

SUBSCRIPTION

Kuwait Times



THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 2016

JAMADA ALTHANI 1, 1437 AH

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Amir patronizes KU graduation ceremony



Iran test-fires missiles marked with 'Israel must be wiped out'



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HEAVY RAINFALL SHUTS UAE SCHOOLS, DISRUPTS FLIGHTS

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KUWAIT TO LET PRIVATE SECTOR MANAGE PORTS

DUBAI: The government plans legislation that will let the private sector manage commercial ports and the country's international airport, with the government retaining its ownership of the assets, a senior government official told Reuters on Tuesday. Like other Gulf states, Kuwait is under heavy pressure to cut costs and improve the efficiency of its economy as low oil prices cause it to run a state budget deficit.

There is an urgent need "to revitalize the ports, whether sea or air, for commercial business", Minister of Commerce and Industry Yousef Al-Ali said on the sidelines of a business conference in Kuwait. "We need to develop the management and transfer it to the private sector." The current law only allows for the transfer of ownership in state assets. Although Kuwait has discussed outright privatization, it has run into political and technical obstacles, so officials are now talking of simply transferring management. Ali did not specify when the new legislation would be passed.

If the law is amended, it will provide Kuwaiti companies such as logistics giant Agility, KGL Logistics and Jazeera Airways opportunities to get involved, said Mustafa Behbehani, chairman of the Kuwaiti Gulf Group for Administration and Economic Consulting, a local firm. "They have the experience to manage the airport and the ports and they operate abroad - Agility has international operations, and KGL and Jazeera as well," he said. — Reuters



A construction zone barrier is seen on parked cars after it fell following a heavy rainstorm yesterday in Abu Dhabi. (Inset) A woman covers her shoes with plastic bags as she walks in the rain in Dubai yesterday. — AFP/AP

DUBAI: Schools were ordered shut, flights suspended and the stock market was closed down in the United Arab Emirates as rare heavy rain hit the desert Gulf state yesterday. Education authorities said schools will stay closed today as more thundery weather is forecast. Flights at Abu Dhabi airport resumed yesterday afternoon after being suspended for several hours, and Dubai International also experienced delays, aviation authorities said. The rains disrupted the Abu Dhabi Air Expo held at the capital's Al-Bateen airport.

Abu Dhabi's stock market said it suspended trading and cancelled all morning deals after many traders could not reach the bourse. Images posted on social media showed vehicles half-submerged in flooded streets in Abu Dhabi and gusty winds lashing through palm trees lining the city's streets. Others showed shades and construction barriers that had collapsed on cars. In Dubai, police registered more than 250 road accidents by midday, local media reported.

The weather agency in the UAE, which ranks among the world's 10 driest countries, said more rain is expected today. The country's annual rainfall stands at 78 mm, more than 15 times less than the amount for an average year in Britain. But the National Centre for Meteorology and Seismology said some 240 mm of rainfall was recorded yesterday near Al-Ain.

Social media user expressed mixed feelings about the unusual weather. "Not #London or #Dublin, this is Dubai today after heavy rain!" wrote Andrea Colonnelli on Twitter posting a video of cars wading through a flooded street.

Another video posted on the micro-blogging site showed a man kayaking through a flooded residential area. "2 days of rain in #Dubai, my neighbour is kayaking," read one comment. — AFP

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah pictured with the audience at the Kuwait University graduation ceremony for excellent students of the 2014-2015 academic year. —KUNA photos



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah seen during the event.

AMIR PATRONIZES KU GRADUATION CEREMONY

KUWAIT: Kuwait University held a graduation ceremony yesterday for excellent students of the 2014-2015 academic year, under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Upon his arrival, His Highness was received by Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Bader Al-Essa, Kuwait University chairman Hussein Al-Ansari and the teaching staff.

The ceremony held for both bachelor degree and higher education students was attended by His Highness the

Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, top Sheikhs and the graduates' families.

Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education said that the ceremony comes in special times as Kuwait cel-

brates the National Day and the Liberation Day anniversaries. He praised His Highness the Amir's support for Kuwaiti students, who will play a vital role in society's development. He also mentioned His Highness' orders to establish the Sabah Al-Salem University City in Shadadiyah.

Meanwhile, he noted that Kuwait University is facing a challenge to receive the increasing numbers of students, adding that there are currently about 37,000 students registered in 17 faculties of KU. The minister said that KU is tak-

ing measures to issue a law on establishing public and private universities in the country, to give students the opportunity to receive top-rated education in all fields. On his part, the university's chairman Hussein Al-Ansari said that KU has been exerting great efforts to provide the best education for society, adding that the university will celebrate its 50th establishment anniversary next November. KU has by now seen the graduation of 113,166 students, he also noted. —KUNA



National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim greets the graduating students.



University's Chairman Hussein Al-Ansari speaks during Kuwait University graduation ceremony.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives flowers from one of the graduating students



Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Bader Al-Essa speaking at the Kuwait University graduation ceremony.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets the graduating students.

KUWAIT INAUGURATES NEW HEADQUARTERS AT ARAB LEAGUE

CAIRO: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah yesterday inaugurated Kuwait's new permanent representation headquarters at the Cairo-based Arab League. Speaking at the launching ceremony, Al-Jarallah said the State of Kuwait is keen on reactivating its role within the Arab League's framework and on promoting and bolstering Arab cooperation and coordination. The opening of the new representative office stems from Kuwait's role in, and contribution to, the promotion and consolidation of common Arab moves, boasting that his country has a long history of efforts to overhaul the Arab bloc.

The new headquarters is bearing on Kuwait's history as it used to be the premises of many Kuwaiti ambassadors to Egypt, Al-Jarallah pointed out. On his part, Kuwait's permanent representative at the Arab League Ambassador Ahmad Al-Baker said the new building, just like other Kuwaiti representative offices worldwide, aims to promote Kuwait's cultural and humanitarian image and to defend its interests and gains. Kuwait has been playing a crucial role in bolstering the Arab League since the country joined it, he said, calling for necessarily supporting and overhauling this bloc. —KUNA



Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah inaugurated Kuwait's new permanent representation headquarters at the Cairo-based Arab League. —KUNA

News

in brief

Kuwait's Embassy in UAE issues weather advisory for Kuwaitis

ABU DHABI: The Embassy of Kuwait in the UAE issued yesterday a weather advisory to Kuwaiti citizens in the UAE as the country is experiencing turbulent weather conditions. The advisory asked Kuwaitis to stay indoors and follow official information regarding the best way to behave appropriately under severe weather conditions. It asked anyone needing assistance of any kind to contact the embassy at this no. 00971506817788. The UAE has been exposed for two days now to a low pressure front, causing torrential rains and thunderstorms and high winds, reaching an apex today in the cities of Al-Ain and Abu Dhabi.

GCC nations ban dealing with Hezbollah-affiliate channels

RIYADH: Information Ministers of Arab Gulf countries have agreed to take all legal measures to prevent dealing with TV channels related to the Lebanese Hezbollah and its affiliate bodies. The agreement is in compliance with decisions of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Arab Interior Ministers, both declaring Hezbollah and its affiliate bodies as "terrorist" groups, a statement said. The statement, issued after the information ministers' meeting, said the legal measures would be applied on all production companies, producers and every media-related content relevant to Hezbollah.

KUWAIT SEEKING TO ESTABLISH AN INDUSTRIAL BASE, DIVERSIFY INCOME

EXPERTS FORECAST UPBEAT OIL PRICES SCENARIO

MANAMA: Dean of Diplomatic Corps in Bahrain, the Kuwaiti Ambassador Sheikh Azzam Mubarak Al-Sabah said yesterday Kuwait is seeking to establish an industrial base depending on the diversification of income sources through the petrochemical industry and others. Sheikh Azzam during his visit to Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) wing participating at (GEO 2016) the 12th Middle East Geosciences Conference and Exhibition held in Bahrain, stressed Kuwait's leadership in the oil industry at

the regional level. He also praised Bahraini Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa's visit to the KOC wing at the exhibition.

Oil forecast

Oil price is forecast to reach \$50 per barrel by 2016 due to prospected positive conditions in the market namely restoration of balance between supply and demand, according to two Kuwaiti analysts. Khaled Boodai, chairman of Al-Ofoq Center for

Administrative Consultation, said in an interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the recent tentative agreement among producers to freeze the crude output at January's level was the main factor that has boosted prices. The market has begun absorbing the glut, amid forecast solution to the "prices' crisis," Boodai said, however he indicated that the prices would not soar, as happened months ago.

Past weeks witnessed gradual hike of the crude prices. The Kuwaiti oil has climbed \$10

"and this is assuring with respect of restoring balance after the bearish period; now it is gradually moving up and this means we have begun surpassing the crisis," he said. He attributed the moderate forecast increase rather than soaring of the crude prices to various factors such as the global economic crisis and the recession in China.

The oil price is forecast to reach \$45-50 pb by end of 2016. The price per barrel has increased by 50 percent in a quarter year, "and this is a good indication." Delving further into the issue, Boodai said global consumption of the crude oil is mounting due to population growth and this largely contributes to "sucking up the excessive supplies. Now demand is higher than supplies, and this will realize balance in the market, provided the output remains stable." Mohammad Al-Shatti, another Kuwaiti oil expert said there are forecasts putting the prospected price at \$41 pb, "that is equal to \$33 per barrel for the Kuwaiti crude oil."

It will reach \$40 pb in April, 2016, and \$49 pb in December this year, he said. Average global demand for oil in 2015 reached 95.3 million barrels per day, in comparison to non-OPEC supplies estimated at 64.9 million bpd, while OPEC's output stood at 32.2 million bpd. This meant, Al-Shatti said, "there was an imbalance by 1.7 million barrels per day," nevertheless conditions now appeared tending for restoring balance, where the global demand would reach 97.1 million bpd.

Non-OPEC supplies are forecast at 64.2 million bpd, while OPEC's production will rise to 33.2 million bpd, thus the imbalance will shrink by 300,000 bpd. "Such a development will impact positively on the prices," said the expert Al-Shatti to the Kuwaiti news network. He added that there is a prevailing belief that OPEC's output will remain in the range of 32.2 million bpd, with Saudi quota at 10.2 million bpd, Iraq 4.4 million bpd and Iran 3.5 million bpd. —Agencies



Dean of Diplomatic Corps in Bahrain, the Kuwaiti Ambassador Sheikh Azzam Mubarak Al-Sabah during his visit to Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) wing participating at (GEO 2016). —KUNA



ITB Berlin's 50th session kicks off with Kuwait participation

BERLIN: The 50th session of the ITB Berlin, the world's leading travel trade show, kicked off yesterday, with a Kuwaiti participation. Kuwait's participation, its 14th in the ITB Berlin, represents a tourism sector affiliated with the Ministry of Information (MOI), in conjunction with Qiblah Tourism and Travel Company and the Kuwaiti Company for Touristic Services. Heading Kuwait's delegation to the event is MOI Assistant Undersecretary of the Tourism Sector Jassim Al-Habib. In a statement to KUNA, head of the department of touristic information and facts Faisal Al-Draie said that Kuwait's participation in this year's ITB session is reflective of strenuous efforts to showcase Kuwait's cultural history to the world. Acting Chairman of Qiblah Company Salem Al-Shatti said that the event is an opportunity to mingle with the world's leading touristic organizations.

Int'l energy conference and exhibit kicks off in Bahrain

MANAMA: GEO 2016 is the 12th Middle East Geosciences Conference Exhibition opening here with the participation of 130 oil and gas and technology firms from twenty countries. In a statement inaugurating this international gathering, Bahraini Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Ali Bin Khalifa Al Khalifa said ever since its inception the conference has been instrumental in shining the light on the latest scientific advancements in the field of oil and gas industries.

Kuwait's disable team wins medals in Dubai

KUWAIT: Kuwait Disabled team won three medals including one gold and two silver in the 2016 Paralympic Asia-Oceania Championship held in Dubai. Chairman of Kuwaiti Disabled Sports Club and head of the Kuwaiti team to the championship Shafi Al-Hajri said by telephone yesterday that the Kuwaiti champion Dhari Buti won a gold medal in the men's shot put F37, while Hamad Al-Adwani got the silver in the paralympic wheel-chair competition for 100 m T53 and Ahmad Niqa in T33 same category. Al-Hajri praised the performance of three players in the tournament, which will last until 12 March, adding that Kuwaiti champions are able to achieve the best results in these major international forums.

Al-Jahra residents hail completion of projects

KUWAIT: After meeting His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday, a number of Al-Jahra residents hailed the completion of several projects in Al-Jahra, namely Sheikh Ahmad Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Hall for social occasions and soon to be over Al-Jahra Hospital. In a press statement, Al-Oyon Mayor Malouh Al-Harbi said that their earlier meeting accompanied by Al-Jahra Governor (retired Lieutenant General) Fahad Al-Amir was a great honor to meet His Highness the Amir to thank him for the various projects that were completed in the governance.

KUWAITI WOMEN 'PLAY GREAT ROLE IN DEVELOPING SOCIETY'

ROME: Kuwaiti women play a key role in developing society on all levels, said spouse of Kuwaiti Ambassador to Italy Dr Sara Al-Rukayyan during the UN's celebration of the International Women's Day late Tuesday, held under the theme "Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality." In her speech at the event organized in Rome, Al-Rukayyan congratulated women around the world on this occasion that expresses appreciation for their role in all of life's aspects.

Meanwhile, she thanked His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for supporting the rights of Kuwaiti women in all fields, mainly in political decision making. Moreover, she mentioned the bravery of Kuwaiti women who were martyred during the Iraqi Invasion while defending their land, also noting the efforts of (Eng) Sara Akbar who participated in putting out the oil well fires caused by Iraqis.

Al-Rukayyan also said that Kuwaiti women have assumed different top positions in the country including a minister, MP, diplomat and many others. She called on the international community to protect and end the suffering of Arab women displaced by wars and conflicts in their countries, adding that these women are living in severe conditions and dangerous environment. —KUNA



Spouse of Kuwaiti Ambassador to Italy Dr Sara Al-Rukayyan seen during the UN's celebration of the International Women's Day. —KUNA

WOMEN ARE FAMILY'S ECONOMIC BACKBONE

KUWAIT: Women are the family's economic backbone, said Nobel Laureate and founder of Grameen Bank Dr Mohammad Yunus late Tuesday. During a lecture held at Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Yunus pointed out that 99 percent of Grameen's clients were women. His remarks came coinciding with the International Women's Day. "Women are more committed and keen on investing and saving funds, while men tend to enjoy money, either in legitimate or illegitimate ways," he pointed out. The lecture is co-hosted by the Kuwaiti small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) society and the State Ministry for Youth Affairs under the theme "redesigning economics to redesign the world."

A social entrepreneur, banker and economist, Yunus is championed in his home country of Bangladesh for pioneering the concepts of microcredit and microfinance. His microfinance organization, Grameen Bank, makes small loans to the impoverished as means of helping them cope with the rising cost of living. In 2006, Yunus was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his finance work. "The main purpose of money must be making people happy and help them get rid of poverty," he said. —KUNA



Kuwait Times

SEE PAGE 09

KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN STUDENTS ART COMPETITION

March 10th Till April 14th, 2016



EXPERT RECOMMENDS FULL-SCALE REFORMS FOR KUWAIT ECONOMY

BUREAUCRACY, LACK OF COMPETITION AFFECT KUWAIT

KUWAIT: An eminent expert has called for comprehensive structural reforms to boost integration among the country's various sectors and enhance the financial basis to minimize effects on the State budget due to low oil prices. Dr. Walid Abedmawlah said in an interview with KUNA that core of reforming the economy is finding alternatives to oil to broaden public income resources and balance the general budget, regardless of the fluctuating oil prices. The Kuwaiti economy heavily hinges on oil resources, accounting to 90 percent of the income and an equal proportion of exports. The oil sector secures 55 percent of the gross domestic product.

The state budget must be in-tuned to "economic turbulence and low oil prices," he said, calling to "seize the opportunity and tackle the defects in the national economy for sake of rationalizing spending and diversifying income resources." Expenditure rationalization must cover fuel prices, other subsidized basics that are a burden on the budget, he said noting that the International Monetary Fund has recommended scheduling hikes of the fuel prices in the middle term, out of "inflationary concerns."

Abedmawlah, who recommended that subsidies' rationalization must be transparent, said the private sector contributes with 30 percent of the GDP, as well as 58 percent of the non-oil GDP. This sector's investments are centered in construction, communications, finance and retail trades; which are unattractive for the Kuwaiti workforce, 90 percent of which are employed in the public sector.

There are promising sectors, such as banking, commerce and real-estate, he said, but to shore them up, there should be clear development schemes. Some of strong aspects of the national economy are availability of capitals, skilled labor in some sectors and the GCC market "which is a robust economic and commercial realm that constitutes an incentive for the national economy in shadow of real integration policies based on common industrial and investment policies," said Abedmawlah.

Shedding further light on problems affecting the Kuwait economy, he mentioned bureaucracy and lack of competition, where the World Bank ranks Kuwait 101 from among 189 countries (in the 2016 issuance). Kuwait low ranking is largely due to thorny permit measures, crediting, settling defaulting cases, investor protection and external trade, he said, adding opening further that income diversification should cover applying the added tax value, in harmony with other GCC countries, on non-necessary commodities and services. — KUNA



MINISTER VISITS AMIR'S CHARITY VILLAGE IN INDONESIA

KUWAIT: Representative of His Highness the Amir, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah yesterday visited His

Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah charity village of Islamic Dar Al-Salam center, Qarut, west of Java Indonesia. The minister toured the village

and a ceremony was held on the occasion. Later, the minister delivered a speech expressing gratitude and pleasure for hosting such activity and wished all success and

prosperity. The minister also laid the foundation for a student complex project, based on donation from Sheikh Abdullah Mubarak Al-Sabah charity. — KUNA

RAILWAY, METRO PROJECTS TO MEET FUTURE REQUIREMENTS

KUWAIT: Transportation Ministry noted yesterday that the development of road transport system is part of the country's development plans to meet future transportation requirements through projects like railway and the Metro. Advisor to Minister of Transportation Najib Al-Munifi made the remarks in a statement, during the second day of (Kuwait Investment Forum), adding that there are many great opportunities in this sector to foreign and Arab investors, including the railway project in Kuwait.

The advisor explained that such investment opportunities in the road transport sector, are like the transport of goods, construction materials, and raw materials for various industries and investment in the construction, operation and main-

tenance of cargo freight trains and passenger terminal. Al-Munifi said the railway project is one of the most vital economic and national development projects.

It is a component of the strategic infrastructure for transport services elements between Kuwait and other countries and is a complementary and supportive of land transportation, sea and air transportation, as well as the project aims to achieve Kuwait's vision of 2035 in being a commercial and financial hub. Al-Munifi also mentioned that among other investment opportunities is to create maintenance workshops for some railway components and set up factories for some consumer goods trains as well as investment in the construction and management of shopping malls and hotels. — KUNA

KUWAIT, JAPAN DISCUSS BUSINESS COOPERATION

OPPORTUNITIES IN ENERGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

TOKYO: Kuwait and Japan yesterday exchanged views on measures to promote economic relations from the view point of the business community, while suggesting opportunities in energy and infrastructure projects. The 20th meeting of the Kuwaiti-Japanese Businessmen's Committee in Tokyo, which brought together some 100 government officials and businesspersons from various sectors of both economies, featured Economic Overview of the both countries, Investment into Kuwait and Renewable energy.

The annual economic meeting, co-chaired by board member of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce Tareq Al-Mutawa and his Japanese counterpart Hiroshi Saito, came amid concerns about a slowing global economy and falling oil prices. In his opening remarks, Al-Mutawa said, "We are all aware of the challenges for the global economy, despite the sizable differences in the scale of challenges facing different countries.

The Kuwait-Japan trade shrank by 42 percent last year, resulting entirely from the decline in the Kuwaiti exports to Japan, which fell 48 percent, while the value of the corresponding imports by Kuwait was kept almost at the same level." However, Al-Mutawa, affirmed that the recently energized public projects market in Kuwait will not be essentially affected by the unfavorable fiscal situation, despite of the declining oil prices. "During 2015 alone, an unprecedented USD 32.2 billion worth of contracts were already awarded. Capital spending in accordance with the 5-Year Development Plan exceeds USD 110 billion targeting major projects in various sectors, including oil industry, infrastructure, power and water, health, education, housing and transportation," head of the Kuwaiti side told audience.

Public Private Partnership

According to Al-Mutawa, the private sector plays a lead role in implementing these mega projects mostly through Public Private Partnership (PPP), which requires strategic foreign partners with advanced technology and technical know-how. "We believe that Japanese partners can still participate effectively in implementing these projects, as they have previously done in the course of their long-standing relationship with Kuwait," he added.

On behalf of Japanese Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Motoo

Hayashi, the ministry's Deputy Director-General for International Trade Policy Nobuaki Ito read a message, in which Hayashi called Kuwait as a very critical partner for Japan. Pointing out that the two countries signed a memorandum of cooperation last year in the fields of electricity and water, the minister expressed expectations for further participation of Japanese enterprises in Kuwait's infrastructure projects by utilizing Japan's manufacturing technology and expertise.

At the one-day gathering, Dr. Salem Al-Hajraf, Executive Director of the Energy and Building Research Center at the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), gave an update on the Shagaya renewable energy project. The first phase of Shagaya Renewable Energy Complex is due in December 2017 and will eventually produce

Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) explained about investment climate and opportunities for Japanese investors.

The Japanese side outlined the economic outlook for Japan, financial support from the government-affiliated Japan Bank for International Cooperation and its role in the Azzour North project. There was also presentation of renewable energy technology by Japanese firms.

On his part, Saito told KUNA that the talks were fruitful with a satisfactory outcome. He also expressed hope that the committee meeting would contribute to further strengthen business relations between the two countries. The Kuwaiti delegation also included Kuwaiti Ambassador to Japan Abdulrahman Al-Otaibi, and other senior officials from Kuwait's ministries. The Kuwaiti-



enough electricity for 100,000 homes, according to Dr. Al-Hajraf. The Phase 1 includes three renewable-based projects-a 50 MW solar thermal station with 10 hours of energy storage, a 10 MW solar photovoltaic station and a 10 MW wind power station.

The new PPP Law

The economic meeting also shed light on investment into Kuwait. Officials from the Kuwait Authority for Partnerships Projects (KAPP), which is responsible for all PPP schemes in Kuwait, briefed the participants on the new PPP Law introduced in 2014 and the latest development of Independent Water and Power Producer projects, including those in Az-Zour North and Al-Khairan. Meanwhile, the Kuwait

Japanese Businessmen's Committee, first launched in 1995, was organized by the Japanese Cooperation Center for the Middle East (JCME) with the objectives of encouraging and promoting feasible and viable projects and joint ventures available in both countries.

The annual meeting is seen as the most important framework to strengthen partnership between the government officials and businesspeople of the two countries. Established in 1973 under the sponsorship of the Japanese government, the JCME has long played a bridging role between Japan and the countries in the Middle East and the North Africa region on the private-sector level by providing cooperation in the fields of trade, investment, economy and technology. — KUNA



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US AMBASSADOR HOSTS ART EXHIBITION

KUWAIT: The US Ambassador to Kuwait Douglas Silliman recently hosted an art exhibition at his residence in the US embassy, showcasing a various collection of artworks by contemporary American artists to the Kuwaiti public. The event, which took place Tuesday evening as part of the US Department of State's Art in Embassies (AIE) Program, was attended by a large number of audiences, including several prominent Kuwaiti figures in arts, culture, social, and business fields.

"The Art in Embassies Program was established in 1963 by President John F Kennedy to give audiences abroad a chance to personally experience America's heritage and values through art," Ambassador Silliman said in his speech to the attendants. "The US administration at that time felt that one of the best ways to make people in other countries under-

stand the heritage and culture of the United States was to show them our works of art," he added.

The US diplomat also indicated that AIE program has played a leading role in his country's public diplomacy as a way to engage, educate, and inspire global audiences, showing how art can transcend borders and build connections among people. "As a theme for this exhibition, we tried to find works that show the connection between land and water. Most of our works here have to do with where the land meets the sea and how people react toward it," Ambassador Silliman said.

He also indicated that Kuwaitis and Americans share close ties to the sea, with both nations enjoying long coastlines, countless number of sea activities, and love of seafood, stressing the importance of preserving and protecting marine natural

resources for future generations to enjoy and utilize, as many generations of Kuwaitis have done in the past. Meanwhile, renowned Kuwaiti artist and sculptor Sami Mohammad, whose pioneering artworks have spanned for over fifty years, expressed his joy and appreciation of the US Embassy's initiative in inviting many veteran Kuwaiti artists to the event to view the works of contemporary American artists.

Boosting cultural ties

"This event definitely helps in boosting cultural ties between Kuwait and the United States, particularly artists of both countries," Mohammad told KUNA, expressing his hope that Kuwaiti diplomatic missions abroad follow "this American approach in order to expose the international audiences to the Kuwaiti art and



The US ambassador speaking

highlight the talents of Kuwaiti artists outside the country. For his part, Abdulasoul Salman, Chairman of Kuwait Arts Association, stated to KUNA that the AIE program shows Washington's keen interest

in arts and culture, adding that hosting this significant event at the US Ambassador's residence contributes in consolidating bilateral cultural ties between the two countries. — KUNA

ARAB INTERIOR MINISTERS DEPLORE TUNISIA ATTACK

TUNIS: The Arab Interior Ministers' Council has denounced the attack that targeted Tunisia's southern Ben Guerdane City on the border with Libya yesterday, terming it as a "terrorist act". The Tunis-based Council's Secretariat voiced in a press release its emphatic condemnation of the "terrorist" attack that hit Ben Guerdane and left scores of people dead or wounded. However, it appreciated the "heroic" efforts of Tunisian army and police forces in face of such a "criminal organized act", warning "terrorism has no future on Tunisian territories".

Earlier in the day, Tunisian Prime Minister Habib Essid said that 55 people, including 36 militants, 12 policemen and seven civilians, were killed in Monday's attack. He told a press conference that seven militants

were arrested in the security operation at Ben Guerdane and that the attacks were carried out by 50 militants, mostly Tunisians.

Qatar deplores attack

Meanwhile, the Qatari foreign ministry also condemned the terrorist attack. Official statement noted that Qatar stood firmly by the Tunisian government and the Tunisian people in the face of acts of extreme violence targeting the nation's security and stability. It further reiterated Qatar's relentless rejection of all facets of terrorism despite any expressed motivations or rationalizations or causes excusing any acts of violence. The statement also expressed Qatar's condolences to the government

and people of Tunisia for the tragic results of the attack on the border town.

Arab Coalition in Yemen

In another development, Arab Coalition Forces Command said yesterday a number of tribal and prominent Yemeni figures helped in enforcing a truce along the border between Yemen and Saudi Arabia. The command added in a statement that halt of military actions on the border aims at allowing delivery of humanitarian supplies to nearby Yemeni villages via Alab border crossing. It also declared release of Saudi prisoner Corporal Jaber Asaad Al-Kaabi and

seven Yemenis who had been taken as prisoners by the Saudi forces in the southern border region. The Coalition Forces Command welcomed the "border truce" that came as part of implementing "restoring hope operation," indicating it might "contribute to efforts for reaching a political solution under the auspices of the United Nations in accordance with Security Council Resolution (2216)." — Agencies



KUWAIT: The National Guard Deputy Chief Lt General Hashim Al-Refaei yesterday received Ministry of Interior's Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs Maj General Abdullah Al-Muhanna and his accompanying delegation to extend their gratitude for the efforts exerted by traffic police during NG's Awareness Program held under the title of 'Wa'ee' (Aware). Al-Muhanna also lectured a number of NG officers on traffic rules during the visit.



Crime

Report

RESIDENCY DETECTIVES RAID NURSERY SCHOOL

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Residency detectives raided a nursery and arrested 18 persons in violation of residency laws, 10 of whom were article 22 iqama holders, four article 20, two without IDs and two article 28 iqama holders. The nursery itself was operating without an education license. Legal action is being taken, and the nursery will be placed on the banned sponsorship list.



3.5 million illicit tablets seized

The customs department, in cooperation and coordination with customs detectives and the northern ports directorate, confiscated 3.5 million illicit tablets hidden in an excavator bucket upon its arrival from an Arab country. The Arab suspect was also arrested. This is the second case in the same border post in less than a week, and the total number of tablets confiscated in both busts total nearly seven million.

GCC REJECTS IRANIAN INFLUENCE IN REGION

DUBAI: The six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) rejected yesterday what it said was Iranian interference in the region, Al Arabiya television said according to a statement by the regional body. The foreign ministers of the GCC countries - Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman - who were meeting in Riyadh, also affirmed their support for a political solution in Syria. The GCC statement also demanded a mechanism to impose a ceasefire in Syria.

The ministerial meetings, chaired by Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir, are scheduled to cover other issues related to previous decisions made in meetings, including a follow up on Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz's vision for bolstering GCC joint work and latest progress on GCC cooperation and integration, and ways to advance them further. The Kuwaiti delegation includes Deputy Foreign Minister and Office Director of the First Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah, Ambassador Sheikh Thamer Jaber Ahmad Al-Sabah, Kuwait Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Nasser Hajji Al-Mezyan, and other senior foreign ministry officials. — Agencies

KUWAIT BANS POULTRY PRODUCTS FROM INDIA

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources has banned the import of all poultry products from India due to concerns of H5N1 (bird flu). Kuwait accounts for only a fraction of India's export market to the Middle East, importing around 24.19 tons of poultry annually. The ban is a precautionary measure due to recent outbreaks of bird flu in several areas of India including Tripura and Mizoram. India is a major supplier of poultry products to Saudi Arabia and Oman.

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Al-Qabas

DAMAGING KUWAIT'S FUTURE

By Prof Maasouma A Ibrahim

Amidst the epidemic of forged certificates, Education Minister Badr Al-Essa wrote to all government entities to account for all holders of forged and bogus university certificates issued by unaccredited universities and also ordered the formation of an investigation committee at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training for the same purpose, and this received parliamentary support as well as those of patriotic spirit who fight corruption in general, and educational corruption in particular, in fear for Kuwait's future.

The Director General of the National Agency for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Dr Nouriya Al-Awadhi announced strict measures to face the issue of forged and bogus university certificates, and among these measures are standards and rules to compact this destructive phenomenon. The gravity of the matter prompted the signing of a Gulf agreement to limit forged certificates in higher education. She also said that the agency approves certificates of universities that adopt the regular attendance system only, and it is stipulated that the specialties programs level presented by the universities be outstanding compared with approved international standardization lists, to prevent obtaining any forged certificates.

And because the issue is a national project to build the nation and an inevitable necessity for the future, there is an intention by the minister to form an investigation panel at Kuwait University that is similar to the investigation committee formed at the PAAET to investigate certificates of professors and make sure about their credibility to uphold those legitimate and discard forged ones, besides following up the procedures and bases of some professors who have received masters and PhD degrees from credible universities.

When the education minister ordered investigations in the forged certificates phenomenon, and opened the issue at the PAAET, he relied on evidence of having 20 professors with forged certificates, while others got leadership positions while having unrecognized and unapproved certificates, which warranted their referral to the judiciary. The Audit Bureau reported that the authority appointed professors with forged certificates from Athens University, in violation of the ministerial decision to first approve their certificates before allowing their holders to work.

The evidence of this phenomenon and its deep roots in the soil of our higher education is the statement of MP Faisal Al-Shaye to Al-Shahid newspaper about the discovery of 200 forged certificates that belong to the PAAET, adding that he presented a parliamentary question in the 1999 and 2006 parliaments about the bogus certificates and how are they gained without "study leaves", and that his two attempts failed in getting an answer, so he resubmitted the question again in 2014 Assembly to the state minister for cabinet affairs, so he got an answer that says there are 5,768 certificates whose holders received them without applying for study leave.

