

Police arrest 4,000 in Jleeb crackdown, free 3,000 later



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PROMINENT SAUDI CLERIC INJURED IN PHILIPPINES ATTACK

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines: An influential Saudi Arabian preacher was shot and wounded in a southern Philippine city yesterday, police said, adding security forces killed the gunman. Sheikh Ayed Al-Qarni was in hospital following the shooting in Zamboanga city but did not have life threatening injuries, local police spokeswoman Senior Inspector Helen Galvez said. "He is out of danger," Galvez told AFP by phone.

A police report said that Qarni was shot in the right shoulder, left arm and chest while his companion, a Saudi embassy attache, was wounded in his right thigh and left leg. However a Saudi embassy statement later said none of Qarni's companions were wounded. The police said that Qarni had just delivered a university lecture when a man came out of the crowd and opened fire with a .45 calibre pistol. Police acting as security escorts shot the attacker dead. "We pinned down the gunman. He's dead," Galvez said. She said the gunman was apparently a Filipino and that two other Filipino men, residents of Zamboanga, were later arrested after eyewitnesses said they were with the attacker.



Ayed Al-Qarni

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KUWAIT: MPs attend a parliament session at the National Assembly yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly yesterday approved a law allowing the government to withdraw KD 150 million from state reserves to support the defense ministry. Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah said the money will be used to make an advance payment for the purchase of Eurofighter warplanes. Head of the budgets committee MP Adnan Abdulsamad said the value of the warplanes deal is KD 2.6 billion. In January, the Assembly approved additional funds of KD 3 billion for military purchases over the next 10 years. The Eurofighter consortium said in September that Kuwait had agreed to buy 28 Typhoon jets.

Also, newly-appointed Minister of Electricity and Water Ahmad Al-Jassar took the constitutional oath before the Assembly yesterday in accordance with article 91 of the Kuwaiti constitution. Newly-elected MP Ali Al-Khamees also took the constitutional oath after winning the only seat in the third constituency's by-election that fell vacant with the death of late MP Nabeel Al-Fadhli. The parliament elected Khamees to replace Fadhli on various committees including the legislative and legal affairs committee, as well as others concerned with public utilities, youth and sport.

In other business, the Assembly passed a draft law adding a new paragraph to article 5 of law 47/1993 regarding housing law in the second deliberation, sending it to the government for further discussions and approval. The bill is primarily intended to relieve the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) of prior scrutiny by the Audit Bureau and the law on public tenders for five years ending March 31, 2021. But, it has to report its financial situation to the Assembly annually. It also aims to enable the PAHW to speed up the implementation of housing projects mentioned in its program of action, with its activities to remain under the Audit Bureau's subsequent control.



TEHRAN: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani (right) unveils the Saina domestically built car while visiting the International Car Industry Show accompanied by Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade Mohammad Reza Nematzadeh yesterday. — AP

18 KILLED IN OMAN BUS CRASH

ARAB GOVT DEBT RISES SHARPLY IN 2015: S&P

DUBAI: Borrowing by leading Arab governments has more than doubled last year and is forecast to remain high in 2016, Standard and Poor's ratings agency reported yesterday. The debt taken by 11 Arab nations rated by the agency, including the oil-rich Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, shot up to \$143 billion last year from \$70.6 billion in 2014, S&P said in a report. Last year's figure includes \$30 billion debt by Iraq which was added to the list for the first time.

The governments of the GCC states - Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates - borrowed \$40 billion last year, including \$26 billion by OPEC heavyweight Saudi Arabia, the agency said. Egypt topped the list with \$44 billion borrowed in 2015, it said. S&P projects that borrowing by the same Arab nations will drop only six percent to \$134 billion, of which the GCC share will be \$45 billion.

The 2016 projections are based on the assumption that most GCC countries will draw down on their huge fiscal reserves to finance budget deficits resulting from low oil revenues. The gross total commercial debt by Arab governments is forecast

Continued on Page 13

DUBAI: A bus traveling through north-western Oman's desert crashed into a truck and a passing car later slammed into the wreckage early yesterday morning, killing at least 18 people and injuring 16 others, police said. Authorities received first word of the crash near the Nahdah area on the road connecting the cities of Fahud and Ibri around 1 am, Oman police spokesman Mohammed bin Salama Al-Hashimi said. Fahud and

Ibri are cities west of the capital, Muscat. He said those hurt in the crash had injuries ranging from serious to minor and had been transported to hospitals throughout the sultanate. The crash tipped the truck over, sending its contents - including plastic bags, cardboard boxes and other debris - all over the two-lane road. The roof of the bus was partly torn off.

Continued on Page 13



Image shows the site of an accident that occurred in the early hours of yesterday on the road between Ibri and Fahud in western Oman. — AFP

ROUHANI: VOTERS CHOSE 'RIGHT AND PROPER PATH'

TEHRAN: Iranian voters chose "the right and proper path for the country", moderate President Hassan Rouhani said yesterday after final election results showed his allies had made significant gains. Friday's twin elections - to parliament and to top clerical committee, the Assembly of Experts - were crucial for the president and a de-facto referendum on his administration after its nuclear deal with world powers.

In the parliamentary election, hardliners who vocally opposed Rouhani's diplomacy with the West and his moves to open Iran up to foreign investment were soundly beaten by reformists. Conservatives also lost seats. "The owners of this country are the people... they determine the path and direction of this country," the president said. "I thank our intelligent and brave people who have taken a step forward," he said at an auto industry conference in Tehran.

Buoyed by new backing from reformists supportive of the government, the president urged a spirit of cooperation among MPs from across Iran's political spectrum. "If there are still some who think that the country must be in confrontation with others, they still haven't got the message of 2013," he said, alluding to his land-

slide presidential election victory on a pledge to end years of standoff over Iran's nuclear program and crippling sanctions.

No single group won a decisive share of parliament's 290 seats, but tallies suggested the pragmatic Rouhani would be able to forge a working majority. The main conservative list secured 103 MPs, reformists and moderates 95, and independents 14, while five seats went to minorities and four to candidates with no single affiliation. While conservatives were wiped out by reformists in Tehran, they retained some seats in other cities and enjoyed strong support in rural areas. Some 69 constituencies had no clear winner, meaning a second round runoff in April in a field that has more conservatives than reformists and moderates.

The outcome signalled strong public support for the nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, an agreement steered by the president which saw the lifting of sanctions in January. "Cooperation should be everyone's concern. Today the era of confrontation is over," Rouhani added. Friday's second election for the Assembly of Experts also produced high-profile gains for Rouhani and his closest allies.

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LADEN LEFT MILLIONS FOR JIHAD

WASHINGTON: In his handwritten will, Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden claimed he had about \$29 million in personal wealth - the bulk of which he wanted to be used "on jihad, for the sake of Allah". The will was released yesterday in a batch of more than 100 documents seized in a May 2011 raid that killed bin Laden at his compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan.

The Al-Qaeda leader planned to divide his fortune among his relatives, but wanted most of it spent to conduct the work of the Islamic extremist terror network behind the Sept 11 attacks. The will did not disclose much detail about where he amassed his wealth, but bin Laden's father ran a successful construction company in Saudi Arabia for years, and the will noted that \$12 million was from his brother on behalf of the Bin Laden Co.

The threat of sudden death was on his



Osama bin Laden

mind years before the fatal raid in Pakistan. "If I am to be killed," he wrote in a 2008 letter to his father, "pray for me a lot and give continuous charities in my name, as I will be in great need for support to reach the permanent home". In a final wistful paragraph, he asks his father for forgiveness "if I have done what you did not like".

The letters were included in a batch of doc-

uments released by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. They address a range of topics, including fractures between Al-Qaeda and Al-Qaeda in Iraq, which eventually splintered off into what is now known as the Islamic State; and bin Laden's concerns about his organization's public image and his desire to depict it as a united network.

In a letter to one of his wives who had been living in Iran, bin Laden expressed worry that her visit to a dentist could have presented the Iranians an opportunity to implant a small chip under her skin, apparently as a tracking device. "My dear wife," he began. "I was told that you went to a dentist in Iran, and you were concerned about a filling she put in for you. Please let me know in detail... any suspicions that any of the brothers may have about chips planted in any way."

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Sheikh Intisar Salem Ali Al-Sabah and her team. They delivered to His Highness a copy of a film depicting the story of martyr Fa'eq Abduljalil.— Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Brigadier Dr Khaled Al-Kanderi.

AMIR, CROWN PRINCE MEET SCHOLARS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a number of scholars at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness the Amir received Sheikh Intisar Salem Ali Al-Sabah and her team. They delivered to His Highness a copy of a film depicting the story of martyr Fa'eq Abduljalil.

His Highness the Amir received Dr Athari Salem Salman Al-Sabah who presented a copy of her doctorate degree on constitutions balances in legislative practices. His Highness the Amir received Brigadier Dr Khaled Al-Kanderi who also presented a copy of his doctorate degree on philosophy in Business Administration. His Highness the Amir then received Dr Majed Al-Enezi, who presented a copy of his doctorate degree on Sharia Politics

of Emam Ibn Hazm. His Highness the Amir received as well Dr Dalal Al-Buajjan who presented a copy of doctorate degree on Molecular Biology. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also met with Sheikh Intisar Al-Sabah and her team, as well as Brigadier Dr Khaled Al-Kanderi.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince separately received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince also received President of Arab Shooting Union and President of Kuwait Shooting Union Duajj Al-Otaibi, and the Union's members. The meeting was attended by chairman of Protocols at

His Highness the Crown Prince Diwan Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

In other news, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to Sheikh Hamid bin Rashid Al-Nuaimi, the Ruler of Ajman Emirates in UAE, on the demise of Sheikh Mohammad bin Nasser bin Rashid Al-Nuaimi, the son of the Deputy Ruler of Ajman.

In his cable His Highness voiced heartfelt and sincere condolences on the demise of Sheikh Mohammad, asking God Almighty to forgive him and to bring solace to his family. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.— KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets Egyptian Minister of Justice Advisor Ahmad Al-Zend.— KUNA

PM MEETS EGYPTIAN JUSTICE MINISTER

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday received the visiting Egyptian Minister of Justice Advisor Ahmad Al-Zend and his accompanying delegation. Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Yaqoub Al-Sane attended the meeting.

Later, First Deputy Prime Minister and

Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received the visiting Egyptian Minister. Justice Minister Sane also attended the meeting which was held at the National Assembly's headquarters. Zend arrived in Kuwait late Sunday and held talks with senior officials. A judicial and legal agreement was signed between the two sides.— KUNA



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CANBERRA: Kuwait's Ambassador to Australia Najeeb Al-Bader and Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, General Sir Peter Cosgrove participate in a ceremony to mark Kuwait's National and Liberation Days.—KUNA

AMBASSADOR LAUDS CANADA'S ROLE IN KUWAIT'S LIBERATION

CAPITALS: Kuwait's Ambassador to Canada Abdulhamid Al-Failakawi has commended Canada's role in the Liberation of Kuwait from the Iraqi invasion, 25 years ago. Failakawi recalled efforts of the Canadian troops in the war during a ceremony held by the Ministry of Veterans' Affairs in Ottawa on Saturday, marking the 25th anniversary of liberation.

The event was attended by a host of senior government officials, topped with Commander of the Royal Canadian Air Force and Chief of the Air Force Staff, who had taken part in the 1991 war. Diplomats from the member states of the international coalition that led the war also attended.

Failakawi voiced high appreciation by the Kuwaiti people over the sacrifices of more than 4,000 Canadian troops for the liberation of the country, upholding the values of freedom and democracy. He described Canada as a true friend, and stressed Kuwait's commitment to working hard for boosting bilateral ties in all fields, referring to a military cooperation agreement recently signed between the two countries.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Embassy in Australia celebrated the 55th anniversary of the National Day, the 25th anniversary of the Liberation Day and the 10th anniversary

of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's ascension to power.

The ceremony was attended by Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, General Sir Peter Cosgrove and his wife Lynne Cosgrove and Kuwait's Ambassador to Australia Najeeb Al-Bader, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives Bruce Scott, along with members of the diplomatic corps in Australia. The event was also attended by a number of Kuwaiti students in Australia, besides Kuwaiti embassy staff.

Kuwait's Ambassador to Australia Najeeb Al-Bader gave a speech before the audience, in which he expressed his appreciation to the Governor for attending the event, stressing the importance of bolstering bilateral ties between both countries. The diplomat also endorsed the joint cooperation between both nations in various fields and praised the firm position of Australia in supporting Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion.

Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, General Sir Peter Cosgrove meanwhile congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the advent of the national festivities.—KUNA



KUWAIT: The photo on the left provided by the Interior Ministry shows Assistant Undersecretary for General Security Major General Abdelfattah Al-Ali explains the security plan to Undersecretary Lieutenant General Suleiman Al-Fahad.

POLICE ARREST 4,000 IN JLEEB CRACKDOWN, FREE 3,000 LATER

MAN LEAPS TO DEATH IN BANK BRANCH

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Over four thousand people were arrested during a crackdown on lawbreakers in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh yesterday, but around 3,000 were later released, the Ministry of Interior announced. Out of 4,015 people detained during the campaign, only 1,053 were sent for deportation while the remaining 2,962 were released after their papers were inspected, the ministry's Relations and Security Media Department said in a statement. Policemen raided targeted places in order to gain total control over all outlets of the area and keep suspects from escaping, the statement reads. Undersecretary Lieutenant General Suleiman Al-Fahad led the 'wide scale security campaign,' and was accompanied by Assistant Undersecretary for General Security Major General Abdelfattah Al-Ali, and Assistant Undersecretary for Central Operations Major General Jamal Al-Sayegh.

Suicide

A Bangladeshi man jumped to his death from the second floor inside a local bank's branch, said security sources. The case was filed as a sui-

cide. The exact motives behind the incident were not immediately known. Investigations are ongoing.

Infant found

Investigations are underway to identify a child who was left inside a box that was found near camel pens in the desert yesterday. The boy was taken to a nearby medical facility. Police are working on identifying the infants' parents in order to arrest and question them.

Fisherman drowns

An Asian fisherman drowned when he went under the waters to repair a boat but never came out. A rescue team went in search for the victim and were able to find his body an hour later. The body was taken by Criminal Evidence Investigation Department personnel to the corner. An investigation was opened in the case.

No injuries in fire

Firefighters from three fire stations tackled a blaze reported at a construction material store. Firefighters from the Shuhada, Shuwaikh and Mishref fire stations first isolated the warehouse where the fire was reported before tackling the

flames. No injuries were reported.

Drug possession

Two persons were arrested at a checkpoint in Mangaf while being in an inebriated state, according to the police report. The two, Kuwaitis, were arrested with possession of 28 suspected illicit tablets. They were sent to concerned authorities.

Students safe

A vehicle turned turtle in front of a girl's school in Jahra, but no injuries were reported.

Municipality statistics

A statistical report prepared by Kuwait Municipality's Public Relations Department revealed that the Violations Removal Department collected KD 3,215 in fines and equipment moving fees during January 2016. The report further indicates that the number of violating signs reached 157, while 31 warnings were issued and 36 signs were removed. The number of cleanliness violations reached 13, while 59 warning stickers were placed on abandoned cars, the report says.



TUNIS: Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah is pictured soon after arriving to Tunisia to partake in the 33rd Arab interior ministers' meeting. — KUNA

INTERIOR MINISTER URGES WIDER ARAB SECURITY COOPERATION

TUNIS: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah underlined yesterday the importance of broader control cooperation among Arab security agencies to counter growing security threats.

In statements to KUNA and Kuwait TV upon arrival to Tunisia to partake in the 33rd Arab interior ministers' meeting, which start today, Sheikh Mohammad said that establishing effective cooperation and coordination among Arab interior ministries has become a must to help

fight terrorism, organized, cybercrimes and other challenges to Arab countries' security and stability. He explained that no economic or social development could be achieved in absence of security and stability.

Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled pointed out that the rapidly developing technology has left some negative effects on security. Arab security bodies should be equipped with the latest technology to prevent cybercrimes and misuse of the new technology by extremists to pro-

mote their ideologies, he said.

On the meeting, he stated the ministers would tackle a wide array of key issues relevant to the security situation, challenges and means to boost mutual cooperation. The minister was received at the airport earlier today by Interior Minister Hedi Majdoub, Justice Minister Omar Mansour, Arab Interior Ministers' Council Secretary General Mohammad Bin Ali Koman, Kuwait Ambassador to Tunisia Ali Al-Thefiri and several embassy staff members. — KUNA

KUWAITI KILLED BY PET LION IN SAUDI ARABIA

HAFR AL BATIN, Saudi Arabia: A young Kuwaiti man died yesterday after being attacked by a pet lioness. The man was mauled by the lioness at a recreational facility in Hafra Al Batin, near the border with Kuwait, while trying to train the lioness. The main trainer for the lioness had left the man to go to the shop when the attack happened. Neither of the men involved were immediately named. The Kuwaiti man died from injuries to his neck and thighs. The main trainer, who called for help, killed the lioness after the attack.



A picture that went viral on social media and allegedly shows the lioness after it was shot dead following its fatal attack.

Keeping wild animals, especially lions and tigers, has grown in popularity in recent years in the Gulf Cooperation Council states despite authorities warning against the practice. In late 2014, a Filipina housemaid died after being mauled by a lion kept domestically at a house in Kuwait. Lourdes Hingco Abejuela died at a hospital in Kuwait days after she was attacked by the wild animal. Kuwait's parliament has called for legislation prohibiting the purchase or sale of exotic animals to private individuals. Still wild cats and other exotic animals can be purchased through social media accounts in Kuwait.

NGOS SUBJECTED EQUALLY TO THE LAW: MINISTER

By Meshal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Planning and Development Hind Al-Subaih stressed that all nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and charities are equally subjected to the law, adding that the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL) and other relevant authorities' approval is a must to allow any of them carry out a project. Referring to allowing the Social Reform Society alone to build schools, institutes, universities and training centers, Subaih denied that this was something new and stressed that it was already included in the society's basic charter and that charters of other charities like the Islamic Heritage Revival Society, Al-Najat, Al-Theqalain, Abdullah Al-Nouri and Direct Aid charities also include such goals and allows them to build educational institutes. "However, and regardless of the basic charter, any charity or NGO cannot carry out any project without MSAL's written permission," she warned.

Subaih added that a committee was being formed to reassess all NGOs' and charities' primary laws as well as the ideal basic charter set in 2005. Subaih said that MSAL was currently investigating over 800 cases of unlawfully receiving social aid. "There will be no tolerance with any unlawful aid recipients," she stressed.

Network restored

The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) has located a cut in a cable providing some companies, public establishments, Kuwait University and a number of ministries with Internet services and landlines and it is being fixed and will be reactivated soon. In other news, MPW's assistant undersecretary for roads engineering Ahmad Al-Hessan said that 83.5 percent of building, executing and maintaining intersections along the middle part of Jahra road have been completed.

Rainwater

Kuwait Municipality stressed that its teams were fully alert to deal with rainwater accumulations in various areas in order to ensure steady traffic flows on all roads and within residential areas. In this regard, the cleaning manager at Ahmadi municipality Faihan Al-Mutairi said that his teams had used municipality pumps to remove such accumulated rainwater in Fahd Al-Ahmad.

Signs for services

Municipal Council member Yousef Al-Ghareeb suggested using signs at each area's entrance showing the location of the area's police station, polyclinic, petrol station, co-op, co-op branches, banks and other services.

WARBA BANK CELEBRATES NATIONAL DAYS WITH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL PATIENTS

KUWAIT: Being a leading Islamic bank operating in full respect to the Islamic Shariah which is marked with tolerance and mercy and in line with its corporate social responsibility program, Warba bank has recently arranged for a visit to the National Bank of Kuwait children's hospital and celebrated the 55th commemoration of independence and

the 25th of liberation with children with cancer. The visit, held on Feb 22nd 2016 provided memorable moments for both Warba Bank Public Relations team and the kids who have spent joyous moments inspired from the national celebrations for kids.

The visit program included a series of entertainment sessions ranged from contests

to games performed by kids' beloved cartoon characters which reflected the national colors and overwhelmed kids with a deep national sensation marked with Kuwait love.

Warba bank PR team was keen to spend quality time with children, where they were keen to visit all kids, out of those who weren't able to attend the celebration due to their health condition, in their rooms giving them gifts and national day collaterals.

The occasion was a true celebration for both kids and parents who have spent an unforgettable time in an ambience full of joy and happiness which greatly helped to wipe, even temporarily, the moments of pain and suffer.

Warba bank stated: "we take pride to have been able to draw a smile on our children faces which is was the prime objective to achieve out of our visit to them". "Warba bank is deeply committed towards the community therefore we wanted to celebrate with the children of Kuwait the occasion and simultaneously giving them our support during the world cancer month"

Since its inception, Warba bank has been keen to support its leading position in the Kuwaiti society as being the fast-growing bank operating according to Islamic Shariah and as the leading Kuwaiti institution committed to secure both prosperity and happiness of the society.



KUWAIT: Information and Youth Affairs Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah meets KRSC Chief Dr Hilal Al-Sayer and his deputy Anwar Al-Hasawi. — KUNA

INFO MINISTER LAUDS KRCS' HUMANITARIAN ENDEAVORS

KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah lauded humanitarian work carried out by Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS). This remark was made by Sheikh Salman after a meeting with KRSC Chief Dr Hilal Al-Sayer and his deputy Anwar Al-Hasawi, the Ministry of Information said in a press statement yesterday.

The KRCS' officials expressed their appreciation to the ministry on highlighting KRCS aid campaigns delivered to the Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan, as well as other humanitarian assistance dispatched to the displaced in Iraq and Yemen. The Minister was given a book that documents 50 years of KRCS' humanitarian work. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Students are awarded following a mock trial organized by the Kuwait International Law Society. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



LAW SOCIETY HOLDS MOCK TRIAL FOR KU STUDENTS

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The Kuwait International Law Society held a mock trial on Monday at

the Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa. Twenty-two students from the faculty of law at Kuwait University (KU) competed in the event, which was the final

stage of the competition.

The activity was held to give an opportunity to law students to practice the theoretic information they have

learnt at the faculty. The students presented mock cases related to international law and used examples of real conflicts between some countries in the human

rights and trade relations fields. The winners were then awarded by the jury committee consisting of general prosecutors and judges.

YOUNG KUWAITIS TRAINED IN THE CULINARY ARTS

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: People in Kuwait are known for their passion for food and are always on the lookout for new restaurants and cuisines. There is even now a plan to make Kuwait the 'food capital of the world' and there are many successful concepts. As part of these efforts to encourage young citizens to develop their entrepreneurial passions in the culinary arts, a local chef collaborated with the Ministry of Youth Affairs to organize an initiative aimed at offering young would-be restaurateurs' and chefs basic training on the food industry in Kuwait.

Kuwaiti entrepreneur Fatma Al-Tawari recently launched and successfully implemented the Houf initiative for strengthening and improving cooking and culinary skills of amateurs and professionals in Kuwait. The ministry did a thorough feasibility study before approving the initiative. It also provides strategic sponsorship and financial support to the project.

From idea to reality

This month-long initiative was launched in February, with registration open to Kuwaitis between 14 to 34 years of age of both genders. "This initiative targets those who have ideas related to the food business or small entrepreneurs. What inspired me to come up with this idea was my own business in this field (preparing sauces and spices), and I met many young entrepreneurs and amateurs aiming to start a business with great ideas and passion but lacking any guidance. For instance, there are no professional photographers specializing in food imagery, proper marketing, or even how to prepare a dish for 200 people," Tawari told Kuwait Times.

Houf is made up of eight programs. "Initially, we planned to have 400 par-



Fatma Al-Tawari

ticipants, so that each program will include 50 participants. But we only accepted 50 participants since they all wanted to register for all eight programs. About 270 people registered online, and only 50 were chosen, with priority for those who registered first. I wanted to return the favor to the community through this initiative," she added.

Training program

Various activities were held as part of this initiative. "Houf includes cooking workshops, field trips, lectures and other activities. Participants visited catering companies, factories, Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company and others. I was keen to let the participants witness the projects and catering activities personally, so we visited some agricultural projects in various farms in Wafra. In this way, we introduced the two parties to each other so they can do business together, and the farms can supply their restaurants. The same applied to the catering companies. We also visited Safir Hotel in Bneid Al-Gar," explained Tawari.

"I supervised the program in gener-

al, and I also gave lectures for three days on how to prepare sauces, spices, pickles and mixing different types of herbs. I told them from where they should buy the spices, how should they prepare the sauces, etc. The participants also attended a live chef station at Shuwaikh Market, where some workshops were also held. We also held lectures at the Kuwait National Library, where participants learned skills such as table etiquette, catering, specialized photography, basics of professional cooking, and many others. I also created a WhatsApp group that included all the participants including the trainers, so they could share their experiences and knowledge," Tawari stated.

This initiative could be repeated again. "I would really like to repeat this initiative as I received a lot of positive feedback and the demand was high from both the participants and the companies, and even the trainers praised this experience. The trainers were from Kuwait from various fields including nutritionists, chefs, a doctor who owns a laboratory for testing food products and others," concluded Tawari.

SCOUTING MOVEMENT IN KUWAIT PROMOTES PEACE: MINISTER

KUWAIT: The scouting movement in Kuwait always promoted friendship and peace since its inception, said Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Bader Al-Essa said yesterday. Speaking to the press after the opening of the eighth conference for the Arab Scouting Federation, Dr Essa said that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's patronage of the event reflected the strong desire on part of Kuwait to further contribute to the Arab scouting movement.

The scouting movement is an extension of its educational counterpart, said the minister, affirming that it taught young individuals all about honor, dignity, and the values of helping others under all circumstances. The Kuwaiti minister welcomed the delegations partaking in the conference and hoped that the event would contribute to the development of the scouting movement in the Arab world.

Meanwhile, head of the Arab Scouting Federation Mohammad Al-Jraiya thanked the Kuwaiti leadership for its generous patronage of the conference and took the chance to congratulate Kuwait on the advent of its national celebrations. He called on the heads of the Arab delegations to work



KUWAIT: Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Bader Al-Essa opens the eighth conference for the Arab Scouting Federation. — KUNA

together to come out with resolutions that would be beneficial for the scouting movement in the region.

Jraiya also welcomed the recent addition of the UAE and Qatar in the membership of the organization, affirming that more countries are welcomed to join. The chief topic of this event will be the establishment of an online magazine that would highlight scouting activities in the Arab world, said the official.

In the meantime, head of the Kuwaiti Scouting Federation Mohammad Al-Dubiyan lauded during his speech the tremendous efforts played by the Arab federation, affirming that it played a major role in coordinating efforts to boost relations amongst members. The official also hoped that the conference would come out with resolutions in favor of developing the scouting movement in the region. — KUNA

HEALTH MINISTRY HOSTS 21 INT'L DOCTORS IN MARCH

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health announced yesterday that it would be hosting 21 international visiting consultants in public hospitals during March. The visits come within the framework of the visiting doctors' program which aims to share their experiences with international universities and medical centers, said Director of Public Relations and Media Faisal Al-

Dosari. The visits also give patients the opportunity to receive advanced treatment without going through the trouble of seeking medical care abroad.

The visiting doctors are set to lecture and participate in scientific workshops, in addition to medical seminars that would help improve services provided for the residents of Kuwait.

The consultants are highly qualified doctors specializing in Neurosurgery and ophthalmology, orthopedics and general surgery, as well as in fields of Chemotherapy, oncology, nutrition, Physical medicine and rehabilitation, he added. The selection of doctors is based on recommendations made by the various heads of medical departments. — KUNA

KUWAIT KEEN ON ACTIVATING HEALTH COOPERATION WITH SOUTH KOREA

SEOUL: Kuwait is keen on activating cooperation with South Korea in the health field, Kuwait's Ambassador in Seoul Jassem Al-Budaiwi said yesterday. Budaiwi made the remarks on the sidelines of his meeting with Minister of Health and Welfare in South Korea Chung Chin-young during the opening of the International Health Service Center in Seoul for international patients to provide health services for them.

The diplomat stressed the importance of South Korean President Park Geun-hye's visit to Kuwait last March, followed by the visit of Kuwait's Minister of Health Dr Ali Al-Obaidi to South Korea that was aimed to develop bilateral relations and cooperation in the health field. He also praised the level of medical services in South Korea's hospitals, including highly-qualified doctors in various fields. — KUNA



SEOUL: Kuwaiti Ambassador in Seoul Jassem Al-Budaiwi is pictured with Minister of Health and Welfare in South Korea Chung Chin-young. — KUNA



KIB DISTRIBUTES GIFTS TO PARENTS OF NEWBORNS ON FEBRUARY 25, 26

KUWAIT: While celebrating the National and Liberation Days, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) distributed special gifts among parents of the newborns on February 25th and 26th, in cooperation with Hadi Clinic, one of the leading hospitals in Kuwait. This comes as a result of the bank's aim to share the celebrations of these two special occasions with citizens and expats.

The Team Leader - Corporate Communications at KIB, Fahad Al-Sarhan said, "As a leading Islamic institution, KIB strives to participate in such occasions as part of its social responsibility program; and this year we went the extra mile and presented special

gifts to parents of the babies who were born in Hadi Clinic on February 25th and 26th."

On the other side, Dr Faten Fahad Al-Mailam, Deputy General Manager of Hadi Clinic expressed her pride and gratitude to have such initiative with KIB, which translates Hadi Clinic's approach and strategy to provide high-quality healthcare services that set new standards in the private health sector. She also praised KIB's active role in supporting various social activities and mainly the medical sector that is considered one of the most vital sectors that serves a wide base of segments, both citizens and expats.

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Kuwait, 2nd March, 2016

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Pachauri charged with stalking, harassment

ISRAELI TROOPS STRAY INTO CAMP, SPARKING CLASHES



ATLANTA: Voters line up to fill out forms to place their ballots at Saint Philip AME church on Super Tuesday yesterday. — AFP



TRUMP, CLINTON SET FOR BIG WINS
 FRONTRUNNERS EYE 'SUPER TUESDAY' BOOST

WASHINGTON/AUGUSTA: Donald Trump looked poised to strengthen his lead in the Republican presidential race when 11 states vote yesterday, an outcome likely to intensify concerns among party leaders who consider him a usurper. In the Democratic race, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton would go a long way toward cementing her path to the nomination if she scores big victories of her own over democratic socialist Bernie Sanders on Super Tuesday.

Opinion polls showed Trump leading in nearly all the states that will hold primary contests or caucuses, many of them in the South. The exception appeared to be Texas, the home state of US Senator Ted Cruz, who enjoyed a narrow lead and was in desperate need of a victory. Super Tuesday is the biggest single day of state-by-state contests to select party nominees for the Nov 8 election to succeed Democratic President Barack Obama. Voting stretches from eastern states to Texas and Minnesota, with the first polls closing at 7 pm EST (midnight GMT) in Vermont, Virginia and Georgia and first results expected soon after.

Trump has stunned many in the Republican establishment with campaign pledges such as building a wall along the US southern border with Mexico, deporting 11 million illegal immigrants and slapping a temporary ban on Muslims entering the country. The former reality TV star, who fires up crowds by mocking his rivals and critics, faced heavy criticism this week over his failure to reject white supremacists' support during a CNN interview on Sunday. Trump later disavowed that support, saying he had not heard the questions

properly, but his explanations failed to satisfy many.

"If a person wants to be the nominee of the Republican Party, there must be no evasion and no games. They must reject any group or cause that is built on bigotry," House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan said in Washington yesterday. Ryan did not mention Trump by name but his target was clear. With a string of victories on Tuesday, Trump would advance his strong lead over Cruz, US Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, Ohio Governor John Kasich and retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson.

Republican Unease

The prospect of a Trump victory has alarmed Republican Party leaders, many of whom do not support his positions and who believe Clinton would easily defeat him in November if she becomes the Democratic nominee. The crossfire between Trump and establishment Republicans threatens to rip the party apart at a time when it will need to generate momentum behind a prospective nominee. That worries some Republican strategists looking ahead to the nominating convention in July. "If Trump continues winning, disappointed party elites will need to reconcile with supporting the party nominee," said Tim Albrecht, a Republican strategist in Iowa.

Rubio saw his support increase among Republican voters after a strong debate performance last week, rising to 20 percent from 14 percent, a Reuters-Ipsos poll found. Trump still dominated the field with 42 percent support. Trump cites his high poll numbers as proof he is not divid-

ing the Republican Party but expanding its ranks. "We're getting people into the party we've never had before," he told ABC's "Good Morning America" yesterday. "We're getting Democrats coming in, we're getting independents coming."

One of those independents, Gwendolyn Beck, was putting up Trump signs across Arlington, one of Virginia's most liberal areas, when she was confronted by a Sanders supporter carrying a 2-year-old. "I came here to tell you you're a terrible person," Mark Blacknell, 40, told Beck before walking into a nearby polling place. He said later he was appalled to see Trump signs being put up in the Washington suburb. The encounter reflected the acrimonious nature of the 2016 campaign and the divisions it has laid bare among Republicans, adding to the traditional split between the two major American political parties.

