

Kuwait: Fighting terrorism greatest challenge in Arab world



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GCC DECLARES HEZBOLLAH A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

HARIRI BACKS MOVE AS NASRALLAH STEPS UP CRITICISM



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GOVT MULLING CURBS ON SOME NATIONALITIES

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Well-informed ministerial sources revealed that the government has received a report on Kuwait's demography and suggested ways to solve the problem of demographic imbalance, noting that the Cabinet views this issue as a top priority. The sources explained that the report suggested limiting the number of workers recruited from certain countries that already have large numbers of their citizens in Kuwait, with the majority of them being 'marginal laborers'.

"Egyptians now number 700,000, with a majority of them marginal laborers," said the report, suggesting reducing the numbers of Egyptian marginal laborers and monitoring labor offices involved in human trafficking. The sources added that the report also suggested cutting the number of teachers hired annually from Egypt from 500 to 200 and making up for the difference by hiring teachers from Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco. The report also suggested limiting Indian manpower to technical jobs like engineers, nurses and oil sector workers.



ANSAR, Lebanon: Hezbollah fighters hold flags as they attend the funeral procession in this southern village yesterday of Hezbollah senior commander Ali Fayyad, who was killed last week during an offensive by Syrian troops and Hezbollah fighters in Syria. Gulf nations formally branded Hezbollah a terrorist organization yesterday, ramping up the pressure on the Lebanese group. — AP

RIYADH: Gulf states yesterday declared Lebanon's Hezbollah a "terrorist" group, escalating tensions with the organization that is fighting in support of Syria's regime. The designation is the latest step taken by Gulf states against Hezbollah as ties between its main backer Iran and regional powerhouse Saudi Arabia deteriorate. The six-member Gulf Cooperation Council "decided to consider the militias (of Hezbollah) a terrorist organization", GCC Secretary General Abdullah Al-Zayani said in a statement.

He said the states targeted Hezbollah because of "hostile actions of the militia who recruit the young people (of the Gulf)". Zayani cited "their terrorist acts and incitement in Syria, Yemen and in Iraq", which he said were threatening Arab security. Saudi Arabia last month halted a \$3 billion program for military supplies to Lebanon in protest against Hezbollah, which has lawmakers in Beirut's parliament. Announcing the funding cut, a Saudi official said the kingdom noticed "hostile Lebanese positions resulting from the stranglehold of Hezbollah on the state".

He specifically cited Lebanon's refusal to join the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in condemning attacks on Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran in January. Riyadh cut diplomatic ties with Tehran after demonstrators burned its embassy and a consulate following the Saudi execution of a prominent cleric. The GCC comprises Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

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MPs WANT FREEZE ON OVERSEAS TREATMENT RULES, GOVT DEFIANT

QUICK SOLUTION FOR BEDOONS SOUGHT

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly yesterday called on the government to freeze new rules for treatment of Kuwaiti patients overseas until the Assembly's health committee has reviewed the issue. The call came in non-binding recommendations MPs voted on after a three-hour debate during which MPs strongly criticized the decision to cut financial allocations for Kuwaiti patients.

The Assembly asked its health committee to study the issue and report back before its next session on March 14. MPs also recommended that the government build specialized medical centers and hire well-known international doctors to work in the country. MPs were angered by a government decision to cut

the numbers of Kuwaiti patients who will be sent for treatment abroad and slashing financial allocations to them to KD 75 daily in US and Europe and KD 50 daily elsewhere. The new rules also allow one companion with each patient, but without any expenses apart from air tickets. State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah said the new rules take effect from April 1 and the government has no intention to freeze them. Public Works Minister Ali Al-Omar said the government will study the recommendations and will implement whatever it can. Head of the budgets committee MP Adnan Abdulsamad said that the budget for medical treatment abroad rose from KD 175 million in 2011 to as much as KD 441 million in the current fiscal year.

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IRBID, Jordan: Jordanian security forces secure a street in this town near the border with Syria yesterday following a security operation. — AFP

JORDAN RAID FOILS IS ATTACKS

AMMAN: Jordan said yesterday that it had thwarted planned attacks by the Islamic State group on its soil, killing seven suspected militants in a major security operation near the Syrian frontier. The kingdom, which also borders Iraq, has for years struggled with home-grown Islamists and is part of a US-led coalition carrying out air strikes against jihadists. The operation, which began late Tuesday in the northern city of Irbid, 80 km north of Amman, was the most significant of its kind since Jordan joined the coalition in 2014.

One member of Jordan's security forces was killed and three wounded in clashes that raged for several hours until dawn, the authorities said. Two civilians were also hurt. Jordan's intelligence services said IS had

been plotting "attacks against civilian and military sites in order to destabilize national security". "The terrorists refused to surrender and put up strong resistance using automatic weapons," it said, adding that the dead jihadists were wearing suicide vests.

Twenty-two suspects were arrested during the operation and automatic weapons and explosives were seized, according to security officials. They said that investigations before the raid had led to the arrest of 13 others linked to the jihadists. King Abdullah, a key Middle East ally of Western powers against Islamist militancy who has also safeguarded Jordan's peace treaty with Israel, has been among the most vocal leaders in

Continued on Page 13

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem.—KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Chairman of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Ali Mohammad Thunayan Al-Ghanem, along with KCCI members.

AMIR, CROWN PRINCE RECEIVE STATE OFFICIALS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of

Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Also yesterday, His Highness the Crown Prince received Chairman of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI)

Ali Mohammad Thunayan Al-Ghanem, along with KCCI members. They offered to His Highness the Crown Prince a comprehensive developmental vision regarding the financial reform in Kuwait in the light of the drop in price for oil.

His Highness the Crown Prince praised this ambitious vision and KCCI keenness the country's economy, stressing on the importance of enhancing the comprehen-

sive cooperation between the governmental and private sectors.

He called on further cooperation between both sectors in order to fulfill a better future of nation's economy based on variation of income sources to transform Kuwait to a financial regional and international centers in accordance with His Highness the Amir's instructions. His Highness the Crown Prince wished them

further success and progress to better serve our country.

In other news, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences yesterday to Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa on the passing of Sheikha Lulwa bint Mohammad Abdullah bin Isa Al Khalifa. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables. —KUNA

KRCS CONTINUES TO DELIVER AID IN IRAQ



KUWAIT: KRCS Chairman Dr Hilal Al Sayer meets with Iraqi Prime Minister Office Director and Deputy Minister of Planning Dr Mehdi Al-Allaq, in presence of Iraqi Ambassador Mohammed Hussein Bahrulloom. —KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society's (KRCS) humanitarian mission in Iraq emphasized the keenness on part of the Kuwaiti leadership to offer aid to displaced Iraqis who are suffering from tough living conditions, KRCS Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer said yesterday. Al-Sayer made his remarks after his meeting with the Iraqi Prime Minister Office Director and Deputy Minister of planning, Dr Mehdi Al-Allaq. He added that the meeting tackled both sides' efforts to ease the suffering of displaced Iraqis in Baghdad and Kurdistan. Allaq praised the level of bilateral ties between Kuwait and Iraq, expressing Iraqi's deep appreciation for Kuwait's humanitarian role in the region. —KUNA



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Iyad Amin Madani.—KUNA

FM, OIC CHIEF DISCUSS ISSUES

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah reviewed yesterday with Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Iyad Amin Madani the latest regional and international issues in view of OIC's policies going forward. The two officials met yesterday at the Kuwaiti minister's office.

Madani is currently visiting Kuwait at the head of a delegation accompanying him.

Attending the meeting were Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Sulaiman Al-Jarallah, Assistant Foreign Minister for the office of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, General Consul

of Kuwait in Jeddah and the permanent representative of Kuwait at OIC Saleh Ali Al-Saqobi, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for International Organizations Nasser Muhareb Al-Hain, and a number of key Foreign Ministry officials. The Kuwaiti Foreign Minister hosted a luncheon banquet in honor of Madani and the delegation with him. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Suleiman Al-Jarallah met with Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Ali Reda Enayati yesterday. The meeting discussed bilateral ties and the latest regional and international developments.—KUNA

AUSTRALIA CELEBRATES GULF WAR ANNIVERSARY

KUWAIT: Australian Vice Admiral Ray Griggs hailed the bravery of Kuwaiti resistance during the Iraqi Invasion, in a ceremony for the 25th anniversary of the Gulf War held in Kuwait's Embassy in Australia yesterday.

In his speech at the event, Griggs touched on the Iraqi crimes in Kuwait during the war and also mentioned the brave act of Sheikh Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who was martyred while defending the palace of his brother, the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, Admiral Chris Oxenbould spoke of his country's military role in the Gulf War, adding that no Australian soldiers were killed in the process to liberate Kuwait. Kuwaiti Ambassador to Australia Najeeb Al-Bader meanwhile thanked Australia for celebrating the 25th anniversary, noting that it is a strategic partner for Kuwait.

The ceremony was attended by ambassadors of the Gulf War coalition countries and a number of soldiers who participated in the war. Over 1,800 Australian Defense Force personnel were deployed in the First Gulf War from August 1990 to September 1991. The force comprised elements from the army, navy and air force. —KUNA



Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah

KUWAITI-SAUDI TIES DEEPROOTED: DEFENSE MINISTER

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah emphasized the "deep-rooted" relations between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and importance of promoting and enhancing these ties. This remark was made by Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah during his meeting with Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Abdulaziz Al-Fayez, Defense Ministry's Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations said in a press statement yesterday. —KUNA

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POLICEMAN'S KILLER REMANDED IN CUSTODY

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The public prosecution office yesterday remanded Kuwaiti Abdul Aziz Al-Shamlan, the alleged murderer of policeman Turki Al-Enezi, in custody for ten more days pending further investigations, while his two brothers were released. The suspect had told investigators that his two brothers and a friend instigated him to commit the crime. The three denied the accusations, however, and said that the suspect had a mental disorder and does not know what he is saying.

Road projects

Ministry of Public Work's (MPW) Assistant Undersecretary for Road Engineering Ahmed Al-Hessan said works on a project to build, execute and maintain intersections on the Fifth Ring Road's western part have already begun after land surveys were done. Hessan added that the 46-month project would cost KD 108.8 million and that once

completed, it would serve areas like Ardiya, Firdous, Sulaibiya, South Doha and Qairawan after increasing its lanes from 3 to 4 and increasing the speed limit from 80 to 120 kph.

TV channels

Municipal Council chairman Muhahel Al-Khaled suggested establishing more local TV channels on land plots allocated for newspapers in Ardiya industrial area. The suggestion also included allocating 3,000 sq m for large channels and 500 sq m for smaller ones on the media street in the area. Notably, the council had issued a decision in 2010 on building the media street in Ardiya industrial area.

Beach cleaning

Jahra municipality teams launched a campaign to clean Khowaisat beach from waste and abandoned vehicles. The campaign is in progress till the end of this week until all garbage and violations are removed.



TUNIS: Arab Interior Ministers, including Kuwait's Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah (far right) are pictured with Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi before the 33rd session of the Arab Interior Council. —KUNA



TUNIS: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Crown Prince, First Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior of Saudi Arabia Muhammad bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser Al Thani.

COMBATING TERRORISM GREATEST CHALLENGE IN ARAB WORLD: KUWAIT

ARAB MINISTERS HIGHLIGHT NEED OF STRATEGY TO COMBAT TERRORISM

TUNIS: Kuwait's Interior Minister affirmed yesterday that combating terrorism and drying up its sources constitute the greatest challenge facing Arab security apparatuses. Addressing the 33rd session of the Arab Interior Council, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, also the Deputy Premier, said hard circumstances prevailing in a number of Arab states led to insecurity and instability. "It is our duty to sense these circumstances and we should seek maximum cooperation and coordination" to deal with these challenges, he said.

Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled sounded the alarm bell due to the terrorist incidents, warning that no country "would be immune from the terrorist operations." He called for serious action to cut off "arteries of terrorism and drying up financing resources and protecting our sons from its perils."

"Intellectual security is the mightiest arm in facing and conquering terrorism," he said, praising in particular role at this level by the Saudi Naif University for Security Sciences. Tremendous development in the social media means rendered the electronic realms a fertile entity for terrorist organizations, threatening the intellectual security by large, and this warrants unification of efforts and activation of pacts for combating cybercrimes and establishing bridges of cooperation with the operating companies for sake of preserving peoples' security, the Kuwaiti Interior Minister stated at the Arab conference.

Extraordinary security conditions in the Arab world have resulted in arms proliferation, in addition to drugs' spread, he said, warning against an approach to amend some anti-narcotics international conventions, including the

notion to cancel execution and allowing deals in some drugs. Such ideas are expected to be put forward at the 59th session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs due in Vienna next month and the extraordinary UN General Assembly session for discussing drugs in April, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled added. Arab states should unify their stances and take a joint attitude to "abort this scheme and confront notions that compromise our basic principles and doctrine," he said.

Broad strategy

Arab interior ministers agreed to enhance cooperation and information exchange, as part of a broad strategy to stifle terrorism. Speaking at the session, Crown Prince, First Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior of Saudi Arabia Muhammad bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al Saud underscored the need to boost cooperation amongst Arab security apparatuses, saying that "combating crime is a joint obligation."

The Arab world faces growing challenges that threaten peace and security, "which calls for increased efforts to generate awareness on the need to uphold peace in society," Prince Mohammad said. Moreover, Arab League Secretary General Nabil Al-Araby underlined the fact that the session takes place amidst trying times, saying that cooperation is necessary to wipe out terrorism.

Araby also said that eradicating terrorism is the Arab world's biggest challenge, calling for plans to hold similar meetings of Arab defense, justice and foreign ministers in attempt to consolidate efforts against terrorism.

Secretary General of the Arab Interior Minister Council Dr Mohammad bin Ali Koman

pointed to "the atrocities committed by terrorist groups in Yemen and Syria. Koman also said that the Arab Interior Minister Council encapsulates Arab cooperation, and is evident of successful, joint Arab work.

Security cooperation

Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi had called on Arab nations to ramp up security cooperation to combat terrorism, "which has sparked disarray and threatened peace." Speaking at the session, Essebsi said that the Arab region is faced with perilous challenges, "as sectarian tensions and internal strife is plaguing the region." He also singled out the so-called Islamic State (IS) as "a major threat to Arab security, by virtue of the group's ability to attract sympathizers." Moreover, Essebsi warned that Arab nations are on the cusp of collapse, in light of rampant conflict that pervades the region. "The fight against terrorism necessitates a united front to uphold security and peace in the Arab world," he noted.

On security conditions in his country, Essebsi said that Tunisia is facing an unprecedented level of danger that threatens security in the country. "Deterioration of security in Libya is detrimental to security in Tunisia, as Tunisia is most vulnerable to the ill effects of the conflict in Tripoli," the Tunisian President said. "These obstacles behoove us to constantly reshape our strategies of fighting terrorism," he said.

Earlier yesterday, the 33rd session of the Arab Interior Minister Council kicked off, with participation of Arab interior ministers, security delegations and representatives of the United Nations (UN), Arab League (AL) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). — KUNA

INTERIOR MINISTER MEETS COUNTERPARTS

TUNIS: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday met his Qatari and Iraqi counterparts Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser Al Thani and Mohammad Al-Ghaban, respectively, to discuss the bilateral security cooperation. The two separate meetings took place on the sidelines of the 33rd Arab interior ministers' meeting.

The discussions dealt with the ties

between Kuwait and the two sisterly countries, and latest developments of the security situation in the Gulf region as well as the topics on the agenda of Arab ministerial meeting.

Sheikh Mohammad Khaled later held similar talks with Crown Prince and First Deputy Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Mohammad bin Nayef Al Saud, and Lebanese Minister of Interior and Municipalities Nohad El Machnouk. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Yaqoub Al-Sane attends a conference on Arab women's judicial experiment yesterday. —KUNA

WOMEN MAKE UP HALF OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN DEVELOPMENT DRIVE: JUSTICE MINISTER

KUWAIT: Women constitute 50 percent of human resources in the implementation of development programs in Kuwait, Minister of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Yaqoub Al-Sane said yesterday. Addressing a two-day conference on Arab women's judicial experiment, the minister said societal development can be gauged by women's cultural and social improvement and effective contribution to civilization.

He said the conference, organized by the Women's Cultural and Social Society, comes at a time when the world is set to mark the International Women's Day, reiterating Kuwait's commitment to ensuring gender equity as per relevant international conventions.

The Egyptian judiciary has issued several rulings allowing the recruitment of Kuwaiti women in judicial jobs, he said, noting that he was proud of making the

first-ever decision to appoint 22 female graduates of the College of Law as prosecutors. Female judges in Gulf and Arab countries have notably proved themselves in the field of prosecution and judiciary, the justice minister pointed out.

Meanwhile, Egyptian Minister of Justice Ahmad Al-Zend addressed the event by confirming that Arab women are now entitled to judicial posts in line with national legislations and laws. He said women's full rights and equity with women, including judicial posts, are enshrined in the religion of Islam and constitutions. Egyptian women managed to join the judicial field in 1954 and held high-level posts at courts, the minister boasted. Male and female judges from several Arab countries are participating in the two-day conference on Arab women's judicial experiment. — KUNA



NO INJURIES IN BASEMENT FIRE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Firefighters from two different fire stations put out a fire that started in the basement of a Jaber Al-Ali house. Firemen from Qurain fire station and Mubarak Al-Kabeer hazardous materials center prevented the fire from spreading and dealt with containers containing hazardous materials at the site. No injuries were reported.

Live ammunition drill

The coastguard department announced that live ammunition shooting exercises will take place in territorial waters on March 7-9, 2016 from 8 am until 2 pm. The shooting will in the southern areas, with coordinates as follows: Qarouh Island, Longitude 28.55.0.N, Latitude 048.37.5.E; Um Al-Muradem Island, 28.46.8.N, 48.30.2.E. The department warned sea goers not to approach the shooting site during the said period.

Fireworks festival

As Kuwait is celebrating 55 years of independence, 25th anniversary of the liberation, and 10 years since His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah assumed power, a fireworks festival will be held on Saturday, March 5, 2016. The Ministry of Interior's relations and security information department said the coastguard urged those who want to watch the works from the sea should stay within the designated area for the public and should have navigation lights on. The department said that any queries about the festival can be received on 1880888.



MAATOUQ REAFFIRMS KUWAIT'S INTEREST IN PEACE, FIGHTING TERRORISM

CAIRO: President of the International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO), UN Humanitarian Envoy and Advisor at the Amiri Diwan Dr Abdullah Al-Maatouq reiterated Kuwait's keenness on promoting peace and fighting terrorism.

Speaking to KUNA on the sidelines of a high-level peacekeeping workshop held at the Cairo-

based Arab League, Maatouq said yesterday that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's repeated calls at international gatherings for promoting global peace are a sign of Kuwait's strong belief in this domain. He added that Kuwait fully believes in the role of national and international civil society organizations due to their

crucial role in the dissemination of humanitarian culture and activities worldwide. Maatouq stressed the necessity of coordination and cooperation among the UN, Arab League, Organization of Islamic Conference and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) over response to the current developments in the Middle East region. — KUNA

In Brief

KUWAITIS IN JORDAN FINE

AMMAN: Kuwaitis in Jordan are safe and sound, Kuwait's Ambassador in Amman Hamad Al-Duajj confirmed yesterday following clashes between police and armed assailants in the northern Jordanian city of Irbid. Kuwaiti citizens, mostly students, are fine, said the Ambassador, adding that the clashes are far from students' accommodation in universities north of Jordan. He stressed that the diplomatic mission is in contact with them around the clock. Deadly clashes erupted yesterday between Jordanian security forces and extremists in the northern Jordanian city of Irbid, the force had raided a number of locations in the city to apprehend suspected extremists. —KUNA



ECLIPSE INVISIBLE IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: A total solar eclipse will take place on March 8-9, but will not be visible in Kuwait, the Kuwaiti Science Club announced yesterday. The eclipse will begin at 4:54 am on Thursday, March 9, 2016 local time, Director of Astronomy and Space Sciences Department at the club Badr Al-Omairah said. The total solar eclipse will be visible in parts of Indonesia including Sumatra, Borneo, and Sulawesi and in several locations in the Pacific Ocean. Observers in northern and eastern Australia, south and east Asia, as well as north and south Americas will be able to see a partial eclipse. —KUNA



TANZANIA GRATEFUL FOR KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Tanzanian Minister of State for Union Affairs and Environment January Yusuf Makamba hailed Kuwait's humanitarian role in developing different sectors in his country. In a statement to Kuwait Embassy in Tanzania yesterday, Makamba noted that the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) has been funding different projects in his country since 1975. He said that Tanzania aimed to benefit from Kuwait's experience in recycling waste, while creating partnerships with the Environment Public Authority (EPA) and Kuwaiti scientific bodies. —KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: An Arabic calligraphy artwork made from metal displayed at an Islamic arts exhibition, which took place recently at the Grand Mosque. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



AL AHLI BANK SELECTS INFOSYS FINACLE TO POWER ITS TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMATION

KUWAIT: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK), a leading retail bank in Kuwait, and Infosys Finacle, from EdgeVerve Systems, the product subsidiary of Infosys, announced that the bank has selected Finacle to drive its technology transformation. The bank will induct a full suite of Finacle solutions including Core Banking, Trade Finance, Wealth Management, CRM, e-banking, Payments, Treasury, Alerts, SMS Banking, Liquidity Management, Retail and Corporate Loan Origination. With Finacle, ABK will be able to achieve high operational efficiencies, accelerate growth and manage scale easily, while delivering a digital age banking experience to its customers.

Highlights:

- Finacle solutions come as a well-integrated suite, with enterprise capability architecture
- The agile technology platform will allow ABK to integrate other existing and planned systems easily, in multiple geographies
- With the Finacle, the bank is enabled to provide 24*7*365 services
- The built in product factory capability will empower ABK to launch products easily and achieve



KUWAIT: Abdulla Alsumait, ABK's Deputy Chief General Manager (left) and Venkatramana Gosavi, Infosys Finacle's Vice President and Regional Head - Growth Markets sign the agreement.

reporting platform

Michael Reh, Executive Vice President and CEO (designate), EdgeVerve said: "In an increasingly digital world, banks will need to fundamentally transform themselves into a technology-led, client-centric model. With this transformation program, ABK joins a select group of banks in the Middle East, enabled with a proven, industry leading technology platform to deliver superior value to its customers and drive innovation. With our partnership with ABK, Finacle stands well poised to help other banks across Kuwait transform and modernize to accelerate growth and profitability."

Abdulla Alsumait, ABK's Deputy Chief General Manager said: "At ABK, we are committed to creating a 'simpler' banking model for our customers; one that specifically offers convenience, security and speed. This comes as part of our 'Simple Banking' strategy, and we are excited to partner with Infosys, who are one of the leaders in core banking systems, globally. We look forward to this partnership and working together to achieve our goal of transforming the technology landscape in ABK and to enhance our service offerings to our customers, in every way."

a quick go to market

- The bank's customers will benefit from a customized offerings and world class banking experience across any channel of their choice
- ABK will move from a collection of product processors to an integrated system, which will provide a robust customer service and

KFH'S NATIONAL, LIBERATION DAY CAMPAIGN ACHIEVES RECORD-BREAKING VIEWERSHIP ON YOUTUBE

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House KFH's National, Liberation Days advertising campaign that has been launched as part of the bank's firm belief in the importance of its social and national

role in Kuwait's history and future, achieved a record-breaking viewership in its social media channels broadcast after only 6days of going on air. The number of several hundred

thousand views is the highest ever out of any KFH campaign in less than a week, as a record breaker towards the genuine nationalistic message of KFH on one of its main social media

channels "YouTube."

With a campaign of this magnitude due to its utilization of integrated media, KFH ensured the campaign's success with an authentic and genuine message which reflects the bank core values, its identity and commitment towards Kuwait and its community.

This distinct advertising campaign was launched in tandem with the occasion of National and Liberation Days anniversary. It aims at conferring the joy of freedom atmosphere on Kuwait. The advertisement of the campaign incorporates children's non-staged authentic spontaneity in spreading joy and renewing loyalty to Kuwait, emphasizing the cohesion of the Kuwaiti national fabric, and fostering the national integration.

The lyrics of the advertisement are adorned with love and loyalty meanings. In the video, children celebrate in an authentic way and feel the enormous happiness of the occasion of the 55th National Day and 25th Liberation Day. No rehearsal or staged scenes were used as children express themselves naturally with great simplicity, spontaneity and admiration where the lyrics narrate "This is our beloved



Kuwait ... See it through our eyes ... Our home, the most precious of all homes". This reflects the national values and principles which are kindness, generosity, security, tranquility, love and peace.

It is noteworthy that this National and Liberation Days communication campaign conveys a joyful message of happiness in the key public locations, blended with little moments of smiley faces and Kuwait's flags hoisting to mark this anniversary. The campaign

embodies people's love to Kuwait through the simplicity and innocence of children to draw a smile and spread joy amongst all.

KFH is keen on embracing its social responsibility, while participating in every event of importance to the society, primarily the national events. This affirms KFH's prestigious status and underlines its ceaseless efforts in shouldering the social responsibility in all its fields. This will motivate other private sector institutions to follow suit.





KUWAIT: Officials are pictured during the opening ceremony of the 4th International Fire and Safety Conference and Expo. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

HUMAN RESOURCES MAIN PILLAR OF DEVELOPMENT: OFFICIAL FOURTH FIRE, SAFETY CONFERENCE UNDERWAY



By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Human resources present the power that actively moves development and prosperity, as it is the main pillar of development plans all over the world, an official said yesterday.

Human resources cannot be replaced by modern technology, as the human element is always necessary, said Lieutenant General Yousef Al-Ansari, Director General of Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD). "Our country always believed in this fact and became a developed country due to its people," he said.

Ansari made those statements during the opening ceremony of the 4th International Fire and Safety Conference and Expo on Tuesday. The event is organized by KFSD to highlight the importance of investing in human resources.

Fire academy

The event, running from March 1-3, 2016 at the Regency Hotel, includes many activities including workshops and lectures. The conference is accompanied with an exhibition for the sponsors and participating companies. This year's event also focuses on the importance of education and training. "We aim to establish a fire academy that welcomes participants from inside and outside Kuwait. This academy will be a regional center specialized in fire protection, and its curriculum is based on the latest technologies in this field. It should attract local and international experts from the field through regularly meeting with them," he added.

Kuwait plays a leading role in this field as



Lieutenant General Yousef Al-Ansari speaks at the event.

KFSD held the first international training course on directing fire accidents and sea rescue. "This course was held in cooperation with the International Organization for Civil Protection and Civil Defense as a prelude to the founding of an International Training Center for Sea Safety. Twenty-five cadets from Arab, Asian, African and European countries in addition to Kuwait joined this course," said Ansari.

Human development

Major General Khaled Al-Turkeit, head of the organizing committee of the event, noted that KFSD aims through this conference and expo to actively participate in supporting human and social development by reviewing the best experiences and practices in the field of fire sciences and its curriculums. "We aim to build a work strategy that fits with international criteria. This will provide strong leaders



Interior Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Training Major General Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah addresses the conference.

and will as a result develop the country and its people," he stated.

KFSD has finished studying and developing the curriculum and education and training plan. "We focus on improving the level of the training center to become an accredited academy, specialized in fire sciences. This needs amendments in legislation to achieve this goal in human and social development," he added.

The conference focuses on various issues including achieving safety and security, importance of academic studies for firefighters and investing in human resources. "The participating companies, universities, and institutes will also present their programs and curriculums that are related to firefighting and rescue services," concluded Turkeit, thanking the sponsors and participants at the event.



KIB SPONSORS FIREFIGHTERS' DAY FESTIVAL

KUWAIT: As part of its leading CSR program, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced its sponsorship of the 14th Firefighters' Day Festival that will be held from March 3rd to 5th at Souk Sharq under the patronage of Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammed Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah.

The festival aims at raising awareness among people about how to prevent fire, methods of fighting it along with giving tips on safety supplies for homes and properties. In addition to commemorating the brave soldiers who dedicate their lives to people and properties. Besides, many governmental organizations will participate in this festival, like the Ministry of Defense represented by the Military Fire Service Directorate, the National Guard represented by the Backup and Firefighting Brigade, Kuwait Oil Company represented by the Firefighting Brigade and EQUATE Petrochemical. The festival will incorporate several activities, including performances, plays and educational contests, as



Nawaf Najia

well as an exhibition for the firefighting and participating sectors along with a display for firefighting equipment and marine show for rescue boats. Nawaf Najia, Manager of the Corporate

Communications Unit at KIB, expressed his pride and honor to sponsor the festival that takes place on the World Civil Defense Day, which falls on March 1st every year. The firefighters' Day honors the sacrifices that firefighters make to ensure that our communities and environment are as safe as possible.

Najia added that this sponsorship stems from KIB's strive to spread awareness among the public when it comes to the safety, security and environment matters, as well as to show gratitude to our brave firefighters for dedicating their lives to protect the people, properties and our beloved country.

It is worth noting that KIB has constant aspiration to support the development of the Kuwaiti community and its institutions, emphasizing on its commitment to good corporate citizenship and social responsibility. The bank promotes its social contributions in all fields through adopting various initiatives that serve our local community and its individuals.

KUWAIT TO HOST ENERGY RESEARCH CONFERENCE

KUWAIT: Kuwait University is set to host the 6th International Conference on Energy Research and Development from March 14-16, under the patronage of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The conference will discuss different energy topics that would help improve Kuwait's infrastructure, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Petroleum Abdullah Al-Khulaifi said in a statement yesterday. The event is an opportunity for the faculty's teaching staff to share experience in the academic research field with their counterparts from international uni-

versities, he added. Meanwhile, head of the conference's organizing committee Ammar Al-Sairafi noted that diversity in energy sources has become a key element in development in the modern world. He added that Kuwait has strategic plans to use different energy sources, rather than just rely on petroleum, which is hazardous to humans and the environment. He also mentioned the announcement of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah that Kuwait will use renewable energy sources to cover 15 percent of its energy needs by 2030. — KUNA

ARAB HEALTH MINISTERS DISCUSS KEY TOPICS



CAIRO: Kuwait's Health Minister Dr Ali Al-Obaidi chairs the Executive Office of Arab Health Ministers Council's meeting yesterday. — KUNA

CAIRO: The Executive Office of Arab Health Ministers Council convened yesterday under the chairmanship of Kuwait's Health Minister Dr Ali Saad Al-Obaidi to discuss some issues pertaining to the joint Arab action in this field. During the one-day meeting, conferees followed up the resolutions of the previous meeting and discussed the 45th ministerial session of Arab health ministers to be held today under the chairmanship of Mauritania.

The meeting's agenda includes 17 items, mainly effects of Syrian refugees on the health sector in the Arab countries and some proposals submitted by Kuwait, Palestine, Algeria, Iraq and Morocco on the health field. Ministers also dealt with the health dossier reviewed by the Arab Economic and Social Development Summit, health legislations, improvement of mothers and children's health in the Arab region, the Arab strategy to combat AIDS and others. — KUNA

ENDOSCOPIC PROCEDURE 'SUCCESSFUL ALTERNATIVE' TO CLASSIC SURGERY



Deputy Director of Amiri Hospital Dr Ali Al-Alanda

KUWAIT: The Amiri Hospital conducted 1,227 endoscopic surgeries during 2015, a convincing indication that this procedure had become a suitable alternative to classic surgery, Deputy Director of Amiri Hospital Dr Ali Al-Alanda said yesterday.

Surgeries have witnessed major developments throughout history; however, most of them are carried out through difficult procedures, D. Alanda said. He added that with the same efficiency, and instead of making one long surgical cuts, endoscopic procedures focus on making several small cuts by (3-10 mm). The post-surgery pains and wounds would also heal faster as a result of the small cuts with changes of infection being at a minimum, said Alanda, adding that endoscopic surgery was safer and less risky for the patient.

One of the first endoscopic surgeries was performed in 1988 by the French Dr Francois Dubois for Cholecystectomy. Endoscopic surgery uses scopes going through small incisions or natural body openings in order to diagnose and treat disease. Another popular term is minimally invasive surgery (MIS), which emphasizes that diagnosis and treatments can be done with reduced body cavity invasion. — KUNA

KUWAITI, EGYPTIAN MEETING IN CAIRO DISCUSSES BOOSTING TIES

CAIRO: Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Armed Forces Lieutenant General Sidqi Subhi received yesterday Kuwait's Ambassador to Egypt Salem Al-Zamanan and Secretary General of Egypt-Kuwait cooperation council Nawaf Al-Enizi.

During the meeting, Ambassador Zamanan discussed the Kuwaiti-Egyptian relations and

means to enhance bilateral ties. Subhi praised the deep-rooted ties between the two countries. Meanwhile, Enizi underlined Kuwait's contributions to reconstruct a number of schools in Sinai Peninsula. The officials also touched on agreed projects and discussed means to enhance cooperation between both countries. — KUNA

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Crime

Report

MAN KILLS FRIEND WHILE INTOXICATED

KUWAIT: A citizen lost his life when he was run over by his friend who was under the influence of drugs, following a fight. Police received a call about the incident at Wafra farms, so they went there and recovered the body. The source said that a citizen who is a detective called operations and said his brother ran over a friend in Wafra, so police went to the house and arrested him. He said he was under the influence of shabu and a fight took place, so he got in the car and ran over his friend. He was charged with murder.

Teen stabbed

A juvenile was rushed to Adan Hospital after he was stabbed in the shoulder by three persons. The victim's father got a medical report and took it to Sabahiya police station and told them a dispute took place between his son and the three others, who stabbed him. An attempted murder charge was registered as detectives are looking for the suspects.

Home robbery

KD 2,000 and official documents disappeared from a citizen's house in Saad Al-Abdullah residential area. The house owner was surprised when he saw his house's contents scattered around, and discovered that the money and documents were missing. He told police about the incident and they started an investigation.

Thieves caught

Mubarak Al-Kabeer detectives arrested a citizen and three Syrians who stole material from cars parked in front of houses. They confessed to committing nine robberies during the past weeks. A security source said investigations in the thefts led to suspecting a citizen in Adan, who was arrested, and he confessed that he along with his three partners committed several thefts and sold the loot. Detectives arrested the three accomplices. —Al-Rai

83,000 PATIENTS VISIT PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL

KUWAIT: Recent government statistics showed that the psychiatric diseases hospital receives about 82,915 patients, ie 2 percent of Kuwait's population, and that 88 percent of them are Kuwaitis. The statistics also showed that the total number of Kuwaitis visiting the psychiatric diseases hospital number 73,643; ie 5.6 percent of the total number of citizens, while expats only numbered 9,272; ie 0.4 percent of expats living in Kuwait.

In a related issue, and responding to recent concerns about issuing driving licenses to a large number of psychiatric patients, informed sources said that thousands of psychiatric patients with various degrees already had driving licenses and that it would be difficult to classify them or assess their exact numbers because some psychiatric diseases are temporary and because of the privacy of patients' information. —Al-Qabas

JARRAH CRITICIZES AIRPORT STAFF PERFORMANCE

KUWAIT: Escorted by the Ministry of Interior's Assistant Undersecretary For Citizenship Affairs Major General Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, undersecretary Lt Gen Suleiman Al-Fahd visited Kuwait International Airport where the problem of Syrians who were mistakenly branded as holders of fake passports was resolved.

Responding to reporters' questions whether Fahd's visit was made specifically for that reason, Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah stressed that the undersecretary was used to making such sudden visits and confirmed that the visit was one of the main reasons of resolving the problem in a short time, because he usually goes around the airport asking both airport officials and passengers about the treatment they (passengers) received.

"The visit showed that some passport counters' staff were indifferent and others were abusive in dealing with passengers," Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah explained, noting that border staff should be patient, hardworking, have endurance and not to jump to conclusions that might irritate passengers. Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah added that some haste was involved in handling the Syrians' case and that passport officials could have exerted a little more effort to make sure the passports were not fake in order to prevent the problem from snowballing. —Al-Rai

MAN SENTENCED FOR OFFENDING SAUDI KING

KUWAIT: The Criminal Court sentenced a Kuwaiti man to a year in prison for offending Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud on Twitter, but acquitted him of charges of committing a hostile act against Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, a mental assessment report for a Qatari national accused of offending His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah revealed that he is sane, said sources familiar with the investigations. The Criminal Court reviewed the report and is set to make its ruling in the state security case during the next hearing on March 22, 2016, said the sources who spoke to Al-Qabas on the condition of anonymity.

In other news, the Public Prosecution released arrest warrants for 107 Ministry of Health employees for forging fingerprints used to register their attendance to work. The suspects had provided coworkers with 'replicas' of their fingerprints made from silicon and other material to use on the check-in scanner so that they can skip work, Al-Jarida reported quoting sources familiar with the investigations. The Public Prosecution had taken similar actions in the past against Ministry of Electricity and Water employees on similar charges. —Al-Qabas, Al-Jarida



Al-Anbaa

NATIONAL 'CHAOS' DAY

By Salah Al-Sayer

Each year, some very disgraceful behaviors and shameful practices take place all over Kuwait's streets and squares during the national and liberation celebrations, where many people find joy in frivolity, uncontrollability, harassment, violating other's privacy, blocking traffic and littering in a seasonal 'chaotic' scene that indicates a great deal of contradiction where everybody 'fails' on a day of 'success'.

Well, the phenomenon is not a local one as uncontrollability, chaos and demagoguery are very well-known characteristics of crowds in the absence of discipline and fear of law. Sociologists have found that it is human nature that crowds tend to act more chaotically and do things they would never consider doing individually. Things even get worse the less aware those

crowds are, just like what happens in our streets where the majority of 'celebrators' taking part in this annual 'chaos' are mainly kids and teenagers.

The sad thing in the Kuwaiti part of this phenomenon is that it happens during a patriotic anniversary when martyrs' sacrifices should be commemorated

The sad thing in the Kuwaiti part of this phenomenon is that it happens during a patriotic anniversary when martyrs' sacrifices should be commemorated. But instead, the occasion turns into silly practices driven by 'mass mentality' of younger generations who turn this patriotic occasion into an opportunity to break the law, disrespect it and come out with very disgraceful practices right before the eyes of their parents who even encourage them. This really contributes to destroying the spirit of patriotism and national loyalty.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

1,100 PRISONERS TO BE RELEASED BY AMIRI PARDON

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammed Al-Khaled Al-Sabah has signed the lists of prisoners to be released on an Amiri pardon on the occasion of celebrating the national anniversaries, said security sources. The sources explained that the list includes the names of 1,100 inmates, 34 (including a woman) of whom are to be immediately released, while the others' prison time would be cut halved

or quartered. "The list also included dropping financial fines and cancelling deportation of expats related to Kuwaitis," explained the sources.

The sources explained that the Amiri pardon committee at the Ministry of Interior's correctional facilities sector recently finished three months of work studying the files of 2,500 prisoners to select those who matched the pardon conditions before it

submitted the 1,100 names list to Sheikh Mohammed, who in turn submitted it to the Amiri Diwan.

Notably, the Amiri pardon condition includes not having benefited from previous pardons, to have good conduct while doing time, not to be imprisoned in relation to murders (unless pardoned by the victim's family), not to be indebted to others (unless they reach a settlement) and not to be

imprisoned in relation to state security or drug cases. In other news, the Ministry of Health has reportedly given orders to medical staff at all public medical facilities in Kuwait to give priority in treatment to prisoners and people held pending deportation. This step comes to protect prisoners' health and maintain the safety of security measures, said sources with knowledge of the news. —Al-Rai, Al-Anbaa



KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) set up a booth at the American University of Kuwait (AUK) to introduce students to its @Tijari accounts that is dedicated to young people. @Tijari clients are entitled to enter three raffle draws to be held on March 20, 2016 for tickets to attend the Formula 1 Bahrain Grand Prix 2016, which takes place on April 3, 2016.

EDUCATION MINISTRY TO CANCEL FIRST, THIRD PRELIMS

HOLIDAYS TO BE TIMED WITH PAAET, KU: ATHARI

KUWAIT: Ministry of Education's (MoE) Undersecretary Dr Haitham Al-Athari said the ministry intends to cancel the current grading system and go back to the two-semester system followed in most countries worldwide. "We are working on finishing the related project to review it with experts and educational area directors before putting it into practice in the next school year," he explained, noting that the new system would start with next year's grade 10 students.

Athari also said that ministry will cancel the first and third preliminary exams in various stages and only keep

the mid-term (mid-year) and final exams by the end of the school year as this would lessen the burdens of both learners and educators and allow more time for learning and activities.

In addition, Athari said MoE's decision number one (pertaining with school year schedule, holidays and vacations) has been adjusted to start the next school year on Sept 18 instead of before Eid Al-Adha, which makes this summer vacation longer. He also noted that adjustments would be done for two years ahead so that educators could set their academic plans without confusion. —Al-Anbaa



Al-Anbaa

BARCELONA, MADRID FANS

By Saad Al-Mo'tesh

Like many other people, I used to read and hear about some sayings about enemies of success, such as: 'People only fight successful ones' and 'When somebody criticizes you, know that you are in the lead'. I do not know who said those sayings or when they were said. Nonetheless, facts have actually proved them to be right.

I have noticed how some people have been criticizing the Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud to stop the continuous successes he has been achieving in the media, which is only denied by people who find harm in any success achieved by the official moderate media that reflects an honorable image of Kuwait, despite the presence of some mistakes.

The closer I look into the names of those criticizing Sheikh Salman, the more I realize that the man was actually going on the right track and path. That he is starting to worry them by his relentless work to serve Kuwait. By criticizing him, they are trying to impede his progress and the plans he set to develop the administrative body he runs.

Well, my advice to Sheikh Salman is to follow in the steps of HH the PM Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, who never pays any attention to those trying to hold him back or hinder his work, because he realizes that the ultimate goal is to make HH the Amir's vision and aspirations come true, in addition to serving Kuwait without responding to this or that criticism by people paid to do so, and we know who funds them.

All of us in Kuwait know the names of those wishing to spoil others' achievements and undermine them. They act just like the fans of Real Madrid and Barcelona would do. Each of them would cheer and support any third team playing against his rival only because of hate.

My final advice to those criticizing others' success is to be more logical and reasonable. Those encouraging such criticisms are unable to achieve similar success, if they ever work on achieving any, and this is their fault. So stop criticizing those who actually work and remember the old saying of 'Failaka Ahoy', as we will say 'Istanbul Ahoy'!

—Translated by Kuwait Times

NBK CELEBRATES NATIONAL, LIBERATION DAYS WITH ZEINA ACCOUNT HOLDERS

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) rewarded its Zeina account holders with an exclusive event at KidZania on the very special occasion of Kuwait's National and Liberation Day at The Avenues.

NBK Zeina account holders enjoyed complimentary entry into KidZania by showing their NBK Zeina Debit Cards.

NBK also organized a parade at The Avenues to celebrate the National and Liberation Days. The mall witnessed several fun activities with KidZania characters and NBK music and giveaways. The event received overwhelming interaction and feedback from both children and excited shoppers.

NBK is the first and exclusive partner bank with KidZania Kuwait. NBK's branch

in KidZania provides visitors with all bank activities in the kid-centric city to teach children real life aspects of banking and financial responsibility. NBK's branch in KidZania introduces children to a unique experience in basic banking services, where they can earn, spend, deposit and withdraw 'KidZos', KidZania's official national currency, through the NBK branch and ATMs.

Zeina account provides children from birth to less than 15 years with their first bank account in order to learn about basic banking services such as saving and banking with the help of their parents. It also provides parents with the tools they need to accomplish their children's long term savings goals in a fun and rewarding manner.



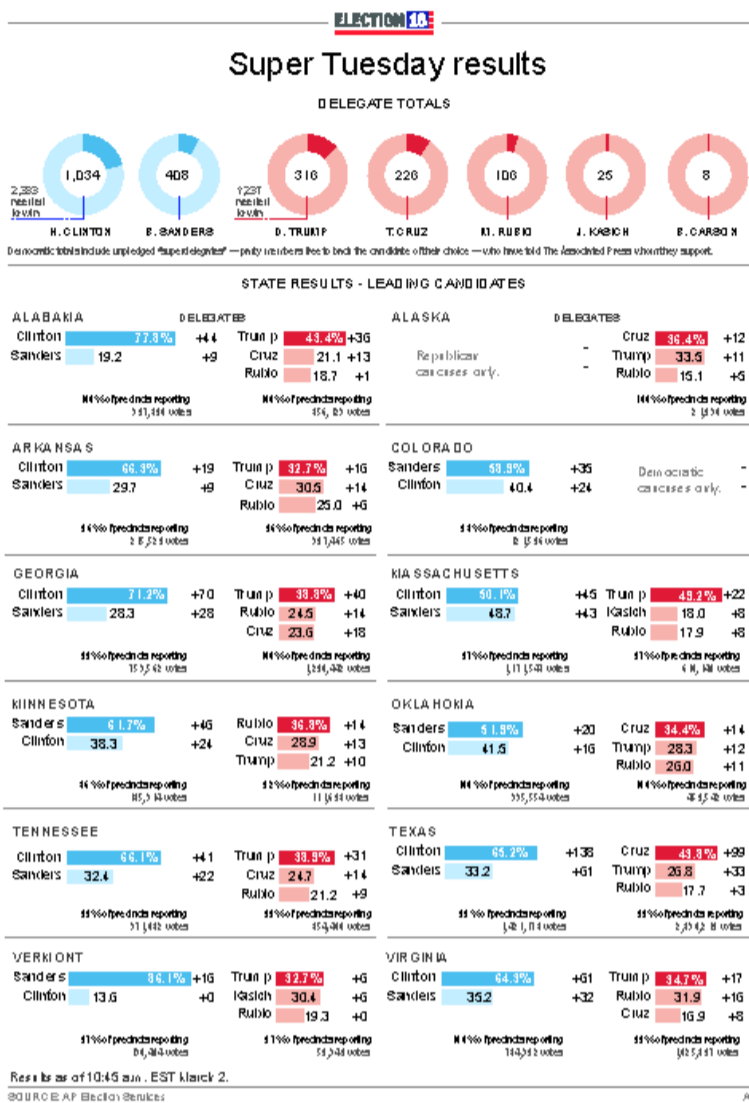


NY restaurants post salt warnings, but diners shrug

MILITANTS ATTACK INDIAN CONSULATE IN AFGHANISTAN



PALM BEACH: Republican Presidential frontrunner Donald Trump speaks to the media at his Mar-A-Lago Club on Super Tuesday. — AFP



MIAMI: Democratic presidential candidate former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaks during her Super Tuesday evening gathering at Stage One Ice Studios.

TRUMP, CLINTON SCORE BIG VICTORIES

CLINTON WINS 7 STATES, SANDERS 4 • TRUMP WINS 7 STATES, CRUZ 3, RUBIO 1

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's triumphal march toward the Republican presidential nomination left his party in disarray yesterday as Democrats coalesced around their White House frontrunner Hillary Clinton after her slew of Super Tuesday victories. Both candidates emerged the clear winners after party nominating contests in a dozen states, piling up delegates on the biggest, most pivotal day of primaries in the race to replace President Barack Obama.

Trump was victorious in seven of 11 states, weakening but not eliminating his rivals, while Clinton equaled that score with wins in seven states against Bernie Sanders, absorbing a formidable challenge from the left. But whereas Clinton appeared to solidify her support ahead of the next key round of primaries March 15, divisions within the Republicans deepened over Trump's success with a slashing campaign that has galvanized disaffected voters but opened wounds on racial, ethnic and gender fronts. With the 69-year-old billionaire powering past their favored candidates, Republican stalwarts have raised the possibility of the party splintering if Trump wins the nomination.

Break-up a 'Real Possibility'
"I think that's a very real possibility," Christine Todd Whitman, a former New Jersey governor, told National Public Radio. "There are a lot of people who just cannot see themselves supporting Trump. You have Mitch McConnell, the Senate majority leader, telling Senate candidates if this is a problem for you, go ahead and run ads against him even if he is your party's presidential nominee."
Senator Ted Cruz and Senator Marco Rubio have both pitched their cam-

paigns to Republican voters looking to stop Trump. In Tuesday's polls, Cruz won his delegate-rich home state of Texas and neighboring Oklahoma as well as Alaska, a better performance than Rubio who notched just one victory in caucuses in Minnesota. Those wins were enough to keep them both in the race for now, but did little to quiet the alarm among their establishment backers, who fear the party is headed toward an annihilating defeat in the general elections.