Here, we can raise all what we want of question marks: If it is stipulated for those sent by PAAET on scholarships to be regular in physical attendance, and not by correspondence, and that they join accredited universities by the authority, then who gave the PAAET the authority to approve certificates that are in violation of this condition? Is not this a destruction of the entire society's future?

— Translated by Kuwait Times



النبا

Al-Anbaa

A CALL FOR THE FUTURE

By Salah Al-Sayer

Despite the terrifying events, fears and concerns about the future of the region, UAE's 'Trending Events' magazine recently saw some light at the end of the tunnel when it said that many indicators have come to materialize in the Middle East showing that it was gradually shifting from uncontrolled chaos into one that could be contained in the short term.

Trending Events explained that the major changes known regionally in the period of 2011-2014 had already reached a climax and that their sudden impact and spread have stopped, thanks to the Arab coalition it describes as the 'axis of stability', which is, though still developing, considered a basic point in creating equal regional relations.

The magazine adds another factor about the

availability of requirements to maintain stability, saying that they are now more achievable despite the bloody conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen, because other regional countries had paid the highest price to maintain minimum consolidation in under-pressure socioeconomic environments.

'Trending Events' is an academic research magazine issued by the Future Center for Advanced Research and Studies in Abu Dhabi, which is considered a 'think-tank' established to help in creating dialogue and decision-making as well as support scientific research about the future. The center's website is: www.futurecenter.ae where students and researchers can find very valuable researches and papers.

— Translated by Kuwait Times

Crime

Report

Male flight attendant smuggles marijuana

KUWAIT: Airport customs foiled an attempt by a male flight attendant to smuggle a quantity of marijuana. Airport Customs General Supervisor Suleiman Al-Fahd said officers suspected the attendant, so he was searched and caught. Meanwhile, an Asian expat attempted to smuggle one kilogram of marijuana in a plastic jam container. Both suspects were sent to concerned authorities.

GCC national threatened

A Gulf national told Sulaiybiya police that he was threatened by his compatriot with a pistol. He was accompanied by another person unknown to him, and they escaped after the incident.

'Internet mafia'

Unknown numbers that contact people are still a source of nuisance, especially when they get conned by the Internet mafia. An Egyptian expat was called from an unknown number telling him that he had won KD 50,000. The caller asked him for his account number, PIN, civil ID, number and name, then hung up. An hour later, the expat found that KD 546 was withdrawn from his account through a bank in Hawally.

Armed robbery thwarted

Ahmedi police thwarted an armed robbery at a car dealership and arrested a Syrian, while another is being sought after escaping on foot. Police operations received a call about the attempted theft, so a patrol was dispatched and they saw a silver taxi attempting to drive off when the suspects saw the patrol car, but it was chased and the driver caught in Ali Sabah Al-Salem.

Syrian police captain?

Residency and passports detectives arrested a police captain, who was found to be a Syrian as his Kuwaiti nationality is forged. A security source said the Syrian had been holding Kuwait nationality since 1988, when his father bribed a citizen KD 12,000 to have his son registered in his name, so he became an original Kuwaiti and benefited from all advantages. The son then enrolled in a police college until he reached the rank of captain in the special forces. The officer's father was caught along with the involved citizen and they were sent to the prosecution following the arrest of the officer.

Kuwaiti swindled

A citizen told Sabahiya police that a contracting company swindled him out of nearly a quarter of a million dinars. A security source said the company offered the citizen to invest money in a piece of land. The victim gave the money in exchange of receipts of KD 223,000, but discovered the company was not serious and refused to return the money to him. — Al-Anbaa

VIVA'S JOB FAIR

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, yesterday concluded its participation in Gulf University for Science and Technology's job fair held from 9 to 10 March 2016. Professionals from Human Resources at VIVA introduced closely the telecom industry and its development to the students, and particularly the significant role that VIVA plays in this domain among sharp competition in telecom market, due to the professional recruitment for skilled and creative employees who plan to enhance their capabilities. Students filled in employment's forms and will get contacted later after graduation as long as

they fit the needed criteria.

VIVA is keen to continue its ongoing socially responsible role in the community by spreading the spirit of goodness amongst Kuwaiti society. We believe at VIVA in taking a holistic approach to our CSR activities, one that engages our employees, and creates goodwill in our communities with a focus on helping to grow and develop the State of Kuwait. VIVA's Corporate Social Responsibility 'CSR' activities can be reviewed on the company's website at <https://www.viva.com.kw/csr>. This offers a description of each CSR initiative that VIVA has supported, or taken on since its inception.



AHLI UNITED BANK STAFF RECEIVE 'MANSION HOUSE SCHOLARSHIP'



KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) announced that two of its employees are the first recipients of the prestigious Mansion House Scholarship in Kuwait, granted by the Lord Mayor of the City of London. The Scholarship scheme aims at providing scholarships for young business executives from overseas to travel to the United Kingdom to study or to undertake training or work experience in the Financial Services Sector. Mishari Fayed Al-Jassim, Head of Trading in Treasury Division at AUB, was the first Mansion House Scholar Kuwait in 2013, completing the General Management Program at the University of Cambridge. In 2015, Al-Jassim was also declared Ambassador of the Mansion House Scheme in Kuwait by the British Council.

Al-Jassim is the first Kuwaiti to be declared a Freeman of The Worshipful Company of International Bankers (WCIB); a livery company in the City of London consisting of 700 members and 250 companies and banking institutions. The Livery is the representative of the major commercial activity in the City, the main objective is to further the trade of international banking and financial services. Dhari Abdulrahman Al-Zayed, Senior Relationship Officer- Corporate Banking at AUB, received his Mansion House scholarship from the Lord Mayor of the City of London in 2015, and is currently attending a Corporate Finance Executive Programme at London Business School.

On this occasion, the Senior Deputy CEO Banking Group, Moataz Al-Rafei, expressed his pride and gratitude that two of AUB's employees were selected for the scholarships among other candidates and who were then invited by Her Majesty's Ambassador in Kuwait HE Matthew Lodge to attend the ceremony held at the British Embassy. Al-Rafei affirmed, "The continuous success that AUB's employees achieve especially after being granted the Mansion House Scholarship for the second time endorses the high qualifications and expertise of our Kuwaiti staff, as well as the successful results of the training programs that are meant to elevate their potential and skills."

He added that the AUB's senior management, mainly through the Human Resource (HR) department ensures to recruit the top talent in Kuwait, in addition to providing the staff with the support they need to excel in their roles. Naqeeb Amin, the Head of HR at Ahli United Bank, said, "Ahli United Bank is always keen on strengthening the professional capabilities of its employees in various fields, as part of its progressive human resources' development strategy that is clearly reflected in the employees' performance and translated in the highest standards of banking services that cater to the needs of the Bank's customers." Then he thanked Mishari Al-Jassim and Dhari Al-Zayed for being role models for the Kuwaiti youth who deserve all the support and appreciation.

A NEW KUWAIT CANCER CENTER

KUWAIT: Within the Ministry of Health's keenness in coping with the development plans in terms of developing medical facilities and providing better medical services, the New Kuwait Report said that a new Kuwait Cancer Center - a comprehensive specialized center is being currently built to provide cancer patients with the best and up-to-date health care. The report added that the center is being constructed by Al-Ghanim General Trading & Contracting Company - and is due to be completed in 2017.

The report added that the new center is located within the Al-Sabah Hospitals Zone and built over an area of 277,000 square meters - comprising of two main towers connected together by special 'bridges' at all floors. Notably, the new 618 bed-center will include surgical theatres, patients rooms, labs equipped with the latest technology and medical equipment in addition to parking spaces for 1951 vehicles. Notably, New Kuwait is a government media initiative that aims at publishing the latest news about the state's mega projects online and through mobile phone applications.



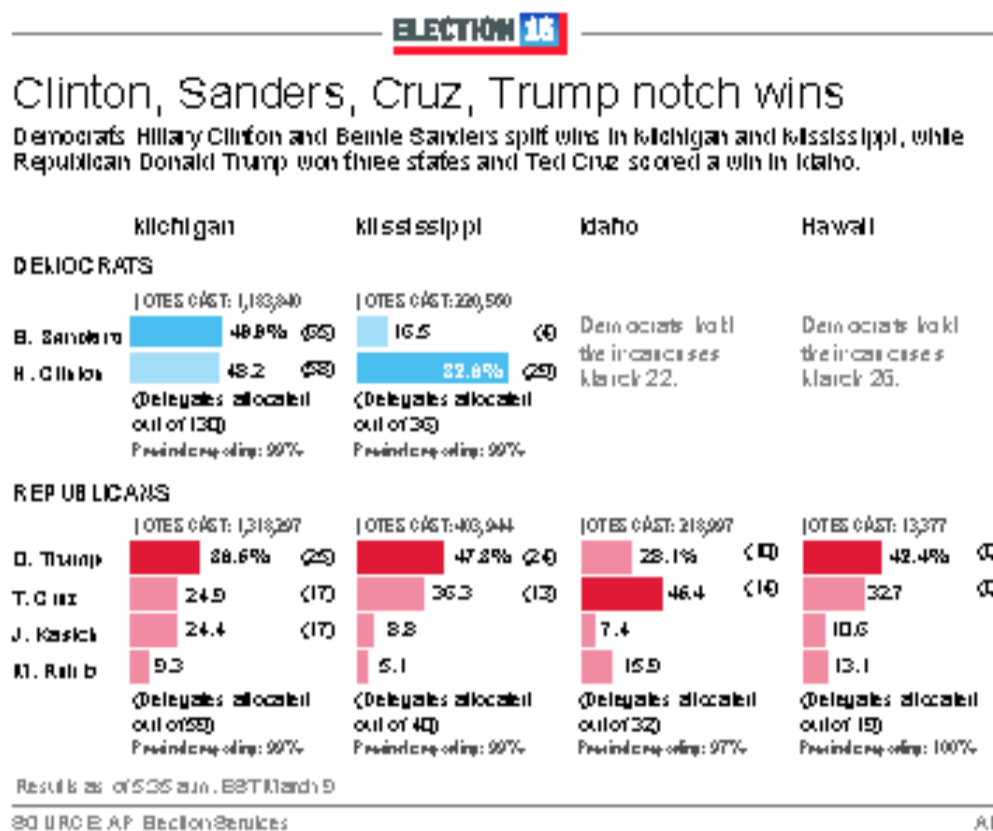


Trouble-hit liquor baron flees India owing \$1 billion

SAUDIS, HOUTHIS AGREE PRISONER SWAP, BORDER CALM



Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks during a press conference at the Trump National Golf Club Jupiter on Tuesday. — AFP



MIAMI: Democratic presidential candidate Sen Bernie Sanders acknowledges his supporters on arrival at a campaign rally on Tuesday. — AP

TRUMP REBOUNDS IN WHITE HOUSE RACE

SANDERS SURPRISES CLINTON • RUBIO PERFORMS BADLY

DETROIT: Republican frontrunner Donald Trump racked up primary wins in the big prize of Michigan as well as Mississippi and Hawaii on Tuesday, brushing off a week of blistering attacks from the party's establishment and expanding his lead in the White House nominating race. In the Democratic contest, Bernie Sanders stunned frontrunner Hillary Clinton in a narrow Michigan primary upset, giving his upstart campaign new energy. Clinton won in Mississippi, but Sanders' victory is seen as likely to ensure a prolonged fight to pick a candidate for November's general election.

Trump's convincing win in Michigan restored his outsider campaign's momentum and increased the pressure on the party's anti-Trump forces to find a way to stop the brash billionaire's march to the nomination ahead of several key contests next week. The 69-year-old New Yorker built his victories in Michigan, in the heart of the industrial Midwest, and Mississippi in the Deep South with broad appeal across many demographics. He won evangelical Christians, Republicans, independents, those who wanted an outsider and those who said they were angry about how the federal government is working, according to exit polls.

Trump said in several television interviews on Wednesday he was drawing new voters to the Republican Party and the establishment figures who are resisting his campaign should save their money and focus on beating the Democrats in November. "If this party came together... nobody could beat it," Trump told NBC's "Today" program. Asked on ABC if he was ready to wrap up the nomination, he said: "I'd like to."

The results were a setback for rival John Kasich, governor of Ohio, who had hoped to pull off a surprise win in neighboring Michigan, and for Marco Rubio, a US senator from Florida who has become the establishment favorite but lagged badly in both Michigan and Mississippi and appeared unlikely to win delegates in either. Speaking at a news conference in Jupiter, Florida after Tuesday's voting, Trump said Rubio's recent attacks on him had backfired. "Hostility works for some people; it doesn't work for everyone," the real estate magnate said.

Trump, a former reality TV star, has peppered his campaign with putdowns of rivals and critics. Many mainstream Republicans have been offended by his statements on Muslims, immigrants and women and alarmed by his threats to international trade deals. Trump has dismissed criticism his statements would be harmful to US interests.

Ted Cruz, a 45-year-old US senator from Texas whose recent victories have positioned him as the prime alternative to Trump, won the party's primary in Idaho. But Trump suggested his rivals had little hope going forward, and took particular aim at Cruz. Asked if he would consider Rubio as potential vice presidential running mate to help coalesce his Republican support and attract Hispanic voters, Trump told MSNBC "Sure," but added he was not yet ready to make that decision.

'A Hard Time'

"Ted is going to have a hard time," Trump said of Cruz. "He rarely beats me." Trump continues to enjoy a wide lead nationally in the Republican race, although Cruz has been climbing over the past week. Among those who identify as Republicans, Trump has settled in at about 40 percent support, according to a five-day rolling average ending on Tuesday in the Reuters/Ipsos poll. Cruz at 23 percent and Kasich at 11 percent have been on the rise, largely at Rubio's expense.

The Michigan victory sets Trump up for a potentially decisive day of voting next week. On March 15, Ohio, Florida, Illinois, Missouri and North Carolina-like Michigan, states rich in the delegates who will select their party's nominee at July's Republican National Convention - cast ballots. The Republican contests in Florida and Ohio award all the state's delegates to the winner. If Trump could sweep those two states and pile up delegates elsewhere next week, it could knock home-state favorites Rubio and Kasich out of the race and make it tough for Cruz to catch him.

Anti-Trump Super PACs have spent millions of dollars on advertisements designed to attack Trump's character in Florida. But Trump's relentless anti-free trade rhetoric and promise to slap taxes on cars and parts shipped in from Mexico resonated in Michigan, which has lost tens of thousands of manufacturing and auto industry jobs. "The biggest takeaway is that the Republican establishment is in its death throes."

The only remaining candidates are 100 percent anti-establishment," said Mark Meckler, an early founder of the conservative Tea Party movement. Trump said he and Republican US House of Representative Speaker Paul Ryan recently spoke by phone, telling MSNBC "It was a smart call," in a sign that he would be willing to work with the Republican congressional leader.

In the Democratic race, Sanders told reporters in Florida that the results in Michigan were a repudiation of the opinion polls and pundits who had written off his chances in the state. Opinion polls had shown Clinton with a double-digit lead going into the primary. The US senator from Vermont, a democratic socialist, said the win showed his political revolution was "strong in every part of the country. Frankly, we believe our strongest areas are yet to come."

Clinton's campaign signaled ahead of Michigan that the race could be tight. Clinton, her husband, former President Bill Clinton, and daughter Chelsea Clinton all campaigned in the state over the past few days trying to garner last-minute votes.

US Housing Secretary Julian Castro, often seen as a potential running-mate for Hillary Clinton, said he does not expect to be the Democratic vice presidential pick. "There's been no conversation whatsoever," Castro told reporters yesterday at the Democratic National Committee Hispanic caucus summit in Miami. — Reuters

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REPORT PAINTS GRIM PICTURE OF KIDS' LIVES IN SYRIA



EASTERN GHOUTA, Syria: In this Nov 17, 2015 photo, three children push a cart of firewood down a street. —AP

UNITED NATIONS: An international children's group painted a grim picture of life in Syria's besieged cities, where young people have lost any hope for the future, living in constant fear of aerial bombardment and lacking access to food and proper medical care. Save the Children said in a report published Tuesday that access to besieged areas by humanitarian organizations is virtually non-existent and only about 1 percent of food aid from the UN reached Syrians in besieged areas in 2015. About 250,000 children live in besieged areas, according to the report.

"Children have really lost any sense of the future," Sonia Khush, the organization's regional director for Syria told a news conference at UN headquarters on Monday. She described a life in which parents and their children are surrounded by warring groups and access to medicine or physicians is limited or non-existent. Children "barely know what fresh fruits and vegetables are" because the government or other combatants have blocked access to them, Khush

said. For the report, Save the Children, working with partners in Syria, interviewed 126 people in eight besieged areas, including children aged 10 to 16, parents and professionals such as doctors and teachers living in areas that have effectively become "open air prisons". Syria's five-year war has killed at least a quarter million people and displaced half the country's population.

The conflict, which erupted in March 2011 as a popular uprising against President Bashar Al-Assad's authoritarian rule, quickly descended into an all-out civil war that allowed militants such as the Islamic State group to seize large swaths of land. Violence has eased in the country since the government and opposition agreed to a partial ceasefire 10 days ago.

According to diplomats, humanitarian aid has begun reaching some besieged areas thanks to a partial cease fire, and a spokeswoman for UN envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura said Tuesday that peace talks with Syrian government officials and opposition representatives will begin no later

than next Monday. The resumption of talks has been expected ever since the US-Russia-engineered truce, which has sharply reduced the bloodshed, took effect on Feb 27. The ceasefire - though limited and tentative - has mostly held, even as sporadic violence has continued.

An aid worker living in Syria who attended Monday's news conference but asked that her name not be used for fear of reprisals said food, medicine and other vital supplies are removed by combatants at checkpoints long before reaching the besieged areas. The situation is so precarious, she said, children routinely run to freshly bombed buildings to salvage wood from the wreckage to provide heat to stay warm, the aid worker said. Michael Klosson, vice president for policy and humanitarian response for Save the Children, said the only real way to get supplies to the people who need them is to end the siege of these areas and ensure sustained access. After five years of war, he said, "Enough is enough." —AP

SAUDIS, YEMEN REBELS AGREE PRISONER SWAP

BORDER CALM FOLLOWING AGREEMENT

RIYADH: Yemen's Houthi rebels have agreed to a prisoner swap and an apparent truce along the border following unprecedented talks with Saudi Arabia, the Riyadh-led military coalition intervening in Yemen said yesterday. The talks marked the first direct negotiations between the Iran-backed rebels and Saudi Arabia, which a year ago launched an air war in support of Yemen's government after the Houthis seized large parts of the country. Analysts said the agreement was the first time an important step had been taken in

finding a resolution to the conflict, which the United Nations says has killed more than 6,000 people.

The coalition said the agreement had been reached with a Yemeni tribal delegation during a visit to Saudi Arabia. The coalition said it had "responded positively" to a request from the delegation "to create a state of calm on the Yemeni border adjacent to the kingdom to make way for the entry of medical and relief materials". Under the agreement a Saudi soldier, Corporal Jaber Al-Kaabi, was handed over in

exchange for seven Yemenis detained by Saudi authorities at the border, said the statement published by the official Saudi Press Agency.

The coalition welcomed the "continuing state of calm" following the agreement, and said it would contribute to UN-brokered peace efforts. Saudi Arabia and several of its Sunni Arab allies launched air strikes on March 26 last year after the Houthis, a Shiite group from Yemen's north, seized control of large parts of the country including the capital Sanaa. Backed by the

strikes and some coalition ground troops, forces supporting President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi have retaken areas in Yemen's south but have been unable to retake the capital. The Houthis have launched cross-border attacks against Saudi Arabia in retaliation for the intervention, with more than 90 people - both military and civilian - killed on the Saudi side of the frontier by shelling and in skirmishes.

Saudis 'Looking for Way Out'

There was no immediate confirmation from rebel sources of a border ceasefire, but analysts said the apparent deal represented an important step. "This is one of the most significant breakthroughs" since coalition operations began, said Adam Baron, a visiting fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations. Baron said there appeared to be increasing pressure on Saudi Arabia to compromise as civilian suffering grows and jihadist groups take advantage of the conflict.

"Key Saudi allies have grown anxious regarding the deepening humanitarian crisis and the - so far - virtually unchecked spread of Al-Qaeda and other extremist groups in areas where the Houthis have been pushed out," Baron said. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the jihadist network's powerful Yemeni affiliate, has taken control of some parts of the country and a local branch of the Islamic State group has also emerged as a new threat. Yemeni authorities have blamed IS for an attack on a care home in Yemen's main southern city of Aden last week that killed 16 people including four foreign nuns. —AFP



ISTANBUL: Syrian Muhammad Faris, Syria's first cosmonaut and a former general of the Syrian Air Force, backdropped by a painting of him depicting him with a space suit, smiles as he talks while holding his Soviet-era and international medals on March 7, 2016. —AP

SYRIAN COSMONAUT: EUROPE MUST HELP REMOVE ASSAD

BURSA, Turkey: Mohammed Faris made history and achieved national hero status in 1987 when he became Syria's first man in space as part of a Soviet-led mission. Now, as a refugee in Turkey, the 64-year-old cosmonaut and retired general is critical of Russia's intervention in Syria, and wants European nations to help remove Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad from office to bring about an end to the refugee crisis.

Faris fled the civil war Syria in 2012 for Turkey to join the Syrian opposition, becoming one of his country's highest-ranking defectors. As well as advising the Syrian opposition, he now gives talks at universities and schools on his experiences in space. "I tell Europe if you don't want refugees, then you should help us get rid of this regime," he told AP in an interview during a visit to a science and technology center in the northwestern Turkish city of Bursa. He also met with the AP in his office in Istanbul's Aksaray district, which is also known as "Little Syria" because of the high number of refugees

living there. Faris said he feels admiration for the Russian people, but is critical of Moscow's campaign in Syria. "I am very sorry about the Russian interference, which has stood on the side of dictator Bashar Al-Assad, and has begun to kill the Syrian people with their planes," he said. He insisted peace in Syria can't be achieved unless Assad leaves. "We in Syria, sacrificed more than a million people and 1.9 million injured," Faris said. "Can we let this be for nothing?"

During the height of the Cold War, Faris was selected for a space program and moved to the former Soviet Union in 1985 for training with other cosmonauts. Two years later, he would travel to the Mir space station aboard a Soyuz spacecraft. "I saw the earth from outer space. The earth is like one ball, it has no borders," Faris said. "And that's wonderful, because in outer space, there are no gates between countries. From there, the earth is one home, one family." —AP



SANAA: A boy gets his handprint on a Yemeni flag during a gathering by held Shiite rebels known as Houthis, against Saudi-led airstrikes yesterday. —AP

NEW CLASH HITS TUNISIA TOWN

BEN GUERDANE, Tunisia: Fresh violence erupted yesterday at Ben Guerdane near Tunisia's border with Libya, as a "martyrs" funeral was held amid nationwide mourning after a jihadist assault killed more than 50 people. The defence and interior ministries said two "terrorists" and a soldier were killed in a firefight in the Oued Rbyaa area. They said the confrontation came after jihadists on the run raided a building site in search of provisions and stole food from workers there. A civilian was also wounded, a joint statement said.

The clash came as thousands of mourners gathered in Ben Guerdane, near the border with conflict-ridden Libya, for the funerals of people killed in Monday's full-blown jihadist attack on the town of some 60,000 residents. Schools across the country held a minute's silence in memory of the seven civilians and 12 members of the security forces killed in the assault that the

authorities blamed on the Islamic State (IS) group. Thirty-six jihadists were also killed.

Since the jihadist dawn attack on an army barracks and police and National Guard posts in Ben Guerdane, the number of dead militants has risen to 45 after another seven were killed overnight. Four Kalashnikov assault rifles were recovered, the ministries said of the nighttime clashes in the Benniri area, a few kilometres south of Ben Guerdane.

Mopping Up Operations

Security forces have flooded Ben Guerdane over the past two days as mopping up operations continue and an overnight curfew was imposed on residents. The authorities said Monday's attack was an unprecedented assault by IS aimed at setting up a new stronghold in the country across the border from Libya, where the group already has a presence. Schools nation-

wide observed a minute's silence early yesterday ahead of funerals for some of the victims. At the Lenin school in central Tunis, pupils sang the national anthem and saluted the national flag before the solemn ceremony.

"It is vital to show students the importance of defending the nation, that the blood of martyrs did not flow for nothing," teacher Sonia El Kefi told AFP. "We will not allow terrorists to influence the minds of children." One of the pupils, Aziz, said: "This is for the martyrs" and so the police "are aware that if they die, there will still be people standing behind them". In Ben Guerdane itself yesterday morning, thousands of residents attended the funerals of some of the victims, an AFP correspondent and a security source said. The security source said the bodies of 11 people were buried in the town cemetery in an area newly designated "The Martyrs of March 7".

'Unprecedented' Attack

Prime Minister Habib Essid said on Tuesday about 50 extremists were believed to have taken part in the assault on Ben Guerdane the day before. On Monday, he said the apparent aim of the operation had been to establish a "Daesh (IS) emirate" in Ben Guerdane. Analysts said the coordinated attacks showed jihadists are keen to spread their influence from Libya to Tunisia and to set up a new stronghold in the country. President Beji Caïd Essebsi has described the attack on Ben Guerdane as "unprecedented" and said it was "maybe aimed at controlling" the border region. He vowed to "exterminate these rats".

Residents of the town said the assailants appeared to be natives of the region. They stopped people, checked ID cards apparently to seek out members of the security forces, and announced their brief takeover of Ben Guerdane as "liberators". Jihadists have taken advantage of a power vacuum in Libya since the NATO-backed overthrow of longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 to set up bases in several areas, including near Sabratha close to the Tunisian border. Tunisia has built a 200-km barrier that stretches about half the length of its border in an attempt to stop militant incursions. —AFP



BEN GUERDANE: Tunisian mourners carry the coffins of victims who died two days earlier in a jihadist attack, during their funeral in a cemetery in the Tunisian town of Ben Guerdane near the Libyan border, on yesterday. —AFP



JERUSALEM: US Vice President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shake hands while giving joint statements at the prime minister's office yesterday. —AP

BIDEN SLAMS 'FAILURE TO CONDEMN' ATTACKS

JERUSALEM: US Vice President Joe Biden yesterday implicitly criticized Palestinian leaders for not condemning attacks against Israelis, as an upsurge in violence marred his visit. Six separate attacks took place shortly before or after Biden's arrival Tuesday, including a stabbing spree on Tel Aviv's waterfront by a Palestinian who killed an American tourist and wounded 12 people. The stabbings in the Jaffa port area took place as Biden met former Israeli president Shimon Peres about a kilometre away on Tuesday.

Biden said his wife and grandchildren had been having dinner on the beach not far from the site of the stabbings. "The United States of America condemns these acts and condemns the failure to condemn these acts," Biden said while meeting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "The kind of violence we saw yesterday, the failure to condemn it, the rhetoric that incites that violence, the retribution that it generates, has to stop."

Biden offered his condolences to the family of the American victim, 29-year-old Taylor Force, whom he noted served in the military

in Afghanistan and Iraq. Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas has repeatedly called for peaceful resistance against the Israeli occupation, but has not specifically condemned a wave of knife, gun and car-ramming attacks that erupted in October. Islamist movement Hamas, which runs the Gaza Strip, often praises such attacks. Biden will travel to Ramallah later Wednesday to meet Abbas. A large number of the attackers have been young people, including teenagers, who appear to have been acting on their own.

Many analysts say Palestinian frustration with Israeli occupation and settlement building in the West Bank, the complete lack of progress in peace efforts and their own fractured leadership have fed the unrest. Israel blames incitement by Palestinian leaders and media as a main cause of the violence, which has killed 188 Palestinians and 28 Israelis since October. Most of the Palestinians were killed while carrying out attacks, Israeli authorities say. Others were shot dead by Israeli forces during clashes or demonstrations. —AFP



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PLAY ABOUT A FRENCH MUSLIM PRESIDENT HITS REFUGEE NERVE

HAMBURG: Stage adaptations of French author Michel Houellebecq's novel "Submission", in which a Muslim president takes power in 2022 France, have been a hit in Germany where a huge Mideast refugee influx has stoked fears of the impact of Islamic culture.

The first German theatre version sold out in the northern city of Hamburg, while in Dresden, birthplace of the Islamophobic PEGIDA street movement, a play premiered last weekend, with a third adaptation planned for Berlin in late April. "It seems like it's a very timely story because everybody, each in their own way, picks up on a point of the topic that concerns them," actor Edgar Selge, who plays the central character Francois in Hamburg's Deutsches Schauspielhaus theatre said.

In the monologue play, Selge stands on stage for nearly three hours, embodying an opportunistic and spineless academic, a loner who is slowly seduced by a new life under Islam and becomes a political force who rises to the French presidency. Selge said that Houellebecq, through this central character,

"asks us provocatively: what values do you have in your culture that really mean anything to you?"

The influential weekly Die Zeit said that "Submission" describes how a pre-modern Muslim ideology turns Western society upside down, how women are denied their rights, how acceptance fades for the central values of the West. "Does that remind you of anything?" it asked.

"Perhaps of the voices that, since New Year's Eve at the latest, see the refugees as agents of a culture war between the Islamic and Western worlds?" Germany was shocked by the chaotic scenes on New Year's Eve in Cologne when a crowd of mostly North African men sexually assaulted or robbed hundreds of women, scenes that heightened fears about Europe's biggest migrant crisis since World War II.

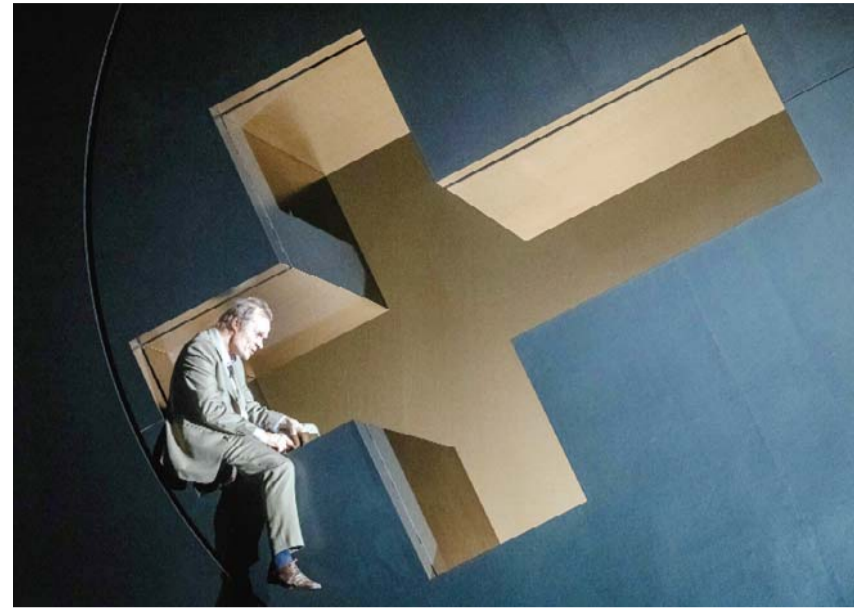
'Finger in the wound'

Dresden-born PEGIDA-short for European Patriots against the Islamisation of the Occident-and the right-wing populist Alternative for Germany party have seized

on the events, railing against "sex jihadists" and "rapefugees". "I think it's almost impossible to watch this piece in Dresden without thinking of PEGIDA or the AFD," said director Malte C Lachmann, who has staged the play in the Baroque capital of Saxony state.