Clinton Leads in South

On the Democratic side, polls show Clinton, who has won three of the first four Democratic contests, with a big lead in six Southern states that have large blocs of black voters, who have been slow to warm to Sanders, a US senator from Vermont. Sanders has been aiming for wins in five other states yesterday - Vermont, neighboring Massachusetts, Oklahoma, Minnesota and Colorado. One factor helping Clinton is a focus on getting her voters to make their choices early. More than half the delegates needed to secure the Democratic nomination will be chosen in March with contests in 28 states, and more than a third of those have early voting. — Reuters

BEFORE TRUMP, THERE WAS VENTURA AND A BIG VICTORY

CHICAGO: He was a candidate few thought stood a chance. Best known as a television showman, he seemed more interested in self-

promotion than winning public office. But soon he was dominating media coverage and debate stages, each pungent remark only endearing him more to a disenchanted public. Then Jesse "The Body" Ventura became governor of Minnesota.



MINNEAPOLIS: In this Jan 7, 2007, file photo, potential Reform Party presidential candidate Donald Trump (left) speaks at a news conference with Gov Jesse Ventura. — AP

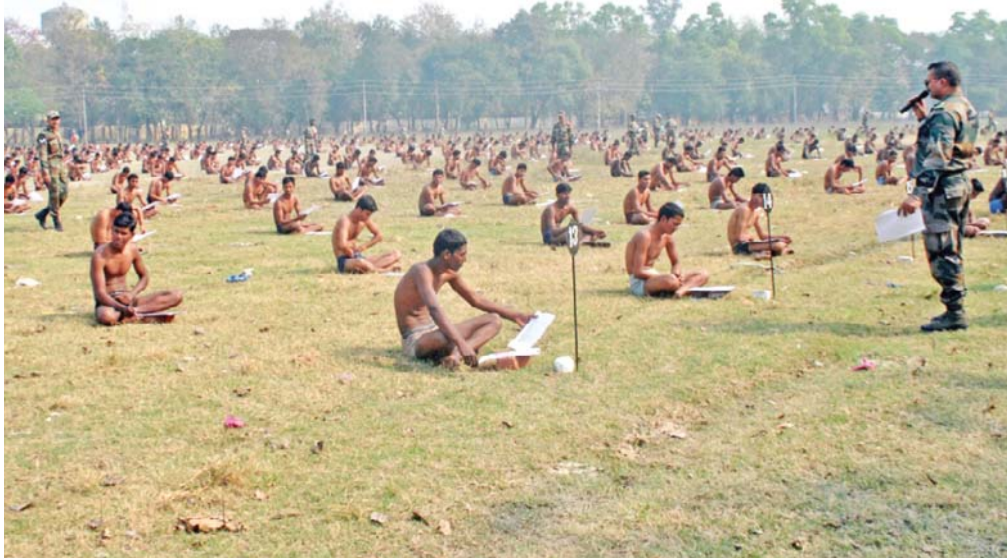
Well before Donald Trump shook up the race for the Republican presidential nomination, there was Ventura, the former professional wrestler, radio talk show host and suburban mayor who - in his own election-night words - "shocked the world" with his improbable 1998 victory.

As Trump looks to expand his delegate lead in Super Tuesday contests and further show that he's for real, the similarities between his campaign and Ventura's continue to grow. The billionaire businessman enters the biggest day of the race so far with several wins under his belt and exuding confidence about his chances in the contests across the Deep South. His top rivals, Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio, are struggling to contain him.

"Jesse's success is the perfect case history to show this can happen," said Bill Hillsman, a Minneapolis ad man and close Ventura adviser who came up with several memorable campaign ads, including one that depicted Ventura as an action figure who tells special interests: "I don't want your stupid money." — AP

INDIAN ARMY CANDIDATES STRIPPED TO FOIL CHEATING

NEW DELHI: India's army made candidates at a recruitment day in Bihar take a written exam in their underwear to prevent them from cheating, reports said yesterday, after a spate of exam scan-



MUZAFFARPUR, India: Indian army candidates sit in their underwear in a field as they take a written exam after being asked to remove their clothing to deter cheating during a recruitment day on Feb 28, 2016. — AFP

dals in the eastern state. Images in the Indian Express showed dozens of men sitting cross-legged in a field clad only in underpants, with many resting their test papers on their thighs,

while a uniformed supervisor stood guard.

The paper quoted an army source as saying they took the radical step to "save time on frisking so many people" after more than 1,000 candidates turned up. "We had no option but to comply with the instructions even though it felt odd," one would-be recruit told the paper. An army spokesman in New Delhi refused to comment on the report, which came a year after police in Bihar said they had arrested around 1,000 aspiring officers for paying people to sit their exams for them.

The High Court in the Bihar capital Patna yesterday asked the defense ministry for an explanation of the unusual move, after a lawyer filed a petition against the army. Cheating - using methods ranging from old-fashioned crib sheets to high-tech spy cameras - is common in India, mostly to secure good school grades and highly-sought government jobs.

The impoverished state of Bihar, also one of the most populous, is especially notorious. Last year a scandal in the state that saw relatives scale the walls of a school exam centre to pass notes to candidates went viral and made national headlines. In the western state of Gujarat, authorities on Sunday blocked mobile phone Internet services in a string of cities and towns where entrance exams were taking place for public service jobs, to stamp out cheating. — AFP

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EU TO CALL FOR EMERGENCY HUMANITARIAN AID TO GREECE

BRUSSELS: The European Union is proposing increased humanitarian aid for Greece, where more than 20,000 refugees and migrants are stuck after borders were tightened along the Balkans preventing them from trekking north to wealthier parts of Europe.

The European Commission, the EU executive, said yesterday it will put forward a plan on Wednesday to offer emergency financial assistance for humanitarian crises inside the 28-nation bloc, comparable with operations it has launched elsewhere in the world. The

Commission's spokesman, Margaritis Schinas, told a regular news briefing in Brussels that the plan was necessary "to prevent humanitarian suffering as a result of an unprecedented number of people arriving in the EU". Schinas said the Commission was very concerned with the outbreak of violence at the Greek-Macedonian border. He was speaking as the bloc is gearing up to a summit on Monday with Turkey, the main departure site for the vast majority of people heading to Europe.

More than a million refugees and

migrants arrived in Europe last year—mostly via Turkey to Greece—and another 130,000 have reached the continent so far in 2016.

Overwhelmed, Greece and other countries along the main migration route have tended to wave the people through and the influx has brought Europe's Schengen zone of free travel to the verge of collapse. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker talked to Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras on Monday and European Council President Donald Tusk will visit Austria, Slovenia,

Croatia, Macedonia, Greece and Turkey this week.

Brussels and Berlin, which are battling to make a joint European plan to alleviate the migration crisis work, are banking on Turkey to sharply reduce the number of people embarking for Europe, many of whom have fled the war in Syria. But a growing number of EU states are resorting to unilaterally tightening their own borders, seeking to control the flow of people and prevent a spike in the arrivals many expect later in March as the weather improves. Austria, the last stop for

refugees and migrants heading to their top destination Germany, infuriated Athens, Berlin and Brussels last month by announcing daily caps on the number of people it processes. Chancellor Werner Faymann defended the step, saying Austria cannot become a waiting room for Germany. Tusk, in Vienna on the first leg of his pre-summit tour along the Balkans migration route, said after talks with Faymann: "We must face together the consequences of our decisions. The country that we must support in particular is Greece." — Reuters

CAMERON'S MORNING AFTER: HOW BREXIT DIVORCE GETS MESSY

BRUSSELS: If Britons vote to leave the European Union in their June 23 referendum, Prime Minister David Cameron can effectively file the divorce papers in person to fellow EU leaders the next morning in Brussels. Just how he will arrange his diary, having scheduled the vote on the first day of the regular midsummer EU summit, is not yet clear; from then on, the process of "Brexit" will only get messier, as Europe's fractious leaders haggle their way through an unprecedented break-up that could take years to complete.

Article 50 of the Treaty of the European Union lets a state quit and sets a deadline to negotiate terms within two years. If by mid-2018, Britain has not agreed issues like trade terms or the status of foreign residents, its membership will simply end — unless it and all 27 other EU states agree an extension.

Cameron's government said this week, however, that rewriting British laws post-Brexit and renegotiating relations in trade and other fields could take a decade, with an EU divided over other crises and smarting from Britain's rejection.

No one has a clear idea how events will unfold once voting ends at 10 p.m. (2100 GMT) on Thursday, June 23. Instant exit polls will deliver a verdict to Brussels just as EU leaders are finishing dinner at the halfway point of their two-day meeting.

If Cameron stays in London for the result, as some British officials expect, he will fly in the following morning, either triumphant or defeated and facing the possible end of his own career and opening negotiations on withdrawing from the bloc.

His experience of sitting out the Thursday summit session, where he may delegate his vote to an ally, possibly the Irish or Dutch, would be one that he, or his successor, would have to get used to. Once Britain gives notice it is quitting, it will be excluded from EU discussions on how to handle that process.

Cameron, who is campaigning to stay on the basis of a reform package that he agreed 10 days ago, says he will not delay in notifying Brussels if Britons vote to leave. It is not clear, however, that he could or would do that formally the next day.

"IT'S OVER"

Some supporters of a Brexit vote have suggested that formal notification of Britain's plan to quit could be delayed to give EU leaders time to offer better terms than Cameron's deal, possibly to a new

British premier if Cameron is forced out.

That seems unlikely, however, and EU leaders have insisted there can be no coming back from a "Leave" vote once London has formally started the clock ticking on Article 50 — ruling out also that Britons could hold a second referendum and change their minds to stay in if they do not like the outcome of talks. "We negotiated a package to try and save our marriage," one senior EU official said.

"If Britain votes to go, it's over. We negotiate divorce." Although no member state has voted to leave in the 60 years of the Union and its earlier incarnations, territories such as Algeria have emerged into independence. But the most recent departure, when Greenland quit the EEC membership it shared with Denmark until 1985, was so tortuous, even though the trade links were tiny, that the 2009 Lisbon Treaty redrawing EU law set the first rules for withdrawal.

"Any Member State may decide to withdraw from the Union," states the new Article 50. An agreement on terms needs approval by a qualified majority of the remaining member states and the European Parliament. If there were no deal in two years, which veteran trade negotiators think improbable, Britain's EU membership would lapse unless all 28 states agreed an extension. Many eurosceptics say an abrupt exit would be no problem and that world trade rules would simply apply.

EU states would want to maintain exports into the British market and Britain would be free to cut its own trade deals with others. A variety of models including Norway and Switzerland are available, though most mean trading some independence for access to EU markets.

British law could be reworked, where needed, to cover gaps in lapsing EU rules. And the rights of some 2 million Britons living and working in Europe could be safeguarded reciprocally with those of a similar number of EU citizens in Britain.

The government paper on Monday questioned those assumptions, however. And supporters of EU membership argue that the EU would drive hard bargains, not just to gain economic advantage but to discourage other states from following Britain to the exit. Fellow leaders face their own challenges from anti-EU opponents—not least in French and German national elections respectively in spring and autumn next year—so negotiating a British divorce by mid-2018 may be a messy business. — Reuters



PIRAEUS: A woman holds her baby as migrants and refugees arrive at the port of Piraeus yesterday. More than 1000 refugees and migrants disembarked at Piraeus port coming from the islands of the east Aegean sea. —AFP

10,000 MIGRANTS STUCK ON GREEK-MACEDONIAN BORDER

EUROPE ON CUSP OF SELF-INDUCED CRISIS: UNHCR

IDOMENI, Greece: On foot or by taxi, hundreds of exhausted refugee families trying to reach Western Europe flocked yesterday to a burgeoning tent city on Greece's border with Macedonia, which has not allowed anybody in for 24 hours, citing a similar policy by Serbia further north.

The impasse drew strongly worded criticism from the United Nations refugee agency, which warned that Europe "is on the cusp of a largely self-induced humanitarian crisis."

A UNHCR statement said inconsistent policies in the continent, which faces its worst immigration crisis since the end of World War II, "are causing unnecessary suffering and risk being at variance with EU and international law standards." Greek police say there could be up to 10,000 people — mostly Syrian and Iraqi refugees — stuck at the country's Idomeni border crossing now in deteriorating conditions. Hundreds of tents fill the fields stretching toward the border fence, which is patrolled on the Macedonian side by scores of regular police, Macedonian special police forces and police from other Balkan countries. During the day on Monday, Macedonia let in only 30 refugees. The Idomeni crossing has become a key flashpoint in Europe's migration crisis. Several European nations, led by Austria, have imposed refugee camps and border restrictions over the past 10 days, creating a huge backlog of migrants in Greece. These unilateral actions have infuriated Greece and threaten to damage the unity of the 28-nation European Union.

The New York-based Human Rights Watch rights group directly blamed "discriminatory border closures" and a cap imposed by Austria for the situation at Idomeni. "Trapping asylum seekers in Greece is an unconscionable and short-sighted non-solution that is causing suffering and violence," HRW Greece specialist Eva Cosse

said. "It demonstrates once again the EU's utter failure to respond collectively and compassionately to refugee flows."

Persuasion

European Union President Donald Tusk was in Austria yesterday to try to persuade Chancellor Werner Faymann to change his mind about the country's decision to accept no more than 80 requests for asylum a day at Austria's southern border with Slovenia, but Faymann said he is holding firm. The cap has caused a ripple effect as other countries southwest of Austria stop people from getting through.

Faymann said Austria is neither a "waiting room for Germany" nor — in an allusion to Greece — prepared to accept the "policy of waving through" migrants to the rest of the EU through Austria.

The Greek government, meanwhile, said it has requested 480 million euros in aid for the refugee crisis from the EU, under an emergency plan that foresees about 100,000 people being stranded in the country.

"That does not mean that this is easy to manage, or that this is what we can take," government spokeswoman Olga Gerovassili said. "There must be a permanent solution on where the refugees will be relocated and what burden each country will shoulder, not just financial but also regarding how many refugees they will take in." Some migrants have been waiting at Idomeni for more than a week. The camp is full and hundreds more people arrive daily. Overnight rain soaked many families, who hung up clothing to dry in the sun yesterday. Jasmin Rexhepi, head of the aid group Legis, which has volunteers working in Macedonia on its borders with Greece and Serbia, told The Associated Press that Macedonian authorities

were restricting the numbers of migrants they let through because Serbia only allowed 30 people from a train carrying 410 to cross its border Monday. He said Macedonia was waiting for Serbia to open that border.

About 70 adults and children, mostly from Pakistan, have been stuck on the Macedonian side of the border between two razor-wire fences for three days. Rexhepi said Macedonian authorities had been trying to send them back to Greece because they had crossed the border illegally, but Greece was refusing to take them.

"We are providing food, water, sleeping bags and raincoats for this group," Rexhepi said. On the Greek side, another group of 150 people who have been told it's their turn to enter Macedonia have spent days in a large, flimsy tent in front of the crossing. "I've been at Idomeni for 10 days and it's the fourth day I've been waiting to cross over," said Hassan Rasheed, 27, from Iraq. "Conditions are very bad. There are many ill children who are coughing, and we spent the night in this tent under heavy rain."

The rapid build-up of migrants stuck at Greece's northern borders risks leading to a humanitarian disaster, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said yesterday. "Europe is on the cusp of a largely self-induced humanitarian crisis," the UN refugee agency warned in a statement, urging better planning and accommodation for all those stuck in Greece.

The UNHCR also urged all EU member states to reinforce their capacity to register and process asylum seekers through their national procedures as well as through the European relocation scheme. Some 131,724 refugees have crossed the Mediterranean already this year, slightly less than in the first half of 2015, it said. — Agencies



CALAIS: Migrants keep warm next to a fire as agents dismantle shacks yesterday in the "Jungle" migrants and refugees camp in the French northern port city of Calais. — AFP

MIGRANTS OCCUPY ROOFTOPS TO PROTEST CALAIS DEMOLITION

CALAIS: About two dozen people protesting the demolition of a sprawling migrant camp in northern France climbed onto shanty rooftops yesterday, briefly stalling the tear-down.

Bulldozer crews plowed through blustery, damp winds, working around the protesters, who ultimately came down from the buildings. By mid-afternoon, the demolition was proceeding unimpeded.

Earlier in the day, a man and a woman standing together on a rooftop had warned police not to approach. The woman then cut her wrists as officers moved forward. Baton-wielding police beat the man and both were removed from the roof. The woman was conscious, but her condition wasn't immediately known. The slow removal of the encampment in Calais has angered migrants who live there in squalid conditions in hopes of reaching a better life in Britain.

France's government has offered to relocate uprooted migrants into heated containers or to centers around France where they can decide whether to apply for asylum, and officials have blamed activists from the group No Borders for the ongoing unrest. But many migrants resist French offers of help, afraid of hurting their chances to reach Britain.

The city bordering the Channel has ferry links and the Eurotunnel rail to England, and is temporary home to an estimated 4,000 migrants, down from 6,000 in December. The camp has become a flashpoint between France and Britain, fueling far-right support in both countries.

"This operation will continue in coming days, calmly and methodically, providing a place for everyone as the government has committed," French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said in a statement yesterday. — AP

TOP GERMAN COURT CONSIDERS BID TO OUTLAW FAR-RIGHT PARTY

BERLIN: Germany's highest court opened hearings yesterday in a bid to outlaw the country's biggest far-right party, which officials accuse of promoting a racist and anti-Semitic agenda.

It's the second attempt to secure the ban, which would be the first of its kind in 60 years. The German parliament's upper house, which represents the country's 16 state governments, applied at the end of 2013 for a ban on the National Democratic Party, or NPD. The states say it violates the constitution and are keen to cut off the state funding to which political parties are entitled.

Back in 2003, the Karlsruhe-based Federal Constitutional Court rejected a first attempt to ban the party because paid government informants within the group were partially responsible for evidence against it. Officials say there's no evidence from informants in the new case.

Bavaria's interior minister, Joachim Herrmann, told n-tv television that "the NPD is a danger to our democracy." He added that "the NPD benefits from state financing of parties — that means that tax money is abused for neo-Nazi propaganda." The head of Germany's main Jewish group, Josef Schuster, said the NPD wants to create a state "in which there is no place for minorities."

Peter Richter, a lawyer representing the NPD, petitioned for the case against the party to be closed, arguing there was no credible evidence that government informants had been removed from the group. He also sought as the hearing

began to have two of the eight judges, both former politicians, removed for alleged bias against the party — a motion that the court rejected.

In a recent statement on the ban proceedings, the NPD asserted that "the real policies of

the German government are extremist, not the criticism of them," citing the government's actions in the migrant crisis. The NPD complained of "constant hate campaigns against patriotic dissenters." — AP



BELFAST: Seamus Daly (2L) walks to a car after being released from Maghaberry prison near Belfast, Northern Ireland yesterday. A British court dropped all charges against Daly, the only remaining suspect in Northern Ireland's 1998 Omagh bombing that killed 29 people and threatened a peace deal in the province. —AFP

EXECUTED PAKISTANI HAILED AS HERO OF ISLAM

RAWALPINDI: Tens of thousands of supporters yesterday cheered and threw flowers at the casket of a bodyguard executed for killing the governor of Pakistan's most populous province over his call to reform a strict blasphemy law.

Security was tight at the funeral for Mumtaz Qadri, whom supporters consider a hero for killing popular Punjab governor Salman Taseer in 2011 who criticized the law that mandates the death penalty for insulting Islam. Police blocked off roads to Liaquat Bagh park in the city of Rawalpindi but thousands arrived on foot. "He lives! Qadri lives!" supporters chanted, surrounding the coffin and throwing flowers. "From your blood, the revolution will come!"

Hardline religious groups in Pakistan say Taseer deserved to die because he himself committed blasphemy by criticizing the law and supporting a Christian woman he said was unjustly charged with the crime. But Qadri's execution on

Monday showed the Pakistani government's willingness to risk the wrath of hard-line religious groups, who wield considerable power.

A Pakistani Taliban attack on a military-run school in Peshawar in 2014 that killed 134 children is seen as having hardened Pakistan's resolve to fight militants and check the influence of religious groups. Pro-Qadri demonstrations first broke out on Monday after word spread that he had been executed.

"Mumtaz Qadri is a hero of Islam. He sent to hell a person who showed disrespect for the holy Prophet," Tahir Iqbal Chistie of the hard-line Sunni Tehreek movement said at one of Monday's protests. Stick-wielding Sunni Tehreek activists were maintaining security at yesterday's funeral.

Most participants at the funeral were religious and political workers of the Bareilvi branch of Sunni Islam - identifiable by their distinctive green turbans -

and members of Islamist parties.

The influential leader of the conservative Council of Islamic Ideology declined to endorse Qadri's action. "No one is above the law," Mohammad Sherani told journalists, according to the Express Tribune newspaper. "I respect Qadri's religious sentiments but I respect Pakistan's constitution more."

Controversy over the blasphemy law has exposed the growing gap between hard-line religious conservatives and liberals in Pakistan. More than 100 people are charged with blasphemy and jailed each year in predominantly Muslim Pakistan, many of them Christians and other minorities. Critics say the law is often invoked in cases of personal disputes. No one has yet been executed, but at least 65 people have been murdered in connection with blasphemy allegations since 1990, according to the Centre for Research and Security Studies and a Reuters tally. — Reuters



RAWALPINDI: People hold the photo of police officer Mumtaz Qadri, the convicted killer of a former governor, during his funeral, in Rawalpindi yesterday. — AP



NEW DELHI: Indian Energy and Resource Institute (TERI) Director-General Rajendra Pachauri addresses an audience at a conference in New Delhi. — AFP

PACHAURI CHARGED WITH STALKING, HARASSMENT

NEW DELHI: The UN climate panel's former chairman, Rajendra Pachauri, was charged yesterday with stalking and sexually harassing a woman who worked at the New Delhi environmental think tank he's headed for more than three decades.

Police filed the case in a Delhi court after investigating a complaint by one of Pachauri's colleagues at The Energy Research Institute, Press Trust of India said.

Pachauri has denied the allegations, but resigned last year from both the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and from TERI after the researcher's allegations were published in Indian newspapers. The allegations caused a public uproar in a country where women face a stigma against discussing issues such as sexual harassment in the workplace.

His appointment last month to another top post at TERI renewed outrage, and a second woman, who had worked there for a year, came forward with additional allega-

tions. The court scheduled an initial hearing on April 23. Separate from the police investigation, TERI's internal complaints committee examined the evidence presented by the researcher, and questioned nearly 50 other employees, and concluded that the allegations of sexual harassment leveled by the researcher were valid.

Police have charged Pachauri, 75, with sexual harassment, stalking and criminal intimidation of the 29-year old woman. Pachauri had headed the four-decade-old think-tank for the last 34 years, when it emerged as a global center for research in efficient utilization of energy and sustainable use of natural resources. It has affiliate institutes in London and Washington.

Pachauri chaired the climate panel - considered the world's authority on climate science - since 2002, and had accepted the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize on its behalf. The panel shared the award with former US Vice President Al Gore. — AP



Trekkers make their way to Dingboche, a popular Mount Everest base camp, in Pangboche, Nepal. Nepal has extended the permits of climbers who were unable to climb Mount Everest last year due to an earthquake-triggered avalanche that killed 19 people at a base camp in hopes of bringing back western climbers to the world's highest peak. — AP

NEPAL SAYS EVEREST CLIMBERS STOPPED BY QUAKE CAN TRY AGAIN

KATHMANDU, Nepal: Climbers turned back from Mount Everest by a deadly earthquake and avalanche last year will be able to attempt to scale the world's tallest peak again this year or next without paying new permit fees, Nepal said yesterday.

The April 25 earthquake killed thousands of people across the Himalayan country, including 19 people hit by an avalanche at Everest base camp. Entire teams of climbers were forced to abandon their attempts at the summit. Nepal hopes that extending their \$11,000 climbing permits by another two years will reassure Western climbers and bring many back, Mountaineering Department official Gyanendra Shrestha said. Permits normally last for only one climbing season, which runs from March to May.

Expedition companies cheered the decision, noting that mountaineers had been spooked by the 2015 disaster as well as a 2014 avalanche that killed 16 guides.

"It is a welcome move from the government that we hope will help bring back the

climbers to the mountains," said Ang Tshering of the Nepal Mountaineering Association. The back-to-back disasters have been worrying for Nepal, which earns millions of dollars from permit fees in an industry that employs tens of thousands of people as guides, porters and equipment suppliers. It's hard to say how many will show up for the 2016 climbing season, which began yesterday. But expedition companies have said their bookings are down from previous years by about half.

"We are encouraged by the permit extension. This will help the local climbing businesses to once again get back on their feet after two bad years," said Temba Tsheri of the Sherpa Khagri Outdoors agency in Kathmandu, who lost three foreign clients and two local workers last year.

Since Everest was conquered by New Zealander Edmund Hillary and his Sherpa guide Tenzing Norgay in 1953, the peak has been climbed by thousands of people. But hundreds have also died on its unpredictable slopes. — AP

AFGHAN TROOPS PULL OUT OF MORE POSTS IN URUZGAN

POLICEMAN KILLS 4 COLLEAGUES, 11 MISSING

KABUL: Afghan forces have pulled back from strongpoints in the southern province of Uruzgan, continuing a withdrawal which began last month when they abandoned two districts in the neighbouring province of Helmand to the Taliban, officials said yesterday.

Provincial government spokesman Dost Mohammad Nayab said around 100 troops and police had been pulled from checkpoints in two areas in Shahidi Hassas district and sent to the neighbouring district of Deh Rawud. The Afghan Taliban, seeking to topple the Western-backed government in Kabul and reimpose Islamic rule 15 years after they were ousted from power, said the move, which came after heavy fighting late on Monday, had left the entire area around the village of Yakhdan under their control.

The decision to leave the posts follows months of heavy fighting with the Taliban, who have put government forces under heavy pressure across southern Afghanistan. "We want to create a reserve battalion in Deh Rawud and we may ask our soldiers and policemen from other districts also to leave their checkpoints," Nayab said. Nayab said the withdrawal was prompted by a shortage of troops and police, worn down

by combat losses and desertions. He said troop numbers in the province were about 1,000 short of their assigned strength while police were hundreds short.

"Some of them have left the army and police, some have been killed or wounded and some have surrendered to the Taliban," he said. "We have to control situation here until we receive enough forces." NATO officials have long pressed Afghan commanders to pull troops off isolated and hard-to-defend checkpoints and use them more effectively against the Taliban, who have pressed their insurgency since international troops ended most combat operations in 2014.

Uruzgan, which shares a border with the insurgent heartlands of Helmand and Kandahar, is a poor and largely mountainous region which Dutch and Australian troops struggled to stabilize after the Taliban regime was toppled by US-led forces in 2001.

Along with northern Helmand, much of which has been abandoned to the Taliban, it constitutes one of Afghanistan's main opium smuggling routes, providing a significant source of revenue for the insurgency. Last month, troops pulled out of the Helmand districts of

Musa Qalah and Nawzad, regrouping around a few towns near the provincial capital Lashkar Gah in what authorities said was a tactical decision to deploy forces more effectively.

Meanwhile, an Afghan policeman shot dead four of his colleagues at a checkpoint on a remote stretch of a major southern highway, an official said yesterday. Another 11 policemen who were manning the checkpoint when the shooting happened on Monday night were still missing, said Gen Ghulam Sakhi Roghlewani, police chief of Uruzgan province.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the incident in an email to media. Roghlewani said it was still unclear what happened at the checkpoint, which is located on the highway between Kandahar and Uruzgan provinces. Afghanistan has seen a series of insider attacks in recent years, in which Afghan soldiers or police attack their colleagues or allied NATO forces.

The Afghan police fight insurgents on the front lines, but have fewer resources than the army. On remote checkpoints they are vulnerable to Taliban attacks. Authorities want to consolidate the checkpoints into larger bases but have faced resistance from locals, who see them as a barrier against insurgents. — Agencies

MYANMAR'S PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATIONS ON MARCH 10

YANGON: Myanmar will announce presidential nominations on March 10, the speaker of its upper house of parliament said yesterday advancing the original date by a week, as a lengthy political transition in the Southeast Asian nation enters its last stages.

The news follows three meetings on the transition between military chief Min Aung Hlaing and democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, whose National League for Democracy will dominate the incoming government after having won the Nov 8 election. The meetings sparked speculation that a deal would be struck to allow Suu Kyi to become president, despite a constitutional bar, and even though the military showed no wavering in its view that there should be no rapid amendment to remove the hurdle.

"The date for holding the meetings of the three presidential electoral colleges has been put forward by one week, to March 10," said Mahn Win Khaing Than, the speaker of the upper house of parliament.

The NLD swept some 80 percent of elected seats in November, enough to push through its president, but Suu Kyi is blocked from holding the country's highest office because her two sons are not Myanmar citizens, nor was her late husband.

The NLD has no number two after Suu Kyi, who has said she will control the government from "above the president," and rumours have swirled over who might fill the top post.

Myanmar's lengthy transition process meant the NLD-dominated parliament sat for the first time on February 1. On March 10, each of the two chambers will nominate its vice-presidential candidate, while the military MPs, who are guaranteed a quarter of the seats, nominate the third.

Once the candidates are in place, a joint-chamber session picks the president for a five-year term. The two losing candidates become vice-presidents. Candidates do not need to be elected members of the legislature. The president then picks the cabinet, which will take over from President Thein Sein's outgoing government on April 1. It is unclear if the presidential vote will take place on the same day as the nominations are announced.

One analyst saw the advanced process as a sign that talks between the military and the NLD for its leader, Suu Kyi, to become president had made no headway.



YANGON: This photograph taken on February 27, 2016 and released yesterday by the Myanmar Armed Forces shows elite Myanmar navy commandos rappelling from a helicopter onto the deck of a warship during the Sea Shield 2016 combined fleet exercise off Coco island in the Andaman Sea. — AFP

"Setting the vote on the presidency so close to the deadline for the handover of power was part of the NLD's pressure strategy," said Romain Caillaud, of FTI Consulting in Singapore. "That the vote has been moved forward is an acknowledgment this strategy has failed." — Reuters

AFGHAN WOMEN, GIRLS FACE 'INVASIVE VIRGINITY TESTS'

KABUL: Afghan women and girls accused of so-called moral crimes are often forced to endure invasive and scientifically questionable "virginity tests" by government doctors, according to human rights advocates.

Improving the lives and rights of women remains a major challenge in Afghanistan nearly 15 years after a US-backed military campaign ousted the Taliban's hardline Islamist regime.

Of 53 women and girls interviewed in a dozen provinces across Afghanistan, 48 said they had been subject to compulsory gynecological exams by government officials after being accused of adultery or escaping from home, investigators for Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission found in a study conducted last year. The study's findings were publicized by Human Rights Watch on Monday.

"Since gynecological tests are conducted without consent of the

victim, it can be considered sexual harassment and human rights violation," the commission concluded, noting that the tests violate the spirit of the Afghan constitution as well as international principles. In most cases the tests, which can include invasive genital as well as anal exams, are carried out in the presence of male guards and others, and often amount to "torture" with "horrible effects and consequences," the report found.

The tests claim to verify whether a woman has been sexually active outside of marriage, but the veracity of the exams has been widely debunked by scientists.

The report said the tests lacked a scientific basis. Girls as young as 13 were among those who reported being forced to endure the tests, and a number of the women were accused merely of leaving their homes without permission, which is not a crime under Afghan law. More than a third of the women reported

being examined more than once.

In a conservative culture where great value is attached to a woman's virginity, the "aggressive" exams can damage a woman's personal dignity, emotional health, and social status, the report warned.

In some cases, women unable to prove they were virgins on their wedding day have faced violence, and some have been killed, the commission said.

"The continued use of degrading and unscientific 'virginity exams' by the Afghan government is part of a broader pattern of abuses in which women and girls in Afghanistan are jailed on spurious 'moral crimes' accusations," Human Rights Watch senior researcher Heather Barr said in a statement. She joined the Human Rights Commission in calling for the government to explicitly ban such tests and to end arrests of women accused of trying to leave their homes. — Reuters



A snow covered earth pyramid is pictured yesterday in Fuerst-Pueckler-Park in Branitz near Cottbus in Germany. Two unique earth pyramids are a special feature of Branitz and a reminiscence of Prince Puckler's trip through the Orient from 1834 to 1840. — AFP

ROUHANI: VOTERS CHOSE 'RIGHT AND PROPER...

Continued from Page 1

Two renowned hardline ayatollahs lost their seats on the 88-member assembly, which monitors supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's work and will pick the 76-year-old's successor if he dies during its eight-year term. By contrast, 15 of the 16 candidates running in Tehran on the list headed by Rouhani and his veteran political backer, former president Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, were resoundingly voted in.

Rouhani also called for foreign partnerships to boost the country's car industry and said the sector must be privatized to improve its competitiveness. He told a car industry conference in a nationally broadcast speech that partnerships with international carmakers offer quick way to improve the industry's technology and safety. "There is a shortcut ... We have to start partnerships with prominent world carmakers. We will reach to the optimum point in technology, protecting the environment, saving energy and safety," Rouhani said.

He said partnerships with foreign carmakers will serve the best interests of all sides, and increasing the competitiveness of the local market can only help

strengthen the industry. "The government will never be a good manager in industry, including the car industry. The sector should be completely privatized and competitive," he said. "The partnership will drive us ahead." But he also warned that plan would mean removing government protections of the domestic car market such as prohibitions or heavy tariffs on imported vehicles. Rouhani said the days of the state-sponsored auto monopoly must end.