"Happiness for Donald Trump is a divided opposition. He's got precisely that and it's going nowhere for the time being," said Sabato's Crystal Ball, a political newsletter published by the University of Virginia. Trump's wins were widespread, from Alabama and Georgia in the Deep South, to Massachusetts in the northeast, to the vital battleground state of Virginia. In his victory speech Tuesday night, the real estate mogul and reality TV star set aside his usual boastfulness to offer an olive branch to party leaders. "I think we'll be more inclusive and more unified. I think we'll be a much bigger party," Trump said.

But Cruz used his victories to argue he is the only Republican who can beat Trump. "For the candidates who have not yet won a state, who have not racked up significant delegates, I ask you to prayerfully consider our coming together, uniting," he said. After his disappointing performance, Rubio ended the day in Florida - a clear signal that he is banking on a win in his home state, which votes on March 15, the next major date in the primary cycle. Two other Republican candidates - Ohio Governor John Kasich and retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson - came up empty-handed on Super Tuesday. Kasich also was expected to hang in until

Ohio votes March 15. Once a contender, Carson has faded into irrelevance.

"Republicans are reaping the whirlwind right now, and Democrats should seize the chance to show Americans an alternative to Mr Trump's politics of rage, and an image of themselves to be proud of, not shrink from," the liberal New York Times observed. In her victory speech, Hillary Clinton signaled she is now turning her attention to a general election face-off with Trump. "It's clear tonight that the stakes in this election have never been higher, and the rhetoric we're hearing on the other side has never been lower." Attacking Trump's pledge to "make America great again," she said, "America never stopped being great!"

Trump painted Clinton - the former first lady, senator and secretary of state - as a Washington insider who cannot address a furious electorate's desire for change. "She's been there for so long. I mean if she hasn't straightened it out by now, she's not going to straighten it out in the next four years," he said. A recent CNN/ORC poll found that both Clinton and Sanders would easily defeat Trump if the general election - set for Nov 8 - were held now.

Sanders, a self-styled democratic socialist, has vowed to press on with his well-funded grass-roots campaign that has made the growing gap between rich and poor the central issue of the Democratic contest.

Sanders notched wins in his tiny home state of Vermont, Oklahoma, Colorado and in Minnesota. But Clinton, who was unbeatable in the southern states with big African-American majorities, trounced him in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia, Texas and Massachusetts. — AFP

QATAR POPULATION HAS REACHED 2.5M

DOHA: Qatar's population has reached 2.5 million people for the first time, officials said yesterday, swollen by the huge numbers of foreign workers employed in the tiny Gulf emirate. The population now stands at 2,545,000, an official from the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics told AFP. The previous official high was 2.46 million, recorded last November. About 90 percent of those working in Qatar are not from the country originally.

The population rise has been fuelled by the huge numbers of non-nationals coming to work in Qatar in recent years, many in the gas, oil and construction sectors. Qatar is undergoing a massive labor-intensive capital investment program and is preparing to host the football World Cup in 2022. Emphasizing how many workers come from abroad, one Dhaka government official this week estimated that by 2018 one million Bangladeshis will be living in Qatar, many employed within the construction sector. The latest population high comes despite it being a time of reported job losses, because of the slump in global energy prices, forcing people to leave Qatar. Qatar's population explosion has largely occurred in the past decade. In 1986, according to World Bank and UN figures, Qatar's population stood at just 398,000. —AFP

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Third prize
• Canon Camera: Eos 70D + Canon EF-S 18-135 mm.
• Free Camera Bag.
• One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Bahrain - Kuwait.

Fourth prize
• Canon Camera: EOS 760D + Canon EF 85 mm f/1.8 USM.
• Free Camera Bag.
• One Economy class ticket Kuwait- Bahrain- Kuwait.

Fifth prize
• Canon Camera: EOS 760D + Canon EF 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6 DO IS USM.
• Free Camera Bag.
• One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Bahrain - Kuwait.

Sixth prize
• Canon Camera: PowerShot G15.
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• One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Bahrain - Kuwait.

All photos should be submitted at the Kuwait Times newspaper before 17th of March 2016.

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PHILIPPINES PROBES ATTACK ON TOP SAUDI CLERIC

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines: Philippine authorities were yesterday probing an assassination attempt against an influential Saudi preacher who was on an Islamic State hit list, after the gunman

was killed and two suspects arrested. Preacher Sheikh Ayed Al-Qarni and Saudi diplomat Sheikh Turki Assaegh were both wounded in a shooting as they left a university auditorium in the southern

port city of Zamboanga, where the cleric had given an address. Their Filipino police escorts killed the lone assailant, while two other suspects seen with the gunman were arrested as they tried to escape, police said.

"It all happened so fast. Suddenly there were gunshots," local Muslim community leader Wakil Kasim, who was at the auditorium, told reporters. The gunman "popped up from the crowd, moved in close and shot the victim" as he was boarding his car, said city police spokeswoman Chief Inspector Helen Galvez, adding that the gunman then walked to the other side of the vehicle and shot the Saudi diplomat. Qarni was shot in the right shoulder, left arm and chest while Assaegh, a religious attaché at the Saudi embassy in Manila, was wounded in his right thigh and left leg, according to a police report.

A student driver's licence and a local government ID were recovered from the man, which identified him as a 21-year-old Filipino, but police said they were not ruling out forgery. A uniform for engineering students in the Western Mindanao State University, where Qarni was speaking, was found hidden in his backpack, but university officials could not immediately confirm if the gunman

was enrolled there.

Footage from ABS-CBN television showed the remains of the gunman, who was wearing a hoodie, sprawled face down on the ground beside the victims' car. Islamic State militants who control vast swathes of Iraq and Syria had called on "lone wolves" to attack Qarni and several other Saudi clerics whom they accused of apostasy in the latest issue of Dabiq, their monthly online magazine.

'Saudi Embassy Threat'

Police declined to comment on potential links between the shootings and IS calls to attack the preacher. A special task force has been created to look into the backgrounds of the suspects and ascertain a motive for the attack, national police spokesman Chief Superintendent Wilben Mayor told AFP. The Philippine government should investigate whether IS had influenced the shooting, international security analyst Stephen Cutler told reporters in Manila. "It's possible it is Daesh-related because he was on this hit list but I don't know yet," he said, using an Arabic abbreviation for the IS group.

The shooting followed a request by the Saudi Arabian embassy in Manila last month for increased police security for

itself and the Saudi national airline due to an unspecified threat, Mayor said. He said the Filipino security services complied, but would not discuss any specific measures implemented. Tuesday's shooting also came as the army seized a rampage by an obscure armed group that pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in Butig, a poor farming town some 200 km northeast of Zamboanga.

At least 12 militants and five soldiers were killed while more than 30,000 people were displaced over several days of fighting, which ended as the army seized the gunmen's main camp over the weekend. Saudi media outlets described Qarni as a senior Islamic scholar and he has more than 12 million followers on Twitter. In his book "Awakening Islam," the French academic Stephane Lacroix included Qarni in his list of "the most famous" Saudi preachers. Zamboanga, 800 km south of Manila, is one of the largest cities in the southern Philippines, an area troubled by a decades-long separatist rebellion by the mainly Catholic nation's Muslim minority that has claimed more than 100,000 lives. The port city has a mixed Christian and Muslim population, and has been a frequent target of attacks by local Muslim militant groups. —AFP



ZAMBOANGA: This screen grab taken from video on Tuesday shows medical personnel transferring Saudi preacher Sheikh Ayed Al-Qarni into hospital in this southern Philippine city after he was wounded during an assassination attempt. —AFP

IN ISLAMIC STATE BATTLE, CAIRO STRUGGLES TO RALLY SINAI TRIBES

SISI SEES SINAI MILITANTS AS EXISTENTIAL THREAT

ARISH, Egypt: An Egyptian military effort to recruit and arm tribal fighters to take on Islamic State militants in the Sinai is failing, according to security sources, Sinai residents and tribal figures. The military launched the program with much fanfare last year and tribal leaders pledged to provide hundreds of fighters. But the number of fighters in the field is no more than 35, security sources say. The scheme has been hampered by the military's reluctance to provide weapons to local fighters and by attacks by Islamic State, which are scaring off would-be tribal troops.

The failure is a blow to President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, who has promised to crack down on militants, whom he sees as an existential threat to Egypt. Islamic State's insurgency in Sinai gives the ultra-hardline group a fourth front in the Middle East after Iraq, Syria, and pockets of Libya. In statements and videos, Sinai Province, the Sinai branch of Islamic State, has said it has executed at least 17 people so far this year. On Feb 28, the group warned on its Telegram channel, which functions as an encrypted online message board, that it had set up checkpoints around the Sinai to intercept and kill anyone who collaborates with the military.

In January, Islamic State wrote in its weekly magazine Naba', which runs news from the group's various branches, that the Sinai branch had killed 1,400 people - members of the military and police as well as collaborators and tribal fighters - in the previous 15 months. The military has disputed this figure and said only 69 military personnel were killed in that period. It would not comment on its Sinai operations.

The army had hoped its plan, launched in April last year, would gain it an edge in the massive region, which stretches from the Suez Canal east to the Gaza Strip and Israel. It wanted to team up with tribal leaders and local fighters who know the terrain. The local fighters promised to provide 300 men who could bring intelligence and help close down routes used to smuggle in weapons from neighbouring countries. Those fighters were

to be organized in what the military calls "popular committees."

But a counter-terrorism researcher who closely watches the Sinai and did not want to be named because of the threat of violence when he visits the Sinai said the strategy was floundering. "The militias are child's-play. It is a failed initiative. These guys are getting the floor wiped with them by the Islamists. They do not have the training to match them."

Digging Their Own Graves

Given the history of tensions between the Bedouins and the military, the scheme was never going to be easy to implement. The Sinai's Bedouins are seen by some in government as a fifth column, while tribesmen have long felt neglected by the central government, tribal leaders say. Some senior officials initially remained uneasy about handing over weapons to local fighters. A police captain stationed in North Sinai said tribal fighters receive no formal combat training but are advised by the military and police.

Even some tribal leaders were reluctant to have their men armed. One senior tribal member, who was once at the forefront of the military's campaign, said arming tribal fighters could cause infighting. "Help the army? Yes. But carry guns, no. We do not form militias," said the man, who is on an Islamic State hit list and has moved away from North Sinai, the epicentre of the insurgency, after militants attacked his home.

But the main reason the military has struggled to recruit more tribal fighters has been the punishment those who have joined have faced when captured by Sinai Province militants. Abdelrahman Al-Moqata'a was one of nine prisoners beheaded or shot by the group in January. On a Sinai Province video of the executions, the men all said they had fought alongside or provided intelligence to security forces. In the video, Moqata'a is seen digging his own grave. "This is the fate of those who work with the army, whether young, old, or a child," he said, standing in a sandy ditch

up to his waist. "No one work with the army. This is the advice of the brother digging his own grave." Sinai Province later circulated a list of men it wanted dead for "crimes" such as "forming militias against Muslims" and spying for the military.

New Recruits, But Not Nearly Enough

Despite the dangers, some tribal fighters remain enthusiastic about helping the army. Some 500 m outside the eastern entrance to Al-Arish, North Sinai's provincial capital, motorists are questioned at a police checkpoint. One day in January, two masked men brandishing assault rifles stood guard about 100 m up the road. They were young members of a popular committee. "We are a group of youths who decided over two months ago to do our part in protecting our people from what the militants are doing," one told Reuters.

"At first there were nine of us. We met with police and military leaders, asking to be allowed to help get rid of these militants after the city became a war zone home to murder and horror," he added in a thick Bedouin accent. His group now numbers 15, and has been asked to provide the military with local intelligence. Initially the authorities did not want to give the men guns, the man said. "A while later we went back and told them it was important they allow us to carry weapons to protect ourselves and families and they agreed, but under certain conditions."

A security source said the tribal fighters can only use the guns to help secure checkpoints or to repel an attack. They also have to tell the military who is participating in each shift or mission. Residents in Arish, Sheikh Zuweid, and surrounding villages have mixed views of the army initiative. Some said the tribal fighters had restored some normality to the province. Others complained that the fighters steal food from them or bully them. "We don't have a problem with them helping (the security forces), said one shopkeeper. "But they shouldn't bully people and act like thugs." —Reuters



RIYADH: Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud receives Prime Minister of Malaysia Mohamed Najib Abdul Razak. —AP

NAJIB VISITS SAUDI ARABIA

RIYADH: Malaysia's premier thanked King Salman for his support in a speech before meeting with the monarch yesterday during a visit to Saudi Arabia meant to deepen ties between the two major Muslim countries. Najib Razak's visit came after Malaysia's attorney general in January decided not to prosecute the prime minister, saying the \$681 deposited in his accounts were a "personal donation" from the Saudi royal family. The chief prosecutor also said most of the Saudi donation had been returned.

Najib's critics, however, accuse him of corruption and claim hundreds of millions of dollars channeled into his accounts came from the indebted 1MDB fund, which he founded in 2009. The fund is mired in \$10 billion in debt and has been selling its assets to clear its books. Najib became embroiled in the scandal after

documents were leaked last year suggesting that money deposited into his accounts may have come from entities linked to 1MDB. Najib has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing.

Speaking at an economic forum Tuesday in the Saudi city of Jeddah, Najib expressed his gratitude. "I would like to personally thank the royal family of Saudi Arabia for all their support over many decades," he said. "I am proud to say that we are like brothers," he added, referring to Saudi-Malaysia relations. Malaysian forces are taking part in joint military exercises by a 34-nation, anti-terrorism alliance of Muslim majority countries that are underway in the kingdom. The state-run Saudi Press Agency gave little details about the king's meeting with Najib, saying only they discussed bilateral relations and ways to strengthen cooperation. —AP



GAZA: Mamadou Sow (left), Head of Gaza sub-delegation in the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), rides a donkey-drawn cart loaded with almond trees distributed by the ICRC in Wadi as-Salqa village near the border of central Gaza Strip with Israel yesterday. —AP

NETANYAHU WANTS TO EXPEL ATTACKERS' RELATIVES TO GAZA

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday he wants to expel to Gaza the families of Palestinian attackers who help in assaults as he came under increasing pressure over a five-month wave of violence. Netanyahu asked the attorney general to examine the possibility of carrying out such expulsions, his office said, while rights groups immediately denounced the move. "Expelling family members of Palestinian terrorists who aided attacks to Gaza will lead to a significant decrease in terrorist attacks," a spokesman for Netanyahu said on Twitter.

The proposal could prove to be a fresh source of tension ahead of a visit by US Vice President Joe Biden next week. Israel's government said yesterday Biden was due to arrive on March 8 for a two-day visit. Talks are expected

to include defense aid, Israeli-Palestinian violence and the conflict in neighboring Syria. It was unclear if he would also hold talks in the Palestinian territories.

A wave of violence in Israel and the Palestinian territories since October has killed 180 Palestinians as well as 28 Israelis, an American, a Sudanese and an Eritrean, according to an AFP toll. Most of the Palestinians who died in the violence were killed by Israeli forces while carrying out knife, gun or car-ramming attacks, according to Israeli authorities. Others were shot dead by Israeli forces during clashes or demonstrations. The Gaza Strip, hit by three wars with Israel since 2008 and run by Islamist movement Hamas, is under an Israeli blockade that severely restricts the movement of people and goods. —AFP

ERDOGAN SAYS TURKEY 'READY' TO FIGHT TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

ABUJA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday he was ready to help combat terrorism in Nigeria, where Boko Haram fighters have killed thousands of people in a bloody campaign for a hardline Islamic state. He also signed a memorandum on trade and economic cooperation, which Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari said was "just the beginning of what we have in the pipeline". Speaking after talks with Buhari in Abuja, Erdogan commiserated with Nigerians fighting insurgents, saying he felt their pain. "As a country combating terrorism for a long time now, every reprehensible terrorist attack that takes place here in Nigeria deeply hurts our heart," Erdogan said to reporters at the presidential villa. "We are always ready to cooperate with Nigeria when it comes to combating terrorism."

Security was a recurring theme in the Turkish leader's stops in Ivory Coast and Ghana ahead of his stay in Nigeria during a tour designed to strengthen economic ties with members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). On Tuesday, Erdogan told Ghana's parliament that Turkey can "contribute tremendously to the establishment of global peace and security." He will cap off his visit to the region with a stop in Guinea. Traditionally focused on North Africa, Turkey in the past decade has paid increasing attention to the fast-growing economies of sub-Saharan Africa.

"Erdogan wants to build a case that Turkey is not just a regional power, but aspires to be a global one," David Shinn, Africa professorial lecturer at The George Washington University, told AFP. "The primary connection with Africa is commercial, especially investment," Shinn said. "Turkey can rarely compete head-to-head with China in Africa but can fill niche markets such as small construction projects, smaller manufacturing companies and even some services."

The country has more than tripled its embassies in Africa since 2009 while flag carrier

Turkish Airlines has dozens of destinations on the continent. "Turkey is not currently a major trading partner for either Nigeria or Ghana, nor is Turkey one of the main foreign investors," Cobus de Hart, economist at NKC African Economics in South Africa, told AFP. "That said, any bilateral agreements that would facilitate increased investment in West Africa would certainly be welcome," he said. "Nigeria especially would do well to utilise opportunities such as these, with the aim of diversifying the economy away from its dependence on oil."

Nigeria, Africa's number one oil producer, has been hit hard by the slump in oil prices, which has squeezed government revenue and severely weakened the naira currency. Boko Haram still remains a threat in the country's northeast, where the group has reverted to attacking "soft" civilian targets such as markets, bus stations, and mosques using suicide bombers. The insurgency has left at least 17,000 people dead since it began in 2009 but over the last year Nigerian forces have recaptured territory lost to the rebels. —AFP



ABUJA: Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (left) is welcomed by Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari during an official visit at the Presidential Palace yesterday. —AP



PHILADELPHIA: Mike Abdullah poses for a photograph on Feb 24, 2016. —AP

A CLASS IN GUNSHOT FIRST AID FOR HIGH-CRIME US NEIGHBORHOODS

PHILADELPHIA: Mike Abdullah watched as a young woman lay shot in the street in a corner of north Philadelphia known as the Badlands, spitting up the blood that gradually choked her to death. The fatal shooting was one of many he says he has seen in the city over the years and felt helpless to stop. Recently, Abdullah - who also lost a younger brother and four nephews to gun violence - joined more than 50 of his neighbors at an elementary school to learn how to help the next victim in time.

"He did what most young men do, tried to run to the hospital," Abdullah, 61, said of his brother. "He made it right up to the door and died because there was nobody to do these procedures on him." Temple University Hospital is enlisting neighborhood residents - most of them poor, black and living in violent areas - in the program, called "Fighting Chance." The doctors and nurses conducting the training have plenty of experience, as the hospital treats at least 400 shooting victims a year.

The moments after a shooting are critical. A gunshot victim hit in the upper arm or thigh can bleed out in two minutes. Borrowing from battlefield tactics, the trainers teach neighborhood residents how to tighten a tourniquet around someone's arm, drag them to safety, apply pressure to major arteries to stop bleeding, and position victims in a vehicle before rushing them to a hospital.

The program is part of a national campaign by the US Department of Homeland Security called "Stop the Bleed," which recognizes that no matter how fast emergency responders get to a scene, bystanders will be there first. But most of

the efforts elsewhere are aimed at teaching the public how to respond to mass shootings or mass accidents like a plane or train crash.

Fighting Chance is run by volunteer hospital staff. Organizers are hoping to find funding to help pay for gunshot-treatment kits to distribute to people who have completed the program and to leave in places that could be adjacent to gun violence, from recreation centers to late-night take-out restaurants. At the recent training, grandmothers, uncles, young women and boys as young as 10 years old paid close attention as hospital volunteers demonstrated techniques before practicing on one another. Absent were young black men - the most likely group to be shot and killed.

Homicide is the leading cause of death for black males between 18 and 34 years old in the US and in Philadelphia. Police recorded more than 1,240 shootings across the city last year, including 690 involving young black men. Of those, 236 were fatal, and 51 percent of those killed were young black men.

Scott Charles, Trauma Outreach Coordinator at Temple University Hospital and one of the program's organizers, suggested part of the challenge could be a mutual wariness between the young men and some in the community who fear them. "The guys who are sometimes engaged in the kinds of activities that put them in harm's way are sometimes reluctant to interact with folks that they see as being people who would tell on them," Charles said. "We have to be creative in how we get to them, because they need to be here." —AP

9

How GOP ELITE TURNED BLIND EYE TO RISE AND RISE OF TRUMP TYCOON SOURCE OF PUZZLEMENT FOR RICH REPUBLICANS

WASHINGTON: One evening last June, some of the Republican Party's wealthiest donors gathered for a cocktail party at an exclusive resort in Deer Valley, Utah, during a three-day retreat hosted by former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney. They had just heard from six presidential hopefuls. Tom Duncan, the CEO of tool-maker Positec Tool Corp, chatted with a few attendees about a fantasy ticket to secure the White House in Nov 2016: Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, with Senator Marco Rubio of Florida as his running mate.

Duncan, for his part, liked Ohio Governor John Kasich, but also had his eye on former Hewlett-Packard CEO Carly Fiorina. No one mentioned Donald Trump, even though he had been signaling for months that he planned to run. Four days later, the New York property magnate declared his candidacy and within weeks had shot to the top of the polls, eclipsing all of his Republican rivals.

The story of Trump's rise has played out day after day on television and on social media, but the conversations behind closed doors among members of the Republican elite during this period have been less well documented. Many of the conversations had one thing in common: A stubborn refusal to take Trump seriously, even as fans packed sports stadiums to see him in the summer months, as he dominated media coverage of the election, and as polls showed him winning wide support among young and old, men and women.

Scenes like the one at Deer Valley would be repeated in rarified enclaves of the party elite around the country again and again in the coming months. Many in the Republican establishment believed he would eventually self-destruct or that Americans would lose patience with his bombast, his free-wheeling insults and lack of firm policies to back up his promises to "Make America Great Again".

They were wrong. Trump won a majority of the states holding nominating contests on Super Tuesday, accelerating his march to the Republican nomination. Republican donors, strategists and campaign operatives interviewed by Reuters admitted they had misjudged the mood of voters who have thrown their support behind Trump after he promised to build a wall on the Mexican border, temporarily ban Muslims from entering the United States and block

Syrian refugees because they might be militants. Trump's spokeswoman, Hope Hicks, declined to comment for this story.

Isolated Insiders

Trump's rise seemed to take place entirely outside the structures of the normal nomination process within the Republican party. For example, many attending the Conservative Political Action Conference, a gathering of grassroots activists, in Feb 2015, were excited by presidential hopefuls Wisconsin governor Walker and Texas Senator Ted Cruz. The annual convention is a must-stop for any Republican White House contender. In his speech, Trump tried out a now

entering it. Paul dropped out after the first nominating contest in February. Cruz has won just three of more than a dozen contests so far.

Early in his run, Trump was a source of puzzlement for rich Republicans, such as those who gathered one Sunday in early August in the Hamptons, New York's gilded summer retreat destination, to discuss the 2016 race. They met for lunch at a billionaire hedge fund manager's estate near a body of water nicknamed "Goldman pond" for the concentration of financiers' houses around it.

Among the guests were former defense department officials, the chief

would force other candidates to go negative. They hoped he wouldn't hijack the first Republican presidential debate, then less than a week away. But they decided, however it had begun, Trump's reign atop the polls wouldn't last. "I think it's literally just a matter of time before his NASCAR careens into the wall - and hopefully not into the other drivers," the source said in an interview on Aug 6. Trump has not crashed. And on Monday, the CEO of NASCAR, Brian France, endorsed him.

Missed Warning Signs

Right to Rise, the outside spending group backing Bush, built up a massive war chest of more than \$100 million to attack opponents who could thwart his bid for the nomination. Trump was not identified as a potential threat, not in the summer, nor in the fall of 2015, even as he eclipsed Bush, according to multiple interviews during that period with a member of the group's leadership team. "I don't think he's hurting us," the official, who did not want to be identified, said in an interview last fall. Trump would be a footnote in the race by January or Feb 2016, he predicted.

Bush bowed out on Feb 21 after months of struggles were capped by a poor showing in the South Carolina primary. Duncan, the Positec CEO, said conversations he had with representatives from three campaigns as recently as November and December barely touched on Trump. "There was so much time left," he said. "I honestly thought that he would implode." Now there is little time left, and the party's establishment can only look back at early warning signs they missed.

One came in Jan 2015 at the Iowa Freedom Summit, a Republican "cattle call" for White House hopefuls that marked the unofficial start of the 2016 presidential race. Attendance spiked after organizers added Trump to the agenda. "When we announced Donald Trump, the event took on a life of its own," said David Bossie, the president of the conservative advocacy group Citizens United and the conference's organizer. "I don't believe it's possible, if you were not in a coma, for anyone in the establishment, or the media, or on planet Earth, to have missed Donald Trump's ascendancy to be the leading Republican for the nomination." —Reuters



LOUISVILLE, Kentucky: Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump holds up a sign he borrowed from a spectator during a rally on Tuesday. —AP

familiar pledge: Build a giant southern wall to stop illegal immigrants, a vow that would later ignite his insurgent campaign and propel him well ahead of the main pack of Republican presidential hopefuls. "His speech was well-received, but he didn't do that well in the straw poll," said Matt Schlapp, the chairman of the American Conservative Union, which organizes CPAC each year. Kentucky Senator Rand Paul won the poll.

CPAC's attendees were mostly conservative political activists already engaged in the electoral process. The fans who would drive Trump's success were not. The candidates favored at CPAC have languished. Walker left the race just two months after officially

executive of a big real estate firm, a prominent private equity partner and conservative academics, according to one of the guests, who spoke on condition of anonymity. The source, like many other guests, backed former Florida Governor Jeb Bush. "A variety of subjects were discussed, but chief among them, I would say, was the concern and consternation over the candidacy of Donald Trump," the source said. At the time, Trump's rating in national polls was twice his closet rival's, according to Reuters/Ipsos data.

The attendees discussed Trump's rise and observed he had struck a chord with many Americans, the source said. They fretted over whether his presence

NY RESTAURANTS POST SALT WARNINGS, DINERS SHRUG

NEW YORK: As warning labels go, the small salt shaker emblems that began showing up on some New York City restaurant menus recently are fairly unobtrusive, but each is supposed to carry a powerful message. If the black and white logo appears next to a dish, it means it contains more salt, by itself, than doctors recommend that a person ingest in an entire day. Getting diners to pay attention to the logos, though, is another matter.

"I haven't had health problems, other than I'm a little overweight, so I feel I should eat what I want until I have a problem," said Madi Boggs, a former resident of New York who now lives in Connecticut, as she tucked into a plate of

they ordered. "For someone that's young, it really doesn't matter, because they're still healthy," said Maite Acosta, a 20-year-old nurse from Birmingham, Alabama, as she dined at an Applebee's just off Times Square. The hostess at the restaurant, Ashley Hurtado, said she thought the labeling was "a good idea," but also said it wouldn't change the way she ate. "I'll eat anything, whatever I want. That's just how I am," she said.

New York City's regulation applies to restaurants and fast-food places with more than 15 outlets nationwide. It requires eateries to post the salt shaker emblem next to menu items that contain more than the daily recommended limit of 2,300 milligrams of salt, or about the amount found in a teaspoon. Health experts say too much salt intake over time can lead to high blood pressure and other problems.

The National Restaurant Association went to court to challenge fines of up to \$600 for non-compliance that were to kick in Tuesday. On Monday, an appellate judge issued a temporary stay of enforcement while the appeal is underway. New York has, for years now, been trying to attack chronic health problems like obesity, diabetes and hypertension by warning consumers about the hidden dangers in the food they eat.

The city banned the use of artery-damaging artificial trans fats in restaurant food. It tried, but failed, to impose a limit on the size of cups used to serve sugary beverages at food service establishments. Eight years ago, it began requiring chain restaurants to post calorie information on their menus, reasoning that if people knew how caloric some dishes and beverages were, they might stay away. That initiative was quickly replicated in several other big cities, but it may not have achieved its main goal, which is to change the way people eat.

Researchers at the New York University School of Medicine who reviewed 31 studies on calorie labeling concluded in a Journal of Community Health article published in December 2014 that its effect on diners was "marginal". "While there are some positive results," they wrote, "overall these studies show that calorie labels do not have the desired effect in reducing total calories ordered or consumed." —AP



The graphic that warns New York City consumers of high salt content. —AP

crispy chicken fingers at a TGI Friday's in Manhattan. The city began requiring chain restaurants to post the warnings in December. Hundreds have voluntarily complied, even as the industry has continued to delay enforcement of the rules through a court challenge.

But customers interviewed Tuesday at several city restaurants said the labels were unlikely to change what

POLICE OFFICER, SUSPECT DEAD AFTER TEXAS PARK SHOOTOUT

EULESS, Texas: A Texas police officer who died after a gunfight had moved from New York City to the Dallas area because he wanted to be somewhere safer, his mother says. Officer David Hofer, 29, died Tuesday during surgery following a gunfight with an armed suspect in a park near a Dallas-area school. A 2008 graduate of New York University, Hofer served in the New York Police Department for five years before coming to Euless in 2014, Police Chief Mike Brown said.

The New York Post reported Hofer, the son of European immigrants, formerly worked in the 9th Precinct on Manhattan's Lower East Side. "He was wonderful child, a wonderful police officer," his mother, Sofija

Hofer, told the newspaper. "He was working this very difficult precinct, so he had a lot of traumatic experiences... He decided to go to a safer place."

Brown said Hofer was one of the officers who responded to a report of shots fired around 3 pm Tuesday near J A Carr Park, which is in a residential area near an elementary school. "Upon arrival, officers encountered a suspect with an unknown weapon," Brown said. "The suspect immediately fired upon officers, striking one of them. Officers returned fire, striking the suspect."

The suspect, who was not immediately identified, died of multiple gunshot wounds, the chief said. Two nearby schools were

placed on lockdown until the situation was resolved. Hofer's fiancée was out of town on Tuesday and needed to be called home and given the news, the Post reported. Sofija Hofer said her son wanted to write a book about his experience with the NYPD. "I thought he might be a scientist, like his father, but he always wanted to be a policeman, ever since he was a little boy," she said.

David Hofer is the second officer to die in the line of duty in Euless, a suburb of more than 53,000 residents west of Dallas and east of Fort Worth. The other officer was Michael Williamson, who was killed by a drunken driver in 1982, according to the city website. —AP

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EU UNVEILS HUGE MIGRANT AID PLAN FOR GREECE

BRUSSELS: The EU yesterday unveiled a 700-million-euro emergency aid plan for Greece and other states hit by the migrant crisis, in what would be the first time humanitarian cash has been used within Europe instead of outside the bloc. The United Nations has warned of a looming humanitarian crisis as thousands of refugees are stuck in wintry misery at the Greece-Macedonia border after a domino effect of Balkan border closures. Greece is the main entry point for the 1.13 million migrants who have landed since the start of 2015 in the European Union, which has been divided and weakened by the biggest wave of refugees since World War II.

"No time can be lost in deploying all means possible to prevent humanitarian suffering within our own borders," EU Humanitarian Aid Commissioner Christos Stylianides said as he announced the aid plan. The funds would be allocated over three years, with 300 million euros (\$325 million) in 2016, and 200 million euros in each of the following years under the plan, which must be approved by member states and the European Parliament. The EU would also work directly with the UN and other aid agencies in Europe, in another first. Greece—which insists it will not become "Europe's Lebanon" by hosting all of the migrants coming to the continent—has asked for around 480 million euros (\$520 million) to help shelter 100,000 refugees.

Macedonia border misery

The crisis is particularly acute at the Greek border crossing of Idomeni where 10,000 are camping in the open after Balkan states including Macedonia imposed tight controls. Macedonia yesterday allowed some 170 Syrian and Iraqi refugees to cross, the first group since Monday when Macedonian police tear-gassed migrants, including children, after some tried



Migrants seen in a tent in the makeshift camp at the Greek-Macedonian border near the Greek village of Idomeni yesterday, where thousands of people are stranded. — AFP

to ram their way through the fence. Bleak scenes saw the refugees stranded in mud-soaked fields and fighting over food distributed from the back of a van, as aid agencies warned of a lack of supplies and the threat of illness. "We have been waiting for six days," said Farah, a 32-year-old Syrian woman. "The food is not enough, everyone is lying to us and we are desperate." The effects of the migrant crisis continue to be felt across the EU, stirring discord between mem-

ber states and rising populism. In the French port of Calais, demolition workers set about razing makeshift shelters in the "Jungle" migrant camp for a third day under close watch of dozens of police officers equipped with water cannon. The camp has become a magnet for people hoping to reach Britain and many have refused to leave, although there has been no repeat of the violent clashes that erupted on Monday. "Unfortunately, we cannot fight the police," said

Nureen, a Sudanese migrant. "There is nothing for us to do. We will just be left in the cold winter."

'Weaponising' migrants

NATO's top General Philip Breedlove meanwhile accused Russia and Syria of "weaponising" the massive influx of people fleeing the Syrian conflict, in a bid to destabilize the West. The United Nations said more than 131,000 migrants have crossed the Mediterranean to reach Europe so far this year, more than the total number for the first five months of 2015. Last year a total of one million entered Europe. "Europe is on the cusp of a largely self-induced humanitarian crisis," UN Refugee agency (UNHCR) spokesman Adrian Edwards said on Tuesday. The EU plan for an internal aid mechanism marks a departure for the 28-nation EU, which normally only gives aid to countries outside the bloc, notably in the Middle East and Africa. The EU has an annual aid budget of 1.2 billion euros for external countries.

But the apparent show of European solidarity masks growing criticism of countries that have capped the number of migrants they are willing to let in. European leaders are divided ahead of two summits this month on the migration crisis, with German Chancellor Angela Merkel saying that after bailing out debt-hit Greece the country cannot now be allowed to plunge into "chaos". The crisis has also sparked warnings that the EU's Schengen passport-free zone could melt down as more and more states bring back border controls. In a bid to ease the divisions, EU President Donald Tusk is currently touring the Balkan states and Turkey, the main departure point for refugees. Ahead of a crucial EU-Turkey summit on March 7, Tusk said he will press for "a more intensive engagement" from Ankara on a deal signed with the EU in November to limit the flow of refugees. — AFP

ANTI-MIGRANT 'SOLDIERS OF ODIN' EXPAND TO NORDICS AND BALTICS

VIGILANTE GROUP EMERGED FIRST IN FINLAND

TALLINN: The Soldiers of Odin, self-proclaimed patriots who have patrolled the streets of some cities in Finland saying they want to protect locals from immigrants, have begun appearing in other Nordic and Baltic countries, worrying authorities. Named after the king of the gods in Norse mythology, the group's members say they want to be the eyes and ears for the police who they say are struggling to fulfill their duties. With some 250,000 asylum seekers moving into the region as a whole over the last year, the group has triggered fears of a rise in vigilantism.

The Soldiers are now expanding outside Finland, wearing similar black jackets adorned on the back with a Viking, his mouth covered with the relevant country's national flag, and the name of the group written in English. In Estonia, the group held their first meeting in mid-February, with local media reporting that 60 people attended. "We don't want refugees to come here," Indrek Olm, who said he was one of the leaders of the group in Estonia, told Reuters

later in the month. "We will start going on patrol to make sure they don't do something illegal."

The Baltic country of 1.3 million has almost no asylum seekers or refugees. But the authorities nonetheless do not like the Soldiers of Odin. "Self-proclaimed patrol gangs do not increase the Estonian people's sense of security in any way, rather the opposite," Prime Minister Taavi Roivas said on Twitter. In Norway, police have expressed concern about how the arrival of some 31,000 asylum seekers in the country of 5.2 million last year will affect far-right groups. "We consider the threat from right-wing milieus to be increasing. The asylum issue is fuelling right-wing activity, radicalization and recruitment," said the Police Security Service in its latest threat assessment last month.

The Soldiers of Odin held their first patrol in Norway on Feb 13 in Toensberg, a town of some 42,000 about 100 km to the south of Oslo. "Our main goal is to prevent violence, the sale of drugs and not least sexual assaults," Ronny Alte,

then spokesman for the Soldiers of Odin in Norway, told Reuters. Alte has since quit the group over differences about the organization's stance. "And if you look at these problems ... it is unfortunately the case that immigrants, and not least illegal immigrants, are over-represented in these cases," he said.

Other patrols have taken took place in several cities, while others were stopped by police. In the city of Kristiansand in the south, the Soldiers of Odin were told by police they could only distribute free buns and coffee. The Soldiers of Odin do attract support in some quarters. "Every citizen who wants to contribute towards reducing criminality and insecurity should be applauded," Jan Arild Ellingsen, a lawmaker from the populist Progress Party, a member of Norway's ruling coalition, told broadcaster NRK. But his statement was condemned by Norway's prime minister. "The Soldiers of Odin have no place in the work to keep our streets safe. Dangerous values," Erna Solberg said on Twitter. — Reuters



MOSCOW: A woman, identified as 38-year-old Gylchekhra Bobokulova, holds the severed head of a child near a metro station in northwest Moscow. — AFP

KILLER NANNY IN COURT

UZBEK WOMAN ARRESTED AFTER BRANDISHING CHILD'S HEAD

MOSCOW: A woman suspected of beheading a child in her care before brandishing the severed head outside a Moscow metro station said yesterday Allah had ordered her to commit the crime. Police on Monday wrestled to the ground Gulchekhra Bobokulova, a 38-year-old divorced mother of three from the Muslim-majority ex-Soviet state of Uzbekistan, after she wandered around a Moscow street holding the infant's severed head in the air and shouting Islamist slogans. Eyewitnesses said at the time they believed she was carrying out a terrorist act, but since her detention, Russian investigators have raised the possibility she might be suffering from mental illness.

Investigators said she had been working as a nanny for a Moscow family and that she had murdered and beheaded one of the children in her care before setting fire to the family flat and fleeing. State television channels did not report the incident, a move that drew accusations of censorship from some opposition activists but which the Kremlin endorsed, saying it would have been wrong to broadcast such "horrific images".

Bobokulova told reporters on her way into the courtroom on Wednesday that Allah had ordered her to do what she did but that she had repented and agreed with her arrest. Sat in the metal cage reserved for defendants in Russian courts, Bobokulova waved and said: "I am Allah's messenger."

Hello everyone." Her head was uncovered and she appeared relaxed, occasion-

ally yawning, in contrast to Monday when she had been dressed in black and wearing a hijab.

Militant Islamist threat

Government officials have issued frequent warnings about the danger that Islamic State militants pose to Russia, especially in the light of Russia's military intervention in Syria in support of President Bashar Al-Assad. Investigators have opened a criminal case against Bobokulova, saying they formally suspect her of murder. They have not mentioned suspecting her of any terrorism-related offence. The court agreed to detain her for two months while the investigation continued after hearing that she presented an "exceptional risk to public safety".

Investigators have said she will undergo psychiatric testing. An investigator said that to date no one else had been identified who was involved in the crime. The judge spoke of possible accomplices still being at large and hiding from the police, without giving details. Some rights activists have warned of a possible backlash in Russia against migrant workers from Central Asian countries such as Uzbekistan who have in the past been targeted for beatings by far-right groups. A Communist Party website campaigning for tighter migration rules displayed a picture yesterday of a black-clad woman wearing a burka holding a severed head inside a red circle with a line through it to indicate such individuals should be banned. — Reuters

MALAWI MOB BURNS 7 TO DEATH OVER WITCHCRAFT

BLANTYRE: A mob in southern Malawi burned seven men to death for allegedly possessing human bones for use in witchcraft, police said yesterday. The seven were "found in possession of human bones and the mob took it upon themselves to burn them with petrol," Kirdy Kaunga, head of the Nsanje district police said. A traditional chief said local suspicions were aroused as a result of the movements and telephone conversations of one of the seven, who was found to have a bag containing the bones. "He was chased and arrested," chief Tengani, who only uses one name said.

"The man is said to have confirmed that his bag contained human bones and that's when the mob began rounding up the seven and burned them, one by one." Images from the scene showed the men being burned on a patch of grass surrounded by locals, with some children looking on. Police arrived after the incident, which took place on Tuesday in Nsanje, the southernmost district of Malawi. So far, there have been no

arrests. James Kadazera, police spokesman for the southern region, said experts would conduct a postmortem on the bones in the bag "to establish whether they are albino humans or not".

Albinos, who have white skin and yellow hair as a result of a genetic disorder, are regularly killed for their body parts, which are used in witchcraft rituals in several in African countries including Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania. "We also want find out who actually torched these people," Kadazera added, saying police condemned "mob justice" where members of the public took the law into their own hands.

Identification of the victims was proving difficult due to their severe injuries, he said. At least six albinos have been killed in Malawi since a surge in attacks which began in December 2014, although UN agencies put the figure at nine. Last summer, Malawi launched an investigation into the root cause of the albino murders, in a move backed by the United Nations Children's Fund. — AFP



CALAIS: Migrants stand in front of a burning dwelling in a makeshift migrants camp near Calais, France. The source of the fire is not known. French authorities have begun dismantling part of the sprawling camp locally referred to as "the jungle" where thousands are hanging out, hoping to make their way to a better life in Britain. — AP

BURNT SHELTERS AND PROTESTS; JUNGLE DEMOLITION RESUMES

CALAIS: The stench of burning plastic hung over the "Jungle" migrant camp yesterday as dozens of riot police moved in for a third day to demolish the shantytown in northern France. Charred husks of shacks and smouldering logs marked the spots where half a dozen shelters were burned down overnight in the camp on the outskirts of the port city of Calais. The blackened shells sat alongside the now-empty stretch of land that has already been cleared in the southern half of the camp.

It was not clear how the fires started—whether they were acts of protest by evicted migrants, burned down by police as some activists claimed, or simply accidents caused by flying sparks from other campfires spread by the freezing winter wind. Police, who arrived in about 30 vehicles, set up lines to push back activists, charity workers and the press, but were clearly under orders to go easy on the refugees in the glare of the world's media. "What do we do with that one?" called one policeman, pointing at a migrant who was walking into the no-go zone. "Leave him—only push back the whites," came the reply from a colleague.

As clear-up teams, town hall employees and police fanned out across the demolition zone hoping people would leave voluntarily, a small group of activists and migrants clambered on top of one of the shelters in the hope of frustrating the destruction of at least one of the makeshift homes.

"The refugees have asked us to help out of solidarity," said Rowan McAllan, a British woman who described herself as an "independent volunteer". "These people have lost everything and come halfway across the world. They've managed to scrape together a very humble little abode in these conditions and now that's being taken from them," she said.

'Fear and uncertainty'

Police were heard shouting at still-sleeping migrants in their shacks that it was time to go. A Sudanese migrant emerged bleary-eyed from his makeshift home, which for the past few months has provided shelter from the miserable northern French winter. The basics of a home could be seen inside—a mattress, hand-made table, even a salvaged leather armchair. The

evicted migrants have been offered accommodation in one of around 100 centers across France, or in heated containers alongside the Jungle. But many fear this will end their dream of smuggling themselves across the Channel to claim asylum in Britain, where many have family or community ties, or believe there are better opportunities for finding work or education.

Thousands have been living in the Jungle hoping to pay their way on to lorries heading for Britain, but French authorities started to demolish the southern half of the camp on Monday, saying they were acting on humanitarian grounds due to the grim conditions. Charities said several migrants from the demolition zone had been seen wandering out of the camp overnight. "Who knows where they are going. It's impossible to know the level of fear and uncertainty they are experiencing at this point," said Tom Radcliffe of Help Refugees. The migrants may have been heading for some of the other camps along the northern French coast, such as those at Dunkirk or Tetenghem where conditions are far worse even than those in the Jungle. — AFP

CHANGE IN COMMAND OF US-NATO FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN

KABUL: US Army General John W "Mick" Nicholson took command yesterday of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan, inheriting America's longest war and a vicious Taliban-led insurgency. Nicholson, 58, took over from US Army General John F Campbell, who oversaw the end of the international combat mission in 2014 and a subsequent escalation in the Taliban's war against Kabul. In a ceremony at the headquarters of the US-NATO Resolute Support mission in Kabul, Nicholson thanked NATO representatives for standing by the US after the September 11, 2001 attacks on "the homeland."

To the "enemy," he said: "I know you. You have brought only hardship and suffering to the Afghan people." Nicholson served in Afghanistan three times between 2006 and 2012. Most recently he was commander of NATO's Allied Land Command in Izmir, Turkey. He takes command of around 13,000 international troops, including 9,800 Americans, in Afghanistan. The RS mandate is focused on training and assisting Afghan forces as they take on the insurgency largely on their own.

Around 3,000 of the US troops are engaged in counter-terrorism operations against the Taliban, Al-Qaeda and -following a recent extension of their man-

date by President Barack Obama - the Islamic State group, which has a nascent presence in some volatile regions of Afghanistan. He takes control of the Afghan theater as the Taliban are extending their reach to previously peaceful areas, notably the northern provinces bordering the Central Asian states, and escalating the war in their southern heartland provinces. In recent months, the insurgents have threatened most districts of Helmand, where much of the poppy crop that produces the world's heroin supply is grown.

Intra-Taliban fighting in Helmand has been taking place over control of the lucrative smuggling routes for men, arms, drugs and minerals, officials have said. At yesterday's ceremony, Nicholson told assembled guests - who included Pakistan's army chief Gen Raheel Sharif - that he traveled to Helmand earlier this week. "I wanted to meet our leaders, look them in the eye, shake their hands and assure them of our commitment to this partnership and the importance of what they are doing," he said, referring to Afghan leaders.

A four-star general, Nicholson returns to Afghanistan as the government of President Ashraf Ghani hopes to kickstart a peace process aimed at bringing the Taliban leadership into a dialogue

with the goal of ending the war. The endgame is not likely for many months or even years, though Kabul has said it expects its representatives to have face-to-face talks with Taliban figures in the coming weeks. In the meantime, violence has spiked as the insurgents seek to prove their superiority on the battlefield ahead of any peace talks.

Thanks to a greater number of men, alliances with other insurgent groups such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and a determined new leader, Mullah Akhtar Mansoor, the insurgency has managed to give the impression of greater strength against the Afghan government forces. Their capture of the northern city of Kunduz in September - which militants held for three days and fought over for more than two weeks - spooked many Afghans. Their faith in their government's ability to end the war was already shaky before the temporary fall of Kunduz, the Taliban's first seizure of a major urban center since they were forced from power by the US invasion of 2001.

The United Nations mission in Kabul reported last month that 3,545 civilians were killed in 2015 as a result of the war, with another 7,457 wounded. The figures mark a 4-percent drop in civilian deaths, but a 9-percent rise in civilian injuries,

compared to 2014. Campbell's departure follows his successful lobbying last year to maintain troop numbers at current levels through most of 2016. His final year in the role was clouded by the Oct 3 American air attack on a hospital run by

the international charity Doctors Without Borders in Kunduz, which Campbell said was a mistake. The sustained attack left 41 civilians dead and raised questions about his command. He is set to retire. —AP



KABUL: US General John Nicholson, incoming commander of Resolute Support forces and United States forces in Afghanistan, salutes during a change of command ceremony at Resolute Support headquarters in Kabul yesterday. —AFP



DHARMSALA: Exile Tibetans march on foot during a candlelit vigil in solidarity with two Tibetans, who exiles claim have immolated themselves demanding freedom for Tibet, in Dharmsala, India, yesterday. —AP

TWO TIBETANS SET THEMSELVES ABLAZE

BEIJING: Two Tibetans—a monk in China and a teenager in India—set themselves on fire on the same day to protest Beijing's ironclad control of the Himalayan region, a rights group and reports said yesterday. Kalsang Wangdu self-immolated in front of his monastery in a Tibetan area of Sichuan province on Monday, reported Radio Free Asia (RFA), which is funded by the US government. London-based campaign group Free Tibet confirmed his death. The monk's action was the first such protest in China this year, and brought the total number in the country to 144, RFA said.

As he burned, "he called out for Tibet's complete independence," it quoted an anonymous source in the area as saying. Police in Xinlong county, where the incident took place, could not be reached for comment yesterday, and a woman at its religious affairs bureau said only that her department was "not very clear" on the incident. Beijing says its troops "peacefully liberated" Tibet in 1951 and insists it has since brought economic development to a previously backward region where serfs were exploited.