But Lachmann insists that "Submission" is "absolutely not Islamophobic", as some critics charged in France, but rather that it "really puts the finger into the wound" of modern Western civilization. "Submission" is not really about Islam, it's about us in the West and our torments," Lachmann said.

Selge agrees, judging that Houellebecq "very accurately captures the detachment and opportunism of our liberal-bourgeois culture". "You really need someone who studies how much we value notions that are supposed to mean something to us-like emancipation, democracy, separation of powers, humanism, atheism, a sense of responsibility for the Third World-and he concludes: these are all just phrases, just paper tigers. "And he challenges us to fill them with new meaning, or to just find new ones." — AFP



HAMBURG: German actor Edgar Selge in the role of "Francois" during a rehearsal of the stage adaptation of French author Michel Houellebecq's novel "Submission" at the Deutsches Schauspielhaus theatre. — AFP



SOUTH CAROLINA: In this Feb 18, 2016, file photo, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks with Anderson Cooper during a commercial break at a CNN town hall at the University of South Carolina. — AP

TRUMP CALLS FOR REPUBLICANS TO RALLY BEHIND HIS CAMPAIGN

DECLARES HIMSELF UNBEATABLE IN THE RACE

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump called for Republicans yesterday to rally behind his presidential candidacy after he cruised to primary victories in three more states, declaring that he could not be defeated in the November general election as the standard-bearer of a united party.

On the Democrat side, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders handed former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton a surprise loss in the industrial state of Michigan, increasing the likelihood that the contest for the party's nomination could stretch into early summer. Clinton, however, crushed Sanders in the southern state of Mississippi, continuing to win a large margin among black voters.

Speaking to MSNBC yesterday morning, Trump said: "If the Republican party unites behind us, nobody can beat us." The message was the same in an interview with Fox News. "Instead of fighting it, they should embrace it," Trump said. "If we embrace what's happening and if everybody came together ... nobody could beat the Republican Party."

Campaign promises

But Trump evaded questions about how he would carry out his campaign promises, especially his boast that he would build a wall along the

Mexican border to stop illegal immigration and make Mexico pay for it. He did concede that he is not doing as well with women voters because of the stinging language of his campaign.

"I can see women not necessarily liking the tone (of his campaign), but I had to be very harsh to win," he said of his brutal counterattacks on party elites and fellow candidates, particularly Florida Sen. Marco Rubio and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz. Trump's lead over Cruz in the race for delegates grew by only 15 delegates. That's because all four states awarded delegates proportionally, so even the second-place finisher got some. Cruz captured the Idaho primary in the west of the country. Rubio, the favorite of the party establishment, failed to pick up any delegates Tuesday. He needs to win home state Florida next week, while Ohio Gov. John Kasich needs to win his home state Tuesday to stay in the race.

Among Republicans, Trump has at least 446 delegates and Cruz has at least 347. Rubio has at least 151 delegates and Kasich has at least 54. It takes 1,237 delegates to win the party nomination. While Sanders upset Clinton in Michigan, she increased her delegate lead by sweeping Mississippi and is now halfway to the number needed to clinch the nomination.

After Tuesday's results, Clinton has accumulated 1,221 delegates and Sanders 571, including superdelegates, the party insiders who can support whomever they like. Democrats need 2,383 delegates to win the nomination. Sanders said that "in almost all national polls" he is the bigger winner against Trump in the general election.

Clinton chose to focus her attention on Republicans and the general election. "We are better than what we are being offered by the Republicans," she declared. The economy ranked high on the list of concerns for voters in Michigan and Mississippi. At least 8 in 10 in each party's primary said they were worried about where the American economy is heading, according to exit polls conducted by Edison Research for The Associated Press and television networks.

Among Democrats, 8 in 10 voters in both states said the country's economic system benefits the wealthy, not all Americans. Sanders has sought to tap into that concern, energizing young people and white, blue-collar voters with his calls for breaking up Wall Street banks and making tuition free at public colleges and universities. But Sanders has struggled to win the support of black voters who are crucial to Democrats in the general election. — AP

PORTUGAL PRESIDENT VOWS TO HEAL FINANCIAL WOUNDS

LISBON: Portugal's new conservative President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa appealed yesterday for dialogue to unite the country after the financial crisis and political turmoil over austerity. "We must heal the wounds caused by so many years of sacrifice," the 67-year-old former star TV political pundit said as he was sworn in following his January election win.

Although the post of president has no executive powers, Rebelo de Sousa is seen as a calming force following the divisive legislative polls in October. Despite coming ahead in the vote, Portugal's incumbent right-wing coalition had to give way to an unstable Socialist-led minority government supported by the radical left, with a commitment to ending austerity policies.

Portugal was engulfed in the financial crisis that threatened to destabilize the euro zone from 2010, receiving a 78 billion euro (\$86 billion) bailout from the EU and IMF in 2011 in return for major spending cuts. "It is essential to re-establish consensus and to resume dialogue," Rebelo de Sousa said at the ceremony in parliament attended by more than 500 delegates including European Commission head Jean-Claude Juncker and Spain's King Felipe VI.

"Without discipline and without financial transparency, the risk of a permanent return to crisis is significantly greater," he said. "Sound finances without growth, employment and social justice can worsen inequality and social conflict." However, the European Commission on Tuesday said Portugal, along with France and Italy, were in violation of EU rules on public spending and would be more closely monitored by Brussels.

Parliament last month approved a 2016 budget that pledged to reverse unpopular austerity measures, although it cut its budget deficit target to 2.2 percent of gross domestic product after an initial EU warning. Credit ratings agency Fitch has warned investors that additional austerity measures "could be a breaking point" for the left-wing governing alliance headed by Prime Minister Antonio Costa.

Although the president has the power to dissolve parliament from early April, experts believe he is unlikely to move against the current government. "The survival of the government is more threatened by the contradictions at the heart of the parties that support it than by the actions of the new president," political analyst Antonio Costa Pinto said. — AFP

POLISH CONSTITUTIONAL COURT STRIKES DOWN NEW RULES

WARSAW: Poland's Constitutional Tribunal ruled yesterday that new rules introduced by the new government to regulate how the court functions are unconstitutional. The ruling deepens a legal crisis that has upended politics in Poland and brought sharp condemnation from European and US authorities.

While it bolsters the moral position of government critics alarmed at what they see as an attack on democracy, the judgment is nonetheless powerless to resolve the crisis because the conservative government of Prime Minister Beata Szydlo says it won't treat it as valid.

An opposition lawmaker, Kamila Gasiuk-Pihowicz, said if the court rulings are not respected it will lead to the biggest constitutional crisis in Poland since the country established democracy in 1989. Szydlo's government says it will also dismiss a separate judgment expected Friday by the Venice Commission, an expert body with the Council of Europe human rights group, which has analyzed the changes to the court.

In a leaked draft of the report, the commission said changes to the court threaten the rule of law, democracy and human rights in Poland. Ruling party leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski insists that Poland is a sovereign nation that will decide its own affairs. The ruling also comes amid a deepening hostility between the government and its critics. Kaczynski reacted to a series of street protests in past months by accusing the

critics of trying to harm Poland's interests.

"I am afraid Poland is really stuck. There seems to be no way out now," said Hanna Szulczewska, a member of the Committee for the Defense of Democracy, an organization formed late



WARSAW: Protesters celebrate in front of the Constitutional Tribunal. — AP

last year in reaction to the moves against the court.

Power to control

Law and Justice swept to power last year, becoming more dominant than any other party in the 27 years of Poland's post-communist history. It now controls

the presidency, both houses of parliament and the government, and has used its powers to quickly take control of a vast range of institutions. Since the government took office last year it has increased its control over state broadcast media, boosted police powers of surveillance and eliminated the office of the general prosecutor, putting those powers under the Ministry of Justice. In its ruling yesterday, judges ruled that many of the laws passed late last year which fundamentally change how the 15-judge court functions breach Poland's constitution.

One of the new laws stipulate that the court should take up cases in the chronological order in which they are brought to the court. Another requires a two-thirds majority to support a ruling for it to be valid, a change from a simple majority previously. Another contested change requires a quorum of 13 judges for rulings to be valid. Critics say the changes have paralyzed the court, depriving it of the power to prioritize cases and preventing it from acting as a check on any new laws that Law and Justice passes. Guy Verhofstadt, leader of the ALDE liberal group in the European Parliament, urged Szydlo's government to respect the court's verdict. He said he believes Poles will not let the party "manipulate their wonderful country eastwards, away from democracy and the trans-Atlantic community of values." — AP

BALKAN NATIONS SHUT OFF MIGRANT ROUTE TO EUROPE

LJUBLJANA: The Balkan trail from Greece to northern Europe used by floods of migrants was blocked yesterday after a string of nations slammed shut their borders, hiking pressure on the EU and Turkey to nail down a "game-changing" grand bargain.

Slovenia and Croatia, two of the countries along the well-trodden route, said late Tuesday that no migrants wishing to transit towards other countries would be allowed to enter. Serbia indicated it would follow suit.

EU member Slovenia said that from midnight (2300 GMT), the only exceptions were for people wishing to claim asylum in the country or for migrants "on humanitarian grounds and in accordance with the rules of the Schengen zone". Prime Minister Miro Cerar said the move meant that "the (Balkan) route for illegal migrations no longer exists". Croatia's Interior Minister Vlaho Orepic called it a "new phase in resolving the migrant crisis".

The measures follow Austria's decision in February to cap the number of migrants passing through its territory, and Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz late Tuesday welcomed the news. "This is putting into effect what is correct, and that is the end of the 'waving through' (of migrants) which attracted so many migrants last year and was the wrong approach," Kurz told public television. "As Europe we must help Greece but we have to make sure that arriving in (the Greek island of) Lesbos doesn't mean a ticket to Germany," he said.

In Greece, however, the tightening of border restrictions in recent weeks sparked by Austria's move has created a bottleneck at the border with Macedonia where more than 13,000 people were stranded, according to state agency ANA. There was no official reaction from Athens to Slovenia and Croatia's moves but a Greek government source told yesterday that it now considered borders through the Balkans as "de facto closed". The authorities were trying "to convince the refugees that are stuck to go temporarily to welcome centres throughout Greece," the source said.

Merkel's open door

More than a million people have crossed the Aegean Sea into Greece since the start of 2015, many from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq and most aiming to reach wealthy Germany, Austria and Scandinavia. This has caused deep divisions among EU members about how to deal with Europe's worst migration crisis since World War II, and put German Chancellor Angela Merkel under severe pressure domestically over her open-door asylum policy.

Merkel hopes that a mooted deal with Turkey discussed at an EU summit on Monday, and due to be finalized on March 17-18, will be the answer, with Turkey offering to take back all illegal migrants landing on the Greek islands. Turkey, currently hosting 2.7 million refugees escaping the five-year-old civil war in neighboring Syria, is the main springboard for migrants making the perilous sea crossing to Greece.

Ankara proposed an arrangement under which the EU would resettle one Syrian refugee from camps in Turkey in exchange for every Syrian that Turkey takes from Greece, in a bid to reduce the incentive for people to board boats for Europe. In return though, Turkey wants six billion euros (\$6.6 billion) in aid, visa-free access for Turkish citizens to Europe's passport-free Schengen zone and a speeding up of Ankara's efforts to join the EU.

'Game-changer'

European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker called the plan a "real game-changer" and insisted it was "legally feasible", but it has sparked concern from UN refugee chief Filippo Grandi and others. "As a first reaction I'm deeply concerned about any arrangement that would involve the blanket return of anyone from one country to another without spelling out the refugee protection safeguards under international law," Grandi told the European Parliament. Rights group Amnesty International said the proposal was full of "moral and legal flaws" and along with Human Rights Watch challenged the idea that Turkey was a "safe country" to which migrants could return. — AFP



Bahraini girls play on swings near the Arabian Gulf shore on a beach filled with puddles from thunderstorms in the western village of Malkiya in Bahrain. Thunderstorms kept fishermen from going out much of the day, so time was spent cleaning traps and Bahrainis enjoyed a rare rainy day in the Gulf island kingdom. — AP



DONETSK: Ukrainian jailed military officer Nadezhda Savchenko sits in a glass cage during a trial yesterday. — AP

DEFIANT UKRAINE PILOT VOWS TO CONTINUE HUNGER STRIKE

DONETSK, Russia: A Ukrainian military helicopter pilot on trial in Russia over the killing of two journalists defiantly raised her middle finger at the court yesterday and vowed to press on with a hunger strike. Nadiya Savchenko's high-profile case has raised deep concern in the West and in Kiev, where the government denounced the trial as a "farce" and demanded her immediate release. "I will continue my dry hunger strike," the 34-year-old said in her final address to the court in the small Russian town of Donetsk.

The Iraq war veteran, who has been held by Russia since June 2014, first announced her protest action last Thursday, rejecting both food and water. Appearing feverish and visibly thinner after several days of fasting, she said she would continue the hunger strike if the court takes longer than a week to announce a verdict. "Maybe I will live that long," Savchenko declared. The judge said the verdict would be handed down on March 21 and 22. "Here's my final word," Savchenko said, climbing onto a bench in her glass enclosure and raising her middle finger. Refusing both food and water is known in Russia as a "dry hunger strike" and was a method of last resort for some Soviet dissidents under Communism.

'Nothing to Lose'

Savchenko is seen by her compatriots as a symbol of resistance against the Kremlin, accused of fuelling the conflict in eastern Ukraine which has claimed more than 9,000 lives since April 2014. The prosecution has sought a 23-year jail sentence for Savchenko over the killing of two journalists from Russian public broadcaster VGTRK in shelling in Ukraine's eastern Lugansk region in June, two months after the pro-Russia uprising began. Prosecutors say she was involved in her capacity as a volunteer in a Ukrainian battalion. But she says she was kidnapped even before the attack and smuggled across the border into Russia.

Defence lawyers Nikolai Polozov said Savchenko's health had deteriorated over the past few days, adding that she was feverish and her temperature had risen to about 38 degrees Celsius. "Remember - we

are playing with my life. And I will win," Savchenko told the court. "The stakes are high and I have nothing to lose." Her lawyers said they will not be able to persuade Savchenko to halt her hunger strike unless Russia releases her immediately or at least provide guarantees that it will do so. "She will either be force-fed or die," said Polozov.

'Kangaroo Court'

Savchenko, who has been elected to Ukraine's parliament since being detained, used her address to predict the downfall of Russian President Vladimir Putin. "There will be a Maidan in Russia," she said, referring to the popular uprising that ousted a Kremlin-backed regime in Kiev in 2014. Savchenko then sang Ukraine's national anthem as her mother and sister joined in from the public benches, placing their hands over their hearts. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko called the trial a "farce" being conducted in a "kangaroo court". "We demand Nadiya's immediate, unconditional release and her return to Ukraine," he said on Facebook, a call backed by the United States and the European Union.

Germany said her trial went against "the spirit and letter of the Minsk agreement," a deal aimed at ending the Ukraine conflict. Five EU member states have called for sanctions against Russian officials involved in her detention, according to Lithuania, one of those involved. Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said any comments on the trial were "unacceptable".

Savchenko has fasted before to protest the accusations against her but has never before refused water. Her lawyers said her mother and sister as well as Ukrainian doctors and diplomats would not be allowed to see Savchenko before March 21. Russia said any visits, including by doctors, were "made impossible" by Savchenko's "provocative behavior" during yesterday's hearing. "Savchenko's health is not cause for alarm," the foreign ministry said in a statement, adding that she "is exercising". Hundreds of angry Ukrainians picketed Russian diplomatic missions yesterday, pelting them with eggs or smoke bombs and fireworks. — AFP

IRAN TESTS 2 MORE MISSILES CAPABLE OF REACHING ISRAEL

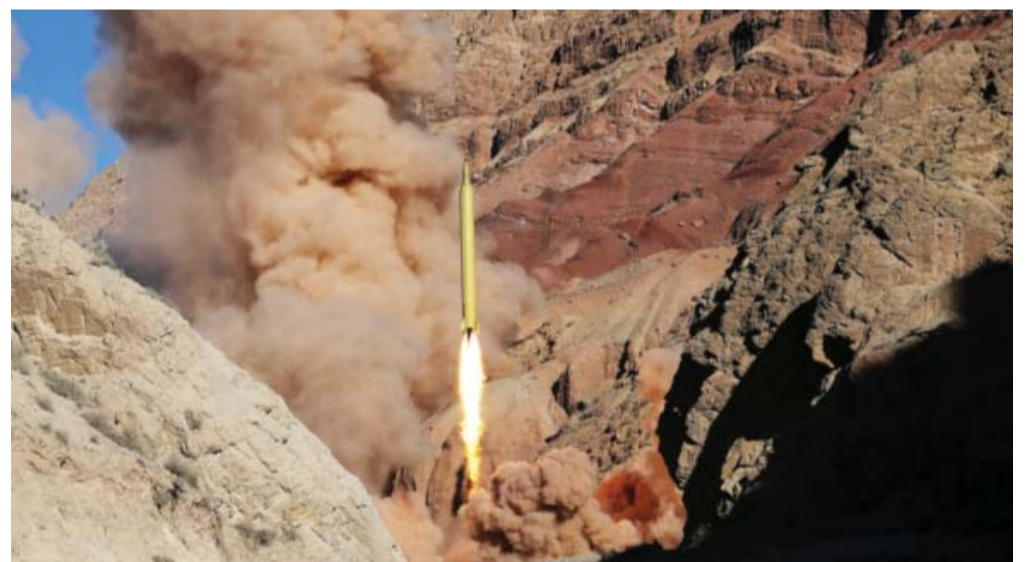
MISSILES MARKED WITH 'ISRAEL MUST BE WIPED OUT'

DUBAI: Iran test-fired two ballistic missiles yesterday with the phrase "Israel must be wiped out" written in Hebrew on them, state media reported, a show of strength by the Islamic Republic as US Vice President Joe Biden visited Israel. The new missile firings - the latest in a series of tests in recent days - appeared aimed at demonstrating Iran will push ahead with its ballistic program after scaling back its nuclear program under the deal reached last year with the US and other world powers.

Hardliners in Iran's military have fired rockets and missiles despite US objections since the deal, as well as shown underground missile bases on state television. There was no immediate reaction from Jerusalem, where Biden was meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who strongly opposed the nuclear deal. Biden, speaking next to Netanyahu, did not acknowledge the missile launch directly but he issued a strong warning to the Iranians. "A nuclear-armed Iran is an absolutely unacceptable threat to Israel, to the region and the United States. And I want to reiterate which I know people still doubt here. If in fact they break the deal, we will act," he said.

The semi-official Fars news agency offered pictures yesterday it said were of the Qadr H missiles being fired. It said they were fired in Iran's eastern Alborz mountain range to hit a target some 1,400 km away off Iran's coast into the Sea of Oman. The US Navy's 5th Fleet, which patrols that region, declined to comment on the test. Fars and state media reported the Hebrew inscription on the missiles. Similar phrases have been emblazoned on Iranian missiles before. However, no writing was visible on the missiles shown in video footage or pictures published by local media.

Soldiers often write slogans or messages on rockets and missiles. During Israel's 2006 war with Lebanon's Hezbollah militants, Israeli children were photographed writing messages on artillery shells in a community near the border. More recently, pictures emerged online of US missiles bound for Islamic State group targets that had "From Paris with love" written on them,



A Qadr H long-range ballistic surface-to-surface missile is fired by Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard during a maneuver in an undisclosed location in Iran yesterday. — AP

referring to last year's attacks.

Fars quoted Amir Ali Hajizadeh, the head of the Revolutionary Guard's aerospace division, as saying the test was aimed at showing Israel that Iran could hit it. "The 2,000-kilometer range of our missiles is to confront the Zionist regime," Hajizadeh said. "Israel is surrounded by Islamic countries and it will not last long in a war. It will collapse even before being hit by these missiles."

Israel's Foreign Ministry declined to immediately comment. Iran has threatened to destroy Israel in the past. Israel, which is believed to have the only nuclear arsenal in the Mideast, repeatedly has threatened to take military action against Iran's nuclear facilities. Hajizadeh stressed that Iran would not fire the missiles in anger or start a war with Israel. "We will not be the ones who start a war, but we will not be taken by surprise, so we put our facilities somewhere that our enemies cannot destroy them so that we could continue in a long war," he said.

The firing of the Qadr H missiles comes after a

US State Department spokesman on Tuesday criticized another missile launch, saying Washington planned to bring it before the United Nations Security Council. A nuclear deal between Iran and world powers including the US is now underway, negotiated by the administration of moderate President Hassan Rouhani. In the time since the deal, however, hard-liners in Iran's military have made several shows of strength.

In October, Iran successfully test-fired a new guided long-range ballistic surface-to-surface missile. It was the first such test since Iran and world powers reached the landmark deal last summer. UN experts said the launch used ballistic missile technology banned under a Security Council resolution. In January, the US imposed new sanctions on individuals and entities linked to the ballistic missile program. Iran also has fired rockets near US warships and flown an unarmed drone over an American aircraft carrier in recent months. — Agencies

CAMBRIDGE REMOVES AFRICAN STATUE AFTER PROTEST

LONDON: A Cambridge University college has removed a bronze statue of an African cockerel from display following a campaign by students, as part of a surge in activism against symbols of Britain's colonial past. Jesus College said it was taking down the statue known as "Okukor" from the former kingdom of Benin - now part of southern Nigeria - and was looking at the possibility of its repatriation. "Jesus College acknowledges the contribution made by students in raising the important but complex question of the rightful location of its Benin bronze, in response to which it has permanently removed the Okukor," a college spokeswoman said. "The college commits ... to discuss and determine the best future for the Okukor, including the question of repatriation," she said.

Last month, the college's student union passed a motion that said the statue was looted by British troops in 1897 during a "punitive expedition" as revenge for the killing of some officers.

The motion said that the statue had been bequeathed to the college from the estate of a former British officer, George Neville, who died in 1929. The students' "Benin Bronze Appreciation Committee" said it was in contact with a Nigerian government minister who supported its repatriation, according to minutes of the meeting on the union website.

Some academics reacted critically to the ruling. Joanna Williams, a lecturer in higher education at University of Kent was quoted by the Daily Telegraph as saying that the decision was "cowardly". "I think students have declared war on the past and this is another example of how students are using history as a morality play," she said. Students at Oxford University launched a campaign last year for the removal of a statue of British imperialist and donor Cecil Rhodes at Oriel College.

Oriel has said it will remove a plaque honoring Rhodes, a white supremacist like many

builders of the British empire, but would keep the statue in place. The campaign has since widened to target other figures associated with British colonial history, including queen Victoria and Charles Codrington, a plantation owner in Barbados who used enslaved labour and was a major donor to All Souls College in Oxford. A group of students held a rally and staged a die-in at Oxford yesterday holding up signs like "Decolonise Education" and "Morals Not Money", the Rhodes Must Fall campaign wrote on Twitter.

Hundreds of works of art were looted by British soldiers from Nigeria in the 1897 punitive expedition. Two statues from the looted "Benin Bronzes" collection were returned to Benin City two years ago by Mark Walker, a retired medical consultant whose grandfather was involved in the raid. They were presented to the Oba (King) of Benin, Uku Akpolokpolo Erediauwu I at a ceremony attended by royal officials and local dignitaries. — AFP

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Issues

'COWBOY' STIRS ROW
WITH EFFORTS TO RESCUE
MIDDLE EAST JEWS

By Joe Dyke

Moti Kahana laughs when he considers what critics think of the Israeli-American millionaire's efforts to "rescue" Jews in danger around the Middle East. "They call me names - vigilante or cowboy," the 48-year-old said during a visit to Jerusalem. "It doesn't matter." Kahana has embarked on a quixotic campaign aimed at relocating fellow Jews he perceives as at risk in their home countries in the region, often moving them to Israel. The problem is Israel is not always ready to welcome them - and some of the people involved have not even asked to be "rescued".

To his supporters, Kahana is a maverick who goes outside the rules to get things done. To his detractors, including many in the Israeli establishment, he is a dangerous man, playing with people's lives. "I don't kidnap people. They say many things about Moti Kahana," the self-made businessman said. "I don't even tell them you have to go to Israel." Kahana hit the headlines in October when it was revealed he had whisked the last three Jews out of the Syrian city of Aleppo and smuggled them to Turkey, where they applied for Israeli citizenship.

Tens of thousands of Jews lived in Syria before World War II, many of them in Aleppo. However, the vast majority have left in waves with only a few families remaining. Under Israeli law, any person of Jewish descent across the globe has the right to citizenship. But in this case, one of the three elderly women - a mother and her two daughters - had converted to Islam to marry, so she, her husband and children were rejected.

Faced with no alternatives, they returned to Aleppo, which has been ravaged by Syria's civil war. What has happened to them since has been the subject of much speculation, but Kahana said he knows they are safe. The Jewish Agency, the semi-governmental body responsible for organising immigration to Israel, accuses him of reckless abandon, labelling him a "self-appointed free-lancer". The family themselves were not even told about the "rescue" mission beforehand. Kahana, who was notified of their situation by one of the women's sons in New York, said it was for their own safety and rejects accusations of being a Jewish vigilante.



Moti Kahana

From Cars to Cause

His efforts have left many scratching their heads, wondering why he would devote so much time, effort and money to such a cause. He said he has spent \$2.2 million in five years, though much of that has gone to non-Jewish refugees from Syria. Until 2011, Kahana seemed to be a fairly average success story. He said he moved from Jerusalem to the United States with nothing in his 20s and gradually built a medium-sized car rental business. "Nobody was renting to under 21s, so I decided to rent to under 21s," said Kahana, who lives with his wife and three kids in the US state of New Jersey.

It went bust when business collapsed after the September 11, 2001 attacks, Kahana recalled, but he started again and in 2009 sold that company to Hertz for several million dollars. Then in 2011, the Syrian war broke out next door to his childhood home, Israel, and he found himself moved. He was reminded of his family - many of whom were killed by the Romanian government in anti-Jewish pogroms in World War II. "I thought the world had agreed never to allow this to happen again," he said.

Going for Broke

Kahana started to support humanitarian causes linked to the war, giving to Syrian refugees of all backgrounds. But it is his more recent work that has become the most controversial. As the hopes of the Arab Spring have faded into chaos and war, the suffering has become larger than he could hope to deal with. As such, his aid has been more selective, focusing more on Jews in danger. Kahana has, working with local Arab allies, now relocated dozens of Jews from across the Middle East, including over 20 from Syria, he said.

"I help any Jews that need help any place in the world. If the Jews of Syria want to come out, they can come to Turkey, they can come to the US, they can come to Israel if they want," he said. The Jewish Agency is exasperated, but admits it cannot do much to stop him. Once someone asks to become an Israeli, providing they can prove their Jewish lineage, it cannot refuse. "I think he has been misleading too many people for too long, playing with people's lives," agency spokesman Yigal Palmor said. — AFP

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IS DAESH
GOING BROKE?

GAZANS TURN TO THE SUN AMID POWER CRISIS

By Nidal Al-Mughrabi

Faced with power blackouts lasting anything from eight to 12 hours a day, residents and businesses in Gaza are increasingly turning to the sun to supply their energy needs. Not only are solar panels more reliable and cheaper in the long run, but in some cases, including that of Tamer Al-Buari, they have become essential to staying alive. "To me, power is not just about lights or entertainment, it's a matter of life and death," said Buari, 40, who suffers from a severe sleep disorder that affects his breathing and has to be hooked up to an oxygen ventilator at night.

Buari used to spend around 18,000 shekels (\$4,600) a year on fuel to run a generator that helped make sure he could weather the daily blackouts. Now he has invested in solar panels, making the long-

run costs much cheaper. "I paid \$5,000 to get solar energy for the entire house and that will provide relief for years to come," the father of four told Reuters proudly. Whereas three or four years ago only a handful of Gaza's 1.95 million people could afford to think about solar panels, in the past couple of years, as prices have come down, it has become a much more accessible option.

Schools, hospitals, shops, banks and even mosques have started to install panels on their roofs across the Gaza Strip, a self-governing Palestinian enclave which suffered considerable damage in 2014 during a seven-week war between Israel and Palestinian armed groups based in the territory. Nabeel Marouf, the general manager of the Gaza-based Renewable Power Engineering and Contracting Company, said he had been overwhelmed with orders.

Two years ago, he might have had a dozen clients, he said, but now it's in the thousands. "People have lost hope for a solution to the power crisis, and on top of that there's the fuel crisis," he said, explaining that the regular power supply, interrupted for years, was a mess and fuel for generators was costly and problematic.

Sunshine Galore

Looking across the rooftops of downtown Gaza City, it is clear solar is catching on, with glinting panels on almost every building. New technology even allows people to hang panels over the edge of their balconies. Most of the equipment, including batteries and controllers, is imported from China, where they are made by US, Canadian or German companies, said Marouf. They are imported via Israel, which allows them into Gaza via one of its cross-

ings. Costs for a system range from \$1,500 to \$30,000, depending on the amount of energy people need.

Gaza has three usual sources of power: around 60 MegaWatts generated by the enclave's only power plant, 30MW imported from Egypt and 120MW that is supplied from Israel. Solar power - abundant in the year-round in Gaza, perched as it is on the edge of the southeastern Mediterranean between Israel and Egypt - may provide the territory with a degree of energy independence. In Khan Younis, a town in the southern Gaza Strip, Mohammad Abu Jayyab watched workers as they installed panels on his home. "It has become clear that there are no solutions (to the energy crisis) in the near future," said Abu Jayyab, a local economist. "The situation became tragic, so we resorted to an alternative - solar power." — Reuters

SPONSORS HAVE NO TOLERANCE FOR BANNED DRUGS

By Ben Klayman

In the day following Russian tennis star Maria Sharapova's admission that she failed a drug test, sponsors Nike, Porsche and Swiss watchmaker Tag Heuer dropped her like a hot potato. Before social media demanded instant responses, sponsors often waited weeks or months before severing ties with an athlete - giving them the benefit of the doubt. With so much invested in a global sponsorship industry IEG estimates at \$60 billion, sponsors now scramble to avoid the taint of scandal so athletes caught doping at the Olympics this summer should also expect a quick end to their lucrative contracts.

"Given the attention that use of performance-enhancing drugs in just about all sports has garnered over the last several years, sponsors are going to cut as quickly as they can," said Brian Socolow, head of the sports practice group at Loeb & Loeb law firm, which has represented both athletes and companies in endorsement deals. "They don't want to get caught sponsoring the next Lance Armstrong," he added, referring to the disgraced cyclist who was stripped of seven Tour de France titles and banned for life in 2012 after a US anti-doping probe. Armstrong later admitted using performance-enhancing drugs in a television interview.

While Armstrong's story took years to play out as he initially denied reports of his drug use, Sharapova quickly called a press conference on Monday to say she had tested positive for meldonium, which she said she was taking to treat diabetes and low magnesium. The drug was only banned by the World Anti-Doping Agency as of Jan 1. Sports apparel giant Nike Inc and German carmaker Porsche, a Volkswagen AG unit, responded by suspending their sponsorship deals, while Tag Heuer, owned by French luxury goods group LVMH, ended talks to extend a contract that had expired in December.

Sponsor decisions on whether to stick with a spokesperson or team are driven by money, industry officials said. If they feel the sponsorship can still work, companies stand by their man, woman or sports group, like many have done with soccer's world governing body FIFA or the International Olympic Committee through their respective scandals.

Industry executives agreed Sharapova was smart to get in front of the news, announcing the positive test herself and

apologizing for her mistake. As a result, she will likely get a second chance with the public and sponsors alike, industry executives said. However, a lengthy suspension could in effect end her playing career and damage her status as one of the highest paid off-field female athletes. Forbes estimates her off-court career earnings at more than \$200 million.