"To close the doors and at the same time impose the products of one or two car factories on the people, while saying these are your only choices whether you like it or not, is not an acceptable logic," he said. Iran's 50-year-old car industry produces about 900,000 cars annually. The country hopes to increase the number to 3 million by 2025. France's Peugeot-Citroen last month announced a joint venture with automaker Iran Khodro to make 200,000 cars a year outside Tehran. The French carmaker was heavily involved in Iran's auto industry before nuclear-related sanctions were imposed. In Iran, a country of 80 million people, road accidents annually claim nearly 17,000 lives, which many blame on lax safety standards. — Agencies

ARAB GOVT DEBT RISES SHARPLY IN 2015: S&P

Continued from Page 1

to reach \$667 billion by the end of this year, up \$85 billion on 2015, the agency said. A report by Kuwait Financial Centre (Markaz) last month forecast that the public debt of the GCC states will double by 2020 as they seek to finance

budget deficits caused by sliding oil prices. After having posted massive deficits of \$160 billion last year and faced with a \$159-billion deficit in 2016, the GCC states' debt is expected to rise to 59 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), the report said. In contrast, GCC states posted a combined surplus of \$220 billion in 2012. — AFP

LADEN LEFT MILLIONS FOR JIHAD

Continued from Page 1

The Iranian dentist might have used a slightly enlarged syringe to make such an implant, bin Laden wrote in the letter. The US translation is undated. "The size of the chip is about the length of a grain of wheat and the width of a fine piece of vermicelli," bin Laden said. He asked her to recall the exact date of her dental work, "also about any surgery you had, even if it was only a quick pinch".

In another letter, addressed to "The Islamic Community in General," bin Laden offered an upbeat assessment of progress in his holy war since Sept 11, 2001, and of US failings in Afghanistan. The letter is undated but appears to have been written in 2010. "Here we are in the tenth year of the war, and America and its allies are still chasing a mirage, lost at sea without a beach," he wrote. "They thought that the war would be easy and that they would accomplish their objectives in a few days or a few weeks, and they did not prepare for it financially, and there is no popular support that would enable it to carry on a war for a decade or more. The sons of Islam have opposed them and stood between them and their plans and objectives."

Bin Laden sought to portray the US as hopelessly mired in an unwinnable war in Afghanistan. In an undated letter that appears to have been written in the 2009-

2010 period, he compared the American combat position to that of the Soviet Union in the final years of its occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s. "America appears to be hanging on by a thin thread. Due to the financial difficulties," he wrote. "We need to be patient a bit longer. With patience, there is victory!"

One document, a hand-written note that US intelligence officials believe the Saudi militant composed in the late 1990s, laid out how he wanted to distribute about \$29 million he had in Sudan. One percent of the \$29 million, bin Laden wrote, should go to Mahfouz Ould Al-Walid, a senior Al-Qaeda militant who used the nom de guerre Abu Hafs Al-Mauritani. "By the way, he (Walid) has already received 20,000-30,000 dollars from it, bin Laden continued. "I promised him that I would reward him if he took it out of the Sudanese government."

Bin Laden lived in Sudan for five years as an official guest until he was asked to leave in May 1996 by the then-Islamist government under pressure from the United States. Another one percent of the sum should be given to a second associate, Engineer Abu Ibrahim Al-Iraqi Saad, for helping set up bin Laden's first company in Sudan, Wadi Al-Aqiq Co, the document said. He set down specific amounts in Saudi riyals and gold that should be apportioned between his mother, a son, a daughter, an uncle, and his uncle's children and maternal aunts. — Agencies

PROMINENT SAUDI CLERIC INJURED IN PHILIPPINES...

Continued from Page 1

But Galvez did not immediately identify the gunman. "We still do not know what this group is or the motives of the gunman," she said.

The Saudi embassy in Manila confirmed the incident, stating Qarni was hit in the arm when a man approached his car and shot him as he left a conference. He was visiting at the invitation of a local religious association, the embassy said. The preacher was later flown to Manila on a plane made available by the Saudi embassy, according to a statement.

Saudi media outlets described Qarni as a senior Islamic scholar. He has more than 12 million followers on Twitter. In his book "Awakening Islam," the French academic Stephane Lacroix included Qarni among "the most famous" Saudi preachers. Although Qarni is not employed by the state, he supports the government and enjoys credibility as an "independent" cleric who once backed an Islamist opposition movement against the regime that led him to be banned from preaching in the early 1990s.

Zamboanga is one of the largest cities in the southern Philippines, which has been home to a decades-

long separatist rebellion by the mainly Catholic nation's Muslim minority. Zamboanga has a mixed Christian and Muslim population, and has been a frequent target of attacks by local Muslim militant groups. One of the nation's main Muslim rebel groups raided the city in 2013, triggering three weeks of clashes with security forces that left more than 200 people dead.

Philippine Foreign Undersecretary Rafael Seguis said last week that the Saudi government had asked several countries, including the Philippines, for improved security because of a possible threat, the nature of which was not specified. Philippine police strengthened security at Saudi Arabia's embassy and its national airline following the request, Seguis said. Seguis noted that Saudi Arabia has a conflict with Iran, where the Saudi Embassy recently came under attack, but said it's hard to say whether the reported threat was connected to that. Protesters set fire to the Saudi Embassy in Tehran and attacked its consulate in another Iranian city in response to the kingdom's execution of a prominent Shiite cleric on Jan 2. The protests prompted Saudi Arabia to cut diplomatic ties with Iran, escalating tensions between the longtime regional rivals. — Agencies

18 KILLED IN OMAN BUS CRASH

Continued from Page 1

Authorities later brought a crane to lift away the smashed remains of the vehicles.

Omani police later issued a statement saying their initial investigation led them to believe the bus and the truck had a head-on collision, while the car later crashed into the wreckage. Police officers from Muscat arrived at the scene by helicopter, while workers with Petroleum Development Oman also aided rescuers, authorities said. Police said six of the dead were from Oman, four were from Saudi Arabia, two were from Pakistan and one was from Yemen. Five

others were still unidentified. Among the injured, 11 were from Oman, two were Saudis, one was Pakistani, one was Chinese and one remained unidentified, the police said.

Traffic crashes are not uncommon in the Gulf states. Many drivers speed on long desert highways and large populations of foreign guest workers are a source of motorists who have come to the country with differing driving habits. In Feb 2013, at least 22 migrant workers died when a gravel-filled truck with faulty brakes rammed into a bus near in Al Ain, an Emirati city on the Omani border. In May the following year, 15 migrant workers died in a bus crash in Dubai. — AP

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Issues

CAR SEX ABUSE SHAME FOR UN

By Celia Lebur

While on the lookout for scraps of food or a little money at a Congolese peacekeepers base, an 18-year-old woman was raped by three men. "They took me into the bush...They were armed and said they'd kill me if I resisted," she told Human Rights Watch. The conjunction of soldiers, war and poverty in Central African Republic has led to a horrendous number of sexual assaults. Barely a month goes by without the United Nations revealing a fresh sex scandal allegation involving its blue helmet peacekeepers and civilians.

Since the start of the UN peacekeeping mandate in September 2014, 42 suspected cases of sexual attacks and abuse have been reported, and French investigators too are looking into rape charges against forces stationed in the former colony. Last year, nearly a third of reported cases among the UN's 16 peacekeeping missions worldwide involved its Central African deployment, known as MINUSCA. As the head of the UN mission in Bangui, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, put it: "We have sadly the 'palme d'or', and this is unacceptable."

The most recent case in February involved four children in a camp for displaced people who were allegedly abused by troops from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Though UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon fired the head of the 10,000-strong MINUSCA force in August over the mounting number of sex abuse cases, the allegations have continued. "These will certainly not be the last. There's no reason for it, now that people are talking," said Onanga-Anyanga. The incriminated troops are from many countries - Congo, Morocco, Niger, Bangladesh, Senegal - some of the nations cited publicly by the UN for the first time.

'An Abomination'

In nearly every case in CAR, the alleged assaults took place near camps for people displaced by conflict that are located close to MINUSCA bases established to protect them. The UN soldiers are not solely at blame. After three years of horrific strife between Christians and Muslims that has left the economy in ruins and the country in chaos, sexual abuse is widespread. The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) registered 30,000 cases, including rape, in the first 10 months of 2015.

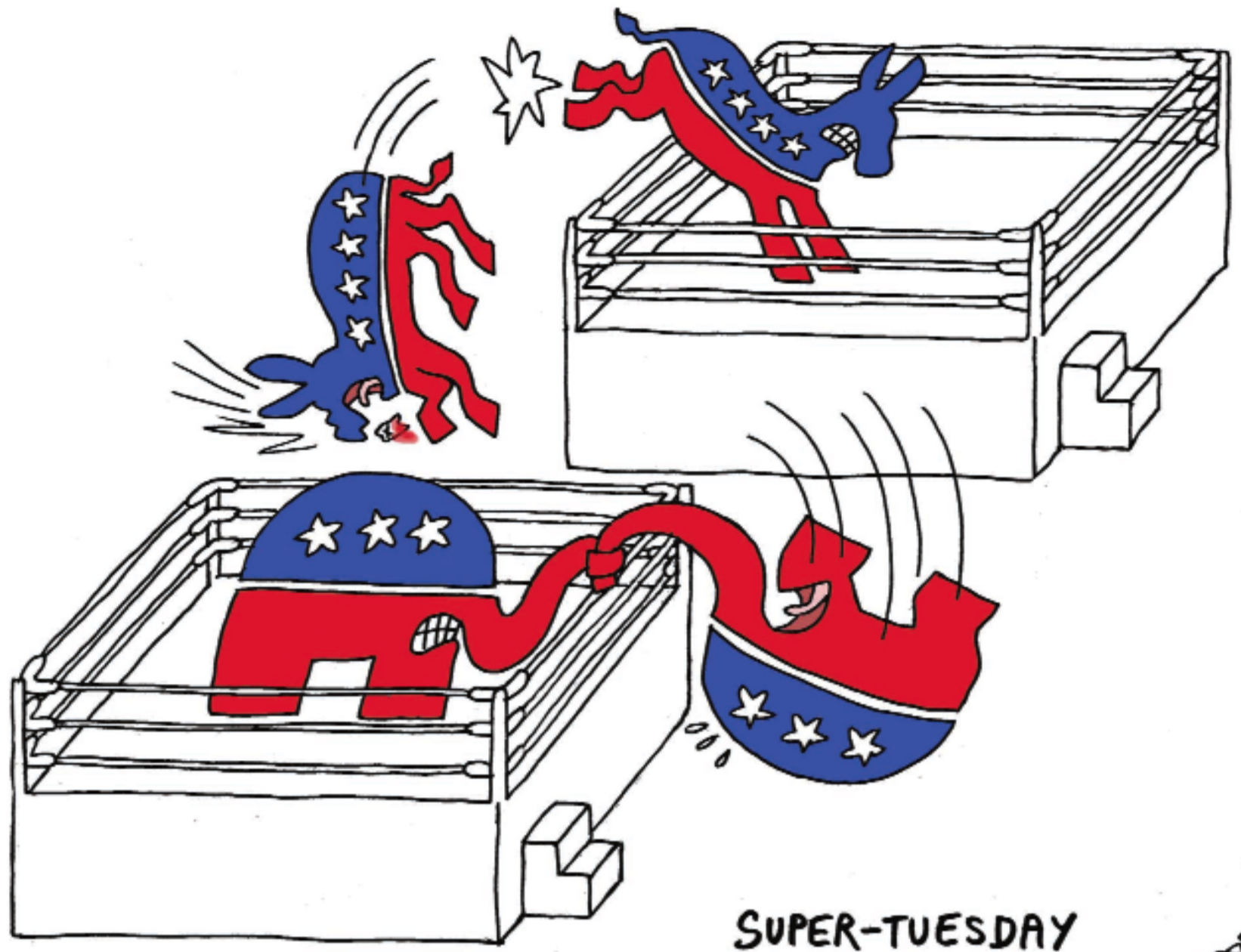
Others turn to sex to survive. A refugee camp like Mpoko near Bangui airport has become a festering slum, overcrowded and desperately poor, with some young girls agreeing to sexual relations or fellatio with men - including peacekeepers - in exchange for some bread or for 500 CFA francs (less than one euro). "Women only have their bodies to offer to feed their families" if their husbands have been killed or displaced elsewhere, said Irene Ngogui, who works with local NGO Vitalite Plus.

Sometimes it's the parents themselves who push their young daughters to prostitution. "Recently a mother wanted her 14-year-old daughter to bring home some food, but the girl refused and she was beaten and chased out of the house," said a humanitarian worker who asked not to be named. The scandals involving UN peacekeepers come as no surprise to residents in the Mpoko district across from the bases of both MINUSCA and the French force known as Sangaris.

And it's hard to prevent the two worlds from crossing paths. "At night, the blue helmets come by in a car and drive off the road and the girls follow them," said Lea, a mother at the camp. "They know they'll get some sardines." But since the scandals erupted, the MINUSCA force says it has taken measures to confine the troops, when possible. Local police patrols have also been organized with "night-time rounds to make sure our men in uniform are not found where they shouldn't be."

For Onanga-Anyanga, the scandals add to the misery of one of the world's poorest countries, where 70 percent of the 4.8 million people live in poverty. "This is a country that's been destroyed and badly disrupted," he said, "and pouring salt into the open wound is an abomination." — AFP

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GAINS UNLIKELY TO SHIFT IRAN POWER BALANCE

By Samia Nakhoul

Impressive gains by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in heavily handicapped elections to parliament and a clerical body are evidence of an isolated nation eager to move from theocracy to a more open democracy, but few expect a sudden shift in power. The Islamic Republic's unique dual system of clerical and republican rule places decisive power in the hands of a conservative Islamic establishment, which has shown in the past its ability to reassert control when it feels threatened.

Rouhani may have a stronger hand to open up an economy ravaged by a decade of sanctions, but his scope to permit more social and political freedom is constrained by hardliners' control of the judiciary, security forces and state media. The scale of gains by Rouhani's supporters was undoubtedly a setback for hawks opposed to any opening to the West. Prominent critics of Iran's nuclear deal with world powers were defeated.

Centrists and reformers not only bounced back in a parliament under hardline control since 2004, but won a stunning 15 out of the 16 Tehran seats in the 88-member Assembly of Experts, which selects Iran's supreme leader. Two key hardliners including the speaker of the powerful clerical body were ousted. Rouhani's allies took all 30 parliamentary seats in Tehran, though their gains outside the capital were more limited, with conservatives keeping many seats in both bodies. An unofficial tally by Reuters of first round results for the 290-member Majlis (parliament) show conservatives won about 112 seats, reformers and centrists 99 and independents and religious minorities 29. There will be run-offs in April in 59 districts where no one won more than 25 percent of the vote. The numbers are approximate because Iran does not have rigid party affiliations. Some candidates were backed by both camps.

The advances came despite the disqualification of thousands pro-reform candidates by an unelected clerical Guardian Council that reports directly to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. "The results in Tehran reflect a

reformist orientation and focus on improvements in the economy and foreign relations," said one Tehran-based analyst who requested anonymity. "Rouhani will bring more order to the economy and greater openness in foreign policy but the overall structure and approach will not be altered. The vocabulary will be different, but the balance of power will not shift," he said. These contests could shape the future of the next generation in Iran, where nearly 60 percent of the 80 million population is under 30 and anxious to reintegrate into the international community and return to world markets following last year's nuclear deal and the lifting of most of the punitive sanctions.

Will of the People

Rouhani's main ally, ex-president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, a shrewd operator who has survived every twist and turn in Iranian politics since the 1979 revolution and came top in the Assembly poll, urged hardliners not to stand in the way. "No one is able to resist against the will of the majority of the people and whoever the people don't want has to step aside," he said in a Twitter message.

Rouhani's foes include supporters of populist ex-president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, religious hawks such as Ayatollah Mohammad-Taqi Mesbah Yazdi, who lost his assembly seat, but perhaps most dangerously hardliners around Khamenei and in the powerful Revolutionary Guards. Rafsanjani's tweet implied that the electoral gains have already started to change Iran's balance of power. They almost certainly cement Rouhani's prospects of re-election next year, since friend and foe alike credit him for the nuclear deal that offered Iran a new relationship with the world.

The results may well also sway the selection of a successor to Khamenei, who holds ultimate state power but is 76 and underwent prostate surgery in 2014. The new parliamentary line-up could hasten Rouhani's drive to open Iran to foreign trade and investment and loosen some of the legal shackles on economic activity. Signalling post-election intentions, the president called on Tuesday for the privatization of

the 50 percent state-owned car industry - the second biggest sector after oil and gas.

How far the elections will enable him to tackle corruption and vested economic interests is less certain. Hardline fundamentalists, still entrenched in institutions Khamenei controls such as the judiciary, are keen to prevent either the new opening to the world or domestic liberalization. In his first comment since the vote, the Supreme Leader praised the high turnout but made no comment on the results. He set out guidelines he would like to see in the newly elected bodies, suggesting they should not be influenced by the West.

The nuclear deal went through because Khamenei wanted it to end crippling sanctions. But he regularly cautions Iranians that the West will try to exploit it to undermine the Islamic system. "The Supreme Leader cannot be very happy to see those supporting his policies losing and those who oppose his policies winning," says Foad Izadi, a pro-conservative Iranian analyst.

Too Early to Celebrate

Almost all analysts agree it is too early for the reformist camp, or a young Iranian population yearning for change, to celebrate any decisive step forward for human rights and social freedoms, judging by historical precedent. The last time reformers won the upper hand in parliament under President Mohammad Khatami in 2000, the Guardian Council vetoed several laws it passed as contrary to Islamic principles.

Khatami was then at the height of his popularity and the hardliners seemed on the ropes, humiliated by his landslide 1997 victory. Many then saw Iran heading for detente with the West, economic reform, social liberalisation and political pluralism. It ended in tears as conservatives used the judiciary and the Guardian Council to shut down the free space Khatami had opened, closing newspapers, locking up reformists, vetoing reform bills and denying his supporters access to state media.

Though re-elected triumphantly in 2001, Khatami soon became a lame duck due to their crackdown and the revelation of Iran's secret nuclear program, which the president did not

control. The lesson was clear. All elected politicians, even the president, are ultimately under the thumb of appointed clerics, Islamic jurists and their opaque but powerful institutions, with the supreme leader at their apex. Now, as then, Khamenei holds ultimate authority. He and the Revolutionary Guards set the limits, and determine the overall direction of the country by controlling the media, the military, intelligence services, morality police, Friday prayer leaders and the bulk of financial resources. They are powerful but alarmed.

Vested Interests

An opening to the world of this magnitude - and Rouhani's popularity - have panicked hard-line allies of Khamenei, who fear losing control of the pace of change, as well as inroads into the lucrative economic interests they built up under sanctions. At stake are the vested interests of the Revolutionary Guard Corps, which is not just Iran's praetorian guard but an economic empire, with vast holdings from banking to construction and manufacturing. The Guards are still under US sanctions for alleged support for terrorism.

This has exacerbated political infighting in Iran's complex power structures. One indicator is what a UN envoy calls "an exponential increase" in executions ordered by the judiciary - more than 1,000 last year, according to human rights groups. One big difference from 2000 is that Rafsanjani, who has wide patronage, is now backing Rouhani. Khatami's reformists made the error of sidelining and humiliating the veteran dubbed "the shark" in the 2000 parliamentary election. Some analysts predict that reformists may gradually gain a bigger say in power if they can consolidate their majority and establish a voice in picking the next supreme leader. This is not just wishful thinking; their opponents feel the same. "In the Assembly of Experts the principalists (hardliners) lost seats. That part is more complicated because the people sitting there are theologians, jurists not necessarily politicians, but they do have a lot of power," said Izadi, an assistant professor at Tehran University. "In the Shiite theology the leader is not infallible." — Reuters

CORRUPTION RAMPANT IN RUSSIAN PRISONS

By Marina Lapenkova

A better cell, a hospital stay or early release - everything can be bought in Russian jails, as corruption revelations have shown. Yelena Fedoseyeva, a former inmate at Prison Camp No. 7 near the city of Kaluga, around 180 km southwest of Moscow, recalled how she was asked for a bribe. "At the end of 2014, Darya Antonova, who was in charge of prisoner education at the No. 7 camp, asked my ex-husband for the equivalent of \$2,600 in exchange for my early release," she told AFP. Six months after he paid the necessary amount - officially to "buy bed sheets" for prisoners - Fedoseyeva said she was released.

Wealthier prisoners convicted of financial crimes as Fedoseyeva was - known as "sweet" inmates in prison slang - are the main targets of such attempts to extort funds. In July, the families of inmates at the prison camp where Fedoseyeva served her sentence accused the governor of organizing large-scale fraud. The prison governor allegedly forced families to buy items of equipment for the prison and then got reimbursed by the state, using invoices provided by the families. "The governor has been removed from her job and is currently under investigation," a spokesman for the regional investigative committee, which probes serious crimes, told AFP. "You pay bribes to get a cell-phone or medication, to be put in hospital, to get married or have a shower - everything is for sale in prison," said Inna Bazhibina, an activist for Rus Sidyashchaya, or Russia in Jail, a movement that defends prisoners' rights. Prices vary according to the prison, said

Bazhibina, an accountant who spent two years behind bars on a smuggling charge before being released in 2011. She recalled that a former businessman complained recently the "monthly rent" for his cell at Medvedkovo penal detention centre in northeast Moscow was excessively high - around a million rubles

(\$13,000), she said. "Transfer to a better cell at Moscow's penal detention centre Number 1 (known as Matrosskaya Tishina) costs 50,000 rubles," said Yelena Masyuk, a journalist and member of the Kremlin's rights council who visits prisons. "It costs more at Moscow's Butyrka prison," she

added, using the informal name for the city's No. 2 penal detention centre in historic buildings. "To get hospitalized costs between one and two thousand dollars, depending on the camp and your state of health," said former Soviet dissident and rights activist Valery Borschchev, who also visits prisons to check on their conditions. "All these reported cases will be checked," the prison service's spokeswoman Kristina Belousova told AFP. "The battle against corruption is continuing."

Rampant Violations

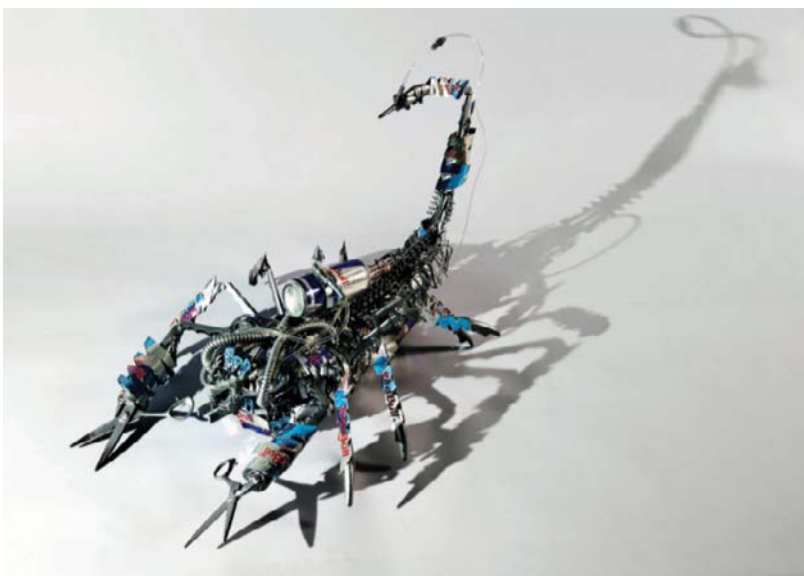
Investigations into corruption in the prison service have uncovered rampant violations involving officials. In late January, the governor of Prison Camp No. 2 in the city of Kazan in central Russia killed himself after his deputy was arrested and confessed to handing prison management the equivalent of about 600,000 rubles from a prisoner in exchange for early release.

In 2012, the former deputy head of the far eastern Khabarovsk region's prison service committed suicide while facing accusations of corruption. His predecessor had killed himself six months earlier, also while facing fraud charges. Last year three members of staff and two former employees at Moscow's penal detention centre No. 1 were arrested for allegedly extorting 10 million rubles from prisoners.

Corruption allegations go up to the very highest level: General Alexander Reimer, the head of Russia's prison service until 2012, was arrested in March last year. He was accused of stealing some three billion rubles from a state contract to buy electronic bracelets and accompanying surveillance systems. — AFP



This file photo taken on March 21, 2007 shows a prisoner in his cell at a prison in Mordovia penal Colony, 650 km east of Moscow. — AFP



WHAT A CREATIVE MIND WITH A CAN OF RED BULL

KUWAIT: Ever thought how far one can go with creativity with just a can of Red Bull? Think again. Following the success of Red Bull Art of Can 2011, the event is returning this year and will be giving talents from Kuwait the chance to go with inspiration to new heights. The masterpiece can be anything - a sculpture, a painting, photography, dress, music, movie, and digital illustration.

ED BULL art of can

This year, a new category will be featured; in addition to the physical art, the digital displayed art will be introduced to the competition for the first time. The physical piece of art should include the actual Red Bull can as the primary material in the final work. However, the digital displayed art is a work of art that can be displayed on a screen and should include a digital version of the Red Bull can in the final piece. Submissions could take the form of an animation, a digital short film, stop motion, or GIF.

The Red Bull Art of Can offers a platform for anyone, regardless of age, who wants to explore his or her creative talent. Artists, students, grandparents and all those in between are invited to submit their works of art. The Red Bull Art of Can is a true expression of one's imagination, with little or no restrictions placed on the budding artist.

Your primary material/inspiration must be a Red Bull can, but you will need to add plenty of imagination and creativity. Make a sculpture, a picture, a 3D model, a mobile, digital illustration or a piece of modern art, but make it beauti-

ful, colorful, clever or amusing. The project will culminate in a premium art exhibition, where the selected pieces will be displayed and the top three pieces awarded prizes. The judges will select the winners who will be announced on the opening night of the exhibition.

When to apply?

The application phase starts on 1st March and extends to 6 weeks until 16th April. Later on, the selection of the artworks take place by 25th May 2016 and June 6th will be the opening of the Exhibition Premiere followed by two week exhibition open for the public. Applications can be submitted online by registering at www.redbull.com/artof-cankw or through calling the hotline: +965 66406020. The closing date for receipt of the finalized works of art is 16th April 2016. The organizers will afterwards shortlist the entrants qualified to participate in "The Art of Can" exhibition based on creativity, theme and final presentation.

A bit of history

The art of creating masterpieces out of Red Bull cans started back in 1999. Exhibitions have been held all around the globe from Europe to New Zealand. Countries like Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Singapore, USA, UAE, Kuwait and many more. This year, Red Bull Art of Can will be taking place in Kuwait only. Be bold and get inspired. Take a look at what others have done - visit <http://www.redbullartofcan.com/gallery>



Event guests enjoy the Red Bull Art of Can Kuwait at the 360 Exhibition Hall in Kuwait.



Event winner, Everito Villacruz, poses for a portrait in front of his artwork.



QUARTERBACK CLASS HAS PLENTY TO PROVE BEFORE THE NFL DRAFT

INDIANAPOLIS: NFL teams looking for a franchise quarterback in this year's draft may have a long search. Sure, Carson Wentz, Jared Goff and Paxton Lynch could be the guy - in time. But there are significant questions about all three, and this weekend's workouts at the NFL's annual scouting combine in Indianapolis failed to produce some of those answers. "Most of these kids have never been under center, so when you talk about a five-step drop, most of them have never done it until they got with the (quarterback) guru," NFL Network draft analyst Mike Mayock said after watching Saturday's drills. "So what the coaches are looking for is their footwork."

Regardless, all three could find landing spots in the Top 10 picks. They always seem to. The question this year is who is best positioned. Goff can make every throw needed to excel in the NFL, though he played largely in a spread offense at California, a program that with the exception of Aaron Rodgers has struggled to produce NFL-ready quarterbacks. Wentz won a national championship every year he attended North Dakota State, but there are big questions about the level of competition he faced in the Football Championship Subdivision. Lynch looked rather fit at 6-foot-7, 244 pounds and displayed his athleticism during workouts. But it's also clear he's not a finished product yet.

"Paxton Lynch looks like, to me, that they're building him from the ground up," Mayock said. "When he gets his footwork the right way ... he's got good arm strength. But he's a little bit of a project. He's a couple years away." Other first-round possibilities at quarterback could include Connor Cook from Michigan State and Christian Hackenberg from Penn State. But the safest bet might be if a team with a solid starting quarterback decided to draft for the future. "If I'm Dallas at No 4, I'm kind of licking my lips because I've got a 36-year-old quarterback (Tony Romo) who hasn't finished a season in three years," Mayock said in reference to Wentz. "I would much prefer drafting a guy for the future." Here are some other observations from Indianapolis:

WHO'S NO 1

With no clear-cut quarterback at No 1, speculation has centered around defensive end Joey Bosa from Ohio State and offensive tackle Laremy

Tunsil from Mississippi. There's little doubt Tunsil looked the part this weekend, measuring in at 6-foot-5, 310 pounds and looking light on his feet. Bosa, however, ran a slower-than-expected 4.86 seconds in the 40-yard dash. Don't be surprised to hear some other names join the conversation before April.

BUCKEYE BONANZA

Ohio State sent 14 players to the combine and linebacker Darron Lee might have been the most impressive. Among the players at his position, Lee ran the fastest 40 (4.47), had the best broad jump (11 feet, 1 inch), had top-10 times in the three-cone drill (7.12) and 20-yard shuttle (4.20) and a 35 1/2-inch vertical jump. Lee may have performed well enough to become the fifth or sixth Buckeye player to earn a first-round grade.

INJURY QUESTIONS

Some of this year's top draft prospects must wait until their pro days to impress scouts. Linebackers Jaylon Smith and Miles Jack and cornerback Kendall Fuller have not yet been cleared to participate in work on the field because of significant knee injuries. Jack and Fuller are hoping to work out before the draft. Smith may not get that chance because he had major knee surgery seven weeks ago.

SLOWER THAN

The most surprising part of the workouts might have been the lack of speed demonstrated by this year's receivers. Notre Dame's Will Fuller (4.32) and TCU's Kolby Listenbee (4.39) were the only receivers to finish the 40-yard dash in less than 4.4 seconds. Only eight other receivers ran sub-4.5s. Compare that to the defensive backs, where six ran faster than 4.4 and another 14 who were faster than 4.5.

NEXT UP

Now that the combine has wrapped up, teams can focus squarely on the next part of the offseason process - figuring out what to do with the veterans. Over the next few days, players such as Peyton Manning and Marshawn Lynch could decide whether to retire, teams will announce franchise and transition tag designations and determine priorities about who to re-sign. And those decisions could be influenced by what scouts just witnessed in Indy.— AP

PAKISTAN'S INZAMAM BACKS TAINTED DUO ASIF AND BUTT

NEW DELHI: Former Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul Haq has backed tainted compatriots Mohammad Asif and Salman Butt, saying they should be given a second chance after serving stints in jail for spot fixing. The pair, along with former teammate Mohammad Amir, were jailed in Britain after being found guilty of spot fixing at the 2010 Lord's Test against England. Although Amir has returned to the national team in impressive style, Asif and Butt remain sidelined and have not been included in Pakistan's squad for the T20 World Cup starting this month in India.

"Once a person completes his sentence, he has the right to live and play and the right to do everything else," Inzamam said in an interview in New Delhi. "So I believe the other players should also get a chance to make a return," said Inzamam, who played with the pair in the later stages of his career. The swashbuckling batsman, who took over as coach of Afghanistan last year, was briefly in Delhi as part of his minnow's preparations for the World Cup. Inzamam, who played 120 Tests and 388 one-day internationals during his illustrious career, praised Amir for his sensational spell of bowling against India in the ongoing T20 Asia Cup in Dhaka.

"The sheer fact that a person can have so much talent, that even after a long hiatus he can bowl with the same vigor and precision" is amazing, he said. "The way he bowled against India it didn't look as if he was making a comeback after five long years. It was a treat to watch." The 23-year-old took three quick wickets for Pakistan in last week's match before India eventually pummeled their bitter rivals by five wickets. Amir's five-year ban from the sport was lifted last April by the International Cricket Council, while Asif and Butt became eligible last September for national and international matches. But the Pakistan Cricket Board has said the pair will have to work harder to impress before returning to international cricket.

They returned to domestic cricket in style in January, with Butt smashing a century and left-arm Asif picking up two wickets in their first outing in the one-day league. All three were found guilty by a British court of arranging deliberate no-balls in return for money in a complex betting scam. They were jailed in 2011 and were released at different times the following year. Amir returned to the national side for the limited-overs tour of New Zealand in January and got down to business right away with his wicket-taking ability intact. Inzamam said he believes Pakistan still stands a chance in the World T20 starting March 8 despite disappointing batting in the Asia Cup. "T20 is an unpredictable format, so you cannot rule out any team's chances," said Inzamam, who has 8,830 Test runs to his credit.— AFP



Former Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul Haq

INDIAN STATE THREATENS PAKISTAN TIE OVER ATTACK

NEW DELHI: India's cricket board yesterday criticized authorities in the northern state of Himachal Pradesh after they refused to provide security for an upcoming India-Pakistan World T20 tie, citing a January attack on an Indian army base. Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh said Sunday that the match should be moved to another venue out of respect for the "martyrs" killed in the assault by Pakistani militants on an Indian air force base in neighboring Punjab.

He has threatened not to provide security for Pakistan's players at the Himachal Pradesh cricket ground in the Himalayan town of Dharamsala where the clash is due to take place on March 19. "We are not willing to provide security for the match," a senior state government official said on condition of anonymity. "It's just one match that we are bothered about because it involves Pakistan and our decision reflects the sentiments of the people of Himachal."