But many Tibetans accuse the central government of religious repression and eroding their culture, and its natural resources are increasingly being exploited in ways that benefit China's ethnic majority

Han. Tibetan monks within China have reported a campaign of government intimidation targeting the family and friends of those who set themselves on fire. Also on Monday, 16-year-old Dorje Tsering set himself on fire in the northern Indian city of Dehradun, RFA and Free Tibet said. He survived with burns to 95 percent of his body and was hospitalized in Delhi. "I have had a strong determination to do something for Tibet since my childhood," a video showed him saying in his hospital bed, according to a translation by Free Tibet.

"I thought that there was nothing else I could do other than self-immolation, because if there is self-immolation, people get shocked, thinking that he set himself on fire for his country," he went on, speaking through an oxygen mask and with his face swollen. "It seems the oil put on my body was not enough for it to burn completely," he added. Free Tibet cited his father as saying that it was a heart-breaking incident but he was proud of his son. The teenager is the eighth Tibetan to mount such a protest outside China, the group added. Its director Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren said the boy's actions should "shame the political leaders who put more value on friendship with China than justice for Tibet." "They should all watch this, and imagine if it was their child," she added. —AFP

CHINA BLOCKED ACCESS TO DISPUTED SOUTH CHINA SEA ATOLL: PHILIPPINES

TENSION RISING OVER RECLAMATIONS, PATROLS, MILITARY BUILD-UP

MANILA: China sent several ships to a disputed atoll in the South China Sea, preventing Filipino fishermen from accessing traditional fishing grounds and raising tensions in the volatile region, Philippine officials said yesterday. China had sent as many as seven ships to Quirino Atoll, also known as Jackson Atoll, in recent weeks, said Eugenio Bito-onon Jr, the mayor of nearby Pagasa Island in the Spratly Islands.

The Spratlys are the most contested archipelago in the South China Sea, a resource-rich region and critical shipping lane linking North Asia to Europe, South Asia and the Middle East. "This is very alarming, Quirino is on our path when we travel from Palawan to Pagasa. It is halfway and we normally stop there to rest," Bito-onon Jr said. "I feel something different. The Chinese are trying to choke us by putting an imaginary checkpoint there. It is a clear violation of our right to travel, impeding freedom of navigation," he said.

In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said China's Ministry of Transport had sent vessels to tow a grounded foreign ship and they had since left the surrounding waters. "To guarantee safety of navigation and of work conditions, China urged fishing vessels near the site to leave," Hong said, adding that China had indisputable sov-

eignty over the atoll. The Philippines Foreign Ministry said Chinese coast guard vessels had been seen at the atoll two weeks ago but were not in the area yesterday. "The Department is monitoring reports on the situation on the ground and reiterates its call for China to exercise self-restraint from the conduct of activities that could complicate or escalate disputes in the South China Sea and affect peace and stability in the region," the ministry said in a statement.

Tensions on the rise

Earlier, the Philippine military said it was looking into the situation around Jackson Atoll, where a Chinese warship allegedly fired warning shots at Filipino fishermen in 2011. "We know there are Chinese ships moving around the Spratly area," spokesman Brigadier-General Restituto Padilla told Reuters. "There are also ships around Second Thomas Shoal, so we want to make sure if the presence is permanent." Second Thomas Shoal is where the Philippine navy has been occupying and reinforcing a rusting ship that it ran aground in 1999 to bolster its claims to the disputed reef.

A military source from Palawan said a surveillance plane had seen four to five ships in the vicinity of Jackson Atoll last week. "There

are no indications China will build structures or develop it into an island," said the source, who was not authorized to speak to the media about the South China Sea. The Philippines Star newspaper, which earlier reported the story, quoted an unidentified fisherman as saying Chinese boats chased them away when they tried to enter the area last week. Along with China and the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam also have claims on the waters, through which about \$5 trillion in trade is shipped every year.

Tensions in the region have been building recently, with the United States and others protesting against Beijing's land reclamations, along with the recent deployment of surface-to-air missiles and fighter jets in the Paracel Islands. US Defense Secretary Ash Carter warned China on Tuesday against what he called "aggressive" actions in the region, saying there would be "specific consequences" to militarization of the South China Sea. In response, Hong urged Washington yesterday to "stop exaggerating and sensationalizing" the issue. For its part, Beijing has been angered by "freedom of navigation" air and sea patrols the United States has conducted near the islands it claims in the South China Sea and says it needs military facilities for its self defense. —Reuters

MILITANTS MOUNT DEADLY ATTACK ON INDIAN CONSULATE IN AFGHANISTAN

JALALABAD: Gunfire and an explosion echoed yesterday as militants attacked India's consulate in the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad, killing three people in the latest in a string of assaults on Indian installations in the country. No group has so far claimed the brazen attack, which coincided with a NATO change-of-command ceremony that saw US army general John Nicholson take charge of international troops in Afghanistan.

Indian diplomats were not hurt, the foreign ministry in New Delhi said, after a suicide bomber blew himself up at the consulate's entrance and four other attackers breached the compound. "All four of them were killed by our security forces," government spokesman Attaullah Khogyani said after the two-hour assault ended. "Three others—two civilians and one policeman—were killed and 19 other people were left wounded." The powerful explosion sent a column of smoke rising in the sky and blew out windows of nearby buildings, as Afghan troops hauled away bodies from the area littered with charred debris.

The attack highlights the worsening security situation in Afghanistan as Taliban insurgents step up nationwide attacks and Islamic State jihadists make inroads in the volatile east. "There is still much work to be done. We now find ourselves at an inflection point in our campaign," outgoing NATO commander General John Campbell told reporters in Kabul. "(Afghan security forces) have come far but they still need our help. (Their) desire to improve and their resilience war-

rants our continued support in the critical years ahead."

Yesterday's assault was reminiscent of a 25-hour gun and bomb siege near the Indian consulate in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif in January. India has been a key supporter of Kabul's post-Taliban government, and analysts have often pointed to the threat of a "proxy war" in Afghanistan between India and Pakistan. Pakistan—the historic backer of the Taliban—has long been accused of assisting the insurgents, especially with attacks on Indian targets in Afghanistan, but denies the claims.

Uptick in violence

Direct peace talks are expected



JALALABAD: Afghan security personnel inspect the site of an attack in front of the Indian consulate in Jalalabad yesterday. —AFP

THAI ARMY SUMMONS POLITICIAN WHO LAMBASTED JUNTA'S 'SEXISM'

BANGKOK: Thailand's junta yesterday summoned an opposition politician for "attitude adjustment" after he berated a senior general for making "sexist" remarks about ousted premier Yingluck Shinawatra. Military officials said Watana Muangsook, a prominent figure in the Pheu Thai party that was toppled by the 2014 army takeover, would be held in custody for up to seven days. His detention follows a Facebook post attacking the Thai junta's deputy leader for saying that soldiers continued to photograph Yingluck, two years after she was toppled from office, because she is good-looking.

"The soldiers took photos of Ms Yingluck probably because she is pretty," General Prawit Wongsuwan said. "It's not a big deal. Don't think too much about it or be anxious about it." In a post calling on the military to cease their monitoring of Yingluck, Watana said it was "unbelievable to hear such comments" by Prawit. "They were sexist comments," he added. Speaking to reporters yesterday General Prawit confirmed Watana had been "invited to talk"—the Thai junta's Orwellian euphemism for a period of compulsory detention—for "expressing false information."

"The invitation is not related to him blaming me but he expressed an opinion that misled society, so we invited him for talks," Prawit said. Since seizing

power in May 2014 the junta has crushed dissent, banning political discussion, locking up opponents and dramatically increasing prosecutions under laws covering lese majeste, sedition and computer crime. So-called "attitude adjustment" sessions have also been instituted, with critics arbitrarily detained by the military—often for days. They are released once they sign a form promising to refrain from criticizing authorities, sometimes under the threat of asset seizures. According to local rights group iLaw, which monitors detentions, more than 800 people have been ordered to attend such sessions since the coup.

While junta chief and Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-O-cha is very much the frontman for Thailand's coup, his colleague Prawit is seen as an equally influential backroom operator. A former army chief and defense minister, Prawit is often described as the "Big Brother" of the Eastern Tigers, a clique of powerful generals who were prominent in both the 2014 and 2006 coups. Prawit is not alone in making gaffes about women. Prime Minister Prayut had to apologize in 2014 for comments suggesting beautiful foreign women wearing bikinis in Thailand should not expect to be safe, following the brutal rape and murder of a British backpacker. —AFP

ONE-THIRD OF WORKING WOMEN IN JAPAN SEXUALLY HARASSED

TOKYO: One-third of Japanese working women have experienced sexual harassment at their place of employment, though nearly two-thirds of these women suffer in silence, a survey has shown. The results of the first-of-its-kind study commissioned by Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, came as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has pledged to support working women to kickstart the country's struggling economy.

Economists have said for years that Japan needs to make better use of its

well-educated but underemployed women, which could go a long way toward plugging the country's labor gap as the country faces an ageing and declining population. The written survey questioned women currently and previously employed, both full and part time, from the ages of 25 to 44 throughout the nation and received some 10,000 responses. It was conducted over a three-week period in September and October last year. Some 30 percent in total said they experienced sexual

harassment at work, according to the results, released on Tuesday.

Among those fully employed, the figure was slightly higher at about 35 percent. More than half of the total who experienced sexual harassment complained that their appearance, age and physical features were subject to casual comments, mostly by male co-workers. A total of 40 percent said they were physically touched in unpleasant ways. The survey also showed that 38 percent said they were subject to comments or

were asked questions of a sexual nature. In more serious cases, some said they were relentlessly asked out or were pressed with demands to have sexual relations. But more than 63 percent said they reluctantly remained silent about the abuse, though the survey did not offer any reasons why.

And about one in 10 who did complain, however, said they were treated unfairly for speaking up, such as being demoted. In speech after speech, Abe has urged the country to open up to

"womenomics", encouraging some of Japan's biggest firms including Toyota, Panasonic and All Nippon Airways to announce targets for boosting the number of female executives. While women are well represented in poorly-paid, part-time work, only a fraction of executives at 3,600 listed companies are female. Japan was ranked 101 out of 145 in the Global Gender Gap Index 2015, released by World Economic Forum, lower than Suriname and Azerbaijan. —AFP

SOUTH DEMANDS MORE SANCTIONS ON 'SERIAL OFFENDER' NORTH KOREA

N KOREA LIKENS SOUTH'S PRESIDENT TO AN 'UGLY BAT'

GENEVA: South Korea's foreign minister called on the UN Security Council to expand sanctions on North Korea yesterday to punish his neighbor for what he called an escalating and increasingly threatening nuclear program. Yun Byung-se called North Korea a "serial offender" and denounced Pyongyang's fourth nuclear test and latest long-range missile launch, carried out in January and February. North Korea's Ambassador Se Pyong So dismissed the speech, saying his country's nuclear program was designed to ensure peace on the Korean peninsula and warned that more sanctions would bring a "tougher reaction".

Both men addressed UN-backed Conference on Disarmament in Geneva hours before major powers were scheduled to vote at the UN Security Council across the Atlantic on a resolution to expand sanctions on North Korea. After nearly two months of bilateral negotiations, China last month agreed to support new measures in the Security Council to try and persuade its ally North Korea to abandon its atomic weapons program. Pyongyang has been under UN

sanctions since 2006 because of its nuclear tests and multiple rocket launches.

"It's no wonder that the Security Council will very soon put up a landmark resolution with the strongest ever non-military sanction measures in seven decades of UN history," South Korea's Yun told the Geneva forum. The credibility of the nuclear non-proliferation regime needed to be protected, he added. "Even at this moment, Pyongyang is accelerating its nuclear weapons and missile capabilities from nuclear bombs and hydrogen bombs to ICBMs and SLBMs," he said referring to intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched ballistic missiles.

"We have heard Pyongyang officially state its intention not only to further develop its nuclear weapons and missiles but also to use them," Japan's envoy at the conference, Masakazu Hamachi, said North Korea's actions had undermined the security of Northeast Asia and the rest of the world. North Korea's envoy retorted that the nuclear program was "not directed to harm the fellow countryman but to protect peace

on the Korean Peninsula and security in the region from the US vicious nuclear war scenario." "The more sanctions will bring about tougher reaction," So said.

An 'ugly bat'

Meanwhile, North Korea launched a fresh personal attack on South Korean President Park Geun-Hye yesterday, calling her an "ugly female bat" in an article apparently penned by a satirizing zoologist. The article, published by the official KCNA news agency, also painted a picture of a panic-stricken Park losing her dress and shoes as she ran to a bunker after hearing of North Korea's January 6 nuclear test. It followed an equally aggressive diatribe in the ruling party newspaper Rodong Sinmun on Sunday which described Park as a "crazy old bitch" and triggered an angry response from Seoul that condemned the use of such "base, vulgar language."

The attacks come amid escalating tensions on the Korean peninsula with Park taking a markedly tougher stance with Pyongyang following its nuclear test and

last month's long-range rocket launch. Yesterday's article was attributed to a North Korean zoologist, Pak Ryo-Un, and was, it's headline suggested, meant to be read as a satire. The main theme was a running and rather forced comparison of Park to a bat, in terms of both looks and behavior. The choice was a play on Park's surname which is a partial homonym for the Korean word for bat "bakjiwi". "She behaved like a bat which lives in such dingy place as cave," the article said.

Upon hearing the news of the North's nuclear test, "she hastily ran down to the underground bunker... unaware that the waistband of her skirt slipped down and her shoes came off, stunning even her confidants," it said. It variously described Park as an "ugly female bat" and someone with a bat's "twisted point of view" and "twisted skinny body." The North has previously launched similarly vitriolic and highly sexist personal attacks on Park, likening her to a "babbling peasant" and a prostitute eager to please US President Barack Obama. —Agencies

News

in brief



SEOUL: The last speaker of the session, Lee Jong Kul, a lawmaker of the main opposition the Minjoo Party, speaks at the National Assembly in Seoul yesterday. —AP

South Korea lawmakers end record-breaking filibuster

SEOUL: South Korean opposition lawmakers yesterday abandoned a record-breaking filibuster aimed at blocking a bill granting greater surveillance powers to the national spy agency. The marathon, day-and-night filibuster, which lasted for eight whole days, has been hailed as the world's longest-shattering the previous record of 57 hours set by Canada's New Democratic Party in 2011. A senior opposition leader said the decision had been taken to end the rotating filibuster in order to concentrate resources on next month's general elections. "Our lawmakers cannot spend any time in their districts because they are focused on the filibuster," Minjoo Party floor leader Lee Jong-Kul said. "We are sorry. We tried our best (to block the passage of the law) but it was not enough," Lee said before ending the filibuster with his 12-hour speech yesterday. More than 30 opposition lawmakers spent over 190 hours taking turns to hold the podium, demanding revisions to an anti-terrorism bill which they argue would violate privacy rights.

Ex-British chief rabbi wins Templeton Prize

LONDON: Britain's former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks has won the 2016 Templeton Prize, worth 1.1 million pounds (\$1.5 million), for his efforts to help steer young people away from the message of extremists by encouraging religions to connect with them.

The US-based John Templeton Foundation said Sacks, 67, was ahead of his time with his central message of respect for all faiths and his argument that only by recognizing the values of each of them could violence and terrorism be countered. The prize, awarded to an individual who has made "exceptional contributions to affirming life's spiritual dimension", is one of the world's richest. Sacks said he was "absolutely knocked sideways" to have won. "It just felt very thrilling and so my wife and I did a little dance together," he said Television in an interview earlier this week. "Not something we do that often, but it was lovely." As Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, Sacks was the leading spokesman for British Jews from 1991 until 2013, leading what many considered to be the revitalization of Britain's Jewish community.



Rabbi Lord Jonathan

Philippines hunts tomb raider-priest

ILOILO: Philippine authorities said yesterday they are looking for a parish priest who allegedly damaged part of a historic cemetery chapel in search of treasure. Father Nelson Silvela, parish priest of the town of San Joaquin in the central island of Panay, vanished after the arrest of 10 men he allegedly hired to dig up the chapel known as the 'Camposanto', said Mayor Eduardo Servidad. "We consider the Camposanto a holy place and we did not expect a priest like him to do a thing like this," he said. The men had dug a hole about 18 meters (60 feet) long which had weakened the structure of the chapel located at the centre of the cemetery built in 1892, the mayor said. The cemetery and chapel, famous for its ornate baroque architecture and ornate carvings, were declared a "national cultural treasure" in 2015 and have long been a tourist attraction. The 10 men, armed with tools, a metal detector and a water pump, were arrested on February 24 and later identified the priest as having hired them to dig for an unspecified treasure, Servidad said. The local archbishop, Angel Lagdameo said he had suspended the priest and would support any criminal charges against him.

Mexican angry mob lynches Honduran

PUEBLA: An angry mob has lynched a Honduran man in central Mexico suspected of trying to kidnap someone, in the latest case of deadly vigilante justice in the country. When police arrived at the town of Chapulco on Monday, the crowd of some 300 people freed the 32-year-old Honduran, "who was taken immediately to a hospital, where he died," Puebla state public security chief Jesus Rodriguez told reporters. Two other men who were suspected of taking part in the kidnap attempt were injured, Rodriguez said, without specifying their nationality. Townspeople claimed that it was the second time that the suspects tried to kidnap the same person. The Honduran man is the seventh person to be lynched in Puebla state since 2015. Nearly 40 other people were rescued during mob beatings in the past year. In a case that shocked the country in October, two brothers who were conducting a survey in the town of Ajalpan were beaten and burned at a public square after people accused them of trying to abduct children.

POWERFUL QUAKE IN WESTERN INDONESIA SPARKS PANIC

PADANG: A powerful and shallow earthquake struck yesterday off Indonesia's Sumatra island, sending panicked residents rushing from their homes in a region hit hard by quakes and tsunamis in the past. Local authorities initially issued a tsunami warning but lifted it several hours later, and there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage. The 7.8 magnitude undersea quake struck at a depth of 24 kilometers at about 6:50 pm (12:50 GMT), the US Geological Survey said. The epicenter was several hundred kilometers from the Mentawai Islands, a small chain southwest of the country's main western island of Sumatra. The quake was felt strongly in Padang, a major city on western Sumatra, sparking panic. An AFP journalist there said people ran from their homes and fled to higher ground by motorbike, car or on foot.

Traffic ground to a halt and there was a sense of panic on the streets, the journalist said. The local BMKG quake-monitoring agency issued a tsunami alert for several provinces with coastlines on western Sumatra but later lifted the warning. The small Mentawai archipelago is regularly hit by quakes and in 2010 was devastated by a quake-triggered tsunami that left hundreds dead. Aceh province on the tip of Sumatra was devastated by a quake-triggered tsunami in 2004. The tsunami killed more than 170,000 people in Indonesia and tens of thousands more in other countries around the Indian Ocean.

Warning sirens

Disaster agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said tsunami warning sirens were after the earthquake activated and "people responded to the early warning by evacuating to higher places". Bambang Soelistyo, head of Indonesia's search and rescue agency, said there had not been any reports of casualties so far. "In the Mentawai Islands, there has been no reports of damage and people have been evacuating to higher areas," he said. Indonesia sits on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", where the meeting of continental plates causes strong seismic activity, and is frequently hit by earthquakes. Hundreds died when a major quake struck near Padang in 2009. Plans for evacuation shelters and improved roads to provide better escape routes from tsunamis since 2004 have mostly not been realized, according to experts.

In Australia, to the east of the Indonesian archipelago, authorities said there was no tsunami threat to the Australian mainland but issued a marine threat to Cocos Island and Christmas Island off the east coast. Evacuations were not required, according to the Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre, but there was a possibility of dangerous waves and strong currents. People in Christmas Island were advised to get out of the water and move away from the immediate water's edge. Sri Lanka's Disaster Management Centre, a government agency for the Indian Ocean island where tens of thousands died in the 2004 disaster, did not issue a tsunami warning yesterday, but said it was monitoring the situation. —AFP



PADANG: A man pushes a relative who lies on a hospital bed as they were told to leave the building following an earthquake, at a hospital in Padang, West Sumatra, Indonesia yesterday. —AP



BAROBO: People stand on a partially-capsized boat believed to be owned by German national Manfred Fritz Bajorat whose body was found inside, after residents found the yacht drifting off the coast of Barobo, on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao. —AFP

DEAD GERMAN IN DRIFTING YACHT 'HAD HEART ATTACK'

MANILA: A German sailor whose mummified body was found on a yacht adrift off the southern Philippines had died of a heart attack about a week earlier, according to an autopsy report released yesterday. Police earlier named the victim as Manfred Fritz Bajorat, based on documents found on the yacht last Friday, but still do not know where he had sailed from or where he was heading.

"The cause of death is acute myocardial infarction based on the autopsy by (the) regional crime laboratory," national police spokesman Chief Superintendent Wilben Mayor said. "The German national is estimated to have been dead for more or less seven days," he added, citing a statement by police in the southern Philippines. Bajorat was a 59-year-old veteran yachtsman who left his native Germany two decades ago and lost his long-time wife several years ago, according to Germany's Bild daily, which quoted an old friend.

The newspaper also published pictures of the man hunched over a table in the main cabin, and cited forensics experts

who explained that a combination of tropical heat, dry wind and salty sea air can quickly preserve or mummify a corpse. Police in the town of Barobo on the east coast of Mindanao island, where the corpse was taken, said the German embassy was arranging for a relative to fly to the Philippines. "It appears he has a daughter based in Germany and the embassy is to fly her here to identify the dead body," Chief Inspector Dominador Plaza, the Barobo police chief said.

'Around the world trip'

Local fishermen found the white-hulled, 13-metre (44-foot) yacht with a broken mast adrift on the western edge of the Pacific Ocean on Friday. Police launched an inquiry to determine whether Bajorat had been the victim of a crime, but the autopsy result indicated otherwise. The area where the boat was found is some 100 kilometers off Barobo, said the town's deputy police chief Inspector Mark Navales. "The... salt water in the air could have mummified his

body," Navales added. German-language documents, old pictures of a family visiting Paris landmarks, rice and tinned food lay scattered in the cabin of the boat, which had taken in water and was listing, police said.

One document photographed by police indicated the boat had obtained clearance from maritime police in Sao Vicente in 2013, although it was unclear if it was issued in Cape Verde or Brazil, which both have ports of the same name. Bild quoted an old friend as saying Bajorat "emigrated 20 years ago, first to the Netherlands, then he wanted to travel around the world with his wife." "I haven't seen him since then," said the friend, who added that he had stayed in contact with Bajorat via Facebook once or twice a year. "The last time was a year ago. At the time he said he wanted to go on (another) around-the-world trip," said the friend. The sailor's wife of some 30 years, Claudia, was believed to have died years ago, likely in 2010 on the Caribbean island of Martinique, said Bild. —AFP

AUSTRALIAN INQUIRY HEARS OF GUN-TOTING PEDOPHILE PRIEST

SYDNEY: An Australian inquiry yesterday heard of a gun-toting pedophile priest who made children kneel between his legs during confession as Vatican finance chief Cardinal George Pell admitted a time of "crimes and cover-ups" within the Catholic Church. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Sydney was hearing evidence from Pell, via video link from Rome, for a third day, with the senior Australian official again facing intense questioning about how much he knew.

The inquiry is currently focused on the town of Ballarat and the city of Melbourne in the state of Victoria, where Pell grew up and

worked, and how the church dealt with complaints, many dating back to the 1970s, against the Catholic clergy. Gail Furness, the top lawyer leading questioning in the inquiry, centered attention yesterday on Doveton parish priest Peter Seanson, who Pell described as "one of the most unpleasant" men he had ever met. The church failed to remove him from his position in the 1980s despite mounting evidence that he was abusing children. The commission heard that one complainant said Seanson brandished a gun and made children kneel between his legs when they went to confession, during which he had a tape recorder. —AFP



Children wrapped in blankets stand in a harbor as migrants and refugees arrive on the Greek island of Lesbos after crossing the Aegean Sea from Turkey yesterday in Mytilene. — AFP

OMAN STUDYING 7-8% CUT IN ELECTRICITY SUBSIDIES

MUSCAT: Oman's cabinet is considering changing electricity tariffs to save the government money which it spends on subsidies, a senior official said yesterday. Qais Al-Zakwani, executive director of the Authority for Electricity Regulation, told Reuters that the proposed change would affect commercial, industrial and government users of electricity consuming over 150 megawatt hours annually - between 9,000 and 9,500 consumers in total.

The change would save the government up to 7 or 8 percent of its bill for electricity price subsidies. Such subsidies totalled around 450 million rials (\$1.17 billion) last year - and that figure is an understatement as the government is also selling natural gas used for power generation at a subsidised rate, Zakwani said. End-consumers of elec-

tricity in Oman are only paying about half of the cost of generating it, he added.

"We have started talking to the targeted segments, and they are happy with the idea of adjusting operating timings from peak hours to hours with less electricity consumption, where they will pay less than the current flat rates. "We are only waiting for the green light from the council of ministers to start changing electricity meters." Like other Gulf states, Oman is considering a range of reforms to state spending and revenues as low oil prices slash its export revenues. The government posted a budget deficit of 4.07 billion rials in the first 11 months of 2015, swinging from a 233.4 million rial surplus a year earlier, finance ministry data showed this week. — Reuters

JORDAN RAID FOILS IS ATTACKS

Continued from Page 1

the region in warning of threats posed by Islamic State, which has seized swathes of territory in Syria and Iraq. The monarch, in ceremonial military attire, attended the funeral of the dead police officer along with several thousand people near the city of Zarqa.

Jordan has reinforced security along its frontiers since the conflict erupted in Syria five years ago. The US ally stepped up its air strikes on IS in Feb 2015 after the Sunni extremist group burned alive one of its air force pilots who crashed in Syria while on a mission. The kingdom also faces a danger from within - nearly 4,000 Jordanians belong to jihadists groups, mostly IS, Islamist sources estimate. More than 400 Jordanians have been killed fighting in jihadist ranks in Syria and Iraq since 2011, according to the sources.

The Irbid operation marks a turning point in the fight against jihadists, said Mohammad Abu Rumman, a researcher at the University of Jordan's Centre for Strategic Studies. Initially the fear was about "lone

wolf" sympathizers travelling to Syria and Iraq to join IS. But yesterday's clashes illustrate "an evolution in the relationship between the Salafist jihadist movement in Jordan and IS". The resistance put up by the jihadists and the amount of weapons seized are all clues to the evolution of this movement which now favors violence and closer ties with IS, he warned. Irbid is just a few kilometres from the Syrian border where Jordanian security forces regularly detain drug traffickers and jihadists attempting to join extremist groups in Syria.

Jordan has tried and imprisoned dozens of jihadist sympathizers since toughening its anti-terrorism law in 2014. The resource-poor country hosts more than 630,000 of the roughly 4.6 million Syrian refugees overseas, according to the UN refugee agency. The Jordanian government gives a much higher estimate of 1.4 million, saying many of them are unregistered. It has been braced for a new wave of refugees since Russia began intense air raids in September in support of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. — Agencies

GCC DECLARES HEZBOLLAH A TERRORIST...

Continued from Page 1

Last week Saudi Arabia urged its nationals to leave Lebanon and avoid travelling there. Qatar and Kuwait followed with similar travel advisories, while the United Arab Emirates banned its nationals from travel to Lebanon. Gulf monarchies had already sanctioned Hezbollah in 2013 in reprisal for its armed intervention in Syria. Last week Riyadh upped measures against the group, freezing assets and prohibiting dealings with three Lebanese nationals and four companies.

Saudi Arabia and Qatar back rebels opposed to Syria's government, whereas Hezbollah is fighting in support of President Bashar Al-Assad. Syria's war has also exacerbated political rivalries within Lebanon, which has been without a president for almost two years because of fierce disagreements between Hezbollah and its rivals.

The GCC announcement came a few hours after a televised speech by Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in which he harshly criticized Saudi Arabia for punitive measures that targeted Lebanon recently, including the halt in aid and Gulf travel warnings. He repeated his accusations that Saudi Arabia was directly responsible for some car bombings in Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, and he denounced Saudi "massacres" in Yemen. Nasrallah said Saudi Arabia does not have "the right to sanction the Lebanese people because one particular party took a certain position".

Nasrallah pledged Hezbollah would continue to speak out against what it saw as Saudi aggression in the region.

Former Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hari, a key ally of Saudi Arabia, called the GCC decision a result of Hezbollah's actions around the region. "What Hezbollah is doing in Syria and Yemen is for me criminal, illegitimate and terrorist," he said. Hari spoke in Beirut following a parliament session to elect a president for Lebanon. The attempt failed just like the previous 35 attempts over a lack of quorum. The post has been vacant for nearly two years.

Mustafa Alani, of the independent Gulf Research Centre, said the GCC designation should make it easier to take further measures against Hezbollah. "You need to fight this sort of organization," he said. Yemen's government last month accused the group of sending fighters to aid Iran-backed Houthi rebels, which a Saudi-led regional coalition is battling. In January, Bahrain said it had dismantled a "terror" cell allegedly linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guards and Hezbollah.

That same month, a lower court in Kuwait sentenced 22 people, all but one of them Kuwaitis, who were charged with spying for Iran and plotting Hezbollah-linked attacks in the Gulf country. And a United Nations-backed special tribunal is trying five Hezbollah members in absentia for the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Hariri. — Agencies

MPS WANT FREEZE ON OVERSEAS TREATMENT...

Continued from Page 1

Head of the financial and economic affairs committee MP Faisal Al-Shaye said the number of citizens sent for treatment abroad rose from several hundred patients a few years ago to as many as 11,000 last year. Several MPs alleged the process involves rife corruption as many of those sent for treatment are not patients but for what they called "tourism" at the expense of public funds.

The government said it took the decision as part of efforts to rationalize expenditures to finance the budget deficit resulting from the sharp drop in oil prices. But lawmakers criticized the government plans for targeting the poor and low income sections while leaving alone the wealthy. MP Askar Al-Enezi said Kuwait remains a wealthy country and under the constitution, the government must provide appropriate healthcare services for citizens. He appealed to the prime minister to reconsider the government's decisions on medical treatment overseas.

MP Mohammad Tana wondered if the government "is fed up with Kuwaitis and wants to see them dead". The new medical care rules are unacceptable as ministers and merchants go to London and spend millions in public

funds while the government is targeting patients, he claimed. MP Jamal Al-Omar blamed the government for the rising number of Kuwaiti patients going abroad because of the delay in its plans to construct hospitals and medical centers. MP Hamdan Al-Azemi threatened to grill the prime minister over the issue.

MPs also debated the plight of over 100,000 stateless people, locally known as bedoons, and called for resolving their decades-old problem by granting Kuwaiti citizenship to all those who deserve it. But the Assembly adjourned the session for two weeks before it could vote on recommendations by the lawmakers because of a lack of quorum. MPs highlighted the humanitarian nature of the crisis of bedoons, who have been living in the country for several decades. MP Youssef Al-Zalzalah said that at least the bedoons should be treated like Kuwaitis like before the Iraqi invasion in 1990. MP Khalil Al-Saleh said that over 34,000 out of 110,000 bedoons are entitled to Kuwaiti citizenship and called for speeding up the process of studying their cases and granting them nationality. Minister Omair said that bedoons who deserve Kuwaiti nationality are being assessed by the Cabinet, which will grant them nationality. He provided no details about the process.

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P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

Focus

VOTER ANGER IS CREATING POLITICAL LIMBO IN EUROPE

By Ouerdya Ait Abdelmalek

Elections in Spain, Portugal and now Ireland have rocked established politics as voters rebelled against austerity and traditional parties, creating political limbo by holding up the formation of new governments. "There is a common pattern to many of these, which is that the established party systems are under threat," said Professor David Farrell, political scientist at University College Dublin. "There's no doubt that one immediate cause is the ongoing experience of austerity and its impact on the wider citizenry."

In Ireland, voters punished the outgoing coalition government of the centre-right Fine Gael and Labour parties, which had slashed public spending and raised taxes in a gruelling austerity program required by an international bailout deal. Reduced overall support for traditional parties meant the vote produced no clear winner, leaving Ireland facing a re-run or an unprecedented deal between Fine Gael and Fianna Fail: the two main parties which have long-held divisions.

In Spain, the vote on Dec 20 produced a parliament with 200 new members out of 350, but no left no party able to form a government as support for two new parties, the left-wing Podemos and centre-left Ciudadanos eroded the standing of traditional forces. Polling suggests Spanish voters would cast their ballots in a similar way in case of a re-run. "One might think that this ungovernability would have an impact and people would return to the classic bipartisan system but no," said Jose Pablo Ferrandiz, deputy head of the Metroscopia polling institute.

'Protracted Political Uncertainty'

In neighboring Portugal, the Left Bloc made a historic breakthrough in parliamentary elections in October to take 10.2 percent of votes in an election that resulted in an unstable minority Socialist government supported by the Left Bloc and other parties. "It was a surprise. The Left Bloc has managed to capture the voice of the young electorate on the left and right who are unhappy with the austerity policies of the last four years," political scientist Jose Antonio Passos Palmeira told AFP.

The common thread to all three countries, which have suffered the brunt of economic crisis, is a reaction to unpopular austerity measures imposed by international institutions in exchange for loans from the International Monetary Fund and European institutions. In Ireland, a return to strong economic growth that saw it become the fastest-growing economy in the eurozone, was not enough to convince voters to back the government which had imposed austerity. Many complained they are yet to feel the benefit of the growing economy and continue to suffer the effects of job insecurity, lower wages, higher taxes and the aftermath of swingeing cuts to public spending. A plea by the outgoing Fine Gael-Labour coalition to return them to office or risk scuppering the recovery with political instability failed to impress. Following the vote, the Fitch Ratings agency warned that "protracted political uncertainty, an unstable government, or reliance on more radical political elements" could be negative for Ireland's outlook.

Historic Moment

Jean-Michel de Waele, professor at the Universite libre de Bruxelles, said the countries might have to come around to the idea of forming coalitions between traditionally opposing political forces, something more common in Scandinavian countries. "Undoubtedly this is a historic moment," de Waele said. "I think we are heading for deep political uncertainty. We see this in Spain: Spain may have to vote again, and we will see how long the Portuguese government lasts." Farrell called the result in Ireland a "wake-up call for the established parties."

"There's a decline in voter turnout that might suggest that our electorates are becoming turned off of politics, but in all sorts of other ways we can see our citizens being more turned on," Farrell said. "They protest more, they express themselves through social media, they get involved in international charities or worry about the world economy," he added. "All of this speaks to a citizenry that is more engaged and the job for the elected politicians is to try to find ways of engaging with that in a new way." —AFP

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CLINTON, TRUMP BRACE FOR EPIC SHOWDOWN

By Michael Mathes

Conventional wisdom says a Donald Trump nomination should bring presidential election gold for Democrat Hillary Clinton - but given how the brash billionaire has outperformed expectations at every turn, it might not be so simple. Analysts and experts who spoke with AFP acknowledged that Trump's strong performance on Super Tuesday, when millions of Democrats and Republican voters in a dozen states chose their nominee, put him in the driver's seat on the road to the GOP nominating convention in July.

From there, it would be a head-to-head battle against the Democratic nominee, most likely Clinton, who dominated rival Bernie Sanders in seven of the 11 states where party voters had their say Tuesday. At first glance, the experience and temperament of a former secretary of state, senator and first lady would be enough to see her soar against a politically untested, deeply controversial billionaire who has yet to flesh out many of his policies.

"It certainly would be a good thing" for Democrats, Norman Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute said about a Trump nomination. A recent CNN poll showed Clinton beating Trump 52 percent to 44 percent among registered voters in a hypothetical matchup. Other polls have reflected similar results for months. But a November Clinton victory is "no sure thing," Ornstein cautioned. "Big divisions in the Republican Party are good for Democrats, but that doesn't mean if Donald Trump is the nominee that there is certainty that he'll lose."

Trump's Appeal

Trump has rallied supporters with his politically incorrect talk about immigrants and trade. But

he has ruptured the party with his hostility: he has called some Mexicans rapists, urged a ban on Muslims entering the United States, mocked women and the disabled, prompting outcries from establishment Republicans. Many experts have assumed that Trump's insults, exaggerations and taunts will hurt him in November. But the 69-year-old real estate mogul appears to operate in an alternate reality, unrestrained by traditional political rules.

This is an election dominated by the unbridled fury at establishment politics. That bodes well for the ultimate outsider who has spent months jabbing a finger in Washington's eye. "Trump has broad appeal," Republican strategist Brad Marston of Massachusetts said. "Yes, he has incredibly high negatives, but both on the left and right, people are tired of their leaders lying to them."

Clinton meanwhile is the ultimate establishment candidate, who polls poorly with voters on honesty and trustworthiness. Marston points out that there was record turnout in the first four primary races, beginning with Iowa and New Hampshire. "People

are being drawn out of the woodwork to vote for Trump," and that can happen too in November, he said. But the Republican "train wreck" can also energize Democrats in the presidential election, argued Bakari Sellers, a Democratic former lawmaker in South Carolina's state legislature. "The biggest push for Democratic base voters to come out is Donald Trump," he told CNN. "We haven't had a better motivator for African-American and Hispanic voters to come out and vote Democratic in a long time."

'Clenched Fist'

Clinton has already begun shifting her campaign talk toward the general election. On Tuesday in Minnesota, the 68-year-old assailed Republicans for "running their campaigns based on insults." "I don't think that's appropriate in a presidential campaign," she said. Trump signalled Tuesday he is ready to go to war against Clinton and that their showdown will be "pretty tough." Savoring his victories, he signalled he could moderate his tone as he shifts to the general election, even praising the work of women's health provider Planned Parenthood, which conservatives loathe for its abortion practices. "Planned Parenthood has done very good work for some, for millions of women," Trump said. "I'm going to be good for women's health issues. It's very important to me. Maybe that's not a perfect conservative view," he said.

Marston had a message to Democrats: Dismiss nominee Trump at your peril. "There's a good chance he's being underestimated," Marston said. "A lot of people doing the estimating don't like him in the first place." Some Democrats have gleefully welcomed a Clinton-Trump showdown, but Hillary's team is holding back. "We've always taken Donald Trump seriously," her campaign chairman John Podesta told CNN.

The New York Times reported that Team Clinton has begun tailoring a strategy to portray Trump as a heartless businessman, a misogynist, and a dangerous blowhard unfit to be president. David Axelrod, architect of Barack Obama's historic 2008 campaign, warned that Democrats must hit Trump on his business record and opportunism, rather than challenge him on the issues. After all, it is an anti-establishment year when rage is the constant. "There are a lot of folks out there who want to deal the system a punch in the face," Axelrod told Vox, "and Donald Trump is the clenched fist." —AFP



DEBT COLLECTORS STRIKE FEAR IN RUSSIA

By Germain Moyon

"If you don't die by yourself, we'll help you," threaten the phone messages that Natalya, a 69-year-old Russian pensioner, has been receiving for months after falling further behind on her credit card payments. Resorting to harassment and threats of violence, debt collectors sent out by banks to recover money have become notorious in Russia and, many complain, usually face no punishment. But as Russia's unpaid debt soars to dramatic levels due to an economic crisis, authorities are now seeking to regulate the cowboy sector.

For Natalya, who declined to give her full name due to fear of reprisal, the problems began last summer. She had to go into hospital and was forced to stop the part-time car park supervisor's job that supplements her monthly pension of around 150 (\$164) plus the 70 disability benefit of her son, who lives with her. It became impossible for Natalya, who lives in the region outside Moscow, to cover the monthly bills for her credit card which she says come to about 5,000 rubles (\$66), although she does not understand exactly what the amount represents. Interest rates can reach as high as 20 percent for longer term loans such as mortgages, and much higher for short term ones.

The menacing phone calls have become increasingly frequent, "day and night," she said. Noting the telephone numbers used by the debt collectors, she has listed up to 18 calls per day.

The callers' tone has also grown more menacing, with threats of violence. "We will come to your home to see if you have any gold teeth," or "we will confiscate your property," and "we will make you run for the cemetery" - just some of the threats she received. "They got me into such a state that I didn't have the strength to leave my flat. I begged them but to no avail. They just kept on shouting and insulting me," she said, fighting back tears. She finally went to a lawyers' association to attempt to get her repayments cut to a manageable level.

Mounting Unpaid Loans

Natalya's case is far from unusual, as are the tactics used against her. Russian media has carried reports of bailiffs beating up people with debts, posting insults in the entrance halls of their apartment blocks and threatening to attack their children. "Over the last year, we have seen a wave of complaints," said Irina Malinina, a lawyer who heads a group helping people with unpaid loans. "Delays or failures to make payments have increased so visits and

phone calls from debt collectors have gone up," she told AFP.

Collapsing oil prices and sanctions on Russia due to the conflict in Ukraine have plunged the country into recession, prompting a drop in spending power that caught out many Russians who had taken loans during the boom years when credit was available with almost no background checks. Payments were late on nearly 18 percent of personal loans on January 1, up from 10.3 percent a year earlier, according to the National Bureau of Credit Histories, a company that holds a large database of credit history records.

Exacerbating the situation, banks have sought to unload their bad loans by selling them to debt collector agencies. Banks have also tightened the criteria for granting loans, pushing Russians towards small micro-credit organizations offering short-term "payday" loans. The situation is particularly difficult in the provinces, where the standard of living is low and people are ill-informed about their legal rights.

Anti-Debt Collector App

Siberian programmer Yevgeny Pyatkovsky, who is in his 30s, has created a smartphone app that allows users to add numbers of debt collectors to a database

and block their calls. Designed initially for his own family, the Antikollektor app now has 300,000 users, he told AFP. He said the app has a dual aim: to protect relatives of debtors, who are sometimes also targeted, and to spare people who owe money from the "enormous stress" of harassment by debt collectors.

After long ignoring the issue, the authorities finally took notice as media reports of abuses by debt collectors have multiplied. The Investigative Committee and the Prosecutor-General's Office vowed to severely punish a debt collector in the Volga city of Ulyanovsk, who in January threw a Molotov cocktail into the house of a man who had taken out a small loan, causing his two-year-old grandson to suffer serious burns.

In mid-February, the speakers of the upper and lower houses of parliament, Sergei Naryshkin and Valentina Matvienko, submitted a draft law regulating debt collection. It limits the lawful number of phone calls debt collectors can make and bans them altogether at night, as well as penalizing harassment. But Malinina believes it does not go far enough. "The constitution already bans entering properties, making threats and resorting to physical violence," she complained. —AFP

EVANS' CONVICTION FOR RAPE TO BE REVIEWED

LONDON: British footballer Ched Evans's conviction for rape will be reviewed by leading judges on March 22, a body that investigates alleged miscarriages of justice announced yesterday. The former Wales striker, who maintains his innocence, was released from prison in 2014 after serving half of a five-year sentence for raping a 19-year-old woman in a north Wales hotel room in May 2011. His case has been referred to London's Court of Appeal by the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC), which investigates possible miscarriages of justice in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The CCRC announced last October that it had unearthed new evidence that could have supported Evans's defence. Court of Appeal judges will now consider how safe his conviction is. Evans previously lost his case at the Court of Appeal in 2012. Following his release, Evans, 27, saw an attempt to resurrect his career with English third-tier club Oldham Athletic collapse amid a public outcry. Evans came through the youth ranks at Manchester City and after a loan spell at Norwich City, he joined Sheffield United in 2009 for a fee of £3 million (\$4.2 million, 3.9 million euros). —AFP



LESS THAN HALF TICKETS SOLD FOR RIO OLYMPICS

LAUSANNE: With five months to go before the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazilian organizers have sold less than half the available tickets for South America's first games. Rio organizers say about 47 percent of the total 7.5 million tickets have been bought so far. Rio organizing committee spokesman Mario Andrada says the revenue from ticket sales stands at \$194 million, or 74 percent of the total target. Andrada says tickets for "premier events" and the Aug. 5 opening ceremony at the Maracana Stadium are essentially sold out. He says most tickets for the foreign market have been sold, leaving domestic sales as the main priority. Speaking to reporters after Rio reported to the IOC executive board, Andrada says organizers plan to set up electronic ticket sales booths across the city. — AP

HAMILTON FASTEST AS MERCEDES DOMINATE

BARCELONA: World champion Lewis Hamilton set the fastest time for the first time this season on the second morning of the second pre-season test in Barcelona yesterday. Hamilton was released onto the faster soft tyres after days of piling out huge mileage on the medium compound to register a best time of 1min 23.622 from his 73 laps. However, the Englishman's time was six tenths of a second down on the best lap posted by Mercedes teammate Nico Rosberg on the soft tyres on Tuesday. Rosberg will take over driving duties for the afternoon with Mercedes choosing to split each of the four days at the Circuit de Catalunya between their two drivers. Kevin Magnussen was second fastest for Renault, three tenths behind Hamilton despite being on supersoft tyres. Sebastian Vettel posted Ferrari's best time of testing so far on the medium compound in third. At the other end of the paddock, both Haas and Sauber suffered reliability problems. —AFP



NO SURPRISES IN 2016 TOUR DE FRANCE TEAM LIST

PARIS: Chris Froome will go up against familiar faces when he attempts to win a third Tour de France title in July, after the same 22 teams from last summer were named by race organisers yesterday. The route seems perfect for Briton Froome, with individual time trials set to play a much bigger part in deciding the winner of the general classification than in previous editions.

The Team Sky man edged out Colombian Nairo Quintana by 1min and 12secs last year, having also taken the 2013 title.

Froome, Quintana and Alberto Contador all look likely to line up alongside each other once more, with Sky, Movistar and Tinkoff all unsurprisingly on the team list.

"It's a selection without surprises," Tour general director Christian Prudhomme told AFP of a list that includes four invitees, three of them French and one German (Bora-Argon).

"Bora is a very strong team that will be in the Tour for the third time. "They have the German champion, the young Emanuel Buchmann, who did an excellent climb at Cauterets last year (he finished third) and a good sprinter in Irishman Sam Bennett," he added.

2014 Giro D'Italia champion Quintana is expected to be one of Froome's main challengers for the yellow jersey again this year, with the mountain finishes at Mont Ventoux and Saint-Gervais-les-Bains expected to produce exciting battles between the top climbers.

For the second year in a row bonus seconds will be handed out to the top three on each stage, after seven years with no seconds on offer for stage finishes.

That did not prevent Slovakian Peter Sagan from winning the points classification for the fourth year in a row last summer, despite not winning a stage.

Sagan will face competition for the green jersey from the in-form Marcel Kittel and Norway's Alexander Kristoff, while Mark Cavendish will be competing with Team Dimension Data in the Tour for the first time. The South African outfit impressed as the first African team to race the Tour de France in 2015 under their previous guise of MTN-Qhubeka, and they will return for a second attempt.

Teams announced by race organisers on Wednesday to contest this year's Tour de France which takes place from July 2-24:

Teams qualified through International Cycling Union rules: AG2R La Mondiale (FRA), Astana Pro Team (KAZ), BMC Racing Team (USA), Cannondale Pro Cycling Team (USA), Dimension Data (RSA), Etixx-Quick Step (BEL), FDJ (FRA), IAM Cycling (SUI) Lampre-Merida (ITA), Lotto Soudal (BEL), Movistar Team (ESP), Orica GreenEDGE (AUS), Team Giant-Alpecin (GER), Team Katusha (RUS), Team Lotto NL-Jumbo (NED), Team Sky (GBR), Tinkoff (RUS), Trek-Segafredo (USA). Invited teams: Bora-Argon 18 (GER), Cofidis (FRA), Direct Energie (FRA), Fortuneo-Vital Concept (FRA). — AFP

ELDER STATESMAN WIGGINS FEELS HEAT AS RIO LOOMS

MANCHESTER: Bradley Wiggins admits that he is feeling the effects of time as he aims to end his glittering career with a World Championship and Olympic gold medal double. The former Tour de France champion returns to London this week, scene of his Olympic time-trial triumph in 2012, as part of the British men's team pursuit squad seeking victory in the World Track Championships. The 35-year-old says racing the sons of some of his former rivals has brought home to him the size of the task he faces in attempting to win selection for the Rio Olympics later this year.

"I do sometimes feel a little bit like the elder statesman because there's a lot of guys riding the track now whose dads I rode with," Wiggins told reporters in Manchester.

"Philippe Ermenault—we rode against each other for the bronze in the team pursuit in Sydney (the 2000 Olympics) and now his son is in the French team, riding the Worlds this year. "And then Rick Zabel, although Erik rode until he was 50, so that's not so hard! But I notice it more. When you start racing people's sons, you know you are getting old.