"In many ways, she's the ideal spokesperson for a brand. She's very attractive, highly successful and very competitive," said San Diego State University marketing professor George Belch, who has used a Harvard case study about her in his classes to tout her ability as a spokesperson. Sharapova's failed drug test at January's Australian Open, one of four annual Grand Slam events, will likely lead to a ban for the 28 year old. Still ranked among the top players, she has won five Grand Slam titles in her career.

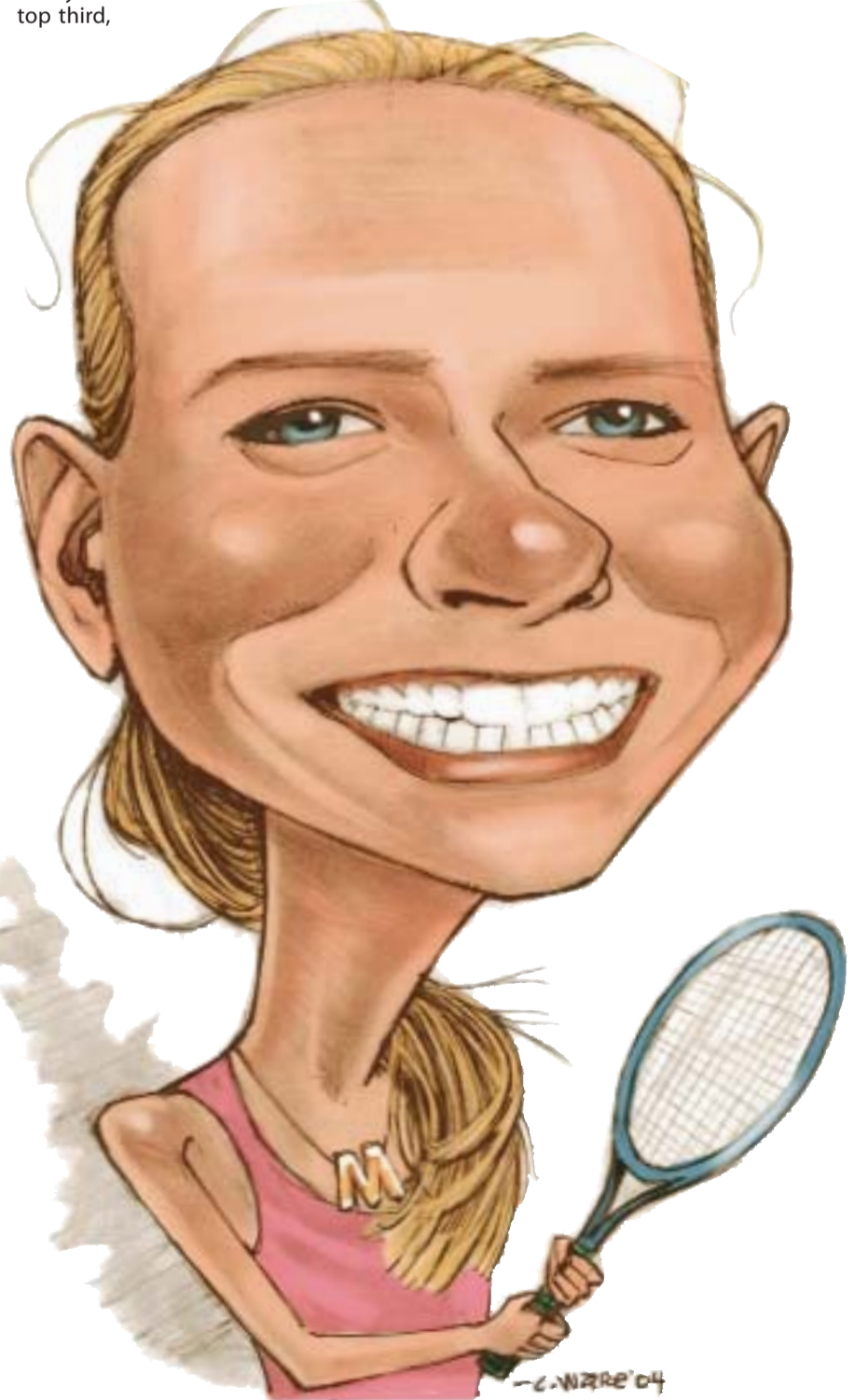
While some critics argue a double standard exists for female athletes, several industry officials said Tiger Woods' sex scandal or the rape allegations against Kobe Bryant in the past would both play out differently in today's social media-driven culture. Issues companies may have waited out not long ago, now demand immediate attention, and some believe it being an Olympic year only raises the pressure to move fast.

Consumer products companies like those associated with Sharapova have even more reason to move quickly to distance themselves from bad news, industry officials said. "It takes a lot of time and money to build a lifestyle brand," said Gary Fechter, an attorney at McCarter & English who has represented companies in sponsorship deals for almost four decades. And for sponsors that may have felt they were overpaying Sharapova, her positive drug test offers a "back-door out," he said.

A source close to the tennis star said her team was encouraged that Nike and Porsche simply suspended their deals rather than terminating them, suggesting the door may be open to reopening them in the future. In the short

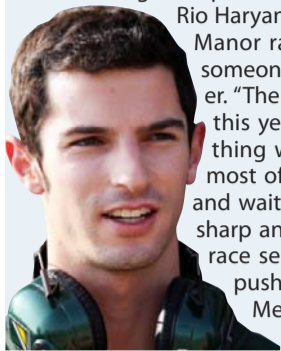
term, however, Sharapova's standing will surely take a hit. Her "trust" scores in an index created by the Marketing Arm for clients to measure celebrity influence will likely take a significant dip, managing director Matt Delzell said. Sharapova currently ranks in the top third,

in the range of former New York Yankee all-star shortstop Derek Jeter, comedian Seth Myers and singer Demi Lovato, according to the unit of the Omnicom Group Inc, which books sports personalities for companies. — Reuters



ROSSI BACK AT MANOR AS RESERVE DRIVER

PARIS: American Alexander Rossi was yesterday named as Formula One team Manor Racing's reserve driver while at the same time competing in the IndyCar series. The Californian-born Rossi lined up for five of the last seven grands prix for the team in 2015, with Manor choosing Indonesia's Rio Haryanto and Pascal Wehrlein as their drivers for this year. Manor racing director said: "We're very fortunate to have someone of Alex's calibre in the role of official reserve driver. "The fact that he's racing full time in the IndyCar Series this year was simply a challenge to be overcome; something we're pretty good at." Rossi, 24, said: "I've invested most of my career in F1 and I'm not one to kick my heels and wait for things to happen, so this is my way of staying sharp and prepared. "It was disappointing to miss out on a race seat with Manor Racing this year; everyone knows I pushed and worked hard for it." The new season starts in Melbourne on March 20. — AFP

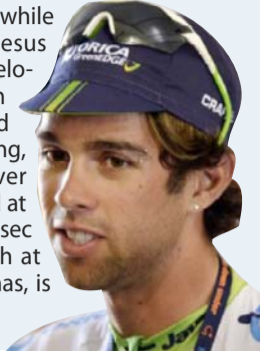


DAVIS CUP SKIPPER LEON SIGNS NEW DEAL

LONDON: Britain's Davis Cup-winning captain Leon Smith has extended his contract and will lead the team for at least another three years, the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) announced yesterday. Smith replaced former Australian Open finalist John Lloyd in 2010 after Britain had suffered a humiliating defeat by Lithuania and were on the verge of relegation to the bottom tier of the men's team tennis tournament. But 2015 saw Smith, thanks mainly to the efforts of Andy Murray, a fellow Scot, guide Britain to their first Davis Cup title in 79 years. Smith, who will remain in post until 2018 and also continue as the LTA's head of men's tennis, said: "It is a huge honour and privilege to continue captaining our Davis Cup team. "We have achieved so much over the last six years and becoming world champions last year will be the highlight of my career," added Smith, who coached Murray when the world number two was a junior. — AFP

PARIS-NICE THIRD STAGE CANCELLED DUE TO SNOW

MONT BROUILLY: Snow caused the third stage of the Paris-Nice race, led by Australian Michael Matthews, to be cancelled yesterday. Weather made the 168km stage from Cusset to the finish in Beaujolais territory at Mont Brouilly dangerous for the riders, who were allowed to climb off their bikes and into team cars. Organisers called a halt to proceedings at a feed zone 75km from the finish, while five riders—Alexey Lutsenko, Laurent Didier, Alexis Gougeard, Jesus Herrada and Thomas De Gendt—had a 3min 30sec lead on the peloton. Organisers originally envisaged restarting the race 42.5km from Mont Brouilly, although falling snow had also been reported at the finish line. No time has been recorded for the day's racing, organisers said. It means Matthews retains his 14sec lead over Dutchman Tom Dumoulin with New Zealander Patrick Bevin third at 19sec. Reigning champion Richie Porte of Australia is 10th at 27sec while two-time Tour de France winner Alberto Contador is 18th at 33sec. Another of the pre-race favourites, Britain's Geraint Thomas, is fifth on the same time as Bevin. — AFP



QATAR'S ASPIRE BOSS HOPEFUL FOR RIO MEDALS

DOHA: The head of Qatar's renowned Aspire Academy has told AFP he believes the centre's graduates this summer could double the number of Olympic medals the tiny Gulf country has ever won.

Ivan Bravo, director general of Aspire, said emerging stars from the academy could bring home up to four Olympic medals—and possibly the country's first ever gold—at Rio later this year as Qatari athletes are now beginning to compete with some of the best in the world.

"For a country the size of Qatar, we could end up with three or four (medals) in the Olympic Games," said Bravo. "We are definitely on the right track," he added. "I think we are starting to compete with the rest of the world."

Qatar has competed at seven Olympics stretching back to Barcelona in 1992. In that time, it has won four bronze medals, including one for its biggest hope for gold in Rio, high jumper Mutaz Barshim. The Doha-born athlete, 24, won bronze in London four years ago, despite suffering a back injury in the early part of that season.

He has been training at Aspire since he was a teenager and could become one of the stories of Rio if he takes gold in Brazil.

He has started the season well, winning his fourth successive gold at the Asian Indoor Athletics Championships, held at Aspire last month. Other gold medal hopes could include middle-distance runners Mohamad Algarni and Musaab Abdelrahman Bala, also graduates of Aspire. The academy was opened 10 years

ago and has spent millions in trying to develop in young Qatari athletes.

Located to the west of the capital Doha, its facilities incorporate not only an indoor athletics track, but also an indoor football pitch with space for 5,800 spectators, Olympic swimming and diving pools, a volleyball and gymnastics hall and sports science laboratories. This year Aspire faces two big tests of how successful it has been at pushing through talent, not only the Olympics, but also Qatar's bid to qualify for its first football World Cup finals.

The national football side has already progressed to the all-important third round of the Asian Football Confederation's qualifying stages for the 2018 World Cup.

Along the way it has twice beaten another super-rich powerhouse of modern football in the region, China, and will now compete against 12 teams for four spots in Russia. Like the athletes, many of the footballers have come through the Aspire system. "When you see the perception of what the rest of the world thinks about Aspire, I think we are definitely seeing growth," adds Bravo. "It is positive and beneficial for the country." He added: "I would say that the country should be proud of Aspire, it's doing this for the country."

Bravo added that Aspire will not be adversely affected by restrictions on budgets in Qatar, as the energy-rich emirate grapples with the ongoing slump in global oil prices, as the "big investments" on facilities has been completed over the past decade. — AFP



Nawaf Al-Khaldi with other officials



Players in action

EXCITING COMPETITION IN KUWAIT 9-BALL CHAMPIONSHIP

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Director of Kuwait Annual 9 Ball Tournament being held at Hot Shot Plazio Hall in Hawally expressed his pleasure at the launch of the 33rd tournament in which more than 160 players both professional and juniors, also for the large crowd that contributed to the tournament's success.

He expected the tournament to see a strong competition in upcoming games as many players have shown outstanding performance and wished the tournament success, and Arab players winning.

Meanwhile, the tournament saw heated competition in many games, and the following are the names of the winners who moved to the second

round: Abdelkareem Al-Otaibi, Mohammad Al-Shimmari, Bashar Al-Kandari, Mohammad Akbar, Hussein Al-Qallaf, from Kuwait, Mohammad Al-Sheikh, Yousuf Al-Hasawi, and Ahmad Al-Naji from Saudi Arabia, Adnan Al-Fares, Mainard Fal, Raed Al-Zaid, Khalid Sayyaf and Ehab Al-Beirut from Lebanon, Muhannad Al-Khateeb, Al-Khateeb, Abdelaziz Al-Muzaini and Ali Ghizlan from Syria, Nawaf Al-Duwaihees, Saad Al-Shimmari and Mohammad Al-Dousary from Saudi Arabia, Bashar Hussein from Qatar, Ali Al Jabbar, Abdallah Al-Enezi, Mohammad Al-Humoud, Hussein Al-Harby, Alfes Fal, Ali Al-Kandary, Mohammad Al-Darweesh and Mifreh Al-Baqmi from Saudi Arabia, Abdallah Al-Qattan, Ali Diab, Faraj Mohammad, Mohammad Jouhar, Marco Serb, Ali Al-Arbeed, Abdelrazaq

Saeed, Ahmad Shukrallah and Ahmad Al-Housanni from UAE, Eric Fal, Fahad Al-Juwaied, Mohammad Al-Ameeri, Ahmad Al-Dulaimi, Saqer Al-Khalidi, Fahad Al-Rashidi, Ali Al-Shalaby, Abdallah Al-Sheeha, Abdelmohsen Abdelrazaq, Abdelaziz Al-Awadhi, Farouq Shaaban from Syria, Rashid Al-Khateeb, and Mishal Al-Kandari.

It is expected that those players will have heated and exciting competition. Saudi player Mohammad Al-Darweesh said he was happy to participate in the tournament which has a large number of professionals and hoped to be on the winning side.

He also thanked the organizing committee under the leadership of Fahad Al-Ghunaim for their care and providing all means of success.

UGC HOLDS INTER-SCHOOL SOCCER TOURNNEY FOR U-14 'FRIENDSHIP THROUGH SPORTS'



Don Bosco



Bhavans

KUWAIT: On the turn of the season, when the cold winds refused to make way for a warmer weather, the United Goans Center held the Inter-School Soccer tournament for kids under the age of 14 at the Surra ground. Since its initiation in 1976, the UGC has always promoted the beautiful game among children. In 2000, UGC had also organized a similar tournament on Sour Grounds which saw Jabriya Indian School lift the Inter School trophy that year.

Their Slogan 'Friendship through Sports' helps stand as a reminder to these young athletes as they mature into grown footballers that though it is a tournament, one must maintain that sportsmanship and discipline at

all times; be it on the field or off.

Since its inception, UGC breathed life into football in Kuwait, at a time when the sport had almost been forgotten. Now it has taken a leading role in allowing school-going kids to compete with each other from different schools to help shape the next round of home grown footballers in Kuwait to take part in local sporting events. Not many kids have the luxury of making it into first teams as older players are always preferred due to their vast experience. But this year the UGC decided to give them a chance to show what they are made of by conducting the tournament for under 14 year olds to commemorate the 40th edition UGC soccer tournament Final. Eight

schools that had taken part in the tournament are: Indian Public School (IPS), Bhavans, Indian Central School, Don Bosco (IEAS), Carmel School, Indian International School, United Indian School and Delhi Public School (DPS). It was a 9-a-side match for 20 minutes full time with rolling substitutes.

The first match was played between Indian Public School and Bhavans and it ended in 1-1 draw after full-time. Spot Kicks were held to decide on a winner and Indian Public School got the better of Bhavans and moved on to the next round. The second match saw Indian Central School take on Don Bosco - IEAS. The match ended in a similar 1-1 draw. After yet another round of spot kicks, Indian Central

School walked away with a 3-2 victory over Don Bosco due to the calm and composed penalty shots taken by their players.

In the third match, United Indian School beat Indian International School by 2 goals to 1. And the fourth match saw Carmel School claim victory with the courtesy of a walkover as Delhi Public School team failed to turn up.

The first semi-final saw United Indian School get the best of Carmel School by a 1 goal margin. The lone goal was scored by Shaheen of United Indian School.

The second semi-final had a similar result with Indian Central School overcoming Indian Public School by a single goal margin. Sandip of Indian Central School was able to find the

back of the net to take his team into the finals against United Indian School.

Though not all teams won, every player was gifted with their own goodie bag with assorted gifts courtesy of Al Yasra foods. The tournament finals between Indian Central School and United Indian School will be held on April 1st 2016 before the men's final of the UGC 40th edition soccer tournament.

The UGC 40th edition Men's Soccer Semi finals will be held on the 11th March 2016 between AVC Football club vs Goa Maroons at 6:45 am. The second semi final will be held between Skynet and Kerela Challengers at 8:00 am. The winners from both matches will face each other on 1st April 2016 for the finals.



Carmel School



Indian International School



United Indian School

ICC TO CONDUCT RANDOM DOPE TESTS IN WORLD T20

NEW DELHI: Cricket's World T20 tournament organisers said yesterday they will carry out random dope tests, following a series of drug scandals that have blighted the sports world including Maria Sharapova's shock revelation.

Doping has been rampant in the field of athletics and this week tennis' poster girl Sharapova admitted to being tested positive for the recently banned drug meldonium at the Australian Open.

Cricket saw the ugly face of doping when Australian spin legend Shane Warne tested positive for a banned drug just ahead of the 2003 World Cup and was suspended for a year.

The organisers of the sixth edition of the World Twenty20 want to make sure that the event stays clear of the doping menace.

"Dope tests are already in place. Random tests will happen during the event," tournament director M V Sridhar, who is Indian cricket board's general manager for cricket operations, told AFP. Boasting of being cricket's biggest ever spectacle, the 27-day tournament is witnessing 16 teams play 58 matches, including 35 men's games and 23 women's fixtures, across eight Indian venues.

Organisers insist that the random checks will keep the players away from indulging in any dope activity.

"The tests will be done by the International Cricket Council anti-doping committee as per the WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) code," Sridhar said. "Like in any bilateral series on the morning of the match the managers of the two teams will exchange the names of two players from their sides to be tested and their sample will be taken in the evening," he added. The ICC has been a signatory to the WADA code since 2006 and has been complying by the international agency's program by upgrading the clauses every year.

CEO Dave Richardson has previously said the ICC will continue random doping players of any team as

they want to see that the game is clean. Last year, Pakistan leg-spinner Yasir Shah and Sri Lankan wicketkeeper Kusal Perera also saw suspensions by their respective boards and ICC after testing positive for banned drugs. While Yasir was banned for three months in January for breaching ICC's anti-doping code, Perera faces a four-year ban after his provisional suspension ends.

Controversial Pakistani pacers Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif had also faced bans after testing positive for a prohibited substance named nandrolone just weeks before the ICC Champions Trophy event in 2006. — AFP

PAKISTAN'S WORLD T20 MATCH AGAINST INDIA MOVED TO KOLKATA

NEW DELHI: The most anticipated match of the World Twenty20 between hosts India and arch-rivals Pakistan was shifted to Kolkata yesterday over concerns about security in the original venue for the March 19 clash at Dharamsala. The marquee contest between the neighbours ran into trouble with Indian war veterans in the state of Himachal Pradesh, where Dharamsala is located, opposing the hosting of a match against Pakistan after militants killed seven security personnel in a Jan. 2 attack on the Indian Air Force base at nearby Pathankot. Pakistan said yesterday it had arrested sev-

eral members of the Jaish-e-Mohammad militant group, which is suspected of masterminding the attack near Dharamsala and 25 km (16 miles) from the Pakistan border.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) delayed the departure of the men's and women's teams and sent a delegation to review security at Dharamsala, which boasts one of India's most beautiful stadiums with snow-capped mountains in the background. After Himachal Pradesh chief minister Virbhadr Singh's warning of possible disruption, the organisers took the "difficult decision" to shift the contest from the picturesque sleepy hill town to Kolkata's usually boisterous Eden Gardens. "We looked at the security situation and we agreed in the end that the level of uncertainties that exist around that match was too great to take a risk," International

Cricket Council (ICC) chief executive David Richardson told reporters. "The safety and security of the event is of paramount importance to the ICC and we've taken into consideration the concerns shared with us by our security advisors as well as the Pakistan Cricket Board."

Richardson, however, all but ruled out a sanction against the state cricket association in Himachal Pradesh. "We had to make this decision for safety and security reasons. I don't think it's reasonable to suggest that we'll be taking disciplinary action against the state association in that province." The ICC official said the organisers were still awaiting an absolute assurance from Pakistan of their participation in the sixth edition of the tournament.

"The decision has just been conveyed to them... We are now obviously very hopeful that they would now board the plane and come to the event."

BITTER NEIGHBOURS

Top cricket countries have refused to tour Pakistan since 2009 when gunmen attacked a bus carrying a visiting Sri Lanka team near Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium.

Shaharyar Khan, the PCB chairman, had said on Monday that there was no question of the country not playing in the tournament but that other venues needed to be considered to replace Dharamsala.

Pakistan and India have fought three wars since becoming separate countries in 1947, two of them over the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir.

Bilateral cricketing ties between the neighbours remain suspended after gunmen killed 166 people in Mumbai in a three-day rampage in 2008 which India blames on a Pakistani militant group. Pakistan's cricket team have in the past received a hostile reception in Mumbai, venue of the second semi-final of the World Twenty20 which got underway on Tuesday, where members of a regional political party dug up a pitch in 1991 on the eve of a test match.

Richardson said if Pakistan reached the last four they would play their semi-final in New Delhi on March 30. "If Pakistan makes the semi-finals, their semi-final won't be played in Mumbai," Richardson said. "We've chosen the venues where Pakistan is due to play very carefully, taking into account safety and security issues." Pakistan open their tournament on March 16 against a qualifying team in Kolkata before the match against India three days later. They will also face New Zealand on March 22 and Australia on March 25, with both of those matches in Mohali. — Reuters



DHARAMSALA: Oman's Ajay Lalcheta, left and Munis Ansari react after they won the ICC World Twenty20 2016 cricket tournament against Ireland at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA) stadium in Dharamsala, India, yesterday. Oman won by two wickets. — AP

OMAN STUN IRELAND AT WORLD TWENTY20

TAMIM HEROICS GUIDES BANGLADESH TO WIN

DHARAMSALA: World Twenty20 debutants Oman stunned Ireland by two wickets in a thrilling last-over finish yesterday with lower-order batsman Aamer Ali's 32-run blitz achieving the target with two balls to spare.

Oman openers Zeeshan Maqsood and Khawal Ali provided a 69-run opening stand only to see the middle-order give it away with the side reeling at 90 for five after 14 overs.

Aamer, who hit five boundaries and a six in his 17-ball stay, then stitched a crucial sixth-wicket stand with Jatinder Singh as Irish medium-pace Max Sorensen failed to stop 14 runs from the last over. It was indeed a great achievement for the Sultan Ahmed-led side, which mostly consists of Indian and Pakistani expats.

"We were trying to get boundaries every over. We have done a lot of hard work before coming to the World Cup, and finally it has paid off," 37-year-old Ali told cricinfo.com through a translator. Earlier, Bangladesh secured a narrow win against a spirited Netherlands. Opener Tamim Iqbal struck an unbeaten 83 before the bowlers secured an eight-run win. Put into bat, Bangladesh suffered from a lack of partnerships but Tamim, with his fourth T20 half-century, almost single-handedly lifted the score to 153 for seven.

It was a disappointing show of batting from a side which sparkled in the recently concluded Asia Cup, where the hosts ended runners-up after a keenly contested final against India.

Tamim though remained unaffected with the wicket-fall as the left-hander smacked six boundaries and three sixes during his 58-ball



DHARAMSALA: Bangladesh's Mustafizur Rahman, right, tries to field a ball from Peter Borren of the Netherlands during the ICC World Twenty20 2016 cricket tournament at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA) stadium in Dharamsala, India, yesterday. — AP

stay. The Dutch batsmen also put up a brave show to give Bangladesh a run for their money but ultimately experience prevailed and the minnows were restricted to 145 for seven in their 20 overs. Mashrafe Morataza-led

Bangladesh are favourites to top their group and move into the Super 10 stage of the 16-team event. Scotland will play Zimbabwe, while Afghanistan are slated to meet Hong Kong in the two Group B matches on Thursday. — AFP

PHANGISO CLEARED AHEAD OF WORLD T20

CAPE TOWN: Left-arm slow bowler Aaron Phangiso will travel with the South African team to the ICC World Twenty20 tournament today after his bowling action was cleared following a second independent assessment.

Cricket South Africa announced late on Tuesday that Phangiso's action for all deliveries had been found to fall within the parameters of international regulations. The new assessment after tests on Monday came a week after it was announced that he had been banned from bowling in domestic cricket after all his variations had been found to exceed the 15 degrees of tolerance allowed.

The first tests were conducted on February 27. Before undergoing the latest tests, Phangiso worked with South

African spin bowling coach Claude Henderson and high performance manager Vincent Barnes in an effort to correct his action.

South African coach Russell Domingo said that although Phangiso had been cleared, he would not play in the third and final Twenty20 international against Australia at Newlands yesterday, South Africa's last match before leaving for India today. "While it is tempting to play him, both Aaron and I feel it's best that he takes a little more time to work on and gain confidence with his new adjustments," said Domingo. "We have an important few weeks coming up in India so it's going to be important to have him in the right frame of mind both mentally and physically." — AFP



BANGALORE: Captains of women Twenty20 cricket teams, left to right, Sri Lanka's Shashikala Siriwardene, India's Mithali Raj, Ireland's Isobel Joyce and Bangladesh's Jahanara Alam pose with the winners trophy during a media interaction ahead of their ICC World Twenty20 2016 cricket tournament in Bangalore, India, yesterday. — AP

MORGAN HOPES ENGLAND STAY BRASH AND AGGRESSIVE IN INDIA

MUMBAI: The current England squad has been the most expressive in a long time and players are encouraged to be as brash and aggressive as they can on the field, limited-overs captain Eoin Morgan said yesterday as he prepares his side for the World Twenty20.

England have looked a completely different proposition in one-day internationals and Twenty20 cricket in the 12 months since their humiliating group stage exit at last year's 50-over World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

The team were then roundly criticised for being too old fashioned in their approach to short-format contests but Morgan's youthful side have since displayed the freedom and exuberance England fans had craved for years.

"I would say, it's the most expressive we've been in a long time. The evidence is the significant totals we have put with our bat," the 29-year-old Ireland-born cricketer told reporters.

"I think we've scored 350 twice or three times and we've definitely chased it down once. I think we had six consecutive times scoring 300, which

is a huge step for us. We've scored 400 once.

"And it's no coincidence. We have a lot of talent within the side, we encourage our players to go out and be as brash and aggressive as they can and take the game to the opposition."

England defeated Pakistan in a one-day series and three Twenty20 contests on the slow pitches in United Arab Emirates in November and were also impressive in defeat against South Africa in both formats last month.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

All-rounder Ben Stokes, a chief exponent of England's fearless cricket, assured the team will continue to play the same brand of cricket during the World Twenty20 in India.

"I mean it's worked. (coach) Trevor (Bayliss) and Morgan gave us that freedom and even (test captain Alistair) Cook in tests," Stokes said.

"We are playing this attacking, positive brand we have probably been talking about the last two-three years but we have only started doing that in the last 12-18 months.

"It's obviously worked for us, so why stop doing it? We got a bit a criticism in South Africa for the two (Twenty20) games we lost but we won six before that."

Morgan said his players would probably be at a slight disadvantage for not playing in the Indian Premier League but hoped they could make up for it with the recent experience of touring the Middle East and Sri Lanka. "I think it (not playing IPL) just becomes a different challenge," Morgan said, while picking hosts India as his favourites for the World Twenty20.

"Not only have our guys not played the IPL a lot of our guys have never been to India. "But we have guys who have toured Sri Lanka quite a lot, been on a recent tour to Dubai and Abu Dhabi, where we had a little bit of success." England open their campaign against 2012 champions West Indies in Mumbai on March 16 before facing South Africa, Sri Lanka and a qualifier in Group 1 of the Super 10 stage. The top two sides will advance to the semi-finals. — Reuters

ZIMBABWE FIXING SCANDAL WIDENS AS PLAYERS, COACHES IMPLICATED

HARARE: Match-fixers "within and outside" the Zimbabwe soccer federation targeted games in Africa's two biggest competitions and in the top league in South Africa, with the former head coach of the Zimbabwe national team one of the "chief suspects," documents seen by The Associated Press say. Edzai Kasinauyo, a Zimbabwe Football Association executive committee member, was suspended Tuesday on suspicion of planning to fix Zimbabwe's two upcoming qualifiers against Swaziland in the African Cup of Nations.

Internal federation documents seen by the AP on Wednesday say players, coaches and other ZIFA officials are suspected of also being involved and more competitions may have been compromised.

The ZIFA documents say Zimbabwe's

games at last month's African Nations Championship - the continent's No. 2 tournament - are under suspicion and evidence implicates former national team coach Ian Gorowa, the team's current assistant coach, Nation Dube, and the former chief executive of ZIFA, Henrietta Rushwaya.

Rushwaya had a life ban from a previous match-fixing scandal involving Zimbabwe's national team overturned in January. The fact that serious allegations of fixing at the Zimbabwe federation should emerge again so quickly is another blow to soccer's image.

Current Zimbabwe coach Callisto Pasuwa and 20-year-old national team goalkeeper Tatenda Mukuruwa were the whistleblowers, according to the documents, after they reported being approached by the fixers and asked to throw games. Mukuruwa

said in an affidavit that former coach Gorowa and assistant coach Dube asked him to undergo a "keeper's course on fixing matches."

Players were offered \$5,000 each for every game fixed, ZIFA believes. FIFA and the Confederation of African Football, the body that oversees the African Cup of Nations and African Nations Championship tournaments, had been informed of the latest investigation, ZIFA said.

'CREDIBLE EVIDENCE'

"The facts reported are very serious," CAF secretary general Hicham El Amrani said in a statement yesterday. "We will immediately, in consultation with FIFA, investigate and activate the mechanisms necessary."

ZIFA said it had "credible evidence" in the

form of emails and audio recordings that "directly" implicated executive committee member Kasinauyo in trying to fix Zimbabwe's home and away African Cup of Nations qualifiers against Swaziland at the end of this month. If those fixes were successful, Kasinauyo would likely try and fix more international games, ZIFA said.

But ZIFA's internal documents also revealed a larger network of alleged match-fixers, including two other unnamed ZIFA officials, an unnamed Italian national who was described as the "ringleader," Rushwaya, the coaches Gorowa and Dube, and two Zimbabwe players.

Rushwaya, using her position at the federation, was previously found guilty of fixing games involving Zimbabwe's team on tours to Asia between 2007 and 2009. That

scam was believed to be masterminded by Singaporean match-fixers Wilson Raj Perumal and Dan Tan. Rushwaya only had her life ban lifted in January by ZIFA's new leadership after it was never endorsed by FIFA. Gorowa was fired after Zimbabwe lost to Tanzania in qualifying for the 2015 African Cup of Nations. Afterward, he was accused by ZIFA of playing players that should not have been representing the country. Games in South Africa's Premier Soccer League were also under suspicion, according to ZIFA's document. The document named two Zimbabweans playing in South Africa - goalkeeper George Chigova of Polokwane City and defender Partson Jaure of Pretoria Matches - as also implicated in fixing matches and among the "chief suspects." — AP

RUSSIA RUNNING OUT OF TIME FOR RIO, SAYS POUND

LONDON: Athletics superpower Russia is running out of time to eradicate doping and may not be able to send a track and field team to this year's Rio Olympics, Dick Pound, chair of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) independent commission, said yesterday.