Indian cricket board secretary Anurag Thakur accused the state of playing politics and said the country regularly provided security for Pakistani sportsmen and women.

"The venues of the World Cup matches were decided one year ago, the allotment of matches was decided six months ago," said Thakur. "By claiming that you cannot provide security, you are only giving credence to Pakistani claims that there is a security threat to their team in India. It's about the country's image."

Pakistan have already voiced concerns about security in India, saying there were specific threats from Hindu activists who forced the cancellation of a meeting between cricket officials from the two countries in Mumbai last October. The South Asian arch-rivals have not played a bilateral series for more than three years amid diplomatic tensions. Those were worsened by the January attack on the Pathankot airbase, which came days after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's surprise peacemaking visit to Pakistan in December. The raid led to the postponement of peace talks between the nuclear-armed arch-rivals, with Modi urging his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif to take "firm and immediate action".— AFP

BASEBALL TOUGHENS UP ON CHEW AS SKY DARKENS FOR DIPPERS

LOS ANGELES: Red Sox pitcher Clay Buchholz spit some chew into a bottle at his locker, then dipped into the latest notice from baseball. Big leaguers are now getting a written reminder that smokeless tobacco is banned at stadiums in Boston, San Francisco and Los Angeles. One-page letters are being put in clubhouse stalls throughout spring training, where there is no prohibition. The notes come jointly from Major League Baseball and the players' union. So, will Buchholz quit?

"That'll probably happen," he said. "If you get reprimanded for something, there comes a time where you're tired of paying fines for something you don't have to do or doesn't make you any better." "You've got to obey the rules or there's consequences to it. We'll probably learn more about that when we get up North," he said at camp in Fort Myers, Florida. Washington Nationals manager Dusty Baker was a big dipper for a long time. He's cut back over the years, but still might pop in a pinch when games get tight. "It's a bad influence for the kids. Big time. I'll say that. But also they're adults, too, at the same time," Baker said.

"We'll see," he said. "My daughter used to put water in my can and put it back in my truck. Or my son, he has lip check - 'Get it out, Dad!' Local laws will prohibit the use of all tobacco products at Fenway Park, Dodger Stadium and AT&T Park this year, meaning players, team personnel, umpires and fans. The letter advises the same ban will take effect at every California ballpark in December. 'Major league players are citizens,' Commissioner Rob Manfred said last week in Arizona. 'Municipalities pass laws. We expect that our players will comply with those laws.' Said new Dodgers manager Dave Roberts: 'I support it.' 'I think that the intentions are there, and there's obviously going to be some resistance with players,' he said.

"Like it or not, players are role models, and we have a platform as coaches and players. So if that's the law, then we definitely support it," he said. Similar legislation has been proposed in New York City, and both the Mets and Yankees say they back such a ban at their parks. In Toronto, a city legislator said Monday that he plans to pursue a ban that would cover the Blue Jays' stadium. The letter being distributed to players on 40-man rosters and teams this spring says: "Please note that these are city ordinances and not rules established by Major League Baseball. However, the commissioner's office will be monitoring players and club personnel for compliance with the regulations."

Smokeless tobacco isn't permitted throughout the minor leagues. There is no ban on dipping in the majors, and the issue is certain to be discussed in upcoming labor talks between MLB and the union on the contract that expires Dec 1. Going back more than a century, even before Bull Durham tobacco signs were plastered all over outfield walls, baseball was filled with pictures of players with a chew in their cheek. Buchholz did take a break, for a while. "I stopped in the offseason and baseball, it goes along with the territory for me," he said. "It's not a good habit."

Over the years, in collective bargaining, MLB and the union have tried to lower that profile. Players, managers and coaches now can't stick tobacco tins, cans or pouches in their pockets when they're on the field or in plain sight of fans. No wads stuck in the mouth during TV interviews, either. In their letter, MLB and the union said it would provide "nicotine replacement therapy products to those players who wish to use them as substitutes. A shipment of various products including lozenges, gum, and patches will be sent to each club free of charge in spring training, and throughout the 2016 season."

The letter included a reminder that Dr Michael Steinberg, director of the Rutgers University tobacco dependence program, had previously been hired as a consultant to help players develop a treatment plan, if they wanted. Toronto Blue Jays manager John Gibbons applauded the effort to cut down on chew. He quit a couple years ago after Hall of Famer Tony Gwynn - a career-long dipper - died at 54 of salivary gland cancer. "I was a tobacco user for a lot of years. I'm not proud of that. I finally was able to quit. It's a dirty, filthy habit," he said. "I wouldn't want my kids doing it. You hope in some way, they can eliminate it and wipe it out. I'm sure there will be some fights over that, especially in this election year. I'm sure that'll be brought up. But, hey, if you can get rid of it, I'm all for that," he said.—AP

IOC TO REMOVE ITSELF FROM DOPING CASES IN RIO GAMES

LAUSANNE: In a major change in the handling of positive drug tests at the Olympics, the IOC is set to remove itself from the process and have a group of independent sports arbitrators rule on doping cases during the games in Rio de Janeiro, officials familiar with the plans said. The change is expected to be approved by the International Olympic Committee's executive board on Tuesday, three officials told the AP. They spoke on condition of anonymity because the plan had not yet been formally adopted.

The move is intended to make the prosecution of doping cases more independent by taking it away from the IOC and putting it in the hands of a special panel of the Court of Arbitration for Sport. Under current rules, doping cases during the Olympics are dealt with by a special IOC disciplinary panel appointed by the IOC president. The panel schedules hearings with athletes who test positive and decides on sanctions. Most athletes who test positive during the Olympics are disqualified, expelled from the games and stripped of any medals.

Under the new proposal, positive cases would go directly to a small group of specially-appointed CAS arbitrators on site. They would hold hearings and issue rulings without IOC involvement. Any appeal against the arbitrators' decision would be heard by a separate CAS division, which already handles eligibility and other disputes at the Olympics. CAS is a Swiss-based body created by the IOC that is considered the highest court in dealing with sports disputes. The change for the Olympics was studied by CAS and IOC lawyers and came together quickly. It was being submitted for formal approval to the IOC's ruling executive board later.

The move is part of IOC President Thomas Bach's efforts to make drug-testing and sanctioning more credible by removing any potential conflicts of interest. Bach has also recommended that, in the future, all doping sanctions be handed down by CAS, rather than by individual sports bodies. Olympic leaders agreed last year that drug-testing in general - not just at the games - should be taken out of the hands of sports bodies. Bach has proposed that an independent testing agency under WADA control be put into place before the 2018 Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea. WADA is still studying the proposal and how to fund it.

"We are convinced that the adoption of these proposals would lead to a more efficient, more transparent, more streamlined, more cost efficient, more harmonized anti-doping system," Bach said late last year.—AP



5TH INTERNATIONAL SHOOTING GRAND PRIX KICKS OFF

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Chairman and board members of Kuwait Shooting Sport Club were honored to meet HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Eng Duajj Khalaf Al-Otaibi expressed his pleasure during which he conveyed greetings from all members of Kuwait Shooting Community. He also thanked HH the Crown Prince for supporting the hosting of the latest Gulf championship under his patronage.

Al-Otaibi congratulated HH the Crown Prince on the occasion of national days and his 10 anniversary as Crown Prince. Meanwhile, HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Fifth International Shooting Grand Prix will begin today with the official opening at the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex, under the patronage of HH the Amir - and the presence of his representative Information Minister, State Minister for Youth Affairs Sheikh

Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

The tournament will witness large participation as world and Olympic champions will be among the 350 shooters from more than 31 countries in the competition. Chairman of the Higher Organizing Committee inspected the latest preparations. HH the Amir Grand Prix is poised to see strong competition. All participants are looking to win medals, in this event, which is as important as world competitions. There will be prize money approved, in addition to the participation of world champions.

Meanwhile, Secretary General of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Obaid Al-Osaimi welcomed all participating delegations, adding that the number of countries and participating shooters reflects the importance of this Grand Prix it. He said that HOC decided to double the prize money for those who hit or break world records - provided that they are in the top three places of the competitions. Al-Osaimi lauded the support of HH the Amir.



The Kuwaiti Shooter Al-Afasi



Shooters seen during the training session



The flags of the participating countries.



SCOLARI TAKING NOTHING FOR GRANTED IN SYDNEY

SYDNEY: Guangzhou Evergrande may be one of the biggest spending clubs in the world but coach Luis Felipe Scolari scoffed at the idea they should be expected to waltz into the knockout stages of the Asian Champions League. The Chinese champions, who splashed out \$45 million on Colombian striker Jackson Martinez last month, today meet Sydney FC, who are obliged to stay under a salary cap of around \$3 million a season for their entire squad. World Cup-winning coach Scolari, whose squad also includes Brazil internationals Paulinho and Ricardo Goulart, bristled when asked whether it remained a fair contest despite the clear disparity in finances. "We will discover the difference between the two teams after we play the match and see the result," Scolari, shaking his head, told reporters at the Sydney Football Ground. "There are no easy matches in the group stage of the Asian Champions League, we are at the start of the season and after our first match we are improving physically and mentally. "Only two teams will go through so we will do our best to get a good result." Chinese champions for the last five years, Guangzhou won their second ACL title in three years by beating Dubai's Al-Ahli over two legs last November.

They got their 2016 campaign under-

way with a 0-0 draw at home to South Korea's Pohang Steelers last week with Martinez coming under fire in the Chinese media for a lacklustre display. With the Chinese Super League not kicking off until next weekend, however, Scolari said this was a time of year for remaining resolutely pragmatic. "Our main objective is to qualify from the group stage," the Brazilian added. "This (is) only our second match and we got a draw in the first match. We are away from home and although we have not come here for a draw, a point would not be the worst result for us."

In stark contrast to Scolari, Sydney FC coach Graham Arnold was more than happy to talk about the different resources available to the two men, and claim underdog status. "What they paid for Martinez would fund the whole league and the whole code in this country. They flew in on two private jets, we fly economy," said the Australian, whose side lost their ACL opener 2-0 to Urawa Red Diamonds in Japan last week. "They're attracting big players and spending a lot of money but we will not be intimidated by them. "They've got three very good foreigners, but the rest are Chinese players and we've shown at national level that we're very good against the Chinese national team. "Anything's possible." — Reuters



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's Memphis Depay (right) challenges Arsenal's Hector Bellerin for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Arsenal at Old Trafford Stadium, Manchester, England on Sunday, Feb 28, 2016. — AP

RONALDO RANT FORGIVEN AND FORGOTTEN

MADRID: Real Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane insists he has put Cristiano Ronaldo's outburst at his own teammates behind him as he attempts to turnaround a terrible season for the Spanish giants. Madrid sit third in La Liga, 12 points adrift of runaway leaders Barcelona, after losing 1-0 to Atletico Madrid on Saturday. However, after the game Ronaldo said Real would be top if his teammates matched his standards.

The three-time World Player of the Year later rectified his comments by claiming he was only referring to his colleagues level of fitness as Madrid have been ravaged by injuries this season. "Cristiano has spoken with everyone. This subject is behind us," Zidane said yesterday. "We all know the importance Cristiano has and we are all with him. "The issue has been fixed. The most important thing is what we have ahead and we will face that by all sticking together."

Defeat to Atletico was Zidane's first in nine games since replacing the sacked Rafael Benitez in January. However, since Benitez's sacking, Barca's lead over Real has

stretched by 10 points leading to questions over Zidane's position for next season. "When I arrived two months ago everything was beautiful and now that we have lost one game everything is black," added the Frenchman. "I understand your concern, but I continue to work with my players because I know they will turn this around. The rest doesn't matter to me."

One of the key injuries that Ronaldo alluded to has been the absence of Gareth Bale. The Welsh star has been out for the past six weeks and featured in just 17 of Madrid's 34 games this season. Bale returned to training yesterday, but won't be risked for today's trip to bottom-placed Levante. Zidane also confirmed that midfielder Luka Modric will miss out in mid-week due to a foot injury. "Bale was with us this morning in training. It is the first full session he has done with us and he didn't feel the injury he had. "He is a fundamental and important player for Madrid. It is clear when he isn't there it is harder for the team. "We will see if this weekend he can be with us." — AFP



MADRID: Real Madrid's Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo (left) vies with Atletico Madrid's midfielder Saul Niguez during the Spanish league football match Real Madrid CF vs Club Atletico de Madrid at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid. — AFP

ALONSO IS HERO AND VILLAIN AS FIORENTINA HOLD NAPOLI

FLORENCE: Marcos Alonso scored for Fiorentina and then almost immediately gifted Gonzalo Higuain the equalizer for Napoli in a pulsating, end-to-end 1-1 Serie A draw on Monday. Fourth-placed Fiorentina twice hit the crossbar before halftime while Napoli, who are second, were denied by a stunning double save from Ciprian Tatarusanu after the break as both sides lost ground on leaders Juventus. Juventus, chasing a fifth successive title, have 61 points from 27 matches followed by Napoli on 58, AS Roma and Fiorentina, who meet on Friday, have 53. The home team went ahead after six minutes when Alonso outjumped the visiting defense to head in a corner.

Napoli's attack from the kickoff broke down but Alonso's clearance went straight to Higuain and the Argentine sent a first-time shot into the net from 25 metres, his 25th league goal of the season. Nikola Kalinic was given a free run on goal and fired against the crossbar with only keeper Pepe Reina to beat and Cristiano Tello also curled a shot against the woodwork in another Fiorentina attack. Tatarusanu twice thwarted Napoli in the 58th minute, parrying Jose Callejon's powerful drive after the Spaniard broke clear on the right and then brilliantly stopping Higuain's follow-up. The Romanian also foiled Lorenzo Insigne in stoppage time, just after Higuain had a goal disallowed for offside. — Reuters



FLORENCE: Fiorentina's Marcos Alonso Mendoza (top left) scores during a Serie A soccer match between Fiorentina and Napoli at the Artemio Franchi stadium in Florence on Monday, Feb 29, 2016. — AP

ARSENAL THROWING AWAY GOLDEN CHANCE TO WIN PREMIER LEAGUE

LONDON: If he's celebrating with the Premier League trophy in May, Arsene Wenger's attempts to head off another bout of abuse will seem reasonable. "Let's not go overboard," the Arsenal manager cautioned after failing again to win at Manchester United. Despite Sunday's 3-2 loss, Arsenal remains third in the Premier League, Leicester is only five points in front and there are still 33 points to play for. "I cannot fault our commitment and spirit and desire," Wenger said of his players. In reality, they lack the fighting spirit and doggedness to grind out the wins required to end a 12-year-old title drought.

In the 20th anniversary year of his appointment, Wenger is fast running out of excuses, particularly when the teams above Arsenal are Leicester and Tottenham. Leader Leicester has never won the league. Tottenham, whose last title came in 1961, hosts Arsenal in the north London derby on Saturday. Not even Alex Ferguson's retirement and the ensuing disarray under David Moyes and Louis van Gaal has enabled Arsenal to end its Old Trafford hoodoo. Arsenal last won at United in the league in September 2006. Since then lesser teams - from Norwich to Swansea - have all emerged victorious at a ground that was renowned as a fortress under Ferguson.

Arsenal has rarely been presented with a better chance to win at the record 20-time champions than on Sunday. It was a patched-up United defense and injuries up front forced Van Gaal into handing Marcus Rashford his first Premier League appearance in place of the sidelined Wayne Rooney. It's too early to declare Rashford a teen sensation. But the 18-year-old academy graduate followed up his debut double in the Europa League on Thursday with another brace on Sunday. Rashford's emergence highlighted Arsenal's deficiencies developing talent within in its own youth system.

But Arsenal did boast a front four of Mesut Ozil, Alexis Sanchez, Theo Walcott and Danny Welbeck which cost more than 100 million pounds (\$140 million) to assemble. They still came out second best in a team lacking leadership. For a striker bought in 2014 for 35 million pounds (then \$60 million), Sanchez has failed to live up to his price tag this season. The Chile forward scored six times in three games across September and October in the league. He hasn't scored since then in the competition, with just three cup goals to his name.

Once Wenger blamed the financial advantage of rivals while Arsenal was funding the move to the Emirates Stadium over the last decade. Even an end to austerity has only produced a couple of successes in the FA Cup, a prize with an increasingly diminished status in England. In the build-up to the United game, Wenger resorted to moaning about players who are "tapped up to go somewhere else" - reinforcing the manager's failure to hold onto talent such as Cesc Fabregas. What irritates Arsenal fans who have seen only one outfield player added to the squad in the last two transfer windows is the club's cash balance: 159.4 million pounds (\$221.6 million) in the latest accounts published on Friday.

But Arsenal's revenue rose to 160 million pounds (\$222.4 million) in the six months to November 30. And the club's main commercial backer, kit maker Puma, is relaxed about Arsenal's failure to win the Premier League since 2004 or challenge for a first Champions League title since reaching the 2006 final. Arsenal heads to Barcelona next month trailing 2-0 in the round of 16. "Anytime you have a partner who can be focused on doing cool things, yes it makes some of those other

things less important," Puma global marketing director Adam Petrick said when asked the importance of winning the Premier League and Champions League. "We want everybody to be successful absolutely in every aspect of what they are doing. But it's not only about winning. It's also about having a good time."

Recently, the anguish has eclipsed rare moments of euphoria for fans of a club which has become adept at tossing away chances of winning the title. Arsenal has collected nine points from a possible 21 in the last seven games. "They have been very successful in the

past," Petrick said earlier this month in London. "They have a tremendous winning tradition." Wenger has relied on past glory to remain the Premier League's longest-serving current manager, with the last of three title triumphs in 2004. With Chelsea's woeful title defense leaving it stranded in the bottom half of the standings and United erratic under Van Gaal, Wenger has never had a better chance to lift the trophy again. At Arsenal, they constantly talk about potential in the team. The players have 11 games to fulfill it. Don't count on it. — AP

RECORD-SIGNING TEIXEIRA SPARKS JIANGSU VICTORY

NANJING: China's record signing Alex Teixeira helped kick-start Jiangsu Suning's AFC Champions League campaign yesterday as the big spenders got off the mark with a tense 3-2 win over Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors. Teixeira started to repay his giant 50 million euros (\$54.4 million) transfer fee from Shakhtar Donetsk as he grabbed the opener in what became Jiangsu's first win of the tournament.

Former Manchester City forward Jo also got on the scoresheet, but Jiangsu's victory came at a cost as ex-Chelsea midfielder Ramires saw red during an injury-time melee. The well-heeled Chinese side were held by Vietnam's Binh Duong in their opening game but it was a different story at home as their expensive new strike-force started to gel. One-time Liverpool target Teixeira ran at a backpedalling defense and fired in at the near post to open the scoring on 16 minutes, only for Lee Dong-Gook to equalize just after the hour-mark.

But Jo buried a leaping header on 66 minutes to restore Jiangsu's lead, before Ramires cued up Wu Xi for a shot on the turn to put the hosts 3-1 ahead. However, there were some nervy moments for Jiangsu when towering striker Kim Shin-

Wook nodded Jeonbuk's second to cut the deficit to 3-2. Ramires got his marching orders after a shoving match in stoppage time but Jiangsu held on-much to the relief of their animated coach Dan Petrescu-to top Group E. Earlier Brazilian goal-machine Adriano made it seven goals in just two AFC Champions League games as FC Seoul destroyed Sanfrecce Hiroshima 4-1 to stay top of Group F.

Adriano, who smashed four in last week's 6-0 demolition of Buriram United, plundered another hat-trick as the Korean FA Cup-holders roared back from a goal down. After Kazuhiko Chiba's opener for Hiroshima, Kim Won-Sik equalized just after the half-hour mark, but Adriano stole the show with his treble in 20 second-half minutes. The Brazilian put Seoul ahead in the 49th minute when he let a free-kick drop over his shoulder and steered home a delicate volley. He showed his predatory instincts with a determined run and near-post finish on 55 minutes, and completed his hat-trick after another flowing team move in the 69th. After two games, FC Seoul lead Group F on goal difference ahead of China's Shandong Luneng, who beat Thai outfit Buriram 3-0. — AFP



NANJING: Alex Teixeira of China's Jiangsu FC falls as he fights for the ball with Kim Jangsoo (right) of South Korea's Jeonbuk during their AFC Champions League group E football match in Nanjing in China's Jiangsu province yesterday. — AFP

INFANTINO HUNTS FOR NON-EUROPEAN CHIEF EXECUTIVE

AFRICAN AND AMERICAN NAMES ALREADY TOUTED

MIAMI: The victory celebration over, new FIFA president Gianni Infantino's first major decision in charge of the troubled world football organization will be to appoint a secretary general, effectively a chief executive, to run day-to-day operations. Since FIFA was founded in 1904, it has had 10 secretaries general, all from Europe, the game's strongest continent. At an event in London during his campaign for Friday's presidential election, Infantino said: "I am convinced the general secretary of FIFA should not be a European. Why not an African?"

A source close to Infantino said on Monday that this "did not necessarily mean that an African would be chosen, more than he had not ruled out an African". That said, there would be a strong African contender in the shape of the Moroccan Hicham El Amrani. The Paris-educated 36-year-old became general secretary of the African confederation (CAF) on an interim basis in 2010 and was confirmed in the role in September 2011. He had previously been deputy general secretary at CAF and worked for the Asian Football Confederation in competitions marketing. He graduated in 2004 from the FIFA Masters course, which was created to train future football administrators from around the world.

El Amrani won the Young Leader of the Year award in 2015 from the 'Leaders in Sports' organization partly in recognition of the way he handled the switch of the African Nations Cup to

Equatorial Guinea after Morocco withdrew two months before the tournament because of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

"He is very, very capable," said Swiss-based sports business consultant Joao Frigerio, who knows El Amrani from the FIFA Masters alumni association. "There is no doubt in my mind that he can be a great general secretary." El Amrani could not immediately be reached for comment.

Not rushing

Infantino said on Sunday that he would not rush into a decision about the secretary general, whose role takes on added importance in FIFA's new, reformed structure. Although some of FIFA's reform documents refer to a "CEO", a source within FIFA indicated that for "tradition reasons" the title of secretary general is likely to continue to be used. Infantino might also look to North America, whose administrators played a key role in swinging votes to the Swiss at Friday's FIFA Congress in Zurich.

US Soccer president Sunil Gulati is an economics professor at Columbia University and well connected politically in the United States. This could be attractive to FIFA as it tries to improve relations with the US Department of Justice, which has charged dozens of soccer officials in the Americas with corruption, and is investigating allegations of bribery and corruption at FIFA itself. A tweet from sports marketing executive Ricardo Fort suggesting



ZURICH: Newly-elected FIFA president Gianni Infantino (center) plays during a football match on February 29, 2016 at the FIFA headquarters in Zurich. — AFP

Gulati would be a good choice sparked speculation in Zurich over the weekend.

Fort was until recently a senior vice-president for sponsorship marketing with Visa Inc, one of FIFA's global sponsors. Fort said his tweet reflected only his personal view, and Gulati was also

not reachable for comment. Although there is no obvious candidate for the role from Asian football, an Asian candidate might also appeal to Infantino as he seeks to build bridges with other confederations, especially after he beat Asian confederation president Sheikh

Salman Bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa to the FIFA presidency. The earliest Infantino could present a nomination would be an Executive Committee meeting in Zurich on March 17, but he may decide to wait until closer to May's FIFA Congress in Mexico City. — Reuters



SEOUL: South Korea's FC Seoul forward Carlos Adriano de Souza Cruz (right) fights for the ball against Japan's Sanfrecce Hiroshima defender Kazuhiko Chiba during a soccer match of the AFC Champions League at the World Cup Stadium in Seoul yesterday. — AP

MAGNIFICENT SEVEN FOR GOAL-MACHINE ADRIANO

SEOUL: Brazilian goal-machine Adriano made it seven goals in just two AFC Champions League games yesterday as FC Seoul destroyed Sanfrecce Hiroshima 4-1 to stay top of Group F. Adriano, who smashed four in last week's 6-0 demolition of Buriram United, plundered another hat-trick as the Korean FA Cup-holders roared back from a goal down. After Kazuhiko Chiba's opener for Hiroshima, Kim Won-Sik equalized just after the half-hour, before Adriano stole the show with his treble in 20 second-half minutes. The Brazilian put Seoul ahead in the 49th minute when he let a free-kick drop over his shoulder and steered home a delicate volley. He showed his predatory instincts with a determined run and near-post finish on 55 minutes, and completed his hat-trick after another flowing team move in the 69th.

After a ball across the box from Spanish defender Osmar Barba, Sin Jin-Ho's backheel found the on-rushing Adriano and the free-scoring forward swept home Seoul's fourth. Adriano remained a danger in the final minutes and ex-Arsenal forward Park Chu-Young also came close with a free-kick which flashed just wide. After two games, FC Seoul top the nascent Group F on goal difference ahead of China's Shandong Luneng, who beat Thai outfit Buriram 3-0. Brazilians Diego Tardelli and Jucliei put Shandong 2-0 up before Chinese defender Zhao Mingjian curled home a stunning strike with the outside of his boot on 86 minutes. — AFP



Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Stoke City v Newcastle	22:45
beIN SPORTS 12 HD	
Arsenal FC v Swansea	22:45
beIN SPORTS 4 HD	
West Ham v Tottenham	22:45
beIN SPORTS	
Man United v Watford	23:00
beIN SPORTS 7 HD	
Liverpool v Man City	23:00
beIN SPORTS 2 HD	

SPANISH LEAGUE

Sevilla FC v SD Eibar	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Celta de Vigo v Villarreal	22:00
beIN SPORTS 8 HD	
Malaga CF v Valencia	22:00
beIN SPORTS 13 HD	
Athletic de Bilbao v Deportivo	22:00
Levante v Real Madrid	23:00
beIN SPORTS 3 HD	

GERMAN LEAGUE

Hertha Berlin v Eintracht	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Schalke 04 v Hamburger SV	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Monchengladbach v Stuttgart	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Darmstadt v Borussia Dortmund	22:00
beIN SPORTS 10 HD	
TSG Hoffenheim v Augsburg	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Bayer 04 v Werder Bremen	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Bayern Munich v FSV Mainz 05	22:00
beIN SPORTS 5 HD	

BAYERN'S GUARDIOLA DISMISSES DORTMUND TALK BEFORE MAINZ

BERLIN: Bayern Munich could move closer to an historic fourth straight German league title if they win at nearest-rivals Borussia Dortmund in four days, but Pep Guardiola says, for now, it's all about Mainz today. Bayern hold an eight point lead in the table and victory at Dortmund on Saturday would be a significant step becoming the first team to win four straight German league titles. Bayern won 2-0 at Champions League side Wolfsburg last Saturday and now a mouth-watering showdown beckons in Dortmund. Before that however Guardiola insists he is focused on playing resurgent Mainz at Munich's Allianz Arena. "Everyone is talking about Wolfsburg and Borussia Dortmund, but we are playing against Mainz, who are fifth in the table. "They are a strong and dynamic team."

The Martin Schmidt-coached Mainz proved just how strong they are in beating Bayer Leverkusen 3-1 at home on Sunday with goal-scoring midfielder Yunus Malli netting twice to leave them fifth and challenging for a Champions League place next season. But Bayern want to secure the league title as soon as possible to allow them to focus on Europe. They set the Bundesliga record for the earliest title win two years ago by wrapping things up with seven games left at the end of March 2014, holding a 22-point gap over second-placed Dortmund at the time.

Two years on, Dortmund are making life much harder under coach Thomas Tuchel and Guardiola knows he can ill afford to be distracted by the Champions League or German



WOLFSBURG: Bayern Munich's Spanish head coach Pep Guardiola arrives for the German first division Bundesliga football match VfL Wolfsburg vs FC Bayern Munich in Wolfsburg. — AFP

Cup in his final few months in Munich before coaching Manchester City next season. Tuchel says it is obvious Bayern are eager to win at Dortmund to leave Borussia with only a mathematical chance of winning the title. "It should be noted that Bayern want to decide things early," said Tuchel, ahead of their game today's at Darmstadt, who are just above the relegation places. "Perhaps it's the best outcome (for Bayern) if the eight point gap remains."

Injuries have robbed Guardiola of defenders with centre-backs Jerome Boateng, Javi Martinez and Holger Badstuber sidelined. But in attack, he has all his players fit and is strugg-

ling to find a place for Germany's World Cup winner Mario Goetze, who is back from injury. "He still needs more time and I have seven forwards fit," said Guardiola. "We still have three months left and we need all our players in order to reach our goals. "Mario is very professional and is important for us." After ex-Bayern president Uli Hoeness was released from prison after serving 21 months for tax evasion on Monday, Guardiola was tight-lipped on whether he has already spoken to him. "That's private," Guardiola snapped. "We are happy for him, for Susi (Hoeness' wife) and his family." — AFP

'NO DIVERSITY OSCAR' FOR EUROPE FOOTBALL GIANTS

PARIS: There is not one black coach in the top leagues of Europe's five major championships and footballers are just as bitter as black actors in Hollywood. "We can play but not lead, maybe the black man is only made to execute," Florent Ibenge, the Democratic Republic of Congo coach said. "You have got to ask the owners. People are there, trained, but no one trusts them." "The European clubs hardly give us a chance and they do not believe in us," added Samson Siasia, who was named Nigeria's interim coach last week.

"Many of us have not only played at the highest level in Europe, but have excelled. Yet even when we get our coaching badges there, these clubs still don't give us the break we need to show what we can do outside the pitch." There is no black coach in the English Premier League and only Jimmy Hasselbaink at Queen's Park Rangers in the second level Championship. No black manager runs a French Ligue 1 team and only former Paris Saint-Germain boss Antoine Kombouare is at Lens in the second division. There have been none in Italy since AC Milan sacked Clarence Seedorf in 2014 after just five months in the post.

There are no black coaches in Germany's Bundesliga. "It becomes obvious why you're not being picked," Chris Ramsey, who for a while was head coach at Queen's Park Rangers in the Premier League, told the Leaders in Sport conference in London in October when describing his battle to get work. "It's been a long journey and it's been very difficult. "You have to keep going and make sure you don't put your head down. Sometimes it's about embarrassing people by showing it's obvious they're not picking you for obvious reasons."

John Barnes syndrome

Is it discrimination, or training? "Something is really not right, but I don't want to put any

name to it," said Siasia, who played for Nantes in France and Lokeren in Belgium before becoming a coach. "Where is John Barnes with all he achieved at Liverpool and even though he grew up in England? He was not given much of a chance there as a coach." England's Professional Footballers Association has called for a version of the NFL's Rooney Rule to be introduced in the Premier League. The rule introduced in 2003 forces American football clubs to interview ethnic minority candidates when a vacancy is posted.

The Premier League has indicated it is not going to introduce the rule yet but lower division clubs are going to start a pilot scheme. Former England striker Les Ferdinand pointed out that Premier League clubs rarely hold interviews for jobs anyway. "Normally they have identified the next man they want." The lack of opportunities fuels a vicious circle where black players—who are still well represented as television pundits—are put off trying to be a coach. "A black player is going to say 'is it worth passing all the diplomas if no one is going to give me a job'," said French sociologist Pascal Boniface who wrote a book with Pape Diouf, a black former president of Olympique Marseille.

"Many of us have good records as players and then coaches, but because the European clubs do not believe in us, we end up having to do something else," added Siasia. "And even when they give us a chance, they are quick to dispense of us." Many African teams appear to prefer European coaches as well and this also hurts their players. Frenchman Herve Renard has just been named Morocco's coach having won the Cup of African Nations with Ivory Coast and Zambia. Ibenge said African federations should put more resources into training black coaches. "We Africans ask that our leaders no longer put up discriminatory criteria such as race or nationality," said Ibenge. — AFP

ALLEGRI WANTS MORE INTER GOALS, AND CUP FINAL SPOT

MILAN: Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri is set to rest key players when the defending champions travel to Inter Milan looking to "score goals" and secure their second successive Italian Cup final today. A 2-0 league victory over a hapless Inter side in Turin on Sunday gave Juventus a three-point lead at the top of Serie A after Napoli held an enterprising Fiorentina to a 1-1 draw on Monday. Inter are out for revenge, but a chastening 3-0 defeat in the first leg of the semi-final as well as their comparative lack of threat against the champions on Sunday has left Roberto Mancini's men needing a miracle if they are to overturn the tie.

Juventus have not reached successive Cup finals since the 1960s, and Allegri warned: "We'll be going out tomorrow completely focused on reaching the final, and we want to do it by winning. Losing never does you any good. "We'll go there with plenty of belief, but also to score goals." Juve's cushion from the first leg means Allegri, who has one eye on a decisive Champions League last 16 second leg away to Bayern Munich in a little over two weeks' time, can afford to rest key players.