"I'm just trying to get to the Worlds. I don't think about the end because I haven't made the end. I haven't made the team for the end. "It has got harder. The training has got harder. It's quite different. The first time I rode the event in the Olympics in 2000, 16 years ago, we broke the Olympic record in qualification with 4min 04sec. "We are now planning on going 3:50, or quicker. It's 15 seconds faster. The whole thing has just evolved and snowballed."

'CUT-THROAT'

He added: "The event has got faster and faster and we are now training like sprinters through the winter, in the gym and everything. "It's brutal. Compare it to the speeds we were going eight years ago. It's moved on that much. The good thing about here is the fact that you come in and it's a numbers game.

"You get shown the numbers after every ride and if you're not up to scratch, you go home. Reputations and results have got nothing to do with it. "It's brutal, really, quite cut-throat. But it's quite evidential as well. You can see on the board who's slowing and who's picking it up." Wiggins, who is targeting a fifth Olympic gold in Rio, has already made his mark on the track in the past 12 months by setting a new World Hour Record at London's Lee Valley Velodrome, the venue for this week's Worlds. The veteran believes that another world record could be broken in London, with the British pursuit team aiming to beat their own mark of 3min 51.659sec, which they set at London 2012. —AFP



HH THE AMIR'S FIFTH ANNUAL GRAND PRIX AWARDING CEREMONY TODAY

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The first gold medal will be awarded today during HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Fifth Annual Grand Prix in the women's trap event.

Competition will start at 9 am, while the finals will be at 3 pm. Today, the pre-event-training for the men's trap will be on 50 targets, as the finals will be tomorrow on 75 targets. Thirty one countries are participating: Algeria, Bahrain,

Czech, Egypt, UAE, Estonia, Hungary, India, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Nepal, Holland New Zealand, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Syria, Tunisia, Britain and Kuwait, the host country.

The Grand Prix enjoys the participation of Olympic Champions from Gulf, Arab and European countries, making competition very strong, especially after the higher organiz-

ing committee's announcement that prizes will be doubled for those who break world records.

Meanwhile, Secretary General of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federation Obeid Al-Osaimi said the Arab Shooting Federation Board of Directors decided to reduce the fees for some Arab countries who are unable to meet their commitments, in order to help those brotherly countries who one suffering from some difficulties these days.



YANKEES CLOSER CHAPMAN AGREES TO ACCEPT 30-GAME SUSPENSION

NEW YORK: New York Yankees closer Aroldis Chapman agreed to accept a 30-game suspension under Major League Baseball's domestic violence policy, a penalty stemming from an altercation with his girlfriend last October.

Under the discipline announced Tuesday, the four-time All-Star will serve the penalty from the start of the Yankees' season on April 4. He will lose 30 days of pay - \$1,856,557 of his \$11,325,000 salary. The agreement specifies he will be eligible for free agency after this season barring any additional suspension for off-the-field conduct that would cost him the necessary service time.

"I found Mr. Chapman's acknowledged conduct on that day to be inappropriate ... particularly his use of a firearm and the impact of that behavior on his partner," baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said in a statement. "I am

gratified that Mr. Chapman has taken responsibility for his conduct."

Chapman became the first player penalized a finite number of games under the policy, which MLB and the players' association agreed to in August following several high-profile incidents among NFL players. Colorado shortstop Jose Reyes was given an indefinite paid suspension last week, pending a trial scheduled for April 4, following an alleged altercation with his wife in October.

Baseball's investigation of Chapman stemmed from an Oct. 30 incident at his house in Florida. Chapman's girlfriend, 22-year-old Cristina Barnea, told police he pushed and choked her. Chapman said there was an argument but that he was pushed down by Barnea's brother, eventually getting a handgun and firing eight shots into a wall and window while locked in his garage.

The Davie Police Department and Broward Assistant State Attorney Stefanie Newman declined to file charges, saying conflicting accounts and insufficient evidence made a conviction unlikely. Under MLB's domestic violence policy, discipline does not have to be predicated on a conviction.

SUSPENSION

Chapman, 28, the hardest-throwing pitcher in the major leagues, was traded from the rebuilding Cincinnati Reds to the Yankees in December. He had said he would contest any suspension, but a deal was reached following negotiations with MLB. "I want to be clear, I did not in any way harm my girlfriend that evening," Chapman said in a statement. "However, I should have exercised better judgment with respect to certain actions, and for that I am sorry. The decision to accept a suspension, as opposed to appealing

one, was made after careful consideration. I made this decision in an effort to minimize the distractions that an appeal would cause the Yankees, my new teammates and most importantly, my family."

Chapman's representatives and MLB had been discussing the discipline for about 10 days. A suspension of 46 days or longer would have delayed his chance to become a free agent until after the 2017 season.

The players' association said it supported Chapman's decision to accept the penalty and said "its members do not condone the mistreatment of others by playing or non-playing personnel."

With the Yankees, Chapman forms a powerful back end of the bullpen along with former closer Andrew Miller and Dellin Betances.

Chapman can continue to participate in all spring training activities. The penalty starts when the Yankees open the

season April 4 at home against Houston. Barring rainouts, he would be eligible to start his season May 9 when the Yankees host World Series champion Kansas City.

"We need him," teammate Alex Rodriguez said Tuesday before the suspension was announced. "He's a big part of our team, and I think the key in New York is you have to focus on the game, focus on your teammates, and I think he has a lot of support in that clubhouse."

Chapman will be allowed to use team facilities while serving his suspension and likely will work out at the Yankees' minor league complex in Florida, but he will not be permitted to play in any minor league games during that time.

Los Angeles Dodgers outfielder Yasiel Puig is under investigation by MLB for a fight with a bouncer at a Miami bar in November following an argument with his sister. —AP

SMITH TO WORK HIS MAGIC WITH WILDCATS: ARONA

LONDON: Tinirau Arona believes Brian Smith can weave the same type of magic at Wakefield Wildcats as he did at Sydney Roosters six years ago - and as a member of both teams he's a man who should know. The 61-year-old took charge last May and subsequently performed a rescue act by guiding the Wildcats through the Million Pound Game to ensure their Super League survival.

The Roosters were similarly in the doldrums in 2009 - having suffered the ignominy of the NRL's wooden spoon - but less than a year later Smith took them all the way to the Grand Final.

With one win from four in the Super League so far, Wakefield still have an awful long way to go before returning to such prominence. But Arona, who was given his NRL debut by Smith in 2011, insists things will only get better under the head coach - starting against Catalans Dragons this weekend.

"We were in the same situation at Sydney Roosters when Brian went there in 2010. When he took over, the Roosters finished bottom and he recruited me to the club," said Arona, who was also joined at Wakefield by former Rooster Anthony Tupou.

"He turned it around massively - we were one win away from winning the title at the Roosters - and I believe he's got those skills to do so at Wakefield.

"I back him 100 per cent and it's good to come back to him, he gave me my first opportunity and I respect him for that.

"What we want now is a really competitive team fighting for their places week in week out, which didn't go so well last year." And while Australian-born Arona is hoping

for a quick Wildcats turnaround, he wants to be there for the long haul.

"The plan was to come here for one year, see what it's all about and what the future holds. My family and I like it here, and I'm loving it too," added the 26-year-old.

"At the moment I see myself playing here for many years. But my main focus for now is getting back to being as consistent and competitive as I possibly can."

Australian front-rower Mitchell Dodds is set to make his long-awaited debut for the Warrington Wolves at Salford Red Devils on Thursday - and it's been a funny old few months for the former Brisbane Bronco. "His last game was an NRL Grand Final in front of 85,000 people and at the weekend he got to run out in front of about 300 at Hull Ionians so there was a fair old contrast to his last two games," said Warrington assistant coach Richard Agar.

"We see a lot of value in what he can do for us defensively around the rucks and that was evident at the weekend. "He's a very strong tackler who makes his presence felt in the middle of the field."

Elsewhere, Hull KR captain Terry Campese reflected on a week that saw Chris Chester removed from the hotseat, just a few months on after guiding the side to a Challenge Cup final.

KR have not won this year and go to table toppers Widnes Vikings next, but Campese admits his departure is a sign of the times. "It's the sport we play, it's the reality," Campese said. "It's a cut-throat business - players go out on loan, players get injured, you can get a change of staff.

"It's always tough when a head coach leaves, there's a big disruption but the boys have handled it well." — AFP



BUFFALO: Anton Lander #51 of the Edmonton Oilers carries the puck against the Buffalo Sabres at First Niagara Center on March 1 in Buffalo, New York. Edmonton defeated Buffalo 2-1. — AFP

MCDAVID GETS SECOND GOAL IN OT, OILERS BEAT SABRES

BUFFALO: Connor McDavid scored his second goal in overtime to give the Edmonton Oilers a 2-1 victory over the Buffalo Sabres on Tuesday night in an anticipated matchup against another top rookie, Jack Eichel.

Cam Talbot made 31 saves for the Oilers as Edmonton began a four-game trip with its second straight win. McDavid and Eichel provided a buzz for this game even though the Oilers and Sabres are both among the NHL's bottom five teams. McDavid was the first pick in last year's draft and Eichel went second, and both players are considered potential generational talents. McDavid scored 22 seconds into the game, then got the winner by blowing past Buffalo's defense seconds after Eichel spun around a defender and missed just wide with a twirling backhand shot. Cal O'Reilly scored his first goal of the season for the Sabres.

CAPITALS 3, PENGUINS 2

Matt Niskanen scored the winner during a third-period power play to help Washington overcome Pittsburgh in an entertaining, back-and-forth showdown that could be a first-round playoff preview. Mike Richards and Evgeny Kuznetsov also scored for the NHL-leading Capitals, and Braden Holtby made 28 saves while becoming the first goalie in franchise history with consecutive 40-win seasons. His glove stop on Carl Hagelin with 32.8 seconds left preserved the victory. After losing to defending Stanley Cup champion Chicago on Sunday, Washington bounced right back. Evgeni Malkin and Patric Hornqvist scored for Pittsburgh, which holds the second wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference. Backup goalie Matt Murray stopped 34 shots.

BLUES 4, SENATORS 3, SO

Patrik Berglund scored the shootout winner in the 11th round as St. Louis outlasted Ottawa. Trailing 3-0, the Senators scored three unanswered goals to force overtime, including one by Jean-Gabriel Pageau with less than a second left in the third period. Ottawa goalie Craig Anderson made 28 saves on 31 shots before leaving the game at 13:41 in the second period. Andrew Hammond stopped 17 shots in relief and made several huge saves to keep the Senators in the game. Ryan Dzingel also scored for Ottawa. Jaden Schwartz, with a goal and two assists, led the Blues. Dmitrij Jaskin and Vladimir Tarasenko also scored, and Jake Allen stopped 40 shots.

BRUINS 2, FLAMES 1

Patrice Bergeron scored the tiebreaking goal with 3:24 left to lift Boston over skidding Calgary. Landon Ferraro also scored and Tuukka Rask stopped 24 shots as the Bruins won for the third time in four games. Jakub Nakladal's first career goal was the only score for the Flames,

who dropped their sixth straight. Joni Ortio made 23 saves.

HURRICANES 3, DEVILS 1

Joakim Nordstrom scored on a rebound with 1:29 remaining as Carolina defeated New Jersey in a game between teams fading from playoff contention. Derek Ryan, playing his first NHL game at age 29, also scored as the Hurricanes snapped a three-game skid and won for the third time in eight games. Eddie Lack was outstanding in making 29 saves, and Nathan Gerbe scored into an empty net with 21.2 seconds to go. Adam Henrique scored for New Jersey, which lost its third straight and sixth in seven games.

WILD 6, AVALANCHE 3

Charlie Coyle and Nino Niederreiter each scored twice to give Minnesota victory over Colorado and possession of the final Western Conference playoff spot. Coyle scored the game-winner at 5:34 of the third period after Zach Parise knocked down the puck at mid-ice, rushed toward the other end and fed a streaking Coyle, who tapped into an open net. Colorado and Minnesota both have 68 points, but the Wild have played one fewer game and are technically ahead in the standings. Jarome Iginla scored 33 seconds in for Colorado. It was his 19th goal of the season and 608th of his career, tying Dino Ciccarelli for 17th place in NHL history. Chris Bigras and Cody McLeod also scored for the Avalanche.

PREDATORS 5, STARS 3

Shea Weber had a goal and two assists in his return from a three-game injury absence to lead

streaking Nashville over Dallas. Weber has 12 power-play goals this season. Craig Smith and James Neal each had a goal and an assist, and Calle Jarnkrok and Mattias Ekholm also scored for the Predators, who have won a season-high five straight. Pekke Rinne made 35 saves Antoine Roussel had a goal and an assist, and Jason Spezza and Vernon Fiddler also scored for Dallas, which has lost four in a row. Antti Niemi stopped 14 of 18 shots before being relieved by Kari Lehtonen midway through the second.

PANTHERS 3, JETS 2

Reilly Smith had two goals and Jaromir Jagr scored the winner early in the third period to send Florida past Winnipeg. Vincent Trocheck assisted on both of Smith's goals, and the Panthers snapped a first-place tie with Tampa Bay in the Atlantic Division. Roberto Luongo made 30 saves for Florida. Jagr is two points from tying Gordie Howe (1,850) for third in NHL history. Dustin Byfuglien and rookie Andrew Copp scored in the second period for Winnipeg, which lost its fifth straight home game.

ISLANDERS 3, CANUCKS 2

Thomas Hickey scored the tiebreaking goal in the third period to help New York beat Vancouver. Travis Hamonic and Anders Lee also scored for the Islanders, and Thomas Greiss made 31 stops. Hickey also had an assist. Linden Vey and Daniel Sedin each had a goal for Vancouver, which got 21 saves from Jacob Markstrom. Sedin tied it 2-all at 10:52 of the third with his 24th of the season. Hickey then scored his fourth on a drive from the point 2:03 later that appeared to hit a defender in front. —AP

NHL Results/Standings

Carolina 3, New Jersey 1; Boston 2, Calgary 1; Edmonton 2, Buffalo 1 (OT); Washington 3, Pittsburgh 2; St. Louis 4, Ottawa 3 (SO); Nashville 5, Dallas 3; Minnesota 6, Colorado 3; Florida 3, Winnipeg 2; NY Islanders 3, Vancouver 2.

Western Conference						Eastern Conference						
Central Division			Atlantic Division			Metropolitan Division			Northeast Division			
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	
Chicago	39	20	5	180	153	83	Tampa Bay	37	22	4	175	151
Dallas	38	20	7	209	189	83	Boston	35	23	6	197	176
St. Louis	37	20	9	166	162	83	Detroit	32	20	11	161	163
Nashville	32	21	11	172	161	75	Ottawa	30	27	7	188	200
Minnesota	29	25	10	170	162	68	Montreal	30	28	5	173	175
Colorado	32	29	4	175	187	68	Buffalo	25	31	8	148	172
Winnipeg	26	32	4	161	186	56	Toronto	21	30	10	147	182
Pacific Division						Florida						
Los Angeles	37	21	4	165	143	78	Washington	46	12	4	205	144
Anaheim	34	19	8	153	144	76	NY Rangers	37	20	6	180	159
San Jose	34	22	6	188	167	74	NY Islanders	34	20	7	174	151
Vancouver	24	26	12	150	178	60	Pittsburgh	32	22	8	167	160
Arizona	27	30	6	168	198	60	Philadelphia	29	22	11	157	168
Calgary	26	33	4	170	197	56	Carolina	29	26	10	158	174
Edmonton	24	34	7	158	194	55	New Jersey	30	27	7	140	156
Atlantic Division						Columbus						
Florida	36	19	8	174	148	80	Washington	26	30	8	167	196

Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L).



STOCKHOLM: US alpine skier Lindsey Vonn speaks during a news conference at a hotel in Stockholm. Lindsey Vonn says she will end her World Cup skiing season early because of a left knee injury. — AP

PLATINI APPEALS AGAINST BAN AMID RESIGN CALLS

LAUSANNE: Michel Platini has made a formal appeal to the international sports tribunal against his six year ban from football amid a call from a top European federation leader for him to resign as UEFA president.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport said yesterday that Platini has lodged an appeal which could be completed before the European Championships start in June. That would allow him to attend the event if successful. But German Football Federation (DFB) Reinhard Rauball said Platini should stand down as UEFA chief because of the power vacuum in European football. Platini is suspended and general secretary Gianni Infantino became FIFA president on Friday.

Platini and former FIFA leader Sepp Blatter were banned for six years each over a two million dollar payment made by FIFA to Platini. The ban against the two football powerbrokers was reduced from eight years by a FIFA appeal committee on February 24. But Platini, 60, has said he wants to fight the ban further.

Blatter has said he will also appeal but the tribunal said no documents had

yet been received.

"In appealing to the CAS, Michel Platini seeks to annul the decisions taken by the adjudicatory chamber of the FIFA ethics committee and by the FIFA appeal committee which lead to him being declared ineligible to take part in football-related activity at national and international level for six years," said a CAS statement.

"First, the parties will exchange written submissions and a panel of three arbitrators will be constituted."

EURO 2016 HOPES

The panel will consider a verdict after a hearing in Lausanne. "In theory we have four months for a verdict, but Michel Platini has asked us for a decision before the start of Euro 2016 so we will adapt to the request of the parties," CAS secretary general Matthieu Reeb said. Platini was a key figure behind staging the European Championships in his native country and is desperate to be present when it starts in Paris on June 10.

Platini and Blatter were found guilty of conflicts of interest when Blatter approved a two million Swiss franc (\$2

million/1.8 million euro) payment to Platini in 2011 for consultancy work done without a contract a decade earlier. He has denied any wrongdoing insisting there was an oral contract. Swiss prosecutors are investigating the payment however and Blatter, 79, is a formal suspect.

Platini had been favourite to take over from Blatter but the ban demolished his hopes.

Platini hopes to keep his post at UEFA if he can win his appeal. The Frenchman went to CAS in December when he appealed against his provisional suspension by FIFA. This was turned down.

And the German federation boss signalled unease in Europe at events at UEFA which organises the Champions League as well as Euro 2016. "Currently, UEFA doesn't have a leader in either of the two most important positions: Platini is suspended and the former general secretary Gianni Infantino is now at FIFA," Rauball, the interim DFB chief, told Sport Bild magazine.

"In the summer, the European championships will take place and a lot of things need to be prepared and agreed.



ZURICH: Combo of file pictures shows Reinhard Rauball (L), the interim president of the German Football Federation DFB (November 9, 2015 in Frankfurt am Main), and UEFA President Michel Platini (May 28, 2015 in Zurich). Michel Platini should resign as UEFA president as soon as possible to fill the leadership vacuum within European football's governing body, Rauball has suggested. — AFP

"I think it is urgent that there is a discussion about an alternative (president) in terms of the congress in May.

"One has to distinguish between the

personal interests of Platini and the capacity to function of UEFA, which is a venture worth billions." UEFA is to hold a congress in Budapest on May 3. — AFP

TURKEY'S GALATASARAY GET ONE-YEAR EUROPEAN BAN: UEFA

ISTANBUL: Turkish champions Galatasaray have been banned from European competition for one year over the club's failure to meet Financial Fair Play (FFP) regulations designed to limit losses, UEFA said yesterday.

Galatasaray's chairman last month told Reuters the Turkish champions had lost about 164 million euros (\$177.79 million) over the last three seasons, overshooting guidelines set by European soccer's governing body UEFA.

UEFA had said in January that Galatasaray had failed to comply with its rules governing the permitted level of financial losses, paving the way for a potential ban.

Under FFP rules, which have been phased in since 2011, clubs who take part in European competition are not allowed to spend more than their generated income.

Designed to stop rich owners buying success by ploughing unlimited amounts of cash into their clubs, the rules are complex, especially as there is a certain amount of leeway.

Galatasaray were expecting a two-year ban, but UEFA said the suspension would only be extended into a second year if the club loses more than 10 million euros this season, a club official told Reuters.

They sold international striker Burak Yilmaz last month to Beijing side Guoan for

eight million euros to help mend their finances.

TOP TABLE

The Istanbul side became the first Turkish side to win a major European trophy when they beat Arsenal to win the 2000 UEFA Cup, the predecessor to the Europa league.

However, ambitions to secure a place at international soccer's top table have come at a high cost for Turkey's leading clubs, which are struggling to navigate a sea of debt after years of heavy spending.

Galatasaray finished third in Champions League Group C this season behind Atletico Madrid and Benfica and dropped into the second-tier Europa league where they lost 4-2 on aggregate to Lazio in the round of 32. The Istanbul side are fifth in the Turkish championship with 37 points from 23 games, two points off the Europa League spots. If the Istanbul side fail to qualify for European competition this year, the ban would be rolled over to next season, the club official said.

Galatasaray are expected to appeal against the decision at the Court of Arbitration for Sport within the 21 days required. On Tuesday, they named youth team coach Orhan Atik to replace manager Mustafa Denizli who quit three months after taking the job. —Reuters



SYDNEY: Guangzhou Evergrande player Jackson Martinez (R) is challenged by Sydney FC defenders Aaron Calver (C) and Matthew Jurman (L) during their AFC Champions League group stage football match in Sydney yesterday. — AFP

EVERGRANDE 'INVASION' FLOPS AS SYDNEY SEND CHAMPS PACKING

SYDNEY: Milos Dimitrijevic's late winner stunned China's Guangzhou Evergrande yesterday as the super-rich AFC Champions League title-holders were sent packing 2-1 by a determined Sydney FC.

Luiz Felipe Scolari's Evergrande boast one of Asia's most potent and expensive strike-forces, but Dimitrijevic's 88th-minute clincher and Ricardo Goulart's penalty miss made it an away trip to forget.

Evergrande had raised hackles by tweeting a mock-up of a naval invasion of Sydney Harbour, with the title "Jackson Landing" - referring to 42-million-euro (US\$45.6 million) striker Jackson Martinez.

But it was Graham Arnold's side who torpedoed the visitors as Evergrande ended the second week of competition bottom of Group H with just one point from two matches.

"Before the game the coach told us, let's try to shock Asia to win this game, and I think we did it and I hope we will keep going," Dimitrijevic said. Sydney began strongly before a noisy crowd dominated by red-shirted Guangzhou supporters, swelled by Evergrande's giveaway of more than 9,000 free tickets to the local expat Chinese community.

But Sydney, assembled for a fraction of the cost of Evergrande, constantly took the game to the Chinese giants and they forged a shock lead when Robert Stambolziev scored on 17 minutes.

The Guangzhou defenders failed to clear the ball from the danger area before a downward header from Shane Smeltz found Stambolziev, who stabbed the ball home.

SPENDING SPREE

The defending champions had a chance to hit back almost immediately, when record signing Martinez of Colombia was pulled down by Sebastian Ryall for a penalty.

But Brazilian playmaker Goulart's poorly struck spot kick was well saved by home goalkeeper Vedran Janjetovic, diving sharply to his right. However, Evergrande levelled only three minutes later when Goulart released Huang Bowen, whose goal-bound shot cannoned in off lunging defender Rhyon Grant.

Goulart looked to have a good claim for a penalty nine minutes from the end when he was apparently held back by Grant as he tried to wriggle his way clear in the box.

But ultimately Serbian substitute Dimitrijevic was Sydney's hero as his shot squirmed beneath Guangzhou goalkeeper Zeng Cheng in the 88th minute. The defeat deals an early blow to Evergrande's bid for a third Asian title in four years, following a bumper spending spree by Chinese clubs in the recent transfer window.

Elsewhere Pohang Steelers, who held

Evergrande 0-0 last week, beat Urawa Red Diamonds 1-0 through Jun Ho-Son's first-half penalty to go top of Group H.

In Group G, Shanghai SIPG gave Evergrande further cause for regret when offloaded striker Elkeson fired their Chinese rivals to a 2-1 win

over Suwon Bluewings.

The Brazilian, sold despite being Evergrande's top-scorer last year, produced a typically strong run and finish in the first half before Wu Lei doubled Shanghai's lead and Jang Hyun-Soo pulled one back for Suwon. — AFP

STEECE COOK, AFOBE EASE BOURNEMOUTH DROP FEARS

BOURNEMOUTH: Steve Cook and Benik Afobe scored in each half as Bournemouth enhanced their chances of avoiding Premier League relegation with a 2-0 victory over south-coast rivals Southampton on Tuesday.

Cook volleyed home in the 31st minute and £10 million (\$14.5 million, 13.3 million euros) record signing Afobe headed in 11 minutes from time as Eddie Howe's side ended a run of three league games without a win. It was Bournemouth's first league win over Southampton in 58 years and took them eight points clear of the relegation zone.

Southampton, who saw a six-game unbeaten run ended by Chelsea at the weekend, remain seventh, four points off the European places. Encouraged by an improved display in Saturday's 0-0 draw at Watford, Bournemouth started with purpose and visiting goalkeeper Fraser Forster had to save with his feet from Matt Ritchie inside the first minute.

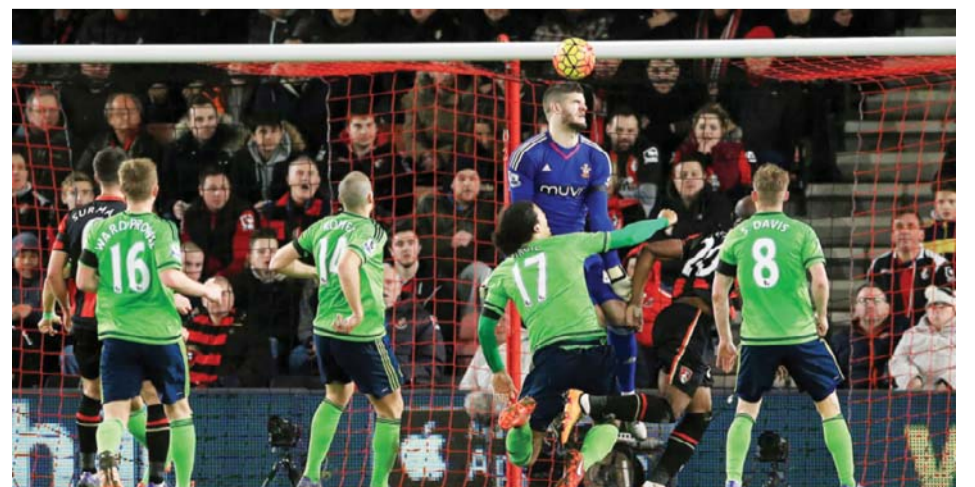
The early storm passed and Southampton began to create inroads, Sadio Mane shooting over from an angle on the left, but just beyond

the half hour Bournemouth went ahead. Forster could only palm Ritchie's right-wing free-kick into the air and centre-back Cook showed the agility of a number nine to readjust his body and hook home a volley from inside the six-yard box.

Bournemouth's Ivorian forward Max Gradel, making his first start since August after a knee ligament injury, threatened to make it 2-0 with a shot that whistled over the bar. Southampton manager Ronald Koeman took reparative action before half-time, introducing midfielder Steven Davis in place of centre-back Maya Yoshida and abandoning his back three.

The start of the second half was delayed by five minutes after fourth official Kevin Friend passed out and banged his head on the Dean Court dug-out. Friend was taken to hospital and Dean Treleaven took over.

A harmless shot from Graziano Pelle was all Southampton could muster in the second half and Afobe put them out of their misery in the 79th minute when he beat Forster to Ritchie's in-swinging free-kick. — AFP



BOURNEMOUTH: AFC Bournemouth's Benik Afobe, second right, scores against Southampton during the English Premier League soccer match at the Vitality Stadium, Bournemouth, England, Tuesday. — AP

MENEZ DELIGHTED AS MILAN SECURE RARE CUP FINAL

MILAN: French midfielder Jeremy Menez said thanks to AC Milan after a memorable return to action helped him dispel the "negative thoughts" he experienced during a frustrating 11-month absence.

Menez marked his first start for the Rossoneri since April 2015 with a brace of goals in a 5-0 rout of third division Alessandria on Tuesday that allowed Milan to end a 13-year wait to contend the Italian Cup final.

Sinisa Mihajlovic's men will now meet the winner of the second leg of the semi-final between Inter Milan and holders Juventus, although the latter take a 3-0 first leg lead to the San Siro later.

The final will be held at Rome's Stadio Olimpico on May 21, and for Milan it has special significance as the winner will secure entry to the group stages of next season's Europa League.

With Juventus vying for their fifth consecutive "scudetto" they will be expected to clinch one of three Serie A places that offer entry to the Champions League. Milan, six points off third-placed Roma, are among several teams expected to battle for one of those places.

Meanwhile Menez, who broke the dead-

lock for Milan on 20 minutes and added a second before half-time, was delighted with his two-goal haul.

"I waited a long time for a night like that, it's been a really difficult period for me," said the Frenchman, who initially made a huge impact at the club following his move from Paris Saint Germain in the summer of 2014.

"I'm delighted to score twice, but the most important thing is we reached the final. "When you're out for so long, you start thinking a lot of negative thoughts, but I have to thank everyone, from the coach to the club and my teammates for all their support. "Now I want to look ahead and, even though I'm not at 100% yet, try to give it everything I have."

Playing up front with Mario Balotelli, Menez's brace overshadowed the performance of the on-loan Liverpool striker, who also made a rare start for the hosts and scored Milan's fifth goal at the death.

But Mihajlovic said he will be counting on both players as Milan continue their battle to clinch a place in the top three.

Mihajlovic said: "You could see that Menez and Balotelli are still a little bit short of match-fitness, and the same also applies at the moment to Luiz Adriano.—AFP



PARIS: Jacques Lambert, President of Euro Soccer 2016 tournament delivers his speech during a press conference to mark the hundred days to go before the start of Euro 2016 soccer tournament, in Paris, yesterday. — AP

EVERTON PUSH WOEFUL VILLA CLOSER TO THE DROP

BIRMINGHAM: Aston Villa were pushed closer to the relegation trapdoor on Tuesday as the Premier League's bottom club slumped to a miserable 3-1 defeat against Everton.

Remi Garde's troubled side were crushed by goals from Ramiro Funes Mori, Aaron Lennon and Romelu Lukaku as they surrendered in front of their furious fans at Villa Park.

Villa's fourth defeat in their last five league matches was played out against the dispiriting backdrop of a 74th minute walkout from supporters in protest at their club's humiliating decline.

Villa last played in the second tier in 1988 but they remain eight points from safety and with games against Manchester City, Tottenham and Chelsea still to come this month, their fate could effectively be sealed before Easter.

Everton's victory—their fifth in their last six games in all competitions—was the ideal way to welcome Iranian billionaire Farhad Moshiri, whose multi-million pound arrival as majority shareholder over the weekend has raised

hopes of an exciting new chapter in the club's history.

Villa's last home game had ended in their worst defeat at Villa Park for 81 years as Liverpool romped to a 6-0 victory that prompted Garde to question his players' commitment.

There was little reason for Garde to rethink that criticism after another lacklustre display against a team from Merseyside.

Villa's problems began in the fifth minute when Everton capitalised on woeful defending to take the lead.

An Everton corner should have been dealt with easily by the Villa rearguard, but they made a hash of it and Funes Mori was left completely unmarked to smash home from close-range.

Villa fans have grown increasingly mutinous in recent weeks as they see relegation looming large at the end of a dismal campaign and they had held up banners calling for the board to sell up before kick-off.

Funes Mori's goal did little to improve their mood and jeers and abuse was cascading down from the stands towards Garde and his team.

Villa briefly sparked into life when Everton goalkeeper Joel Robles made saves to deny Gabriel Agbonlahor and Ashley Westwood.

Micah Richards fired narrowly wide moments later and Leandro Bacuna saw his effort kept out by Robles, but Villa's pressure proved a false dawn and Everton doubled their lead in the 30th minute.

Ruthlessly exposing Villa's fragile defence, the visitors broke with speed and purpose as Ross Barkley released Kevin Mirallas and the Belgian teed up former Tottenham winger Lennon to finish from close range for his fourth goal in his last six appearances.

Villa were in complete turmoil and Brad Guzan couldn't hold a Mirallas shot, with Bryan Oviedo's follow-up cleared off the line by Richards.

When Villa won a rare corner, ironic cheers rang out from the disillusioned fans. But by the 60th minute the stands were more than half empty as Villa fans streamed to the exits following Everton's third goal.

Funes Mori was allowed to cross far too easily and Belgium striker Lukaku



BIRMINGHAM: Aston Villa's Rudy Gestege, right, scores with a header against Everton during the English Premier League soccer match at Villa Park, Birmingham, England, Tuesday. — AP

stuck out his leg to divert it past Guzan for his 22nd of the season.

In a fitting coda to the evening, more of Villa's fans departed in protest

with 16 minutes left, so when Rudy Gestege got one back with a 79th minute header, there was hardly anyone left to see it. — AFP

ATLETICO BEAT REAL SOCIEDAD MOVES CLOSER TO BARCELONA

MADRID: Atletico Madrid easily defeated Real Sociedad 3-0 on Tuesday to put some pressure on Spanish league leader Barcelona.

Atletico opened the scoring with an own goal by defender Diego Reyes in the eighth minute and midfielder Saul Niguez added to the lead in the 46th. French striker Antoine Griezmann sealed the victory by converting a 61st-minute penalty at Vicente Calderon Stadium.

The win moves Atletico within five points of Barcelona, which plays at struggling Rayo Vallecano on Thursday to close out the 27th round. Atletico opened a seven-point advantage over third-place Real Madrid, which plays at last-place Levante.

"We will keep trying to do the best we can," Atletico coach Diego Simeone said. "We know that it will be difficult for Barcelona to falter."

Atletico was coming off a win over Madrid at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium on Saturday, a result that prompted home supporters to call for the resignation of their club's president, Florentino Perez. Atletico fans at the Vicente Calderon quickly picked up on it on Tuesday, loudly chanting for Perez to stay in his position.

It was the fourth win for Atletico in its last five league games, and the ninth at home this season. Simeone's team hasn't conceded a goal in its last five matches.

Atletico cruised from the start and quickly got on the board, with Reyes

finding his own net while trying to intercept a low cross by midfielder Jorge "Koke" Resurreccion.

Niguez made it 2-0 just seconds into the second half, scoring from close range after a cross by Luciano Vietto, and Griezmann added the third from the penalty spot after being brought down inside the area by defender Alberto de la Bella. It was the first penalty kick goal scored by Atletico in the league this season.

Atletico substitute Angel Correa scored in the 90th minute but the goal was ruled out for offside. Replays suggested the midfielder was onside.

Sociedad's best chance was a header by Reyes that struck the post in the 63rd. With the game under control, Simeone substituted some regular starters to give them a rest, including Diego Godin and Griezmann. The team has played four games in 10 days.

Sociedad was coming off a home draw against Malaga but had won its previous four league matches.

Simeone made only one change to the lineup from the impressive 1-0 victory over Real Madrid at the Bernabeu, replacing Fernando Torres with Vietto.

In the other game Tuesday, Las Palmas moved further away from the relegation zone with a convincing 4-0 home win over Getafe, which played a man down from the 65th after a red card for Uruguayan defender Alvaro Pereira. — AP



LEICESTER: Leicester's Jamie Vardy, right, battles for the ball with West Bromwich Albion's Claudio Yacob during the English Premier League soccer match between Leicester City and West Bromwich Albion at the King Power Stadium in Leicester, England, Tuesday. — AP

LEICESTER ARE UP FOR THE FIGHT: RANIERI

LEICESTER: Leicester City manager Claudio Ranieri said his side were ready to fight for the Premier League title after the setback of a 2-2 home draw against West Bromwich Albion.

Ranieri's men missed the chance to extend their lead to five points as they were held by West Brom on Tuesday and, in doing so, handed encouragement to their title rivals.

But Ranieri insists their spirit remains undimmed as they prepare for the final 10 games of the season, starting with Saturday's trip to Watford.

And he says he is more confident now, after seeing his side rattle the crossbar twice against West Brom, than after the thrilling, last-gasp 1-0 win over Norwich City in their previous game.

"It was a fantastic match and I am very pleased with our performance," said the Italian. "It was just the goal that was missing, but we created a lot of chances. We were a little unlucky, but I am more confident than after the game against Norwich."

"Against Norwich we won the game at the end, but we created very few chances. In this game we created a lot of chances, but we drew the match."

"It is OK. Four points from two difficult match-

es, it is fantastic. We are alive and our spirit is ready to fight again.

"I am happy, not that we didn't get the three points—you can't always get the three points — (but) our performance was fantastic."

"Of course the players were not so happy, but I told my players that we are alive and we made a fantastic performance. Now they must focus on Watford," Ranieri said before the game with West Brom that his side were underdogs for the title despite leading the table for several weeks.

And he believes dropping two points against West Brom makes his side even bigger outsiders.

PULIS A LEICESTER FAN

"I think there is Arsenal, Tottenham and Manchester City who fight for the title," he said.

"And then there is little Leicester who fight against them. I want people to remember where we started."

"We are confident. We try to do our best. In this game we were not so lucky, but perhaps in the last 10 matches we will be. Why not? Be positive."

Leicester have a new supporter for the final 10 games of their shock title challenge after winning over Tony Pulis. The West Brom head coach

saw his side frustrate Leicester by taking the lead through Salomon Rondon and then equalising through Craig Gardner's superb free-kick after Danny Drinkwater and Andy King had given Leicester a 2-1 half-time lead.

Pulis's side have seven points from their last three Premier League games.

He said: "Leicester City are in some ways an old-fashioned team, the way they play. They play through the pitch quickly, they get the balls wide and they get bodies in the box. They play really exciting football."

"The way the team is set up, the balance of the team, the enthusiasm, the commitment they give, every Leicester City supporter should be proud of their team."

"They're fantastic—their effort, their energy. They never stop. We've done brilliant. It's a fantastic point for us, but now the game's over, I just hope Leicester City win the league."

"I am supporting Leicester from now until the end of the season, apart from West Bromwich Albion."

"If they can get the breaks going their way—and that's what you need sometimes in football—then keep going, and keep believing, hopefully they can do it." —AFP

Spanish La Liga table															
MADRID: Spanish La Liga table after Tuesday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points).															
Barcelona	26	21	3	2	69	21	66	Valencia	26	7	10	9	30	29	31
Atletico Madrid	27	19	4	4	39	11	61	Real Betis	26	6	10	10	21	36	28
Real Madrid	26	16	6	4	71	25	54	Espanyol	26	8	4	14	26	50	28
Villarreal	26	15	7	4	33	18	52	Las Palmas	27	7	6	14	29	40	27
Sevilla	26	11	8	7	37	28	41	Getafe	27	7	5	15	26	44	26
Celta Vigo	26	12	5	9	39	44	41	Rayo Vallecano	26	6	8	12	36	53	26
Athletic Bilbao	26	11	5	10	38	35	38	Sporting Gijon	26	6	6	14	30	46	24
Eibar	26	10	6	10	40	35	36	Granada	26	6	5	15	27	51	23
Real Sociedad	27	9	7	11	36	38	34	Levante	26	5	5	16	24	4820	-AFP
Deportivo La Coruna	26	6	14	6	33	32	32	Results: Atletico Madrid 3, Real Sociedad 0; Las Palmas 4, Getafe 0.							
Malaga	26	8	8	10	23	23	32								



MADRID: Atletico Madrid's Angel Correa, right, vies for the ball with Real Sociedad's Aritz Elustondo during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Atletico Madrid and Real Sociedad at the Vicente Calderon stadium in Madrid, Tuesday. Atletico won 3-0. —AP

HIDDINK SETS SIGHTS ON OVERHAULING MAN UTD

NORWICH: Guus Hiddink has set Chelsea the target of over-taking Manchester United by the end of the Premier League campaign.

Winning the Champions League and the FA Cup are the top priorities for last season's champions, who moved up to eighth place in the table thanks to a 2-1 win at Norwich City on Tuesday. A top four finish has long been established as the norm at Stamford Bridge in the Roman Abramovich era, but Hiddink knows that it remains a tough task to achieve that aim this term. United, in fifth, seem more catchable and are currently five points ahead, although that could change when they play Watford on Wednesday.

Fifth spot will qualify the team that finishes there for the Europa League, as will winning the FA Cup. "Are they catchable?" said Hiddink when asked about United. "Well, first of all, we're happy. It's not Chelsea standard to be happy to be out of the relegation zone, and sit back and relax

a bit. "We have to set new targets now with the ambition of Chelsea in the direction of Europe."

"We have a tight schedule—Stoke, PSG, Everton—and the squad is not very, very broad, so we hope everyone is on board."

"If everyone is available, we'd like to go as high as possible towards the European spots."

Chelsea took the lead at Norwich after just 39 seconds when Kenedy scored and Diego Costa doubled the lead in first-half stoppage time, albeit from an offside position.

That gave them enough of a cushion to repel a spirited fightback from Norwich, who saw Nathan Redmond pull one back.

Hiddink made it clear he was happy with the result but the performance could have been better. "We have now won a few games in a row, which gives satisfaction of course," he said.

"But I think we were a bit sloppy in the finishing in the first half. "We had a splendid start through Kenedy, a beautiful goal, but after that

we had some options to get a second.

"We did in the end, but we should have killed it off already by then. I'm satisfied with the result, but I like to be critical that we didn't finish it off early."

FRUSTRATED

It wasn't the first time this season that Chelsea have benefited from an offside goal and Hiddink sympathised with the Canaries, who dropped into the bottom three. "I haven't seen it yet but, if so, I can understand people are frustrated in the other dressing room," he said. "If that's the case, I can understand their feelings." Norwich manager Alex Neil was confident that the players would not be affected by the current league table. "I don't think psychologically it will have a part," he said. "We have Swansea on Saturday, Man City and then games against teams around about us. We're capable of winning those games. — AFP

Sports

HH the Amir's Fifth Annual Grand Prix awarding ceremony today



Lindsey Vonn ends early because of knee injury



THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2016

LEICESTER ARE UP FOR THE FIGHT: RANIERI

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OAKLAND: Atlanta Hawks' Al Horford (15) dunks over Golden State Warriors' Brandon Rush, left, Shaun Livingston (34), Harrison Barnes (40) and Anderson Varejao (18) during the first half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, in Oakland, Calif. — AP

WARRIORS EDGE HAWKS IN OT

OAKLAND: Draymond Green hit an off-balance 3-pointer as the shot clock expired with 40.2 seconds remaining in overtime, and the Golden State Warriors escaped with a 109-105 win against the Atlanta Hawks on Tuesday night while Stephen Curry watched in street clothes with an injured ankle. Andrew Bogut saved the ball from going out of bounds, and then Green got the shot off just in time while avoiding Kent Bazemore's diving steal attempt. Klay Thompson made a go-ahead 3 with 2:54 left and another big basket at the 11.4-second mark. He finished with 26 points. The Warriors won their second straight overtime game and got a franchise-best 43rd straight regular-season home victory and 25th in a row this season. Golden State (54-5) can tie the Bulls' 44-game unbeaten mark at home from March 30, 1995, to April 4, 1996, when the Warriors host Oklahoma City today.

HEAT 129, BULLS 111

Hassan Whiteside scored a career-high 26 points and grabbed 14 rebounds, and Miami set a franchise record by shooting 67.5 percent while rolling past Chicago. Joe Johnson added 24 points in his Miami home debut. The previous Heat record for shooting percentage in a regular-season game was 63.4 percent on Dec. 16, 2013, against Utah. Chicago was within 108-102 with 5:14 left, before Miami finished on a

21-9 run. No team had shot better in an NBA game this season than the 61.8 percent posted by San Antonio against Philadelphia on Dec. 7. Derrick Rose returned from a three-game absence because of injury and scored 17 points for Chicago, which lost for the 17th time in 25 games and fell to the No. 9 spot in the Eastern Conference race. Pau Gasol had 15 points, nine rebounds and six assists.

TRAIL BLAZERS 104, KNICKS 85

Damian Lillard scored 30 points, CJ McCollum had 21 of his 25 in the second half and Portland earned its sixth straight road victory. The Blazers followed a fantastic February with a blistering start to March, winning for the 18th time in their last 22 games. Lillard reached the 30-point mark for the eighth time in nine games and had 14, nearly half of them, in the final 4:25 of the first half. Carmelo Anthony had 23 points and 10 rebounds for the Knicks, so hopeless in their 15th loss in 18 games that fans spent much of the fourth quarter chanting for Jimmer Fredette, who is nearing the end of his 10-day contract. The former college player of the year finally got in for the final 3:13 and finished with four points.

HORNETS 126, SUNS 92

Kemba Walker scored 26 points, leading the Hornets to the runaway win. Al Jefferson had 19

points and seven rebounds for Charlotte, which has won nine of 12. Nicolas Batum and reserve Jeremy Lamb scored 15 points apiece. The Suns had five players score in double figures in their 16th consecutive road loss. Alex Len had 18 points and 12 rebounds, and Mirza Teletovic scored 17 points. Charlotte led by 26 points at halftime and opened its biggest lead at 115-72 on Troy Daniels' 3-pointer with 7:56 left in the fourth quarter.

MAVERICKS 121, MAGIC 108

Wesley Matthews scored 21 points, and Dallas beat Orlando for its third straight win. The Mavericks made a season-high 56 percent of their field goal attempts (43 for 77). Zaza Pachulia had his 24th double-double of the season with 17 points and 10 rebounds. Dirk Nowitzki scored 19 points, and Chandler Parsons and J.J. Barea each had 17. Ersan Ilyasova scored 22 points for the Magic. Nikola Vucevic had 18, all in the first half, and Elfrid Payton and Dewayne Dedmon added 12 apiece.

LAKERS 107, NETS 101

D'Angelo Russell scored 39 points and hit two of his eight 3-pointers in the final minute to lead Los Angeles over Brooklyn. While Kobe Bryant sat out with a sore right shoulder, the Lakers snapped their eight-game losing streak with a spectacular game from the 20-year-old

NBA results/standings

Golden State 109, Atlanta 105 (OT); LA Lakers 107, Brooklyn 101; Dallas 121, Orlando 108; Miami 129, Chicago 111; New York 85, Portland 104; Charlotte 126, Phoenix 92.

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	33	28	.541	9.5
New York	25	37	.403	16	Utah	28	31	.475	13.5
Brooklyn	17	44	.279	23.5	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	54	5	.915	—
Indiana	31	29	.517	11.5	LA Clippers	39	20	.661	15
Detroit	31	29	.517	11.5	Sacramento	24	34	.414	29.5
Chicago	30	29	.508	12	Phoenix	15	45	.250	39.5
Milwaukee	25	35	.417	17.5	LA Lakers	12	49	.197	43
Southeast Division				Southwest Division					
Miami	34	26	.567	—	San Antonio	50	9	.847	—
Atlanta	33	28	.541	1.5	Memphis	35	24	.593	15
Charlotte	31	28	.525	2.5	Dallas	33	28	.541	18
Washington	29	30	.492	4.5	Houston	29	31	.483	21.5
Orlando	26	33	.441	7.5	New Orleans	23	35	.397	26.5

Russell, who scored 16 points in the fourth quarter and went 14 for 21 from the field. Brook Lopez had 23 points before fouling out with 2:43 left for the Nets, who fell to 2-3 on their nine-game trip with back-to-back losses at Staples Center. Russell hit a 3-pointer with 53

seconds left and another with 30 seconds to play, capping a spectacular night for the No. 2 overall pick in the draft. His 39 points were the most by a rookie this season. Los Angeles hung on for its first victory since Feb. 4 and just its fourth win in 26 games since Jan. 3. — AP

BANGLADESH BEAT PAKISTAN TO REACH ASIA CUP FINAL



DHAKA: Bangladesh's captain Mashrafe Mortaza, right, and Mahmudullah celebrate after winning the Asia Cup Twenty20 international cricket match against Pakistan in Dhaka, Bangladesh, yesterday. Bangladesh won by five wickets. — AP

DHAKA: Bangladesh qualified for the final of the Asia Cup after beating Pakistan by five wickets yesterday.

Pakistan recovered from 28-4 to post 129-7, before Bangladesh reached a winning total of 131-5 in 19.1 overs. Mahmudullah secured victory, and a place in Sunday's final against India, with a deep mid-wicket boundary.

Mahmudullah was unbeaten on 22, but Soumya Sarkar (48) provided the platform for the victory. Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Amir had figures 2-26 and kept his side's hopes alive until

Mashrafe Mortaza (12 not out) hit him for two consecutive boundaries in the 18th over. Those two boundaries off a searing yorker and a bouncer came after Shakib Al Hasan perished to a reverse sweep shot, piling the pressure on Pakistan.

With 18 runs needed in the last two overs, fast bowler Mohammad Sami conceded two no-balls, one of which Mahmudullah cut past the point to hit the boundary. It left Bangladesh needing just three runs to win in the last over.