"There seems to be some evidence that they're just changing deck chairs on the Titanic," he told an anti-doping conference.

Russian athletes were banned from international competition after a report by Pound's commission revealing widespread doping and graft with involvement of Russian and international athletics officials. Russian athletics authorities were ordered to carry out sweeping reforms to allow a lifting of the ban.



MUNICH: Canadian Dick Pound, Chairman of WADA's (World Anti-Doping Agency) Independent Commission (IC), presents the findings of his Commission's Report surrounding allegations of doping in sport, during a press conference in Munich, Germany. — AP

"My guess is Russia may not make it back for Rio. The IAAF and WADA are not going to risk their reputations by rolling over and playing dead," Pound said referring to the sport's world governing International Association of Athletics Federations. Last week a German TV documentary contained fresh allegations of malpractice in Russia's anti-doping system.

Amongst the claims in Sunday's ARD programme were that Russian coaches suspended in the worst corruption and doping scandal to hit the sport were still working in athletics, while others continued to provide banned substances to athletes. "We said to them at the time if you

stop complaining about the (WADA) report you have a chance. Whether their progress is sufficient enough? I don't think they are devoting all their time and energy into getting where they ought to be. "We knew it would be a stretch for them but if they devoted themselves, heart and soul, to getting it done, it would be possible. Yet here we are four months later and I think somehow they must have convinced themselves that it would go away. "Clearly it's not going to go away. Neither WADA nor the IAAF are going to buy a band-aid solution," he told Reuters.

The ARD reports in recent months on doping in Russian sport were based on information provided by whistleblowers Vitaly Stepanov, who formerly worked for Russia's anti-doping agency, and his wife Yuliya, an 800 metres runner banned for doping.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

WADA chairman Craig Reddie, who also addressed delegates, said he had appealed to the IAAF and the International Olympic Committee to allow Yuliya to compete at the Rio Olympics. Reddie said that contrary to media reports, WADA had also offered financial support and relocation to the Stepanovs who currently live in an undisclosed location outside Russia. "For the record, I, WADA and the anti-doping community are very grateful," Reddie said. Branded as traitors at home, Vitaly, Yuliya and their young son have been in hiding since the documentary aired in December 2014. They have changed residences nine times and are living under assumed names.

"Without them it would have been a case of 'Niet, not possible, it's lies'. They gave us hard evidence," Pound said. Russia, second to the US in the sport's pecking order, will be allowed to return to competition, including August's Rio Olympics, when it proves to WADA and the IAAF that it has met a series of conditions regarding its anti-doping operation.

The doping and corruption scandal is amongst the worst in athletics' history and has put in question lucrative global sponsorship deals as well as results and medal awards in past international competitions.

Reddie said governments and sports governing bodies, had to invest more to ensure their sports were clean. "Here we are in sport awash with money, but I'm very perplexed there isn't more cash for anti-doping," he said. — Reuters



NEW YORK: Marc-Andre Fleury #29 of the Pittsburgh Penguins makes a save against Nikolay Kulemin #86 of the New York Islanders during their game at the Barclays Center on Tuesday in New York City. — AFP

BRUINS WIN AT LIGHTNING TO TAKE SHARE OF ATLANTIC LEAD

TAMPA: Brad Marchand scored 10 seconds into overtime, Jonas Gustavsson made 42 saves and the Boston Bruins beat the Tampa Bay Lightning 1-0 on Tuesday night in a matchup of Atlantic Division leaders. Patrice Bergeron sent a pass from the right wing through the slot that Marchand redirected past Ben Bishop. Boston and Tampa Bay both have 83 points but the Bruins have played one more game. Bishop stopped 32 shots.

ISLANDERS 2, PENGUINS 1

Anders Lee scored the tiebreaking goal in the third period, Jaroslav Halak stopped 31 shots before leaving late in the third period and got his 200th career victory and surging New York beat Pittsburgh. Halak left the game with 4:22 left with a possible injury. Thomas Greiss replaced him and stopped all three shots he faced.

Halak, in his second season with the Islanders, improved to 200-115 -37 in his career. John Tavares scored in the first period for the Islanders, who improved to 11-2-1 in their last 14 games in their first time back at Barclays Center since Feb. 18. New York was coming off a 6-1-0 trip that ended with 6-4 win against the hometown-rival Rangers on Sunday. Kris Letang had the Penguins' goal and Marc-Andre Fleury finished with 25 saves.

CANADIENS 4, STARS 3, OT

Alex Galchenyuk got his second goal of the game 1:59 into overtime and Montreal beat Dallas to end a four-game skid. Max Pacioretty and Phillip Danault also scored for Montreal. Ben Scrivens made 30 saves. Cody Eakin, Jason Spezza and Ales Hemes had goals for the first-place Stars. Kari Lehtonen stopped 24 shots. The 13th-place Canadiens are 6-0-1 in their last seven home games. Galchenyuk one-timed in a pass from Andrei Markov from the faceoff circle.

RANGERS 4, SABRES 2

Mats Zuccarello had a goal and two assists and New York edged Buffalo after nearly blowing a three-goal lead. J.T. Miller sealed the victory with a backhander into an empty net with a minute left after he lost a glove on the rush up the right wing. Derrick Brassard and Jesper Fast also scored for New York, which extended its winning streak over Buffalo to nine. The Rangers haven't lost to the Sabres since a 3-1 decision on March 12, 2013. They improved to 13-2 in their past 15 meetings. Sam Reinhart and Johan Larsson scored for Buffalo.

SHARKS 3, OILERS 0

James Reimer made 31 saves in his first shutout of the season, Logan Couture scored twice and San Jose beat Edmonton. Joe Pavelski also scored for the Sharks, who won their second in a row. They've now won five of their last six and have gone 19-5-4 since Jan 9. Cam Talbot stopped 19 shots for Edmonton, which had won four of its previous five games. The Sharks started the scoring just 1:33 into the game when a puck bounced around before landing between the legs of Talbot, who spun around in vain trying to find it before Couture swatted it into the net.

PREDATORS 4, JETS 2

Craig Smith scored twice and Nashville hung on to beat Winnipeg. Colton Sissons and Ryan Johansen also scored for the Predators, and Sissons added an assist and Colin Wilson had a pair of helpers. Pekka Rinne turned aside 21 shots. Nashville is 9-0-4 in its last 13 games. Forward Drew Stafford and defenseman Jacob Trouba had goals for Winnipeg, while Ondrej Pavelec made 27 saves. The loss ended Winnipeg's five-game homestand with only one victory (1-3-1).

BLUE JACKETS 5, RED WINGS 3

Cam Atkinson scored twice in the third

period and Boone Jenner had a goal and an assist while Columbus held off Detroit. David Clarkson and David Savard also scored for the Jackets, and Jonas Korpisalo made 32 saves. Atkinson's empty-netter with 17.5 seconds left secured the win. Tomas Tatar and Andreas Athanasiou scored 46 seconds apart late in the third to pull Detroit within 4-3. Darren Helm thought he'd tied it less than a minute later, but the puck careened off the post behind Korpisalo. Justin Abdelkader also scored for Detroit, and Jimmy Howard made 27 saves.

HURRICANES 4, SENATORS 3, SO

Rookie Jaccob Slavin scored in the fourth round of the shootout, and Carolina beat Ottawa. Jeff Skinner scored twice for Carolina, including one with 0.2 seconds remaining to force overtime, and Jay McClement had a short-handed goal. Cam Ward made 21 saves for the Hurricanes, who won a shootout for the first time this season. They've earned points in three straight. Zack Smith, Mark Stone and Ryan Dzingel scored for the Senators, who have lost five of seven. Andrew Hammond made 34 saves for Ottawa, but Slavin beat him high with a backhand in the tiebreaker. Ward then stopped Smith to end it. — AP

NHL results/standings

Carolina 4, Ottawa 3 (SO); Columbus 5, Detroit 3; NY Rangers 4, Buffalo 2; NY Islanders 2, Pittsburgh 1; Montreal 4, Dallas 3 (OT); Boston 1, Tampa Bay 0 (OT); Nashville 4, Winnipeg 2; San Jose 3, Edmonton 0.

Western Conference						Central Division				Pacific Division																																													
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS																																						
Dallas	40	20	8	218	196	88	Chicago	41	21	5	191	160	87	St. Louis	38	20	9	170	164	85	Nashville	34	21	12	185	170	80	Minnesota	31	26	10	177	169	72	Colorado	34	30	4	183	195	72	Winnipeg	27	34	5	171	198	59							
Eastern Conference						Atlantic Division				Metropolitan Division																																													
Tampa Bay	39	23	5	185	160	83	Boston	38	23	7	208	184	81	Florida	36	21	9	181	161	81	Detroit	32	23	11	167	177	75	Ottawa	31	29	8	196	212	70	Montreal	31	30	6	183	188	68	Buffalo	27	32	9	162	185	63	Toronto	21	33	11	155	194	53
Washington	49	13	4	214	151	102	NY Rangers	39	22	6	192	173	84	NY Islanders	37	20	7	186	159	81	Pittsburgh	34	24	8	180	168	76	Philadelphia	31	23	11	167	174	73	Carolina	30	26	11	165	181	71	New Jersey	31	29	7	148	170	69	Columbus	28	31	8	178	208	64

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



Chen Long

TOP CHINESE STARS MAKE WINNING ALL-ENGLAND STARTS

BIRMINGHAM: World number one Chen Long and Olympic champion Lin Dan gave China an encouraging start to the first Super Series event of 2016 as each carefully overcame tricky hurdles to reach the second round of the All-England Open. The two stars have seven All-England titles between them, and revealed some of this vast experience in negotiating early difficulties with cold conditions by winning in straight games against ambitious younger opponents. Chen won 21-18, 21-12 against Kent Nishikoro, a 21-year-old Japanese who led early on and was still in touch in the middle part of the second game before a little extra pace and variety from the titleholder killed off his challenge.

Lin won 21-17, 21-17 against Lee Dong Keun, a 25-year-old South Korean who turned the match into a good scrap in many long rallies, but found his legendary opponent playing a little better when it mattered. Lin took five of the last seven points in the first game and the last four points in the second, which gave the scoreline a more comfortable look than the match actually had.

"It's going to be difficult for me," said Lin, who hopes to earn the chance to try for a record third Olympic gold medal in Rio in five months' time. "There is fierce competition - and within the Chinese team as well." Lin next plays the winner of Sho Sasaki of Japan and Wei Nan of Hongkong. Chen was bolder in his predictions. "The draw is very tough and challenging, but I am confident I can win (the All-England) again this year," he said. "Sometimes you play thinking it is a bad draw, and you play quite well. It's up to me to fight for it."

He certainly does have a far from easy draw. Chen next plays his compatriot Xue Song, and could go on to face Lin Dan in the semis. It almost became easier when Viktor Axelsen, Chen's conqueror in the Super Series finals in Dubai in December, was forced to save a match point in the second game before surviving 14-21, 22-20, 22-20 against Brice Leverdez, the 36th-ranked Frenchman. If both win again they will meet again. The top seed in the women's singles, Carolina Marin, also found herself in early difficulties. — AP

Oman stun Ireland
at World Twenty20

17

No Europa League
shame for Van
Gaal

19

THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 2016

SHARAPOVA DRUG PREVALENT IN TENNIS: EX WADA CHIEF Page 16



LONDON: Paris Saint-Germain's Swedish forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic (R) takes a shot but fails to score during the UEFA Champions League round of 16 second leg football match between Chelsea and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) at Stamford Bridge in London yesterday. — AFP

IBRAHIMOVIC LEAVES CHELSEA KO AGAIN

LONDON: Zlatan Ibrahimovic scored one and created another as Paris Saint-Germain won 2-1 at Stamford Bridge yesterday to eliminate Chelsea from the Champions League for the second season running. Leading 2-1 from the first leg of the last 16 tie, PSG stretched their lead when Ibrahimovic crossed for Adrien Rabiot to tap in and although Diego Costa's slick finish gave Chelsea hope, Ibrahimovic volleyed home in the 67th minute to complete a 4-2 aggregate success.

Victory took Laurent Blanc's PSG into the quarter-finals for the fourth year in a row, while Chelsea were left to contemplate a first season without Champions League football since 2002-03.

Ten points off the top four in the Premier League, Chelsea's hopes of qualifying for the Champions League via the league are paper-thin and their chances of bouncing back in Saturday's FA Cup quarter-final at

Everton were jeopardised by injuries to Costa and Eden Hazard. Much of the pre-game attention had focused on Costa and Ibrahimovic, and it was PSG's Swedish talisman who emerged triumphant as the French champions claimed further revenge for their elimination by Chelsea in 2014. Sent off at Stamford Bridge a year ago, when PSG's 2-2 draw took them through on away goals, he belied doubts about his big-game temperament to keep the runaway Ligue 1 leaders on course for a potential quadruple.

Marco Verratti's failure to recover from a groin injury meant that Rabiot started in midfield for PSG and he almost cost his side an early goal with a loose pass that culminated in Kevin Trapp parrying from Costa. But with Angel di Maria and Lucas Moura abandoning their wings at will, PSG's attack bristled with menace and in the sixth minute stand-in Chelsea captain Branislav

Ivanovic had to slide a shot from Di Maria off the line after he had been played in by Lucas.

MOTTA CARELESS

Ten minutes later PSG tightened their grip on the tie as Di Maria played a pass behind the Chelsea defence for Ibrahimovic, whose masterful low cross was turned in by Rabiot.

Leading 3-1 on aggregate, it should have been the cue for PSG to take the sting out of the game, but instead they allowed Chelsea to level on the night with a goal that owed equally to Thiago Motta's carelessness in possession and the hosts' dazzling interplay.

After Pedro Rodriguez nipped in to rob Motta, Willian played a quick one-two with the Spaniard before feeding Costa, who expertly turned Thiago Silva and drilled home left-footed.

Ibrahimovic put a header straight at Thibaut Courtois from a Lucas cross, but the hosts finished the half with the wind in their sails, Cesc Fabregas, Hazard and Costa all going close to levelling the tie. Costa had another sight of goal early in the second half, David Luiz blocking his shot from Willian's cut-back, but the Spain international, who had been a constant menace, had to go off on the hour after appearing to hurt his calf, with Bertrand Traore replacing him. Guus Hiddink's side came close to making light of Costa's departure, but Trapp produced a sharp double-save to thwart Willian and then Hazard, and within two minutes the tie was over.

Motta's astute pass to the left found Di Maria in acres of space and his fine cross was volleyed in emphatically by Ibrahimovic. Chelsea's mood darkened yet further with 14 minutes remaining when Hazard limped off, but the hosts' fire had already burnt itself out. — AFP

AUSTRALIA POWER TO SERIES VICTORY

CAPE TOWN: Australia gained a confidence boost ahead of the World Twenty20 with an impressive run chase to defeat South Africa by six wickets in the third and final Twenty20 international at Newlands yesterday.

Needing to achieve the highest successful chase at Newlands after Hashim Amla's 97 not out inspired South Africa to 178 for four, Australia achieved victory with four balls to spare, clinching the three-match series 2-1. Usman Khawaja (33) and Shane Watson (42) gave Australia a strong start, putting on 76 for the first wicket in 8.2 overs.

Both fell to leg-spinner Imran Tahir in the space of three balls, but captain Steve Smith and David Warner made virtually sure of victory with a third-wicket stand of 79.

Smith made 44 and Warner hit 33. Warner was run out and Smith was caught behind, but Glenn Maxwell made 19 not out off ten balls before Mitchell Marsh hit the only ball he faced for four to finish the match. It was the last match for both teams before they leave for the World Twenty20 in India on Thursday.

Amla hit eight fours and four sixes in a 62-ball innings as South Africa posted a challenging total. It was the highest score by a South African in a Twenty20 international against Australia and the highest individual score at Newlands.

Amla and Quinton de Kock got South Africa off to a fast start, putting on 47 for the first wicket before De Kock was caught at third man off Nathan Coulter-Nile for 25 off 13 balls.

The six-over power play yielded 68 runs but the scoring rate slowed when the fielding restrictions were lifted, with leg-spinner Adam Zampa conceding only 23 runs in a four-over spell.

Zampa should have had the wicket of Rilee Rossouw, with Maxwell putting down a straightforward catch on the midwicket boundary when the batsman had made three of his eventual 16 runs.

South Africa chose to bat first on a ground where the average total for teams batting first in floodlit games was 154. Amla, making his first appearance in the series, replaced AB de Villiers in one of three changes in the South African team.

Left-arm spinner Aaron Phangiso was not included in the South African team despite having his bowling action cleared in an independent test, after failing a similar test ten days earlier. Coach Russell Domingo said Phangiso needed more time to work on and gain confidence with the adjustments he had needed to make. — AFP



CAPE TOWN: Australian batsman Shane Watson mishits a high ball during the third and final T20 cricket match between South Africa and Australia at the Newlands Stadium in Cape Town yesterday. — AFP

BENFICA STUN ZENIT TO REACH CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUARTERS

SAINT PETERSBURG: Nicolas Gaitan and Talisca scored late goals as Benfica came from behind to beat Zenit Saint Petersburg 2-1 in Russia yesterday and march on to the Champions League quarter-finals 3-1 on aggregate.

Trailing 1-0 from last month's first leg, Zenit levelled the tie when Hulk opened the scoring on the night in the 69th minute and extra time was looming when Gaitan stunned the Petrovsky Stadium by netting at the other end five minutes from the end.

Substitute Talisca wrapped up the victory with the last kick of the game as the Portuguese league leaders progressed to the last eight of the Champions League for the first time since 2012, when they also eliminated Zenit at this stage.

Benfica travelled to Russia with the edge in the tie thanks to a solitary late strike by Jonas in the first leg last month but Zenit will rue a host of missed chances in the second half at the Petrovsky Stadium as their dream of reaching the Champions League last eight for the first time died in the chill of Saint Petersburg.

Zenit's Portuguese coach Andre Villas-Boas, who will leave the club at the end of the season, has hurt Benfica in the past when in charge of Porto and he would have been confident of turning this tie around against a diminished visiting side.

The Portuguese league leaders were without a host of key players due to injury and suspension, including towering centre-back Luisao, Jardel, Lisandro Lopez, Andre Almeida and goalkeeper Julio Cesar. Artem Dzyuba, scorer of six goals in the group stage, fired just wide

for Zenit early on, but Renato Sanches came close at the other end in a fairly even first period.

Zenit needed a goal from somewhere but they became a much greater threat following the introductions of Igor Smolnikov and Oleg Shatov just before the hour mark.

Smolnikov should have scored from a Hulk cross moments after coming off the bench, but Ederson made a crucial save low down. Dzyuba then should have netted after being set up by Shatov, but Benfica's resistance was broken as Zenit got the breakthrough on the night just past the midway point in the second half. One-time Chelsea full-back Yuri Zhirkov crashed into Nelson Semedo on the left flank, leaving the Benfica player on the ground. The Hungarian referee let play go on as Zhirkov advanced into the area before lifting the ball into the six-yard box for Brazil star Hulk to head home.

That left the prospect of extra time, although Yuri Lodygin produced a superb save to keep out a header by Benfica's Swedish defender Victor Lindelof while Ederson stood up well to deny Dzyuba after the striker had powered into the box.

Zenit looked the more likely side but Benfica got a decisive away goal from nowhere in the 85th minute. Substitute Raul Jimenez crashed a shot off the woodwork from distance and, with Lodygin taken out of the game, Gaitan followed in to score.

Talisca made it 2-1 on the night in the sixth minute of stoppage time as Rui Vitoria's side secured their place in next week's draw for the quarter-finals. — AFP



ABU DHABI AIR EXPO 2016 GETS OFF TO A FLYING START



GULF BANK CONCLUDES ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

‘GULF BANK IS WELL PLACED TO CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AND INNOVATE’

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank yesterday held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the Movenpick Hotel, Kuwait, where shareholders approved the company's audited financial results for the year ended 31 December 2015 and endorsed the recommendation of Gulf Bank's Board of Directors for a cash dividend of 4 fils per share.

For the year ended 31 December 2015, Gulf Bank's operating profit before provisions reached KD 108 million and net profit grew 10% compared to the prior year to KD 39 million. The Bank's balance sheet continued its trend of steady growth, with gross customer loans increasing 3% to KD 3,926 million, assets up 2% to KD 5,438 million, deposits up 5% to KD 4,563 million, and equity growing 5% to KD 538 million compared to 2014. The Bank's total capital adequacy ratio remained steady at 15.6%, which is well above the minimum requirement of 12.5%. The Tier 1 capital ratio stands at 14.4%, which is also above the minimum requirement of 10.5%, and comprises 92% of the Bank's total capital.

Loan quality remains strong, reflecting the Bank's prudent risk appetite. Non-performing loans (NPLs) declined from 3.3% at the end of 2014 to 2.7% at the end of 2015, and coverage (collaterals and provisions) on NPLs improved to 348%. Of the Bank's total loan loss reserves of KD 293 million, KD 178 million or 61% are general provisions.

Commenting on the 2015 results, Mr Omar Kutayba Alghanim, Gulf Bank's Chairman said: "As we celebrate the 55th anniversary of the founding of Gulf Bank, it gives me great pleasure to report to you on the Bank's performance and progress. We have transformed the Bank quite dramatically since 2012. Today we have a much stronger Consumer Banking franchise, a more diversified Wholesale Banking business, reduced our concentration on the real estate and non-bank financial sectors, reduced non-performing loans, and increased our loan loss coverage. Overall, this has resulted in a much stronger capital base with a higher level and quality of earnings."

"This progress has been recognized by credit rating agencies. Prior to 2015, Gulf Bank was rated A+ by Fitch Ratings. In June 2015, the Bank received a rating upgrade from Standard & Poor's to "A-" from "BBB+."



Omar Kutayba Alghanim

Then, in November, the Bank received a rating upgrade from Moody's to "A3" from "Baa1". Thus, Gulf Bank ended 2015 with three "A" ratings from the three leading international credit rating agencies. These ratings reflect the restructuring of our portfolio, lower risk appetite, resilient core profitability, and adequacy of its capital buffers. The agencies affirmed the Bank's asset quality, capitalization, revenue-generating capacity, and sound risk management systems and practices. To achieve these ratings in a time of global turmoil, is a testament to the growth and transformation we have completed.

"Our 2015 customer satisfaction survey results showed a marked improvement in service across all customer touch-points, and a decline in complaints. This shows that our brand health has improved significantly, as demonstrated by an increased Net Promoter Score (NPS), especially among priority clients. Based on customer feedback, we have made a significant investment in a new state-of-the-art mobile banking app and online banking platform, both of which will be launched in 2016."

"Consumer Banking continued its strong performance in 2015 with double digit growth in interest income and compounded annual growth in loans of

14% since 2012. Following the review and re-launch of two of our core customer propositions in early 2015, we saw 12% growth in our Kuwaiti Salary new accounts, and 52% growth in the Red (student) accounts. We also launched our new Gulf Rewards loyalty program, which includes Gulf Points for the fastest free flights in Kuwait, as well as "Entertainer", Kuwait's first geo-locator mobile application offering exclusive deals in Kuwait, UAE and London.

There was net growth in Wholesale Banking, despite the purposeful decrease in high-risk sectors. Wholesale has worked hard to further improve its suite of products and services, as well as streamline its operations to deliver faster and more efficient customer service. This has resulted in strong growth in cash management and online banking revenues. Wholesale Banking's updated automated salary process system now enables corporate clients to process salaries online. Additionally, the Wholesale Bank remains actively engaged in the construction sector and the "Kuwait Development Plan," financing many of the key projects in Kuwait.

Awards

"I am pleased to report that our progress in 2015 was once again noticed by our peers and we received over 20 major awards for our work across the whole spectrum of the Bank's activities, including consumer banking, wholesale banking, products, performance, marketing and human resources. These included awards from respected international publications such as The Asian Banker; International Finance Magazine (IFM); International Banker; and Banker Middle East and reflects the hard work and effort of the bank's employees."

Focus on Human Capital and Building Talent

"In order to sustain and increase our competitive advantage, we are focused on attracting, developing, and retaining the best talent. Our most recent employee satisfaction survey showed an increase in satisfaction from 78% to 81% across all areas of the Bank. "We are very proud that 64% of our workforce is Kuwaiti and we

are committed to increasing that percentage and gender parity. Additionally, we celebrated the first graduates from our Graduate Development Program for talented Kuwaiti nationals (now known as Ajyal).

Events and Corporate Social Responsibility

"During the year, the Bank was also heavily committed to numerous community events focusing on youth, education, health and fitness, helping the underprivileged, women's empowerment, and promoting Kuwait's heritage and culture. For example, in order to raise awareness about health and fitness, the Bank sponsored the first Gulf Bank 642 Marathon, Kuwait's first and only full road race to be internationally accredited by the world's governing body for marathons, which attracted over 2,400 participants."

"During the year the Bank also continued its long term commitment to INJAZ - Kuwait, with a high level of employee volunteers, maintaining its position as lead sponsor. Gulf Bank was also a platinum sponsor of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS) conference in the USA, and a sponsor of the TMkeen Youth Empowerment Symposium, a Kuwaiti initiative delivered by youth to the youth in Kuwait, and we also sponsored the Jahazeen 2 training and development program, which was held in cooperation with Kuwait's Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP)"

"With all these achievements and international recognitions, the Bank is well placed to continue into the next phase of its expansion. Looking ahead, exciting innovations are underway, with our clients at the center of our efforts."

In conclusion, Mr Alghanim said: "I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to our Board of Directors and our Shareholders for their commitment and loyalty. I would also like to thank our valued customers for their continued trust in our products and services. All of this progress would not have been possible without the work of our dedicated staff; I thank them for their services and for being part of the Gulf Bank family."



EGYPT LIFTS FOREX CURBS ON IMPORTERS OF ESSENTIAL GOODS

CAIRO: Egypt's central bank yesterday removed caps on foreign exchange deposits and withdrawals for companies importing essential goods...

Its forex reserves tumbled from \$36 billion before the revolt to \$16.5 billion in February. To preserve scarce dollars for essential imports such as medicine and basic foods...

Yesterday's move comes less than 24 hours after the central bank scrapped restrictions on forex deposits and withdrawals for individuals and weeks after it eased restrictions for large exporters...

Rate sweetener

In an apparent effort to stop customers withdrawing all their dollars, Egypt's main state-owned banks quickly announced they would boost yields on dollar-denominated certificates of deposit (CDs)...

Bankque du Caire Chairman Mounir El Zahid

said he would follow suit. Al Mal newspaper quoted the Banque Misr chairman saying it too would raise rates...

"This could also mean interest rates will rise big time on the Egyptian pound in order not to make the dollar more attractive. People are expecting around a 1 percent hike next week."

It kept rates on hold at the last meeting after raising them 50 basis points in December after a US rate hike put additional pressure on the currency...

The central bank has so far resisted a devaluation, holding the pound at 7.7301 to the dollar though the black market rate has weakened from 8.8 to the dollar a month ago to 9.8 now...

"The initial (reactions) to the bank's decisions started to show in the early hours of its implementation today, as the currency market appeared calm after the (people) realized they can withdraw and deposit at any time," it quoted him as saying.

Economists have long urged Egypt to devalue its currency, with some advocating it abandon its dollar peg, either for a basket of trading currencies or for a managed floating regime...



CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi (left) addresses the parliament. — AP

UAE BANKS WORK OUT PLAN TO HELP STRUGGLING SMES

DUBAI: Banks in the United Arab Emirates have agreed a plan to help small-and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) struggling with debt, including suspending payments and restructuring loans...

Under the proposal outlined yesterday by the UAE Banks Federation, companies owing debt to more than one bank and finding it tricky to repay will be able to restructure future payments...

"This again reflects banks' commitment to apply a coordinated approach, to alleviate SME funding difficulties and continue banks' support to the SME sector being vital to the national economy..."

Some struggling business people opted to depart the country, leaving behind unpaid debts. A senior banking official in November estimated the amount owed by those fleeing reached around 5 billion dirhams (\$1.4 billion) last year. — Reuters



ABU DHABI: Saudi Arabia's Prince Sultan bin Salman stands for pictures with a group of young Arab students at the Global Aerospace Summit. — AP

SAUDI JOB CREATION DRIES UP AS OIL PRICES SLUMP RISE IN EMPLOYMENT AT SLOWEST IN YEARS

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's plans for economic reform foresee winding down 'jobs for life' in an inefficient state bureaucracy and replacing them with new careers in a dynamic private sector...

A tough market awaits first-time job seekers in the world's largest oil exporter, where "employment week" fairs are currently helping to pitch some 400,000 graduates to prospective employers...

Saudi net employment rose by only 49,000 in 2015, its slowest annual increase since records began in 1999. That is far short of the 226,000 jobs that the economy must create each year to accommodate new entrants to the labor market...

The number of working-age Saudis outside the labor force also rose by 85,000, most of them young people, said the Jadwa report. That was nearly double the number entering the labor force, representing the first drop in the participation rate since 2009...

Signs of strain

In a country where nationals generally count on steady government paychecks to support them, Saudi citizens have so far been largely sheltered from the effects of prolonged low oil prices...

But as the economy has slowed and the government has begun tightening its purse strings, signs of strain in the labor market have started to show. The government hired 10,000 fewer Saudis in 2015 than it did the year before...

Meanwhile, the number of Saudis employed in the private sector in 2015 fell for the first time since the Nitaqat labor market reforms began in 2011, introducing targeted hiring quotas for private companies to make their staffs more Saudi...

A challenging year

Hiring prospects are likely to shrink even further in 2016, as proposed government spending cuts totaling some 135 billion riyals (\$36.01 billion) take their toll. The government's 2016 budget included explicit pledges to rein in state spending on "recurring expenditures" like salaries and benefits...

Economic growth is widely expected to slow, with the IMF projecting GDP growth of 1.2 per-

cent, only slightly lower than the central bank's own expectations of around 2 percent. Professionals surveyed by online job portal Bayt.com expressed diminished expectations: 65 percent expected their companies to hire new employees in a year's time, down from 78 percent last August...

Some economists, including al-Sheikh, expect to see increased pressure from the Ministry of Labor for "job substitution," in which companies are compelled to swap out cheaper foreign workers for Saudis...

EGYPT TO OFFER INCENTIVES FOR LOW-COST AIRLINES, SAYS MINISTER

BERLIN: Egypt plans to announce incentives for low-cost airlines such as easyJet and Germany's Air Berlin and Condor to help combat a slide in tourist arrivals, its tourism minister said in an interview...

Visitors to Egypt's beaches and ancient sites bring in business which accounts for 11.5 percent of the country's economy. However, the sector has suffered since a 2011 uprising that triggered years of political turmoil...

The government has been offering tour operators an incentive of \$30 per seat on aircraft on which between 60 and 90 percent of seats have been filled. Zaazou said it was not yet clear whether the new program for commercial airlines would pay a certain amount per seat on planes or whether it could offer alternate incentives such as lower handling

fees at airports. "I will announce that (program) very soon, maybe towards the end of the ITB when I meet with everybody and listen to everybody," he said in the interview...

The number of tourists coming to Egypt fell around 6 percent to 9.3 million in 2015 from a year earlier due to a drop following the plane crash in October, while receipts slid to \$6.1 billion from \$7.2 billion, he said...

Zaazou said arrivals in the first couple of months of 2016 were down 30 to 40 percent compared with a year earlier and said he did not expect to see a significant improvement before the second half of the year...

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Table of Asian exchange rates including Japanese Yen, Indian Rupees, Pakistani Rupees, Sri Lankan Rupees, Nepali Rupees, Singapore Dollar, Hongkong Dollar, Bangladesh Taka, Philippine Peso, Thai Baht.

GCC COUNTRIES

Table of GCC exchange rates including Saudi Riyal, Qatari Riyal, Omani Riyal, Bahraini Dinar, UAE Dirham.