Argentine striker Paulo Dybala and Croatian Mario Mandzukic, who started in Sunday's win, could both start on the bench in place of Simone Zaza and Alvaro Morata. Part of that decision is because Dybala, as well as defender Leonardo Bonucci, are one booking away from being suspended for the final. "Zaza and Morata could be our choices up front," said Allegri, who will also be reshuffling his defense. Patrice Evra will be absent having missed training due to "family reasons" and Giorgio Chiellini—who hobbled off against Inter—is also expected to sit out. — AFP

Sports

Hornqvist hat trick powers Penguins past Coyotes 6-0



Ronaldo rant 'forgiven and forgotten'



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2016

5TH INTERNATIONAL SHOOTING GRAND PRIX KICKS OFF Page 17



LOS ANGELES: Los Angeles Clippers center DeAndre Jordan dunks during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Brooklyn Nets on Monday, Feb 29, 2016 in Los Angeles. The Clippers won 105-95. — AP

THUNDER HUMBLE KINGS 131-116

LEBRON SCORES 33; CAVALIERS HOLD OFF PACERS 100-96

SACRAMENTO: Russell Westbrook had 20 points, 15 rebounds and 13 assists, leading the Oklahoma City Thunder to a 131-116 victory over the Sacramento Kings on Monday night. Kevin Durant finished with 27 points, 10 rebounds and six assists as Oklahoma City bounced back from a difficult stretch. The Thunder had dropped four of five, including a heartbreaking overtime loss to Golden State on Saturday night. Oklahoma City shot 57 percent (47 for 82) from the field, including a 14-for-34 performance from 3-point range. Enes Kanter scored 23 points on 11-for-11 shooting. Sacramento has lost three in a row heading into a four-game road trip. DeMarcus Cousins had 35 points and 12 rebounds, and Rajon Rondo finished with 11 points, 12 assists and nine rebounds.

CLIPPERS 105, NETS 95

Jamal Crawford scored 26 points, and the Clippers beat the Nets to win their second in a row after alternating wins and losses in their previous six games. Chris Paul had 23 points and 12 assists for Los Angeles, and JJ Redick scored 19 points. Brook Lopez had 25 points and 10 rebounds for Brooklyn, which was going for its first three-game winning streak of the season. Instead, the Nets lost their fifth straight to the Clippers at Staples Center.

CAVALIERS 100, PACERS 96

LeBron James scored 33 points after sitting out a game and Tristan Thompson made two huge plays in the final minute, leading Cleveland to the victory. James was rested on Sunday by coach Tyrone Lue and the Cavs were lethargic in a 113-99 loss at Washington. But with James back on the floor, Cleveland played with much more energy and again looked like a team with NBA championship aspirations. Matthew Dellavedova hit a tying 3-pointer for the Cavs with 1:13 left before Thompson made it 96-94 with a layup. Thompson then blocked a shot by Indianapolis George Hill with 18 seconds left. Monta Ellis scored 28 points and Paul George had 23 for the Pacers, who lost their third straight but played much better than in a loss to Portland on Sunday.

WIZARDS 116, 76ERS 108

John Wall scored 16 of his 37 points in the fourth quarter, helping the Wizards rally for the win. Wall and Marcin Gortat combined for 14 points during a 16-0 fourth-quarter run in Washington's sixth victory in eight games since the All-Star break. Gortat finished with 18 points and a career-high 20 rebounds. Markieff Morris added 16 points and 13 rebounds in his first double-double with Washington. Philadelphia played without rookie center Jahlil Okafor, who was

sidelined by a right shin bruise. But the 76ers had six players score in double figures, led by Ish Smith's 25 points. The 76ers were outrebounded 53-32 in their ninth straight loss.

BUCKS 128, ROCKETS 121

Giannis Antetokounmpo recorded his second career triple-double with 18 points, 17 rebounds and 11 assists, and the Bucks outlasted the Rockets. Jabari Parker scored a career-high 36 points for Milwaukee, and Khris Middleton had 30 points. The Bucks nearly blew a late 13-point lead after the Rockets put together a 9-0 run. After forcing a turnover, Houston's Trevor Ariza was whistled for a 5-second violation on inbounds pass with 20 seconds remaining. Dwight Howard had 30 points and 13 rebounds for Houston, while Ariza had 20 points and 11 assists.

GRIZZLIES 103, NUGGETS 96

Zach Randolph scored 22 points, leading Memphis to the road win. Matt Barnes had 16 points for the Grizzlies, and Mario Chalmers finished with 15. Memphis won its fifth in a row against the Nuggets, including three meetings this season. Kenneth Faried had 16 points and 11 rebounds for the Nuggets, who have lost five of six. Gary Harris added 15 points. Newly signed JaKarr Sampson started in place of injured forward

NBA results/standings

Cleveland 100, Indiana 96; Washington 116, Philadelphia 108; Boston 100, Utah 95; Milwaukee 128, Houston 121; Memphis 103, Denver 96; Oklahoma City 131, Sacramento 116; LA Clippers 105, Brooklyn 95.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference					
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division					
W	L	PCT	GB						
Toronto	39	19	.672	-	Oklahoma City	42	18	.700	-
Boston	36	25	.590	4.5	Portland	32	28	.533	10
NY Knicks	25	36	.410	15.5	Utah	28	31	.475	13.5
Brooklyn	17	43	.283	23	Denver	23	37	.383	19
Philadelphia	8	52	.133	32	Minnesota	19	41	.317	23
Central Division				Pacific Division					
Cleveland	42	17	.712	-	Golden State	53	5	.914	-
Chicago	30	28	.517	11.5	LA Clippers	39	20	.661	14.5
Indiana	31	29	.517	11.5	Sacramento	24	34	.414	29
Detroit	31	29	.517	11.5	Phoenix	15	44	.254	38.5
Milwaukee	25	35	.417	17.5	LA Lakers	11	49	.183	43
Southeast Division				Southwest Division					
Miami	33	26	.559	-	San Antonio	50	9	.847	-
Atlanta	33	27	.550	0.5	Memphis	35	24	.593	15
Charlotte	30	28	.517	2.5	Dallas	32	28	.533	18.5
Washington	29	30	.492	4	Houston	29	31	.483	21.5
Orlando	26	32	.448	6.5	New Orleans	23	35	.397	26.5

Danilo Gallinari, the Nuggets' leading scorer who is sidelined indefinitely after severely spraining his right ankle Friday at Dallas. Sampson finished with seven points.

CELTICS 100, JAZZ 95

Jae Crowder had 22 points, and the Celtics extended their home win streak to 11. Isaiah

Thomas added 18 points and nine assists. Avery Bradley also finished with 18 points. The Celtics went in front for good on a 3-pointer by Crowder with less than a minute to play. Trey Lyles had 18 points and 10 rebounds for the Jazz, who have dropped three in a row. Shelvin Mack added 18 points. Gordon Hayward finished with 16. — AP

IN-FORM KOHLI GUIDES INDIA TO ASIA CUP FINAL



DHAKA: India's captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni (left) breaks the stumps successfully as Sri Lanka's Thisara Perera falls during the Asia Cup T20 cricket tournament match between India and Sri Lanka at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka yesterday. — AFP

DHAKA: In-form batsman Virat Kohli made an unbeaten half-century as India eased to a five-wicket win over Sri Lanka to qualify for the Asia Cup final in Dhaka yesterday. Kohli, who played a brilliant innings of 49 under pressure against Pakistan on Saturday, hit 56 off 47 balls to guide India to 142-5 after their medium pacers restricted Sri Lanka to 138-9. Replying to the modest score, India were in danger early on when Nuwan Kulasekara removed both the openers Shikhar Dhawan and Rohit Sharma for just 16 runs. Dhawan returned to the starting line-up after an injury break against Pakistan but survived just three balls before edging Kulasekara to Dinesh Chandimal for one.

Sharma fell in Kulasekara's next over after slipping to Chamara Kapugedera for 15. Kohli, who hit seven fours, added 54 runs with Suresh Raina for the third wicket to put India firmly in control. "Touch wood, it's coming out nicely now. Another crunch situation, 16 for 2. It's nice to challenge yourself," Kohli said after the match. "Kulasekara and Angie were bowling well. I knew I'm striking the ball well, so I have to take the pres-

sure off the other batsman by hitting the odd boundary." Dasun Shanaka broke the partnership as Raina miscued a catch to Kulasekara at mid-off after making 25 runs.

Yuvraj Singh ensured it did not affect India's run-flow, hitting left-arm spinner Rangana Herath for two sixes off successive balls in the next over to make 35 off 18 balls. India captain MS Dhoni praised Singh for his effort. "Yuvraj Singh's innings was crucial, not just for this match but for the team as well," said Dhoni. "Good to see him get into some good form." Put into bat first by Dhoni, Sri Lanka's Kapugedera scored the team's highest of 30 off 32 balls, but the islanders needed a strong effort from lower order batsmen Milinda Siriwardana and Kulasekara. Siriwardana made 22 off 17 balls while Kulasekara added 17 after facing just six balls to provide a late impetus. Indian medium pacers controlled the innings making regular in-roads from the start.

Ashish Nehra removed Chandimal early after he added six runs to his 50 and 37 runs in the previous two matches. Hardik Pandya and Jasprit Bumrah

SCOREBOARD

DHAKA: Scoreboard of the Asia Cup Twenty20 match between India and Sri Lanka at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday:

Sri Lanka		India	
D. Chandimal c Dhoni b Nehra	4	S. Dhawan c Chandimal b Kulasekara	1
T. Dilshan c Ashwin b Pandya	18	R. Sharma c Kapugedera b Kulasekara	15
S. Jayasuriya c Dhoni b Bumrah	3	V. Kohli not out	56
C. Kapugedera c Pandya b Bumrah	30	S. Raina c Kulasekara b Shanaka	25
A. Mathews b Pandya	18	Yuvraj Singh c Kulasekara b Perera	35
M. Siriwardana c Raina b Ashwin	22	H. Pandya b Herath	2
D. Shanaka run out	1	MS Dhoni not out	7
T. Perera st Dhoni b Ashwin	17	Extras (w1)	1
N. Kulasekara run out	13	Total (five wickets; 19.2 overs)	142
D. Chameera not out	2	Fall of wickets: 1-11 (Dhawan), 2-16 (Sharma), 3-70 (Raina) 4-121 (Yuvraj), 5-125 (Pandya)	
Extras (lb 5 w4 nb 1)	10	Did not bat: R. Jadeja, R. Ashwin, J. Bumrah, A. Nehra	
Total (nine wickets; 20 overs)	138	Nehra Bowling: Mathews 3-0-16-0, Kulasekara 3-0-21-2, Perera 4-0-32-1, Chameera 4-0-27-0 (w1), Herath 3-2-0-26-1, Shanaka 1-0-7-1, Siriwardana 1-0-13-0. Result: India won by five wickets.	
Fall of wickets: 1-6 (Chandimal), 2-15 (Jayasuriya), 3-31 (Dilshan) 4-57 (Mathews), 5-100 (Siriwardana), 6-104 (Shanaka), 7-105 (Kapugedera), 8-125 (Perera), 9-138 (Kulasekara)			
Did not bat: R. Herath			
Bowling: Nehra 4-0-23-1(w2), Bumrah 4-0-27-2, Pandya 4-0-26-2, Yuvraj 1-0-3-0, Jadeja 2-0-19-0, Ashwin 4-0-26-2 (nb1 w2), Raina 1-0-9-0			

then claimed two wickets each to finish with 2-26 and 2-27 respectively before the lower-order gave the Sri Lankan innings some respectability. Sri Lanka captain Angelo Mathews said dew that had fallen on the ground in the evening was partly responsible for their defeat. "With the dew coming in, it felt like we

were 20-25 runs short, but the Indians batted well, as always, and Virat was outstanding," he said. "If the wicket was like the previous one, it would have been a fighting total, but the dew came in and the ball started sliding through." Bangladesh will face Pakistan in the tournament today. — AFP

Kuwait Times BUSINESS

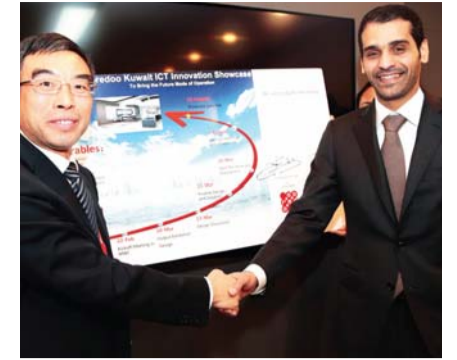
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Smaller UAE companies
struggle for finance

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Markaz announces net profit
of KD2.88 million for 2015

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Ooredoo Kuwait, Huawei
showcase ICT Innovation

BARCLAYS SHARES DIVE AS BANK SEES PROFIT FALL

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GENEVA: The New Ferrari GTC4 Lusso is presented during the press day at the 86th International Motor Show in Geneva yesterday. The Motor Show will open its gates to the public from tomorrow to 13, presenting more than 200 exhibitors and more than 120 world and European premieres. —AP (See Page 25)

OIL PRICES HAVE BOTTOMED OUT: IEA OPEC WATCHING IRAN, RUSSIA, UNLIKELY TO CUT OUTPUT IN JUNE

OSLO: Global oil prices appear to have bottomed out and are expected to rise through this year as investment cuts help to reduce a supply glut, a senior analyst at the International Energy Agency said yesterday. Benchmark Brent crude futures were up 44 cents at \$37.01 a barrel at 1304 GMT, the highest in eight weeks. They hit a more than 12-year low of \$27.10 on Jan. 20.

"Oil prices appear to have bottomed out," Neil Atkinson, the new head of IEA's oil industry and market division, told a seminar in Oslo. "Prices are expected to grow throughout 2016 and into 2017, reflecting expectations that the market is going back into balance in 2017," he added.

The global oil market was expected to begin rebalancing in 2017 as US output is set to decline under pressure from low oil prices, the International Energy Agency said on Feb. 22 in its medium-term market outlook. If the US producers were to "remain longer in the game," the market's rebalancing could be pushed back by one year to 2018, Atkinson said.

The price rally, however, will be capped in the medium term by a potential increase in the US shale oil production once a rise in oil prices makes it profitable again. "As soon as oil rises to \$40-50 per barrel, it will give a signal to light tight oil producers (to ramp up)," Atkinson said.

The IEA expects prices to reach \$80 per barrel by 2020, with US oil production reaching a record high of 14.2 million barrels per day by 2021. Some analysts disagreed with the IEA's outlook on the speed of oil price rebound.

"The change is not going to be gradual, but it will be sudden," Torbjorn Kjus, senior oil analyst at Norway's leading bank DNB. "We think the price will be above \$60 per barrel within the next 12 months," he added. DNB analysts estimate that it would take about a year for the US shale oil producers to ramp up output after prices rise to levels that make it profitable again.

Saudis to watch Iran

OPEC is very unlikely to cut output at its next meeting in June, even if prices remain extremely low, according to OPEC sources and delegates, as it will be too early to say how fast Iranian output is rising. The sources, which include officials from the Middle East, say OPEC countries such as Saudi Arabia also want to test Russia's commitment to freezing output before taking any further steps to stabilise prices. More than 18 months after oil prices began a steep slide due to excess supply, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Venezuela and non-OPEC Russia agreed last month to freeze output at January levels in the first global oil pact in 15 years.

Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Ali Al-Naimi said last week a supply cut was not on the cards although adding that the production freeze was only the first step to balance the market after prices fell to their lowest since 2003. "Maybe by the end of the year (a cut could be possible) when it is really clear that Iran is actually producing the volumes they are talking about. But not in June," a source from one of OPEC's Middle Eastern producers said.

January was peak or near-peak production for Russia and Saudi Arabia, the world's two top oil exporters, but Iran - OPEC's No.3 producer - is the key supply uncertainty for 2016 as it is raising output after the lifting of Western sanctions in January, adding barrels to the already saturated market. Over the past month, Iran has issued conflicting statements saying it could add up to 1.5 million barrels per day over the next year which would confound market skepticism that its fields were damaged by years of sanctions.

Meanwhile, its February exports have disappointed as European buyers were cautious to immediately boost trade amid remaining dollar clearance and ship insurance problems. "No-one at OPEC knows what's going on with Iranian fields. So the Saudis want to see what happens in reality," a source in one of the OPEC delegations who is familiar with production freeze negotiations, said.

Non-OPEC Oman and some OPEC sources have floated an idea of Iran being exempt from output freezes - as was Iraq in the past when the country was subject of international sanctions - but so far Tehran has not been offered any special terms, according to OPEC sources.

Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh said last week the production freeze was "laughable" while Iranian sources say the country would be prepared to discuss a production pact once its output reached the pre-sanctions level. Analysts believe output and exports could rise by a maximum of 0.7 million bpd to around 3.5 million bpd in the next months but it will take time to understand where real figures stand.

Iran, for instance, has already told OPEC it was pumping as much as 3.4 million bpd in January - a much higher number than estimated by OPEC watchers. By June, when OPEC holds its next meeting, the picture of Iranian exports will still not be clear, several OPEC sources said, adding that they might only have reliable numbers for April. The sources also said it will be too early to say in June if the world's record oil stocks have finally become to shrink.

Saudi Arabia and Russia have not said the output freeze would be void if Iran refuses to join in, leaving room for a potential compromise. Russia's

Energy Minister Alexander Novak plans to travel to Iran, Moscow's close ally, in March for more talks on the production freeze, which he said could last for as long as a year.

Russian compliance

If Russia respects the output freeze, it would be a major departure from its former policies. The only time Russia agreed to cooperate with OPEC was in 2001 but it never delivered on its pledge and raised exports instead. That was a big disappointment for Naimi, who orchestrated the 2001 deal, and is still wary of agreeing anything at risk of being cheated by Russia or fellow OPEC members. "Even if they say that they will cut production they will not do it. There is no sense in wasting our time seeking production cuts," he said last week. But in the opinion of OPEC watchers the output freeze deal signals a change of tone for Saudi Arabia, from a view that the market would rebalance itself to one where it might need a push. "Eventually, we will have a cut in production," one OPEC delegate said, declining to be identified.

Others are urging swifter action. Qatar's former energy minister Abdullah al-Attiyah, who is still talking to producers inside and outside OPEC, said a cut was needed before the glut became unmanageable. - Reuters

GULF STOCKS RISE WITH OIL, EGYPT WEAKENS

MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

DUBAI: Stock markets in the Gulf rose yesterday after oil prices firmed above \$36 a barrel, while Egyptian stocks slid in feeble volume as investors worried about a possible interest rate hike.

The Saudi index advanced 1.5 percent to 6,181 points, breaking technical resistance at the early February and end-January peaks of 6,056-6,099 points. Chartists said this pointed to a rise towards 6,850. Petrochemical stocks helped lift the bourse as Saudi Basic Industries added 1.7 percent and Saudi Kayan rose 2.0 percent in high volumes. Telecommunications also attracted considerable activity with Atheeb adding 2.4 percent and Mobily surging 6.7 percent after Bloomberg reported, citing unnamed sources, that Digital Bridge Holdings, which invests in communications industries, was among leading bidders for Mobily's portfolio of wireless towers in Saudi Arabia, a sale valued at \$2 billion.

In a Reuters interview last November, Mobily said it was considering selling its mobile transmitter towers, most likely to a specialist tower company that would then lease these back to the seller. In February, Saudi's Maal financial news website said the kingdom's three telecommunications operators including Mobily were in talks to create a company to

own and manage their mobile transmitter towers. For a second day, Dubai's Arabtec soared its daily limit; it jumped 14.6 percent to 1.65 dirhams with volume at another 6-1/2-year high. On Monday, exchange data showed former chief executive Hasan Ismaik had raised his stake to 11.91 percent from 11.81 percent.

In a brief statement yesterday, the company said there was no material news, technical or operational, to affect its share price. A source close to Ismaik told Reuters he was buying the shares because he saw future value in them, but details of his intentions remained unclear. Many institutional investors are sceptical of the stock after its collapse from a record high of 7.37 dirhams, hit in May 2014. Of eight analysts covering it, three rate it "hold" and five "sell" or "strong sell," according to Thomson Reuters data; their median price target is 1.09 dirhams.

But Arabtec helped lift Dubai's index 1.5 percent, with Union Properties adding 4.3 percent, its third straight day of gains. Amlak Finance, a mid-sized Islamic investment house, jumped 9.4 percent, adding to a 12.8 percent gain made on the previous day when the company announced that annual net profit attributable to equity holders had surged 130 percent. —Reuters

US MANUFACTURING SHRINKS ASIAN FACTORIES HIT HARD IN FEB, JOBS ON THE LINE

WASHINGTON: US factory activity contracted for the fifth straight month in February. The Institute for Supply Management says that its manufacturing index rose to 49.5 last month from 48.2 in January. But anything below 50 signals a decline. Factory employment and exports fell, but new orders and production increased. American manufacturers have been hurt by economic weakness overseas and a strong dollar, which makes US goods more expensive in foreign markets.

The ISM, a trade group of purchasing managers, surveys about 200 US companies each month. Meanwhile, manufacturing activity across much of Asia shrank in February with China suffering a seventh straight month of decline, a blow to policymakers who only a day earlier resumed an easing cycle in a fresh effort to spur growth. Business surveys from China to Indonesia showed no signs of reversing a weakening trend, forcing factories in the trade-reliant region to shed yet more jobs and cut prices, a move that could worsen a global disinflationary trend.

Surveys of manufacturing output from other parts of the globe will be released later yesterday. Asia's grim readings will sharpen the focus of officials in the world's leading economies who declared at a weekend G20 meeting that they needed to look beyond ultra-low rates and print-

ing money to reanimate growth. Economists at Citi said last week that the chances of a global recession - which it defines as global growth falling below 2 percent - are rising.

China aims to lay off 5-6 million workers from "zombie enterprises" over the next two to three years, two sources with ties to the country's leadership told Reuters.

Australia's central bank governor, Glenn Stevens, observed yesterday that conditions have become more difficult for a number of emerging market economies and noted that "China's growth rate has continued to moderate." Stevens, who attended the Shanghai G20 meeting, made those comments after leaving interest rates at a record low 2.0 percent. He kept a conditional easing bias in a widely expected outcome. Survey after survey served to remind how challenging the current environment is.

INDIA AS A STANDOUT

Japan's factories saw their weakest growth in eight months, while Indonesia and Malaysia contracted for the 17th and 11th month respectively, according to survey compiler Markit. Taiwan went into reverse gear for the first time in three months as orders wilted.

India was perhaps the only standout, and for

merely maintaining modest growth driven by cutting prices to attract demand.

The Nikkei/Markit Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index held steady at 51.1, the second month above the 50 mark that separates growth from contraction. By contrast, China's official Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) stood at 49.0 in February, down from 49.4 and below the 50 mark for a seventh month.

A private survey, the Caixin/Markit China PMI, which focuses on small and mid-sized companies, fared no better, falling to 48.0, from 48.4, and undershooting market expectations of 48.3.

Analysts said some of the weakness in China's PMIs was probably due to the long Lunar New Year holidays, but they pointed to a worrying fall in the index's employment gauge which dropped to its lowest since January 2009. "The big question is do we see a pickup in the second quarter once China does pass through the seasonal disruption, but at the moment there is little hope for that to happen in any significant way," said Angus Nicholson, market strategist at brokerage IG in Melbourne.

Underscoring how a slowdown in China is putting trade-reliant economies on the skids, South Korean exports in February tumbled in their 14th consecutive month of declines. —Agencies



GENEVA: A new Seat Ataca is displayed at the stand of Spanish carmaker during the press day of the Geneva Motor Show yesterday in Geneva. — AFP



GENEVA: Lamborghini CEO Stephan Winkelmann stands behind the new Centenario model car displayed at the stand of Italian carmaker during the press day of the Geneva Motor Show in Geneva. — AFP

Following prank, VW concedes it's a target

GENEVA AUTO SHOW

GENEVA: The Latest on the auto show taking place in the Swiss city of Geneva (all times local):

12:15 am. The new normal at Volkswagen? The VW executive who kept his calm as a protester mocked its emissions scandal during a glitzy media presentation at the Geneva Auto show says such stunts are "something that you just have to live with."

A wrench-wielding prankster dressed up as a VW mechanic crawled up under a display car to feign a repair on a car that marketing chief Juergen Stackmann had just ridden up in at the show yesterday.

After being interrupted by the protester, Stackmann quipped: "It doesn't need repairs: It's a perfect car." Security guards then whisked away the protester. Afterward, Stackmann told The Associated Press: "Obviously we know at the moment that we are the brand that attracts a lot of attention - and we have to live with that."

Volkswagen has admitted that up to 11 million vehicles worldwide may be affected by a diesel emissions-rigging scandal after revelations last fall from the US Justice Department.

Ford

Ford predicts demand for small SUVs "is here to stay" in Europe, and says lower oil prices won't translate into a significant drop in fuel costs in the region.

Ford Europe chief Jim Farley spoke yesterday to The Associated Press at the Geneva auto show, where the Detroit automaker is launching the Edge as its flagship for the SUV market in Europe.

At just over 4 meters (13 feet) long, the Edge is small enough to fit many urban parking spaces in Europe, but also sits high up for a sense of safety for drivers.

Farley said plunging oil prices aren't leading to as sharp a drop in costs at the pump because much of the fuel price is made up of taxes in Europe. Ford is also among automakers working on "full autonomy" self-driving cars, which he predicted will hit markets within four years, though Ford will wait until it can

make the vehicles affordable for a broad customer base.

Volkswagen

A cheeky protester dressed as a Volkswagen mechanic disrupted the automaker's media presentation at the Geneva auto show yesterday, exemplifying the German company's nagging image problem following an emissions scandal. The protester alluded to Volkswagen's cheating on US emissions tests revealed last year. Holding a wrench and a prop labeled "cheat box," the protester walked on stage and looked under a display car as a Volkswagen executive spoke.

In German-accented English, he said CEO Matthias Mueller "said it was OK as long as no one finds out about it." Security guards then escorted the man away. Volkswagen admitted to US regulators in September it had used illegal software in its so-called "Clean Diesel" engines, allowing the cars to pass laboratory

emissions tests while spewing high levels of harmful nitrogen oxide when operating.

BMW

BMW's CEO introduced new versions of the company's big luxury sedan at the Geneva International Motor Show and cautioned that sales growth in Europe and China will only be modest this year. Harald Krueger showed off a new plug-in hybrid of the 7-Series, saying customers who wanted to set an example were asking for a low-emissions vehicle. For those wanting top performance, the company is rolling out a version with a 12-cylinder, 610-horsepower engine that can accelerate to 100 kph (62 mph) in just 3.9 seconds.

Krueger said yesterday the company expected "moderate sales growth" this year after a record year in which the company sold 2.2 million cars. He said he expected sales growth in Europe and China only in the lower single digit percent range. — AP



GENEVA: Herbert Diess, Chairman of the Board of Volkswagen presents the new T-Cross Breeze during the press day at the 86th international Motor Show in Geneva yesterday. — AP



GENEVA: French carmaker Renault CEO Carlos Ghosn poses with the new Renault Scenic model car at the stand of French carmaker during the press day of the Geneva Motor Show yesterday. — AFP



GENEVA: The New Bugatti Chiron is presented during the press day at the 86th International Motor Show in Geneva yesterday. — AP

BARCLAYS SHARES DIVE AS BANK SEES PROFIT FALL

LONDON: Barclays saw its shares plunge yesterday after the bank revealed plans to split itself into two, simplify its operations and cut its dividend amid weaker earnings.

The bank said its fourth quarter adjusted pretax profit, which includes one-off items like provisions to pay for mis-selling policies in the UK, fell by more than a half to 247 million pounds (\$344 million) from the year before. The London-based firm's restructuring plan is part of new rules to separate riskier investment banking from retail banking. Such ring-fencing is meant to keep people's savings secure in the event of another financial crash.

The bank said it would pay a lower dividend this year and next year, leading shares to fall nearly 11 percent to 153.30 pence.

The bank also announced plans to sell down its stake in its African operations over the next three years to a non-controlling position. Barclays Africa Group Ltd. is now 62 percent owned by Barclays and has 12 million customers across 12 countries.

New CEO Jes Staley says Barclays PLC "is fundamentally on the right path, and is, at its core, a very good business." Staley was brought in after former CEO Antony Jenkins was pushed aside amid concerns about the performance of Barclays' investment bank. Staley began his career as a commercial banker and advanced to head

J.P. Morgan's global investment bank.

Jenkins had championed a more ethical approach to his company's operations after he took charge in wake of allegations Barclays was involved in the manipulation of a key global interest rate called the London interbank offered rate, or LIBOR. He sought to reduce the importance of investment banking.

"The new boss Jes Staley is clearly taking a big broom to Barclays' operations in a bid to dramatically simplify the group," said Laith Khalaf of Hargreaves Lansdown stockbrokers. "When the dust has cleared, the bank should have two high quality financial services divisions, and the potential to offer investors a decent dividend, but it's going to take some elbow grease to get there."

The bank also offered a warning about the uncertainty regarding operations in the event that Britain votes to leave the European Union on June 23. It argued the vote "raises the possibility of a disruptive uncertain exit from the EU, with attendant consequences for investment and confidence."

It described the period following a vote in favor of leaving as having "unpredictable implications on market conditions." "We think it is in the interests of our customers and clients for the UK to remain in the EU," Chairman John McFarlane said. — AP

JAPAN SETTING UP PANEL TO DISCUSS EXTRA BUDGET

ST HIKE NEXT YEAR COULD HURT JAPAN'S CONSUMPTION

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will convene an advisory panel to consider an extra budget for the coming fiscal year, sources told Reuters, days after the Group of 20 nations urged more fiscal spending to support the ailing global economy.

Abe announced the plan yesterday, saying the panel would help him prepare for hosting a Group of Seven summit in May where the fragile state of global growth is sure to top the agenda.

"We need to do more to ensure stable growth for the world economy," Abe told reporters. "I want to hear the frank views of experts and well-known economists from both inside and outside Japan. We need to debate how G7 countries can cooperate."

Financial market turmoil and economic contraction at the end of last year have increased pessimism about Japan's domestic demand, but rising tax revenue and falling bond yields suggest it now has more leeway to spend. Finance Minister Taro Aso told reporters on Feb. 23 that he would not rule out a stimulus package for fiscal 2016/17, which starts from April.

"If there are changes in the economy, then it's natural to respond with an extra budget," said an official involved in fiscal policy, who said the government was seriously leaning toward more spending.

"Cash handouts for pensioners have only just started, but this could be an option," the official said, referring to a policy that will start next month.

Timing was not yet clear on an extra package, he said, though ruling party heavyweight Toshihiro Nikai has said he suspected it was being prepared ahead of elections expected in July.

Abe advisor Masahiko Shibayama has also said the next package could include spending on childcare and elderly care to reduce the burden on the working population.

Economists are building extra spending into their forecasts. "We are already factoring in an extra budget for money to be spent in fiscal 2017," said Masamichi Adachi, senior economist at JP Morgan Securities. "Nominal growth is good, and tax revenue is nominal, so the government should have enough money to spend."

SALES TAX CONUNDRUM

A spending boost could also offset the coming blow from a rise in sales tax to 10 percent from 8 percent in April 2017. The government tried the same

thing when it raised the tax to 8 percent from 5 percent in 2014, but its 5.5 trillion yen (\$49 billion) stimulus package was not enough to stop a recession.

This time the size of the tax increase is smaller, and the government has already agreed to exempt food and other everyday goods, but politicians are worried.

Top government spokesman Yoshihide Suga said on Friday taxes should not be raised if it caused revenue to fall, suggesting a delay is possible.

A 2 percentage-point sales tax hike will cost consumers around 5 trillion yen, so government needs to spend 5 to 10 trillion yen to keep consumption on track, economists say.

"The size of fiscal stimulus should be at least equal to as large as last time, possibly larger, given the global situation," said Hiroshi Shiraiishi, senior economist at BNP Paribas Securities.

Tax revenue is closely correlated with nominal

gross domestic product growth, and on that measure Japan is set for a windfall, economists say. Last calendar year, nominal GDP expanded at the fastest pace since 1994, when comparable data first became available. The finance ministry expects fiscal 2015/16 tax revenue to reach a 24-year high of around 56 trillion yen, more than their original estimate of 54.5 trillion yen.

Even if nominal growth slows, fiscal 2016/17 tax revenue could still top the government's estimate of 57.6 trillion yen, economists say.

And the government could bring forward bond issuance, they say, as it can borrow at no cost, given the Bank of Japan's (BOJ) negative interest rate policy. Critics say Japan already has the world's worst debt burden at twice the size of its economy and runs large budget deficits, so risks triggering a downgrade by credit rating agencies. — Reuters

UK MANUFACTURING ACTIVITY SLUMPS TO THREE-YEAR LOW

LONDON: British factories had their weakest month in nearly three years in February, a survey showed yesterday, raising a warning signal that the country's recovery from the financial crisis could be slowing further.

With growing uncertainty about the health of the global economy and the approach of Britain's European Union membership referendum, the Markit/CIPS manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) fell sharply to 50.8, below all the forecasts in a Reuters poll, from 52.9 in January. It was just above the reading of 50 delineating expansion from contraction.

The survey showed demand at home slowed while export orders fell, a double whammy for a sector which accounts for about 10 percent of Britain's economic output. It underscored why the Bank of England has said it is ready to pump more stimulus into the economy if needed.

"The near-stagnation of manufacturing highlights the ongoing fragility of the economic recovery at the start of the year and provides further cover for the Bank of England's increasingly dovish stance," Rob Dobson, a senior economist at Markit, said.

"The breadth of the slowdown is especially worrisome." New orders in February were their weakest since the turnaround began in 2013. Consumer and investment goods orders bore the brunt of slower growth in demand at home and a further fall in orders from abroad, Markit said.

BREXIT

Kallum Pickering, an economist with Berenberg, said nervousness about Britain's June 23 EU membership referendum suggested a difficult few months ahead for manufacturers.

"As long as the UK votes to stay in the EU, domestic demand will likely pick up again thereafter. If the UK votes to eject itself from its biggest market, things may get much rougher," he said in an email to clients. The survey was mostly conducted before a latest sharp fall in value of sterling in late February which would make British goods cheaper abroad.