Mahmudullah, who was at the crease during Bangladesh's two-run defeat by Pakistan in

SCOREBOARD

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

Pakistan		Bangladesh	
Khurram Manzoor c Rahim b Al-Amin	1	Tamim Iqbal lbw b Irfan	7
Sharjeel Khan b Sunny	10	Soumya Sarkar b Amir	48
Mohammad Hafeez lbw b Mortaza	2	Sabbir Rahman b Afridi	14
Sarfraz Ahmed not out	58	Mushfiqur Rahim lbw b Malik	12
Umar Akmal c Shakib b Taskin	4	Shakib Al Hasan b Amir	8
Shoaib Malik c Sabbir b Sunny	41	Mahmudullah not out	22
Shahid Afridi c Sabbir b Al-Amin	0	Mashrafe Mortaza not	12
Anwar Ali c Sabbir b Al-Amin	13	Extras (lb 4 w2 nb2)	8
Extras	0	Total (five wickets; 19.1 overs)	131
Total (seven wickets; 20 over)	129	Fall of wickets: 1-13 (Tamim) 2-46 (Sabbir), 3-83 (Soumya), 4-88 (Rahim), 5-104 (Shakib).	
Fall of wickets: 1-1 (Manzoor), 2-12 (Sharjeel), 3-18 (Hafeez), 4-28 (Akmal), 5-98 (Malik), 6-102 (Afridi), 7-129 (Ali).		Did not bat: Mohammad Mithun, Al-Amin Hossain, Arafat Sunny, Taskin Ahmed.	
Did not bat: Mohammad Sami, Mohammad Amir, Mohammad Irfan		Bowling: Amir 4-0-26-2(w1), Irfan 4-0-23-1, Sami 4-0-30-0 (nb2), Afridi 4-0-20-1, Ali 2.1-0-25-0 (w1)	
Bowling: Taskin 4-1-14-1, Al-Amin 4-0-25-3, Sunny 4-0-35-2, Mortaza 4-0-29-1, Shakib 4-0-26-0.		Result: Bangladesh won by five wickets.	

the 2012 Asia Cup final, then hit a boundary to the wild delight of the home crowd. However, Sarkar's run-a-ball 48 against a high-quality Pakistan attack, despite losing Tamim Iqbal for seven and in-form Sabbir Rahman for 14, was the key to Bangladesh's success.

Earlier, Sarfraz Ahmed led Pakistan's recovery with an unbeaten 58. He and Shoaib Malik, who scored 41, combined in a 70-run partner-

ship for the fifth wicket. Electing to bat first, Pakistan was 28-4 after 10 overs, before the duo counterattacked to give the bowlers a decent total to defend.

Bangladesh fast bowler Al-Amin Hossain claimed 3-25 and caused the early damage for Pakistan, helped by his new-ball partner Taskin Ahmed, 1-14. Left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny finished with 2-35. — AP



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Kuwait Times BUSINESS

THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2016

Japan's silver-haired seniors
still punching the time clock

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India axes tender for
\$1.5 billion tunnel

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Debut for Infiniti
advanced all-new
3.0 V6 twin-turbo

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GLOBAL STOCKS RALLY ON US DATA, CHINA STIMULUS

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GENEVA: A Bugatti Chiron car model is displayed during the press day of the Geneva Motor Show in Geneva. — AFP

VOLKSWAGEN FLAUNTS SUPERCARS AT AUTO SHOW

GENEVA: Bugatti unveiled the world's fastest road car at the Geneva auto show this week: the 2.4 million euro (\$2.6 million) Chiron with a 1,500-horsepower engine that can hit 420 kilometers per hour. Also on display is the Lamborghini Centenario, almost modest by comparison with a 770-horsepower engine, a price tag of 1.75 million euros and a top speed of around 350 kilometers per hour.

One thing the supercars have in common is that they are both made by Volkswagen, the German carmaker facing billions of dollars of fines and years of damage limitation after cheating diesel emissions tests in the United States. For some analysts, the extravagance is misplaced at a time Europe's largest carmaker has been forced to postpone its 2015 results while it tries to put a price on the emissions scandal, and its core VW brand steps up cost-saving plans.

Volkswagen (VW) has pledged to pull funding

from all non-essential projects and Chief Executive Matthias Mueller said in October it would examine the profit contribution of each of its over 310 models as part of the company's belt tightening. "VW must decide what their future focus should be. That entails the question whether the super-luxury business is needed?" said Stefan Bratzel, head of the Center of Automotive Management think-tank near Cologne. "This cannot be the future direction of VW." While the company does not publish a detailed breakdown of how much it costs to develop and produce its supercars, nor whether they contribute to the bottom line, past research has argued that they are loss-leaders.

Bernstein Research in 2013 said the Chiron's predecessor - the Veyron - was one of the six "most loss-making European cars of modern times", estimating the loss per car at nearly five times its original sale price of 1 million euros.

Hanover-based NordLB analyst Frank Schwöpe said the French brand Bugatti, which has never been profitable since VW bought it in 1998, "is a superfluous asset and its role must be questioned even more in tough times". Some analysts say selling Bugatti or Italian supercar brand Lamborghini makes more sense for VW, to help it pay fines and legal costs linked to its emissions test-rigging scandal.

'Unwise to stop'

But to a certain extent, the decision has already been made. When the diesel scandal broke, CEO Mueller vowed not to sell any of VW's brands and the Chiron, which had been in development for years, remained on course for its launch in Switzerland.

A source at VW said there was some criticism within top management as to whether the Bugatti supercar should be pushed to such extremes in

light of the post-dieselgate environment, but Mueller himself agreed the work should continue.

The argument internally is that the engineering work carried out by Bugatti is a testing ground for technologies used in relatively more accessible brands such as Porsche and Bentley, which do contribute to the bottom line. Porsche is the second biggest contributor to VW's operating profit after Audi, VW sources say technical insights on the durability and stability of materials and components gathered by Bugatti are used directly by Porsche and Bentley.

"Of course, the critics at VW asked whether we need such a car," Bugatti's Chief Executive Wolfgang Duerheimer said. "But it would have been unwise to stop this project." Besides the technological spin-offs, continued spending by the super-rich in the United States, China and Europe may encourage VW to press ahead with the supercar extravaganza. Deliveries of cars

priced at 250,000 euros or more may increase 12 percent to 8,014 vehicles by 2020 from 7,182 this year, according to research firm IHS Automotive.

At Geneva, VW's Bentley flaunted an all-new extended wheelbase version of its flagship Mulsanne saloon, especially catering to Chinese buyers with 250 millimeters (9.8 inches) of extra rear leg room and airline-style extending legrests. Lamborghini said it would only make 40 Centenarios, which is the most powerful car in its 53-year history, and they were all sold before the doors to the Geneva car show opened.

A third of the planned 500 models of the Chiron had also been snapped up before the supercar's unveiling.

"It's part of human nature to break boundaries and to reach new records," said Bugatti's Duerheimer, who is also head of motorsports at VW. "People are driven by their aspirations, and so is Bugatti." — Reuters

'WORLD'S LONGEST FLIGHT' LANDS IN NEW ZEALAND

WELLINGTON: An Emirates Airbus A380 touched down in New Zealand yesterday, completing what is believed to be the world's longest non-stop scheduled commercial flight. The service from Dubai to Auckland covered 14,200 kilometers (8,824 miles), according to industry website airwaysnews.com, pipping Qantas' 13,800-kilometre Sydney-Dallas route launched in 2014.

It said the route was also the longest in duration, with passengers set to spend 17 hours 15 minutes in the air during the return leg from Auckland to Dubai. However, that record is expected to be short-lived because Emirates' upcoming Dubai-Panama City service will take 17 hours 35 minutes when it launches later this month. Emirates described it as "one of the longest air routes in the world by distance".

"But with the assistance of clever technology and good planning, passengers will get to their destination in the shortest possible time," it said. "Emirates will be using flexible routes, which can vary by day, taking advantage of tail winds and avoiding head winds to reduce the time in the air." The inaugural Dubai-Auckland flight was made by an A380 but the regular service will be carried out using the Boeing 777. New Zealand Transport Minister Simon Bridges said the non-stop service, which cuts three hours off current Dubai-Auckland travel times, improved New Zealand's connectivity to the rest of the world. "Direct flights will encourage even more trade and tourism between our two countries, by offering more choice to passengers and freight customers," he said. — AFP

JEWELERS ACROSS GOLD-LOVING INDIA STRIKE OVER 'EXCISE TAX'

MUMBAI: Jewelers across gold-loving India started a three-day strike yesterday in a bid to force the government to shelve plans for a controversial excise tax announced in this week's budget. Indian finance minister Arun Jaitley on Monday proposed to reintroduce a one-percent levy on some jewelry transactions as he laid out his budget for the financial year 2016-17, angering the industry.

"Today we are left with no options but to go for 72 hours' token strike," Ashok Minawala, an All India Gems and Jewelry Trade Federation (GJF) representative said in a statement late Tuesday. "Pan India, all retail jewelers, manufacturers and wholesalers have decided to join the strike expressing their anguish over the government apathy towards the industry," he added. At the normally bustling Zaveri Bazaar—the centre of India's jewelry trade—in the western city of Mumbai, the majority of shops were closed but some opted to stay open yesterday.

Union leaders hope the industrial action, which runs until Friday, will be as successful as a three-week nationwide strike in 2012, which forced the previous Indian government to drop its plans for an excise tax. A one percent excise duty was also introduced in 2005 before being quickly dropped. Industry officials say the planned tax will damage growth as it will make certain purchases more expensive for buyers, at a time when demand is already weak due to the global financial slowdown. Long-running strike action by the jewelry industry would pose a major headache for Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he bids to kick-start economic growth and bolster his government's flagging popularity.

India vies with China for the title of the world's biggest consumer of gold and has an insatiable appetite for jewelry, with diamonds and bangles proving popular gifts at weddings and festivals. India is believed to have around

20,000 tons of gold lying idle in temples and homes and Modi is also currently trying to bring this wealth into the formal economy through a gold monetization scheme. India is now the world's fastest-growing major economy

but Modi is struggling to push much-needed reforms through parliament. Protests over jobs turned deadly recently while the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party received a hammering in state elections late last year. — AFP



MUMBAI: Indians walk past closed jewelry shops at Zaveri Bazaar — the centre of India's jewelry trade in Mumbai yesterday. Jewelers across gold-loving India started a three-day strike yesterday in a bid to force the government to shelve plans for a controversial excise tax announced in this week's budget. — AFP

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report								
At 02:00 PM Previous Day								
Global Stock Indices								
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %			
Dow Jones	16,516.50	16,865.08	348.58	▲ 2.11	3.45			
NASDAQ	4,558.00	4,689.60	131.60	▲ 2.89	-6.35			
S&P 500	1,932.23	1,978.35	46.12	▲ 2.39	3.31			
Financial Times	6,157.88	6,145.13	-12.75	▼ -0.13	-1.56			
DAX	9,717.16	9,717.57	0.41	▲ 0.00	9.55			
CAC 40	4,406.84	4,415.76	8.92	▲ 0.20	-4.77			
Swiss	7,962.22	7,997.26	35.04	▲ 0.44	9.31			
Nikkei 225	16,085.51	16,746.55	661.04	▲ 4.11	-12.02			
Topix	1,300.83	1,349.61	48.78	▲ 3.75	12.78			
Hang Seng	19,407.46	20,003.40	596.93	▲ 3.07	-0.72			
Straits Times	2,682.39	2,726.96	44.57	▲ 1.66	5.40			
MENA Stock Indices								
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %			
Kuwait	5,235.65	5,262.35	26.70	▲ 0.51	-7.25			
Saudi Arabia	6,180.66	6,173.75	-6.91	▼ 0.11	10.58			
Dubai	3,787.07	3,775.78	-11.29	▼ -0.30	4.32			
Abu Dhabi	4,372.48	4,379.63	7.15	▲ 0.16	1.51			
Bahrain	1,170.69	1,172.63	1.94	▲ 0.17	-3.72			
Qatar	9,969.25	10,014.43	45.18	▲ 0.45	1.41			
Oman	5,415.66	5,410.78	-4.88	▼ -0.09	0.17			
Lebanon	1,157.90	1,156.90	-1.00	▼ 0.09	0.99			
Jordan	2,173.90	2,136.88	-37.02	▼ 1.70	-0.50			
Egypt	6,115.54	6,122.49	6.95	▲ 0.11	12.71			
Morocco	8,978.11	8,978.30	0.19	▲ 0.00	0.03			
Tunisia	5,316.47	5,423.57	107.10	▲ 2.01	5.44			
Global Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	Kuwait Dinar	Saudi Riyal	US Dollar	Euro	Sterling Pound	Swiss Franc	Japanese Yen	Australian Dollar
Kuwait Dinar	12.3617	3.3091	3.0473	2.3650	3.3028	378.23	4.5889	
Saudi Riyal	0.08090	0.2677	0.2465	0.1913	0.2672	30.60	0.3712	
US Dollar	0.30220	3.7357	0.9209	0.7147	0.9981	114.30	1.3868	
Euro	0.32816	4.0566	1.0859	0.7764	1.0840	124.15	1.5065	
Sterling Pound	0.42284	5.2270	1.3992	1.2880	1.3969	159.92	1.9410	
Swiss Franc	0.30278	3.7428	1.0019	0.9225	0.7759	114.54	1.3894	
Japanese Yen	0.00261	0.0327	0.0087	0.0081	0.0087		0.0121	
Australian Dollar	0.21792	2.6938	0.7211	0.6638	0.7197	82.42		
MENA Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	US Dollar	Kuwait Dinar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatari Riyal	Omani Rial	UAE Dirham	Egyptian Pound
US Dollar		0.30220	3.7357	0.3740	3.6270	0.3833	3.6574	7.7201
Kuwait Dinar	3.3091		12.3617	1.2377	12.0020	1.2684	12.1026	25.5463
Saudi Riyal	0.2677	0.08090		0.1001	0.9709	0.1026	0.9790	2.0666
Bahraini Dinar	2.6736	0.80796	9.9877		9.6971	1.0248	9.7784	20.4003
Qatari Riyal	0.2737	0.08332	1.0300	0.1031		0.1057	1.0084	2.1285
Omani Rial	2.6088	0.78838	9.7456	0.9758	9.1621		9.5414	20.1401
UAE Dirham	0.2734	0.08263	1.0214	0.1023	0.9917	0.1048		2.1108
Egyptian Pound	0.1295	0.03914	0.4839	0.0484	0.4698	0.0497	0.4738	
Global Interest Rates								
Currency	1 Week	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year			
Kuwait Dinar	0.00	1.19	1.44	1.63	1.94			
US Dollar	0.39	0.43	0.63	0.88	1.17			
Euro	0.28	0.27	-0.22	-0.13	-0.02			
Sterling Pound	0.40	0.50	0.58	0.73	0.99			
Swiss Franc	0.81	0.82	-0.80	-0.76	-0.68			
Australian Dollar	2.06	2.11	2.04	2.00	1.90			
Canadian Dollar	0.00	0.86	0.87	0.97	1.04			
Global Bond Yields								
Country	2-Year	5-Year	10-Year	30-Year				
United States	0.85	1.33	1.84	2.71				
Europe	-0.56	-0.37	0.19	0.96				
United Kingdom	0.44	0.84	1.45	2.37				
Commodities								
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %			
Kuwait Oil	29.97	29.57	-0.40	▼ 1.33	4.07			
Brent	35.89	35.76	-0.13	▼ -0.36	-4.74			
West Texas	34.44	34.34	-0.10	▼ 0.29	7.81			
Gold	1231.86	1231.46	-0.40	▼ -0.03	13.85			
Silver	14.84	14.80	-0.04	▼ 0.29	6.69			

BUREAUCRAT, OLD FUNGUS LAW HOLD EGYPT'S WHEAT SUPPLIES HOSTAGE

THREAT OF REJECTED SHIPMENTS KEEPS SUPPLIERS AWAY

CAIRO: A global grain glut should make purchasing wheat cheap and easy for Egypt, the world's biggest importer, but traders say one bureaucrat has made it anything but. Saad Moussa, the head of the agricultural quarantine agency, refuses to let in a single grain of wheat infected with ergot, a common fungus that can lead to hallucinations and irrational behavior in large quantities but at trace levels is of no harm to humans.

Confusion over Egypt's position on ergot levels has disrupted wheat tenders, raising the possibility of a shortage of grain which could pose a political problem for President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi as the impoverished population relies on highly subsidized bread. Officials at Moussa's quarantine authority use a 2001 regulation, which Reuters has seen, stipulating zero tolerance for ergot as their main guide, according to a quarantine official who declined to be named. They first used the rule to reject a wheat shipment in December.

Moussa, who did not respond to repeated attempts to contact him for this story, told Reuters in January: "Any wheat that we inspect that has any level of ergot will be rejected...it would be very harmful if any level of contamination reached plants in Egypt." Moussa reports to Agriculture Minister Essam Fayed but a spokesman for the agriculture ministry said he had no knowledge of the 2001 regulation Moussa was relying on. "I don't know anything about this topic, the last thing I have is what was announced by the agriculture minister and the minister of supply that they would accept 0.05 percent," spokesman Eid Hawash said.

Officials at the Supply Ministry were not available for comment for this story. Most Egyptian officials follow a different specification issued in 2010 by the Egyptian Organization for Standardization and Quality allowing trace levels of 0.05 percent,

the common worldwide standard and the one stipulated by Egypt's grain-importing body, the General Authority for Supply Commodities (GASC). "I am bound by the Egyptian specifications," Mamdouh Abdel Fattah, vice chairman of GASC, told Reuters when asked about the contradiction between the two, stressing that the 2010 specifications are more recent than the 2001 regulation and is accepted internationally.

Two decision makers

Panic began to spread among traders after a 63,000-tonne French wheat shipment purchased by GASC was rejected by the quarantine agency in December for containing trace levels of ergot. GASC was forced to cancel two tenders after rattled traders and suppliers stayed away, uncertain that their shipments would be ergot free and fearing the heavy cost of having a shipment rejected. After weeks of confusion Minister Fayed and Supply Minister Khaled Hanafi tried to reassure the market in a joint press conference on February 7 that Egypt would accept all shipments with less than 0.05 percent ergot.

The following day Moussa's agency rejected a shipment of Canadian wheat, further baffling the market. "This was a big surprise. It was one day after the TV announcement of both ministers...and all of a sudden the vessel is rejected. So do we have two different decision makers in the same (agriculture) ministry?" the Cairo-based trader said. According to documents seen by Reuters, the shipment had a far lower ergot reading than 0.05 percent. The lack of successful sales prospects to a huge buyer along with record global wheat prices has weighed on Benchmark global grain prices and curbed export prospects for European Union producers. That should have created ideal

conditions for Egypt to buy wheat at great prices.

Incalculable risk

GASC successfully purchased 300,000 tons of wheat last week. But with less than half the usual number of suppliers opting to make bids during the tender, the uncertainty was still front and centre. "The risk is still incalculable," said a Cairo-based trader that sat out of the tender, echoing the sentiment of several others reached by Reuters.

All traders interviewed for this story asked to remain anonymous. Wheat traders are generally banned from speaking to the media by the companies they represent. Traders who sat out the latest tender said they would remain on the sidelines, at least for now. (Moussa's) definitely not changed his mind at all—he's even lobbying all the research centers in the country and now they are all convinced with the zero," said another trader. Egypt will announce the results of its latest tender for an unspecified amount of wheat from global suppliers for shipment from April 5-14 after 3:30 p.m. local time (1330 GMT) on Wednesday.

Hanafi said on Friday Egypt has enough wheat supplies to last until the middle of June. But should the crisis deepen, it could hurt Sisi's credibility at a time of waning popularity and with the economy struggling after years of political turmoil. The former army chief faced tough criticism last week by Egyptians on social media after he delivered a long television speech on his vision for the future. Any Egyptian leader knows ample supplies of low-cost bread are key to maintaining stability. President Anwar Sadat triggered riots when he cut the bread subsidy in 1977. And when Egyptians rose up against autocrat Hosni Mubarak's rule in 2011, one of their signature chants was "Bread, freedom and social justice". — Reuters



LEXUS LC 500 COUPE GRABS 'EYESON DESIGN AWARDS'

KUWAIT: The all-new Lexus LC 500 luxury coupe grabbed two awards for design excellence on its debut at the 2016 North American International Auto Show (NAIAS), which was held recently in Detroit, USA. The provocative, athletic flagship car bagged the 2016 EyesOn Design Award for Design Excellence in the Production Car category and for Interior Design. The LC 500 which is inspired from the Lexus LF-LC 2+2 Hybrid Sports Coupe wins this award four years after the latter won the EyesOn Design best concept car award.

The NAIAS 2016 EyesOn Design Awards honor the best production and concept vehicles making their worldwide auto show debut at the prestigious Detroit show. The awards are selected by active and retired design heads of automotive manufacturers and transportation design chairs from top art schools. "I am so honored to receive the EyesOn Design awards for best interior design and for best production car from our design peers for the LC 500," said Tadao Mori, Chief Designer of the Lexus LC 500. "The LC 500 is



a clear result of the passion, hard work and collaboration between our designers and engineers for the future chapter of Lexus."

The LC 500 is the first ever luxury automobile to feature a 10-speed automatic transmission. Powered by high-revving 5.0-liter V8 engine, the luxury coupe is also the first Lexus to use the

brand's all-new, premium rear-wheel-drive luxury platform, which promises enhanced dynamic capability and performance. "The accolades for its design and the excitement that the LC 500 is generating is a very positive sign and reflects Lexus' attempt at raising the bar in the luxury car segment," said Takayuki Yoshitsugu, Chief Representative of Middle East & North Africa Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation.

"This new coupe makes a statement, both in terms of style and engineering and represents an exhilarating and progressive design direction for Lexus. We would like to thank our customers for their support and loyalty which inspires us to create the best luxury vehicles for their driving pleasure." The design of the LC 500 shares many of the key elements, proportions and visual dynamism of the LF-LC concept car. The challenge for Lexus designers was to work in conjunction with the engineers to find new ways to redefine the Lexus design style with dynamic design and advanced technology.

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.	
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.646
Indian Rupees	4.466
Pakistani Rupees	2.876
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.086
Nepali Rupees	2.746
Singapore Dollar	215.670
Hongkong Dollar	38.778
Bangladesh Taka	3.844
Philippine Peso	6.382
Thai Baht	8.482
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	80.443
Qatari Riyal	82.864
Omani Rial	783.524
Bahraini Dinar	801.120
UAE Dirham	82.130
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	35.330
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	38.571
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.408
Tunisian Dinar	148.130
Jordanian Dinar	425.160
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.010
Syrian Lira	2.150
Morocco Dirham	309.23
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	301.500
Euro	328.940
Sterling Pound	422.100
Canadian dollar	225.250
Turkish Lira	103.080
Swiss Franc	303.470
Australian Dollar	219.340
US Dollar Buying	300.300

GOLD	
20 Gram	247.560
10 Gram	126.700
5 Gram	64.190
UAE EXCHANGE CENTRE WLL	
CURRENCIES	
Australian Dollar	201.91
Canadian Dollar	219.82
Swiss Franc	306.95
Euro	336.85
US Dollar	299.90
Sterling Pound	431.04
Japanese Yen	2.67
Bangladesh Taka	3.817
Indian Rupee	4.375
Sri Lankan Rupee	2.083
Nepali Rupee	2.732
Pakistani Rupee	2.860
UAE Dirhams	0.08161
Bahraini Dinar	0.7970
Egyptian Pound	0.03819
Jordanian Dinar	0.4265
Omani Rial	0.7788
Qatari Riyal	0.08269
Saudi Riyal	0.07994
DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD	
Rate for Transfer	
US Dollar	301.750
Canadian Dollar	226.610
Sterling Pound	422.300
Euro	328.765
Swiss Franc	302.320
Bahrain Dinar	798.280
UAE Dirhams	82.395
Qatari Riyals	83.605

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY		
COUNTRY	SELL CASH	SELLDRAFT
British Pound	0.413977	0.422977
Czech Korune	0.004082	0.016082
Danish Krone	0.039791	0.044791
Euro	0.321699	0.329699
Norwegian Krone	0.030781	0.035981
Romanian Leu	0.073122	0.073122
Slovakia	0.008965	0.018965
Swedish Krona	0.030895	0.035895
Swiss Franc	0.295071	0.305271
Turkish Lira	0.096862	0.107162
Australian Dollar	0.209659	0.221159
New Zealand Dollar	0.193340	0.202840
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.218993	0.227493
US Dollars	0.297400	0.301900

US Dollars Mint		
	0.297900	0.301900
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003456	0.004056
Chinese Yuan	0.044564	0.048064
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036685	0.039435
Indian Rupee	0.004182	0.004572
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002561	0.002741
Kenyan Shilling	0.002962	0.002962
Korean Won	0.000235	0.000250
Malaysian Ringgit	0.068833	0.074833
Nepalese Rupee	0.002858	0.003028
Pakistani Rupee	0.002703	0.002983
Philippine Peso	0.006282	0.006562
Sierra Leone	0.000071	0.000077
Singapore Dollar	0.211520	0.217520
South African Rand	0.013291	0.021791
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001745	0.002325
Taiwan	0.008979	0.009159
Thai Baht	0.008158	0.008708
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.792849	0.800849
Egyptian Pound	0.033300	0.037636
Iranian Riyal	0.000083	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000197	0.000257
Jordanian Dinar	0.421234	0.428734
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000149	0.000249
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020519	0.044519
Nigerian Naira	0.001241	0.001876
Omani Rial	0.776697	0.782377
Qatar Riyal	0.082103	0.083316
Saudi Riyal	0.079513	0.080463
Syrian Pound	0.001277	

GLOBAL STOCKS RALLY ON US DATA, CHINA STIMULUS

LONDON: A global stock market rally continued yesterday on bright US data, China's stimulus, steadier oil prices and growing hopes of more euro-zone monetary policy easing, dealers said. Shanghai soared almost 4.3 percent, despite news that Moody's has downgraded the outlook on China's sovereign bonds from stable to negative. Tokyo surged 4.1 percent, driven also by the weaker yen which boosts exporters, and Hong Kong jumped 3.1 percent.

Europe's equities also churned higher with London and Frankfurt both adding 0.1 per-

cent in late morning deals, and Paris up 0.3 percent. This week's rally was sparked Monday by the People's Bank of China (PBoC), which cut the reserve requirement ratio for banks. The move is aimed at encouraging lending and stimulating activity in the world's number-two economy, a key driver of global growth. Further ahead, there are growing expectations of monetary policy easing from the European Central Bank (ECB) next week.

'Investor-reassuring cocktail' 'After a volatile February saw the markets

scraping a variety of years-long lows, the recovery ... seems to have stepped up a gear as March has got underway,' Spreadex analyst Connor Campbell told AFP. 'It is hard to pinpoint exactly why there has been such a shift in sentiment; however, steps in the right direction from the PBoC in regards to its recent cut, the gradually-steadying situation in oil, and the near-guaranteed action from the ECB next week appear to have combined into an investor-reassuring cocktail, for now at least.'

Markets have also been propelled higher

by a stream of upbeat data on the United States economy. Better-than-expected reports on the sluggish US manufacturing sector, construction spending and auto sales showed the world's top economy was still resilient even as global growth sputters. The bright figures also put the chances of another Federal Reserve rate rise this year back into play.

Russ Mould, investment director at trading firm AJ Bell, added that steadier commodity prices have also contributed to the rally. 'Oil, copper and iron ore have all stopped going down and that has calmed a few nerves about both economic growth and the banks' exposure

to these industries,' Mould said. 'In addition, macroeconomic releases have generally met expectations.'

'All eyes are now on the big run of central bank meetings slated for this month - ECB on the 10th, Bank of Japan on the 15th, Federal Reserve on the 16th and Bank of England on the 17th.' The BoJ had shocked markets in January by unveiling a below-zero interest rate policy as its latest weapon to spur bank lending and drive up inflation. However, the move was widely panned as desperate, and underscored the challenges facing Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's limping bid to kickstart Japan's economy. — AFP

Table with multiple columns: Index, Change, Volume, etc. Includes sections for 'أسعار الأسهم في سوق الكويت للأوراق المالية' and 'الاربعاء 02 مارس 2016'. Lists various stock indices and individual shares with their respective values and changes.



TOKYO: A man riding a bicycle looks at the electronic stock indicator of a securities firm in Tokyo yesterday. Global stocks jumped yesterday after encouraging signs of strength in the US economy sent shares higher on Wall Street. — AP

GOLD DOWN; ROBUST US DATA LIFTS DOLLAR

DOLLAR UP 0.1% VS BASKET OF CURRENCIES

LONDON: Gold dropped for a second session yesterday as the dollar rose and global shares strengthened after strong US data rekindled speculation the Federal Reserve could still raise interest rates this year. Spot gold slipped 0.1 percent to \$1,229.06 an ounce by 1049 GMT, while US gold futures for April delivery were unchanged at \$1,230.80 an ounce.

'We have seen oil markets stabilize, stocks move higher and the dollar making a bit of headway over the past week and then adding to that, we are looking at whether to readjust the expectation for US rate hikes,' Saxo Bank senior manager Ole Hansen said. 'But the reaction in gold is really benign. We are still in the phase of investors filling their boots and that means the retracement we are seeing in gold is likely to be used as a buying opportunity.'

Yesterday, gold fell along with other assets perceived as safer, including the Japanese yen, as a rally in stock markets stoked risk appetite. Data showed US manufacturing stabilized in February. A

separate report on construction spending showed activity scaled a more than eight-year high in January. The dollar was up 0.1 percent against a basket of currencies, after hitting a one-month high against the euro on Tuesday. Investors will be watching more US data to gauge the impact on stocks and the Fed's monetary policy, with the most important release being non-farm payrolls on Friday.

While gold faces firm resistance at \$1,250-\$1,260, 'the market has built a solid and supportive base above \$1,200' and there is enough risk sentiment and uncertainty to support the metal, HSBC said in a note. 'We are raising the top end of our trading range to \$1,300 from \$1,275 previously and believe the rally remains essentially intact.' Flows into bullion-backed exchange-traded funds (ETFs) continued to increase. Assets in SPDR Gold Trust, the world's top gold ETF, rose 1.15 percent on Tuesday to 786.20 tons, the highest since September 2014. Among other precious metals, platinum fell 0.3 percent to \$935.77 an ounce, while silver lost 0.2 percent to \$14.81 and palladium climbed 0.4 percent to \$516.75. — Reuters

JAPAN'S SILVER-HAIRED SENIORS STILL PUNCHING THE TIME CLOCK

TOKYO: Many people his age would be happy to slip on a cardigan and put their feet up, but not Teruo Sugiura. The 86-year-old makes his way to a seniors' work centre in Tokyo several days a week where he repairs traditional Japanese sliding doors. It doesn't pay much, but that hasn't stopped Sugiura from turning up for the last 20 years-one of millions of elderly Japanese still collecting wages into retirement age. 'I'm working to keep my body in good shape,' said Sugiura, a former sweets salesman at a high-end department store. 'I think it's wrong not to be doing anything. There's no point staying at home twiddling my thumbs.'

Japan's silver-haired workforce is everywhere these days-from wrinkled men waving glow sticks at construction sites to checkout counter clerks or caregivers for the very old. And this geriatric working class shows no sign of shrinking-more than 20 percent of Japanese older than 65 still work. That is the highest proportion among developed economies and a figure likely to soar as the pool of younger workers falls and the fast-ageing population squeezes a strained social welfare system. People over 65 are expected to account for nearly 40 percent of the greying population by 2060 as Japan wrestles with a low birth rate.

Meanwhile, the country's labor force-the number of employed and unemployed people aged 15 to 64-is at risk of losing more than 27 million workers in the same time frame, a drop of about 42 percent from current levels, according to a government advisory panel. Demand for workers is high and Japan's unemployment rate for January, published on Tuesday, was an enviable 3.2 percent, a two-decade low and well below the United States or many European nations.

Market pressure

In response to demographic shifts, the government is gradually raising the official retirement age and starting ages for state pension payments to 65. The official retirement age will be raised in steps from 61 to 65

by 2025. It will be raised to 62 next month. 'This is enough incentive for (seniors) to push back their retirement and keep working,' investment bank Goldman Sachs said in a recent report on Japan's labor market. And Tokyo is putting the pressure on firms to keep workers on longer, or by hiring older employees. Some firms have responded, including automaker Honda which has said it would raise its working age by five years to 65 starting in April, a move that could affect tens of thousands of workers. Meanwhile, in northern Japan, nationwide convenience store chain Circle K Sunkus has trained a handful of elderly people in a nod to the ageing labor pool. Electronics giant Ricoh has called on retired technicians to get its computers ready to be installed at companies, schools and government departments. 'There is very strong market pressure for employers to keep older people,' Atsushi Seike, a professor of labor economics and president of Tokyo's Keio University said. 'The drastic decline of the workforce will have a significant impact on the behavior of employers.' 'Many are willing to boost the number of older workers, even at major companies, and I think this trend will continue-or even accelerate-in the future.'

More than half a million older Japanese find work through the government-subsidized National Silver Human Resources Center Association, including door repairman Sugiura and 63-year-old Junko Kondo. Kondo's government pension isn't enough to let her do everything she wants. 'I'm saving the money I make here,' Kondo says, as she assembles packages for wrapping up high-quality salt sold at luxury stores. 'I'll use it to buy presents for my grandchildren, or a sweater, or maybe just lunch for myself.' The reasons for Japan's elderly staying in the workforce vary, but keeping mentally and physically fit is key for many people.

It also puts some extra money in seniors' pockets, although the wages paid by the Silver Centres are low-they pay an average of 37,000 yen (\$330) a month. — AFP



BAIC X65 ready for adventure

Maximum joy, freedom and easy control



Driving can only be experienced during tough circumstances by providing motorists with unique opportunities to enjoy adjustable flexible controls for a smooth drive, and nothing can elaborate luxury better than scientific aesthetics. The moment a driver gets in the BAIC X65, he feels elegance and privacy as if he is at home enjoying a highly developed sound system and absolutely comfortable seats that give driving two new dimensions: Maximum joy and maximum freedom. It is a fantastic vehicle by all means. It provides a dynamic balance between reason and passion and full enjoyment for drivers and passengers. Its luxury touches are impressive. Its outstanding performance provides power. This is the BAIC X65, the best and richest in specifications.

BAIC X65 is full of value and excitement. It is strong, safe and trustworthy. This is what all those who test-drive the BAIC X65, which was recently launched in Kuwait by First Trading Company, a subsidiary of Mutawa and Alkazi Group, will say. The car is characterized by elegance and supremacy. It is elegant in design that matches international security standards and supreme in terms of econom-

- First Trading Co is a subsidiary of Mutawa and Alkazi Group
- 58 years of leadership
- 11-year warranty on all vehicles



ic performance, which both form the depth of the philosophy of manufacturing it. It embodies strength, elegance and luxury. It makes drivers comfortable on all roads with a unique design and sophisticated interior and exterior systems and a powerful engine with potentials on all roads.

Whenever BAIC X65 drives along, it will surely catch looks of admiration and amazement. It will evoke feelings with its strong rear LED lights and front xenon lights and large luggage area, which makes it the best companion on long trips and the ideal vehicle for adventure on mountainous and desert roads.

With a design based on the unique features of SUV vehicles, BAIC X65 combines superior performance, smart configuration and fashionable design in one in order to provide customers with an exclusive ride for pursuing fashion and quality of life, and to bring them a more passionate and enjoyable driving experience. BAIC X65 is an exceptional vehicle with endless ambitions, fearless powers and great passion for adventure, which recently arrived to the Kuwaiti market at Mutawa and Alkazi showrooms as a substantial addition for drivers in a market with the highest demand for purchasing modern vehicles as soon as they are released.

Comfortable Leather Interior

The most recent in the vehicles offered by the First Trading Co, a subsidiary of Mutawa and Alkazi Co and the sole agent of BAIC in Kuwait, is characterized with a comfortable spacious leather interior, a 7-inch screen and LCD



operated DVD, a 360-degree rearview camera, GPS, a 6-speed tiptronic transmission, multifunction controls and volume control in the steering wheel, which enables drivers enjoy listening to music while driving without fear of stopping or being too busy to check the road.

The body represents the highest high-strength steel use ratio in its class, namely, 95 percent, which contributes to protecting all passengers inside this unique four-wheel-drive vehicle that drives on 17-inch aluminum wheels suitable for all seasons and all roads. It is also equipped with double front airbags, side airbags and SRS that provide utmost safety levels and protect passengers in case of collisions.

The Chinese company BAIC has surely worked on providing the most suitable circumstances to help drivers by equipping the X65 with 8-direction electrically adjustable seats and enough space for beverages and keys, in addition to a BEBS system to enter and start the engine without keys that will highlight its appeal to technology-loving clients, namely the youth.

The vehicle is available at First Trading Company showrooms in seven colors - black, grey, silver, white, dark green, wine red and orange, which indicate that BAIC is keen on providing the demands of all users including men and women. The company is also characterized by using the highest high-strength steel and material which increase the maximum tensile rigidity to highest rates and enables it to endure various road dangers with a strong independent front suspension that improves the vehicle's performance and facilitates easy control over it.

Getting inside the cabin, passengers will feel comfort-

able with an integrated computerized screen and a panoramic shaded sunroof, electrically foldable and adjustable side view mirrors and indicators to meet all customers' tastes and demands of elegance and luxury in one affordable vehicle for all.

Notably, BAIC Motors is one of the world's largest automobile manufacturing groups and has a long history of cooperating with major automobile manufacturing companies like Mercedes, Hyundai and others in addition to winning the intellectual property rights of using the Swedish Saab company's technology in manufacturing its vehicles. BAIC is also one of the fastest growing companies that managed to make considerable leaps forward in terms of sales and customers' trust worldwide.



DUBAI-BASED NETWORK INTERNATIONAL SEAL EMP DEAL DEAL DEEPENS EXPOSURE TO AFRICA

DUBAI: Dubai-based Network International has agreed to buy rival Emerging Markets Payments (EMP) from private equity firm Actis in a deal creating the largest payments processor in the Middle East and Africa, it said yesterday. The size of the deal was not disclosed but sources familiar with the matter told Reuters it was more than \$300 million. It

is the first acquisition made by the payments firm since private equity firms Warburg Pincus and General Atlantic bought a 49 percent stake in Network International late last year. Dubai's largest bank, Emirates NBD, owns the rest.

"We are creating an organization that is five times larger than our closest competitor and giving our customers a

geographic spread right across the Middle East and Africa," Network International Chief Executive Bhairav Trivedi said. He said the competitor he was referring to was Lebanon-based CSC. Network International currently sources around 80 percent of its revenue from the United Arab Emirates. After the deal, around 65 percent will

come from within the UAE, Trivedi said.

The acquisition would allow Network International to grow its revenue in the mid to high 30s percent in 2016, he said. In Africa, EMP serves more than 35,000 retailers and 130 banks and processes over nine million accounts, Network International said in a statement. "We will use their [EMP's] platform to expand fur-

ther into Africa," Dan Zilberman, head of EMEA at Warburg Pincus, told Reuters. "We will integrate the two businesses and continue growing through acquisitions and organically." Nigeria-based payments firm Interswitch is one of the companies that could be the next acquisition target, sources familiar with the matter told Reuters. —Reuters

INDIA AXES TENDER FOR \$1.5 BILLION TUNNEL AFTER OPPOSITION CRITICISM

OPPN QUESTIONS MINISTER'S LINKS TO IRB BOSS

NEW DELHI: India's transport minister Nitin Gadkari has cancelled a contract to build a \$1.5 billion tunnel in the Himalayas, after opposition politicians alleged irregularities in the bidding for India's most expensive road project. IRB Infrastructure Developers Ltd won the right to build the Zojila Pass tunnel in Jammu & Kashmir state in January after it emerged as the sole bidder. It said Gadkari's ministry had cancelled the award without giving a reason. "We have no clue as to why," Virendra Mhaikar, IRB's managing director said yesterday.

Shares in IRB fell more than 4 percent on the cancellation of a deal worth three-fifths of its entire order book. They later rebounded to trade 1 percent up. India's opposition Congress Party had seized on the winning bid for the 100.5 billion rupees (\$1.49 billion) project, accusing Gadkari of violating

India's anti-corruption rules - a charge the ministry rejected. Gadkari, a leading figure in Modi's nationalist government, is leading a drive to upgrade India's infrastructure. This week's annual budget hiked annual spending on roads and railways by 22.5 percent to \$33 billion.

As state transport minister in Maharashtra in the 1990s, Gadkari championed the construction of India's first major express highway. That toll road, from Mumbai to Pune, is one of around 20 road concessions now run by IRB. IRB has acknowledged having invested in a company owned by Gadkari in the early 2000s, when the latter did not hold public office. Both Mhaikar and Gadkari have denied any wrongdoing. Digvijaya Singh, Congress general secretary, has said that these past links between Gadkari and Mhaikar should have been disclosed in rela-

tion to the tunnel tender.

Clean image

Modi is sensitive to charges his government cosies up to big business rather than working for everyday Indians, and is desperate to avoid the corruption allegations that dogged his predecessor. A senior transport ministry official said the decision to cancel the tender was taken at "the highest level" but declined further comment beyond saying the tender would be retendered this month. A call to Gadkari's spokesman went unanswered. The roads ministry said on Jan. 12 that it had followed due process and maintained complete transparency in the Zojila tender, and that IRB won only after it was extended several times in the absence of other participants. Mhaikar said he did not think the cancellation had anything to

do with the alleged irregularities. IRB would await the revised terms of the new tender before deciding whether to bid again.

"The allegations have no base," Mhaikar said of the rebuttal by the transport ministry after the tender was awarded in January. "The matter was rubbished by the ministry there and then." One analyst said that IRB still had good chances of winning the order. "They are the only company in the country who can take on this type of project," said Vibhor Singhal at Phillip Capital in Mumbai. The 14 km tunnel would open up a strategic highway running east from Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar that now only opens in the summer months. Its completion would strengthen New Delhi's grip on the disputed region, over which India and Pakistan have fought two of their three wars. —Reuters

News

in brief

UAE's Mubadala open to selling SR Technics

ABU DHABI: Abu Dhabi state-owned fund Mubadala is open to selling its aviation services unit SR Technics, an executive at the company said yesterday, confirming a previous media report. "If someone comes for a prime price we will sell," Homaïd Al-Shemmari, Mubadala's head of aerospace and engineering services, told Reuters at a finance event in Abu Dhabi, though no-one had yet approached Mubadala to buy the unit. Mubadala, whose main goal is to make investments which enhance the development of the local economy, has stakes in companies including General Electric and private equity firm Carlyle. State-linked funds in the region have come under pressure as low oil prices prompt governments to tighten their spending and investment plans. Mubadala was considering the sale of SR Technics and held talks with bankers about the matter, Bloomberg reported on Feb. 23, citing sources familiar with the matter. Mubadala had initially acquired a 40 percent stake SR Technics in 2006 as part of a \$1.3 billion takeover of the company, which was hived off from Swiss Air.

German new car sales up 12.1% in February

FRANKFURT: New car registrations in Germany, a key indicator of demand in Europe's top economy, rose strongly in February, data showed yesterday. A total of 250,302 new cars were registered last month, an increase of 12.1 percent compared with the figure for the same month in 2015, according to data compiled by the federal road transport authority KBA. Car sales had already risen by three percent in January. In the breakdown of sales by different carmakers, new own-brand registrations of the country's biggest carmaker Volkswagen increased by 4.3 percent in February. Volkswagen has admitted to installing emissions-cheating software in 11 million diesel engines worldwide, sparking a worldwide scandal. Nevertheless, VW brand cars are still the biggest selling models in Germany, accounting for 20.9 percent of the overall market, the data showed. New registrations of Skoda cars, one of the VW brands also involved by the scandal, increased by 9.1 percent last month, while sales of the group's Spanish brand SEAT fell by 10.7 percent.

Spain's jobless queue inches up in February

MADRID: Spain's unemployment queue inched up slightly in February, the government said yesterday, due mainly to a rise in the number of jobless in the agriculture sector. The number of people registered as unemployed rose month-on-month by 2,231 people, or 0.05 percent, to 4.15 million in February, the Labor Ministry said in a statement. It was the first increase in the number of jobless during the month of February since 2013. The number of jobless in the agriculture sector rose by 14,029 people but fell by 6,724 people in the construction sector and by 9,753 people in the services sector. Spain was hit hard by the global financial crisis, experiencing five difficult years of on-off recession that saw unemployment rocket from a low of around eight percent in 2007 to a high of 27 percent in 2013. The unemployment rate registered a record fall last year, dropping nearly three percentage points to 20.9 percent, although it still remains the highest rate in the euro-zone's after Greece's.

Alibaba eyeing a stake in China business magazine

SHANGHAI: The publisher of one of China's most respected business magazines, Caixin, said yesterday it was seeking new investors following reports e-commerce giant Alibaba plans to take a stake in the company as it looks to expand its media empire. Alibaba founder Jack Ma is seeking to diversify beyond the core business of providing online retail platforms and in December bought Hong Kong's premier English-language newspaper, a move that raised concerns about media independence. Caixin Media provides financial and business news through its flagship magazine and several other platforms under the editorial leadership of Hu Shuli, who has received international attention for her brand of investigative journalism within the boundaries of the Communist-ruled state. Bloomberg News said yesterday that Alibaba's financial services unit Ant was in talks to invest in Caixin Media, but gave no size or price for the stake.

Nigeria to start new talks over \$3.9 billion MTN fine

ABUJA: Nigeria will start new talks with South African mobile phone operator MTN "very soon" to settle a dispute over a \$3.9 billion fine but the final decision rests with President Muhammadu Buhari, the communications minister said. Last week, MTN said it had withdrawn a lawsuit against Nigeria over the fine, which originally stood at \$5.2 billion, and aimed for a settlement. "It is (now) for government to meet with them and conclude negotiations," telecommunications minister Adebayo Shittu told Reuters late on Tuesday, the first reaction from the ministry. MTN shares, which had been down 2.8 percent yesterday, trimmed losses after the comments although they were still down 1.8 percent by 1045 GMT. Shittu said President Muhammadu Buhari would make the final decision on any settlement over the penalty. "It is within his power and jurisdiction to do that if he feels that it would be in the interests of Nigeria to do so," he said.

OOREDOO AND ERICSSON TO ADDRESS M2M OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNER ON RADIO DOT

KUWAIT: Ericsson (NASDAQ: ERIC) and Ooredoo Kuwait, a telecommunications operator and member of the Ooredoo Group, announced a partnership to expand the established M2M and IoT partnership between both companies during MWC 2016, which took place recently in Barcelona. Ooredoo Kuwait is launching the advanced M2M/IoT Connectivity Management Service using Ericsson DCP platform, a service that will promote the creation of IoT business in Kuwait for them Ericsson Device Connectivity Platform (DCP) Service will be developed for the first time in the Kuwaiti market and Ooredoo is the pioneer operator enabling the service. Further to this announcement, Ericsson and Ooredoo Kuwait also launched their to deploy Ericsson's City Site and Ericsson state of the art indoor small cell solution Radio Dot System for the first time in Kuwait.

As a result of the deployment, Ooredoo will be able to provide superior network performance and faster data speeds to enterprise and in-building consumers with a short time to market. The solutions will also blend with the city landscape without impacting performance, a requirement that is increasingly high on operators' agendas. Following the initial deployment, Ericsson will continue to cooperate with Ooredoo Kuwait to apply the City Site solution more extensively throughout the country. In addition to providing customers with advanced mobile broadband services, the deployment will enrich Ooredoo Kuwait's existing 4G+ network and will ensure an improved customer experience.

Mijbil Al-Ayoub, Director of Corporate Communications at



Ooredoo Kuwait, says: "We have once again aligned ourselves with Ericsson, a trusted ICT transformation partner, to maintain our own leadership in deploying advanced, state-of-the-art mobile broadband solutions in the Kuwaiti market. As the fastest growing telecommunications company in Kuwait, we continue to innovate to serve our customers, including the large enterprise market, which requires superior indoor cellular connectivity to keep up with the pace of business."

Ahmed Abdel Shafy, Vice President at Ericsson, says: "By 2050, 70 percent of the global population will live in cities. As a result, operators are constantly looking to enhance their networks to meet urban dwellers' expectations. Ericsson's City Site and Radio Dot System solutions showcase our technology and services leadership in this area, and will empower Ooredoo Kuwait to deliver high-performance coverage and capacity for their customers."

