MELBOURNE: A younger Maria Sharapova was convinced she would be retired from tennis and have children by now, but it hasn't quite turned out that way. Instead, she has five Grand Slam titles and millions in the bank, and is listed by Forbes as the top-earning sportswoman in the world. All in all, the 28-year-old Russian said she had no regrets about how her life has gone. "I never thought that I'd be playing at this age, honestly," she said in Melbourne, after moving into the Australian Open fourth round. "When I was born, my mother was very young. I thought I would, I mean, not have kids at 20, but I would have children at this point. "When you're younger, that's what I envisioned because that's what my family had. You always look to family traditions."

Her personal life remains out of bounds, although she most recently had a relationship with fellow player Grigor Dimitrov. Sharapova said she had managed to find a good balance between tennis, her personal life and her flourishing business career as she gets older. As well as being one of the world's most recognizable athletes, she has become a major force in the business world with a series of successful ventures. They include Sugapova, a candy line, and a Nike apparel collection. Forbes calculated she earned US\$29.7 million in the year to last June, naming her as the highest-paid female athlete for the 11th year in a row.

Despite the luxurious life her money can bring her, she said she still likes nothing



MELBOURNE: Ballboys dry the court following Russia's Maria Sharapova's win against Lauren Davis of the US during their women's singles match on day five of the 2016 Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. —AFP

more than hitting balls on a tennis court. "I mean, I really love what I do. Although I'd love to sit on the beach and read a book and drink margaritas, after a few days I get bored," she said. "I know, especially when I miss a couple of weeks... I get back on the court, it's funny, those first few moments where you feel a bit rusty, but the feeling of hitting the ball, even though you're not

playing points, when that comes back to me, I'm like, This is what I love to do. "There's no better feeling."

A reflective Sharapova credited her parents Yuri and Yelena for much of what she has achieved, calling them her "rock" in a life that has seen countless people come and go. "I've had many different people in my life. Ultimately my parents are kind of

the two, you know, rocks that have really guided me in so many incredible directions," she said. "My father paved this career for me that I just keep following. He just really opened the door to my dream. I'm just kind of living it. "My mother opened up the world to me culturally, educationally. So I got very different things from both of them." — AFP

FRENCH LEAGUE PREVIEW

IBRAHIMOVIC HITS FORM; PSG TACKLE GAME GLUT

PARIS: Runaway leaders Paris Saint-Germain host third-placed Angers in Ligue 1 today, with star striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic in towering form as a series of eight games in three weeks awaits the French champions. Elsewhere, Marseille's visit to Lyon is a clash of struggling giants tomorrow, and on Friday new Rennes boss Rolland Courbis hopes to give his new team a first home win since August. A massive 21 points ahead of second-placed Monaco, PSG's midweek French Cup win delivered by a late Ibrahimovic goal means Laurent Blanc will be rotating his line-up in their seven scheduled games before Chelsea's visit in the Champions League on February 16.

"We have to get through this month of January, which is difficult with this crazy schedule," Blanc said after the come-from-behind 2-1 home win over Toulouse. On current form it is hard to imagine PSG allowing Ibrahimovic, whose contract expires in June, to leave at the end of the season. The Swede took his club goal tally in all competitions to 20 in midweek, but he is also the leader of the team, dictating matters on the pitch and also ruling the roost in the dressing room.

So the Swede will start at the weekend while Edinson Cavani, linked with a switch to Manchester United this week and increasingly isolated both on the pitch and off it, may make way for Brazilian forward Lucas. "Rotating the team all the time is making PSG a little sluggish," former France and Liverpool coach Gerard Houllier told sports daily L'Equipe this week, before praising the club's fitness coaches as the reason why PSG were hurting rivals in the latter stages of games. "They are aiming at being ready by March and they've got real experts in the fitness domain," said Houllier. However, PSG have several stars in the sickbay in Thiago Silva, Marquinhos, Javier Pastore and Marco Verratti. Visitors Angers tumbled out of the Cup on Tuesday with a 2-1 home defeat to Bordeaux.