ARAB COUNTRIES

Table of Arab exchange rates including Egyptian Pound - Cash, Egyptian Pound - Transfer, Yemen Riyal/for 1000, Tunisian Dinar, Jordanian Dinar, Lebanese Lira/for 1000, Syrian Lira, Morocco Dirham.

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

Table of European and American exchange rates including US Dollar Transfer, Euro, Sterling Pound, Canadian dollar, Turkish lira, Swiss Franc, Australian Dollar, US Dollar Buying.

Table for GOLD exchange rates: 20 Gram (253.750), 10 Gram (129.800), 5 Gram (65.740).

UAE EXCHANGE CENTRE WLL

CURRENCIES

Table of various currencies including Australian Dollar, Canadian Dollar, Swiss Franc, Euro, US Dollar, Sterling Pound, Japanese Yen, Bangladesh Taka, Indian Rupee, Sri Lankan Rupee, Nepali Rupee, Pakistani Rupee, UAE Dirhams, Bahraini Dinar, Egyptian Pound, Jordanian Dinar, Omani Riyal, Qatari Riyal, Saudi Riyal.

TELEX TRANSFER PER 1000

Table of telex transfer rates for various currencies.

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer

Table of rates for transfer for US Dollar, Canadian Dollar, Sterling Pound, Euro, Swiss Frank, Bahrain Dinar, UAE Dirhams, Qatari Riyals.

Selling Rate

Table of selling rates for US Dollar, Canadian Dollar, Sterling Pound, Euro, Swiss Frank, Bahrain Dinar, UAE Dirhams, Qatari Riyals.

Table of Saudi Riyals, Jordanian Dinar, Egyptian Pound, Sri Lankan Rupees, Indian Rupees, Pakistani Rupees, Bangladesh Taka, Philippines Peso, Cyprus pound, Japanese Yen, Syrian Pound, Nepalese Rupees, Malaysian Ringgit, Chinese Yuan Renminbi, Thai Bhat, Turkish Lira.

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

Table for BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY with columns for CURRENCY, BUY, and SELL rates.

Table for AUSTRALASIA with columns for CURRENCY, BUY, and SELL rates.

Asia

Table of Asia exchange rates including Bangladesh Taka, Chinese Yuan, Hong Kong Dollar, Indian Rupee, Indonesian Rupiah, Japanese Yen, Kenyan Shilling, Korean Won, Malaysian Ringgit, Nepalese Rupee, Pakistan Rupee, Philippine Peso, Sierra Leone, Singapore Dollar, South African Rand, Sri Lankan Rupee, Taiwan, Thai Baht.

Arab

Table of Arab exchange rates including Bahraini Dinar, Egyptian Pound, Iranian Riyal, Iraqi Dinar, Jordanian Dinar, Kuwaiti Dinar, Lebanese Pound, Moroccan Dirhams, Nigerian Naira, Omani Riyal, Qatari Riyal, Saudi Riyal, Syrian Pound, Tunisian Dinar, Turkish Lira, UAE Dirhams, Yemeni Riyal.

GERMAN POWER GIANT WARNS OF 'TOUGH' TIMES AFTER HUGE LOSS

FRANKFURT: German power giant E.ON yesterday said it booked a 7.0-billion-euro (\$7.7-billion) net loss in 2015 and warned that "the course ahead will be tougher and longer than anticipated." E.ON said in a statement that "impairment charges of 8.8 billion Euros... primarily on generation assets resulted in a substantial net loss of 7.0 billion Euros" last year.

At an underlying level, however, operating profit was "in line with expectations," E.ON insisted. "We posted solid operating results in a very difficult market environment," said chief executive

Johannes Teysen. "Our numbers reflect the far-reaching structural transformation that our industry is experiencing and that continues unabated in the current year."

Operating profit, as measured by earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA), declined by 10 percent to 7.6 billion Euros, last year. And "underlying net income", adjusted for one-off factors, was steady at 1.6 billion Euros, E.ON said. The company said it had succeeded in reducing its net debt "significantly to 27.7 billion Euros." And management would propose

a dividend payout of 0.50 Euros per share for 2015. German power utilities have complained that the country's transition from conventional carbon fuels to greener, cleaner sources of energy is squeezing their margins.

The cost of having to close down their nuclear power plants and the heavy subsidies afforded to renewable energy have pushed them deeply into the red, the companies argue. As a result, Germany's two biggest players, E.ON and close rival RWE have had to make huge writedowns on their conven-

tional coal-fired power plants. And they have both decided to split their conventional power operations from their renewable energy divisions.

In E.ON's case, the conventional business is being spun off into a unit called Uniper. CEO Teysen insisted this was "the right response to this transformation. But the course ahead will be tougher and longer than anticipated." And he warned that as a result of its planned spin-off, it expects the outlook for 2016 "to be significantly lower" than previously predicted.

"The difficult market environment will cause, in particular, free cash flow to be below earlier assumptions; future investments and dividends will have to reflect this," E.ON said. "It's right for us to divide our operations into two companies, which will enable them to develop their respective businesses in line with their own strategy," Teysen said. "Precisely because we're facing huge challenges, we need to take decisive action. Our new setup will give our shareholders more options and E.ON and Uniper's management more leeway." — AFP

CATHAY PACIFIC PROFIT SOARS THANKS TO DIVE IN OIL PRICES

HONG KONG: Hong Kong flag carrier Cathay Pacific said net profit almost doubled last year as tumbling oil prices slashed fuel costs and boosted passenger numbers, although global demand dented the cargo unit. With fuel accounting for a huge chunk of most airlines' outlay, the slump in crude since mid-2014 has provided a much-needed boost to their bottom lines.

Cathay reported a net profit of HK\$6 billion (\$773 million) in 2015, up 90 percent from HK\$3.15 billion the year before and beating an average forecast of HK\$5.32 billion in a Bloomberg survey. "The group's performance in 2015 was better... the business benefited from low fuel prices," chairman John Slosar said in a statement filed to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. He added there was a "significant reduction in fuel surcharges."

Cathay said it and subsidiary Dragonair had seen their fuel costs sink 37.8 percent, although that was partly offset by huge losses in its hedging exposure — when an airline locks in prices at a pre-determined level for a certain amount of time. "Fuel hedging losses reduced the benefit of lower fuel costs," Slosar said. The lower surcharges helped boost passenger numbers 7.9 percent, driven by strong economy class demand, the company said.

"Overall passenger demand remains strong and we expect to continue to benefit from low fuel prices," Cathay Chairman John Slosar said in the statement. "We are confident of longer-term success... overall passenger demand remains strong and we expect to continue to benefit from low fuel prices," he said.

Trouble for cargo

But he added competition from other airlines in the region and foreign currency fluctuations could put pressure on yield, the amount of cash earned from carrying passengers each kilometer. Shares in the firm were up 3.89 percent at HK\$13.90 in afternoon Hong Kong trade. Aviation analyst Robert Poon of Aspire Aviation told AFP: "The end of fuel surcharges, translating to more affordable fares, has attracted more passengers."

In a bid to take advantage of the continuing rise in demand for air travel in Asia-Pacific, Cathay said it will be adding a dozen new Airbus A350-900 aircraft, which boasts new cabins, seats and entertainment systems, to its fleet in 2016. However, while the passenger side enjoyed a healthy year, Cathay's cargo services suffered a nine percent fall as the sector faced "many challenges" in the face of a slowdown in the global economy, with European business particularly hit.

This in turn dragged on overall revenues, which were down 3.4 percent at HK\$102.3 billion. "Demand was strong in the first quarter of 2015... overall demand was weak for the rest of the year, particularly on European routes," Slosar said. Financial analyst Jackson Wong, associate director of Simsen Financial group, told AFP it is "hard to predict" when cargo services can bottom out with a slowdown in China, the world's number two economy and crucial driver of global trade and growth. China on Tuesday unveiled data showing exports plunged more than 25 percent last month, the sharpest fall since May 2009 at the height of the financial crisis, while imports tumbled nearly 14 percent. — AFP



PARIS: Striking rail workers demonstrate to call for better work conditions in front of the headquarters of the RATP (state-owned public transport operator responsible for most of the public transport in Paris). — AFP

MASS PROTESTS IN FRANCE AS LABOR REFORM ANGER GROWS

UNPOPULAR PROPOSALS DIVIDING SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT

PARIS: High school pupils and workers protested across France yesterday against deeply unpopular labor reforms that have divided the Socialist government and raised hackles in a country accustomed to iron-clad job security.

Teenagers and students were expected to be among the most vocal demonstrators against reforms they fear will render their future even more unstable, and gathered from early morning despite pouring rain in many cities. Pupils blocked entry to several schools in Paris at the start of the day of protests that was compounded by a rail strike over a wage dispute that left many commuters stranded for hours.

France's government has faced massive backlash including from within its ranks-to measures that would give bosses more flexibility in hiring and firing. The reforms aim to bring down a record 10.2-percent unemployment rate, which is more than double that for young people. The proposed new law also cuts overtime pay for work beyond 35 hours-the working week famously introduced in the 1990s in an earlier Socialist bid to boost employment. In some sectors, young apprentices could work 40 hours a week. William Martinet, president of the Unef student union, said the proposals "betrayed the youth."

'Provide flexibility'

An online petition against the El Khomri draft law, named after Labour Minister Myriam El

Khomri, has attracted more than a million signatures, while a poll showed seven in 10 people were opposed to the planned changes. President Francois Hollande, who campaigned on a promise to improve the prospects of young people, said on the eve of the protests that he wanted to help them "have more job stability." "We must also give companies the opportunity to recruit more, to give job security to young people throughout their lives, and to provide flexibility for companies."

Prime Minister Manuel Valls on Monday kicked off three days of talks with unions in a bid to salvage the law, after the chorus of opposition derailed a plan to submit the proposals to the cabinet this week. The turmoil created by the proposals has struck yet another blow to Hollande and Valls, who have come under attack from leading members of the Socialist party for being too pro-business and shifting to the right. Whether over economic reforms or plans to strip convicted terrorists of their nationality, the government has faced howls of protest from the left flank of the party at almost every turn.

'Don't be afraid of change'

Those backing the reforms believe they are essential to reviving a stagnant economy, creating jobs and remaining competitive, and El Khomri has argued that a lot of the opposition to her law is the result of misinformation and false rumours. Outspoken Economy Minister

Emmanuel Macron told France radio on Tuesday that unemployment had not dropped below seven percent in 30 years. "Have we tried everything? Let us look outside France. What has happened elsewhere? They have all evolved, they have all done things," he said. Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, whose country has adopted similar reforms-as has Spain and Britain-said Tuesday after talks in Venice with Hollande that the French "should not be afraid of change."

Referring to a "Jobs Act" passed in Italy in December 2014, Renzi said: "In Italy, things worked. More than 760,000 jobs were created." "Since then, couples have finally been able to buy houses, have children and so on."

Le Parisien newspaper said in an editorial Tuesday that France's labour code was "not adapted to our era." "Denying the need to reform is to deny that the world around us is moving, that our social system is on its last legs and unemployment is not budging," it said.

French employers are reluctant to take on permanent workers because of obstacles which prevent them laying them off in lean times. Young people leaving university find themselves working temporary contracts for years at a time or doing internship after internship while hoping to secure a job. Along with tweaks to working hours, the reforms identify precise conditions such as falling orders or sales, or operating losses, as sufficient cause for shedding staff. — AFP



HONG KONG: In this Jan 28, 2016, file photo, flight attendants pose next to a model jet decorated in the new livery of Hong Kong airline Cathay Dragon, formerly known as Dragonair. — AP

IKEA FOUNDER A FRUGAL FAN OF FLEA MARKETS

STOCKHOLM: Frugal billionaire Ingvar Kamprad, founder of the flatpack furniture chain Ikea, buys his clothes at flea markets to save money, he said in a documentary to be broadcast yesterday on Swedish television. Kamprad, who turns 90 on March 30, has a reputation for penny-pinching, which he claims helped Ikea to become one of the world's top brand names.

"I don't think I'm wearing anything that wasn't bought at a flea market. It means that I want to set a good example," he told Swedish channel TV4, according to business daily Dagens Industri which viewed the documentary. "It's in the nature of Smaland to be thrifty," he said, referring to Sweden's southern agricultural region where he comes from.

Kamprad is estimated to have an accumulated fortune of about 610 billion kroner (about 65.5 billion Euros), according to recent Swedish media reports. But

it is difficult to separate what belongs to him, what belongs to his children and what is held in a family foundation in one of Europe's most infamous tax havens, Liechtenstein.

In 2006, the American business magazine Forbes listed him as the fourth richest person in the world. Kamprad's modest spending habits have made headlines over the years. In 2008, he told newspaper Sydsvenskan that a 22-euro bill in the Netherlands had broken his bartering budget. "Normally, I try to get my haircut when I'm in a developing country. Last time it was in Vietnam," Kamprad explained.

In 1973, he fled Sweden's higher tax structure for Denmark, before seeking even lower taxes in Switzerland. From 2010 onward, Kamprad progressively retired from the family company to make way for his three sons, finally returning to live in Sweden in 2014. — AFP

ZARA PROFITS SOAR ON HIGH SALES, EXPANSION

ARTEIXO: Spanish global clothing giant Inditex, owner of the Zara brand, reported yesterday a sharp jump in profits in 2015 due to higher sales and its international expansion efforts. The group said in a statement that net profit rose by 15 percent to 2.88 billion Euros (\$3.2 billion) for the full year period until the end of January.

The result was slightly better than expected by analysts polled by financial services firm Factset who had forecast an average net profit of 2.85 billion Euros. Sales rose by more than 15 percent to 20.9 billion Euros, boosted by growth in all the regions in which the group is present, it said.

Inditex, which competes with Sweden's H&M as the world's top ready-to-wear clothing retailer, continued its expansion, opening a net 330 stores in 2015. A Zara

store that opened in Honolulu in Hawaii during the last three months of the group's financial year marked its 7,000th, it said in the statement. The company said it had expanded its online presence especially in Asia, with Internet shopping sites now in 29 markets.

"The investments carried out in head offices and logistics platforms, and in upgrading the company's technology have continued to translate into significant job creation and enabled Inditex to attract talent all over the world," group chairman Pablo Isla said in the statement. Inditex created over 15,800 new jobs over the year, 4,120 of which were in Spain, as the Eurozone's fourth biggest economy slowly recovers from an economic crisis. It said the board would propose a dividend of 0.60 Euros per share. — AFP

BMW CLOCKS UP RECORD PROFIT, RAISES DIVIDEND

FRANKFURT: German top-of-the-range carmaker BMW said yesterday it clocked up record sales and profits in 2015 and would celebrate its centenary this year by increasing its dividend payout to shareholders.

"The BMW group achieved its sixth record-breaking year in succession in 2015, posting new highs to date for sales volumes, revenues and profit, despite a volatile market environment," the carmaker said in a statement. Net profit rose by 10 percent to 6.4 billion Euros (\$7.0 billion) in 2015 and, to mark the group's centenary, BMW planned to pay an increased dividend of 3.20 Euros per ordinary share and 3.22 euros per preferred share, the statement said.

For the previous year, shareholders had been paid dividends of 2.90 Euros and 2.92 Euros respectively. "We have met all of our ambitious targets for the financial year," said chief executive Harald Krueger, calling the results "another set of impressive figures in BMW's centenary year." BMW celebrated its 100th birthday earlier this week, throwing a lavish party in its home city of Munich.

Leading its rival Daimler-Benz in units sold, and with giant Volkswagen damaged by the emissions scandal, BMW remains in pole position at the high end of the auto industry and is seen as a symbol of German engineering prowess. In terms of the total number of vehicles, unit sales were up 6.1 percent at a new record of 2.247 million vehicles worldwide last year. Sales of BMW's own brand were up 5.2 percent at 1.9 million and sales of Mini cars sped ahead by 12 percent to 338,466. By contrast, sales of its premium Rolls-Royce brand were down 6.8 percent at 3,785 cars. Thanks to favorable exchange rates, revenues climbed by 14.6 percent to 92.2 billion Euros. Underlying or operating profit was up by 5.2 percent at 9.6 billion Euros, mainly on the back of sales volume growth.



MUNICH: German car manufacturer BMW presents the 'Vision Next 100' concept car during the 100th anniversary celebrations. — AP

'Fine performance'

"To mark the company's centenary, we are once again raising the associate bonus for our permanent staff in Germany, the highest amount paid in the German premium auto industry," said CEO Krueger. "Dividend payments to our shareholders will also exceed the two-billion-euro mark for the first time, reflecting the BMW group's fine performance in 2015," he said.

Looking ahead to the current year, the upward trend in worldwide sales by volume is forecast to continue in 2016. "We are again targeting a new sales volume record in 2016, with sales expected to be

slightly up on the previous year," said CEO Krueger, adding that "the global political and economic environment is also expected to remain volatile."

Despite BMW's optimistic outlook, investors appeared to be disappointed about the size of the dividend and the group's shares were the biggest losers on the Frankfurt stock exchange, shedding 2.2 percent to 78.25 Euros while the overall blue-chip DAX 30 index was up 0.73 percent. The dividend proposal "came in below expectations," said DZ-Bank analyst Michael Punzet. "We had also expected a bonus payment of 1.00 euro related to BMW's 100-year anniversary." — AFP

OIL PRICES ABOVE \$40, EU SHARES BOUNCE BACK

LONDON: Oil prices rose above \$40 a barrel yesterday, helping lift European stock markets back towards recent one-month peaks and taking the edge off global growth concerns for now.

weakened ahead of Thursday's keenly-anticipated European Central Bank meeting. Oil prices rallied on speculation that the world's largest exporters could agree this month to freeze production and help erode the largest global build in unwanted crude in years.

Brent crude futures rose 68 cents to \$40.33 a barrel by 1050 GMT, having touched three-month highs on Tuesday above \$41, while US crude futures were up 54 cents at \$37.03.

biggest one-day drop since November on weak Chinese data. The rebound in commodity and oil prices, which fell about 3 percent on Tuesday, supported sentiment in stock markets.

Positive territory

Blue-chip stock markets in London, Paris and Frankfurt were all firmly in positive territory, while the broader European share market rose 0.8 percent.

which we can put down to the stabilization in oil prices," said Ipek Ozkardesky, a market analyst at London Capital Group.

In Asia, Chinese shares closed more than 1 percent lower, while MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan fell 0.3 percent, down 1.4 percent from a two-month high hit on Monday.

Lingering anxiety about China following Tuesday's poor trade numbers also weighed on emerging market stocks, which slipped for a second straight day. China's February trade performance was far worse than economists had expected, with exports tumbling the most in over six years.

Yen rallies

A moderately risk-averse tone dominated currency markets, with the safe-haven yen broadly higher amid anxiety about China. The yen was 0.25 percent

firmer at 112.37 per dollar and was up 0.5 percent against the euro at 123.35. The People's Bank of China set the yuan's midpoint rate at 6.5106 per dollar prior to market open, weaker than the previous fix. The currency opened stronger at 6.5062 but has since weakened to 6.5124.

The euro meanwhile slipped 0.5 percent to around \$1.0961 ahead of the ECB's policy meeting today. Financial markets expect the ECB to cut its deposit rate by at least 10 basis points and expand its asset-buying program.

"The poor Chinese data is fuelling risk aversion, but that is slowly giving way to some positioning adjustment before the ECB meeting," said Niels Christensen, FX strategist at Nordea. "Given expectations are so high that the ECB will ease policy, there is a chance that it could fall short and we could see a bounce in the euro," he said.

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report. Wednesday 09 March 2016. Table with columns: Index, Change, Closing, Last Closing, High, Low, Volume, Value (KWD), Number of Trades. Includes sub-sections for Trades, Global Stock Indices, MENA Stock Indices, Global Currencies Exchange Rate, MENA Currencies Exchange Rate, Global Interest Rates, Global Bond Yields, and Commodities.

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report. At 02:00 PM Previous Day. Includes line graphs and tables for Global Stock Indices, MENA Stock Indices, Global Currencies Exchange Rate, MENA Currencies Exchange Rate, Global Interest Rates, Global Bond Yields, and Commodities.

ABU DHABI AIR EXPO 2016 GETS OFF TO A FLYING START

ABU DHABI: The Abu Dhabi Air Expo 2016 began Sunday in spectacular fashion with two Etihad Airways' Extra EA 330 LT Trainer aircraft conducting an aerial ribbon-cutting during an acrobatic display at Al Bateen Airport, Abu Dhabi. The Abu Dhabi Air Expo is just one event that is taking place during Abu Dhabi Aviation

Week 2016, which runs from 6 to 12 March 2016.

Other events include a two-day Global Aerospace Summit which has attracted leaders and specialists from throughout the aviation industry. It also includes exhibitions on unmanned systems and military simulations and training, and a

Middle East Aviation Careers Conference and Exhibition, which will focus on the current and future recruitment needs of the Middle East aviation industry.

James Hogan, Etihad Airways' President and Chief Executive Officer, said: "The Abu Dhabi Air Expo serves as a global focal point and platform for show-

ing the latest products and innovations within the industry, and has attracted much interest from leading aviation specialists across the Middle East and around the world."

As official airline for Abu Dhabi Aviation Week 2016, Etihad Airways is flying in visitors from across its network, with an expected 20,000 delegates attending the various high-profile conferences and exhibitions, which feature around 300 exhibitors from more than 55 countries, and 150 aircraft on static display.

Highlights of the day

A highlight of this display includes an Etihad Airways' Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft to showcase the innovative and award-winning products and services aboard its flagship aircraft, including its revolutionary First, Business and Economy Class cabins - which have been designed to greatly enhance the guest experience and bolster the airline's position as one of the world's leading airlines.

Etihad Airways is also displaying an A320 aircraft that has been re-configured to incorporate 12 lie-flat Business Class seats to cater for the requirements of the busy regional charter market. Alongside are the two new Extra EA 330 LT aircraft that took part in the opening acrobatic display, which have just joined the fleet of trainer aircraft at the Etihad Flight

College to assist cadet pilots in their training.

Visitors to the Air Expo will also be able to visit the Etihad Airways stand to experience the highly acclaimed The Residence, which is exclusively available on the airline's fleet of A380 aircraft. Comprising a living room, double bedroom, separate ensuite shower room, discerning Residence guests are provided with a dedicated Savoy Academy trained Butler to look after their every need while on board.

To support the growing numbers of young Emirati students interested in pursuing a career in the UAE's growing aviation industry, Etihad Airways also has a booth at the Middle East Aviation Careers Conference and Exhibition, which is being held for the first time as part of Abu Dhabi Aviation Week.

In line with the theme for Abu Dhabi Aviation Week, "Building the Future of Aerospace through Innovation", delegates to the various events are also able to tour the Etihad Innovation Centre to see the two highly detailed, life-size mock-ups of the cabins inside the airline's A380 and B787 aircraft, featuring the new Economy Smart Seats, Business Studios, First Suites (B787), First Apartments and The Residence. Visitors are also able to view a model of the new Midfield Terminal at Abu Dhabi International Airport.



KIPCO COMPLETES \$500M BOND ISSUE

KUWAIT: KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company - has announced that it has successfully completed the issue of a US\$ 500 million (KD 151.8 million) bond under its US\$ 3 billion Euro Medium Term Note (EMTN) Program. The issue was 2.5 times oversubscribed.

The seven year fixed rate notes are listed on the London Stock Exchange and carry a fixed rate coupon of 5%. The issue extends the maturity profile of KIPCO's debt, reduces its cost of funds and provides flexibility to execute its business strategy. This issue also builds on KIPCO's strategy of regularly raising money in the local and international debt markets to diversify its investor base.

In a volatile market backdrop, KIPCO was able to capitalize on positive investor feedback to swiftly execute an intra-day trade. The transaction serves as a leading reference point for the region, being the first corporate bond transaction in 2016 out of CEEMEA and the first from the Middle East since October 2015.

Commenting on the issue, KIPCO's Vice Chairman (Executive), Mr Faisal Al Ayyar said that the success of the transaction reflects the strong reputation that KIPCO enjoys in the global financial community and its confidence in the company's sound business model despite the

difficult economic circumstances across the world:

"Despite challenging market conditions, the demand for our bonds has been overwhelming. The 2.5 fold oversubscription reflects the confidence that the global financial community has in KIPCO's strategy and

ability to deliver on it. While KIPCO's liquidity remains strong, the proceeds from this bond issue will serve to provide the company with further financial flexibility so that we can continue to pursue our strategic plans."

The issue attracted a wide range of investors, including leading fixed income global institutions. The bond order book closed at US\$ 1.25 billion. The bonds were allocated across a wide range of quality investors. The distribution profile was very well balanced, with European investors allocated for 32% of the transaction, while Asian, UK, Middle East, and US (offshore) investors accounted for 28%, 23%, 14% and 3% respectively.

The joint lead managers on the transaction were BNP Paribas, Citi, HSBC and JP Morgan. KIPCO launched its EMTN Program in 2006. This is the sixth issue under this flexible arrangement. Since inception, KIPCO has raised over US\$ 2.5 billion in US dollars and Euros, and kept an impeccable record of payment and repayment of interest and principal.



Faisal Al Ayyar



Jabra Ghandour

BLME ANNOUNCES JABRA GHANDOUR AS NEW CEO

LONDON: BLME has yesterday announced that it has appointed Jabra Ghandour as its new Chief Executive Officer and Board Member effective March 25, 2016. Jabra has more than 30 years' experience in private, corporate and retail banking, having managed major institutions across the Gulf. He joined BLME in late 2015 and has been instrumental in refining the Bank's strategy and business plan. During the last 13 years Jabra held senior positions within the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) Group, latterly as Managing Director and Board Member of the International Bank of Qatar representing NBK.

As CEO, Jabra will be responsible for driving BLME's growing Wealth Management arm alongside its revitalized Corporate Banking offering. Jabra succeeds Michael Williams, who was appointed as interim CEO in May 2015. BLME is delighted that Michael will be resuming his role as Non-Executive Director on the Board of BLME Holdings plc and the Bank plc where his insight will be invaluable.

Jabra Ghandour, CEO of BLME, commented "I'm thrilled to be taking this role at such an important time for BLME. 2015 was a year of positive change for the bank, as it more closely aligned its objectives to ensure that it is best placed to facilitate business and investment activity between the UK and the Gulf. We will be growing

our wealth management products and services substantially in order to serve better our clients in the Gulf alongside our established and expert Corporate Banking offering to the UK mid-market.

"Underpinning everything we do is a desire to build strong relationships and be ready and able to provide innovative Sharia'a compliant solutions to a broad range of institutional, corporate and, of increasing importance, to individual high net worth clients. Our strong UK-Gulf links are a major competitive advantage and we plan to build on this further over the coming years. I look forward to continuing the good work started by Michael Williams."

Adel Al Majed, Chairman of BLME, said "Jabra Ghandour brings a wealth of experience building market-leading banks. Combined with the role he has played in developing our new strategic approach, he is ideally positioned to leverage BLME's UK expertise and existing business to create new product and investment opportunities for our Gulf investors."

"This is an exciting time for the bank, as we come to the end of our major strategic review, and I'm delighted to welcome Jabra as our new CEO. I would also like to thank Michael Williams for his excellent work overseeing our day-to-day activities, driving a period of transition and leaving us in a stronger position to deliver."

SNAPCHAT AMONG COMPANIES DUPED IN TAX-FRAUD SCAM

SAN FRANCISCO: Tax-filing season is turning into a nightmare for thousands of employees whose companies have been duped by email fraudsters. A major phishing scheme has tricked several major companies - among them, the messaging service Snapchat and disk-drive maker Seagate Technology - into relinquishing tax documents that exposed their workers' incomes, addresses and Social Security numbers.

The scam, which involved fake emails purportedly sent by top company officials, convinced the companies involved to send out W-2 tax forms that are ideal for identity theft. For instance, W-2 data can easily be used to file bogus tax returns and claim fraudulent refunds.

Embarrassing breakdowns

The embarrassing breakdowns have prompted employers to apologize and offer free credit monitoring to employees. Such measures, however, won't necessarily shield unwitting victims from the headaches that typically follow identity theft. "This mistake was caused by human error and lack of vigilance, and could have been prevented," Seagate's chief financial officer, Dave Morton, wrote in a March 4 email to the company's employees about the breach.

The swindlers behind the tax scam are exploiting human gullibility rather than weaknesses in computer or Internet security. They have targeted company payroll and personnel departments, in many instances with emails claiming to be requests from the company CEO asking for copies of worker W-2s.

The schemes are so widespread that the IRS sent a March 1 notice alerting employers' payroll departments of the spoofing emails. The agency said the scheme has so far claimed "several victims," but declined Tuesday to disclose how many other employers had reported releasing W-2s to unauthorized parties. The IRS said it's seen a 400 percent increase in phishing and computer malware incidents this tax-filing season.

The federal alert didn't come soon enough for Snapchat, which on Feb 28 revealed that its payroll department had been duped by an email impersonating its CEO, Evan Spiegel. The Los Angeles company didn't specify how many employee W-2s it released. Snapchat didn't respond to requests for comment Tuesday.

"When something like this happens, all you can do is own up to your mistake, take care of the people affected, and learn from what went wrong," Snapchat wrote in a post on its corporate blog. Seagate acknowledged surrendering the

W-2s for all of its current and former employees who worked at the company last year. The Cupertino, California, company said "several thousand" people were affected, but declined to be more precise. As of July last year, Seagate employed about 52,000 workers but all but 10,500 of them were based in Asia.

Phishing attacks

Both Snapchat and Seagate notified federal authorities about the phishing attacks and are offering affected workers two years of free credit monitoring. It's unclear how many other employers have been sucked into the tax scam. Hundreds of companies appear to have been targeted, according to Stu Sjouwerman, CEO of KnowBe4, a Florida company that trains employees to detect and avoid such scams.

Phishing attacks commonly occur during holidays and other annual events, such as tax season, to prey upon people's routines, said Farih Orhan, director of technology at security firm Comodo. The attacks are becoming increasingly effective because they rely on powers of persuasion instead of an attachment or link that might raise suspicion, said Ed Jennings, chief operating officer at email security company Mimecast. "It's just like someone who convinces you to hand over

\$20 on the street," Jennings said.

Sjouwerman said the W-2 seeking attacks are most likely are being sent by Eastern European hacker groups planning to sell the information or claim fraudulent tax refunds. The most effective phishing attacks use emails decked in company logos and colors to reduce the chances of detection. Orhan said. It's relatively easy for con artists to pose as a CEO online, since they can quickly fetch convincing details from a Google search or a perusal of professional networking service LinkedIn.

That doesn't excuse payroll or personnel departments who reflexively acquiesce to requests in apparently legitimate email, experts say. For instance, Sjouwerman said his firm's controller received a phishing email that, at first glance, appeared to be sent by him. But the email asked the controller to "kindly prepare" employees' W-2s, a phrase that he never uses. Company employees were alert enough not to send out the W-2s.

Even without a red flag like that, payroll and personnel specialists should be trained well enough to question why a CEO needs to see individual worker W-2s in the first place. "It's a case of: 'Oh, the boss wants it,'" Sjouwerman said. "They stop thinking, 'Why would this be?'" —AP



LOS ANGELES: In this Thursday, Oct 24, 2013, file photo, Snapchat CEO Evan Spiegel poses for a photo. —AP

SMALL-BUSINESS OWNERS ASK NY TO REJECT \$15 MINIMUM WAGE

ALBANY: Small-business owners struck back against New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo's plan to implement a \$15 minimum wage Tuesday, saying the Democratic governor's call to enact what would be the highest state minimum in the country would devastate an already struggling economy. Gathering at the Capitol in Albany, the business owners warned that such a steep increase would squeeze small businesses struggling in an already challenging economic climate.