EXCLUSIVE SEMINAR ON INVESTMENT IN INDIAN REAL ESTATE

KUWAIT: There will be a seminar on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)/ Non-Resident Indian (NRI) investment in Indian real estate during the Indian Realty Exhibition that will be held at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Salmiya on 4 and 5 March. There will be two sessions every day and the morning session will be held from 11am to 1pm while the evening session will be from 5pm to 7pm. The seminar will cover the present real estate scenario, FDI and NRI investment in real estate. Among the specific areas to be covered include government regulations, investment trends, easing of regulatory norms, highlights of the recent Union Budget for the housing sector and specific city scenario.



Experts will talk on a wide range of topics from the regulatory angle to implementation opportunities available for overseas investors. Foreign direct investment in Indian real estate is up by 48 percent in the last 19 months, at a time when global FDI has fallen. Private equity investment has been estimated at US\$2.9 billion in 2015. India is poised for listing of Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) with the dividend distribution tax (DDT) getting exempted in the recent budget. This assumes significance as currently, around 21.4 million sq m of office space can be seen as REIT-compliant. Assuming even 50 percent of these get listed, REITs listing has been estimated at US\$18.5 billion.

The recent policy changes by the Indian government for investment by NRIs via non-repatriable route would be considered as domestic investment at par with the investments made by residents. Similarly FDI in partnership firms by NRIs is currently under the approval route. New rules permit NRIs/PIOs resident outside India to invest in a partnership firm or a proprietary concern in India on non-repatriable basis under the automatic route. NRIs were given certain special benefits in sectors such as construction and development of townships, housing and built-up infrastructure. Now NRIs can enjoy more benefits in terms of nature of securities they can subscribe to.

Leased commercial properties yield return on investment between 8 and 10 percent per annum depending on the city, building, developer and type of amenities offered in the project. Now FDI is permitted in completed buildings. The Indian government has allowed foreign direct investment of up to 100 percent under the automatic route in real estate projects. This will be for housing, townships, commercial and industrial construction to boost infrastructure activities in India. There is provision for reduction in the area from 50,000 sq m to 20,000 sq m and reduction in minimum capitalization for FDI investment from \$10 million to \$5 million.



EXCLUSIVE INDIAN REALTY SHOW TO OPEN IN SALMIYA

KUWAIT: The New Indian Express newspaper in association with Life Insurance Corporation Housing Finance Limited (LIC HFL) is all set to open their exclusive Indian Realty Exhibition 2016 tomorrow at Holiday Inn Hotel in Salmiya. The two-day exhibition, which will be open from 10am to 8pm on Friday and Saturday, will see a wide range of residential properties, primarily from South India, being displayed by some of the top-most property developers in India. More than 25 builders and developers will be showcasing projects, including luxury villas, apartments, row houses, budget homes and ready-possession development plots, in cities such as Bengaluru, Chennai, Kochi and Hyderabad.

In addition to bargain offers and discounts for homebuyers, a special aspect of this realty exhibition will be the realty consultancy services being offered to NRIs to clarify their queries related to investment, home loans, tax planning and repatriation procedures. The mega property show also assumes added importance as it is coming at a time when the property prices are stagnant and home loan lending rates are competitive with a special concession in interest rates for women homebuyers.

The easing of investment norms by the Indian government has opened the flood-

gates of investment to foreign investors. As a result, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India has increased by 48 percent in the last 19 months, at a time when global FDI has fallen. The Indian government has also pushed through policy measures to boost the realty sector. The government's relaxed FDI guidelines for the real estate sector make it possible for 100 percent FDI under the automatic route in completed projects for the operation and management of business centers. This is a tremendous opportunity for foreign investors, and, in the long run, can significantly boost the share of foreign capital in India's real estate sector.

Other significant policy interventions such as the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Bill, guidelines for the launch of REIT units and continued push by the government in the development of infrastructure will give a much-needed fillip to real estate sector during the current year. The NDA government has also recently approved a proposal allowing investment made by NRIs to be deemed as domestic investment on par with resident investments. The repatriation benefits upto two residential units and annual repatriation limit up to US\$1 million out of NRO account arising out of income from sale of properties, rentals and others have made investment in real

estate a lucrative option for NRIs.

In a further move to ease the norms, residents are now permitted to remit home loan EMI on behalf of NRIs. The RBI has also clarified that income and sale proceeds of assets held abroad by the returning NRIs need not be repatriated to India and can be retained and invested outside India. With the commercial property absorption increasing across metros, there will also be corresponding demand for housing both for rental and investment purposes. Experts believe that for every square meter of commercial property absorption in a city, it generates demand for three square meters of residential property.

Moreover, availability of property management companies to take care of NRIs' properties during their absence in India has made investment in multiple cities a viable proposition and hassle free exercise. Easier lending norms, flexibility in repatriation with minimal paperwork, fiscal sops and other monetary benefits have all made investment in Indian property easy and convenient now. There has never been a more opportune moment to buy or invest in Indian properties and the Indian Realty Exhibition 2016 is probably the best venue to explore the lucrative options available in this sector.

AIRBUS STARTS WORK ON NEW FACILITY IN CHINA

AIRCRAFT MAKER FACES OFF AGAINST BITTER RIVAL BOEING

TIANJIN: Europe's largest aircraft manufacturer Airbus started construction yesterday on a new facility to deliver wide-body planes in China, as it faces off against bitter US rival Boeing for market share in the world's second-largest economy. At a ceremony in the northern port of Tianjin Airbus CEO Fabrice Bregier and Chinese officials officially broke ground for the completion and delivery centre that will produce two A330 planes per month. The centre is an expansion of the firm's existing final assembly plant for A320 single-aisle aircraft in the city.

It comes with China's economic growth at its weakest in a quarter of a century and concerns over its outlook sending shivers through global stock exchanges. But Bregier said that "this is not true for our market", adding that increased middle-class incomes and easing visa rules were driving a boom in Chinese air travel. The world's second-largest economy is already Asia's biggest aircraft buyer as a growing middle class takes to the skies in ever-increasing numbers. The country is forecast to have 1.7 billion air passengers by 2034, and is poised in the next two decades to become the largest civil aviation market in the world.

The new \$150 million centre is the com-

pany's first such facility for wide-body aircraft outside Europe, and "marks a new milestone for Airbus' international footprint", Bregier said. It will take flyable unpainted aircraft from their headquarters in Toulouse, France and add cabins, furnishings and paint, before they are delivered to customers. Boeing also plans to open a completion centre in China, it announced last year. The company sold 300 aircraft worth a record \$38 billion during President Xi Jinping's visit to the US in 2015.

The two firms have been in a fierce battle for market share in China, where Airbus says it has gone from 27 percent in 2004 - before it opened the Tianjin final assembly line - to roughly 50 percent today. The country is now Airbus' largest market, accounting for nearly a quarter of the planes it delivered in 2015. Days before the ground-breaking, Air China announced orders for 12 wide-body aircraft for \$2.9 billion. "I understand that our competitor is trying to mimic" the Airbus strategy by opening a facility, CEO Bregier said in Tianjin, but added: "It's not really state-of-the-art." A Boeing spokesman retorted: "Partnership is defined by more than a few buildings," calling its relationships in the country "second

to none" in supporting the development of Chinese aviation.

'Give and take'

Beijing has made building up its aerospace industry a strategic priority, considering it a crucial component of an advanced economy. Investing in new plants in China is not only a way to increase production, but also a way to win the approval of the government, which controls the airline industry. "Our industrial cooperation serves a purpose, and that purpose is to facilitate our sales... to China," said Andreas Ockel, general manager of the Tianjin assembly facility. "It's a give and take."

The Airbus A320 assembly plant is a joint venture in which Chinese stakeholders control 49 percent, and the European firm has joint operations with partners across China manufacturing doors, wings, and other parts for A320 family aircraft. "In China the sales are not limited purely to the commercial dimension," said Eric Chen, president of Airbus China. "You need also to explore industrial cooperation to reinforce the relationship."

For its part Boeing has joint ventures in Boeing Tianjin Composites and Boeing Shanghai Aviation Services as well as a man-

ufacturing innovation centre. But even while it has encouraged partnerships with foreign firms the government is investing heavily in building up domestic champions such as state-owned Commercial Aircraft Corp of China (COMAC). Airbus' Bregier

acknowledged the threat of future Chinese competition, adding that co-operation only went so far. "We will try to make their life as difficult as possible," he said. "I exclude in principle to support the development of a competitor." — AFP



TIANJIN: Chinese guests shake hands during a ceremony to mark the beginning of construction on a new Airbus facility in Tianjin yesterday. — AFP



TURKISH AIRLINES CROSSES \$1 BILLION IN NET PROFITS

KUWAIT: According to the consolidated financial statements reported to Borsa Istanbul, Turkish Airlines reported 1 billion 69 million USD net profit surpassing a billion dollar level for the first time in its history. Profit from main operations stood at 895 million USD with an increase of 32 percent from the previous year. Turkish Airlines generated sales revenues of 10 billion 522 million USD in 2015. Pointing to the operational cash generation ability, Turkish Airlines generated 2.6 billion USD of EBIT-DAR with a 24.5 percent margin, increasing 5.7 percentage points in 2015.

With these financial results the company strengthened its place among the most profitable airlines in the world despite the political and economical instabilities over its operating environment and significant currency fluctuations. In 2015 Turkish Airlines realized a capacity increase of 13.6 percent (available seat km) and carried 61.2 million passengers on its 453,000 flights with a load factor of 78 percent.

M. Ilker Ayc?, Turkish Airlines' Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee, said: "First of all, I would like to specify that we successfully completed 2015 which was

generally described as a tough year for both the world and our country. Turkish Airlines has reinforced its position among the most profitable airlines with these financial results recorded in this challenging year despite the fierce competition in the global aviation industry and also the political and economical instabilities over its operating environment and significant currency fluctuations."

Selected the "Best Airline in Europe" for the fifth time in a row, today Turkish Airlines flies to 49 domestic and 235 international destinations, a total of 284 destinations in 113 countries including routes inaugurated in 2015 such as San Francisco, Miami, Maputo, Taipei and Manila. One of the youngest airline fleets in the world Turkish Airlines now operates 304 aircraft comprising 75 wide body, 219 narrow body and 10 cargo aircraft. Providing close to 47,000 jobs together with its subsidiaries Turkish Airlines is considered the biggest exporter of Turkey generating over 7 billion USD of exports with more than 70 percent of its ticket sales being made abroad. As the country's global brand Turkish Airlines continues to grow and support Istanbul as a global aviation hub.

ROLLS-ROYCE GIVES BOARD SEAT TO LARGEST SHAREHOLDER VALUEACT

LONDON: Rolls-Royce has appointed a partner from its largest shareholder ValueAct Capital to its board after the US activist investor built up a stake in the British engineer following a string of profit warnings last year. Rolls-Royce Chairman Ian Davis said the appointment of Bradley Singer to the board would not change the group's strategy but would rather bring experience from an executive who has worked with public companies going through periods of change. "This appointment will not trigger a particular strategic review," Davis told reporters.

"There are no changes to our plan to maintain the broad structure of the company." ValueAct's Singer joins Britain's flagship engineering company at a time of turmoil. Profits at the world's second-largest maker of aircraft engines are set to halve this year after dropping 16 percent in 2015 on tough trading in its civil aerospace unit and as its marine engine business suffered from declining demand from oil and gas customers.

Shares in the company have fallen by 44 percent since its peak in January 2014, and were 0.8 percent higher at 689 pence by 0830 GMT. Media reports have suggested ValueAct could pressure the company to sell its marine engine unit but Warren East, who became CEO of Rolls in July last year in a bid to steady the group, has told Reuters that the investor backs his plans. "I have been deeply impressed with the senior leadership team and Directors of Rolls-Royce and their commitment to improving their operations to match the company's world-class product portfolio and engineering capabilities," Singer said in a statement.

Troubled times

Founded in 1884, Rolls-Royce the aero-engine maker was separated from the luxury car brand of the same name in the 1970s when it was under state ownership before establishing itself as one of Britain's most prominent engineering companies. It increased profit every year in the decade to 2013 but has since repeatedly unnerved investors by slashing forecasts. East, previously one of Britain's most successful technology executives who ran ARM Holdings, has set out plans to cut costs and simplify the group. It halved its final dividend to shore up its finances in February, the first cut for 24 years. Singer is a partner and chief operating officer of ValueAct, which first bought a 5 percent stake in Rolls in July before adding to it in November to own 10.8 percent of Rolls.

ValueAct, which played a key role in shaking up Microsoft Corp's management, tends to make long-term investments. Singer will join the board with immediate effect and become a member of its Science and Technology Committee. Davis said the majority of investors had been happy to leave the decision to the company, and that several in the US indicated a positive attitude towards an activist shareholder joining the board. He also added that Singer would stay on the Rolls-Royce board for as long as ValueAct remained a significant shareholder of the company. "ValueAct has a record of being a long-term investor ... so we would expect Brad to be on the board for many years." — Reuters

EMERGING MARKETS INDUSTRY SINKS INTO POST-BOOM SOUL SEARCHING

BARCLAYS BANK PULLS OUT OF AFRICA AFTER A CENTURY

LONDON: After the dotcom bubble and the global credit crunch, it's the turn of the emerging markets industry to sink into post-boom soul searching. The near mania that once flabbergasted even emerging market specialists is gone. Now many of the firms that grew to serve investors in the likes of China, Brazil or South Africa are slashing their businesses and jobs, with more cuts to come. If proof were needed that global investors have gone off developing economies, it came in Tuesday's announcement by Barclays that it is pulling out of Africa after more than a century. The British bank's African subsidiary insisted the decision to withdraw under a makeover of the London-based parent did not relate to economic sentiment on the continent.

But sentiment among investors in emerging markets generally has been souring for some time; in dollar terms, emerging equities underperformed their developed peers by around 50 percent in the five years from the end of 2010. Compare that with the mood just before the market peaked half a dozen years ago. More adventurous investors had long poured into emerging markets (EM) - especially countries exporting then booming commodities - seeking better returns than in developed economies where interest rates were near rock-bottom. But to the astonishment of market professionals, even some pension fund managers - the traditionally ultra-conservative guardians of people's retirement incomes - wanted to join them.

Devan Kaloo, head of emerging equities at Aberdeen Asset Management, recalls a conversation he had with a European pension fund in 2010: it wanted to put no less than 80 percent of its assets into a sector that a few years earlier had been considered too risky for mainstream investors. "I am an EM guy and I should have been jumping up and down and saying 'yes absolutely' but even I was thinking: 'seriously?'" he said. Kaloo advised against such a move, and the conversation with his fund at least went no further. "I just hope they didn't do it," he added.

Kaloo runs one of the sector's most successful funds; it delivered average annual returns of almost 20 percent in the decade after its 2003 launch, far outpacing the underlying emerging index. But some time after the 2010 conversation, Kaloo "soft-closed" his fund - not marketing it and charging new investors extra fees upon entry. "EM became so much in vogue that we had investors coming to us who perhaps didn't understand the asset class; they looked at our track record and extrapolated that forward. We wanted to rebalance the book and to better cherry-pick clients," he said.

Little did they know but emerging equities' boom decade was drawing to a close. Having risen more than 200 percent from 2001, the main index run by MSCI fell 35 percent in the subsequent five years.

Kaloo's fund has not been spared as investors fled the problems of emerging markets - such as diving oil prices for energy producers from Nigeria to Russia or political infighting in the likes of South Africa - and returned to developed markets in the hope of reviving returns. Its assets under management (AUM) are down to \$5.1 billion from \$16 billion in 2013. Aberdeen Asset Management's overall AUM fell by \$30 billion last year, mainly due to its EM-heavy profile.

Across the industry, \$26 billion fled emerging equity funds last year, according to Boston-based EPFR Global, a sizeable chunk of the net \$153 billion inflows received between 1996 when data tracking began and now. Most of this is down to small investors but the downturn is also testing the patience of pension and insurance funds, mostly late arrivals to the EM party who had been lured by the juicy returns earlier entrants enjoyed. The losses go beyond equities. EM debt funds tracked by EPFR suffered \$32 billion in redemptions last year; more emerging market bond funds closed than were launched in 2015, according to Lipper, the first time this has happened since it began compiling data in 2006.

On top of investors themselves, their advisers have also become cautious. "There is what I call double risk aversion - there is natural risk aversion, plus the financial adviser has an increased risk of being fired," said Peter Preisler, head of global investment services for Europe, Middle East and Africa at T. Rowe Price. More pain probably lies ahead because it usually takes at least 8-10 quarters of negative returns to affect the biggest, diversified funds seriously, says Shiv Taneja, principal at Market Metrics, which provides data to the asset management industry, adding that there was still "fat in the system".

Bank retreat

Global banks, struggling with sluggish home economies, had fanned out across the world in anticipation of dealmaking and research fees. Hopes were also pinned on mortgage and credit card sales to the millions of Brazilians, Nigerians and Indians who were expected to join the middle classes. This paid off for a while, particularly with underwriting new share sales (IPOs) in the developing world. With jump deals such as Agricultural Bank of China's \$22 billion IPO and Santander's \$9 billion Brazilian debut, equity bankers' fees topped \$6.3 billion in 2010, a six-fold rise from 2000, ThomsonReuters data shows. This fell to \$4 billion in 2015, or \$1.2 billion if China is excluded.

The shift is forcing lenders to retreat, closing offices overseas and routing activity back through London or New York. Global job cuts just between June and December last year amounted to 130,000 at the top 10 European banks, double the 2013 and 2014 losses, according to data compiled by Reuters. Much of this

centers on emerging markets business. Barclays, for instance, is also selling its Asian private wealth business and radically cutting its investment banking operations across emerging markets.

Promising overseas ventures have soured; at Standard Chartered, balance sheets have been dented by rising loan losses in India, once a highly profitable market. The bank, which plans to axe 15,000 jobs, has just posted its first annual loss since 1989. Amid the general jobs carnage, it is hard to quantify losses specifically on emerging market trading desks. But data from Coalition, an industry analytics firm, offers clues. Based on reporting by the top 10 global investment banks, it estimates Eastern European, African and Middle Eastern bond and currency trading desks are down over a hundred personnel since 2012.

"A huge industry grew up around EM but the mistake people made was in thinking the story was secular, rather than cyclical," said John-Paul Smith, founder of the Eclectic Strategy investment consultancy. Smith, who has worked as a fund manager at Pictet and in equity strategy at Deutsche, called the end of the emerging equity cycle in December 2010, advising clients to sell. Some fund managers emailed to ask if he was joking, he recalled. Consultants who urged pension funds and insurers to diversify into emerging markets just as the boom peaked are also to blame, he said.

Good, bad, ugly

One problem is that anticipated improvements in public and corporate governance did not happen in emerging markets and most such countries made little effort to reduce their dependence on exports of commodities, prices of which are plunging. Late last year, Martin Taylor, founder of the \$1.5 billion Nevsky Capital hedge fund, closed his vehicle, telling clients the decision was partly because economic data from countries such as China and India had become "less transparent and truthful", complicating investment decisions.

Many also blame the nature of the emerging markets class which lumps together disparate countries into indexes used by funds to guide investment and benchmark performance. This can mean emerging markets - good and bad alike - tend to rise and fall as a bloc. Kaloo said even well-managed, profitable companies in emerging markets are now being punished. Investors do seem to be differentiating more between countries, said Greg Saichin, head of emerging debt at Allianz, but the benchmarks still unite "the good, bad and ugly". Saichin reckons flexible strategies not tightly tied to the benchmarks are the way forward. "Emerging markets rode high on back of the commodity super-cycle and monetary accommodation, no questions asked," he said. "But now people are asking questions." — Reuters



DEBUT FOR INFINITI ADVANCED ALL-NEW 3.0 V6 TWIN-TURBO

3 EUROPEAN PREMIERES FOR INFINITI AT GENEVA MOTOR SHOW

KUWAIT: Infiniti's European debuts include two all-new models and one comprehensively updated vehicle at the Geneva International Motor Show. All three share Infiniti's iconic design language, innovative technologies and precise driving characteristics. All-new is the Q60 Sports coupe, promising a powerful drive from a highly-advanced new V6 engine boasting up to 400 hp, and the QX30 premium active crossover, with its elevated stance, concept-like exterior, and asymmetric cabin design. They are joined by the refreshed Q50 sports sedan, which features significant performance and dynamic upgrades that deliver a more empowering and rewarding drive experience.

Roland Krueger, President of Infiniti Motor Company, commented: "2015 was a successful year for Infiniti, as we transformed our product line-up and established a sales record for the brand around the world. The three new cars, which make their European debuts here in Geneva, highlight our ongoing commitment to developing and expanding Infiniti's product portfolio." The launch of these new and upgraded models in Europe comes at a time of rapid growth for Infiniti. The company sold a record 215, 250 new vehicles in 2015, representing a year-on-year rise of 16%. Infiniti sales in Europe in 2015 were 45 percent higher than in the previous year and in January 2016 were up 75 percent on the same month in 2015.



PENTAGON NEEDS DATA SECURITY, STRONG ENCRYPTION

SAN FRANCISCO: Defense Secretary Ash Carter on Tuesday underscored the US military's support for data security and strong encryption as he asked top US technology sector entrepreneurs and innovators to play a larger role in national security.

Carter, on his third trip to Silicon Valley since taking office a year ago, urged greater cooperation between private industry and the public sector on data security and warned that failing to do would allow China, Russia and others who

do not favor a free Internet to set new global standards. The defense chief also waded into a controversy between the US government and Apple Inc over the FBI's request to circumvent security features on an iPhone used by one of the San Bernardino, California, shooters.

Carter did not address the case directly since it is under litigation, but he said the Pentagon as the largest user of encryption in the world viewed strong encryption as critical, and no one case should drive future

policy considerations.

"We shouldn't let the solutions to this larger issue of how to handle data security as a society be driven by any one particular case," Carter told reporters after a speech to the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco. "It would be unreasonable."

He said the issue of protecting data was complex, involving many different kinds of data, including data in motion, data at rest, and data crossing borders, and a solution required interaction between private

industry and the public sector. FBI Director James Comey told a congressional panel on Tuesday that a final court ruling forcing Apple to give the FBI data from the iPhone 5c in the San Bernardino case would be "potentially precedential" in other cases.

In his speech, Carter also warned against new legislation spurred solely by this case. "It is easy to see wrong ways to do this. One would be a law hastily written in anger or grief. Another would be to have the rules be written by Russia or China," he

said. After his speech Carter and his chief arms buyer met with five small companies at an event styled on the television series "Shark Tank," where entrepreneurs pitch their ideas to investors.

Carter told reporters that he saw some interesting new technologies, including unmanned surface drones and ways to visualize big data, but he was particularly impressed with the "tremendous" people behind the ideas. "I hope we steal some of them," he said. — Reuters

CISCO BELIEVES BUSINESSES IN ME MUST GO DIGITAL TO STAY AHEAD

KUWAIT: Digital disruption means getting to business outcomes faster. Cisco can help customers transform their businesses and thrive in this 'new normal'. With new solutions enabling Customer Experience, Workforce Experience, and Digital Ceiling - Cisco announces a suite of offers that are taking business models to a whole new level.

In this era of digitization, expectations are quickly on the rise. Businesses must stand out in a big way in order to gain a strategic edge with their customers - and with their employees. To become a successful digital business, companies must answer these critical questions:

* Are we using predictive insights and analytics to personalize the customer experience?

* Are we driving the very best in workforce efficiency and employee retention?

* Are we transforming business models to maximize value and optimize operations?

"Companies that embrace digital transformation are driving significant market valuations. They recognize the value of competitive differentiation, and know how to identify and act on critical enablers of growth. Cisco's Customer and Workforce Experience solutions, as well as Digital Ceiling, are designed with that in mind. These customer-validated, digital solutions are created to help you drive revenue and deliver on those critical business outcomes," said Mike Weston, Vice President for Cisco Middle East.

Cisco's new digital solutions are based on validated designs and use cases. Orderable as one solution, they bring together hardware, software, and services. The software is designed to allow our 60-plus ecosystem partners the flexibility to extend functionality and value across the use cases - without risk.

Customer Experience

Digital Capability: Three new offers

The customer is king. Delivering a better experience, as well as measuring and optimizing on each customer interaction, is at the heart of these new offers. Capturing this information strengthens consumer relationships and captures loyalty. It also drives increased revenue across the entire customer journey.

Virtual Expertise: This solution brings easy, real-time interactions with experts. Anywhere - on any device. From insurance claims on demand to remote access of health information - consumers want it when they want it. Some of the key components of this business offer include Unified Call Manager, Cisco Unified Contact Center, Cisco UCS Server, and more.

Mobile Experience: Personalized and differentiated mobile experiences are at the center of this solution. Did you know that the majority of people that use mobile to research a purchase actually go on to make that purchase? Drive bigger net revenues and create long-term customer intimacy. Key components of this business offer include Connected Mobile Experience, Enterprise Mobility Service Platform, and more.

Intelligent Branch: Get the reward without the risk. This solution enables quick deployment of rich and secure services in the branch - critical for the best customer experiences. Key components of this business offer include Cisco 4000 Series Integrated Services Routers and Security Bundle, Catalyst 3850 Switches, UCS E-Servers, and more.



Mike Weston, Vice President for Cisco Middle East

Workforce Experience

Digital Capability: One new offer

Employees are the glue. Create a workplace that's collaborative and digitally innovative. It keeps your existing talent coming back - and entices Millennials looking for a flexible space to hang their hat. Tailoring employee experiences to a bevy of different work styles fosters an environment that's key to retaining today's workforce.

Workspace Productivity: Improve productivity and cut costs. Using face-to-face collaboration and conferencing, this offer is made up of standardized room types that allow you to set to your preference and then roll out. Key components of this business offer are: Cisco Video end-points, TelePresence Management Suite, and Cisco UCS Server.

Digital Ceiling Framework: New Lighting Solutions from Digital Ceiling Partners

Buildings just got personal. Cisco's Digital Ceiling enables the convergence of building systems including lighting, heating, cooling, sensors, and other actuators. All of these work together to increase efficiency, lower costs, and enable unique user experiences. The net-net: creation of buildings that are not only smart, but also connected, secure, and easy to manage.

* Harness the power of the partner community. With 15 partners and counting, these industry leaders have a collective wealth of expertise that extends across domains like lighting, building automation, enablers, and ISV's. Digital Ceiling users also can count on Cisco's world-class partner organization. By bringing everyone together and providing a Digital Ceiling framework, we enable open and secure communication, i.e., a new Information Exchange.

* Access the Information Exchange. This eases interoperability among devices, sensors and actuators. It enables more efficient communication over CoAP - a standards-based IoT protocol.

* Lighting. Find new lighting solutions that run on the IP network from lighting industry leaders including Cree, Phillips, and more.

* An optimized Cisco network. This now includes enhanced switches that enable lighting and building automation to run on a converged IP network. Features like Perpetual Power over Ethernet (PoE), Fast Boot, Smart Install, and software for sensor integration (including motion, light, temperature, infrared, and humidity) are also included.

SHARE YOUR FITNESS DATA FOR AN APPLE WATCH OR CASH

NEW YORK: You know you need to exercise more, but there's always next week, or the week after? To entice you to stop procrastinating, your company or insurer might soon reward you for wearing a fitness device to track your steps, heart rate and more.

For instance, in one program expected to be announced yesterday, some workers can buy a \$350 Apple Watch for just \$25 by meeting exercise goals for two years. Vitality, a provider of disease-prevention and lifestyle programs, is initially bringing the offer to US employees at three companies, along with John Hancock life-insurance customers. It has been testing the program in South Africa since December.

Other programs let you can redeem points from fitness activities for gift cards and other rewards. Submit to biometric screenings and nutrition classes, and in some cases you can earn cash in the form of insurance discounts.

"We all live busy lives, but the truth is, if doctors could write one prescription for the world, it would be activity," says Jeff Williams, Apple's chief operating officer. "The beauty of this program is members are going to get healthier."

Adrian Gore, CEO and founder of Vitality parent company Discovery Group, says that for many people, the benefits from exercise might not be apparent for a few decades. Reward programs make the payoff more immediate.

Programs like these are still new, but appear to be expanding as part of broader changes in the health-care marketplace. Oscar, which sells health insurance directly to consumers, has been giving out free Misfit trackers for opportunities to earn up to \$100 a year in Amazon gift cards. Fitbit works with employers such as Indiana University Health and Emory University in Atlanta to subsidize fitness trackers for their staff. In turn, employees who exercise are eligible for insurance discounts or drawings for big prizes like vacations to the Caribbean.

"I love playing sports, but doing cardio stuff isn't my favorite," says Brett Broviak, 43, an IU Health employee in Noblesville, Indiana, whose daughter challenged him to hit 1 million steps a month on his discounted Fitbit. "It kind of made it exciting to really push myself."

WELLNESS INCENTIVES

These programs are typically voluntary, but you must be willing to share data to earn the most rewards and insurance discounts. Sound creepy? Program officials say that data from fitness trackers typically go to outside administrators, such as Fitbit or Vitality. Employers and insurers get only broad totals to verify eligibility and not details on heart rate and sleep. But participants need to trust that these systems won't get hacked.



Mike Doughty, president and general manager of John Hancock Insurance, says premiums won't rise if a screening uncovers higher blood pressure or other risks. Rather, he says, wellness incentives are about promoting longer lives - and collecting life-insurance premiums longer.

There's no proof that providing fitness trackers directly lowers health-care costs, but there's plenty of evidence that exercise leads to better health, which in turn can improve productivity and reduce absences. Michael Stauffer, Emory's director of health management, describes the thinking as a "value of investment and not a hard-dollar return on investment as it relates to medical or pharmacy costs."

More importantly, reaching daily exercise goals is just the beginning of getting people to think more about their health. "If I exercise regularly, then junk food just doesn't appeal to me," says Mark Holloway, 55, of Clemmons, North Carolina, who participates in Vitality's wellness program through his employer, Lochton. "French fries and hamburgers? No, thanks. It's like putting sand in your gas tank."

Programs from Vitality and others typically won't let you earn insurance discounts simply by exercising. You'll need to earn additional points by completing questionnaires and getting flu shots. You sometimes get bonus points simply

by staying within recommended limits for cholesterol, blood pressure and other measures. Smokers can also get points for joining programs to help them quit.

"You change one thing about your behavior, and you can be more motivated to work on these other aspects," says Tammy Smith, who manages the employee wellness program at IU Health. DaVita HealthCare Partners says health-care spending by its employees slowed significantly after it offered tracker-based incentives through Vitality. But DaVita also increased the deductible on claims and started such initiatives as Fresh Fruit yesterday. That makes the effect of the fitness program difficult to isolate.

With the Apple Watch program, participants must pay back Vitality for every month they miss their fitness goals, which typically call for four substantial workouts a week. The goals are meant to be achievable, but tough enough to encourage a change in lifestyle. Participants qualify for smaller discounts by meeting some of the goals and can get more expensive models by paying the difference. Bonus point offers are sent to the watch.

An iPhone is required; Vitality has no current plans to offer anything similar for Android. Neither Apple nor Vitality would provide financial details on the arrangement. — AP

INTEL SECURITY EXPANDS PARTNER ECOSYSTEM

DUBAI: Intel Security yesterday announced several major strategic initiatives, from the expansion of the Intel Security Innovation Alliance to collaborations with Siemens and BT. These initiatives build on Intel Security's commitment to help customers address the increasingly urgent need to shorten response times when advanced targeted attacks occur and more easily remediate compromised systems, leading to a simplified and more automated threat defense lifecycle.

"In the current security environment, collaboration and integration is more important than ever to create a strong security posture," said Tom Fountain, Intel Security's vice president of Strategy and Business Development. "Our goal is to become our customer's number one security partner. In doing so, we remain committed to working across the industry to deliver solutions that detect new threats more quickly and enable automated workflows to correct issues as they arise." Intel Security and its Partners Empower Customers to Build a Unified, Connected Security Ecosystem.

Intel Security is leading the way not just in integrating its management platform, security information and event management (SIEM) tools, threat intelligence solutions, threat data sharing technology, advanced persistent threat protection and automated detection and response capabilities-with more than 150 partners in more than a dozen security markets.

The Intel Security Innovation Alliance technology partnering program accelerates the development of interoperable security products that converge with Intel Security's integrated, connected security system and reinforce



detect, protect, and correct processes across the threat defense lifecycle. This expanded portfolio of tightly integrated products and specialized solutions simplifies and expedites deployment of security solutions within complex enterprise environments, to help customers resolve more threats, faster, and with fewer resources in a more complex world. Intel Security Innovation Alliance partners deliver solutions that are designed to maximize the value of existing investments, reduce time to resolution, and help lower operational costs.

McAfee Data Exchange Layer Enables Threat Intelligence Sharing Across Multivendor Security Products

As part of the key technologies that form the foundation of the Intel Security Innovation Alliance program, McAfee Data Exchange Layer is an underlying communications fabric technology that not only connects Intel Security prod-

ucts, but also connects products from other vendors. This open, yet secure framework connects multivendor security products and enables them to exchange information, helps make customers' security tools work more efficiently and effectively. More than 20 partners in the Intel Security Innovation Alliance have completed or are currently in the process of integrating to McAfee Data Exchange Layer.

Intel Security Welcomes New Innovation Alliance Partners:

More than 30 Intel Security Innovation Alliance partners have joined the program within the last six months, increasing the number of interoperable security products that converge with Intel Security's integrated, connected architecture. A full list of these partners can be viewed here.

New partners that have joined the Intel Security Innovation Alliance this quarter include:

* Aruba, A Hewlett Packard

Enterprise Company

- * Brocade
- * Check Point
- * Forcepoint
- * Identity Finder
- * MobileIron
- * Rapid 7
- * VMware Airwatch
- * Proofpoint

Siemens Expands Collaboration with Intel Security for Industrial Security Solutions:

Siemens and Intel Security are expanding their collaboration to help protect industrial automation systems from increased cyber threats. Siemens' experts leverage Intel Security solutions such as anti-virus software, whitelisting and security information and event management (SIEM) within the framework of plant security services. These tools are designed to help detect security incidents promptly, enabling Siemens' experts to notify plant operators without undue delay and allowing them to implement counter-measures. The two companies are coupling their expertise in the area of industrial automation and cyber security to provide industrial plants with products and services designed to help minimize cyber risks, while increasing system availability.

BT and Intel Security Collaborate to Develop Next Generation Security Services: BT and Intel Security today announced a strategic agreement to create new solutions that help organizations improve security and prevent cyberattacks. The companies will also work together in a joint cyber initiative to further develop their common vision of next generation security services. RSA Conference attendees can visit BT Security booth 7.07 at the MosconeCenter for a demo.

AT&T SAYS DIRECTV WON'T NEED A DISH OR A BOX

NEW YORK: Like other cable and satellite companies, AT&T is trying to win new customers by making it a little easier to sign up for and watch TV.

It said Tuesday that DirecTV packages that run on apps and don't need a dish or TV set-top box are coming in the fourth quarter. You don't have to be an AT&T phone customer to sign up.

But it's hard to gauge how appealing these deals will be, because it's not clear what they are. AT&T, which bought DirecTV last year, isn't providing details about prices, which channels or video will be available, or whether there will be any content blackouts on mobile devices or computers when you step outside your house.

The company wants to launch an Internet TV offering that replicates a lot of what's in the traditional big bundle of channels, and hopes that approach will appeal to big entertainment companies like Twenty-First Century Fox and Disney.

Some other Web TV services have had trouble getting off the ground. A hoped-for Apple TV streaming service hasn't materialized, having reportedly hit roadblocks in negotiations with channels. Sony launched a TV service, Vue, last year with many popular channels, but not those owned by Disney, like ESPN and Disney Channel. It had said in November that it was adding them.

The industry shift to ditch equipment that adds to the cost of TV service comes as a growing number of people cancel their traditional TV subscriptions. Young people are considered especially unlikely

to pay for a bundle of hundreds of channels that can easily cost \$70 and more each month.

Over the past year, rival cable and satellite companies have introduced TV-watching apps aimed at millennials. Dish Network's Sling TV has channels that work whether you're in the house or not, but some programs have been blacked out. Offerings from cable companies have rights issues that make some channels unavailable when you leave your house and, for now, are available only in a few regions. Comcast's Stream also doesn't work on TV.

Competition is increasing as phone companies want to be video hubs, too. T-Mobile lets you watch video from dozens of providers, including HBO Now, Netflix and Hulu, without using up data on your plan. Verizon exempts its own video app, which has some full-length TV episodes.

Dallas-based AT&T Inc. said it is planning packages that have "much of what is available from DirecTV today" as well as a more limited service that only works on phones and a free offering with ads.

AT&T has a "number of programmers on board and we're continuing discussions with others," said AT&T executive Tony Goncalves. He said that AT&T has a "programmer-friendly approach" because it wants to put so many channels online.

Asked if ESPN channels were going to be included in the new AT&T packages, spokeswoman Amy Phillips said ESPN was "having productive conversations, but we have nothing to announce at this time." — AP

FIFTY SHADES OF GRAY: GENE FOR GRAYING HAIR IDENTIFIED

WASHINGTON: They may not have settled the enduring debate over whether gray hair makes a person look distinguished or just plain old, but scientists have identified for the first time a gene behind graying hair. Researchers said on Tuesday an analysis of DNA from more than 6,300 people from five Latin American countries enabled them to pinpoint a gene that affects a person's likelihood of getting gray hair.

The gene, called IRF4, is involved in regulating melanin, the pigment responsible

for hair color as well as the color of the skin and eyes. People with a certain version of the gene are predisposed to hair graying, according to University College London human geneticist Andres Ruiz-Linares, one of the researchers in the study published in the journal *Nature Communications*. The researchers said hair graying is not driven exclusively by genetics, with other factors in the mix such as stress or experiencing a traumatic event. "This is really the first study on the genetics of hair graying in humans," University College London sta-

tistical geneticist Kaustubh Adhikari said. People spend a lot of time and money dyeing gray hair back to their natural hair color. The researchers said identifying this gene could offer a path forward for developing a treatment that could prevent or reverse graying.

"A drug that has effects on the melanin-production pathway in hair follicles as the follicles develop internally might reduce the need to apply external hair dyes on the scalp hair after it comes out.

This is certainly a research avenue

worth pursuing," Kaustubh said.

The researchers combed through genetic information from men and women in Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Mexico and Peru, with a combination of European, Native American and African ancestry.

The gene variant predisposing people to early hair graying was essentially only seen in those of European ancestry. "This might, to some extent, explain why hair graying is more common in Europeans than in other populations," Ruiz-Linares said. One of the researchers brushed aside

the issue of whether or not gray hair is attractive.

"Personally I don't have much of a view regarding the social response to hair graying, but I find it an interesting model to study aging in general," said Desmond Tobin, a hair follicle and pigmentation biologist at Britain's University of Bradford. The study also identified genes related to other hair traits including curliness, beard thickness, eyebrow thickness and predisposition for eyebrows that join together, known as unibrow or monobrow. — Reuters

NEW FDA CHIEF CITES PROMISE OF HARDER-TO-ABUSE PAINKILLERS

WASHINGTON: The Food and Drug Administration's new commissioner is pledging to fully back efforts to develop harder-to-abuse painkillers, part of a sweeping government effort to reduce deadly overdoses tied to prescription pain medications.

Dr Robert Califf told a panel of FDA advisers on Tuesday that his agency alone cannot solve the crisis of prescription drug abuse. But he pledged to do "everything possible under our authority to prevent abuse, save lives and treat dependence." Last week, the Senate confirmed Califf to head the FDA, overcoming objections from some senators that his agency has not done enough to combat painkiller abuse.

In remarks at FDA's headquarters, Califf laid out his strategy for addressing the epidemic of abuse tied to opioids, which include both legal pain drugs and illegal narcotics like heroin. In 2014, fatal overdoses tied to those drugs climbed to about 28,000, the highest number on record, according to public health officials.

"What we can do is work with prescribers, professional associations, patient advocates and state and local partners - essentially the entire country - to encourage safe use and disposal of opioid medications," Califf said.

Califf has already pledged to add stronger warning labels to the most commonly prescribed opioids, and to consult more with outside advisers. On Tuesday he highlighted the potential of new painkillers designed to discourage abuse. For instance, the latest version of OxyContin is harder to crush for snorting. When dis-

solved it turns into a thick jelly that is difficult to inject.

Califf acknowledged that such drugs are not full-proof solutions. "But the promise that we are on a path toward products that are effective in preventing abuse both by patients and non-patients is real. And the agency intends to fully support efforts to advance this technology," he said.

Abuse-resistant opioids

The FDA has approved five abuse-deterrent drugs since 2010. FDA officials say at least 30 similar drugs are in development. But public speakers warned that overstating the benefits of abuse-resistant opioids could create false assurances in doctors. To date, it's not clear the new formulations actually translate into fewer overdoses or deaths. And most can still be abused when simply swallowed.

"I am not convinced that we can engineer our way out of this epidemic, and I would caution against over-relying on abuse deterrent formulations to do so," said Dr Caleb Alexander of Johns Hopkins University.

Today, reformulated painkillers make up just a small fraction of the 200 million opioid prescriptions written each year in the US, according to figures from IMS Health. Doctors prescribe opioids for a wide range of ailments, from post-surgical pain to arthritis and migraines. Medical experts continue to disagree over the appropriate role of the drugs, with some arguing that they should only be used for the most severe cases, such as cancer pain or end-of-life care. — AP



KLERKSDORP: This file photo taken on February 03, 2016 shows rangers and farm workers dehorning a rhino by trimming part of his horn at John Hume's Rhino Ranch. — AFP photos

S AFRICAN PRIVATE ARMY PROTECTS WORLD'S LARGEST RHINO RESERVE

NORTH WEST PROVINCE: The world's largest rhino farm looks like a vast fortress and is guarded by a private army. At night a helicopter fitted with an infrared camera circles over the 8,000 hectare electric-fenced ranch in South Africa, and by day armed men in military fatigues are on patrol.

Their sole mission: to protect 1,200 rhinos from poachers, who killed 1,175 of the horned beasts across the country last year. Rhinos are being slaughtered in record numbers to meet the insatiable demand for their horns in countries such as China and Vietnam, often for use in traditional 'medicines'. The horn is mainly hard keratin, the same substance found in human nails, but on the black market where it is sold in powdered form it is believed to cure cancer and other diseases.

It can fetch as much as \$60,000 (\$5,000 Euros) per kilogram, more than gold or cocaine. Clad in khaki shorts, blue shirt and sandals, wealthy South African businessman and rhino farmer John Hume says he has bred 600 rhino since 2008, but his target is to breed 200 each year.

Legalise trade?

"The way we are going to save the rhino from extinction is to breed more and protect them, and that is what I am trying to do here," said Hume. His next battle is to secure the legalization of international trade in horns, which has been outlawed since 1977. Horns peddled on the black market are from dead rhinos but, if trade is allowed, demand would be fed from live ones. Just like nails, cut horns will regrow.

"We can supply horns from live rhinos, while now every single horn that you are supplying to the demand is coming from a dead rhino. Surely that is stupid. It absolutely flummoxes me," said Hume. Plans to legalize the trade are controversial, however, and are fiercely debated by conservationists. Hume opened the farm in 2008 after selling hotels he owned.

Today he employs around 60 full-time staffers plus his "army", whose strength he refuses to divulge on the grounds that it is "too sensitive." Even the exact location of the farm - where he spends some \$170,000 (156,000 Euros) a month in security costs - is kept secret, to protect it from poachers ravaging game parks elsewhere across the country.

Harvesting horn

On the plains of South Africa's North West province where the farm is located, a dozen rhinos were due for dehorning when AFP visited. Standing at the back of a pick-up truck, Menard Mathe used a pair of binoculars to identify the animals earmarked for dehorning.

In front of the vehicle, veterinarian Michelle Otto drew her gun and darted one animal with a powerful anaesthetic. A few minutes later, the gigantic animal began to stagger. Otto cautiously walked towards it, and another worker secured its hind legs with a rope, forcing it to fall limply to the ground. Quickly the rhino's eyes were covered with a piece of mutton cloth and old socks used for makeshift earplugs.

The horns are measured and a line is marked precisely where it will be cut, making sure blood vessels are not touched. Then a handheld power saw cuts through the horn. The procedure is painless for the animal. "We trim their horns for their safety and to deter poaching," said Otto.

Despite the dehorning and the massive securi-

ty cordon around the ranch, 39 rhinos have been poached there since 2008. Back at the farm building, the horns are weighed. A total of 23 kilograms have been harvested on this day, said farm general manager Johnny Hennop. Each horn is then numbered and they are stored in metal trunks where they are wrapped in baby diapers to protect them from moisture while mothballs are strewn around the containers to keep bugs away.

The boxes are then sealed and are ready to be moved to a safe location. Hume has a stockpile of five tonnes in banks and with private security companies. It is potentially worth a fortune, but is worthless as long as the ban in international trade in rhino horn remains in place. The ranch's security chief, Stefan Broekman, who previously worked at private game reserves, says he is "frustrated" that even when poachers are arrested in South Africa, some of them get away with a "small fine". At the turn of a muddy track, Broekman's face lights up on seeing a newborn calf suckling his mother under a tree. It was born overnight. — AFP



TUSCALOOSA: In this photo taken Feb 22, 2016, Ellie Hermann, stands near the street, protesting the West Alabama Women's Center.

ABORTION DEBATE RETURNS TO DEPLETED SUPREME COURT

WASHINGTON: The abortion debate is returning to the Supreme Court in the midst of a raucous presidential campaign and less than three weeks after Justice Antonin Scalia's death. The justices are taking up the biggest case on the topic in nearly a quarter century yesterday, considering whether a Texas law that regulates abortion clinics hampers a woman's constitutional right to obtain an abortion.

The clinics want the court to roll back regulations requiring doctors who perform abortions to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals and forcing clinics to meet standards for outpatient or ambulatory surgical centers. Like other states, mainly in the South, Texas says it passed the measure to protect women's health.

Justice Anthony Kennedy probably holds the deciding vote on the eight-justice court. He already joined with the court's four liberal members to block some restrictions from taking effect while the case is on appeal. If Kennedy sides with the liberal justices, the case could stand as an important reaffirmation of the standard the court first laid out in 1992 that allows states to regulate abortion provided the restrictions do not impose "an undue burden" on a woman's right to an abortion.

Scalia's death means it is likely that Texas can get no more than four votes on a court that has been starkly divided over abortion between conservatives and liberals. A 4-4 tie in this case would leave Texas' law standing, because the federal appeals court in New Orleans ruled for the state. Such an outcome would allow Texas to put the regulations into full effect. The clinics say no more than about 10 facilities will remain open, where there once were more than 40 before the law was enacted in 2013.

If the court is evenly divided, the justices could decide to re-hear the case once a new colleague joins them. President Barack Obama says he will nominate a successor to Scalia. But Senate Republicans, backed by the party's presidential candidates, have pledged to keep Scalia's seat empty so that the next president can fill it.

Separately, the justices also are weighing an emergency appeal from clinics in Louisiana. The same federal appeals court has allowed that state's admitting privileges law to take effect while a legal challenge winds its way through the courts, even after a trial judge struck it down as unconstitutional. The case is being appealed. A decision in *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt*, 15-274, is expected by late June. — AP

HEALTH GROUPS AIM TO MAKE RECORDS EASIER TO ACCESS

WASHINGTON: Technology companies, hospital systems and doctors' groups have agreed to take steps to make electronic health records easier for consumers to access and use, the Obama administration announced Monday. While nearly all hospitals and most doctors' offices have now gone digital, those systems often don't talk to each other, limiting their usefulness to patients. The latest initiative is meant to speed removal of technological bottlenecks, but it's unclear if it will lead to breakthroughs.

The administration needs to make things happen fast, since President Barack Obama leaves office in less than a year. "Now is the time for this data to be free and liquid and available," said Karen DeSalvo, head of the Health and Human

Services department office overseeing the transition to computerized medical records. The goal is to improve care where it matters the most, added DeSalvo, who spoke ahead of a formal announcement by Secretary Sylvia M. Burwell at a health technology conference in Las Vegas.