The manufacturing sector cut jobs for a second month in a row although the decline was mild. Companies said they cut the prices of their goods for the sixth month in a row but the fall was slightly less marked than in January. — Reuters



LONDON: A customer uses an automated teller machine outside a branch of the British bank Barclays in London. — AFP



David Beckham poses for a selfie with British Airways pilots and cabin crew.



David Beckham talks travel with British Airways pilots and cabin crew.

DAVID BECKHAM TALKS TRAVEL TO BRITISH AIRWAYS

BRITISH SPORTSMAN REVEALS HIS UNFORGETTABLE FAMILY HOLIDAYS

KUWAIT: The iconic British sportsman and frequent flier speaks to British Airways' High Life magazine about travelling the world, pub lunches, and his favourite city.

From his love affair with America, to dog walks in Hyde Park and his favourite family destination, David also reveals why Buenos Aires is on his must visit list.

You fly all over the world for work - where is your favourite place to visit?

That's a tough one. New York and LA are pretty special but I also like Singapore (I love staying at Marina Bay Sands) Then again, can you ever beat Paris? I'd say it can be matched but not beaten. Of course, I love coming back to my home, London. It has everything you could ask for in a city.

What's your favourite London restaurant?

Restaurants in London are some of the best in the world, so it's difficult to pick only one. I'm really into pub lunches at the moment - The Cow in Notting Hill is great.

What do you enjoy doing in London with your family?

There is nothing better than walking my dog with the kids in Hyde Park. You feel you're in the heart of the greatest city in the world.

What's been your best holiday to date?

We had an incredible time in the Maldives for our last few Christmas holidays, it has it all for the whole family. I'm also a huge fan of Bali.

Where's your favourite US destination?

I've had so many great holidays in the US, especially with Victoria and the kids, but our most memorable holiday has been to Utah. The landscapes are breath-taking.

What's the most exhilarating live sport to watch?

Football of course! Though I also love basketball and tennis. There's always a great atmosphere at Wimbledon. I would love to watch the Palio di Siena horse race in Italy one year. It's something I've always wanted to see.

Do you have a favourite sports stadium?

The Estadio Santiago Bernabeu in Madrid, Wembley Stadium in London and Old Trafford in Manchester are of

course my personal favourites. They have all you could ask for as a player and a fan including scale and atmosphere. I have never been to La Bombonera in Buenos Aires but I'd love to see it. It's supposed to be amazing.

You travel a lot. Is there anywhere left on your bucket list?

I'm incredibly fortunate to have visited many places around the world. Antarctica for example, was pretty special and somewhere I will never forget. There are so many places still to see but it's difficult to pick out one in particular. I like to visit destinations where food is the central part of the journey so my next holiday will be somewhere I can try different cuisines.



HONG KONG: US Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew attends a roundtable meeting with journalists in Hong Kong yesterday. — AP

FED'S DUDLEY SEES RISKS TO US ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

HANGZHOU, China: An influential Federal Reserve official yesterday said he sees downside risks to his US economic outlook, an assessment that could flag a longer pause before the Fed's next interest-rate hike than he and his colleagues had earlier signalled.

"At this moment, I judge that the balance of risks to my growth and inflation outlooks may be starting to tilt slightly to the downside," New York Federal Reserve President William Dudley said in remarks at a conference in Hangzhou, China sponsored by the People's Bank of China and the New York Fed.

Although he said he still expects the US economy to grow about 2 percent this year, enough to push unemployment down and begin to pull inflation up to the Fed's 2-percent target, he added, "on balance, I am somewhat less confident than I was before."

The Fed raised US interest rates in December for the first time in almost a decade, and signalled that it would probably raise rates four more times this year, a gradual pace by historical standards.

The US central bank in December raised its target range for its benchmark policy rate by one quarter of a percentage point, and currently aims to keep the rate between 0.25 percent and 0.5 percent. Dudley, a close ally of Fed Chair Janet Yellen and a permanent voter on US monetary policy, suggested that the sharp global economic slowdown, stock-market sell-off and oil price slide since the beginning of the year may force the Fed to tighten monetary policy even more slowly.

The Fed put markets on notice for just such a possibility in January, saying it needed more time to assess global developments and their effect on the US economy before offering an assessment of the balance of risks to the outlook. For Dudley, the jury now appears to be in. With turbulence in global financial markets reflecting mixed economic signals, the risks appear to have increased, and though so far he has left his outlook largely unchanged, continued tightening in financial markets "could potentially lead to a more significant downgrade to my outlook."

Of particular concern, he said, were falling inflation expectations, as tracked both by market pricing and more importantly in his view, by surveys of households. While so far the declines were not dangerously large, if they fell further they could make it more difficult for the Fed to bring inflation back up to its goal.

The Fed next meets in mid-March to consider monetary policy, and is widely expected to leave rates unchanged.

STRONG DOLLAR, CHINA

In a question-and-answer session following his speech, Dudley said the December rate hike was justified. He said the relative strength of the dollar was a factor in the Fed's decision-making in general, although the US central bank did not have "an objective" for the greenback.

He noted that the dollar had appreciated "quite a bit" in recent months, adding: "a lot of that seems to be well justified by where we are on the economic cycle and the monetary policy cycle". Asked about China's transition away from investment and export-led growth toward consumption, Dudley said he thought Beijing was on the right course. "Obviously, this is difficult to manage because it's a big, complex economy so I would not be surprised if there were a few bumps...but I think that I'm quite optimistic that this transition can be managed," he said. — Reuters

OOREDOO KUWAIT, HUAWEI SHOWCASE ICT INNOVATION AT MWC BARCELONA

USING CUTTING-EDGE COMMUNICATIONS TO DELIVER BEST VALUE

KUWAIT: Top executives from Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of the international Ooredoo Group, have met with their counterparts at Huawei, a leading global ICT solutions provider, during the Mobile World Congress which took place in Barcelona between 22-25 February 2016, as the companies prepare showcase ICT Innovation previewing how Ooredoo Kuwait will use cutting-edge communication, IT and managed services to deliver value to its customers in the coming years.

Ooredoo Kuwait first teamed up with Huawei in the FMO project in late 2015 at the companies' first Annual Strategy Summit aimed at developing new technology platforms as well as supporting local community initiatives in Kuwait. During the summit, the companies signed a memorandum of understanding related to future innovation and collaboration, with leaders now agreeing on a joint global showcase by August 2016.

The showcase will be the first global ICT innovation showcase, displaying Huawei's ICT converged operation capability on helping operators optimize organization process, build unified service platform and improve the efficiency of network management and business. Driven by revenue and customer experience, Ooredoo Kuwait and Huawei will together show how to create more business values for operators and establish the globally leading ICT operation model and capability.



BARCELONA: Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Thani, General Manager and CEO of Ooredoo Kuwait and Huawei Executive Howard Liang, President of Global Technical Service Department.

Several meetings with Huawei were held at MWC 2016 Barcelona as Ooredoo Kuwait looks to accelerate its own digital transformation and match the demands of a growing customer base both locally and abroad. The cooperation was discussed between senior management of both companies including Sheikh Mohammed Al-Thani, CEO of Ooredoo

Kuwait, Executive Director&CEO, Advisor of Ooredoo Kuwait Dr Hamad Y Al-Naimi, Hendrik Vorster, CTO of Ooredoo Kuwait, as well as Huawei executives Howard Liang, President of Global Technical Service Department Huawei and management team from Huawei Middle East and Huawei Kuwait led by Anas Mahaftha.

Among the technical areas being explored include the Internet of Things, Customer Experience Management, and more.

Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Thani, CEO of Ooredoo Kuwait: "At Ooredoo, we aim to continuously offer our customers a differentiated service with added value and hence a unique experience. Our longstanding partnership with the leading global ICT solutions provider, Huawei, is a major step towards further achieving that and we look forward to debuting an FMO project that will feature cutting-edge technology from the telecom field."

Howard Liang, President of Global Technical Service Department Huawei, "Ooredoo is a significant strategic partner of Huawei. In the past few years, Ooredoo and Huawei have experienced a meaningful and fruitful relationship aiming at helping Ooredoo provide the best network service in Kuwait. The collaboration between both sides includes different domains, such as the converged ICT operations and working closely to evolve Ooredoo network to 4.5G."

In recent years Ooredoo and Huawei have partnered in the development of Ooredoo's mobile broadband capabilities including the commercial launch of LTE services in Kuwait. Ooredoo and Huawei have since expanded their relationship to include plans on IP transmission networks modernization, core network virtualization, and LTE service expansion.

VIVA LAUNCHES A DEDICATED PORTAL TO INFORM CUSTOMERS ABOUT ARRIVAL OF THE SAMSUNG S7 & S7 EDGE

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, launched a dedicated portal on its website informing customers about the arrival of the anticipated Samsung Galaxy S7 & S7 Edge, at its branches all over Kuwait.

Customers interested in acquiring the latest Samsung Galaxy S7 & S7 Edge, with postpaid plans, are required to register on the portal with their full name, civil ID number, mobile number and email address, and will be contacted by VIVA through SMS regarding the availability of the new devices its branches.

Samsung Galaxy S7 and Galaxy S7 edge introduce the first Dual Pixel camera on a smartphone, delivering brighter and sharper images, even in low light. Thanks to the revolutionary Dual Pixel technology, brighter lens with wider aperture, and bigger pixel, the camera has a faster shutter speed and a more accurate autofocus even in low-light conditions. Motion Panorama, a new camera mode, brings movement to traditional panoramic photos, giving the user a completely immer-

sive visual experience.

The 5.1-inch Galaxy S7 and 5.5-inch Galaxy S7 edge are constructed with 3D glass and metal - all in a sleek design with durability and ergonomic curves for a comfortable grip. From work to play, the device's new Always-On Display, gives users a simplified, zero touch experience where they don't need to worry about missing a call or important notification.

Without compromising design, Galaxy S7 and Galaxy S7 edge both have increased utility with IP68 water and dust resistance. Edge UX, the advanced edge experience available on Galaxy S7 edge, provides convenience and increased efficiency by creating easy shortcuts to users' most loved functions such as email, selfie mode, panorama mode or third party applications.

To find out more about VIVA's Samsung Galaxy S7 & S7 Edge, customers can visit VIVA's 70 VIVA branches, or the VIVA website at www.viva.com.kw, or call VIVA's 24 hour call center on 102.

ICE WEIGHS COUNTER BID FOR LSEG GROUP

LONDON: Exchange and clearing house operator Intercontinental Exchange Inc said yesterday it was considering making an offer for London Stock Exchange Group Plc (LSEG), a week after Deutsche Boerse AG made a third attempt for a merger with LSEG.

No approach has been made to the board of LSEG, and no decision has been made yet as to whether to pursue such an offer, ICE said in a statement. Shares in LSEG, which had a market capitalisation of \$13 billion as on Monday, rose as much as 8.8 percent to a record high of 2914 pence on Tuesday morning.

A spokesman for LSEG declined to comment. ICE is planning a counter bid for LSEG in an attempt to scuttle a merger with Deutsche Boerse, Bloomberg reported earlier on Monday citing sources.

The potential deal between LSEG and Deutsche Boerse would combine the LSE's share-trading operation with the derivatives trading of Deutsche Boerse's Eurex. It would propel the companies to a similar scale as U.S. exchange ICE, which has taken a huge slice of the European derivatives market.

Atlanta-based ICE must make an offer for LSEG no later than March 29. Under British takeover rules, Deutsche Boerse must either make an offer or announce it will not do so by March 22, unless it obtains an extension from the UK mergers regulator.

Deutsche Boerse could not immediately be reached for comment. The German company's shares were up 1.7 percent at 77.57 euros. — Reuters

YUSUFFALI MA: INDIAN BUDGET TO HAVE POSITIVE IMPACT

ABU DHABI: Yusuffali MA, Managing Director of LuLu Group, the largest retail chain in the Middle-East, giving his views on the Indian Budget, which was presented by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in Parliament on Monday, 29 February, said this is "a prudent budget, sure to make a positive impact in many sectors."

The Finance Minister has clearly highlighted the growth pillars of the Indian economy in agriculture, rural, social sector, skills, ease of doing business and tax and compliance reforms. I am happy that the government has given stress on 'Make in India' by providing tax and duty benefits and these will go a long way in strengthening the manufacturing capabilities and infrastructure facilities of India."

He added, "The Finance Minister's focus on agriculture was keenly awaited and will enhance expenditure on the rural and agriculture sectors which in turn will enhance food security and boost exports. In my point of view, the 'three years tax holiday' for Start-ups is one of the most exciting announcements of this budget. The next-generation of skilled entrepreneurs are our future and this will bring in the much needed impetus. Another highlight would be the 100 percent FDI in food processing business. This will be news to many international players who are looking to set up business in India and we all must welcome this."

In conclusion, the MD of LuLu Group, which operates the largest retail hypermarket chain in the region, said, "Being a retailer, obviously, I am pleased to note that the FM has mentioned about retail as the largest service sector employer in country and [that] many more jobs opportunities can be created, provided the regulations are simplified."

He added that from a common NRI's point of view, the easing of customs declaration and increasing of free baggage allowance are a welcome step.



Yusuffali MA

BBC KIDS' CHANNEL CBBC TO AIR 'THE DEEP' FOLLOWING TECHNICOLOR, DHX DEAL

Technicolor and DHX Media have finalized an agreement with the UK's BBC to air the underwater adventure series "The Deep" on kids' channel CBBC from this month.

The animated show, whose primary target is 6 to 12 year olds, is based on the Aurealis Award-winning graphic novel series created by Tom Taylor, whose graphic novels include "Earth 2," "Superior Iron Man," "Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight," "Injustice: Gods Among Us" and "Star Wars: Blood Ties." The books are illustrated by James Brouwer ("Justice League Beyond"), and published by

Gestalt Comics. Taylor serves as co-creator and lead writer of the animated series, and Brouwer is co-creator and art director.

"The Deep" follows the adventures of the Nekton family—a brilliant team of underwater explorers. With state-of-the-art technology and a thirst for discovery, the Nektons explore the mysterious depths of the ocean. The deep is a place where leviathans swim through sunken cities, pirates lurk amid floating black markets, and a mysterious group of Guardians hide long lost secrets.

Other broadcasters airing the show

include Australia's the Seven Network and ABC3, Super RTL in Germany, Ketnet in Belgium, NRK in Norway, SVT in Sweden, YLE in Finland and Canada's Family CHRGD. The series premiered on Seven Network on Nov. 30, on Family CHRGD on Jan. 1, and on Super RTL on Feb. 19.

Twenty-six half-hour episodes of "The Deep" are in production. Technicolor is the underlying rights holder and will oversee the series roll-out and brand licensing extensions; Australia-based A Stark Production (scripts, design and music) and Canada-based DHX Media

(animation, voices and post-production) are the co-production partners, with distribution handled by DHX.

Alison Warner, VP, IP sales, acquisitions and co-productions at Technicolor, said: "The Deep' is a classic adventure story with solid appeal for co-viewing audiences with a strong cohesive family, who live and work underwater in a state of the art submarine, exploring uncharted areas of the earth's oceans to unravel the mysteries of the deep sea. There's really nothing else on air like it right now."

"CBBC is poised to take the plunge

into 'The Deep' and join the Nekton family on their thrilling aquatic adventures as they uncover the mysteries of the undersea world," commented Cheryl Taylor, controller of CBBC. "This beautifully animated series is action adventure with a real heart." "The Deep' is a terrific animated family series and we are excited that CBBC has picked it up for broadcast in the UK," added Josh Scherba, senior VP distribution at DHX Media. "We've seen tremendous interest in 'The Deep' worldwide, and we look forward to further distribution announcements with Technicolor and A Stark." — AP



MOUNTAIN VIEW: In this May 13, 2015, file photo, Google's self-driving Lexus car drives along a street during a demonstration at Google campus in Mountain View, California. — AP

GOOGLE'S SELF-DRIVING CAR STRIKES PUBLIC BUS

LOS ANGELES: A self-driving car being tested by Google struck a public bus on a Silicon Valley street, a minor accident that appears to be the first time one of the tech company's vehicles caused a crash during testing.

Google accepted at least some responsibility for the collision, which occurred on Feb 14 when one of the Lexus SUVs it has outfitted with sensors and cameras hit the side of the bus near the company's headquarters in Mountain View, California.

No one was injured, according to an accident report Google wrote and submitted to the California Department of Motor Vehicles. It was posted online Monday. According to the report, Google's car intended to turn right off a major boulevard when it detected sandbags around a storm drain at the intersection.

The right lane was wide enough to let some cars turn and others go straight, but the Lexus needed to slide to its left within the right lane to get around the obstruction. The Lexus was going 2 mph (3 kph) when it made the move and its left front struck the right side of the bus, which was going straight at 15 mph (24 kph). The car's test driver - who under state law must be in the front seat to grab the wheel when needed - thought the bus would yield and did not have control before the collision, Google said. While the report does not address fault, Google said in a written state-

ment, "We clearly bear some responsibility, because if our car hadn't moved there wouldn't have been a collision."

Chris Urmsom, the head of Google's self-driving car project, said in a brief interview that he believes the Lexus was moving before the bus started to pass. "We saw the bus, we tracked the bus, we thought the bus was going to slow down, we started to pull out, there was some momentum involved," Urmsom told The Associated Press. He acknowledged that Google's car did have some responsibility but said it was "not black and white."

NO INJURIES

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority said none of the 15 passengers or the driver of the bus was injured. The transit agency is reviewing the incident and hasn't reached any conclusions about liability, spokeswoman Stacey Hender Ross said in a written statement. There may never be a legal decision on fault, especially if damage was negligible - as both sides indicated it was - and neither Google nor the transit authority pushes the case. Still, the collision could be the first time a Google car in autonomous mode caused a crash. Google cars have been involved in nearly a dozen collisions in or around Mountain View since starting to test on city streets in the spring

of 2014. In most cases, Google's cars were rear-ended. No one has been seriously injured.

Google's written statement called the Feb. 14 collision "a classic example of the negotiation that's a normal part of driving - we're all trying to predict each other's movements." Google said its computers have reviewed the incident and engineers changed the software that governs the cars to understand that buses may not be as inclined to yield as other vehicles.

Jessica Gonzalez, a spokeswoman for California's DMV, which regulates Google's testing of about two dozen Lexus SUVs in the state, said agency officials spoke Monday with Google but would have no comment. A critic of Google's self-driving car efforts said the collision shows the tech giant should be kept from taking onto public streets self-driving prototypes it built without a steering wheel or pedals. Google sees that as the next natural step for the technology, and has pressed California's DMV and federal regulators to authorize cars in which humans have limited means of intervening.

"Clearly Google's robot cars can't reliably cope with everyday driving situations," said John M. Simpson of the nonprofit Consumer Watchdog. "There needs to be a licensed driver who can takeover, even if in this case the test driver failed to step in as he should have." — AP

NY JUDGE: US CANNOT MAKE APPLE PROVIDE IPHONE DATA

NEW YORK: A federal judge ruled Monday that the US Justice Department cannot use a 227-year-old law to force Apple to provide the FBI with access to locked iPhone data, dealing a blow to the government in its battle with the company over privacy and public safety.

The ruling, by US Magistrate Judge James Orenstein, applied narrowly to one Brooklyn drug case, but it gives support to the company's position in its fight against a California judge's order that it create specialized software to help the FBI hack into an iPhone linked to the San Bernardino terrorism investigation.

Both cases hinge partly on whether a law written long before the computer age, the 1789 All Writs Act, could be used to compel Apple to cooperate with efforts to retrieve data from encrypted phones.

"Ultimately, the question to be answered in this matter, and in others like it across the country, is not whether the government should be able to force Apple to help it unlock a specific device; it is instead whether the All Writs Act resolves that issue and many others like it yet to come," Orenstein wrote. "I conclude that it does not."

Apple's opposition to the government's tactics has evoked a national debate over digital privacy rights and national security. On Thursday, the Cupertino, California-based company formally objected to the order in a brief filed with the court, accusing the federal government of seeking "dangerous power" through the courts and of trampling on the company's constitutional rights. The separate California case involves an iPhone 5C owned by San Bernardino County and used by Syed Farook, who was a health inspector. Farook and his wife Tashfeen Malik killed 14 people during a Dec. 2 attack that was at least partly inspired by the Islamic State group. The couple died later in a gun battle with police.

Orenstein, ruling with an eye to the California case, cited it specifically multiple times in his ruling and noted that the government request there is far more "intrusive." The New York case features a government request that is far less onerous or invasive for Apple and its cellphone technology; the extraction technique exists for that older operating system and it's been used some 70 times before to assist investigators.

CREATE SPECIALIZED SOFTWARE

Since late 2014, that physical extraction tech-



WASHINGTON: This Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2016 file photo shows an iPhone in Washington. Can the FBI force a company like Apple to extract data from a customer's smartphone? Some legal experts and now a New York federal magistrate say in effect that Congress has already considered that question and declined to grant that authority. — AP

US TO RENEGOTIATE ARMS CONTROL RULE FOR HACKING TOOLS

WASHINGTON: The Obama administration plans to renegotiate portions of an international arms control arrangement so it's simpler to export tools related to hacking and surveillance software, since those technologies are also used to secure computer networks, a lawmaker says.

The rare reconsideration of a rule agreed to in 2013 by 41 countries is set to be included on a December agenda by the United States. It makes room to more precisely draft ways to control the spread of such hacking tools without the unintended negative consequences for national cybersecurity and research that industry groups and lawmakers have complained about for months.

As one of those 41 member countries of the 1996 Wassenaar Arrangement, which governs the highly technical world of export controls for arms and certain technologies, the United States agreed to restrict tools related to cyber "intrusion software" that could fall into the hands of repressive regimes.

On Monday, the co-chairman of the Congressional Cybersecurity Caucus, Rep. Jim Langevin, D-R.I., issued a statement revealing the administration's decision to ensure countries discuss the removal of language that would broadly sweep up research tools and technology used to create or otherwise support hacking and sur-

veillance software.

"International cybersecurity policy is a new domain, and it is vital that we work together in order to protect our networks from the many threats they face," Langevin said, applauding the effort thus far.

The White House has said it supports making cyber intrusion tools available overseas for legitimate cybersecurity activities. The White House referred questions Monday to the State and Commerce departments, neither of which responded to requests for comment.

Efforts to come up with a workable U.S. rule have highlighted the difficulty of applying the export controls restricting physical items to a virtual world that relies on the free flow of information for network security. Many companies operate in multiple countries and routinely employ foreign nationals who test their own corporate networks across borders.

In May, the Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security proposed denying the transfer of offensive tools - defined as software that uses "zero-day" exploits, or unpatched new vulnerabilities, and "rootkit" abilities that allow a person administrator-level access to a system.

But in the cyber world, testing a network often requires determining first how to exploit it and attempting to do so. — AP

HUAWEI OPENING UP COMMERCIAL USE OF 4.5G & 5G BROADBAND

DUBAI: This past week's Mobile World Congress saw Huawei and other heavyweights from the mobile industry lay the foundation for wider commercial use of 4.5G & 5G broadband-considered the backbone of today's digital economy.

Huawei Deputy Chairman and Rotating CEO Guo Ping has noted that industry players must ensure they do not miss out these opportunities in the coming five years. Guo said that three things should be done before 5G arrives: increase connectivity, enable verticals, and redefine network capabilities. These initiatives will help address the uncertainties brought about by new technologies and new business models.

To that end, over 300 leading telecom operators, analysts and enterprises attended the recent 4.5G Industry Summit to analyze pre-commercial deployments of mobile broadband. For its part, Huawei extended global open partnerships on 5G technologies with more than 20 operators, including Etisalat, Vodafone, Telefonica, TeliaSonera and more.



Huawei Deputy Chairman and Rotating CEO Guo Ping.

On the regional level, Ooredoo has now teamed up with Huawei to open a next-generation Innovations Lab in Qatar to pioneer broadband solutions and infrastructure. Saudi operator Mobily has further announced plans to optimize its network performance and investments through a network managed services agreement with Huawei over the next five years. In Oman, Omantel is enhancing and expanding its mobile

broadband coverage by delivering the Sultanate's first Smart Street Lamppost solution together with Huawei.

A greater emphasis on openness and collaboration has been crucial to the maturation of broadband technologies at the start of 2016. This includes strengthened ties between global telecom operators, leaders of industry, product designers, and application developers. In a fully connected era, the ability to seamlessly combine expertise from these different sectors has led to a new industrial revolution-increasingly known as 'Industry 4.0'-which Huawei believes has the potential to reorder the global economy impacting the way that people learn, work and live.

POWERFUL MOBILE NETWORKS

"Changes in the ICT industry are the main driving force behind business development in the digital era. As a key enabler in the ICT industry, Huawei is committed to helping the telecom industry and vertical industries digitize their infrastructure, operational systems and business

models with state-of-the-art technology," said Zou Zhilei, President of Carrier Business Group, Huawei.

This past week the company also unveiled its five "Big Initiatives" for the telecom industry to accelerate its digital transformation. Huawei describes the five initiatives as Big Video - Everywhere, Big IT - Enabling, Big Operation - Agile, Big Architecture - Elastic, and Big Pipe - Ubiquitous. The initiatives represent new opportunities for telecom operators in the Middle East and worldwide, foreseeing a potential \$100 billion video industry market, a \$1 trillion enterprise cloud market, and the number of IoT connections expected to grow 10-fold.

City planners are placing particular emphasis on using ICT to develop safer urban communities. According to Huawei, safe city development has now shifted from an incubation period focused on video surveillance to a rapid-growth stage embracing comprehensive public safety management. This includes building multidimensional and intelligent security systems featuring awareness, visualization, and collaboration-helping governments improve crisis prevention and emergency handling capabilities while reducing crime rates.

Tapping into the potential of more powerful mobile networks, consumers also got a glimpse this past week of Huawei's new flagship device the Huawei MateBook-a 2-in-1 gadget designed to meet the evolving demands of today's modern business users. Building on Huawei's success in delivering powerful high-end mobile consumer devices, the MateBook defines itself as a mobile productivity tool that seamlessly integrates mobility, high efficiency, work and entertainment.



Huawei team.



WASHINGTON: Photo shows the US Supreme Court in Washington, DC. The US Supreme Court hears its most important abortion case in decades today, with all eyes on the critical swing vote of Justice Anthony Kennedy. The case has huge implications on this hot-button issue that could determine the availability of abortion services across the country, just as a highly polarized American electorate goes to the polls in this election year. — AFP

US WOMEN SEEKING ABORTIONS GET MISLEADING INFO

NEW YORK: Women in many US states are given misleading information in state-issued brochures when they seek abortions, such as characterizations of fetal and embryonic development, according to a study released on Monday. Thirty-one US states require women to be given informational packets ahead of getting an abortion in a practice known as informed consent, according to the study by researchers at Rutgers University in New Jersey. Their findings come just days before the US Supreme Court is set to hear arguments in its first abortion case in nearly a decade.

Looking at brochures issued in 23 of those 31 US states, the researchers said they found nearly a third of the information to be medically inaccurate. The brochures are authored by and required by the states. Based on those findings, the researchers estimated that nationwide, 35 percent of women having abortions were given information exaggerating the development of fetuses and embryos. For example, a Wisconsin brochure said a 20-week-old fetus "may feel pain" and a North Carolina pamphlet said fetuses between weeks 12 and 14 had fully formed lips and noses and have fingernails beginning to form, the study said.

Such characterizations are incorrect, the researchers said. "Misinformation is a threat to the integrity of the doctor-patient relationship and to the medical system as a whole," said Cynthia Daniels, the study's lead author and a professor who heads Rutgers's Informed Consent Project. "This study shows the problems that occur when politicians intervene into the doctor-patient relationship," she said. The nation's highest court on Wednesday is scheduled to hear challenges to a 2013 law in Texas that requires doctors at abortion clinics to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals and for clinics to meet the standards of ambulatory surgical centers.

Critics say the Texas law is unnecessary, superfluous and expensive and creates an undue burden on women seeking abortions. Abortion has been legal in the United States since 1973. The study found that the US states with the worst records regarding the medical accuracy of their brochures were North Carolina, Michigan and Kansas. Worldwide, about three in 10 countries allow abortions on request or for any reason, according to a 2015 Pew Research Center analysis, although many prohibit procedures after a certain point in the pregnancy. — Reuters

FOR ETHIOPIA'S FAMINE SURVIVORS, NEW DROUGHT STIRS HUNGER, FEAR

GOVT, AID AGENCIES SEEK \$1.4 BILLION TO FEED 10.2 MILLION

ESTAYISH: When drought and pests decimated their farm in Ethiopia's northern Amhara region, 10-year-old Eseye Tiruneh and her family boarded a bus, fleeing the starvation all around them. It was 1985 and Ethiopia was in the grip of its worst famine, which killed around one million people. Ethiopia's communist regime resettled Eseye's family in Wollega, over 1,000 km (620 miles) southwest, as part of an ambitious plan to move more than a million people from the drought-affected north, where it was fighting a rebellion, to the fertile west.

But they did not escape death. Eseye's mother, grandmother and two siblings died in an epidemic of malaria and diarrhoea that killed about a dozen people each day in the resettlement village. "It was only my father and I who survived," said Eseye, now aged 40, wearing a black headscarf, dusty maroon dress and faded beige shawl, her eyes fixed on her feet. "The main work of the farmers was to bury people." While no one is predicting famine in Amhara this year, drought is once again casting a shadow over farmers eking out a living on these rocky hillsides.

Precarious

Under a burning sun, hundreds of men and women squatted in the dust outside a warehouse, waiting to fill their plastic bottles with cooking oil and their white sacks with wheat and yellow split peas. Life is always precarious for families in these densely-populated highlands, who plough narrow terraces cut into steep mountainsides. The poorest 10 percent receive food aid from the government from January to June every year, in exchange for digging ponds or planting trees. It started distributing emergency food aid in October after the strongest El Nino on record triggered a drought which left wheat shoots to wither in the fields.

The government and aid agencies have asked for \$1.4 billion to feed 10.2 million people—the third largest appeal globally after Syria and Yemen. All of the farmers at the food distribution who remembered 1984-85 famine said the current drought is worse, particularly as it came on the back of a poor harvest in 2014. "We are hungry, the children are hungry," said Ayalew Berihun, 51, a blue headscarf wound round his head and a plastic sack stuffed into the pocket of his faded turquoise jacket. "On good days, we usually eat in the morning and evening. But now

it is difficult to even eat once a day."

His family of eight did not harvest anything in 2015 from their half hectare plot. Every few days, they make a three hour round trip to fetch water from a spring with their donkey. Up to 30 people can be in the queue ahead of them, quickly washing their faces before filling their jerrycans with water that will be reserved for drinking and cooking at home. But help is at hand this time, unlike in 1984, when the government hid the hunger crisis until its had celebrated its 10th anniversary in power, bombed markets in rebel-held territory and blocked relief to areas controlled by insurgents.

Children drop out of school

Yet with soaring rates of malnutrition, children are dropping out of school and into menial jobs to survive, robbing parents like Eseye and Ayalew of hope for the future. "I wish God would give us rain so that I can educate my children properly and they could get government jobs, live a better life and support me," said Eseye, who has a cross tattooed on her forehead and a picture of the Virgin Mary on a black string around her neck. Chances of that are slim. Eseye's daughter quit school at 16 to work in a nearby town so she can send a couple of dollars home to her mother each month.

Eseye's 12-year-old son is still in school, but his attention is waning as his body grows thinner. "He is getting weak and tired," she said. "He doesn't follow his lessons properly and he doesn't study." Some 1.3 million schoolchildren have been affected by the drought, the government says, either too hungry to concentrate or dropping out to search for food or water. In Eseye's village, children aged 12 and above have left home to work as shepherds, housemaids, dish washers and porters while the younger ones are sick with coughs and diarrhoea. "They try to help their younger siblings not die from hunger by sending some money back home," she said.

Then and now

Hunger has not yet brought death in the farming highlands, people said, unlike in 1984 when Derg junta forces and rebels battled on the spectacular mountain paths. Hundreds of thousands walked along hairpin bend roads from rebel-held Sekota to government-con-

trolled Korem to get help. "We called it the road of death," said John Graham, country director for Save the Children, who was a young aid worker at the time. "It could have been 100,000 people or more who died just along that road."

Today, Korem is a bustling town, surrounded by fields that turned green after a few days of unseasonal rain in December. Blue and white tuk tuks vied with donkeys for space on its busy roads, lined with buildings under construction. "I can't stress enough the difference in the situation between 1985 and 2015," said Graham. "It was already a full blown disaster by the time Michael Buerk (of the BBC) got to a Save the Children feeding camp in Korem and announced to the world that this thing was happening."

In contrast, the current government - which ousted the Derg in 1991 and took power - has been quick to acknowledge the crisis and has put \$380 million of its own money into the emergency response since July. "Twenty years ago, we had no such capacity," said Mitiku Kassa, head of Ethiopia's National Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committee. "It has come through the economic development that we registered for the last 12 years."

Vision

With double digit growth over the last decade has helped Ethiopia to achieve many of the Millennium Development Goals, slashing poverty, hunger and child mortality rates. It has a strong, if authoritarian, vision and is keen to dispel the proud nation's image as a poster child for famine. There is a well-established health system with staff in each local clinic routinely screening children for malnutrition. Moderate cases receive a fortified porridge and severe ones get therapeutic food, with admission to a stabilization centre if there are complications.