"You're either going to cut back on employment or raise prices," said Art Price, owner of a Southern Tier plumbing business. Eric Ooms said his family dairy farm near the Hudson River is now employing robotic milkers, a move partially prompted by higher labor costs that could reduce his overall staff by up to three workers. He predicted other dairy farmers would also switch.

"We're competing with states like Pennsylvania and Idaho," he said, listing states with significantly lower minimum wages. He said the wage hike would be "incredibly awful for the dairy industry, but it's even worse for the vegetable farmers and the fruit farmers who can't do the automation."

The state's current minimum wage is

\$9 an hour. Cuomo, a Democrat, argues that a higher minimum would get low-wage workers off government assistance, while giving them more money to inject in local economies. To help businesses adjust, he is proposing a gradual increase to \$15 - by the end of 2018 in New York City and by July 2021 in the rest of the state - and nearly \$300 million in small business tax relief.

"We will have the highest minimum wage in the United States of America, which is a tremendous, big step toward economic justice and economic freedom," he told an audience Monday on Long Island. A vote on Cuomo's measure is expected in the coming weeks. The measure is widely supported in the Democratic-led Assembly but faces greater challenges in the GOP-run Senate. Still, Senate leaders haven't shut the door completely on a minimum wage increase, suggesting that the size of the raise, the duration of the phase-in and the size of tax cuts for businesses could be up for negotiation.

Business groups say they want to make sure any increase that's passed by the Legislature. "We do not believe this is a foregone conclusion," said Mike Durant, New York state director for the National Federation of Independent Business. —AP

RUBICON PROJECT CARVES OUT PROFITABLE NICHE IN DIGITAL ADS

SAN FRANCISCO: You may not be familiar with the Rubicon Project, but chances are its technology helped pick some of the ads you might have seen on your phone or personal computer. Rubicon serves as a matchmaker between digital publishers trying to sell ads and marketers looking for the best place to promote their products and services. The Los Angeles company, though small, has been increasing its influence in the \$170 billion digital advertising market. More than 1,500 publishers and tens of thousands of advertisers rely on Rubicon to figure out which marketing messages are best suited to the different

audiences that gravitate toward certain websites and apps. The company says it processes 7 trillion requests per month using about 60,000 different algorithms. Last year, Rubicon managed more than \$1 billion in ad spending. That's a paltry amount compared to market leaders Google and Facebook, which last year sold a combined \$87 billion in advertising. But its exchange for mobile ads ranks as the third largest behind those of Google and Twitter. The 8-year-old company recently posted its first full-year profit, helping to lift its stock back above its April 2014 initial public offering price of \$15. The shares ended recently were trading

between \$17 and \$18. Gregory Raifman, Rubicon's president, recently discussed the state of the digital ad market with The Associated Press. The interview has been edited for clarity and length. **Q:** Rubicon Project's revenue nearly doubled last year to \$248.5 million. What is driving that? **A:** We provide a comprehensive solution for buyers and sellers. Google and Facebook operate in their own walled gardens. We are the only one that operates in an open Web environment. We are now reaching well over 1 billion users. So if you are an advertiser that wants to reach an audience at scale

across mobile, desktop and video, then you have to be working with Rubicon Project. **Q:** How are you able to figure out which ads are most likely to appeal to specific audiences? **A:** The biggest brands in the world have data about what their consumers want. Publishers have other data on why users come to their site. Our job is to match the data of the buyer with the data of the seller in a way that creates the best environment at the best price. **Q:** We are seeing more ways to block digital ads from appearing on screens. How does that affect Rubicon? **A:** From our perspective, ad blocking

is an opportunity. Good advertising follows good content. If you are working with really good content providers, you are typically going to find better and better advertising. Consumers will typically react well to quality advertising. They will react poorly to low-end advertising. **Q:** Any thoughts on where the industry is heading? **A:** There are not that many that can say their industry is growing as quickly as ours. We feel like Rubicon Project is playing a central role. I often joke that this industry changes so rapidly that in three years you could build a whole new company out of your existing company. —AP



EMC RANKED 6TH IN TOP 10 COMPANIES TO WORK FOR IN THE UAE BY GPTW

DUBAI: EMC yesterday announced that the Great Place to Work Institute (GPTW) has recognized EMC among the Top 10 Best Companies to work for in the UAE. Announced at an awards ceremony on 8th March at Jumeirah Zabeel Saray, the official list is a ranking of the nation's 20 best employers based on the confidential feedback of employees and an audit of management practices. A regular on the GPTW ranking since 2012, EMC reports a significantly improved position at number 6 and bagged the top spot among ICT companies in the UAE. GPTW recognized EMC for its success in creating a collaborative, high performance work environment that is built on trust and offers employees on going professional and career development opportunities. EMC earned significant points for placing the health and happiness of their employees at the strategic center of the business; and empowering HR leaders with innovative tools and resources. The company boasts a work environment and culture that is designed to attract and retain high performing candidates. The company was applauded for their

'people first' practices such as the onsite talent acquisition teams that work with business leaders to identify potential candidates and innovative leave policies that entitle employees to paternity leave, marriage leave and compassionate leave in addition to the employee's annual leave entitlement as stipulated by labor law. EMC was also recognized for their industry leading approach to training and development through the EMC Individual Development Program (IDP), which helps employees chart out and achieve their long term career goals through a series of specific learning and development programs. To select the 'Top Companies to Work for in the UAE', Great Place to Work conducts an evaluation of each participating company. Two-thirds of the company's score is based on the results of the Institute's proprietary Trust Index(c) survey, which is sent to the employees from each company. EMC's ranking is a result of the organizations consistent efforts to maintain a fair balance between employee engagement and learning, effective leadership and customer satisfaction to create a truly, high performance environment.

MACHINE BEATS TOP GO PLAYER IN WIN FOR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

SEOUL: Google's AlphaGo computer program yesterday won the first of five matches against one of the world's top players of a complex board game, Go, marking a dramatic advance for the field of artificial intelligence (AI). South Korean professional player Lee Sedol, the holder of 18 international titles, conceded defeat in a match broadcast live, with one YouTube stream drawing tens of thousands of spectators worldwide, while domestic television gave frequent updates. "We landed on the moon," Demis Hassabis, chief executive and co-founder of Google subsidiary DeepMind, which built AlphaGo, said in a tweet after the victory. "So proud of the team!" AlphaGo had made history in October, by becoming the first computer program ever to beat a human professional player at the ancient Asian game, which many experts consider to be the most fiendishly complicated of its kind. But 33-year-old Lee, a much more challenging opponent, was considered a bigger hurdle for a machine to vanquish. Lee expressed surprise at his loss. "I didn't think AlphaGo would play the game in such a perfect manner," he told reporters after the match. "I would like to express my respect to the programmers for making such an amazing program."

Experts did not expect an artificial intelligence programme to beat a human professional for at least a decade, until AlphaGo's victory last year over player Fan Hui. "Today's win is symbolic, but nevertheless a very important step," said Jang Woo-seok, a research fellow at the Hyundai Research Institute. "What AlphaGo is doing is essentially cutting down the number of potential moves to consider." Google executives say Go offers too many possible moves for a machine to win simply through brute-force calculations, unlike chess, in which IBM's Deep Blue famously beat former world champion Garry Kasparov in 1997. Instead, they said, AlphaGo has sought to approximate human intuition, by studying old matches and using simulated games to hone itself independently. In recent years, scientists have

made strides in getting computers to think and learn in ways approaching those of people, so that artificial intelligence can one day assist in advanced fields, such as healthcare and scientific research. "The ultimate aim is to use these general-purpose technologies and apply them to all sorts of important real world problems," Hassabis said ahead of the match. —Reuters



SEOUL: South Korean professional Go player Lee Sedol, right, prepares for his second stone against Google's artificial intelligence program, AlphaGo, as Google DeepMind's lead programmer Aja Huang, left, sits during the Google DeepMind Challenge Match in Seoul, South Korea, yesterday. Google's computer program AlphaGo defeated its human opponent, South Korean Go champion Lee Sedol, yesterday in the first game of a historic five-game match between human and computer. —AP

KASPERSKY LAB LAUNCHES SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICES TRANSFORMING EXPERTISE INTO PROTECTION

DUBAI: Kaspersky Lab expands its enterprise portfolio with the launch of Security Intelligence Services - a diverse set of services aimed at faster sharing of leading security expertise and transforming knowledge into protection for its clients. Aimed primarily at Security Operation Centers, personnel of large businesses and Service Providers, Security Intelligence Services include threat data feeds and intelligence reporting, security awareness programs and training for professionals, specialist services such as penetration testing, and application security assessment. "We are observing a major shift towards an adaptive security strategy, especially among large businesses. Enterprises understand that, on top of their ongoing threat prevention and compliance challenges they need tools and intelligence to identify complex and targeted threats and to reduce the potential damage. At Kaspersky Lab we believe that sharing our leading security intelligence in the actionable, comprehensive form of security services and next-generation solutions is the right path to better security. Introducing Security Intelligence Services that address major, time-critical enterprise security threats is the first milestone of our new business strategy, aimed at accelerating the transformation of security expertise into real protection for our customers," commented Veniamin Levtsov, Kaspersky Lab's Vice President, Enterprise and Presales. Kaspersky Lab's Security Intelligence Services are designed to meet the most frequent demands of large organizations, governmental agencies, ISPs, Telecoms and Managed Security Service Providers, and comprise of three major branches. They include security assessment, training and threat intelligence. Security Assessment: the specifics of the next cyber-attack before it happens Security Assessment services is a brand new security offering from Kaspersky Lab that includes Penetration Testing and Application Security Assessment. Allowing corporate clients to predict the specifics of a cyber attack before it happens, Kaspersky Lab speeds up trans-

formation of intelligence into real protection. Kaspersky Lab's dedicated team of security experts is assigned to support this service offer, and can test a company's protection against the wide variety of attack methods. Cyber security Training: Awareness and Expert Courses in Information Security. The important part of the Security Intelligence Services offering is the Cyber security Training. Employing the best gamification techniques and based on the latest intelligence in social engineering and targeted attacks, Cyber security Awareness program for the businesses workforce epitomizes the experiential learning, and has already produced excellent results during test runs. Kaspersky Lab also shares its vast security expertise with fellow IT Security professionals. A major part of the Cyber security Training offering is Cyber security Fundamentals, Digital Forensics and Malware Analysis/Reverse Engineering training. Aimed at speeding up response to cyber attacks, this training suits Enterprises and MSSPs as well as governmental and law enforcement agencies. One of the notable examples of successful intelligence sharing is Kaspersky Lab's cooperation with City of London Police and Interpol. The training provides IT Security professionals with the necessary skills and knowledge to identify and mitigate cyber attacks. Threat intelligence Data-driven, uncompromised intelligence sharing. Threat intelligence branch of Security Intelligence Services package allows companies to access threat intelligence data from Kaspersky Lab through Threat Data Feeds and Botnet Tracking. Threat Data Feeds include prompt information on malicious programs and URLs, phishing attacks and mobile threats, and are compatible with the popular third-party SIEM solutions. The fruit of Kaspersky Lab's security experts' work is also available in a form of tailored Intelligence Reporting, made-to-order reports on specific aspects of the threat landscape as well as prompt, actionable reports on the latest and most sophisticated threats.

PHISHING SEASON IN FULL SWING AS TAX DEADLINE LOOMS

NEW YORK: Tax day is a little more than a month away, which means phishing season is in full swing. The IRS says it's seen a "surge" this year in phishing emails, with thieves baiting special hooks for payroll and human-resources workers in hopes of snagging a company's entire stash of employee Social Security numbers and other personal information. Meanwhile, tax-season phishing attacks against individuals are also up. Last month, the IRS said it had seen a quadrupling of phishing- and malware-related incidents for this year's tax season. Experts warn that phishing emails often masquerade as legitimate communication from your bank, human resources department or email provider. But in reality, they're part of a scheme designed to steal the confidential information stored in your computer, or to gain access to the network it's attached to. And this time of year, that information can be used to file a false tax return. While people are more aware of the danger of phishing more than ever before, the lures continue to evolve and increase in sophistication, making it tough for the average person to discern which emails are legitimate and which ones aren't. Here are a few answers to common questions about phishing:

WHY IS IT SO BAD THIS TIME OF YEAR?

Phishing peaks during tax season, partially because it's a time of year that many people are accustomed to entering their most personal information - such as their Social Security number or bank account information - on websites, Satnam Narang, senior security-response manager for security software maker Symantec, says. Thieves can then use that captured information to file a false return. Phishing also spikes around Christmas, with attacks in the form of fake delivery notifications. Thieves also often tie phishing emails to major sporting events, or natural disasters like overseas earthquakes, says Raj Samani, chief technology officer for Europe, the Middle East and Africa at Intel Security. "They're very much up with the latest news and information," Samani says. "If they can spend a little more time and get a 0.1 percent increase in click-throughs, then their campaign becomes hugely more profitable and successful."

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PHISHING AND SPEAR FISHING?

Narang likens phishing to a person casually throwing a rod in a lake and waiting for a bite. Phishing emails don't contain a lot of specifics, but are quick and easy to send out in mass quantities. "Spear

phishing" is much more targeted and personalized. The people behind those attacks spend time researching their targets in order to create highly customized emails that look much more legitimate and are much more likely to be clicked on. The rise of social media has made this a lot easier. Thanks to Facebook and Twitter, details including a person's place of employment, where they bank, like to shop and the names and ages of their children are just a few clicks away.

WHAT OTHER RED FLAGS SHOULD I BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR?

In an effort to get more people to click on a link before thinking about the possible consequences, many phishing emails will give an impression of scarcity, or include some kind of time limit. For example, an email made to appear to be from a person's bank or email provider may state that if that person doesn't click on the enclosed link within 24 hours, they will be locked out of their account. And while poor English and long, complex web links were previously sure signs of phishing, they're not as prevalent anymore. Many overseas hackers are no longer using clunky translation websites, because there are fluent English speakers who specialize in translating phishing emails for a fee, Samani says. Meanwhile, it's become easier to shorten the Web links that direct a person to fake websites, he says.

Narang adds that people should be wary of emails purported to be from banks, or other companies they do business with, but didn't opt into emails from. He also notes that banks generally don't include Web links in emails. Those links will likely take a person to a fake website where they will be asked to login and those credentials will ultimately be stolen, he says. And attacks don't just come in the form of email. They can come as text messages too, with those links often containing viruses, Samani says.

IS THERE ANY WAY TO PREVENT IT?

Basic cyberhygiene can go a long way toward preventing a data breach, even if a link in a phishing email gets accidentally clicked on. Using different passwords for different accounts, two-factor authentication and changing passwords frequently all can be a big help. In addition, companies should test their employees by periodically sending out fake phishing emails to see who falls for them, Narang says. And companies need to make sure their security keys are up to date, along with their anti-spam filters, so past bad senders don't keep getting through, Samani says. "I think common sense goes a considerable long way," Samani says. He adds that with any email communications, it's always better to just go straight to the main website of the entity it purports to be from, just to be on the safe side. "I can't remember the last time I clicked on a link in an email," Samani says. "I just don't do it." —AP



RIKUZENTAKATA: This combo of handouts of Google map pictures released by Google from its "East Japan Earthquake digital archive project" on Tuesday shows street view images of the city of Rikuzentakata, Miyagi prefecture in August 2011 (top L), five months after the devastating tsunami, in June 2013 (top R), in May 2014 (bottom L) and in August 2015 (bottom R) over four years after. Walls of sea water inundated a wide swathe of the country's northeast on March 11, 2011 after a magnitude 9.0 earthquake upended the ocean floor. —AFP

DANCING MAY REDUCE RISK OF DYING FROM HEART DISEASE

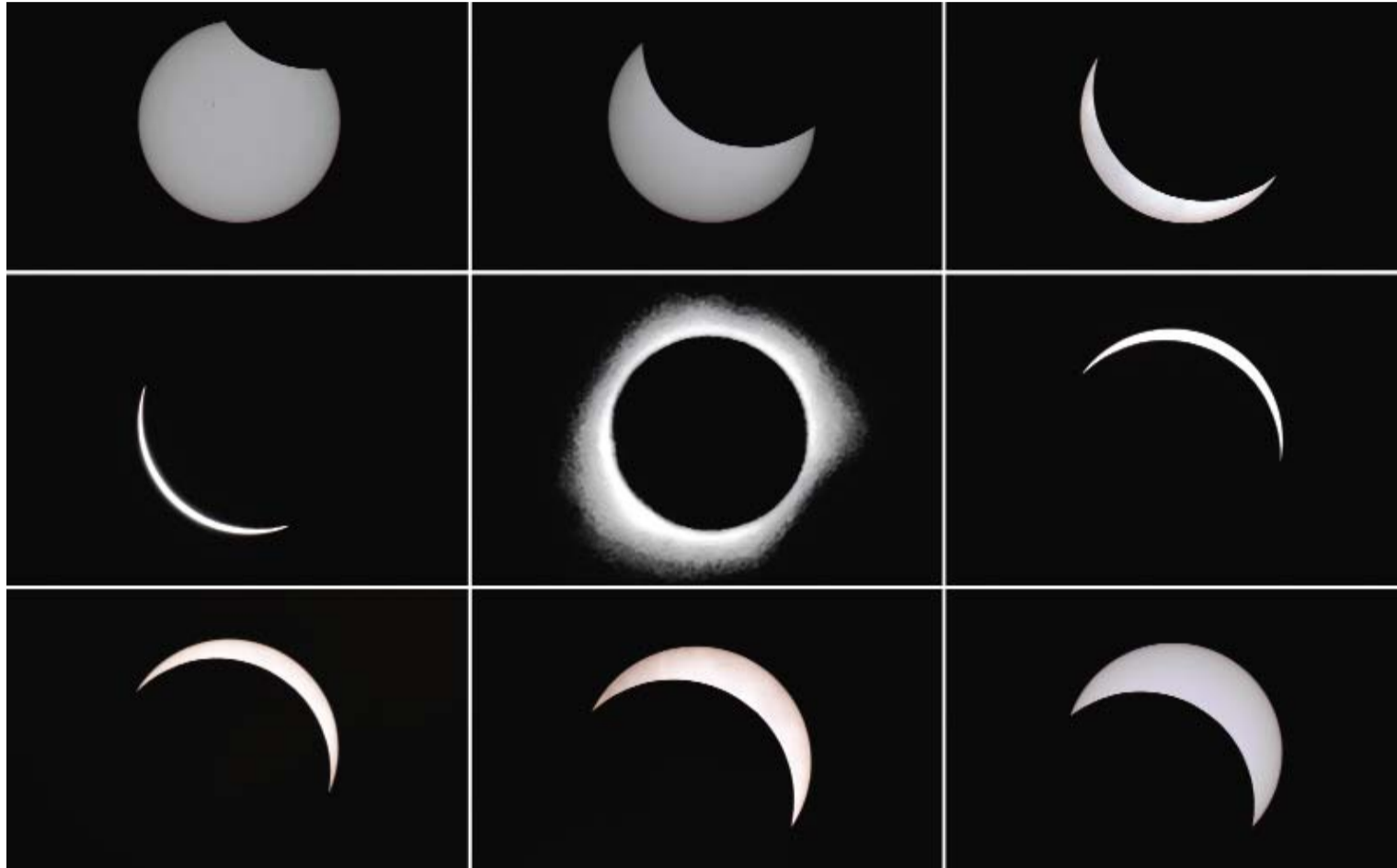
UNITED KINGDOM: Moderate intensity dancing, like moderate intensity walking, is tied to a lower risk of dying from cardiovascular disease, according to a new study. "It is not surprising that moderate-intensity physical activity is protective against cardiovascular disease mortality," said lead author Dafna Merom of the University of Western Sydney in Australia. "I actually was surprised that light-intensity dancing was not protective; I would expect that if the benefits of dance can be attributed to the social and affective aspect of dancing than I would expect light-intensity dancing to be beneficial," Merom told Reuters Health by email. Merom and her colleagues pooled 11

population surveys from the UK between 1995 and 2007, including more than 48,000 adults age 40 and older with no heart disease at baseline. The surveys included questions about frequency, duration and intensity of dancing and walking over the previous four weeks. These answers were linked to the National Death Registry. Only about 3,100 of the 48,000 people surveyed reported dancing of any intensity. Two-thirds of the group said they walked at any intensity. People who danced tended to be younger, have a lower body mass index, were less likely to have long-standing illnesses and got more overall physical activity than non-dancers.

The follow up
During follow-up, there were 1,714 deaths due to cardiovascular disease. People who reported moderate intensity dancing and walking were less likely to die from cardiovascular disease than those who did not, even after accounting for age, sex, socioeconomic status, smoking, alcohol use, body mass index, chronic illness, psychosocial distress and total physical activity, as reported online now in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine.
The minimum recommended amount of moderate-intensity activity is 150 minutes a week, but this pooled analysis did not include a direct measurement of

how much people were dancing, Merom said. "I would advise for those who find walking somewhat boring or those that like to challenge themselves to try dancing," she said. "First, you can reach higher intensity than in walking while dancing, it may be for short intervals but this all adds up, and you get some of the benefits associated with vigorous-intensity physical activity." "But dance is also hard on the brain, as it is a highly coordinated activity and requires skills and learning," she said.
All styles of dance tend to have slow or quick tempo options, and the quicker the better for heart health, Merom said. "A large body of literature over 60 plus

years shows that energy expenditure from physical activity reduces risk of cardiovascular disease," said Dr I-Min Lee of the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health in Boston, who was not part of the study. "We now increasingly realize that how this energy is expended - from walking, biking, swimming, dancing, playing with children, etc. - doesn't matter, so long as it is moderate in intensity."
"I think what is important is that we need to stick with being physically active - and to do so, one must do what one likes," Lee told Reuters Health by email. "So if you like to dance, great! If you don't and prefer to walk - then walk." — Reuters



TERNATE, Indonesia: This photo combo shows the moon passing in front of the sun (top left to bottom right) during a total solar eclipse in the city of Ternate, in Indonesia's Maluku Islands yesterday. — AP/AFP photos

TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE SWEEPS ACROSS INDONESIA

'IT WAS SPECTACULAR'

INDONESIA: A total solar eclipse swept across the vast Indonesian archipelago yesterday, marked by ecstatic sky gazers cheering the spectacle, devout Muslims kneeling in prayer and tribes people performing rituals. The moon began to move between the Earth and sun at 6:19 am (2319 GMT Tuesday), and about an hour later a total eclipse became visible in western parts of the country. The sun then went entirely dark in a broad arc right across the world's biggest archipelago nation, which straddles three time zones, before the eclipse swept out across the Pacific Ocean.

Partial eclipses were also visible over other parts of Asia and Australia, and astronomy enthusiasts across the region gathered on rooftops, beaches and in observatories to witness the phenomenon. Tens of thousands of foreign and Indonesian tourists flocked to the best viewing spots, and special events were organized, from a festival to fun runs and dragon boat races.

"It was spectacular," said Daniel Orange, a 52-year-old American tourist from California, who was watching the total eclipse on the small western island of Belitung. "It was very beautiful, there are a lot of people here and when the totality hit, everybody cheered. I got goose bumps."

In Ternate, in the eastern Maluku Islands, thousands of people yelled "Glory to God" as the total eclipse became visible, while on the small Mentawai archipelago in the west of the country, hundreds cheered, prayed and hugged one another during the spectacle. The whole eclipse lasted around three hours in Indonesia, but the total eclipse was visible for between just one and a half and three minutes, depending on location. The weather stayed clear in many popular viewing spots, although clouds obscured views in some places.

Tribal ritual

For some of Indonesia's tribes, the eclipse is viewed



INDONESIA: Acehese people watch the total solar eclipse in Banda Aceh.

INDIAN GURU'S FESTIVAL ON DELHI FLOODPLAIN RILES GREENS, POLICE WORRIES

NEW DELHI: Indian environmentalists are aghast at the hosting of a huge cultural festival on the floodplain of Delhi's main river that begins on Friday, warning that the event and its 3.5 million visitors will devastate the area's biodiversity. The "World Culture Festival", organized by one of India's best-known spiritual gurus, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, spreads across 1,000 acres (400 hectares) on the banks of the Yamuna. It features a 7-acre stage for 35,000 musicians and dancers, newly built dirt tracks and 650 portable toilets.

Green groups accuse organizers of ripping up vegetation and ruining the river's fragile ecosystem by damaging its bed and disrupting water flows. They want authorities to cancel the event before more harm is done. "This land is not meant for any of those things. The biodiversity of the land has been completely destroyed," said Anand Arya, one of several environmentalists who peti-

tioned India's top green court. "Where will the sewage and the excrement go? All across the floodplains!" he said, adding that the waste left by visitors would endanger a nearby bird sanctuary.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who like Ravi Shankar is a yoga devotee, was due to attend Friday's opening, but it is not clear whether he will do so after the event sparked such uproar - and not just among environmentalists.

Delhi police have warned of "utter chaos" at the event unless safety lapses are addressed, the Indian Express reported on Tuesday, citing a March 1 letter to the federal government that says the stage lacks a structural stability certificate. Ravi Shankar, who enjoys a cult following in India and abroad, has rejected the criticism. He has said he should be rewarded for hosting the event alongside one of the country's most polluted rivers.

with apprehension. In Palangkaraya, on Borneo island, Dayak tribesmen performed a special ritual to ensure that the sun, which they view as the source of life, did not disappear entirely. As the total eclipse hit, the tribal chief-dressed in a traditional costume-began to chant loudly and was answered by even louder chants from other members of the tribe.

For many in the world's most populous Muslim-majority country, it was a spiritual experience, and large numbers flocked to mosques to say special prayers. Foreign scientists also descended on Indonesia. A four-strong team from NASA was in Maba, a small town in the Maluku, to observe the eclipse. Other parts of Southeast Asia witnessed substantial partial eclipses. A crowd of about 400 people, including students and families, gathered at a university sports field in Singapore to watch the eclipse, while groups of enthusiasts also converged on beaches and outside their high rise apartments to gaze upwards.

In the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur, 1,000 school students witnessed the eclipse at the national planetarium and in the Philippine capital Manila, dozens of people carrying telescopes jostled for space on the roof deck of the country's only space observatory. "People were howling with excitement. For many of them, it's their first time to see a solar eclipse," said Philippine state astronomer Allan Alcaraz. A partial eclipse was also visible in northern Australia, with a handful of astronomy enthusiasts watching the event in Darwin.

The total eclipse swept across 12 out of 34 provinces in Indonesia, which stretches about 3,000 miles (5,000 kilometers) from east to west, before heading across the Pacific. It passed over the major islands of Sumatra, Borneo and Sulawesi, before sweeping over the Malukus and out into the ocean. The last total solar eclipse occurred on March 20, 2015, and was only visible from the Faroe Islands and Norway's Arctic Svalbard archipelago. Total eclipses occur when the moon moves between the Earth and the Sun, and the three bodies align precisely. As seen from Earth, the moon is just broad enough to cover the solar face, creating a breath-taking silver halo in an indigo sky. — AFP

His organization's lawyer, Saraswati Akshama Nath, said necessary approvals including safety certificates were granted in December before construction began, and that the structures would be removed once the three-day festival ends. "Consent was given to us by all the authorities," she told Reuters outside the court on Tuesday. "We have only used eco-friendly material."

The National Green Tribunal has recommended Ravi Shankar's Art of Living Foundation be fined 1.2 billion rupees (\$18 million) to restore the land, and is expected to make its final ruling on Tuesday. Meanwhile, back at the festival site, builders are rushing to finish what they say is the world's biggest ever performing stage. "This here will have a symphony of 8,500, and this 20,000 performers on stage at any one time," said Prasana Prabhu, a trustee of Ravi Shankar's foundation. — Reuters

FDA SETTLES WITH DRUGMAKER IN FISH-OIL DRUG MARKETING CASE

WASHINGTON: The maker of a prescription fish-oil drug says it has reached a legal settlement that will allow it to promote unapproved uses of its drug for lowering fat levels. The closely watched case between Amarin and the Food and Drug Administration could strengthen the drug industry's hand in the ongoing debate over promoting drugs for uses that have not been declared safe and effective by regulators.

But the FDA said Tuesday the settlement is "specific to this particular case and situation," and did not mark a new legal precedent. "The FDA is responsible for protecting the American public by helping to ensure medical products meet the rigorous legal standards for safety and effectiveness for their intended uses," the agency said in a statement. Still, pharmaceutical experts said companies would likely pursue more aggressive legal action against FDA, in light of the settlement. "We would expect companies throughout the country to ask courts to provide the same legal reasoning," said attorney John Fleder, who was not involved in the case.

Previous victory

In August, Amarin won a surprise victory over the FDA when a US District Court judge ruled that the company had a First Amendment right to distribute journal articles about unapproved indications for Vascepa. Amarin said in a statement Tuesday that the FDA agreed to be bound by the earlier court decision. Drug makers are not allowed to advertise drugs for "off-label" uses, or those that have not been cleared by the FDA as safe and effective. But companies' ability to distribute independent materials about their drugs - such as

medical journal articles - has been subject to years of legal debate centering around the limits of "commercial speech."

The FDA approved Vascepa in 2012 for patients with abnormally high levels of triglycerides, a type of fat found in the bloodstream. But the agency rejected a second use that would have allowed the company to market the pill to patients with lower triglycerides who also take statins - drugs used to lower cholesterol. The agency said the company needed to submit more data on whether lowering triglycerides actually translates into fewer heart problems in those patients. And FDA regulators suggested that distributing information about the alternate use would be illegal.

Amarin responded in May with a pre-emptive lawsuit, arguing that FDA efforts to stop the company from sharing "off-label" information would violate the company's free speech protections. In August, Judge Paul Engelmayer agreed, stating the company could "engage in truthful and non-misleading speech" while promoting its drug. Doctors are free to prescribe drugs for unapproved uses, regardless of FDA's prescribing recommendations.

Some attorneys cautioned Tuesday that the settlement had "important limitations." "It only applies to Amarin," said Lisa Dwyer. "I don't think we're at a point where it makes sense to extrapolate to other companies."

Vascepa is Amarin's only approved product, a prescription strength form of an omega-3 fatty acid found in wild fish. Fish oil is thought to lower heart disease risk, though no definitive studies have yet established that benefit. Shares of Amarin Corporation PLC rose 14 cents, or 9 percent, to \$1.69 in after-hours trading. — AP

NUMBER OF OBESE INDIAN TEENS NEARLY DOUBLES IN 5 YEARS

NEW DELHI: India's health minister says the number of obese teenagers in the country has nearly doubled over the last five years, with economic growth fueling lifestyle changes including a fondness for fast food. Health experts said yesterday that changing diets were to blame, along with an increase in sedentary activities like driving a car, watching TV and using a computer.

On Tuesday, Health Minister Jagat

Prakash Nadda cited the government's national family health survey as showing 29 percent of Indian teens are obese, compared with 16 percent five years ago. He said the rise in obesity among 13- to 18-year-olds is alarming. Rising incomes have allowed India's middle class to grow quickly, while fueling the proliferation of Western-style fast food chains in cities and suburbs. — AP



NEW DELHI: Indian teenagers eat and drink outside a street food stall yesterday. — AP photo

DOCTORS STAGE THIRD STRIKE IN ENGLISH HOSPITALS

LONDON: Junior doctors at English hospitals staged a third strike yesterday in protest at proposed new conditions and pay rates for working unsociable hours. Around 5,000 treatments have been postponed in the latest action by junior doctors, who were providing only emergency care during the 48-hour strike in the longest walkout so far. It comes a day after talks with the British Medical Association, the country's trade union for doctor, broke down on Tuesday as the government plans to impose the new contracts in the summer.