Taxpayers have ponied up about \$27 billion in subsidies to encourage the adoption of electronic medical records by hospitals and doctors' offices. But the results so far have fallen short of the data-driven transformation that proponents envisioned. With new personal health applications for mobile devices hitting the market, there's a renewed push to clear obstacles rooted in different technologies and clashing competitive priorities among vendors and health care providers. — AP

WASHINGTON: Scientists have been telling Americans about the benefits of healthy eating for decades, and yet more Americans are obese than ever - more than a third of the country. Now, researchers at Harvard and Tufts Universities have laid out concrete steps officials can take by linking food prices to health effects.

Reducing prices of fruit and vegetables while raising prices for sodas and other sugary drinks could save millions of lives, according to a study released Tuesday at the American Heart Association's epidemiology and lifestyle meeting in Phoenix, Arizona.

"A change in your diet can be challenging, but if achieved through personal choice or changes in the market place, it can have a profound effect on your cardiovascular health," Harvard professor Thomas Gaziano, the report's lead author, said in a statement.

The researchers developed a computer model that predicted a 10 percent drop in the price of fruits and vegetables could reduce death from cardiovascular disease by 1.2 percent within five years and nearly two percent within 20 years.

The measures could decrease heart attacks by 2.6 percent and strokes by four percent over two decades, the report said.

Sugary drinks

It also found that deaths from cardiovascular diseases could decrease by nearly 0.1 percent within five years of a price increase of 10 percent on sugary drinks, and 0.12 percent within 20 years.

The measures could decrease heart attacks by 0.25 percent in both timeframes and strokes by 0.17 percent in 20 years, the report said, adding that diabetes could decrease by 0.2 percent in five years and 0.7 percent in 20 years.

Together, small price changes could prevent 515,000 deaths from cardiovascular disease and stop nearly 675,000 heart attacks, strokes and other events from occurring, the computer model predicted.

"These novel findings support the need to combine modest taxes and subsidies to better represent the real costs of food to health and society," Tufts University's Dariush Mozaffarian

said. Encouraging people to eat one more piece of fruit or one more serving of vegetables a day through food assistance programs such as the SNAP program - also known as food stamps - could have a significant effect, the researchers said. Several states and cities such as New York, Philadelphia and San Francisco as well as Native American tribes have attempted imposing sales taxes on sugary drinks. They have been met with little success.

But there have been some exceptions. The Navajo Nation last year eliminated sales taxes on fruits and vegetables, while increasing them on sodas and other junk food. The tribe - which numbers 173,600 people living in Arizona, New Mexico and Utah - is spending the revenue on education campaigns and other programs to promote healthy behavior.

A recent study showed that Mexico's imposition of a small tax on sugary drinks also decreased sales. It's not all bad news in the United States, too. Changing attitudes have helped sales of soft drinks fall more than 25 percent over the last two decades. — AP



SOUTH DAKOTA GOVERNOR VETOES LAW ON TRANSGENDER BATHROOMS

PIERRE: South Dakota's governor vetoed a bill that would have made the state the first in the US to approve a law requiring transgender students to use bathrooms and locker rooms that match their sex at birth.

Republican Gov Dennis Daugaard, who initially reacted positively to the proposal but said he needed to research the issue, rejected the bill Tuesday after groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union and the Human Rights Campaign insisted it was discriminatory.

In his veto message, Daugaard said the bill "does not address any pressing issue" and that such decisions were best left to local school officials. He also noted that signing the bill could create costly liability issues for schools and the state. The ACLU had promised to encourage legal action if the bill became law.

"I am so happy right now. You have no idea," said 18-year-old Thomas Lewis, a transgender high school student in Sioux Falls. Lewis said he has support at his school, but that the veto shows such support goes beyond his friends. "The government's not going to hold me back from who I really am," he said.

The bill's sponsor, Republican Rep. Fred Deutsch, said he would ask lawmakers not to override the veto, saying more focus on the issue would detract from the Legislature's other accomplishments this year. The Republican-controlled Legislature approved the bill last month, with supporters saying it would protect student privacy.

New flashpoint

Transgender rights have become a new flashpoint in the nation's cultural clashes following the landmark US Supreme Court ruling that legalized same-sex marriage last year. The high court victory encouraged advocates for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights to push harder, prompting backlash from conservatives. Caitlyn Jenner, the transgender activist and former Olympic decathlon gold medalist, had called on Daugaard to veto the bill. Opponents also used the South Dakota Tourism Department's Twitter hashtag to take aim at the state's roughly \$3.8 billion tourism industry.

Other high-profile cases include last week's vote in North Carolina by the Charlotte City Council to allow transgender people to choose a bathroom. The vote was immediately criticized by Gov. Pat McCrory, who said it denied privacy rights for those who expect to share restrooms or locker rooms only with people born with the same anatomy.

In Texas, Houston voters soundly defeated an ordinance that would have banned discrimination against transgender people after opponents alleged it would allow sexual predators to go into women's bathrooms. Daugaard initially offered a positive reaction to South Dakota's proposal, but said he wanted to listen to testimony before making a decision. Last week, he met with three transgender individuals and heard their personal stories; before the meeting, the governor said he had never knowingly met a transgender person.

Vulnerable students

Opponents said the legislation was an attack on vulnerable transgender students that would further marginalize them at school. They also criticized comments made by some lawmakers, including Republican Sen. David Omdahl.

"I'm sorry if you're so twisted you don't know who you are," Omdahl said when asked about the bill last month. "I'm telling you right now, it's about protecting the kids, and I don't even understand where our society is these days." Under the plan, schools would have been required to provide a "reasonable accommodation" for transgender students, such as a single-occupancy bathroom or the "controlled use" of a staff-designated restroom, locker room or shower room.

Supporters said the proposal was a response to changes in President Barack Obama administration's interpretation of the federal Title IX anti-discrimination law related to education. Federal officials have said barring students from restrooms that match their gender identity is prohibited under Title IX. Deutsch had said the plan pushed back "against federal overreach and intrusion into our lives."

Heather Smith, executive director of the ACLU of South Dakota, said Tuesday that had the governor signed the bill, schools would have been forced to choose whether follow state or federal law. She also said her organization would have encouraged any student harmed by the new law to file a federal civil rights complaint.

Smith said people from across the state and country reached out to the governor to urge this veto. She said that's the true testament of democracy. Chad Griffin, president of the Human Rights Campaign, added that the governor "chose to do the right thing." "Today, the voices of fairness and equality prevailed, and these students' rights and dignity prevailed against overwhelming odds and vicious opponents in the state Legislature," Griffin said. — AP



PIERRE: Representatives from the Center for Equality, American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota, LGBT supporters and members of the Human Rights Campaign stand on the front steps of the State Capitol to honor Trans Kids Support Visibility Day. — AP



KAZAKHSTAN: Russian cosmonauts Mikhail Kornienko (left), Sergey Volkov, (center) and US astronaut Scott Kelly rest in chairs outside the Soyuz TMA-18M space capsule after they landed in a remote area outside the town of Dzhezkazgan. — AP photos

INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION'S 'ONE YEAR CREW' RETURNS HOME

PREPARING FOR A POTENTIAL MISSION TO MARS

DZHEZKAZGAN, Kazakhstan: US astronaut Scott Kelly and Russian cosmonaut Mikhail Kornienko returned to Earth yesterday after spending almost a year in space in a ground-breaking experiment foreshadowing a potential manned mission to Mars. The 340-day mission saw Kelly claim the record for the longest single stay in space by a US astronaut, while Kornienko is now fifth on the list for lengthiest mission by a Russian cosmonaut.

"We have landing," Russian Mission Control confirmed after the trio touched down southeast of the settlement of Dzhezkazgan in central Kazakhstan at around 0430 GMT. After returning from his lengthy stint in space Kelly was clearly in high spirits as he was lowered to the ground by burly Russian rescue workers at the landing site.



KAZAKHSTAN: Ground personnel help International Space Station (ISS) crew member Scott Kelly of the US to get off the Soyuz TMA-18M space capsule after landing.

"The air out here feels great. I've no idea why you guys are so bundled up," NASA TV reported him as saying as he sat upright in a chair on the steppe in temperatures just below zero degrees Celsius (32 degrees Fahrenheit). Kelly and Kornienko returned with Russia's Sergei Volkov, who was stationed at the ISS for over five months and was met upon landing by his father, retired cosmonaut Aleksandr Volkov. The "one-year crew" mission—which began on March 27 last year—was the longest by any astronauts aboard the ISS and seen as a vital chance to measure the effects of a prolonged period in space on the human body.

'Giant leap to boots on Mars'

"Scott Kelly's one-year mission aboard the International Space Station has helped to advance deep space exploration and America's Journey to Mars," NASA administrator Charles Bolden in a statement. "Scott has become the first American astronaut to spend a year in space, and in so doing,



KAZAKHSTAN: Russia's Soyuz TMA-18M space capsule carrying the International Space Station (ISS) crew of US astronaut Scott Kelly and Russian cosmonauts Mikhail Kornienko and Sergey Volkov prepares to land.

helped us take one giant leap toward putting boots on Mars." The pair were subjected to a battery of tests before and after their ascent towards the ISS and underwent more tests soon after landing. Weightlessness reduces muscle mass and bone density and is believed to diminish eyesight by increasing cerebrospinal fluid around the optic nerve. Kelly, 52, was also part of an experiment comparing his development and changes in space with his identical twin brother-Mark-back on Earth. He will now arrive by chartered flight in Houston for a NASA medical examination.

Gorilla in space

In his year aboard the space station Kelly has been an avid Internet poster, capturing stunning views on his Instagram page and tweeting regularly to nearly a million followers while travelling some 143 million miles.

In one particularly eye-catching stunt, the bald-headed astronaut posted a short video of himself dressed up in a gorilla suit and floating through the ISS in pursuit of a colleague. "Needed a little humor to lighten up a year in space," he wrote on Twitter on February 23, when he posted the video.

One image Kelly tweeted captured the economic divide between North and South Korea as visible from space, with the South aglow with electric

lights and the North cast in a blanket of darkness. Another impressive shot was one of the Milky Way which Kelly described as "old, dusty, gassy and warped. But beautiful."

"Spaceflight is the biggest team sport there is, and it's incredibly important that we all work together to make what is seemingly impossible possible," Kelly said when handing over command of the ISS to fellow NASA astronaut Tim Kopra on Monday. The ISS trio leave behind Kopra, Russian cosmonaut Yuri Malenchenko and the European Space Agency's British astronaut Tim Peake.

NASA's Jeff Williams and Roscosmos' Oleg Skripochka and Alexey Ovchinnikov, will join them following a launch from Baikonur later this month. The record Kelly beat for consecutive days spent in space by an American astronaut was previously held by Michael Lopez-Alegria, who spent 215 straight days in space in 2007.

The world record for longest single stay in space is held by Russian Valery Polyakov, who spent some 438 days on the Mir space station from 1994 to 1995. The ISS space laboratory has been orbiting Earth at about 28,000 kilometers an hour since 1998. Space travel has been one of the few areas of international cooperation between Russia and the West that has not been wrecked by the Ukraine crisis. — AFP

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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

OFFICERS FROM MUBARAK AL-ABDULLAH JOINT



Mubarak Al-Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College (MAJCS) officers and Kuwait Times management and staff in a group photo. — Photos by Joseph Shagra and Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT: A total of 55 officers studying at the Mubarak Al-Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College (MAJCS) visited the Kuwait Times Newspaper and Publishing House in Shuwaikh Industrial Area yesterday. The officers, including staff and students from Kuwait, Bahrain, Egypt, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States toured the facilities, listened to lectures and engaged in discussions on media and the military, editorial issues, printing processes, marketing and audience management.

The MAJCS visit was part of a broader nine month Masters level Command and Staff Course focusing on the military contribution to the delivery of national security and the planning and execution of military operations at the National and International level.

Kuwait's MAJCS is widely regarded as the premier staff college of its type in the Middle East and enjoys a close working relationship with the United Kingdom Defence Academy, from where many of its staff are drawn. Its primary role is to prepare senior officers to fill high grade command and staff appointments in Kuwait's National Armed Forces and as members of international coalitions.



Kuwait Times Deputy General Manager Adnan Saad gives a presentation to the visiting delegation.



Officers pictured during their visit to the Kuwait Times Newspaper and Publishing House.

COMMAND & STAFF COLLEGE VISIT KUWAIT TIMES



Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan and Deputy General Manager Adnan Saad present a gift to the visiting delegation.



Colonel Tim Wordsworth presents a commemorative plaque to Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan.



(From left) Lieutenant Colonel Meshaal Al-Ansari, Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan and Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Abd Al-Nour.



Kuwait Times Deputy General Manager Adnan Saad guides the delegation during the tour.



The military delegation tours the printing press.



Officers listen to a demonstration given by Kuwait Times IT Manager Islam Al-Sharaa.



Military staff listen to a demonstration during their tour at the printing press.



Members of the delegation are seen while touring the printing press.



Officers observe a machine during the tour.



The delegation seen during a luncheon held in their honor.

amc 00:55 The Heavenly Kid 02:25 State Of Grace 04:40 Big Screen 04:55 It Runs In The Family 06:20 Billy Two Hats 08:00 The Aviator 09:35 The Secret Of Santa Vittoria 11:50 Captain Jack 13:30 Big Screen 13:45 Beauty Shop 15:30 Hackers 17:15 Death Rides A Horse 19:10 Punks 20:45 Big Screen 21:00 Breaking Bad 22:00 The Heavenly Kid 23:30 A Fish Called Wanda

11:00 Global Business 12:00 News Update 12:30 Culture Express 13:00 Africa Live 14:00 News Update 14:30 Dialogue 15:00 News Update 15:15 China 24 16:00 News Update 16:15 Global Business 17:00 News Update 17:15 World InSight 18:00 Asia Today 18:30 Culture Express 19:00 News Update 19:30 The Heat 20:00 Africa Live 21:00 Global Business 21:30 Dialogue 22:00 News Update 22:15 China 24 23:00 News Update 23:15 World InSight

Zahn 09:40 Fatal Encounters 10:30 Murder Shift 11:20 Deadly Affairs 12:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones 13:00 The Will 13:50 I Almost Got Away With It 14:40 California Investigator 15:05 Dr G: Medical Examiner 15:55 Fatal Encounters 16:45 On The Case With Paula Zahn 17:35 Murder Shift 18:25 I Almost Got Away With It 19:15 The Will 20:05 Deadly Affairs 20:55 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones 21:45 California Investigator 22:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry? 22:35 Who On Earth Did I Marry? 23:00 Deadly Affairs 23:50 True CSI

ANIMAL PLANET HD 00:50 River Monsters 01:45 Mountain Monsters 02:40 Dog Rescuers 03:35 Tanked 04:25 Charles & Jessica: A Chimpy Tale 05:15 Gator Boys 06:02 Treehouse Masters 06:49 Dog Rescuers 07:36 Monkey Life 08:00 Monkey Life 08:25 Bad Dog 09:15 Dog Rescuers 10:10 Treehouse Masters 11:05 Tanked 12:00 Bad Dog 12:55 Bondi Vet 13:50 Dog Rescuers 14:45 Gator Boys 15:40 Treehouse Masters 16:35 Tanked 17:30 Charles & Jessica: A Chimpy Tale 18:25 River Monsters 19:20 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet 20:15 Tanked 21:10 Animal Cops South Africa 22:05 Treehouse Masters 23:00 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet 23:55 Gator Boys

CNBC 01:00 CNBC Conversation: v Santigrabob 01:30 First Class 02:00 U.S. Squawk Alley 03:00 Asia Squawk Box 05:00 Asia Street Signs 07:00 Fast Money: Half Time Report 08:00 Capital Connection 09:00 Squawk Box Europe 12:00 Europe Street Signs 13:00 Worldwide Exchange 14:00 U.S. Squawk Box 17:00 Squawk On The Street 19:00 U.S. Squawk Alley 20:00 Fast Money: Half Time Report 21:00 U.S. Power Lunch 23:00 U.S. Closing Bell

Discovery Science 00:35 Weird Or What? 01:20 How It's Made 01:44 How It's Made 02:08 Invent It Rich 02:55 How The Universe Works 03:42 Sci-Fi Saved My Life 04:29 Weird Or What? 05:16 Invent It Rich 06:03 How The Universe Works 06:50 Mighty Ships 07:37 How Do They Do It? 08:00 How Do They Do It? 08:23 Weird Or What? 09:08 Sci-Fi Saved My Life 09:53 Mighty Ships 10:38 How It's Made 11:00 How It's Made 11:23 Food Factory 11:45 How The Universe Works 12:08 Mighty Ships 12:53 Weird Or What? 14:23 How It's Made 14:46 How It's Made 15:10 Sci-Fi Saved My Life 15:57 Food Factory 16:20 Food Factory 16:44 How The Universe Works 17:31 Mighty Ships 18:18 Sci-Fi Saved My Life 19:05 Weird Or What? 19:50 Mega Builders 20:40 How The Universe Works 21:25 How It's Made 21:50 How It's Made 22:15 Sci-Fi Saved My Life 23:00 Mega Builders 23:45 How The Universe Works

BBC FIRST 00:20 Eastenders 00:50 New Tricks 01:45 New Tricks 02:35 Ripper Street 03:30 Doctors 04:00 Eastenders 04:25 Starlings 05:10 Death In Paradise 06:05 The Cafe 06:30 Doctors 07:00 Eastenders 07:30 Starlings 08:15 Call The Midwife 09:15 Doctor Who 10:05 Doctors 10:35 Eastenders 11:05 Death In Paradise 12:00 Starlings 12:45 Call The Midwife 13:45 Doctor Who 14:35 Doctors 15:05 Eastenders 15:35 Starlings 16:20 Dickensian 17:10 Doctor Who 18:00 Doctors 18:30 Eastenders 19:05 Death In Paradise 20:00 Holly City 21:00 Stella 21:45 Ripper Street 22:45 Death In Paradise 23:40 Doctors

crime & investigation network 00:00 The Haunting Of... 01:00 The Ghost Inside My Child 02:00 My Haunted House 03:00 Diabolical Women 04:00 The First 48 05:00 The Ghost Inside My Child 06:00 The Haunting Of... 07:00 The FBI Files 08:00 The FBI Files 09:00 Homicide Hunter 10:00 Beyond Scared Straight 11:00 Martina Cole's Lady Killers 12:00 Crimes That Shook Australia 13:00 Nightmare In Suburbia 14:00 The First 48 15:00 Homicide Hunter 16:00 I Killed My BFF 17:00 The FBI Files 18:00 Crimes That Shook Australia 19:00 Nightmare In Suburbia 20:00 The First 48 21:00 Homicide Hunter 22:00 Martina Cole's Lady Killers 23:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover

Discovery world 00:40 Mao's Cold War 01:30 Zero Hour 02:20 Origins 02:40 Chasing Classic Cars 03:05 Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations 03:50 100 Miles From Nowhere 04:35 Secrets Of The Arsenal 05:20 Extreme Engineering 06:05 Codes And Conspiracies 06:50 Mao's Cold War 07:35 Origins 08:00 Bizarre Foods 08:50 Tattoo Hunter 09:40 Extreme Engineering 10:30 Gunslingers 11:20 Origins 11:45 Chasing Classic Cars 12:10 Bizarre Foods 13:00 Tattoo Hunter 13:50 Extreme Engineering 14:40 Gunslingers 15:30 Origins 15:55 Chasing Classic Cars 16:20 Bizarre Foods 17:10 Tattoo Hunter 18:00 Extreme Engineering 18:50 Gunslingers 19:40 Origins 20:05 Chasing Classic Cars 20:30 American Guns 21:20 Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations 22:10 Extreme Engineering

Bloomberg TELEVISION 00:00 What'd You Miss? 01:00 Charlie Rose 02:00 First Up With Angie Lau 03:00 First Up With Angie Lau

Discovery CHANNEL HD 00:20 Fast N' Loud 01:10 Mythbusters 02:00 The Weapon Hunter 02:50 Big Giant Swords 03:40 Storage Hunters 04:05 The Liquidator 04:30 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop Edition 05:00 How It's Made: Dream Cars 05:30 How Do They Do It? 06:00 Flying Wild Alaska 06:50 Philly Throttle 07:40 Fast N' Loud 08:30 Storage Hunters 08:55 The Liquidator 09:20 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop Edition 09:45 How It's Made: Dream Cars 10:10 How Do They Do It? 10:35 Mythbusters 11:25 The Weapon Hunter 12:15 Big Giant Swords

00:00 Henry Hugglemonster 00:20 Calimero 00:30 Zou 00:50 Loopdidoo 01:05 Art Attack 01:30 Henry Hugglemonster 01:45 Calimero 02:00 Zou 02:15 Loopdidoo 02:30 Art Attack 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster 03:05 Calimero 03:20 Zou 03:30 Loopdidoo 03:45 Art Attack 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster 04:20 Calimero 04:35 Zou 04:45 Loopdidoo 05:00 Art Attack 05:25 Henry Hugglemonster 05:35 Calimero 05:50 Zou 06:00 Loopdidoo 06:15 Art Attack 06:35 Henry Hugglemonster 06:50 Calimero 07:00 Zou 07:20 Loopdidoo 07:35 Art Attack 08:00 Calimero 08:10 Zou 08:25 Loopdidoo 08:40 Miles From Tomorrow 09:05 Sofia The First 09:30 Goldie & Bear 09:45 Jake And The Never Land Pirates 10:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse 10:35 Doc McStuffins 11:00 Sofia The First 11:30 Goldie & Bear 12:00 Miles From Tomorrow 12:25 Special Agent Oso 12:40 The Hive 12:50 Handy Manny 13:15 Jungle Junction 13:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse 13:50 Loopdidoo 14:10 Miles From Tomorrow 14:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates 17:00 Sofia The First 17:25 Jungle Cubs 17:50 Aladdin 18:15 Gummi Bears 18:40 Goldie & Bear 19:05 Miles From Tomorrow 19:30 Sofia The First 19:55 Doc McStuffins 20:10 Jake And The Never Land Pirates 20:35 Miles From Tomorrow 21:00 Goldie & Bear 21:30 Sofia The First 22:00 Jungle Cubs 22:25 Aladdin 22:50 Gummi Bears 23:20 Lilo And Stitch



OSN MOVIES HD ACTION 04:00 Trending Business 05:00 Trending Business 06:00 Asia Edge 07:00 Bloomberg West 08:00 Charlie Rose 09:00 Countdown 10:30 On The Move 11:00 On The Move 12:00 The Pulse 13:00 Bloomberg Surveillance 14:00 Bloomberg Surveillance 15:00 Bloomberg Go 16:00 Bloomberg Go 17:00 Bloomberg Go 18:00 Bloomberg Markets 19:00 Bloomberg Markets: European Close 20:00 Bloomberg Markets 21:00 Bloomberg Markets 22:00 Bloomberg Markets 23:00 Bloomberg Markets

ID. INVESTIGATION DISCOVER 00:40 Who On Earth Did I Marry? 01:05 Who On Earth Did I Marry? 01:30 The Haunted 02:20 Ghost Lab 03:10 Scorned: Crimes Of Passion 04:00 Deadline: Crime With Tarron Hall 04:45 Who On Earth Did I Marry? 05:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry? 05:30 The Haunted 06:20 Fatal Encounters 07:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones 08:00 Dr G: Medical Examiner 08:50 On The Case With Paula Zahn

American Guns 23:50 Codes And Conspiracies 00:00 Violetta 00:45 The Hive 00:50 Mouk 06:20 Lolirock 06:25 Sofia The First 06:50 Gravity Falls 07:15 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir 08:05 Shake It Up 08:30 Shake It Up 08:55 That's So Raven 09:20 That's So Raven 09:45 Austin & Ally 10:10 Austin & Ally 10:35 A.N.T. Farm 11:00 A.N.T. Farm 11:25 Jessie

CCTV NEWS 00:00 News Update 00:30 Dialogue 01:00 News Update 01:15 China 24 02:00 The Heat 02:30 News Update 03:00 Global Business 04:00 News Update 05:00 News Update 06:30 Dialogue 07:00 News Hour 08:00 Global Business 09:00 News Update 09:30 Sports Scene

00:00 Programmes Start At 7:00am KSA 07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil 07:25 K. C. Undercover 07:50 Supa Strikas 08:15 Annedroids 08:40 Lab Rats 09:10 Kirby Buckets 09:35 Wander Over Yonder 10:00 Rocket Monkeys 10:25 Ultimate Spider-Man 10:50 Boyster 11:20 Boyster 11:45 Pair Of Kings 12:10 Pair Of Kings 12:35 Lab Rats 13:00 Lab Rats 13:30 Phineas And Ferb 13:55 Phineas And Ferb 14:20 Kickin' It 14:45 Kickin' It 15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse 02:25 Rocket Monkeys 02:50 Wander Over Yonder 03:40 Shipping Wars 04:05 Shipping Wars 04:30 Pawn Stars 05:00 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstation... 06:00 Ice Road Truckers 06:50 Duck Dynasty 07:15 Duck Dynasty 07:40 Shipping Wars 08:05 Shipping Wars 08:30 Shipping Wars 08:55 Leepu And Pitbull 09:45 Counting Cars 10:10 Aussie Pickers 10:35 Aussie Pickers 11:25 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstation... 12:15 Pawn Stars 12:40 Pawn Stars 13:05 Shipping Wars 13:30 Shipping Wars 13:55 Counting Cars 14:20 Counting Cars 14:45 Leepu And Pitbull 15:35 Storage Wars 16:00 Aussie Pickers 16:50 Big Rig Bounty Hunters 17:40 Duck Dynasty 18:05 Duck Dynasty 18:30 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstation... 19:20 Alaska Off-Road Warriors 20:10 Pawn Stars 20:35 Pawn Stars 21:00 Duck Dynasty 21:25 Duck Dynasty 21:50 Pawn Stars 22:15 Pawn Stars Australia 22:40 Hoard Hunters

00:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 00:55 The Grace Helbig Show 01:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 02:20 El News 03:15 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills 04:10 The El True Hollywood Story 05:05 The El True Hollywood Story 06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 07:50 Style Star 08:20 El News 09:15 Giuliana & Bill 10:15 Giuliana & Bill 11:10 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills 11:35 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills 12:05 El News 13:05 WAGs 14:05 Botched 15:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 16:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 17:00 Fashion Police 18:00 El News 19:00 House Of DVF 20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 21:00 Dash Dolls 22:00 El News 23:00 WAGs



LAY THE FAVOURITE ON OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

00:00 Jessie 12:15 Cars Toons 12:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir 12:45 Fish Hooks 13:00 Fish Hooks 13:10 Austin & Ally 13:35 Austin & Ally 14:00 Liv And Maddie 14:25 Descendants Wicked World 14:30 Liv And Maddie 14:55 Dog With A Blog 15:20 Dog With A Blog 15:45 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir 16:10 Violetta 17:00 The Next Step 17:25 Alex And Co 17:47 Descendants Wicked World 17:50 Dog With A Blog 18:15 Mako Mermaids 18:40 Gravity Falls 19:05 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir 19:30 Violetta 20:20 The Next Step 20:45 Good Luck Charlie 21:10 Good Luck Charlie 21:35 H2O 22:00 Binnie And The Ghost 22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch 22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch 23:10 Hank Zipzer

00:00 Programmes Start At 7:00am KSA 07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil 07:25 K. C. Undercover 07:50 Supa Strikas 08:15 Annedroids 08:40 Lab Rats 09:10 Kirby Buckets 09:35 Wander Over Yonder 10:00 Rocket Monkeys 10:25 Ultimate Spider-Man 10:50 Boyster 11:20 Boyster 11:45 Pair Of Kings 12:10 Pair Of Kings 12:35 Lab Rats 13:00 Lab Rats 13:30 Phineas And Ferb 13:55 Phineas And Ferb 14:20 Kickin' It 14:45 Kickin' It 15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse 02:25 Rocket Monkeys 02:50 Wander Over Yonder 03:40 Shipping Wars 04:05 Shipping Wars 04:30 Pawn Stars 05:00 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstation... 06:00 Ice Road Truckers 06:50 Duck Dynasty 07:15 Duck Dynasty 07:40 Shipping Wars 08:05 Shipping Wars 08:30 Shipping Wars 08:55 Leepu And Pitbull 09:45 Counting Cars 10:10 Aussie Pickers 10:35 Aussie Pickers 11:25 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstation... 12:15 Pawn Stars 12:40 Pawn Stars 13:05 Shipping Wars 13:30 Shipping Wars 13:55 Counting Cars 14:20 Counting Cars 14:45 Leepu And Pitbull 15:35 Storage Wars 16:00 Aussie Pickers 16:50 Big Rig Bounty Hunters 17:40 Duck Dynasty 18:05 Duck Dynasty 18:30 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstation... 19:20 Alaska Off-Road Warriors 20:10 Pawn Stars 20:35 Pawn Stars 21:00 Duck Dynasty 21:25 Duck Dynasty 21:50 Pawn Stars 22:15 Pawn Stars Australia 22:40 Hoard Hunters

13:30 Guy's Big Bite 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives 14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives 15:00 Man Fire Food 15:30 Man Fire Food 16:00 Chopped 17:00 The Kitchen 18:00 The Pioneer Woman 18:30 The Pioneer Woman 19:00 Chopped 20:00 Iron Chef America 21:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers 21:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers 22:00 Tia Mowry At Home 22:30 Siba's Table 23:00 Siba's Table

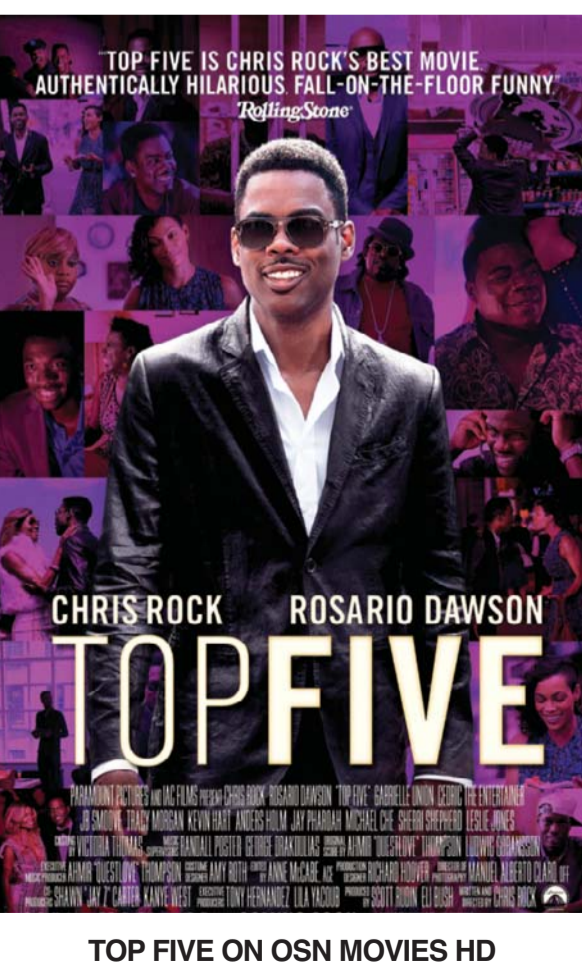
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00:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 00:55 The Grace Helbig Show 01:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 02:20 El News 03:15 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills 04:10 The El True Hollywood Story 05:05 The El True Hollywood Story 06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 07:50 Style Star 08:20 El News 09:15 Giuliana & Bill 10:15 Giuliana & Bill 11:10 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills 11:35 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills 12:05 El News 13:05 WAGs 14:05 Botched 15:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 16:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 17:00 Fashion Police 18:00 El News 19:00 House Of DVF 20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 21:00 Dash Dolls 22:00 El News 23:00 WAGs

00:00 Suburgatory 01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore 01:30 Brickleberry 02:00 Curb Your Enthusiasm 02:30 It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia 03:00 Modern Family 03:30 Playing House 04:00 Weird Loners 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon 05:00 Modern Family 06:00 Mad Love 06:30 Community 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers 08:00 Weird Loners 08:30 Breaking In 09:00 New Girl 09:30 The Last Man On Earth

00:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 00:55 The Grace Helbig Show 01:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 02:20 El News 03:15 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills 04:10 The El True Hollywood Story 05:05 The El True Hollywood Story 06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 07:50 Style Star 08:20 El News 09:15 Giuliana & Bill 10:15 Giuliana & Bill 11:10 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills 11:35 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills 12:05 El News 13:05 WAGs 14:05 Botched 15:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 16:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 17:00 Fashion Police 18:00 El News 19:00 House Of DVF 20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians 21:00 Dash Dolls 22:00 El News 23:00 WAGs

00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives 00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives 01:00 Chopped 02:00 All Star Academy 03:00 Man Fire Food 03:30 Man Fire Food 04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives 04:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives 05:00 Iron Chef America 06:00 Chopped 07:00 Man Fire Food 07:30 Man Fire Food 08:00 Chopped 09:00 Barefoot Contessa 09:30 Barefoot Contessa 10:00 The Kitchen 11:00 The Pioneer Woman 11:30 The Pioneer Woman 12:00 Chopped 13:00 Guy's Big Bite



TOP FIVE ON OSN MOVIES HD

itv HD CHOICE 00:10 The Chase 01:05 Emmerdale 01:30 More Tales From Northumberland... 02:00 Coronation Street 02:30 Murdoch Mysteries 03:25 Murdoch Mysteries 04:20 Murdoch Mysteries 05:15 Come Dine With Me Couples 06:10 Who's Doing The Dishes? 07:05 More Tales From Northumberland... 07:30 Murdoch Mysteries 08:25 Murdoch Mysteries 09:20 Murdoch Mysteries 10:15 The Chase 11:10 More Tales From Northumberland... 11:35 Come Dine With Me Couples 12:30 Who's Doing The Dishes? 13:25 Emmerdale 13:50 More Tales From Northumberland... 14:20 Coronation Street 14:45 Big Star's Little Star 15:35 Come Dine With Me Couples 16:30 Grantchester 17:25 Seven Days With A Friend 18:20 Emmerdale 18:45 More Tales From Northumberland... 19:10 Coronation Street 19:35 Come Dine With Me Couples 20:30 Grantchester 21:25 Seven Days With A Friend 22:20 Coronation Street

NAT GEO people HD 00:10 Eat Street 00:35 Eat Street 01:00 The Great Food Revolution 01:50 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia 02:15 Eat Street 02:40 Eat Street 03:05 Cesar Millan: Viva Las Vegas! 03:55 Poh & Co. 04:20 Maximum Foodie 04:45 David Rocco's Dolce Vita 05:10 Street Food Around The World 05:35 Planet 06:00 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet 06:25 A Marriage Of Flavours 06:50 The Great Food Revolution 07:40 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia 08:05 Eat Street 08:30 Eat Street 08:55 Cesar Millan: Viva Las Vegas! 09:45 Poh & Co. 10:10 Maximum Foodie 10:35 David Rocco's Dolce Vita 11:00 Street Food Around The World 11:25 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet 11:50 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet 12:15 A Marriage Of Flavours 12:40 The Great Food Revolution 13:35 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia 14:00 Eat Street 14:30 Eat Street 14:55 David Rocco's Dolce Vita 15:25 The Wine Quest: Spain 15:50 Poh & Co. 16:20 Maximum Foodie 16:45 Maximum Foodie 17:15 Eat Street 17:40 Eat Street 18:10 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet 18:35 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet 19:05 David Rocco's Dolce Vita 19:30 The Wine Quest: Spain 20:00 Poh & Co. 20:25 Maximum Foodie 20:50 Maximum Foodie 21:15 Eat Street 21:40 Eat Street 22:05 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION 00:00 Supernatural 01:00 Marvel's Agent Carter 02:00 Marvel's Agent Carter 03:00 DC's Legends Of Tomorrow 04:00 Good Morning America 06:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 07:00 White Collar 08:00 The Voice 10:00 Marvel's Agent Carter 11:00 Marvel's Agent Carter 12:00 Coronation Street 12:30 Coronation Street 13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 14:00 The Flash 15:00 Live Good Morning America 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 18:00 Bled & Oil 19:00 The Art Of More 20:00 The Art Of More 21:00 Blindspot 22:00 Wicked City 23:00 Mr. Robot

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION 00:00 Colors 02:15 The Borderlands 04:00 Destruction: Las Vegas 06:00 Jack The Giant Killer 08:00 Northern: A Viking Saga 10:00 Jurassic Attack 12:00 Stranded 14:00 The Outsider 15:45 Northern: A Viking Saga 17:30 Dragon Blade 19:45 X-Men: Days Of Future Past 22:00 X-Men

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY 00:00 Duets 02:00 That Awkward Moment 04:00 Serial (Bad) Weddings 06:00 The Devil Wears Prada 08:00 Down To Earth 10:00 Serial (Bad) Weddings 12:00 Garfield's Fun Fest 13:30 The Other Sister 16:00 Down To Earth 18:00 Pitch Perfect 20:00 Lay The Favorite 22:00 Borat

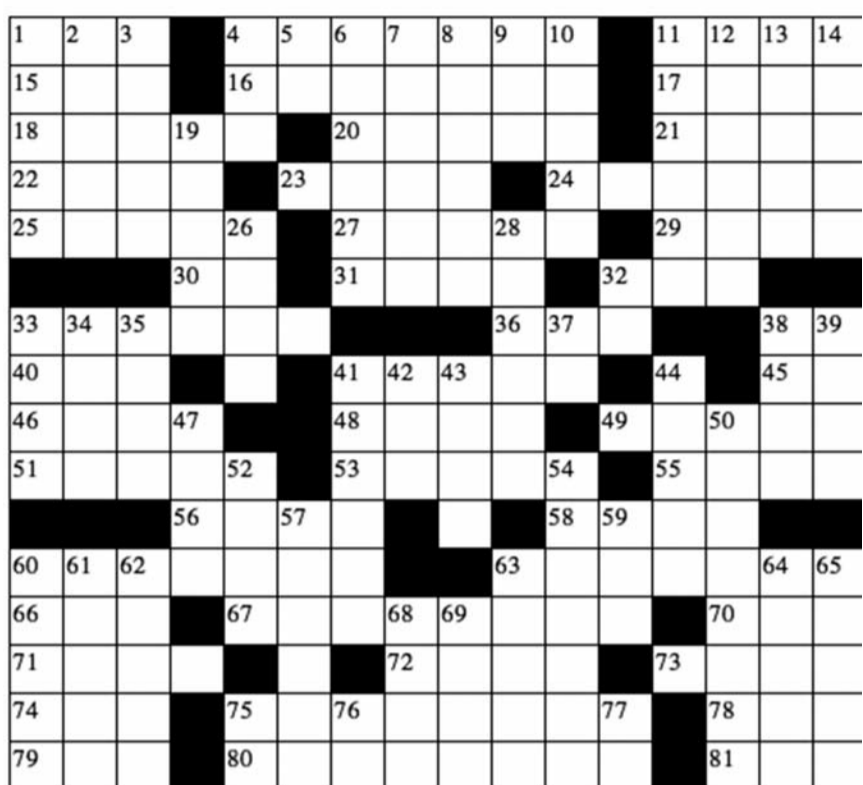
OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY 01:15 Don Peyote 03:00 About Alex 05:00 From Up On Poppy Hill 07:00 High Moon 09:00 About Alex 2: Sammy's Escape From Paradise 13:00 Left Behind 3: The Sorcerer's Curse 17:00 Accidental Love 19:00 Hot Pursuit 21:00 Top Five 23:00 The Skeleton Twins

OSN SPORTS 1 HD 00:00 Super Rugby 02:00 Trans World Sport 03:00 PGA Tour 07:00 Golfing World 08:00 PGA Tour Highlights 09:00 Asian Tour Highlights 10:00 Inside The PGA Tour 10:30 Golfing World 11:30 NRL Premiership Final 12:00 Live NRL Premiership 14:00 European Tour Weekly 14:30 Sunshine Tour Highlights 15:30 AFL NAB Challenge 18:00 Golfing World 19:00 Sunshine Tour Highlights 20:30 Inside The PGA Tour 20:30 European Tour Weekly 21:00 Live World Golf Championships

OSN SPORTS 2 HD 00:00 Asian Tour Highlights 01:00 PGA European Tour Highlights 02:00 Inside The PGA Tour 02:30 European Tour Weekly 03:00 Live NHL 06:00 Asian Tour Highlights 07:00 Mobil 1 The Grid 07:30 Top 14 Highlights 08:00 Gillette World Sport 08:30 AFL NAB Challenge 11:00 Live AFL NAB Challenge 13:30 Top 14 Highlights 14:00 Trans World Sport 15:00 Mobil 1 The Grid 15:30 WWE Vintage 16:30 WWE Raw 19:00 WWE NXT 20:00 WWE Smackdown 22:00 Live Premier League Darts

OSN SPORTS 3 HD 02:30 Top 14 Highlights 03:00 PGA European Tour Highlights 04:00 Inside Sailing 04:30 The World Sailing Show 05:00 Rugby League World Cup Challenge 07:00 Super Rugby 09:00 Premier League Darts 12:30 Eurotop Tour 14:30 Live UIM F1 H20 World Championship 15:30 NRL Premiership Final 16:00 Golfing World 17:00 Gillette World Sport 17:30 NRL Premiership 19:30 Top 14 Highlights 20:00 Inside Sailing 20:30 The World Sailing Show 21:00 Golfing World 22:00 Asian Tour Highlights 22:58 Live Super League

CROSSWORD 1184



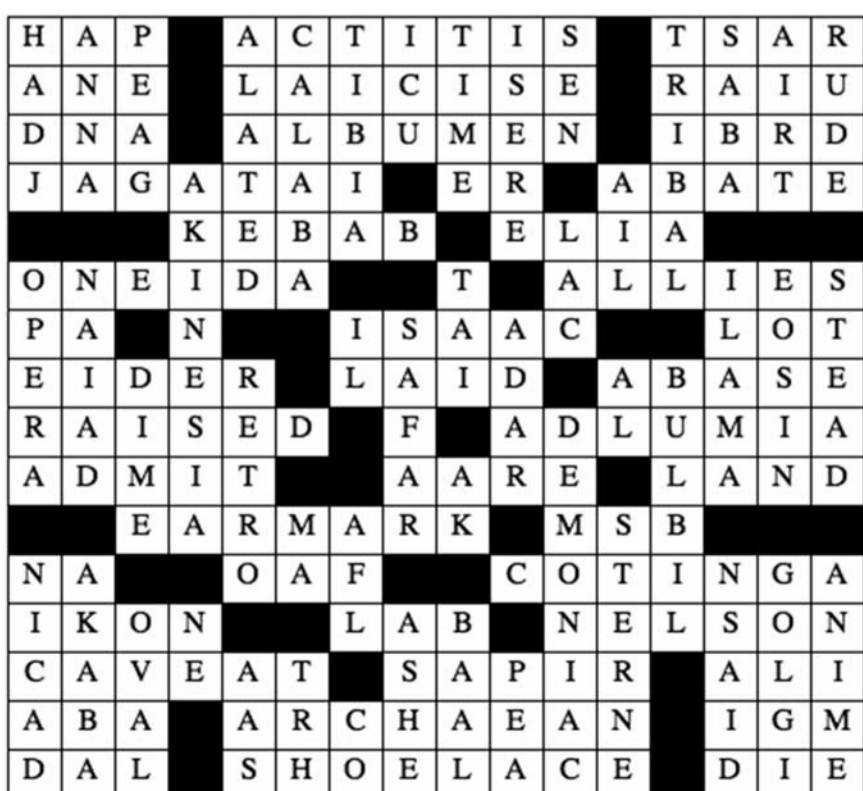
ACROSS

1. A large sandwich made of a long crusty roll split lengthwise and filled with meats and cheese (and tomato and onion and lettuce and condiments).
4. A large waterfall on the border between Argentina and Brazil.
11. Free from risk or danger.
15. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
16. (military) Withdrawal to a more favorable position.
17. A white crystalline double sulfate of aluminum.
18. Gracefully slender.
20. Italian violin maker in Cremona.
21. A large bundle bound for storage or transport.
22. Type genus of the Majidae.
23. An inn in some Eastern countries with a large courtyard that provides accommodation for caravans.
24. Inhabitant of the island of Cebu.
25. Any of a series of univalent groups of the general formula C_nH_{2n+1} derived from aliphatic hydrocarbons.
27. (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
29. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
30. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
31. A quantity of no importance.
33. One of two branches of the Finno-Ugric languages.
36. A mature blood cell that contains hemoglobin to carry oxygen to the bodily tissues.
40. A self-funded retirement plan that allows you to contribute a limited yearly sum toward your retirement.
45. A public promotion of some product or service.
46. An inhabitant of Lapland.
48. Any competition.
49. A fabric woven with lisle thread.
51. Short and fat.
53. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
55. A shade of blue tinged with green.
56. An enclosure made of wire or metal bars in which birds or animals are kept.
58. (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.
60. Small silvery schooling fishes with protrisible mouths found in warm coastal waters.
66. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
67. A field game played with a ball (especially baseball).
70. One-thousandth of an equivalent.
71. A flat float (usually made of logs or planks) that can be used for transport or as a platform for swimmers.
72. A genus of Mustelidae.
73. A small cake leavened with yeast.
74. A proinflammatory cytokine that is produced by white blood cells (monocytes and macrophages).
78. The bill in a restaurant.
79. One of the most common of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
80. Beaten eggs or an egg mixture cooked until just set.
81. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. A city in central Alabama on the Alabama river.
2. Bearded reddish sheep of southern Asia.
3. A dyed fabric.
4. A strong emotion.
5. A brittle gray crystalline element that is a semiconducting metalloid (resembling silicon) used in transistors.
6. A resident of Utah.
7. A large fleet.
8. The upper house of the parliament of the Republic of Ireland.
9. The seventh and last day of the week.
10. A city in central New York.
11. A midnight meeting of witches to practice witchcraft and sorcery.
12. Type genus of the Alaudidae.
13. A family of languages of the Fula people of west Africa in the sub-Saharan regions from Senegal to Chad.
14. Make improvements or corrections to.
19. Austrian composer who influenced the classical form of the symphony (1732-1809).
26. Set down according to a plan.
28. A unit of astronomical length based on the distance from Earth at which stellar parallax is 1 second of arc.
32. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
34. A republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
35. Chevrotaian somewhat larger than the kanchil.
37. A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.
38. River in eastern Asia.
39. The content of cognition.
41. A severe or trying experience.
42. The cry made by sheep.
43. Electronic warfare undertaken to insure effective friendly use of the electromagnetic spectrum in spite of the enemy's use of electronic warfare.
44. Used chiefly as a direction or description in music.
47. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
50. Diapsid reptiles.
52. An aggressive remark directed at a person like a missile and intended to have a telling effect.
54. Not capable of being swayed or diverted from a course.
57. United States evangelical preacher famous as a mass evangelist (born in 1918).
59. Goddess of criminal rashness and its punishment.
61. Large long-armed ape of Borneo and Sumatra having arboreal habits.
62. A port in western Israel on the Mediterranean.
63. French revolutionary leader (born in Switzerland) who was a leader in overthrowing the Girondists and was stabbed to death in his bath by Charlotte Corday (1743-1793).
64. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
65. Jordan's port.
68. (archaic or Scottish) Faithful and true.
69. An aggressive remark directed at a person like a missile and intended to have a telling effect.
75. Conforming to truth.
76. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
77. A Mid-Atlantic state.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your mind is quite able to handle any management issues or business problems that move in your direction. You could find ways to use some new technical knowledge that will bring faster and more satisfying results. You are able to turn chaos into quick and simple methods of achievement-most of the time. Expect some matters to come to your attention that need review. Repairs on the home front this afternoon may require a sense of humor. Some of the problems that you are trying to solve may be caused by outside influences. This evening you can kick back and enjoy the company of family. Leisure activity among friends or family should be enjoyed as often as possible. It may be that the family trivia or some board game is a pastime before bed.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your business and social status will improve soon. Luck is in your corner today, increasing your earning power. This may mean new information has come your way or it could mean a development has been announced. Any decisions surrounding your future should be given a time for thorough consideration. This is a time when you could make some wrong choices regarding your living situation. You may need to be of assistance to a relative or co-worker. If you are looking for a change in career, think about a business in the arts. You need a career in which you have free expression for your emotions-designer of clothes, closets, shrubbery, cabinets, cars, cartoons, etc. Be wise to balance your day so that you do not spread yourself too thin.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

There may be some serious decisions made about the future of a project, investment or term of employment with your business. This is a good time to be communicative to the associates around you and to listen carefully as well. An exchange of ideas will help you decide on any changes necessary to improve a job situation. You have no trouble at all solving problems and moving forward in the workplace. You iron out difficulties with ease and graciousness. This afternoon you may decide to open your home to new social activities. You draw emotional sustenance and a sense of security from ideals, friends and social involvement. If someone you love does not have the information you need-be patient.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Don't be too quick to jump into a financial deal. Today you might be tempted to sign on the dotted line. Some item that broke may have your attention and during the noon break, you may be able to fix it. Don't forget to have lunch first. Later, this afternoon you may enjoy having a visitor in your home. This could be a temporary visitor in the form of an animal or a child. Perhaps you will be sitting for this creature or child and doing someone a big favor. Child or animal, you can enjoy a fun adventure outside with bicycle, ball or leash. You may greatly enjoy this time. All of this activity stimulates your creativity and imagination. Your visitor may move your thoughts into having a child or an animal to love. Take pictures.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You have an opportunity to come to the aid of your fellow workers. You and another co-worker make a good team and can quickly turn difficulties into positive experiences. You may find yourselves leading a group very soon. This is a good thing. It is possible that there may be much planning involved; the project, however, will bring in many benefits. You believe in your kids and you like to show up when they have activities or a competition that is important to them. Your employer will understand that you cannot work twenty-four hours a day and because you have children, you can usually trade shifts or days with someone. Some of your organized successes in working with children can be employed within the work group.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your genius mind kicks in early this morning and moves at breakneck speed all day long. Put your mind to work and take care of any unfinished business-your mental attitude is good and discipline should come easily. Get rid of the little chores that accumulate and keep shifting to the bottom of your list. Problems and obstacles that have been difficult in your past will become less and less frustrating as you examine the process of accomplishment and do not give up in your quest to overcome. You would make a good writer and perhaps a musician. Tonight you have an invitation to go out to a classy place with friends. This is certainly the activity you enjoy, so it will not take long for you to decide. If you have a family, they will enjoy the evening as well.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may feel that you have a lack of mental concentration today but it could be that you are just tired of the same old view, or the same old work. You are ready for a change and any new business venture begun around this time could be risky due to poor planning-patience. Perhaps you are in just too much of a hurry to do the footwork, or the research. Give yourself time to think before jumping into an investment that is too good to be true. This is a better time to sell than to buy-pruning the excess and the obsolete is the right thing to do. This applies to material things, but extends to social and romantic relationships as well. Remind yourself to take it slow with a romance until you know the relationship has a future.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

If you had not noticed, this year is more a year of setting in or finding a good vocation. For the next several years, your opportunities do not get much better than they are right now. Now is the time to look, change or upgrade your job situation. Get busy-pick and choose. Love relationships, if you are not in one already, may be slow to develop for a little while; patience please. Leave this confusing situation alone until after the month of May. Energy follows thought... Above all, make your thinking positive. One way or another, the winds of change are on their way into your life. You may discover that by making a change-you will feel liberated. Work on your personal bookkeeping this evening and plan a vacation soon.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This is one of your best days for whatever you want to accomplish. Focus your attention on your goals. Make an effort to complete one task before moving on to another. Continue to analyze where you may best spend your energies. Happiness is a rebound from the hard work you have been experiencing lately. It could be that you will decide to work very hard, save up your money and go vacationing-or some other fun activity. More than likely you will be able to have friends join you in your travel adventures. Perhaps some day a large travel trailer would be fun. Sometimes it is just great to hang out with friends and enjoy a drive through the countryside. Arranging this adventure should be lots of fun. The desire for intimacy and love is strong.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Someone is kind enough to bring a subject to your attention that you can either correct or change before a client or customer becomes difficult. You can handle most anything with expert finesse. A book-review club may bring insights into your life this afternoon. Mysteries, secrets and unknown truths take you away from the everyday matters. You enjoy a group get-together, whether it is in a book club, hobby group or some other type of group get-together. This is a great time to reflect and understand your own situation-a nice time. You may find yourself serving to guide someone younger than you in matters of importance this evening. You enjoy being a mentor and you do not mind hearing input from young people.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You could come up with new solutions to some of the slowdowns in the workplace. You may be in a situation where a new computer software package does not work in the way it was meant to work and you modify or use it in different ways. Others are pleased with your resourcefulness. Later today you may want to express yourself through feelings and movement and you may want to just get out and walk or exercise. There is time this evening to be with friends and you may find an opportunity to be helpful to one of them as a good listener. You may be planning a party for a friend or welcoming a new family to your neighborhood. A welcome committee is part of the traditions of your neighborhood and good networking among neighbors is a good thing to do.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Some of the happenings today may involve some interactions with your close friend over job or path changes. This may mean that you will alter your path, not necessarily change it, perhaps a day-care owner instead of a day-care teacher. You may be pleased at the results, but it also may take a long time to complete. New ideas and an independent or pioneering mental orientation take on more importance in your life now. Learning, communicating and social contact have a way of outlining new directions in your life. This is good, in that it allows you to move to your own music instead of deadlines and time zones and the high-stress of performance. General good feelings and a sense of harmony makes this a happy time.