"This is not some independent, international relief effort," said Paul Handley, head of office for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Ethiopia. "This is being done not just together with but actually through government systems." But eight out of 10 Ethiopians are still dependent on rain-fed agriculture, leaving Africa's second most populous nation vulnerable to drought. "If the rain doesn't come and this support doesn't come regularly, what is going to happen to us?" asked Ayalew. "I am scared for our lives." — Reuters

VEGAS OUTBREAK MAKES NEVADA'S SYPHILIS RATE HIGHEST IN THE WEST

LAS VEGAS: Nevada is experiencing the highest rate of syphilis in the West following an outbreak in Las Vegas. Health officials say it is part of a national spike in cases tied to increased testing, a rise in anonymous sex tied to social media, and a less consistent use of condoms. Social media's link to syphilis in the gay community has prompted health officials to take their educational outreach directly to the websites and apps, in some cases creating profiles or buying advertisements. Here's a closer look at what's going on:

What is syphilis?

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted disease that's been around at least since the Roman times, said Dr. Tony Fredrick, the Southern Nevada Health District's medical epidemiologist. It's never really gone away - it just comes in waves. It's detected by blood testing, which means it's not a part of the "bundle" of STDs found through urine screening.

Caused by the bacterium *Treponema pallidum*, syphilis spreads through skin-to-skin sexual contact when there's a sore or lesion, typically in the genital or anal areas or mouth. Symptoms aren't always apparent and can

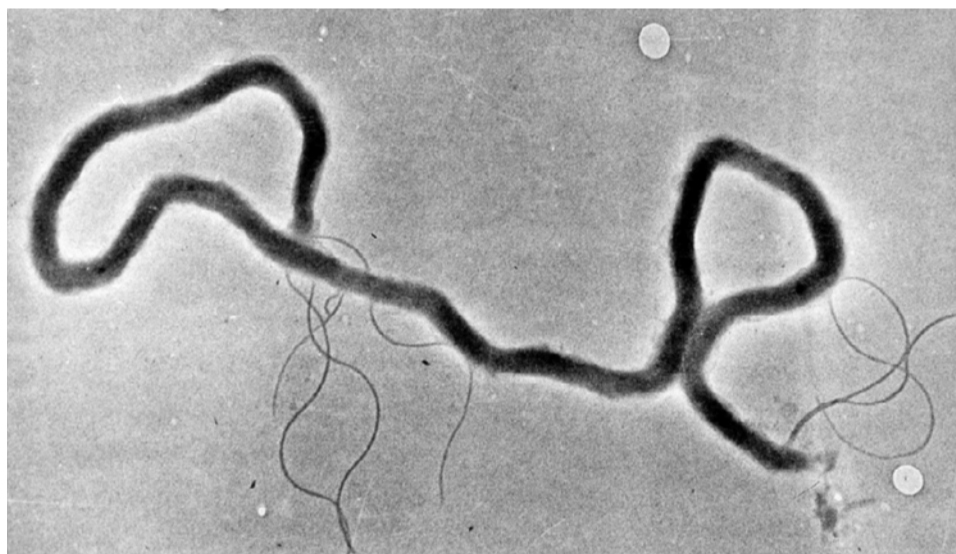
progress for years, even decades, without treatment. In early stages, it's highly treatable with penicillin.

What's going on in Nevada?

Clark County health officials declared an outbreak in Las Vegas last week after noting a 128 percent increase in reported syphilis cases since 2012 - with 615 of the 694 cases involving men diagnosed in 2015. This makes Nevada's rate of syphilis the highest in the West. There's been an uptick in other parts of Nevada, too, but that could be tied to a population increase, the state health department said. Nevadan youth, meanwhile, are having sex at younger ages and are using condoms inconsistently or improperly.

Rest of the country

Syphilis outbreaks have appeared in pockets of the US in recent years, including in Kansas, Pennsylvania and Hawaii. The latest available data, from 2014, showed a 15 percent increase in cases overall, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. There's been an increase in other STDs. The most common, chlamydia, has risen to record levels.



In this file photo, the organism *treponema pallidum*, which causes syphilis, is seen through an electron microscope. — AP

Blaming social media?

Health providers and officials have warned publicly about the prevalence of anonymous sex through social media, particularly with an

increase in the use of smartphone apps. Elizabeth Adelman, a senior disease investigator for the health department in Las Vegas, said young people dependent on their

iphones can find quick, easy access to hook-ups. Not meeting in person first can make it harder to negotiate condom use, she said.

What's being done?

Las Vegas officials have been working to connect with various websites and apps. Adelman said they've sought permission for a passive presence on platforms such as the gay website Adam4Adam, so users can reach out to them for information. Other popular apps officials are looking into include Tinder and Grindr. Adam4Adam said through Twitter it has live health counselors and tips available on its website, and it counts some health agencies among its advertisers. Tinder and Grindr couldn't be reached for comment.

How is LGBT responding?

The Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Southern Nevada said the issue has been on its radar, as a majority of the latest syphilis cases have involved men having sex with men. Educational outreach, destigmatizing efforts and a push for testing are priorities, said Vince Collins, the center's HIV prevention services manager. — AP

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PAGE

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Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
فهد علي المخيزيم

استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

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



Bumblebee Class performs a Kuwaiti national song.



A coloring activity.

Happy Birthday



Happy first birthday to Gabriel Roque Lagman on Feb 22, 2016. May you have more birthdays to come and good health. Greetings coming from mom, dad, Ninong Dhan, Tita, Tricia family and friends.

AL-MUTHANA NURSERY CELEBRATES NATIONAL, LIBERATION DAYS

Al-Muthana Nursery proudly celebrated Kuwait's National and Liberation Days with students, their parents and friends. The celebration started at 9 am and continued till 1 pm.

The celebration began with the Kuwait National Anthem performed by Yousef Fadi, Abdulrahman Fahad and Mohammad Sami. Followed by the prayer lead by Ghalia Sulaiman Haniyah Raza and Haya Abdulaziz.

Presentation of Ladybug Class students performed singing and dancing. Bumblebee Class presented tableau, singing and dancing with Kuwait national songs. Small children of 1 year+ also contributed to dancing.

The hall of Al-Muthana Nursery were decorated with a colorful balloons representing Kuwaiti flag. Kuwait national songs were played thru out the celebration.

Al-Muthana Nursery entertained children and guests with light snacks and refreshments. At the end of the celebration prizes were distributed to winners. Students played lots of games, face painting, fishing, play dough, coloring. Parents enjoyed the full of fun and entertainment.

Angie - Administrator thanks students and parents for their participation. Also, she thanks sponsors, Al Hassan Optics - Ahmad Nasr and Royal Digital Computer Center - Imran Nasim for their support. Special thanks to Merla, Annette, Elda, Fatima, Haifa, Nida, Julie, Jonna, Gina, Douaa, Lina and Milba for their voluntary efforts.



Angie, Administrator, welcomes children and parents.



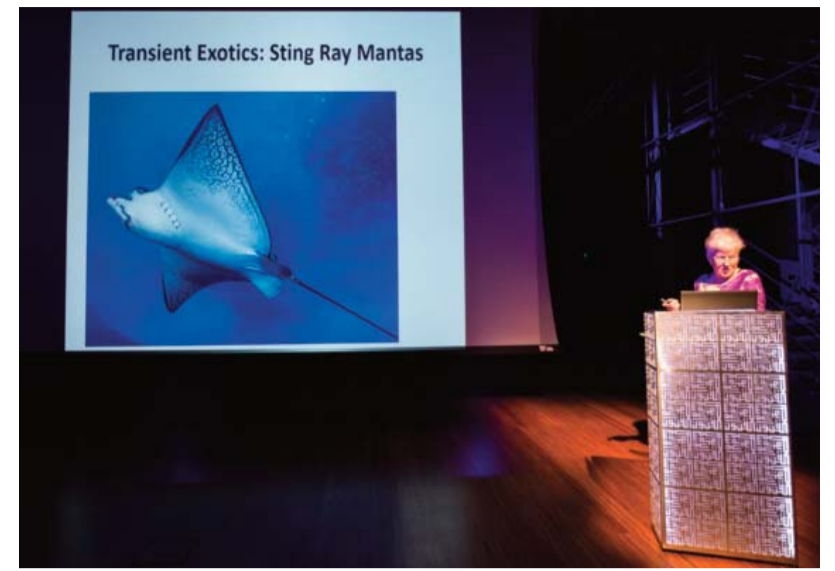
Duaa, Master of Ceremonies, announces the event's details.



The Ideal School for Special Needs organized a ceremony recently to celebrate Kuwait's National and Liberation Days.



The Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity organized a ceremony for gifted students to celebrate Kuwait's National and Liberation Days. The event took place recently at the Sawda Bint Malek School in Fahad Al-Ahmad. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



DR KAWAMI LECTURES AT DAR AL-ATHAR AL-ISLAMIYYAH

Dr Trudy S Kawami, Director of Research for the Arthur M Sackler Foundation, NYC, gave a lecture recently at the Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah titled 'The Animal Parade in the Gulf in Antiquity.'

During the lecture, Dr Kawami said that the gazelle and the wild goat were native to the Gulf and appeared in the earliest art from the region. "Just as the blue waters of the Gulf provided a highway for humans, it

served the movement of animals as well," she said. "The heavy-horned water buffalo was native to South Asia, but took up happy residence in the reed swamps of the head of the Gulf and appeared in ancient art as far north as Syria," she added.

"Exotics like the maned Asiatic lion never lived here in nature, but may have been kept in royal zoos and were quickly adopted as international symbols of power and authority," she explained. "The fascinating

mix of local and exotics animals, whether domesticated or wild, nicely mirrors the diversity of peoples who moved through the Gulf in antiquity," she concluded.

Dr Kawami received her PhD in art history and archaeology from Columbia University, where she specialized in the art of ancient Western Asia. She has carried out research in Turkey, Iran, and Central Asia, and in major European and American museums. The author of Monumental Art of the

Parthian Period in Iran (Leiden: 1987), Ancient Iranian Ceramics from the Arthur M Sackler Collections (New York: 1992) and Breath of Heaven, Breath of Earth: Ancient Near Eastern Art from American Collections (U. of Washington Press, 2013), Dr Kawami has published numerous articles and lectures frequently. She has a special interest in the mingling of ancient cultures in the Gulf area and along the Silk Road in Central Asia.



Dr Trudy S Kawami

SHORBAGI JUDGES 2015 AD STARS ADVERTISING INTERNATIONAL AWARD

Paragon Marketing Communications Creative Director, Nizar Al-Shorbaji judges the 2015 Ad Stars Advertising International Award, Busan, South Korea in the Direct Marketing category as a member of the preliminary judges in the festival that awards creativity in advertising in various categories from participants from over 67 countries in which the Kuwait is officially represented for the first time.

This comes as a direct result of Paragon leading by example the GCC creative revolution as well as placing Kuwait and Oman on the world map of graphic design.

On the significance of being one of a handful of judges from the Middle East to ever serve on the Ad Stars International Award jury Nizar says "I feel an amalgamation of pride and responsibility to live up to the trust of the organizers and exceed them in order to open the doors for others in the region to be recognized for their talent, experience, knowledge and ethics."

Nizar Al-Shorbaji, is a Creative Director of an award winning agency - Paragon International has immeasurable passion for the creative industry and believes in the power of communication and its positive effect on our lives when practiced responsibly, therefore he regularly judges international, regional and local awards such as New York International Festival in 2013 and the Summit International Award in 2013 - 2015 which held a place in the United States of America.

He earned his Bachelor degree in Art and Design from Cairo, Egypt, his work for a wide sector of local and international brands such as Porsche, VW, Audi, Mazda, Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge, Toyota, Nikon, Dominos Pizza, Cafe Supreme and IKEA over the past 15 years has won numerous local, regional and international creativity awards and worldwide recognition in addition to his work is featured in many



Nizar Al-Shorbaji

international books on creativity, corporate identity and design.

It is worth mentioning that this is not the first time that a creative team member from Paragon participate as a member of the jury for an international competitions for creativity, he was preceded by Louai Alasfahani, Founder and Chief Creative Officer of Paragon Marketing communications as a key member of the jury of many international competitions such as New York International Festival of creativity and the Summit International Award and much more. Louai Alasfahani who has always been and still encouraging and inspiring his creative team to contest for many of the international and local creative events.



The Indonesian Embassy in Kuwait participated at the 1st International Kuwait Trade Fair that was held at the Kuwait International Fairground from February 21-27, 2016, by renting 108msqj of booth and displaying a number of products such as furniture, silver jewelry, Muslim women clothing, and some food products from Indonesia. During the exhibition, the Embassy's booth also featured a fashion show with models including the Ambassador's wife Madame Marita Razak and the daughter of the Russian Ambassador to Kuwait, Alexey Solomatin.

—Photos by Joseph Shagra



AL-MUNAYES TEA BAG RELAUNCHES WITH NEW LOOK

Al-Munayes General Trading Est has relaunched its tea bag product in the Kuwait market, sporting an all-new look and enhanced quality. The new modern design places the Al-Munayes logo in the center of focus and conveys a clear visual message about the quality of the packaging through smart use of white space. Now in distribution, the all-new Al-Munayes Tea Bags will gradually become available in all points of sale throughout the country.

The new Al-Munayes Tea Bags come in two variants: 25 bags and 100 bags, and feature a freshness-preserving metallic foil wrapping to ensure the highest levels of quality and taste.

"Our improvements are not limited to the visual presentation of the Al-Munayes Tea Bags, rather our vision goes much further than that. We ensure a 100 percent all natural product to deliver a rich and refreshing taste," explained Salah Al-Munayes, Deputy General Manager of Al-Munayes General Trading Est.

He added: "Drinking tea is an essential

habit for most people. We take this fact very seriously and never compromise on quality because we believe that customers deserve to always receive the best"

Al-Munayes Tea has a distinguished heritage that stretches back to 1954. Its tea is 100 percent pure original Ceylon, and packaged in Sri Lanka. The product enjoys widespread popularity thanks to its comprehensive formula that blends together rich refreshing taste, pristine color and beautiful aroma. Moreover, Al-Munayes Tea is a purely "Natural" product without any additives or preservatives making it a healthy choice for consumers of all ages.

All Al-Munayes Tea packages display the "Original Ceylon Tea" seal of quality which can be done only with the permission of The Ceylon Tea Counsel in Sri Lanka. Moreover, Al-Munayes Est ships utilizes a highly efficient delivery and distribution system which ensures that the tea reaches the market quickly, thereby preserving quality and freshness. Al Munayes General Trading Est was established in 1947, and remains loyal to its founding principles.



AMC

- 00:40 Cursed
02:20 Valley Girl
04:00 Ghoulies
05:20 Jakob The Liar
07:15 Apache
08:45 Mannequin
10:15 Race For The Yankee

- 11:00 Global Business
12:00 News Update
12:30 Culture Express
13:00 Africa Live

- 09:40 Fatal Encounters
10:30 Murder Shift
11:20 Deadly Affairs
12:10 True Crime With Aphrodite

ANIMAL PLANET HD

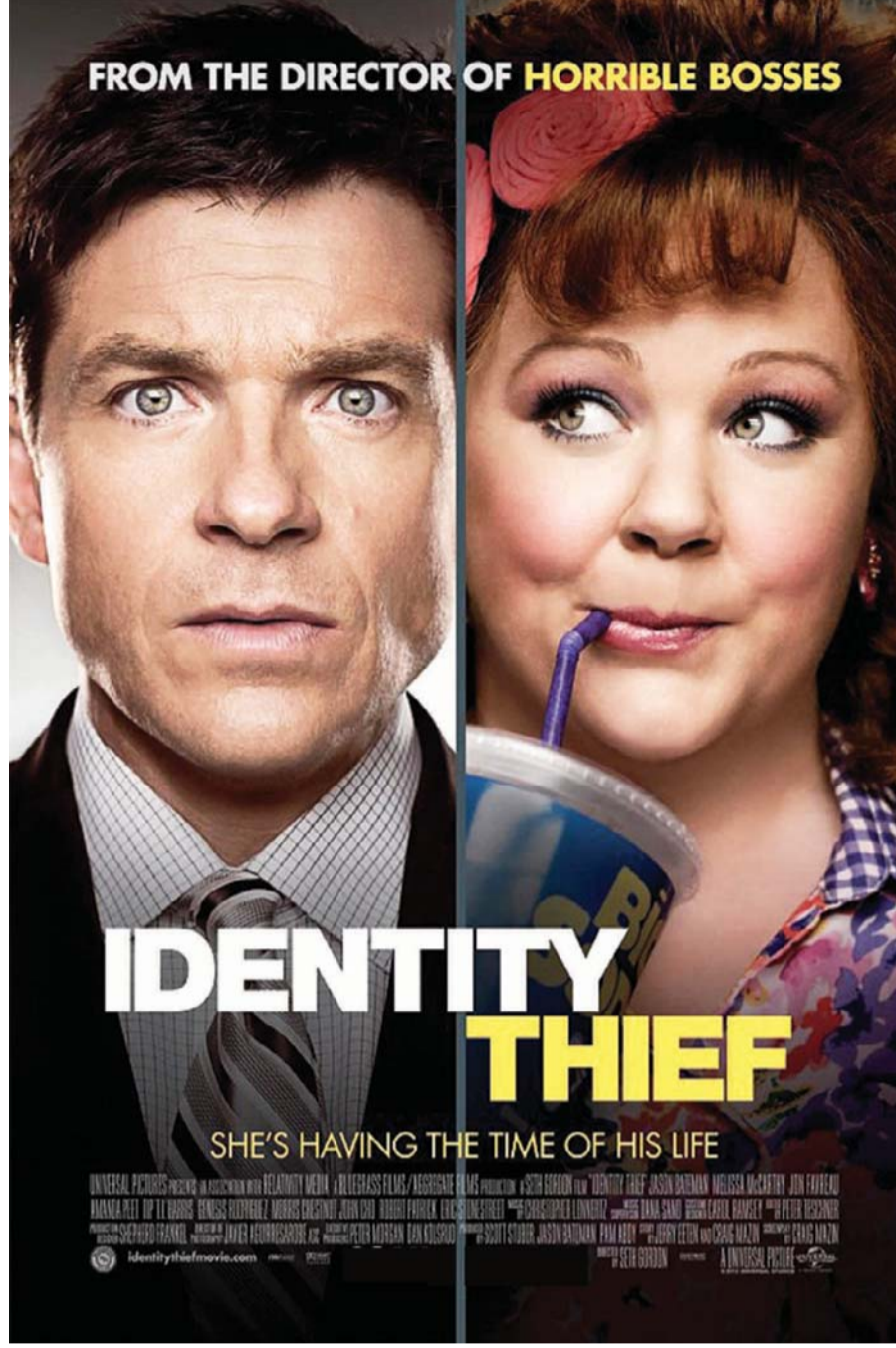
- 00:50 River Monsters
01:45 I Was Bitten
02:40 Wild Capture School
03:10 Wild Capture School

CNBC

- 01:00 CNBC Originals
02:00 Us Squawk Alley
03:00 Asia Squawk Box

DISCOVERY SCIENCE

- 00:35 Weird Or What?
01:20 How It's Made
01:44 How It's Made
02:08 Food Factory



IDENTITY THIEF ON OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

BBC FIRST

- 00:10 Doctors
00:40 Unforgotten
01:30 Unforgotten
02:20 Ripper Street

crime & investigation network

- 00:00 Killer Kids
01:00 Martina Cole's Lady Killers
02:00 Fatal Vows
03:00 I Killed My BFF

Discovery world

- 00:40 Mao's Cold War
01:30 Zero Hour
02:20 Origins
02:40 Chasing Classic Cars

Kids

- 11:50 Jessie
12:15 Cars Toons
12:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir

Programmes Start At

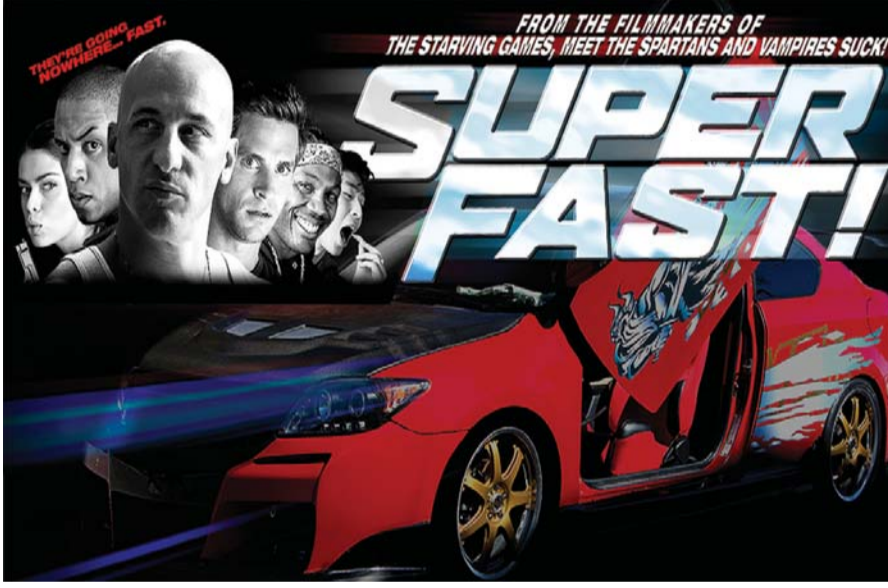
- 00:00 KSA
07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
07:25 K. C. Undercover
07:50 Supa Strikas

HISTORY

- 00:20 Swamp People
01:10 The Curse Of Oak Island
02:00 Sean Bean On Waterloo
02:50 American Pickers

Bloomberg TELEVISION

- 00:00 What'd You Miss?
01:00 Charlie Rose
02:00 First Up With Angie Lau



SUPERFAST ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 04:00 Trending Business
05:00 Trending Business
06:00 Asia Edge
07:00 Bloomberg West

- 12:15 So You Think You'd Survive?
13:05 Storage Hunters
13:30 The Liquidator

- 22:10 Extreme Engineering
23:00 Secrets Of The Arsenal
00:00 Violetta

CCTV NEWS

- 00:00 News Update
01:00 Dialogue
01:30 News Update

ID

- 00:40 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
01:05 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
01:30 The Haunted

- 00:00 Violetta
00:45 The Hive
01:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

Disney JUNIOR

- 00:05 Henry Hugglemonster
00:20 Calimero
00:35 Zou
00:50 Loopydoo

EHD

- 00:00 Stewarts And Hamiltons
00:55 The Grace Helbig Show
01:25 Giuliana & Bill

OSN FIRST HD COMEDY

- 00:30 Suburgatory
01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
01:30 Brickleberry

itv CHOICE

- 00:10 The Chase
01:05 Emmerdale
01:30 More Tales From Northumberland

NAT GEO people HD

- 00:10 Eat Street
00:35 Eat Street
01:00 Maverick Chef

- 09:30 Modern Family
10:00 Hot In Cleveland
10:30 Community
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon

OSN FIRST HD

- 00:00 Chicago Fire
01:00 Castle
02:00 Supergirl

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 00:00 Contraband
02:00 Jersey Shore Shark Attack
04:00 388 Arletta Avenue

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 00:00 American Reunion
02:00 Blues Brothers 2000
04:15 The Love Guide

OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL

- 00:45 Tiff Human Voices Wake Us
02:30 Capital

OSN MOVIES HD

- 01:00 Wish I Was Here
03:00 Kon-Tiki
05:00 Barely Lethal

OSN SPORTS 1 HD

- 01:00 Top 14
03:00 Sunshine Tour Highlights
04:00 Super Rugby

OSN SPORTS 2 HD

- 03:00 Top 14 Highlights
03:30 Gillette World Sport
04:00 PGA European Tour Highlights



ABOUT ALEX ON OSN MOVIES HD

food

- 00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
01:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

Chris Martin never responded to Gwyneth Paltrow's divorce petition

According to TMZ - who have obtained legal documents - the Coldplay frontman has failed to respond to Gwyneth's separation papers which could lead to her being eligible for a default judgement, meaning the 43-year-old actress would be granted what she has asked for in her petition with Chris, 38, having no right to a counter claim. It is known her petition asks for joint custody of their two children, daughter Apple, 11, and nine-year-old son Moses. Gwyneth filed for divorce in April 2015, and Chris was served with the legal documents in May 2015, with the case remaining dormant since then. However, business managers for Gwyneth and Chris have

been privately hashing out a settlement, focusing on their extensive financial assets. The former couple have maintained an amicable relationship since their "conscious uncoupling" in 2015. The 'Fix You' singer previously insisted he didn't want there to be any animosity between him and the actress as he didn't want their split to negatively impact their kids. He said: "If you have kids and they start reading about their parents not liking each other, that's not good. "We just spent a long time trying to maintain a friendship so there wouldn't have to be any kind of battle."



Lewis Hamilton has written songs about Nicole Scherzinger

The Formula One racing driver is currently working on his debut album and he admits his on-and-off relationship with the former Pussycat Dolls singer has provided inspiration for his music. However, Lewis insists he won't be making heartbreak tracks and instead he has focused on the "fun stuff" from their romance. Speaking about his album, the 31-year-old sportsman told the Daily Mirror newspaper: "I've been inspired by life - the easy stuff like relationships, that's always easy to talk about, and partying. "It's not really break-ups or none of that emotional stuff, it's usually fun stuff. It's the good stuff in relationships, the excitement when you're in something new." Lewis won

the Formula One World Championship for a third time in 2015, and although he would love to release his first musical project this year, he is putting his ambition to one side to concentrate on winning the racing title for a fourth time. The 31-year-old driver - who currently competes for the Mercedes AMG Petronas team - said: "I wish I could release my album this year, but right now I'm focused on working on getting the fourth championship. "I hope at some stage people will hear it, but it's not ready yet."



Nicole Kidman nominated for an Olivier Award

The 48-year-old actress spent two months on London's West End playing the part of DNA researcher Rosalind Franklin in the acclaimed play, written by Anna Ziegler. The Australian beauty has already won a London Evening Standard Theatre Award for the role, as well as a Best Actress gong at the WhatsOnStage Awards. However, the Olivier Awards are recognised as Britain's top theatre accolades, with other nominated performers including Oscar winner Mark Rylance and Benedict Cumberbatch. Nicole previously admitted she relished the opportunity to work in the West End, revealing she missed the thrill of performing in front of a live audience once the play came to a close. She said in November: "I have just loved it so much, that connection with an audience and I'm going to miss it. "I was sobbing on Saturday night at the curtain call. I've said to Michael (Grandage, the director) 'Don't make me wait another 17 years.'" By contrast, Nicole previously blasted the movie industry, saying women are given too few opportunities to demonstrate their talents. She said: "We're all working and banding together and trying to change that and that's what's needed. "We also need to put cameras in little girls' hands and get them to tell stories and increase their confidence so that they can feel powerful." Elsewhere, 'Gypsy' leads the nominations after being listed in contention for eight prizes, including a Best Actress in a Musical Category nod for star Imelda Staunton.



Brie Larson 'risked her life' to attend the Academy Awards

The 'Room' actress dined with death to pick up her gong for Best Actress over the weekend because she had to endure three frightening flights from Vietnam, where she's currently shooting her new movie 'Kong: Skull Island', to California for the annual ceremony. Speaking on 'Live! with Kelly & Michael' just hours after she celebrated her win at a boozey after-party, she said: "It was like three really sketchy flights [from Vietnam], and I was like 'I really hope I win because otherwise I've risked my life for...'" But the 26-year-old actress is pleased she made it out alive as she was able to walk out on stage at the Dolby Theatre and collect her prize, although she has admitted the moment is a bit of a blur now. She explained: "I don't know what I said at all [in my acceptance speech]. I hope I thanked people." However, the blonde beauty was well prepared for the mind-boggling moment, as Eddie Redmayne - who she calls her "fairy godmother" since he's presented her with a number of awards this season - warned her she'd be riddled with nerves when he left the audience to present her category. She said: "He told me, 'You're going to be fine until they call me to come up and present and once that happens, you're going to like need some.' It's totally true. They very slyly pulled him away and I was like 'Oh no'... It was like, 'Is this going to happen again?' When he called my name, it's a weird out-of-body experience."

Blythe Danner thinks she's too old to use social media

The 73-year-old actress' daughter Gwyneth Paltrow convinced her to join photo-sharing website Instagram, but Blythe quickly decided to delete her account after realising she doesn't "feel the need" to be active on the platform or any other similar site. She shared: "I'm glad I'm older in that I don't feel the need. I was on Instagram for about two minutes. My daughter put me on, than I said, 'That's not for me.'" However, Blythe admitted she still takes a keen interest in the activities of her daughter and her grandchildren, Apple and Moses, on social networks. She told the Metro newspaper: "I check in with my grandchildren and my daughter but other than that, I have no desire." Blythe said Gwyneth encouraged her to join Instagram because she thought it would help provide a behind-the-scenes look into her new movie 'I'll See You in My Dreams', the comedy-drama directed by Brett Haley. Blythe explained: "She thought I should be doing things of the moment. She loves the movie and she thought people should see what I was up to. I said: 'Well, I'll leave that up to you. You tell them.'"



Michael C Hall has married in secret

The 'Dexter' actor and long-term girlfriend Morgan Macgregor reportedly exchanged vows at New York City Hall yesterday in a private ceremony. Though a spokesperson for the 45-year-old actor has confirmed the happy news, no further details have been made available. Michael and Morgan - a book reviewer and novelist - have been together almost four years and made their first public appearance together at the 2012 Emmy Awards. This is the third marriage for the actor, who was married to actress Amy Spanger from 2002 to 2007, and his 'Dexter' co-star Jennifer Carpenter, whom he divorced in 2011 after

three years of marriage. Michael was most recently seen in stage production 'Lazarus', which featured songs written by the late David Bowie. And he recently revealed the iconic singer - who died of cancer in January - sent him a "very, very amazing gift and note" on opening night for the play, which was staged at The New York Theater Workshop. He added: "Out of respect for his intense privacy I'll just say that it was an artifact from his past that he had passed on to me. "And it will be a talisman to me for the rest of my life."

Leonardo DiCaprio almost left his Oscar in a restaurant

The 41-year-old actor - who scooped the Best Actor accolade on Sunday evening on his sixth nomination at the prestigious ceremony - was caught on camera by website TMZ getting into a car as he left Ago in Hollywood. The clip shows one person handing 'The Revenant' actor a bottle of alcohol, before a man rushes out holding the statuette and attempts to hand it to Leonardo. The man asked: "Do you want this to go with you?" Leonardo calmly replied: "Give it to Dan right there." The 'Wolf of Wall Street' star headed to both the Governors Ball and the Vanity Fair afterparty once Sunday's ceremony at the Dolby Theatre had finished, but decided to head to Ago "where everyone could get in" so he could celebrate with all his friends. An onlooker told the New York Post newspaper's Page Six column: "Leo was with all his boys. It was a lot of dudes." The actor was joined by Lukas Haas, Tobey Maguire, Chuck Pacheco, Vincent Laresca, 'The Revenant' producer Arnon Milchan, and club boss Richie Akiva, as well as his mother Irmelin Indenbirken, dad George, and stepmom Peggy DiCaprio, and the group seemed to enjoy inspecting his award. The source said: "A couple of the guys kept standing on the couch and lifting the Oscar and passing it around." They were also heard howling and chanting "Wolf pack, wolf pack, wolf pack."



Nervous Adele kicks off world tour in Belfast

Adele has kicked off her first world tour in four years with a concert in Belfast that received overwhelmingly positive reviews despite the bestselling singer's bout of pre-gig nerves.

The show in Northern Ireland's main city late on Monday was sold out months in advance and fans came from as far as Japan and South Africa to catch a first glimpse of the British ballad singer.

The 100-stop tour includes dates in London in March, Paris in June, as well as New York's Madison Square Garden and the Staples Center in Los Angeles, culminating with two dates in Mexico City in November.

"I know some of you have been dragged along but I'm going to win you over," Adele joked with some 11,000 fans gathered in Belfast, the BBC reported.

"Although some of my songs get a bit depressing," The 27-year-old singer, who has been frank about her stage fright, also informed fans that she was suffering "bowel movements" because of nerves.

Dressed in a long black dress with golden threads, she performed 18 hits including "Hello," "Rolling in The Deep," "Set Fire

to The Rain" and "Skyfall", the theme song to the James Bond film of the same name. Adele last performed in Britain in September 2011.

Alexis Petridis, music critic for The Guardian newspaper, gave the concert four out of five stars, praising her "fantastic voice" and calling the performance "solid-if-unsurprising".

The Sun, the biggest selling daily in Britain, gave her five stars saying the show "proved why she is the most successful artist of the 21st century".

The show was "polished and perfect". The Independent called on the singer to be the "bawdy, ballsy person she is on stage when she writes".

Adele has broken several records with her third and latest album, featuring the ballad "Hello".

She was officially the biggest-selling artist in the world in 2015, according to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI). — AFP



Fallen Japan idol Nori-P emerges as survivor of 'bullying' culture

Former pop idol Noriko Sakai, who fell spectacularly from grace after being arrested on drugs charges, is a rare breed in Japan: A female celebrity who has suffered public humiliation and survived.

The swift demise of mixed-race sweetheart Becky over an alleged affair with a married man recently highlighted Japan's harsh treatment of women in the entertainment business, but Sakai insisted that redemption is possible for those with thick skin.