Struggling giants clash

Marseille and Lyon are in eighth and ninth respectively. Lyon, runners up last season, fired their coach at Christmas while Marseille's incumbent Michel has been being booed by home fans lately. The former Spain international will be looking for Belgian striker Mishy Batshuayi, second only to Ibrahimovic in the Ligue 1 scoring charts, to add to his 12 league goals. Marseille can also build upon the momentum of a midweek home win in the Cup over Montpellier, following last Sunday's 3-1 victory at Caen. "It's going to be a huge game in their brand new stadium, but it's nice to travel up there on the back of a win," Marseille midfielder Remy Cabella told regional paper La Provence. Rennes sacked their coach Philippe Montanier on Wednesday, and his replacement Courbis immediately promised to target second place. —AFP

MASAKADZA AND MADZIVA LEAD ZIMBABWE TO VICTORY

KHULNA: A record-breaking innings by Hamilton Masakadza led Zimbabwe to an 18-run victory over Bangladesh yesterday as the tourists clinched a series draw in the fourth and final Twenty20 international in Khulna. Masakadza hit 93 off 58 balls, the highest innings by a Zimbabwean in a T20 international, as the southern Africans reached 180-4. His heroics were then followed by Neville Madziva who grabbed 4-34 as the hosts were dismissed for 162 in 19 overs.

Mahmudullah top-scored for Bangladesh with 54 off 41 balls, but Zimbabwe were always in control after Madziva and Tendai Chisoro both claimed two wickets in their opening spells to reduce the home side to 17-4. Mahmudullah and Imrul Kayes (18) steadied the innings before Nurul Hasan (15) and Mashrafe Mortaza (22) gave Bangladesh a faint glimmer of hope. But Madziva sealed the victory with two wickets in his final spell, giving the visitors a significant confidence boost in the build-up to the World Twenty20 which begins in India in early March.

Masakadza, who had equaled his own record of 79 in the opening match of the series, struck eight fours and five sixes in an unbeaten knock that ensured Zimbabwe compiled an imposing total. After opting to bat first, Zimbabwe began aggressively, shrugging off the early dismissal of opener Vusi Sibanda who was caught at cover by Shakib Al Hasan off the bowling of Mashrafe Mortaza after making just four. Much of the damage came during a second-wicket partnership of 80 between Masakadza and Richard Mutumbami.

Rookie pacesman Abu Hider bowled Mutumbami for 32 with a brilliant yorker before Taskin Ahmed took the wicket of Malcolm Waller for 36. Waller, man of the match in Zimbabwe's 31-run victory during

Wednesday's third contest, had again looked dangerous in an 18-ball innings before he was bowled. But Masakadza continued to blaze away and was joined at the climax of the innings by Zimbabwe skipper Elton Chigumbura, who made an unbeaten five on his return after taking a break in the previous two matches.

"I thought the guys showed a lot of character to come back from 2-0 down. They showed a lot of willpower, making such a good comeback," Masakadza said after the

match. "The momentum definitely helped after the third game. Obviously the guys got more confidence with what they were doing," he added. Bangladesh skipper Mortaza lamented his team's top-order batting collapse. "It was always going to be tough to chase 180 runs when you are four wickets down within the first three overs," he said. "It put us on the back foot at the very beginning of our innings." Bangladesh won the first two matches, respectively by four wickets and 42 runs. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

KHULNA, Bangladesh: Scoreboard of the fourth Twenty20 international between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna yesterday:

Zimbabwe		Sabbir Rahman c Sub (W. Masakdza) b Chisoro	1
V. Sibanda c Shakib b Mortaza	4	Imrul Kayes c Jongwe b Raza	18
H. Masakadza not out	93	Shakib Al Hasan b Chisoro	4
R. Mutumbami b Hider	32	Mahmudullah b Chisoro	54
M. Waller b Taskin	36	Nurul Hasan c Chigumbura b Raza	15
S. Raza st Nurul b Shakib	2	Mashrafe Mortaza c Sibanda b Jongwe	22
E. Chigumbura not out	5	Abu Hider c Masakadza b Madziva	14
Extras (b2, w6)	8	Arafat Sunny b Madziva	10
Total (for four wickets, 20 overs)	180	Taskin Ahmed not out	1
Fall of wickets: 1-4 (Sibanda), 2-84 (Mutumbami), 3-145 (Waller), 4-149 (Raza)		Extras (lb 2 w9)	11
Did not bat: P. Moor, L. Jongwe, T. Chisoro, N. Madziva, G. Cremer		Total (all out; 19 overs)	162
Bowling: Mortaza 4-0-40-1, Hider 4-0-33-1 (w3), Sunny 3-0-27-0, Taskin 4-0-31-1 (w1), Shakib 4-0-35-1 (w2), Sabbir 1-0-11-0		Fall of wickets: 1-12 (Soumya), 2-13 (Tamim), 3-13 (Sabbir), 4-17 (Shakib), 5-53 (Kayes), 6-110 (Nurul), 7-134 (Mahmudullah), 8-139 (Mortaza), 9-157 (Sunny), 10-162 (Hider)	
Bangladesh		Bowling: Chisoro 4-0-17-3, Madziva 4-0-34-4 (w1), Jongwe 3-0-35-1 (w1), 3-0-31-2 (w6), Cremer 4-0-27-0 (w1), Chigumbura 1-0-16-0.	
Tamim Iqbal b Madziva	1	Result: Zimbabwe won by 18 runs.	
Soumya Sarkar c Mutumbami b Madziva	1		

SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 2016

Kuwait Times

Sports



Stuttering Valencia held by Las Palmas in King's Cup **45**



MELBOURNE: Russia's Maria Sharapova returns against Lauren Davis of the US during their singles match on day five of the 2016 Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

SUPER SERENA, DJOKOVIC SOAR INTO 4TH ROUND

FEDERER DEFUSES DIMITROV; SHARAPOVA HITS 600

MELBOURNE: Novak Djokovic underlined his supremacy in men's tennis yesterday as he marched unstopably into the Australian Open fourth round-along with Serena Williams, who raced through in just 44 minutes. As Roger Federer reached a landmark 300th Grand Slam win, Djokovic still looked like the man to beat as he weathered a strong challenge from Andreas Seppi to reach the first weekend without dropping a set. The top seed and defending champion saved two third-set points against Seppi before reeling off the next four points to clinch it 6-1, 7-5, 7-6 (8/6), his 33rd straight victory over Italian opposition.

It was a moment that once again demonstrated the mental strength of the Serbian 10-time Grand Slam winner-against an awkward opponent who beat Federer at the same stage last year. Federer earlier went through 6-4, 3-6, 6-

1, 6-4 against Grigor "Baby Fed" Dimitrov, a man whose game is so similar to his own that he admitted it was like playing a mirror. It wasn't all plain-sailing for Federer, but with the win he became the first man to reach 300 Grand Slam victories and lies six away from Martina Navratilova's record of 306. "It's very exciting, I must tell you," said the Swiss, who also became the oldest man to reach the round of 16 since Andre Agassi in 2005. "Not something I ever aimed for or looked for, but when it happens, it's very special."

Dress for success

Maria Sharapova also weathered a fightback when she beat pint-sized American Lauren Davis 6-1, 6-7 (5/7), 6-0, helped by a strategic break and change of dress, for her 600th career win.

Sharapova left the court after she lost the second-set tiebreak but after she came back refreshed and revitalised, she raced to victory to set up a clash with Switzerland's Belinda Bencic. Williams had no such problems as she crushed overawed Russian teenager Daria Kasatkina 6-1, 6-1 in 44 minutes, the shortest match of the tournament so far. "I definitely think I played better today. Everything I've been trying to work on was kind of clicking today," said the buoyant world number one, who is seeking a record-equalling 22nd Grand Slam title. The busy day of action helped take the focus off corruption claims which have overshadowed the year's first Grand Slam after a report said players had been suspected of fixing matches but never faced action. Belgium's David Goffin awaits Federer in round four, after he beat Dominic Thiem 6-1, 3-6, 7-6 (7/2), 7-5 in a match

which included a generous act of sportsmanship from the Austrian.

Thiem, leading in the second set, told the umpire to give a point to Goffin rather than replay it after a Hawk-Eye challenge found a shot from the Belgian had landed in. Elsewhere, fourth seed Agnieszka Radwanska reeled off nine straight games to floor Monica Puig 6-4, 6-0, despite continuing pain from a left-leg injury which stopped her competing in Sydney last week. And Roberta Vinci was knocked out by Germany's Anna-Lena Friedsam in three sets, meaning there will be no rematch of last year's US Open semi-final when she halted Williams' bid for a calendar-year Grand Slam. In other matches, Japan's Kei Nishikori beat Guillermo Garcia-Lopez 7-5, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4 and Jo-Wilfried Tsonga ousted fellow Frenchman Pierre-Hugues Herbert 6-4, 7-6 (9/7), 7-6 (7/4). — AFP