WORD SEARCH

Elvis

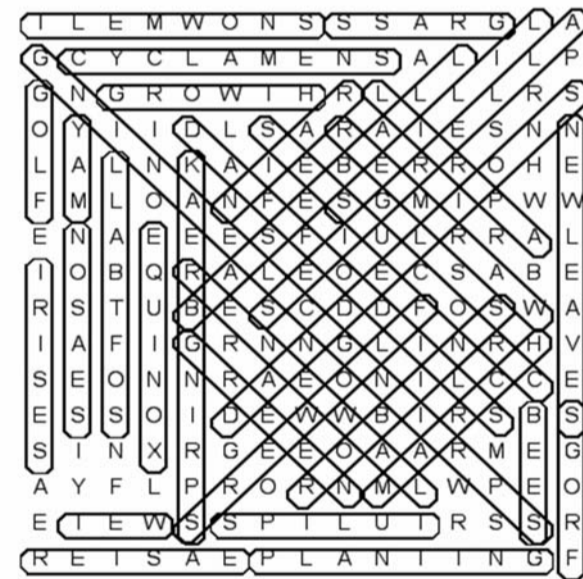
Find and circle all of the words, names, songs, and movies that have to do with Elvis. The remaining letters spell a line from an Elvis song.



- | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| AARON | GOOD LUCK CHARM | LITTLE SISTER | STUCK ON YOU |
| ALL SHOOK UP | GOSPEL | LOVE ME TENDER | SUN RECORDS |
| BLUE HAWAII | GRACELAND | MEMPHIS | SURRENDER |
| BURNING LOVE | GYRATING | ONE NIGHT | SUSPICIOUS MINDS |
| CLAMBAKE | HEARTBREAK HOTEL | PRISCILLA | THE KING |
| COLONEL PARKER | HOUND DOG | RCA | TOO MUCH |
| DON'T BE CRUEL | IN THE GHETTO | RETURN TO SENDER | TUPELO |
| DRAFTED | JAILHOUSE ROCK | ROCKABILLY | U.S. ARMY |
| G.I. BLUES | KENTUCKY RAIN | ROUSTABOUT | VERNON |
| GIRL, HAPPY | KING CREOLE | SHE'S NOT YOU | VIVA LAS VEGAS |
| GLADYS | LISA MARIE | | |

Yesterday Solution

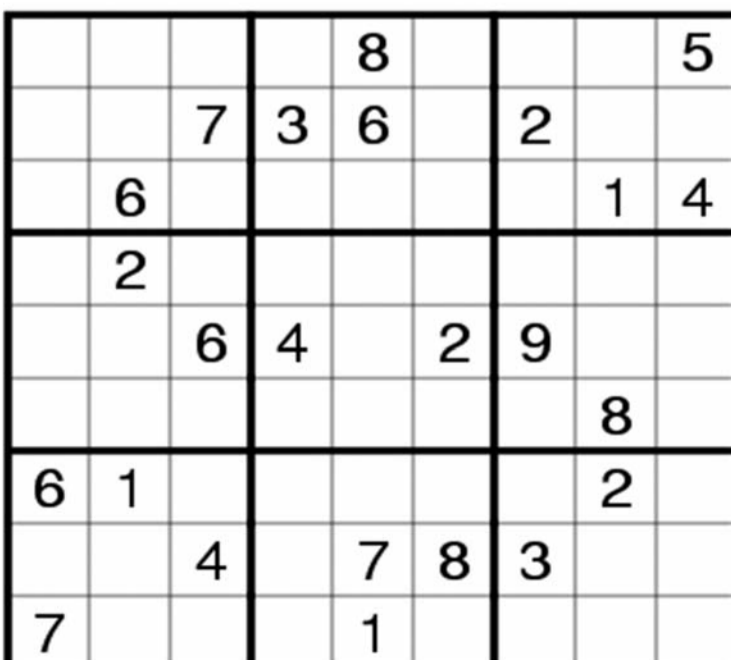
Spring



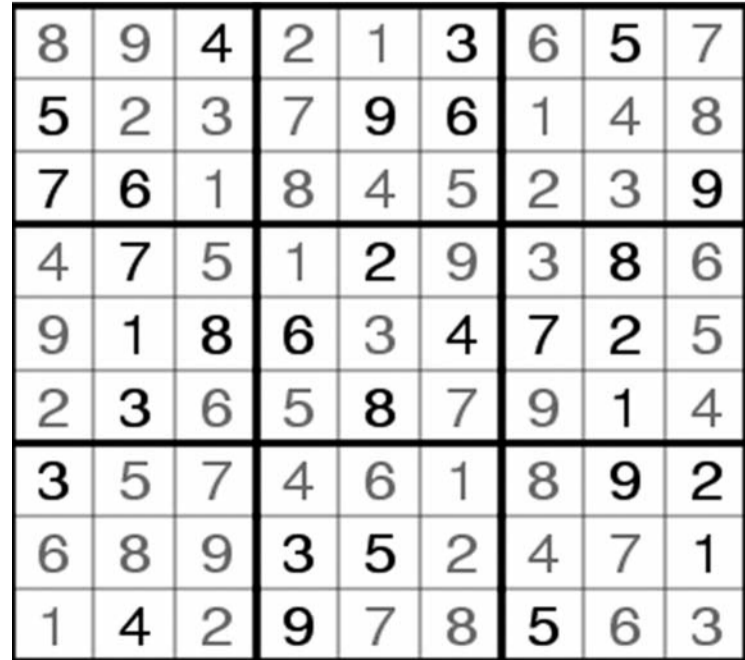
- | | | |
|-----------|------------|-----------------|
| ALLERGIES | FROGS | RAIN |
| APRIL | GOLF | RENEWAL |
| BASEBALL | GRASS | ROBINS |
| BEES | GREEN | SEASON |
| CROCUSES | GROWTH | SNOWMELT |
| CYCLAMENS | IRISES | SOFTBALL |
| DAFFODILS | LILIES | SPRING BREAK |
| DAFFODILS | MARCH | SPRING CLEANING |
| EASTER | MAY | TULIPS |
| EQUINOX | NEW LEAVES | WARMER |
| FLOWERS | PLANTING | WET |

The hidden sentence is: APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY FLOWERS

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Luxembourg	00352
Albania	00355	Macau	00853
Algeria	00213	Macedonia	00389
Andorra	00376	Madagascar	00261
Angola	00244	Majorca	0034
Anguilla	001264	Malawi	00265
Antigua	001268	Malaysia	00660
Argentina	0054	Maldives	00960
Armenia	00374	Mali	00223
Australia	0061	Malta	00356
Austria	0043	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Nigar	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Toga	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lithuania	00370		

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

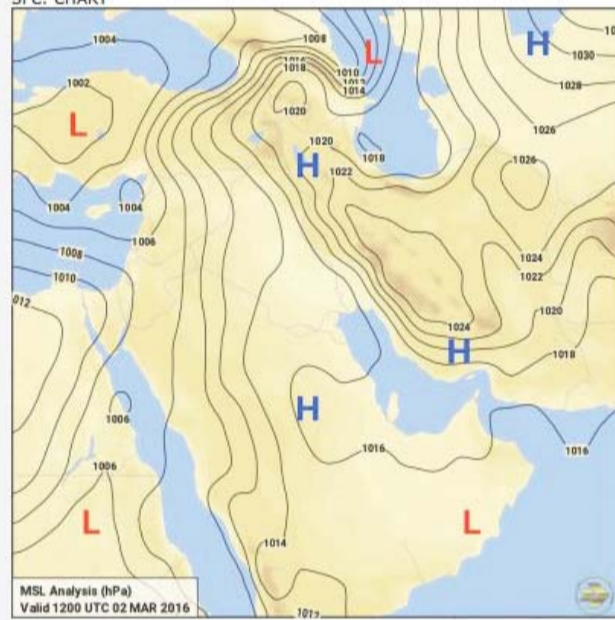
Issued 02/03/2016-19:00 LT UTC +3hr

MIN Temperature 14 °C

By Night :Cool with variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear later on

By Day : Clouds will increase gradually with light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 38 km/h with a chance for scattered rain later on

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Expected Weather	clouds to increase + scattered rain later on	partly cloudy + scattered rain+rising dust	cloudy + scattered rain might be thundery at times	clouds to decrease
Min Temp °C	14	16	17	14
Max Temp °C	27	26	27	28
Wind Direction	south easterly	south easterly	south easterly	north westerly
Wind Speed km/h	15 - 38	20 - 45	15 - 40	15 - 38

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C EXP	Max °C REC
KUWAIT CITY	18	30
KUWAIT AIRPORT	14	29
ABDALLY	13	30
BUBYAN	14	26
JAHRRA	15	31
FAILAKA ISLAND	15	28
SALMIYAH	19	26
AHMADI	18	25
JAL ALIYAH	14	29
QAROH ISLAND	18	23
UMM AL-MARADEM	18	23
NUWAISIB	17	29
WAFRA	16	30
MANAGISH	14	29
SALMY	12	28
MUTRIBA	13	30

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	28
Min Temp (°C)	15
Max Rel Hum (%)	85
Min Rel Hum (%)	21
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	43 NW
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Prayer Times

Fajr	04:53
Sunrise	06:12
Zuhr	12:00
Asr	15:20
Sunset	17:48
Isha	19:05



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	Plastic Surgeons
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaizeem	22636920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Paediatricians	Endocrinologist
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarouf	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gupare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr. Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Family Doctor	Psychiatrists	Gynaecologists & Obstetricians
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581	
Psychiatrists		
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047	
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0	
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians		
Dr. Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581	
Dr. Verginia s. Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321	
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539	
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406	
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272	
Dr. Salem soso	22618787	
General Surgeons		
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044	
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148	
Internists, Chest & Heart		
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939	
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300	
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004	
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515	
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446	
Dr. Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3	

Physiotherapists & VD	Rheumatologists:
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR. Mohammed Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC	
Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	
Te: 2575077	
Fax: 25723123	



Yolanda Hadid had days where she 'didn't want to live anymore'

The mother of Supermodels Gigi and Bella Hadid discovered she has the Lyme Disease - which can affect the skin, joints, heart, and nervous system - in 2012 and admitted that it was only her children who kept her going. Speaking on 'The Dr Oz Show', she said: "My children [are] what kept me alive. I remember just waiting for them to get out of school, just to give them a hug and look at them for hope. They're the ones that kept me fighting and wanting to live. There were many days that I really didn't want to live anymore. But when you look at your children, it's not a choice anymore. You have to get through, you have to keep fighting and searching to get well." However, she

admitted that her disease, which Bella and her son Anwar have also been diagnosed with, had forced all of her children to grow up too soon. She said: "It made them grow up all of a sudden, a lot faster. There were nights where Gigi, at three o'clock in the morning, had to drive me to the emergency room because I had such severe inflammation in my brain that I'd be balling on the floorlike, 'Please take me to the hospital!' So you know, and not just Gigi driving, Anwar and Bella in the back of the car and the four of us going to the hospital. They learned to take charge and...be my strength." Yolanda, 52, also blamed the disease for the breakdown of her marriage to music producer David Foster, 66.

She explained: "At the end of the day, David never changed, I changed. Unfortunately, these are the cards that life dealt me. It wasn't by choice. But I'm not the woman I used to be and I probably will never be again. My focus, my energy goes to trying to get well, trying to make a difference, trying to find a cure for my children ... and David's life is really traveling, going to concerts, loud music. And I mean, I couldn't, I can barely listen to the radio."



Joe Manganiello was born an addict

The 39-year-old hunk spent a decade of his life battling with substance abuse and excessive drinking, to the detriment of his career, but he believes his problems started in the womb - before he had even picked up his first bottle of booze. He explained: "I think addicts are born wired a certain way. But alcohol was not the issue for me - the issues were all internal, the drink just helped me to quell all the ill feelings I could remember having since I was a child. I was an addict before I ever picked up a drink." But after bouts of depression and homelessness, the 'Magic Mike XXL' star decided to turn his life around and believes that leap in the right direction was the best thing he's ever done because it's led to him finding his 'dream' woman. Joe married Sofia Vergara last November in a lavish wedding in Palm Beach, Florida, surrounded by their close friends and family following 16 months of dating.



Sir Elton John doesn't want his children to inherit his entire fortune

The 'Your Song' hitmaker may be worth an estimated £200 million - wracked up from his five decades in the nitty-gritty music industry - but he and his husband David Furnish are adamant their sons Zachary, five, and Elijah, three, won't be getting their paws on their cash when they're older. Sir Elton said: "Of course I want to leave my boys in a very sound financial state. But it's terrible to give kids a silver spoon. It ruins their life." The couple, who have been together nearly 23 years, are currently in the process of drafting their wills and, although they want to leave their boys in a solid financial state when they pass, they believe it's important they understand the value of money from a young age to help set up their future. David explained: "We're still

working out the details and it's about finding the balance. Anything beyond the basic, they have to go out and earn it themselves ... The greatest joys, everything Elton and I have created, have come from hard work and that's where your self-esteem comes from." And, although they're still young, Zachary and Elijah - who were born via surrogate mother - are already starting to learn the meaning of hard work. Sir Elton, 68, told the Daily Mirror newspaper: "They have to do chores in the house - take their plates to be cleaned, help in the kitchen, tidy their rooms and help in the garden, and each time they do they get a little star to put on these charts they've made. They understand they need to do these things."



Spears feels sorry for Justin Bieber

The 34-year-old singer first found fame as a child star on Disney's 'Mickey Mouse Club' and empathises with the current crop of popstars who have to adjust to having their every move scrutinised. She said: "Whoever is in the spotlight, people are really quick to judge. There are a lot of kids coming up who've experienced that. You know, Justin Bieber, he's huge, and he experiences that. It's just the way the world works, unfortunately." While Britney has had her own issues in the past, the mother-of-two says she no longer cares what people think about her. She explained: "I've been doing this for 20 years. I kind of don't pay attention to it. I have my relationship with God and myself and that's what matters to me. I really don't care what most people think." Meanwhile, the singer hasn't released a new record since her eighth LP 'Britney Jean' in 2013. However she told V magazine the following regarding her upcoming album: "I'm just particular with this record. It's my baby, and so I really want it done right. I would much rather have it be completely how I want it to be, whether that takes another year for me to do, or two months. It's the best thing I've done in a long time."



Kris Jenner finds it confusing that Caitlyn Jenner wants to date men

The reality TV star/Manager admitted that hearing that her former husband - who revealed last year that she is transgender - might be interested in romantic relationships with men was surprising at first but she just wants her to be happy. Kris stated the following on the Ellen DeGeneres Show "[It's] confusing for sure. But you know I think that I really want her to be happy and be really comfortable in all the things where she says she wasn't her true authentic self for most of her life

and knew when she was four that she felt like that. So you don't want somebody to be miserable or in pain or anything like that. I think for me, just getting used to that, you know I am human and I have my feelings and I try and its baby steps. And it's the mourning of somebody that you feel you are never going to be with or see again."

Shakira thinks Gerard Pique is the 'rock' of their family

The 'Hips Don't Lie' singer is grateful to have such a supportive partner and doting father in the 29-year-old soccer star - with whom she has sons Milan, three, and Sasha, 16 months - and says he is much wiser than she is. Shakira, 39, told HELLO!: "Since the kids were born, a tender side of him has come out. "He is the one who changes the diapers and he is there for them as he is here for me - we had a conversation recently where I said that I was missing my career and he said, "You do your thing girl, and start making music again - I am going to be there for the kids." He is the rock of the family and he might be 10 years younger than me but he is also 10 years wiser." Shakira hopes her sons grow up to be great friends and also wants them to develop a "passion" for something in the way she and Gerard have.



Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie's London home has been flooded with sewage

The Hollywood power couple are renting a nine-bedroom mansion in the English capital but were left horrified after issues with one of the toilets. A source told the Daily Mirror newspaper: "Brad and Angelina were mortified after flooding it as soon as they moved in. There was a big problem with the toilet. It caused a fair bit of damage but they managed to sort it out quickly." The couple and their six children Maddox, 14, Pax, 12, Zahara, 11, Shiloh, nine, and seven-year-old twins Knox and Vivienne, have relocated to London while Brad works on the 'World War Z' sequel. While Brad, 52, will be busy shooting his movie, his 40-year-old actress-and-director wife will use her stint in London to focus on her humanitarian work. A source previously said: "She plans to focus on political projects dealing with the ongoing refugee crisis in Europe." This is not Brad and Angelina's first time living in London; in 2012, they splashed out a reported £17,000 a month renting the Whornes Place estate for 15 months while Angelina shot 'Maleficent' and Brad filmed 'The Counselor'. As they did in their previous stint in London, the couple are expected to send their children to Le Lycee Francais school.



Disney is set to produce a new 'High School Musical' movie

The franchise launched the careers of a host of stars including Zac Efron, Vanessa Hudgens and Ashley Tisdale and 'High School Musical 4' will be the first movie since 2008's 'HSM 3: Senior Year'. Disney Channel President Gary Marsh said: "High School Musical is part of Disney Channel's DNA. It embodies all that we stand for. As a way of continuing to embrace that heritage, we're excited to announce 'the start of something new' as we launch a search for a new class

of East High Wildcats to star in a fourth installment of the 'High School Musical' franchise." Described as a modern-day 'Romeo & Juliet', 'High School Musical' - tells the story of Troy Bolton (Efron) the star athlete at a small-town high school who falls for nerdy beauty Gabriella Montez (Hudgens) at a karaoke party. Kenny Ortega directed the original while Jeffrey Hornaday will direct and choreograph the reboot. It will feature an entirely new cast and it has not yet been revealed if any of the original stars will make an appearance. No word yet on when the new movie is scheduled to air, but casting will begin soon





Coloring craze poses headache for crayon makers

Coloring books for grown-ups may be the new lifestyle craze, promising ways to combat stress, unleash our creative spirit and generally take time out from our increasingly tech-frazzled, gadget-obsessed lives. But for the makers of crayons and color pencils, the trend also poses a fundamental strategic question: is the current boom in demand just a passing fad or is it a new sustainable trend?

"I dream about crayons at night," says Andreas Martin, who manages a factory of the manufacturer Staedtler in Nuremberg, southern Germany. Staedtler is a small family-run firm employing a workforce of around 2,000 and has seen demand for some of its colored pencils explode, more or less overnight.

"These are models we've been making for years and demand always chugged along unspectacularly," Martin said. "But then all of a sudden, we weren't able to manufacture enough. It's incredible." Just behind him, a machine spits out yellow ink pens at a rate of around 6,000 per hour. Another next to it is currently programmed to produce orange ones.

On the next floor down, finished crayons in a kaleidoscope of different colors are packed into boxes of 20 or 36 for shipping to the United States, Britain or South Korea. Those are the countries at the centre of the current adult coloring craze, said Staedtler chief, Axel Marx. In the USA, nine coloring books are currently among the top 20 best-selling products on Amazon.

A slice of the cake
Gradually "we're seeing a similar development in European countries, too," said Horst Brinkmann, head of marketing and sales at rival Stabilo Schwan, which makes fluorescent marker pens and colored pencils as well. All the players in the sector are keen to get a slice of the cake. Stabilo has launched a set of crayons and book with spring motifs. Swiss upmarket maker Caran d'Ache has published its own coloring book of Alpine scenes.

Without revealing any figures, Brinkmann said Stabilo's sales of crayons had risen by more than 10 percent while the coloring craze enabled Staedtler to lift its sales by 14 percent last year to 322 million euros (\$350 million). "That's remarkable, in this age of digitalisation," said Marx. But the hype also constitutes something of a headache for factory chief Martin.

"No-one knows how long it will last," he admits. "We need to strike a balance," so as to know much to sensibly invest to be able to ride the wave, while still keeping in mind that the trend could vanish as quickly as it started.

"At the moment, we're making use of adjustable working hours," adding shifts, say, at night or on Saturday mornings. In addition to the 350 regular employees, the factory had taken on around 30 temporary workers. But ultimately, the decision is whether to invest the 300,000 Euros needed for a new machine.

Fundamental trend
Staedtler is ready to stomp up the cash, with the hope that "if the market falls again, we can use the machines for different types of products," Martin said. But rival makers are betting on the durability of the new trend.

At Caran d'Ache, "we have invested in production equipment and extended working hours," said president Carole Hubscher. The company sets great store by being a "Swiss Made" brand and "there is no question of relocating to boost production," she said. Hubscher is convinced that writing and drawing "won't disappear."

And "our growth targets are not solely built on trends," she argued. Stabilo's Brinkmann insisted that adult coloring "is part of a fundamental and universal trend towards slowing down." Nevertheless, "it's important to continue to innovate in this area" to maintain market momentum, he said, pointing to the new "fashion within a fashion" of "Zentangling" or drawing images using structured patterns. Staedtler chief Marx is more fatalistic, saying that a trend such as coloring is not predictable. "But we're keeping our fingers crossed that it'll continue," he said. — AFP



An employee of the German pencil maker Staedtler fills graphite for the color pencil's production in the production hall of the company.



Refugees listen to a general rehearsal of the Deutsches Kammerorchester Berlin chamber orchestra in a shelter for asylum seekers in Berlin. — AFP

Berlin's orchestras send refugees to 'the clouds' in special welcome

"For a while, I forgot everything," enthused Mohammad from Syria, explaining how he lost himself in the music during a concert for refugees hosted by the world's top conductors in Berlin. "We suffer a lot as refugees but today, I just really appreciated the moment," added the 25-year-old from Damascus who arrived in Germany three months ago.

He was among 2,200 asylum seekers and volunteers, helping in Germany's massive refugee relief, treated to the free concert in Berlin's iconic Philharmonic Hall. Three leading conductors and their respective orchestras had teamed up for the special occasion: Simon Rattle with the legendary Berlin Philharmonic, Daniel Barenboim with the Staatskapelle Berlin and Ivan Fischer with the Konzerthaus Orchestra.

"From the bottom of our hearts, we want to welcome you to Berlin. There is something that we all understand: the language of music," said Martin Hoffmann, the general manager of the Philharmonic, ahead of the show. The atmosphere seemed much more relaxed than usual in the hall, with children dressed in fluorescent sports jerseys clearly having fun in the audience. Finance Minister Wolfgang Schauble was the only member of government to attend the event put together under the patronage of Chancellor Angela Merkel.

'In the clouds'

During the 90-minute concert, the maestros and their orchestras transported the refugees to a different world. "It was surprising, it felt like I was in the clouds... It's a perfect show with perfect music. Thank you very much," said Maysara, 38, from Damascus. She said she enjoyed going to such concerts in the Syrian capital

when there was still peace in her country, but this was her first in Germany. "There are people here who have come from all around the world...but here, they speak the same language-music," she said. Israeli-Argentinian conductor Barenboim welcomed the audience in Arabic, before kicking off the program with Mozart's D-minor piano concerto KV 466, in which he also performed the solo part.

The 65-year-old Hungarian conductor Fischer led his orchestra in Prokofiev's First or "Classical" Symphony while 61-year-old British-born Rattle conducted the second and fourth movements of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, with each performance greeted with a standing ovation. Corry Sindern, 49, a member of an aid association for refugees, highlighted the significance of the event. "It's very important for the signs of welcome to come from everywhere... because there are many people who reject refugees or who are afraid of them," she said.

Germany took in 1.1 million asylum seekers in 2015, but skepticism is growing among the general population over the country's ability to cope with the record influx. Far-right attacks targeted at refugee shelters have also increased sharply, particularly in the former communist east of the country. Ute Detka, 54, a volunteer at the Berlin suburb of Reinickendorf praised the orchestras for their effort, saying: "It's a very nice gesture. Music unites, breaks down border and tears down walls." Maurice, 24, who arrived from Cameroon's Yaounde in September 2015, described the show as pure "joy for me." "I would never had had the chance to enter such a hall. What graciousness to give us something like that," he said. — AFP

'Coronation Street' creator Tony Warren dies at 79

British writer Tony Warren, who created the long-running soap opera "Coronation Street," has died at 79. The show he leaves behind is 56 years old, a national cultural fixture whose fans have included royalty, poets, rappers and millions of TV viewers. Broadcaster ITV said Wednesday that Warren died Tuesday night, "surrounded by his loving friends" after a short illness.

Anthony McVay Simpson - Warren was a stage name - was a 24-year-old actor when he had the idea for a television

series set in a working-class street in northwestern England, where he had grown up. He wrote the initial 13-episode run of what was originally called "Florizel Street" - renamed before it was first broadcast in December 1960.

Some TV executives had their doubts about the program, calling the characters' northern speech "the language of the music halls." But its workaday setting, memorable characters, dramatic story lines and tart northern humor was a hit.

"Corrie" - as it is popularly known - set the model for British

TV soaps, which to this day offer grit rather than the gloss of their American counterparts. "Coronation Street" still has millions of regular viewers and a surprising range of fans around the world. Prince Charles once made a cameo appearance, and his wife Camilla pulled a pint in fictional pub The Rovers Return during a 2010 visit to the set. The late poet laureate John Betjeman compared "Corrie" to the novels of Charles Dickens, while Snoop Dogg recorded a message for its 50th anniversary.

For Warren, the show's success had a dark side. He said in a 2010 interview that the pressure of creating it left him addicted to alcohol and morphine for many years. Warren wrote for the show for many years, and ITV said he remained a consultant on the series until the day he died. Warren also wrote several novels, other TV shows and the 1960s film "Ferry Cross The Mersey," starring the Liverpool band Gerry and the Pacemakers. But nothing else had the impact of "Coronation Street."

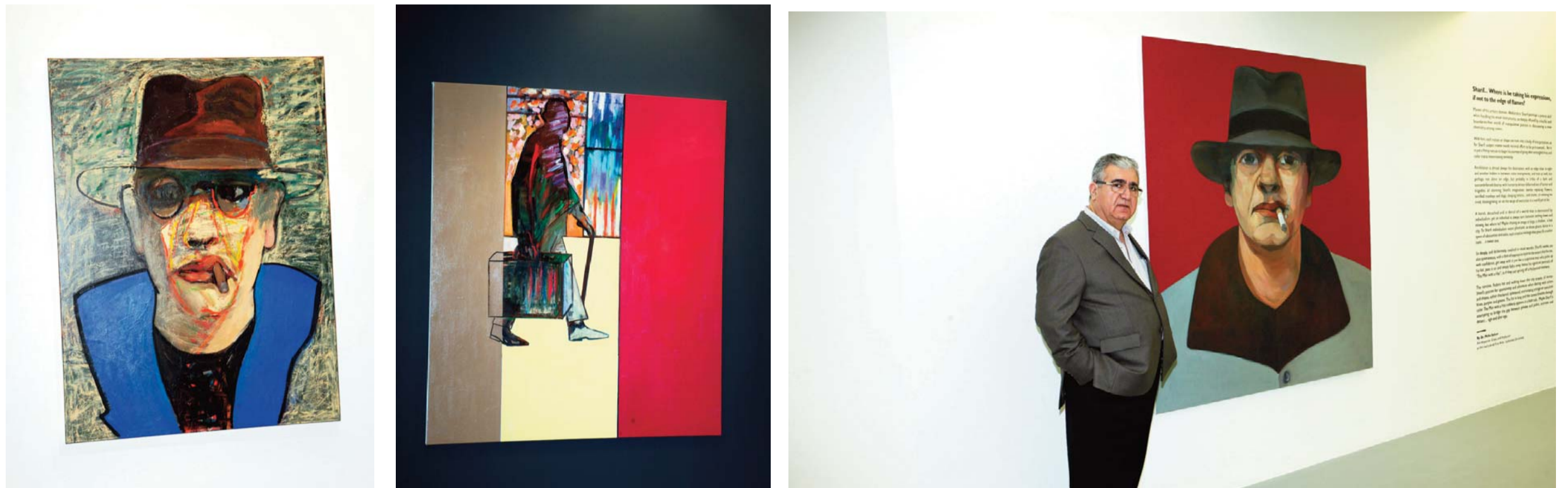
Actress Helen Worth, who has played the often-married, long-suffering Gail McIntyre in the soap since 1974, said Warren was "a genius of our time." "He brought real life into our homes for us all to relate to and enjoy. He will, of course, live on forever through 'Coronation Street,'" she said. — AP



The Duchess of Cornwall, second left, pulls a pint of beer in the Rovers Return pub, as she meets actors Beverley Callard, left, who plays landlady Liz McDonald, Anne Kirkbride, second right, who plays Deirdre Barlow, and Ryan Thomas, who plays Jason Grimshaw, during a visit to the set of the British television soap opera 'Coronation Street', in Manchester, England. — AP photos



Coronation Street creator Tony Warren



Coffee with artist **Abdulrahim Sharif**

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

Talking to Abdulrahim Sharif was an engaging and enlightening experience. His confident tone and witty jokes, not to mention the

suave cigar he was smoking, makes you feel that you're in front of a powerful man, filled with secrets. His wizened features seem to have lived a thousand of exciting stories and adventures, and this can also be seen in his art which is both mature and masterful. His portraits of gangsters and mafia figures expresses his own vision of their personalities and he was amused by the gangster lifestyle from a very young age.

The wow factor is what he wants to discover. In other words, "There's a common level in all the masterpieces in the world, they all have effects and secrets that never die. A true masterpiece would mature with time and become capable of provoking and speaking to the future generations", said the artist.

In 2000, the artist set up an exhibition called "Entity" which was an invitation to give color and shape a chance to break away from the ego. "Ego limits our imaginative thinking because it makes it so selfish and blind. When we abandon the ego, like in my work, I ceded in favor of color and form in order to understand

them and understand me. Thus the work succeeds. Just like marriage life, when it is founded on sacrifice and acceptance, the relationship succeeds", he explains.

When asked why he chose 'Edge' to exhibit his work, he said "I'm a kind of artist who's constantly trying to tear down the work. With time and experience, I learnt that demolition is a heavy part of the creation process. Sometimes, we examine a beautiful work but are not convinced, therefore, I'm taking to the fullest extent. All my work in the current exhibition has come to the edge, like on the brink of a pit of fire, either win or fail. To forever live or die".

Abdulrahim Sharif's exhibition "Edge" will be held in the Contemporary Art Platform (CAP) at Life Centre in Shuwaikh industrial area. The exhibition is open to public today from March 3rd to the 2nd of April.



About the Artist

- Abdulrahim Sharif was born in Manama, Bahrain in 1954.
- Studied art at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, France from 1974 - 1979.
- Completed a Masters of Fine Arts at New York's Parsons School of Design.
- One of the first founders of the Bahrain Arts Society.
- Lecturer and Art teacher in University of Bahrain.
- His work has been exhibited in the Middle East, GCC, Europe, USA and Australia.
- Considered one of the leading fine artists in the Middle East.



OSN continues to cement content leadership in MENA

Film lovers in the Middle East and North Africa region cannot have it any better than on OSN, the leading pay-TV network, as they will now have exclusive access to the expansive roster of movies and future television series from Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios (MGM). The renewed long-term deal between OSN and MGM, builds on the long-standing successful partnership that has kept OSN's loyal subscribers entertained with incredible access to new and classic movies from the MGM stable.

MGM not only owns one of the world's deepest libraries of premium film and television content, but also every Bond film ever made. This continued partnership, allows subscribers to continue to enjoy the entire James Bond film library from Albert R. Broccoli's EON Productions and MGM, from 1962's Dr No to the 24th adventure, Spectre, making OSN the number one choice for Bond fans in the region. The alliance also gives viewers the opportunity to enjoy over 175 Academy Award winning films including 14 Best Pictures from the prestigious studio. All these and more, will be available for OSN subscribers across all platforms, including OSN's the award-winning catch-up service OSN Play, and Go online TV service.

David Butorac, Chief Executive Officer of OSN, said: "For over 90 years, MGM has been representing the best in world-class cinema and entertainment. OSN is proud to deliver MGM's compelling content - both through record breaking movies and smash-hit TV series - exclusively to our subscribers in the region."

Butorac added, "Clearly, in movie and series content, OSN has surged way ahead in the industry through such long-term partnerships, and we continue to firmly make our mark as the entertainment destination that delivers the widest choice of channels, the deepest archive of international film and TV and with a continued dedication to new and exclusive content. By continually forging new deals and maintaining our relationships with all the top studios in Hollywood, our subscribers experience an unrivalled level of high-quality entertainment straight to their homes or on the go."

"We are thrilled to extend and expand our

longstanding partnership with OSN," said Chris Ottinger, President of Worldwide Television Distribution and Acquisitions, MGM. "We look forward to continue providing OSN customers access to not only a selection of our theatrical first-run titles, but our classic library and future first-run TV series and mini-series."

The new long-term deal marks the next level in the partnership between the two industry leaders. OSN will now have first and second pay window rights for MGM movies including its vast library of classic movies.

Award-winning titles in MGM's extensive portfolio include: the "Rocky" franchise, Annie Hall (1977), Platoon (1986), Rain Man (1988), The Princess Bride (1988), Dances With Wolves (1990), The Silence of the Lambs (1991), and the "Stargate" franchise among others. Hit films from the MGM catalogue include Creed, Poltergeist, Max, and Hercules.

The roster of new movies from MGM is equally impressive. OSN subscribers will be able to watch upcoming movies such as How To Be Single, Barbershop The Next Cut, Me Before You, Ben-Hur, and The Magnificent Seven.

OSN also has first-access for over-the-top rights to MGM movies on OSN Play, the catch-up platform for anytime, anywhere entertainment, and GO Online TV by OSN. All future first-run TV series and mini-series from MGM will reach MENA first and exclusively for OSN subscribers.

The long-term agreement with MGM further reinforces OSN as the first stop for all global movie and TV series in the region exclusively. OSN has the most comprehensive portfolio of exclusive rights from all the major studios including Warner Brothers, Paramount, Fox, Disney, Sony, MGM, NBC Universal, HBO and DreamWorks, among others.

OSN recently announced the launch of seven new channels - BBC First HD, OSN First HD, Home of HBO, OSN Ya Hala Cinema HD, OSN Movies Family HD, H2, Discovery Family and IDX - with more premium and exclusive high definition channels to come on board over the next few months.



Film Review

Disney's 'Zootopia' is wildly entertaining

Just when it was looking like animated animal movies had run out of anything original to say, along comes the smartly amusing, crisply relevant "Zootopia" to handily demonstrate there's still plenty of bite left in the anthropomorphic CG menagerie.

Boasting a pitch perfect voice cast led by a terrific Ginnifer Goodwin as a righteous rural rabbit who becomes the first cotton-tailed police recruit in the mammal-centric city of "Zootopia," the 3D caper expertly combines keen wit with a gentle, and very timely, message of inclusivity and empowerment.

The engaging result should easily appeal to all creatures great and small, giving this premium Walt Disney Animation Studios effort a paw up on spring break entertainment, not to mention the summer arrival of Universal's animated "The Secret Life of Pets."

As the Zootopia Police Department's sole bunny officer, idealistic Judy Hopps (Goodwin) discovers that breaking barriers can be an uphill climb, especially when the other cops in the force are mainly of the more imposing elephant/rhino/hippo ilk.

Although intrepid Judy can't wait to collar her first perp, Bogo (Idris Elba), Precinct 1's gruff cape buffalo police chief, has other plans, assigning her to parking duty, where she proves her worth by writing 200 tickets before noon on her first day. But when a number of "Zootopia's" residents abruptly go missing, Bogo gives Judy the green light to do some big time police work and she finds herself partnering up with Nick Wilde (Jason Bateman), a sly, world-weary scam artist of a fox, in a 48-hour bid to crack the case.

Nimbly directed by Byron Howard ("Tangled," "Bolt") and Rich Moore ("Wreck-It Ralph"), along with co-director Jared Bush, who shares screenplay credit with Phil Johnston, the romp serves up plenty of sharply observed satire (a DMV manned entirely by sloths is played to hilariously protracted effect) wrapped up in judicious life lessons that never feel preachy or shoehorned-in.

While Goodwin and Bateman are a voice-casting dream team come true as a dysfunctional duo who learn to follow their instincts over preconceived notions, they're joined by a nicely diverse supporting ensemble that also includes J.K. Simmons, Tommy Chong, Octavia Spencer and Shakira as a gazelle pop star who performs the film's original song, "Try Everything," co-written by hit-makers Sia



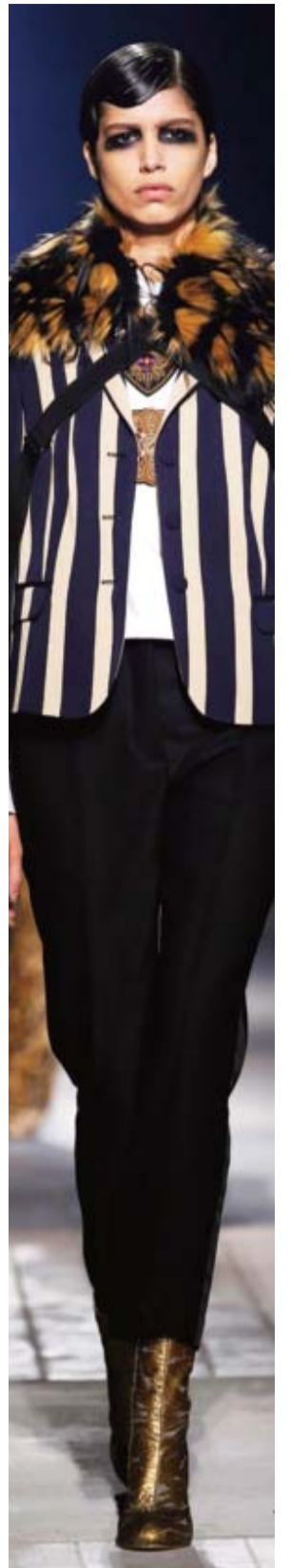
and Stargate. Also making their lines count are Jenny Slate as a not-so-sheepish sheep who serves as "Zootopia's" predator-averse assistant mayor and Maurice LaMarche as an arctic shrew version of Don Corleone named Mr. Big.

Visually, the "Zootopia" canvas pops - with or without the 3-D glasses - thanks to a gorgeously vibrant color palette and whimsical architectural scales orchestrated by production designer David Goetz. His work is in keeping with an all-mammal parallel universe comprised of distinct microcli-

mates like sunny Bunnyburrow, icy Tundratown and self-explanatory Little Rodentia.

Composer Michael Giacchino, meanwhile, in his first non-Pixar animated feature assignment, delivers a typically buoyant score, playfully tossing in music cues that pay affectionate homage to Bernard Herrmann and Nino Rota. "The Book of Life," a Disney release, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association of America for "some thematic elements, rude humor and action." Running time: 95 minutes. — AP





Charlier

The Cedric Charlier Autumn/Winter 2016-2017 ready-to-wear presentation on display yesterday in Paris. — AFP photos

Madsen

Models preview the 2016-2017 fall/winter Anne Sofie Madsen pret-a-porter collection yesterday in Paris.

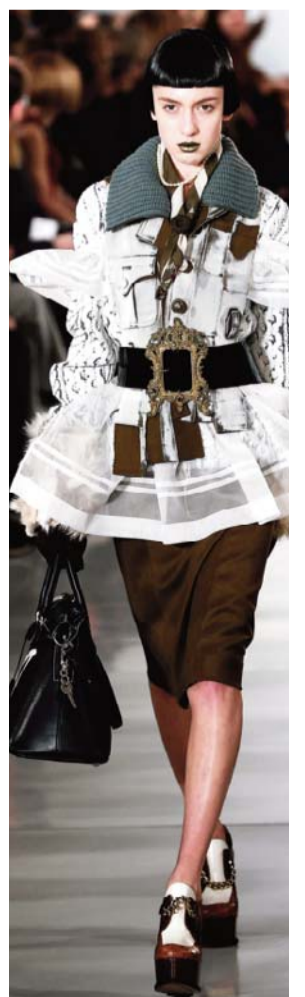
Paris Fashion week

Dries Van Noten

Models show Dries Van Noten's creations during the 2016-2017 fall/winter ready-to-wear collection through Paris fashion show Yesterday.

Maison Margiela

Models wear creations for Maison Margiela's fall-winter 2016-2017 ready to wear fashion presented yesterday.



Lifestyle

THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2016

Coffee with artist
Abdulrahim Sharif

38



A boy enjoys sledging from the hill on March 1, 2016 after heavy snowfall in Prague. — AFP

Pet Tech keep animals safe, healthy and connected

Technology isn't just for humans anymore. It's also for their furry friends. In Silicon Valley and beyond, a growing number of startups are selling devices to keep pets safe, healthy, entertained and connected when their owners are away. "Pet tech" entrepreneurs and investors see a big opportunity as pet ownership grows and owners show a willingness to spend serious money on their four-legged companions.

Nearly two-thirds of US households, or 80 million homes, have pets, and Americans spent more than \$60 billion on them last year, according to the American Pet Products Association. "The number of pets in the world is growing extremely fast and that opens up the market," said Peter Harrop, chairman of IDTechEx, a technology market research firm. "I'm sure five years from now there will be all sorts of things we can't imagine."

Already, there are devices that let your pets call you (PetChatz), play games and win treats when they're home alone (CleverPet) and even speak with a human voice (Petspeak). But as more pet-tech gadgets come to market, experts caution owners against relying on them too much.

"The technology can be useful as an adjunct, a way of enriching your relationship with your pet, but certainly not a substitute for time spent with your dog," said Pamela Wyman, who runs the DogEvolve training school in Oakland. The Petzi Treatcam lets Anne Ryan check on her dogs Oscar and Reggie at her Berkeley home when she's working in San Francisco or traveling out of state. The Internet-connected device lets her see her dogs, talk to them, take photos and even dispense treats - using an app on her phone.

Mood changers

"I turn it on, get to see them, get to talk to them and it changes my mood, and puts me back in a positive frame," said

Ryan said. "I didn't know that I needed it, but now I don't think that I could live without it." The TreatCam was created by San Jose-based Petzila, which was founded by two veteran technology executives who wanted to get their pets online. The startup also created a social media app that lets owners share pet photos.

"All of the most current crazes and fads in technology were touching everything but the pet," said CEO David Clark. Whistle, a San Francisco startup, sells a GPS-enabled Pet Tracker that alerts owners when their pets have left their "safe zone" and helps find them if they get lost. The device also lets owners track how much exercise and sleep their animals are getting.

Ben Jacobs, Whistle's CEO and co-founder, said the pet-tech market is expanding fast as pets move up the household hierarchy. "From the yard to the home to the bed - the dog is no longer out as part of the farm, but they're actually sleeping in bed with you as part of the family," Jacobs said.

For owners who want their dogs and cats to be more active during the day, the Petcube Camera lets them see and speak to their pets, and play with them with a laser pointer. Petcube's Ukrainian founders started the company in Kiev, but moved its headquarters to San Francisco to reach a global market. "If we can connect all the pets to the Internet and basically digitize this space, it will be nothing short of disruption," said Yaroslav Azhnyuk, Petcube CEO and co-founder. "It will be very big."



Russell Gipson Shearer displays the Whistle pet tracker, a GPS-enabled device, on his dog Rocket at Dolores Park in San Francisco. — AP photos



The interactive wi-fi pet camera Petcube



Russell Gipson Shearer displays the Whistle pet tracker, a GPS-enabled device, on his dog Rocket's collar at Dolores Park.



Russell Gipson Shearer displays on his phone how the Whistle pet tracker follows his dog Rocket.



Yulia Zimmermann demonstrates using her phone to watch Pusher, a Pomeranian dog, with the interactive wi-fi pet camera Petcube.



Pusher, a Pomeranian dog, plays with a laser pointer on the interactive wi-fi pet camera Petcube in San Francisco.