"I don't like losing," the 45-year-old told AFP in an interview. "I used to play softball at school. It was very tough pulling tyres around the schoolyard in winter (for training). If you made a mistake you would get a slap across the face, it was different to how it is today."

"It was very spartan," added Sakai, who is set to embark on an Asian tour to mark a new mini album and celebrate 30 years in pop. "It toughened me up for later life, gave me that tenacity."

Sakai, who two decades ago cultivated a sweet, girl-next-door image similar to Becky's brand, was given a suspended jail sentence in 2009 for using illegal stimulants.

Her comeback, following a three-year hiatus, was little short of remarkable in a country which wants its female entertainers not only to entertain, but to be squeaky clean-not elegantly wasted.

A native of Fukuoka in western Japan, Sakai has just returned from Taiwan, where the singer-actress was greeted at the airport by hundreds of fans and around 50 television crews and media.

"I got a taste of what it feels like to be Lady Gaga," she laughed. "I didn't expect an amazing welcome like that. I'm very grateful my fans have stayed with me and I've been able to have such a long career."

Becky, a half-British singer in the Katy Perry mould, regularly appeared on several television shows, in multiple commercials and was adored by millions-until a leaked text message from the star to her alleged lover found its way into the Japanese tabloids and a 15-year career ended in tears.

SHAVED HEAD

Her plight is not a first in Japan, where a female performer's stock can quickly plummet if she suddenly becomes "unavailable" to male fans.



Former pop idol Noriko Sakai smiles during an interview in Tokyo. Sakai, who fell spectacularly from grace after being arrested on drugs charges, is a rare breed in Japan: a female celebrity who has suffered public humiliation and survived. — AFP photos

Teeny-bopper Minami Minegishi, a former member of Japan's most popular girl band AKB48, famously shaved her hair off-a traditional act of contrition in Japan-after being photographed leaving her boyfriend's home in 2013.

"In some respects it's tougher for a woman," said Sakai. "But if you make a mistake in Japan, and not necessarily just women, people judge you to the bitter end."

"They will dig up a mixture of fact and fiction. It's like a kind of group bullying, it's quite spiteful," she added.

"It's contagious, like when a pupil makes a mistake at school-that pupil is made to feel totally alone and they parade them around until they break down completely. I wonder if it's really necessary to go that far."



The media vitriol ended Becky's career, but her alleged boyfriend, a married male pop singer, suffered no such backlash.

"What disgusts Japanese people about what Becky did was how she continued to lie about the affair," said celebrity psychologist Yoko Haruka.

"She carried on pretending to be a sweet girl. But when her lying was exposed, she became persona non grata," Haruka added.

Sakai shot to fame in 1986, when she went by the nickname 'Nori-P' and sang songs with lyrics such as "sweet couple, pee-pee! Woo be popple, pee-pee!"

Less sugar-puff and more street-wise thirty years on,



Sakai believes that Japan has turned a corner with regard to the thorny issue of sexual equality.

"I think it has improved," she said. "Although I've never worked in an office so I can't speak for women working alongside men in companies."

"But every family has a strong woman running it. And if you look at Japan as a metaphor for the family, things can only improve the stronger women become." — AFP



Film Director Emir Baigazin at his Photo Exhibition in Lugano.

Four separate stories in which male adolescents go off the rails constitute "The Wounded Angel," the sophomore outing of Kazakh writer-director Emir Baigazin. Unfortunately, it's impaired by the fact that it is very similar to his much-prized, Berlin Silver Bear-winning debut, "Harmony Lessons" (2013), but considerably less compelling: Whereas the earlier film combined a pitch-perfect study in crime and punishment with engagingly stylized visuals, the follow-up, which the director calls the second in a trilogy, fails to catch fire emotionally and is burdened by excessive formalism. While not exactly DOA, this "Angel" will struggle to fly beyond festivals. The action is set in the early 1990s-a time of severe economic crisis and increasing crime-in a desolate outpost of rural Kazakhstan that, in the words of the local teacher, produces nothing but criminals and lazybones. The episodes are separated by images from a symbolist painting by Hugo Simberg, called "The Wounded Angel," which is situated in Finland's Tampere Cathedral, and accompanied by simple titles such as "Fate," "The Fall" and "Greed." The second episode focuses on Chick (Madiyar Aripbay), a lad with a beautiful singing voice, who is preparing for a competi-

tion. When an illness destroys his chances, angry Chick acts out, joining his school's thugs in shaking down younger children for their money (a plot element that also appeared in "Harmony Lessons")

The most surreal-looking of the stories follows greedy loner Toad (Madiyar Nazarov) as he scavenges for scrap metal in a dingy sewer tunnel. There he meets three boys who have escaped from an orphanage. The older two carry a mentally impaired youngster on a decorated litter. As the orphaned boys sniff glue and get high, one (Timur Aidarbekov, the lead of "Lessons") tells Toad about their unseen companion, the wounded angel. Meanwhile, Toad steals the bag of silver that they have stripped from electric cables.

DEDICATED STUDENT

The final protagonist is Aslan (Omar Adilov), a dedicated student whose ambition to become a doctor come to naught after he performs an abortion on his girlfriend, then goes mad. His parents even try an exorcism to disabuse him of his belief that a tree is growing inside him. As in his earlier film, helmer Baigazin works with non-pro actors who give intense but impassive per-

formances. But while "Harmony Lessons" provided some sort of psychological grounding for the protagonist's behavior and explored the notion of survival of the fittest, "The Wounded Angel" lacks a similar mechanism that would generate a rooting interest in the characters, and feels arbitrarily tied together by the director's interest in the themes of the Simberg painting. Baigazin's formalist tendencies, typified by peripatetic French lenser Yves Cape's lengthy shots-which frame characters in windows and doors, and within devastated landscapes-don't support the overall narrative as well as they did in the director's more energetic debut. The visuals, while striking, also come across as alienating and self-conscious, as do production designer Sergey Kopylov's austere whitewashed homes, where the walls contain nothing but a mirror. During the Berlin Film Festival, Baigazin announced that the final film in this trilogy would be postponed while he prepared the first pic in a new trilogy about modern nightlife in Kazakhstan's capital, Almaty. Sounds like a good plan, since his treatment of rural teens is producing diminishing returns. — Reuters

Film review

'The Wounded Angel'

'The Tenth Man'

Thomas Wolfe may have believed that you can't go home again, but Argentine writer-director Daniel Burman begs to differ in his latest, "The Tenth Man," which pivots on a middle-aged guy returning to his roots and ultimately finding himself. A valentine to the bustling Once district, the old Jewish neighborhood of Buenos Aires, and to Usher, the macher behind a Jewish welfare foundation located there, this low-key romantic comedy marks a return to one of Burman's oft-repeated themes-a son coming to grips with his relationship with his father-and to the setting of one of his most successful features, "Lost Embrace." Although the pic has a warm and fuzzy vibe, its low-budget, documentary-like look, slight storyline and general lack of drama may limit offshore distribution to festivals and Jewish-interest events.

The story is structured around the seven days that the genial and slightly pudgy Ariel (Alan Sabbagh) spends in Buenos Aires during the colorful Purim holiday, trying to connect with his father (voiced by the real-life, mono-monikered Usher), the backbone of the close-knit Jewish community. One of the film's several running jokes is that, while managing the affairs of his foundation in a god-like way, Usher is often heard yet never seen. Another is the constant supply of used cell phones with prepaid minutes remaining that come Ariel's way, with Usher always knowing what number to call. Ariel grew up in the Once, but currently works in New York as an economist. He still carries sad childhood memories of his father failing to attend his school events, because he was constantly called away to make up a quorum at funerals and the synagogue. "Why does a quorum in Judaism require 10 men?" Ariel continually wonders, a question that gives the film its English-language title. As Usher orders Ariel to run various errands, it may seem, at first, that the father doesn't have his priorities straight. But it soon becomes apparent that he has a hidden agenda or two concerning his son's welfare and happiness. And one of their chief components involves Eva (Julieta Zylberberg,

"Wild Tales"), an unmarried, outwardly prim Orthodox woman that works at the foundation. Burman pays tribute to the work of Usher's foundation, shooting on location with actual workers and clients. Given that fiction and documentary are so closely bound up in the film, audiences may wonder if some of the humorously inspired solutions to problems that the foundation provides are real or imagined-as when a hungry person is dispatched to a bar mitzvah celebration along with a wrapped gift from the foundation's supply.

As Ariel begins to spend time with Evaclearing out the apartment of a recently deceased person, checking the bathroom cabinet for a medication that another foundation client requires-he is initially intrigued by her efficiency, unflappable calm and her apparent muteness. Because of Usher's interventions, he continues to see her over the course of the week, sampling her cooking and even spying on her as she cleanses herself at the mikva. When Ariel's girlfriend back in New York essentially dumps him over the phone, thanks to Usher, he has no reason to feel depressed or even to want to return to the U.S.

Ariel's peregrinations on behalf of Usher and the foundation might easily have become tiresome, but Burman keeps them entertaining and slightly absurd, such as Ariel's hospital visits with the gentle giant Marcelito (Uriel Rubin), who is obsessed with the sports paper and has an aversion to bathing. Ariel's quick-witted solutions to Marcelito's problems prove that he is definitely a macher in the making. This is the sort of quiet, well-observed comedy that is characteristic of Burman's oeuvre, and it's in ample supply here.

Low-light, hand-held lensing by Daniel Ortega provides an almost monochrome look and adds to the docu feel, as do the dozens of locals who comprise the extras. — Reuters



In this photo taken Thursday, Jan 28, 2016, Rudy Madrigal, left, shares a fist bump with fellow inmate Nicolas Melendrez before Madrigal headed into his world history classroom, at right, at the Monroe Correctional Complex in Monroe, Wash. College education in American prisons is starting to grow again, more than two decades since federal government dollars were prohibited from being used for college programs behind bars.



Rudy Madrigal, center, looks on as he sits with fellow inmates in a college world history class at the Monroe Correctional Complex in Monroe, Wash.

College behind bars

An old idea with some new energy

Eight years ago, when Noel Caldellis began serving time for killing a university student, his main objective was to make 20-plus years in prison pass as quickly as possible: work out, walk circles in the yard with inmates and watch TV. A few years into his sentence at the Monroe Correctional Complex, Caldellis discovered he could spend his time developing his mind as well as his body, moving from the weight room to the classroom. "It's helped me tremendously to grow as a person," said Caldellis, who is working on a bachelor's degree in history.

ects associated with criminal justice. Now more dollars are starting to follow those results, led by a recent decision by the US Department of Education to experiment again with federal Pell Grants for inmate students. Forty-seven states have applied to participate in that program. States such as Washington, New York and California also are looking into spending more state dollars on these programs. Rudy Madrigal, a student in Washington's University Beyond Bars program, said the experience transformed his life.

participate in any kind of educational program behind bars are 43 percent less likely to reoffend. Another study paid for by the Indiana Department of Correction found that while all kinds of inmate education has a positive influence on recidivism, inmates who take college courses have a prison return rate of less than 5 percent. That's compared to the national average of nearly 68 percent within three years of release, federal statistics show.

In Washington state, private donations have been paying for college classes at prisons across the state since 2008. The state also provides vocational education in subjects ranging from computer coding to auto mechanics. One way Washington is unique among the states is how many inmates are participating in its education programs. It has about 16,500 inmates and 11,000 are involved in education, said Mike Paris, state administrator of offender education. In comparison, in California less than a quarter of its more than 112,000 inmates participate in educational programs.

FREE COLLEGE EDUCATION

The Vera Institute's Pathways from Prison to Post-Secondary Education Program, which is paid for with private foundation money, gives inmates a free college education, both in prison and after release, along with other supports such as mentoring and housing assistance for inmates in Michigan, New Jersey and North Carolina. California will be starting a new pilot



Inmate Jayson Bush raises his hand in a college world history class at the Monroe Correctional Complex.

project this fall to pair four community colleges with state prisons to provide classes. In the past, most California inmates going to college took online classes supported by private dollars. In 2014, New York Gov Andrew Cuomo said the state would be putting money back into inmate education programs. Lawmakers fought the plan, saying it rewarded criminal behavior, but others pointed out how much less expensive it is to educate prisoners than to incarcerate them.

Authorities estimate New York spends about \$60,000 a year to incarcerate one prisoner while a year of college in prison will cost about \$5,000. Katja Schatte, a PhD candidate at the University of Washington who teaches world history at the Washington state prison in Monroe, said criminal justice reform is intertwined with so many things happening in American society today - from the Black Lives Matter movement to inequity in public schools. "People should be thinking about how do we keep people out of prisons in the first place and education is the answer," Schatte said. This story has been corrected to reflect that Washington University's program is called Beyond Bars, not Behind Bars. — AP



Katja Schatte, left, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Washington, talks with inmate Noel Caldellis in a world history class Schatte teaches at the Monroe Correctional Complex in Monroe, Wash.

College education in American prisons is starting to grow again, more than two decades since federal government dollars were prohibited from being used for college programs behind bars. The shift comes as everyone from President Barack Obama to state policymakers are looking for ways to get better results from the \$80 billion the US spends annually on incarceration. Private money kept some prison education programs going when government dollars vanished. Several recent studies have shown those projects cut crime and prison costs by helping inmates go home and stay there instead of returning.

"Education in prison is transformative. It leads to safer communities and that's to the benefit of everyone," said Fred Patrick, director of the Center on Sentencing and Corrections at the Vera Institute of Justice, a New York nonprofit that combines research and demonstration proj-

DEGREE WITH A SCHOLARSHIP

Madrigal, who expects to serve about 24 years for second-degree murder and assault with a deadly weapon, said he had a rough start to his sentence, getting in fights and other trouble. He took his first class as another way to pass the time, but started getting excited about school after really connecting with a math teacher and finding out he could work toward a degree with a scholarship from a private foundation. "Since I started school and educating myself, I've built up connections not just with people in here but with people out there," said Madrigal, who hopes after prison to get into social services to help other people.

While his path is personally enriching, state officials and prison experts say the community is the real beneficiary. A Rand Corporation study on education in prisons found inmates who par-



Inmates look on in their college world history class. — AP photos



This file photo taken on March 22, 2003 shows US actor George Kennedy saluting as he arrives at the 75th Academy Awards in Hollywood, California. Kennedy, the Oscar-winning star of "Cool Hand Luke" and the "Naked Gun" comedy movies, has died at the age of 91. — AFP

'Airport' star George Kennedy dead at 91

George Kennedy, who won a supporting actor Oscar for his role alongside Paul Newman in the beloved film "Cool Hand Luke," and was also a fixture of 1970s disaster movies including the "Airport" franchise and "Earthquake," died Sunday in Boise, Idaho. He was 91. His grandson Cory Schenkel reported the death on his Facebook page.

While Kennedy largely played gruff, blue-collar characters in dramas and genre films, he allowed a comedic side to emerge in the deadpan "The Naked Gun" movies.

Kennedy appeared in all four of the "Airport" movies of the 1970s as Joe Patroni, the reluctant, cigar-chomping but highly effective chief mechanic who could be counted upon when the chips were down and supreme expertise was required. He also turned in a powerful performance in 1975's "Earthquake" as the hearty, sentimental police sergeant Slade, who helps where he can in the wake of the devastating temblor.

Kennedy toiled in the TV trenches for much of the 1960s, especially guesting on Westerns and occasionally appearing in supporting roles in high-profile films such as "In Harm's Way," "The Sons of Katie Elder," "The Flight of the Phoenix" and "The Dirty Dozen."

He finally burst into the public consciousness with his 1967 role as Dragline in "Cool Hand Luke," in which he was second-billed and held his own alongside star Paul Newman. The New York Times said:

"George Kennedy is powerfully obsessive as the top-dog who handles things his way as effectively and finally as

destructively as does the warden or the guards."

During the 1970s he made two attempts at starring in his own television series: 1971's brief "Sarge," in which he played a priest with a police background, and 1975's "The Blue Knight," an adaptation of the Joseph Wambaugh novel and subsequent TV movie in which he played a Los Angeles beat cop.

Other notable film credits during the 1970s included Michael Cimino's "Thunderbolt and Lightfoot"; "The Eiger Sanction"; and Agatha Christie period mystery "Death on the Nile," in which he was gruff as always but in this case exceptionally well groomed. He worked steadily in the 1980s but made an impression only in the 1988 deadpan police comedy "The Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad!" and its sequels. He recurred on primetime soap "Dallas" as rancher Carter McKay from 1988-91 and appeared in the reunion telepics "Dallas: J.R. Returns" (1996) and "Dallas: War of the Ewings" (1998).

Most recently he appeared in the 2014 crime drama remake "The Gambler," starring Mark Wahlberg. Kennedy was born in New York City to parents in show business. He first appeared onstage at the age of two, but later he would spend 16 years in the U.S. Army, ultimately working for Armed Forces Radio. He participated in the opening of the Army Information Office, which provided technical advice to the entertainment industry. A role as technical adviser to "The Phil Silvers Show" led to his early career in television.

The actor also wrote books: murder mysteries "Murder on

Location," published in 1983, and "Murder on High," released in 1984. His autobiography, "Trust Me," was published in 2011. Kennedy was married four times, the first time to Dorothy Gillyooly in the 1940s, the second (and third) time to Norma Wurman. His fourth wife, Joan McCarthy, died last year. He is survived by two children and several grandchildren. — Reuters



Flowers are placed on the Hollywood Walk of Fame star of actor George Kennedy. — AFP



A man walks past a gold jewelry shop in the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul. Istanbul's Grand Bazaar, built in the mid-15th century, has suffered some wear and tear over the years, surviving fire and earthquakes, and welcoming up to 400,000 people a day. The labyrinthine bazaar is now about to undergo a much needed renovation that will last a decade and cost tens of millions of dollars. — AFP photos

Istanbul's venerable Grand Bazaar to get facelift

Over 500 years old, surviving fire and earthquakes, it welcomes up to 400,000 people a day and takes pride in being the world's most visited destination—more popular than the Eiffel Tower.

So it's hardly surprising that Istanbul's venerable Grand Bazaar, built in the mid-15th century, has suffered some wear and tear over the years.

The labyrinthine bazaar is now about to undergo a much needed renovation that will last a decade and cost tens of millions of dollars.

But the revamp is not without controversy, especially among traditionalists who fear the spirit of the historic market will be lost.

"It's the most visited destination in the world, so it's very important for us," said Mustafa Demir, the mayor of the Fatih district of Istanbul where the bazaar is located.

"It's a very long project which is going to need a decade," he said. The cost is estimated at \$33.5 million (30 million euros) which will be largely financed by the Turkish authorities.

The Grand Bazaar ranked as the top destination anywhere in the world with over 90 million visitors in 2014, according to a Travel + Leisure listing.

Construction of the bazaar began around 1455 under the reign of Sultan Mehmet II, the "Conqueror" who had finally seized the city then known as Constantinople from

the Byzantines in 1453. With the city in need of a trade centre for goods coming in from all over the nascent Ottoman Empire, the Grand Bazaar expanded rapidly.

By the 17th century it had taken on its current form, a covered market (giving the bazaar its Turkish name Kapalicarsi), which now has thousands of shops and dozens of streets.

It has become one of Istanbul's most iconic sites, outstripping even the Hagia Sophia in terms of visitor numbers, and featured in a memorable sequence in the 2011 James Bond film "Skyfall".

Visitors flock there to pick up souvenir trinkets or a carpet. Bargaining with the multilingual, friendly but famously hard-nosed shop-holders is all part of the experience.

Locals also come in droves to pick more prosaic goods like clothes, furniture or shoes, or possibly jewellery for a special occasion.

'CHANGE IS NEEDED'

With the building's foundations showing their age, the absolute priority is to give the bazaar back its structural stability, the restoration's architects say.

"The Grand Bazaar is built on a hill whose soil is permeated by water," said Okan Erhan Olfaz, the engineer in charge of the works.

"The soil cannot sustain the building which is slipping

down the slope towards the Golden Horn."

One by one, trenches will be dug in the alleyways of the market. Engineers will build concrete tunnels through them to allow water, rain and discharges to pass and also to carry the electrical wiring which still hangs above from the bazaar's walls.

"These galleries will solidify the edifice underground and stabilise the building's columns," said Olfaz.

Meeting under the framework of their union, the owners of the more than 3,000 shops in the bazaar agreed to also contribute to the renovation, convinced that it was necessary.

"It's too cold here in the winter and in summer it's too hot. And as soon as it rains there are leaks," said a vendor, Kenan, who sells leather. "There are lots of problems, I expect that will change soon."

'NOT A SHOPPING CENTRE'

But there are still dissenting voices, especially from among the small-scale traders who fear their rents could skyrocket.

"That depends on our landlords but we are expecting an unpleasant surprise," said Mahmut, a clothes seller, in front of a pile of T-shirts.

"If that is the case we will be obliged to leave, We won't be able to manage."

With the government undertaking massive construction projects across the country that risk trampling on heritage, others fear atmosphere will be sacrificed to modernity.

The project also foresees the construction of two hotels in caravanserais—Ottoman-era guesthouses that were aimed at travelling merchants—on the edge of the bazaar.

"In Turkey, urban development takes place excluding the people," said Cemal Gokce, president of Istanbul's civil engineers chamber.

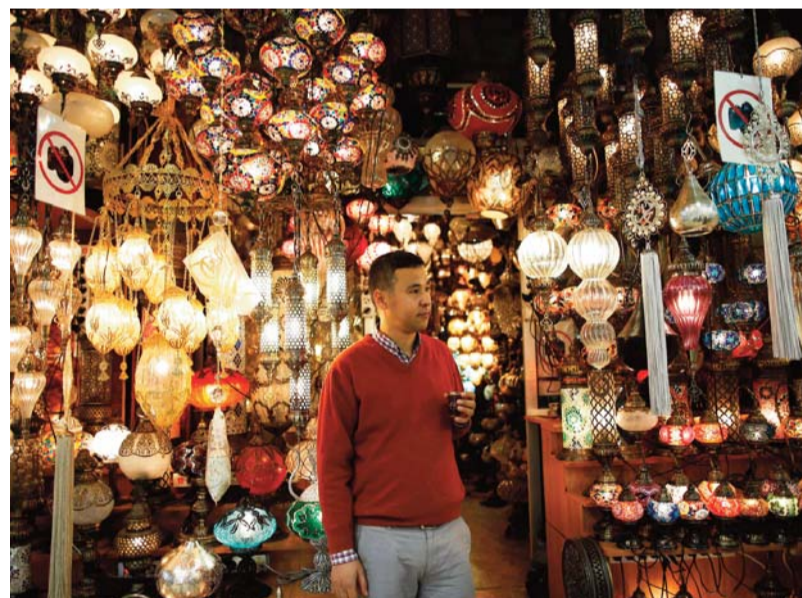
"I do not think that the project is aimed at reinforcing the historical and cultural identity of this edifice. With its long history, it's wrong to make the Grand Bazaar simply a shopping centre."

But Demir, a close ally of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, insisted that there was no alternative to the renovation.

"We are in the 21st century, there is no question of freezing the Grand Bazaar in its past," said Demir. "We need to keep traditions going while responding to the needs of people today." — AFP



A man sits in front of the blocked Sandal Bebesten gate in the historic Grand Bazaar in Istanbul.



A shop assistant waits for customers.



Mustafa Demir, mayor of the Fatih district of Istanbul where the city's historic Grand Bazaar is located, stands on the roof of bazaar.

Cath Kidston introduces SS16 collection - Blooming Lovely!

At Cath Kidston, spring has well and truly sprung! The latest, Blooming Lovely collection has landed, and it's full of the joys of the season. Cath Kidston, the Home of Modern Vintage is known for its signature floral designs, and the SS16 prints and products are a joyful celebration of British blooms in all their glory.

After the success of the AW15 Library Collection, Cath Kidston has returned to its print archive once more and cherry-picked some favorite florals that were ripe for reinvention; with beautiful new prints that come in fresh shades of blue, green, yellow and coral.

Cath Kidston's Blooming Lovely garden bursts into flower with an eclectic, colorful array of blooms, from classic roses to new hero hydrangeas, and daisies to ditsies. Herbaceous borders are a traditional feature of English gardens, so Cath Kidston has run them along skirt hems and on bags in all their glory.

Key background colours for vibrant blooms include versatile, easy to wear shades of denim blue and fresh green as well as classic oat and navy grounds on fashion and bags. The collection also includes, lovely pieces like Modern Vintage turnlock bags, crisp printed cotton dresses and essential outfit building pieces in denim and cotton, plus beautiful new luggage and feminine nightwear trimmed with delicate broderie anglaise.

Kids can dress for spring in style too, with new character knits, specially-designed bags for their scooters and more. New parents will wonder how they survived without Cath Kidston's clever new changing bags and accessories. For Home, Cath

Kidston's fresh new Highgate Rose china collection is surely the star of the show - and your kitchen!

Make sure you look out for the adorable Confetti Hearts print, fluttering Garden Fairies and much more, as the collection is here to bring sunshine and cheerfulness to the last of the winter months. This season, see how Cath Kidston's garden grows...

Welcome to SS16 at Cath Kidston!

Cath Kidston is operated in Kuwait by European Apparel Co.





Sand gazelles are seen at the Arabian Oryx Sanctuary in Umm Al-Zamool, some 290 kilometres south of Abu Dhabi near the border with Oman and Saudi Arabia, yesterday. The sanctuary which is reserve for many different animals stretches over an estimated area of 8,900 square kilometres and currently hosts nearly 155 Arabian Oryx, which were reintroduced into its natural habitat in the UAE in a five-year conservation plan launched by UAE's late ruler Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, after fears of their extinction. — AFP

Oscars shine light on Mexico's cinema revival

Call it cinema's renaissance: Left for dead two decades ago, Mexico's movie industry is now thriving under a golden generation of film-makers who have scooped up Oscars for three years in a row. Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu became only the third director to win back-to-back Oscars, rewarded on Sunday for his survival epic "The Revenant," a year after his triumph for "Birdman."

Before him, countryman Alfonso Cuaron won the best directing statuette for the sci-fi thriller "Gravity" in 2014.

All three films were shot by another Mexican, Emmanuel Lubezki, who made history by winning his third consecutive Oscar for best cinematography after filming "The Revenant" under extreme winter conditions.

Inarritu, Cuaron and their friend Guillermo del Toro form "The Three Amigos" of Mexican directors who have conquered Hollywood. But other less famous film-makers have won prizes at prestigious film festivals in Europe.

The five-year haul is impressive: Mexicans have won nine Oscars, four Golden Globes, three prizes at the Cannes film festival, two best film awards in Berlin and a Golden Lion in Venice. But that's not all. While Mexicans make a name abroad, production is soaring back home, from 10 films made in 2000 (when Inarritu's first film, "Amores Perros," came out) to 120 per year today. "Rather than calling it a new wave, we should talk about several waves," said Jean-Christophe Berjon, film critic and former advisor at the Cannes film festival.

'STIMULATING EXCHANGE'

The "Three Amigos" created their own production firm, Cha Cha Cha films, in 2009. "There is a special relationship between them, a very stimulating exchange," said Daniela Michel, director and co-founder of a film festival in the Mexican western city of Morelia.

"They show their films to each other during editing and they sometimes produce each other's work," she said.

Behind this trio, who live in the United States and make Hollywood features rather than Mexican-themed movies, is another generation of promising film-makers such as Amat Escalante, who won best director at Cannes in 2013 for his drug war drama "Heli."

Another Mexican, Michel Franco, won the best screenplay prize at Cannes last year for "Chronicle," a film about an end-of-life nurse played by British actor Tim Roth.

Roth, during a visit to Mexico in October, said the country's film industry was going through an "incredible" period. "I think it's the energy; there's a whole new group of young filmmakers whose cinematic vocabulary is extraordinary," he said at the Morelia festival, according to US film publication Variety.

He was promoting another Mexican-made film he starred in, the drug cartel flick "600 Miles" directed by Gabriel Ripstein.

US box office hit - Homegrown productions have soared in the past decade thanks to tax incentives, which have encouraged all sorts of companies to invest in films.

Mexican cinema had enjoyed another golden period between the 1930s and 1950s, with legendary film-maker Luis Bunuel heading that generation.

But the industry went through a quiet period marked by a series of comedies panned by critics, and barely any movies were made in the 1990s. "Short films kept Mexican cinema alive for years," said Michel, who created the Morelia festival to encourage young movie-makers.

While Mexico is making more movies, Mexicans still spend more at the box-office on Hollywood blockbusters than domestic fare. "Only one-third of films that are produced (in Mexico) come out in theaters," Berjon said, adding that while directors like Escalante are making a name for themselves in Europe, they are not really known



Director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu arrives at the 88th Oscars in Hollywood, California. — AFP

in their own country.

The industry is doing well even though the Mexican government is forbidden from providing aid for productions under the North American Free Trade Agreement.

But two movies managed to break box-office records in the same year in 2013 with the comedies "Instructions Not Included" and "We Are the Nobles."

"Instructions Not Included," a comedy starring popular comic Eugenio Derbez as a playboy whose life is upended when an ex-love leaves a baby at his doorstep, even broke new ground as it became the most seen Spanish-language movie in US box office history. — AFP

Leonardo DiCaprio Oscar win breaks Twitter record

Leonardo DiCaprio's moment in the Oscar limelight on Sunday spawned a record-breaking burst of Twitter activity.

DiCaprio's best actor win for his starring turn in "The Revenant" at the 88th Academy Awards - his first Oscar-generated more than 440,000 tweets per minute. That made it the most-tweeted minute of an Oscars telecast ever, handily beating the previous record of 255,000 tweets per minute, set in 2014 when host Ellen DeGeneres tweeted a star-studded selfie.

After DiCaprio's win, the next most-tweeted Oscars moments were the "Spotlight" surprise win for best picture followed by "Mad Max: Fury Road" picking up its sixth statue of the night, for sound mixing.

Twitter said there were 24.2 million total Oscar-related tweets from 5:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. ET, yielding 3.9 billion overall impressions; last year, Twitter said 3.7 billion tweet impressions were viewed in a 48-hour period. Still, Ellen DeGeneres' staged selfie with a gaggle of thespans (which was actually snapped by Bradley Cooper) may retain the title of most-tweeted Oscars

moment. In less than 24 hours, the post had been retweeted nearly 2.9 million times; as of Monday, it has been retweeted 3.34 million times.

Related Leonardo DiCaprio Uses Oscar Speech to Speak Out on Climate Change On Facebook, DiCaprio also topped the buzz chart, followed by the "Spotlight" win, Lady Gaga performing best-song nominee "Til It Happens to You" and Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu winning best director for "Revenant." The world's biggest social service said 24 million people had 67 million interactions (posts, likes and comments) related to 88th Academy Awards, up from 21 million users and 58 million interactions in 2015. DiCaprio's thank-you post on Facebook about the Oscars had more than 1.5 million likes as of 9 am ET. On Twitter, numerous celebs posted huzzahs for DiCaprio after he grabbed the trophy. — Reuters

Stallone's brother livid over Oscar snub

A furious Frank Stallone slammed the Academy in a foul-mouthed tirade Monday for snubbing big brother Sylvester in the best supporting actor category at this year's Oscars.

The Rocky star was widely backed to bag the prize following a Golden Globe award for his critically acclaimed turn as the boxer in Ryan Coogler's spin-off movie "Creed."

But the statuette went instead to Britain's Mark Rylance for "Bridge of Spies," in one of the biggest shocks of Sunday's gala ceremony at Hollywood's Dolby Theatre.

"The Academy should be ashamed of themselves. It's as clear as the nose on your face that Sly won. Mark who? It's total Hollywood bullshit," tweeted livid actor and musician Frank, 65.

The younger Stallone, warming to his theme, insisted that Rylance should have "been embarrassed" to supplant an actor who had done a "historic job" creating two cinema icons that have appeared in films spanning four decades.

Sly's underdog prizefighter turned world champion boxer Rocky Balboa spawned seven movies grossing an inflation-adjusted \$1.7 billion in North America alone, while four Rambo films featuring irritable Vietnam vet John Rambo took in \$674 million.

"Mark Rylance couldn't even comb his hair for Christ sake this is the 3rd time Sly's gotten ripped off Rocky, Copland and Creed. Never Voters," Frank tweeted, although his brother was never nominated for 1997 crime drama "Cop Land."

Stallone himself was in more magnanimous mood, posting a picture of himself on Instagram in his black and blue Oscar tuxedo winking at the camera, fist clenched in defiance.

"To all the 'real Rocky's' of the world, Please hang on to your dreams, NEVER GIVE IN, NEVER GIVE OUT, NEVER GIVE UP! thanks for the support," said the 69-year-old.

He later posted a screenshot of a smiling Rocky from "Creed," assuring fans that he was "very happy" and urging them to "please understand my brother is so emotional (sic) because he is just very protective and only wants the best for me. Life is good!"

Stallone was last nominated for an Oscar 39 years ago as best lead actor and writer for "Rocky."

A host of celebs rushed to ally themselves with Team Sly, including British media personality Piers Morgan, US actress Mia Farrow and Arnold Schwarzenegger, Stallone's co-star in action franchise "The Expendables."

"Sly, just remember, no matter what they say, to me you are the best, you were the winner. I'm proud of you," Arnie said in a video posted to Facebook.

Rylance, 56, was asked backstage how it felt to have outpunched Stallone but said he didn't take awards too seriously.

"I don't know, people come up and say things about competing as actors and I know it's necessary to make a show out of it," he told reporters, insisting he did not feel "better" than his fellow nominees. — AFP