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt said he had to take the dramatic action as doctors were holding him to "ransom", the BBC reported. But polling by IPSOS MORI suggested that most of the public blamed the government for the dispute with 65 percent of the 860 people approached for the BBC-commissioned survey supporting the strike.

The main point of dispute between doctors and the government is over whether Saturday should be classed

and paid as a normal working day. Prime Minister David Cameron's centre-right government says the reforms are needed to fulfill his manifesto promise of a "seven-day NHS", with a consistent level of care provided at all times. The government cites eight studies in five years that show weekend mortality rates are higher.

The striking doctors contend that rates are higher on weekends because those who are admitted tend to be emergency cases. The next two strikes are planned for April. Johann Malawana, the BMA's junior doctor leader, disputed Hunt's claims, saying "the government has left junior doctors with no choice. Ministers have made it clear they intend to impose a contract that is unfair on junior doctors and could undermine the delivery of patient care in the long term." A first 24-hour strike was staged on January 12 and a second on February 11. There are more than 50,000 junior doctors in England, making up a third of the medical workforce. — AFP

SEAWORLD: ORCA THAT KILLED TRAINER IS ILL

ORLANDO: The killer whale responsible for the death of a SeaWorld trainer is very sick from a bacterial infection that may eventually kill him, SeaWorld officials said Tuesday. In a post on the park's blog, officials said the infection in Tilikum's lungs has been resistant to treatment thus far. Tilikum has been lethargic, and veterinarians and trainers are just trying to manage the infection and make sure he is comfortable. "It's extremely difficult to treat," staff veterinarian Dr. Scott Gearhart said in a video posted to the blog. "I wish I could say I was tremendously optimistic about Tilikum and his future but he has a disease

that is chronic and progressive and at some point might cause his death." Tilikum has been at SeaWorld Orlando for 23 years and has been used many times for the park's breeding program. In 2010, he grabbed trainer Dawn Brancheau after a "Dine with Shamu" show and pulled her into a pool, killing her. Tilikum was involved in the deaths of two others. In 1991, a part-time trainer at Sealand of the Pacific in British Columbia slipped accidentally into a pool holding Tilikum and two other orcas. They submerged her and dragged her around the pool. The park closed a short time later, and

Tilikum was moved to SeaWorld Orlando. In 1999, a man who had trespassed into SeaWorld Orlando after the park closed was found dead in Tilikum's pool. The documentary "Blackfish" chronicled Tilikum's life and argued that killer whales become more aggressive to humans and each other when in captivity. The documentary fueled criticism of SeaWorld by animal rights' activists. After the documentary's release in 2013, several entertainers pulled out of planned performances at SeaWorld parks, and Southwest Airlines ended its 25-year marketing partnership with the theme park company. — AP



ORLANDO: Killer whale Tilikum, watches as SeaWorld Orlando trainers take a break during a training session at the theme park's Shamu Stadium. —AP photo



TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras: Women take part in an homage to Honduran Human Rights activist Berta Caceres Flores on the International Women Day on Tuesday. —AFP photos

US JOINS HONDURAN PROBE OF ENVIRONMENTALIST'S MURDER

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras: US investigators have joined a Honduran probe into the killing of a prominent indigenous environmental activist who was leading a campaign against a hydroelectric dam at the time of her murder. Berta Caceres, who headed the Civic Council of Indigenous and People's Organizations (COPINH), was brutally

assaulted and shot dead Thursday in her home in the western town of La Esperanza. Her death sent shockwaves across Central America and was highlighted in demonstrations in the region on Tuesday marking International Women's Day. "The government has to investigate the murder," with a focus on the company involved in

the dam project, activist Suraya Martinez told AFP during a march of hundreds of women in Tegucigalpa. In the Nicaraguan capital Managua, where 400 people demonstrated, organizer Sandra Ramos said: "We are demanding justice from the Honduran government, so that this does not go unpunished."

Crime scene 'altered'

Honduran Attorney General Oscar Chinchilla said a team of US investigators arrived Sunday in La Esperanza to help Honduran authorities with their probe. US Ambassador James Nealon said Washington was committed "to assist in bringing those responsible for her murder to justice." Caceres's brother says the attack was carried out by two hooded gunmen who broke into her home while she was sleeping. She got up to investigate a noise and confronted the men, who broke her arm and leg before shooting her at least eight times at point-blank range, he said.

A Mexican activist, Gustavo Castro, was reported to have been wounded in the attack. He was detained over the weekend as a wit-

ness and prevented from leaving Honduras. In a letter that he wrote while in custody, Castro charged that "the crime scene was altered and modified," but provided no details. "The government continues preparing arguments to present Berta's assassination as due to internal conflicts when there are lawsuits pending against those who wanted to kill her implicating a hydroelectric company protected by the state," the letter said.

Amnesty International criticized the Honduran government's "absolute lack of willingness to protect human rights defenders in the country." In a statement, it accused Honduran authorities of failing to investigate "that Berta had been receiving serious death threats related to her human rights work for a very long time." Caceres, a member of the indigenous Lenca people, was leading a campaign against a hydroelectric dam that would flood large areas of native land and cut off water supplies to hundreds. She was awarded the 2015 Goldman Prize, considered the world's top award for grassroots environmental activism. — AFP



LA ESPERANZA, Honduras: The brother of murdered indigenous activist Berta Caceres, Gustavo Caceres, shouts slogans during her funeral, on March 5, 2016.

ANTARCTIC BLUE WHALES BELONG TO THREE POPULATIONS

SYDNEY: Antarctic blue whales, the largest creatures on the planet, likely belong to three populations that feed alongside each other but breed in separate oceans, according to Australian-led research published yesterday. Using the largest data set ever obtained from the critically endangered subspecies, the study in the Scientific Reports journal seeks to shed light on blue whale populations to aid their conservation. "We found genetic evidence that there are three groups of Antarctic blue whales that likely represent three populations," the study's lead author Catherine Attard, a biological sciences lecturer at South Australia's Flinders University, told AFP.

"We suspect that each population migrates north to breed in a different ocean basin." Relatively little is known about the Antarctic blue whale, even though they are the biggest animal in the world and can grow to more than 30 meters (100 feet) in length. Attard said the animals fed on krill in Antarctica in the southern hemisphere summer, but exactly where they headed to next was a mystery.

She said they likely migrated north to the South Pacific, South Atlantic and Indian oceans to breed as the southern hemisphere winter approached.

The idea that the whales split up to breed has been around since the 1960s, and Attard said it was possible that calves learned their migratory routes from their mothers. But she said satellite tracking now needed to be done to confirm the majestic animals' migratory routes and breeding grounds. Knowing the number and distribution of populations would help prevent biodiversity loss, the study noted. Antarctic blue whale numbers were drastically reduced due to whaling in the past, with only an estimated 360 left in the world in the 1970s when they were last hunted. Attard said current estimates were that there were "several thousand" of the huge creatures, but they remained surrounded by mystery given the difficulty of studying them in the harsh and remote Antarctica and their wide-roaming nature. "It's quite amazing that they are the biggest animal and we don't know much about them," she said. — AFP

FROG WITH YELLOW EYEBROWS DISCOVERED IN COLOMBIA

BOGOTA: A new species of terrestrial frog with yellow eyebrows has been found in Colombia's East Andes, researchers announced Tuesday. The *Pristimantis macrummendozai* was discovered in the Iguaque Merchan paramos, an Alpine ecosystem, north of the town of Arcabuco in the central department of Boyaca, according to the Humboldt Institute, which worked on the study in collaboration with the Environment Ministry. The discovery "places Colombia among the five most biodiverse countries in the world," said Andres Acosta, curator of the Humboldt Institute's biological collections.

Researchers said the frog has a skin with

folds that retain humidity, and that its dark color helps it blend well with the rocky soil of this mountainous region. "Unlike other species, the *Pristimantis macrummendozai* reproduces well in the humidity of the paramos region, laying its eggs in the ground," the Humboldt Institute said in a statement. The frog's front legs have sticky pads similar to velcro that allow the male to keep its grip on the female during reproduction. The Humboldt Institute noted that with this latest discovery, there are now 10 known species of high-altitude frogs in the East Andes, home to 16 paramos regions such as the Chingaza, Santurban, Almorzadero and Cundinamarca. — AFP



COLOMBIA: Handout pictured released in Bogota by the Humboldt Institute of a *Pristimantis macrummendozai* frog. —AFP

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CRY CRICKET 2016 TOURNAMENT

Friends of CRY Club (FOCC) is proud to announce the 19th CRY (Child Rights & You) cricket tournament for children that will be held on Friday the 8th April 2016. The venue will be announced soon. The one day "CRYket" tournament participated by children under 14 (born on or after 01/01/2002), is a very popular annual family event. The children are grouped into teams in two age categories and play softball cricket while spectators, parents and well-wishers enjoy a carnival atmosphere. 12 teams each are set to participate in the Under-12 and Under-14 divisions.

The initial round in four groups in round robin fashion leads to 1 winner from each group, who will clash in the semifinals. After the final, the winners and runners-up of both groups are awarded trophies. Apart from the trophies, medals and certificates from CRY-India will be given to each player of all participating teams. The 7-over matches will be played simultaneously on two playgrounds.

Experienced umpires will control the games assisted by official scorers. The teams will play in this tournament in recognition of a much felt need to support less fortunate children in India (delete: the Indian subcontinent) and heightened awareness of the work done by CRY, which is an international organization, that believes that every child is entitled to basic rights of survival, protection, development, education and participation. A colorful souvenir will be released to mark the occasion, which is open to all for placing their adverts. Delicious breakfast, lunch and snacks will be available throughout the day, along with raffle draws and other games for children.



SOCIO-CULTURAL ACTIVIST ABEY VARICAD AWARDED PHD

Abey Varicad, a prominent Indian businessman and a socio-cultural activist in Kuwait was awarded the doctorate in philosophy (PhD) based on his thesis "Christian Values in Business and Charity" (specialization in socio-cultural and charitable activities) from the University of Jerusalem. The Convocation ceremony was held in Chennai, India.

Abey is the Managing Director of Orma Group International having gold jewelry and food stuff business in Kuwait. He is the Senior Vice President of Overseas Indian Cultural Congress (O.I.C.C) and patron of different organizations like Thiruvalla Pravasi Association, Gulf Malayalee Welfare Association etc. Under his leadership he organized various social, cultural and charitable activities through some prominent organizations in Kuwait.

He is also the member of the Sabha Council, which is the executive body of the Marthoma Syrian Church of Malabar. He is the recipient of many awards including the Rajeev Gandhi Award from Sonia Gandhi, the chairperson of Rajeev Gandhi Foundation. He hails from Thottungal family in Thiruvalla, Kerala and his wife is Gracy Abraham. They are blessed with three children Arun, Praveen & Kiran.



Joseph Vazakkan M L A honors Abey Varicad with Ponnada for his Doctorate during the meeting of Overseas Indian Cultural Congress (OICC).



MARTHOMA CONDUCTS STUDY BOOK EXAM

Kuwait City MarThoma Yuvajana Sakhyam conducted a Study Book examination based on the book "Lord's Prayer" written by Dr Yuhanon Marthoma Metropolitan at United Indian School Auditorium, Abassiya. Examination was conducted in two languages, English and Malayalam. Forty eight participants took part in the exam. The results will be published later. Anish Abraham & Ms. Bisha Anish served as the convener. The examination started before a public meeting in which Convener Anish

Abraham welcomed all the participants. The Open Book exam was officially inaugurated by Rev Sam T Koshy with his inaugural address. Bisha Anish announced the rules and instructions for the exam. Parimanam Manoj (Vice President) delivered the vote of thanks. Shilu George and Sabu Mathew were the exam chief invigilator. Certificates were distributed for all the participants by Anish Thomas (Secretary), Anand Abraham (Jt Secretary) and Jijom Issac (Treasurer).



KUWAIT NATIONAL ENGLISH SCHOOL HOLDS SPORTS WEEK



Kuwait National English School recently held its annual Sports Week. Each department had their own Sports Day and participated in various team activities to promote healthy living and physical development. The week was a huge success with pupil's excelling in all areas of activity; producing some excellent sporting performances and examples of sportsmanship. The football games on show were very competitive with some excellent team performances and great football played. Down on the athletics track the pupils displayed their physical prowess, while in the swimming pool, Primary and Secondary students swam 25 meter heats. After the competitions were over the scores were calculated and the students were presented prizes for their achievement. This is when children made us so very proud as they showed good sportsmanship and fair play which are the most important aspects of these competitions.



Invitation
Join us at our 4th yearly festival of
"A day of Kuwaitis for Jerusalem"
Friday 11th of March 2016 from 3 to 9 pm

Let us take you through the streets of occupied Jerusalem to the esplanade of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, stroll through the sad Hebron alleys, As in Palestine, we will greet you with Dabke, coffee, Konafa Nabulsiya, Zaater & other Palestinian delicacies, We welcome you at WCSS Khaldiya, Block 2, Saleim Bn Ali Bo Qamaz St.

Kuwaitis for Jerusalem
A Joint Committee between
Kuwaiti Graduates Society. &
Women Cultural and Social Society











Captain Jettaili addressing the students during the event. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Kandari & Al-Sager cut the ribbon as he inaugurates the event.



JABER AL-ALI HOSTS 2ND UNIVERSITIES EXPO

By Hassan Abdul Bari

Under the auspices of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Educational Zone director, Mansour Al-Daihani and with the attendance of the School Libraries Department manager, Ahmed Al-Kandari, Jaber Al-Ali Secondary School for boys recently hosted the second Educational Opportunities Expo with the aim of enlightening senior high school students on learning opportunities provided by various public and private universities in Kuwait.

The exhibition included representatives from Kuwait University, PAAET, the ministry of higher education, GUST, ACK, AUK, AOU, AUM, ACM, Kuwait Technical College (KTC), The College of Aviation Technology, the National Guards, Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences and KFSD. The expo attracted considerable media attention from local dailies and TV channels.

Speaking to Kuwait Times after opening the exhibition and touring various sections, Al-Kandari expressed happiness for holding such exhibitions that eventually benefit students and help them make the right decision on the next level of education they preferred after leav-

ing high school. He added that, in addition to annual Edu-Expo held at Mishref fair Grounds, this one would help both students and their parents make better decisions on the lines of study.

"The fact that the exhibition includes both public and private universities gives students wider choices", he underlined pointing out that the exhibition was a great opportunity for students as it saves time and effort they would have to exert visiting each individual university's headquarters to explore their chances there. Al-Kandari also thanked the school director, Khaled Al-Sager and the head of the organizing committee; Jaber Al-Ali librarian, Omar Fawzi and the libraries supervisor, Muneer Al-Omar for being so creative in meeting students' need to make better choices.

On his part, Jaber Al-Ali school director, Khalid Al-Sager stressed the significance of holding such exhibitions that provide high school students with enough explanation and information about the learning opportunities they can get in Kuwait or abroad, be them in public or private universities. "We have also given students from grades 10 and 11 the chance to explore the exhibition to get proper guidance before they even studied their final year in grade 12", he added pointing that

the school administration decided holding the 2nd cycle of the exhibition after the great success achieved last year.

Al-Sager also noted that this year's expo includes representatives from the National Guards, Saad Al-Abdullah Academy and KFSD to allow students with military ambition explore their chances, as well. "Next year, God willing, we will also come with new ideas and participants to improve the services students can get from the expo", he concluded. Speaking to the exhibition organizer and the school's senior librarian, Omar Fawzi, he told Kuwait Times the idea had first come to him when he escorted his students to the Islamic Book Fair that coincided with the annual Educational Expo held at Mishref International Fairgrounds. "It was then that I noticed our students' eagerness to get such information about university studies", he added noting that the idea was greatly welcomed by both the school administration and the educational area officials. "Following last year's success, we thought of going further inviting more participants such as the National Guards and the Police Academy", he added.

On his part, National Guards captain, Faisal Al-Jettaili expressed excitement over the Expo's idea and stressed that though NG provides



several community services, this was the first time a PR team went out to brief high school students about the chances they might get by joining the National Guards. "We have recently launched a special public awareness program to enhance the concept of patriotism amongst younger generation", he underlined. KFSD First Lt Abdul Salam Al-Baker stressed that this was his second education expo after one held last year in Bayan, after which the total number of applicants to join KFSD jumped from 1000 to around 1700. "I expect the number to even go further after this expo", he added.



AL MUHALLAB MALL CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Al Muhallab Mall recently celebrated International Women's Day on March 8th, by organizing its monthly Ladies Night event and hosting prominent society figures. The event witnessed an overwhelming participation by women who were entertained, empowered, and pampered, all for the aim of celebrating them on an internationally recognized day.

The event featured a 'Positive Energy' lecture by Layla Kaizen - famous social media influencer and positive energy public speaker, who delivered an interactive session around how women can re-energize themselves to do

and be their best while helping them communicate and connect more powerfully with others. Kaizen also presented several tips on how to banish negative thoughts and self-doubts that keep women from getting what they want, thus empowering them to reach for higher heights of success in their personal lives and professional careers.

Following the 'Positive Energy' lecture, women were then entertained to a 'Comedy & Illusion' show which was delivered by Abdullatif Al Saleh and Khalid Al Muhareb; who are also known as The Imagine Team. The Imagine Team is the only Middle Eastern

team that performs a combination of comedy and illusion shows professionally. Al Saleh and Al Muhareb performed several tricks while interacting with the audience in a fun-filled environment, by which audience received a chance to win significant prizes.

It is worth mentioning that this event is considered the second of many Ladies Night events that will be held on a monthly basis by Al Muhallab Mall. Every month, ladies of all ages will be invited to an exclusively themed event with the participation of some of Kuwait's most prominent social media influencers and public figures. Last month's

event hosted a number of female social media influencers, which featured a musical segment, food and beverage specials, interactive activities and surprises for ladies.

The event also acted as an informative and interactive platform for ladies to know more about the trendiest of the beauty world, whether in makeup or skincare, which was discussed and led by several famous social media influencers. Al Muhallab Mall's recently refurbished brand identity and corporate strategy aims at engaging with the general public through specially designed monthly activities and

events that would meet the needs of every segment of the society.

Marked on March 8th as 'International Women's day' is an annual international celebration recognizing women for their economic, political and social achievements around the world. In different regions, the focus of the celebrations ranges from general celebration of respect, appreciation and love towards women. To know more about Al Muhallab Mall, follow the Mall's social media channels on Instagram: @AlmuhallabMall, Twitter: @AlmuhallabMall, or Facebook: Almuhallab Mall.

AMC

- 00:55 NED Kelly
02:40 The Basketball Diaries
04:20 Dr. Goldfoot And The Bikini Machine

- 14:30 Dialogue
15:00 News Update
15:15 China 24
16:00 News Update

- 15:05 Dr G: Medical Examiner
15:55 Fatal Encounters
16:45 On The Case With Paula Zahn

CNBC

- 01:00 Gunfight: Remington Under Fire
02:00 U.S. Squawk Alley
03:00 Asia Squawk Box

Discovery Science

- 00:35 Race To Escape
01:20 How It's Made: Dream Cars
01:44 How It's Made: Dream Cars

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:50 River Monsters
01:45 Mountain Monsters
02:40 Dog Rescuers

crime & investigation network

- 00:00 The Haunting Of...
01:00 The Ghost Inside My Child
02:00 My Haunted House

Discovery world

- 00:40 HMS Ark Royal
01:30 Zero Hour
02:20 Origins

BBC FIRST

- 00:20 Eastenders
00:45 New Tricks
01:40 New Tricks

Discovery CHANNEL HD

- 00:20 Fast N' Loud
01:10 You Have Been Warned
02:00 The Weapon Hunter

Bloomberg TELEVISION

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

Disney

- 00:05 Henry Hugglemonster
00:20 Calmermo
00:30 Zou

Disney JUNIOR

- 00:05 Henry Hugglemonster
00:20 Calmermo
00:30 Zou



FALCON RISING ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 08:00 Charlie Rose
09:00 Countdown
10:00 Countdown

- 16:50 Chasing Classic Cars
17:15 How Do They Do It?
17:40 Salvage Hunters

Disney

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

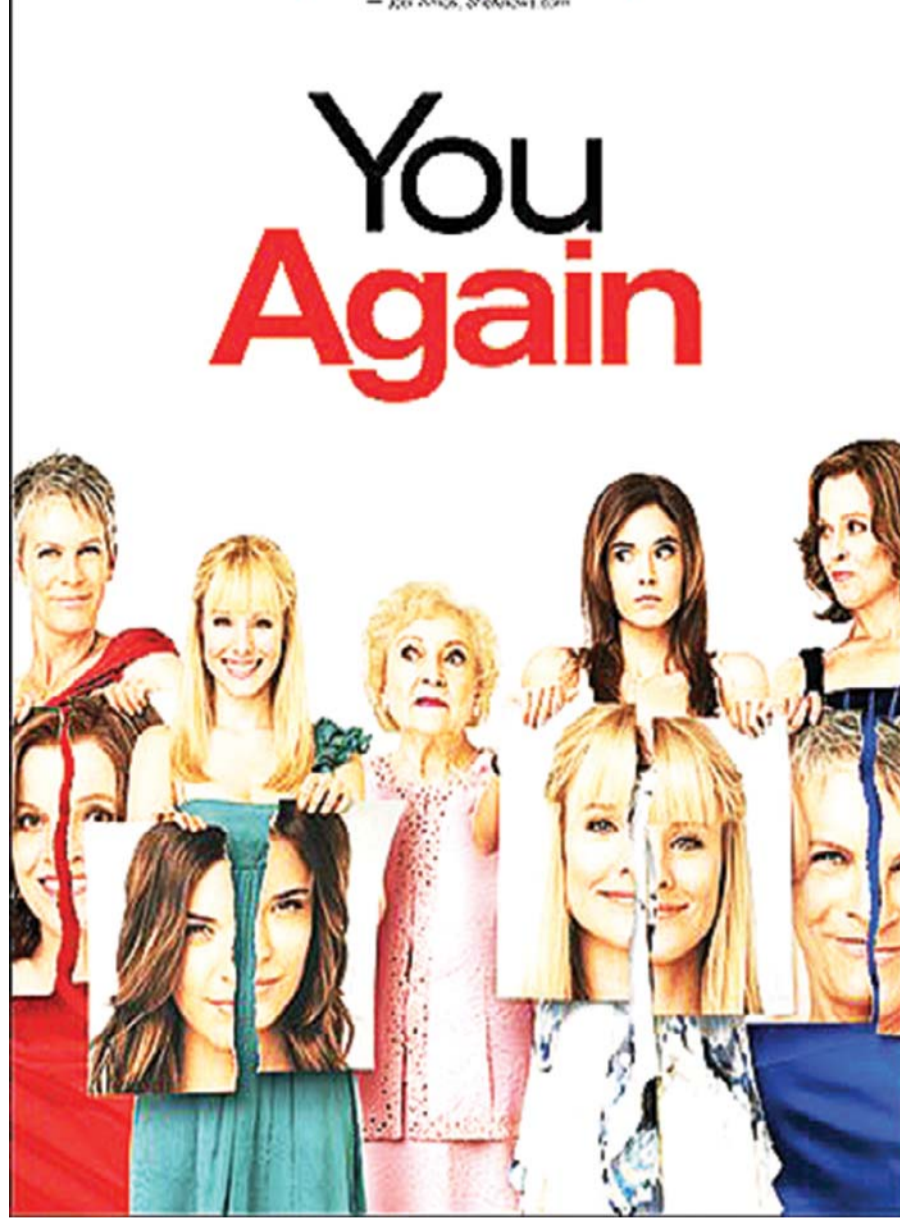
CCTV NEWS

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

ID INVESTIGATION DISCOVERY

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

"Hysterically Funny" You Again



YOU AGAIN ON OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 12:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
12:45 Fish Hooks
13:00 Fish Hooks

- 00:00 Programmes Start At 7:00am KSA
07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
07:25 K. C. Undercover

- 11:30 The Pioneer Woman
12:00 Chopped
13:00 Guy's Big Bite

- 00:05 Henry Hugglemonster
00:20 Calmermo
00:30 Zou

- 00:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
00:55 The Grace Helbig Show
01:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

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

- 00:05 Henry Hugglemonster
00:20 Calmermo
00:30 Zou

- 00:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
00:55 The Grace Helbig Show
01:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

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

- 00:05 Henry Hugglemonster
00:20 Calmermo
00:30 Zou

- 00:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
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- 00:30 Suburgatory
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- 00:05 Henry Hugglemonster
00:20 Calmermo
00:30 Zou

- 00:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
00:55 The Grace Helbig Show
01:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

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

- 02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Big Star's Little Star
03:25 Shelland

OSN FIRST HD

- 00:00 In Treatment
00:30 In Treatment
01:00 Big Love

NAT GEO people HD

- 00:10 Eat Street
00:35 Eat Street
01:00 Chasing Time

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 00:59 You're Next
02:44 Outpost: Rise Of The Spetsnaz

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 00:00 Drunk Wedding
02:00 The Trip To Italy

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 00:00 Drunk Wedding
02:00 The Trip To Italy

OSN FIRST HD

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

OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

- 01:30 Atlas Shrugged Part 2: The Strike

OSN FIRST HD

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

OSN SPORTS 1 HD

- 01:00 NRL Premiership
03:00 Super Rugby
05:00 World Golf Championships

OSN FIRST HD

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

OSN SPORTS 2 HD

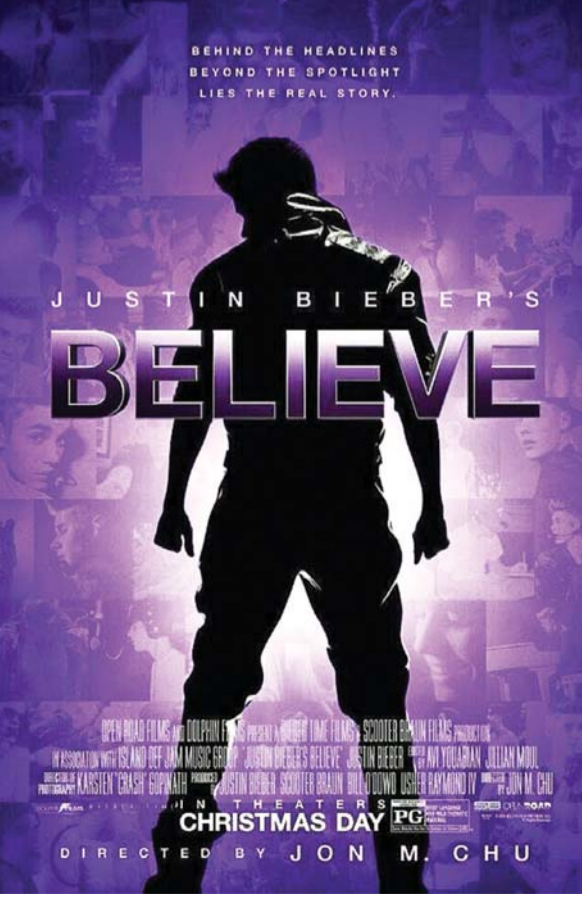
- 00:00 World Golf Championships
01:00 Darts UK Open

OSN FIRST HD

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

OSN SPORTS 3 HD

- 00:05 Trans World Sport
01:00 Top 14 Highlights



BELIEVE ON OSN MOVIES HD

CLASSIFIEDS

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Kuwait CINEMA

KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (10/03/2016 TO 16/03/2016)

SHARQIA-1
 THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR 11:45 AM
 ZOOTOPIA 1:45 PM
 THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT 4:00 PM
 ZOOTOPIA 6:45 PM
 THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR 9:00 PM
 THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR 11:00 PM
 THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR 1:00 AM

SHARQIA-2
 LONDON HAS FALLEN 12:30 PM
 LONDON HAS FALLEN 2:30 PM
 LONDON HAS FALLEN 4:30 PM
 LONDON HAS FALLEN 6:30 PM
 LONDON HAS FALLEN 8:30 PM
 LONDON HAS FALLEN 10:30 PM

SHARQIA-3
 THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT 12:00 PM
 THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT 2:30 PM
 THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT 5:00 PM
 THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT 7:30 PM
 THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT 10:00 PM
 THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT 12:30 AM

MUHALAB-1
 ZOOTOPIA 11:30 AM
 THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT 1:45 PM
 THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT 4:15 PM
 THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT 6:45 PM
 THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT 9:15 PM
 THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT 11:45 PM

MUHALAB-2
 THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT 12:45 PM
 ZOOTOPIA 3:15 PM
 ZOOTOPIA 5:30 PM
 THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR 7:45 PM
 THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR 9:45 PM
 THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR 12:05 AM

MUHALAB-3
 LONDON HAS FALLEN 12:00 PM
 LONDON HAS FALLEN 2:00 PM
 LONDON HAS FALLEN 4:00 PM
 LONDON HAS FALLEN 6:00 PM
 LONDON HAS FALLEN 8:00 PM
 LONDON HAS FALLEN 10:00 PM
 LONDON HAS FALLEN 12:05 AM

FANAR-1
 THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR 11:30 AM
 ZOOTOPIA 1:45 PM
 THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR 4:00 PM
 ZOOTOPIA 6:00 PM
 THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR 8:15 PM
 THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR 10:15 PM
 THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR 12:15 AM

FANAR-2
 THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT 12:00 PM

Danah Universal School of Kuwait

Requires energetic and highly qualified candidates, preferably native or near native speakers for the following positions :

- **Head of Departments for English, Maths and Science (Grade 6 to 12) having minimum 5 years of experience in the same position**
- **Teachers for Maths and English subjects for Grade 5 to 12, having 3 years experience in the same field**

Interested Candidates are invited to submit their updated CV's along with their recent Photograph through email at: info@aldanahbsk.net

FOR SALE

Mitsubishi Pajero, dark blue, 2006 model, owner driven 1,00,000 kms, 5x CD changer, new tyres, new battery, registration upto Dec 2016. Please call 99218172. (C 5143)

Expatriate leaving Kuwait, household appliances and furniture for sale, please call 99218172. (C 5143) 10-3-2016

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Abdullah Walid Khalid holder of Pakistani Passport No. AC 6774661 22 Zubair Street Islamiya Park Pouch Road Lahore, hereby changed my name to Saad Walid Khalid. (C 5142) 10-3-2016

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 Ethical Investment Group

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 Email: Info@Eiglkoman.Com

Prayer timings

Fajr: 04:45
Shorook 06:04
Duhr: 11:58
Asr: 15:20
Maghrib: 17:53
Isha: 19:10



FOR RENT

New flat in Jabriya
 3 bedrooms, 3 baths, kitchen

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REQUIRED

Leading Food Stuff Co. requires Sales Manager - Supervisor

- ◆ 5 - 10 years' Experience with FMCG in Hyper Markets in Kuwait
- ◆ Demonstrated ability to build and maintain client relationships
- ◆ Enthusiastic can-do attitude, highly self-motivated, result oriented, detail oriented and a well-developed sense of drive & supervision
- ◆ Excellent communication skills in English & Arabic
- ◆ Excellent computer and project management skills.
- ◆ Transferable Visa (18)
- ◆ Driving license + Car

Please send CV
Fax: 2247 9555, e-mail: export@barakadates.com

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is looking for a Government Liaison Officer and IP Administration Assistant based in Kuwait to support our IP professional team in Dubai with trade mark prosecution work. You need to be a Kuwaiti national and will ideally have 2 - 3 years' of government liaison/ administrative experience, fluent Arabic and English, excellent organisation skills and attention to detail.

For a detailed job description and to apply, please send your CV to **Mena.Recruitment@clydeco.ae**

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

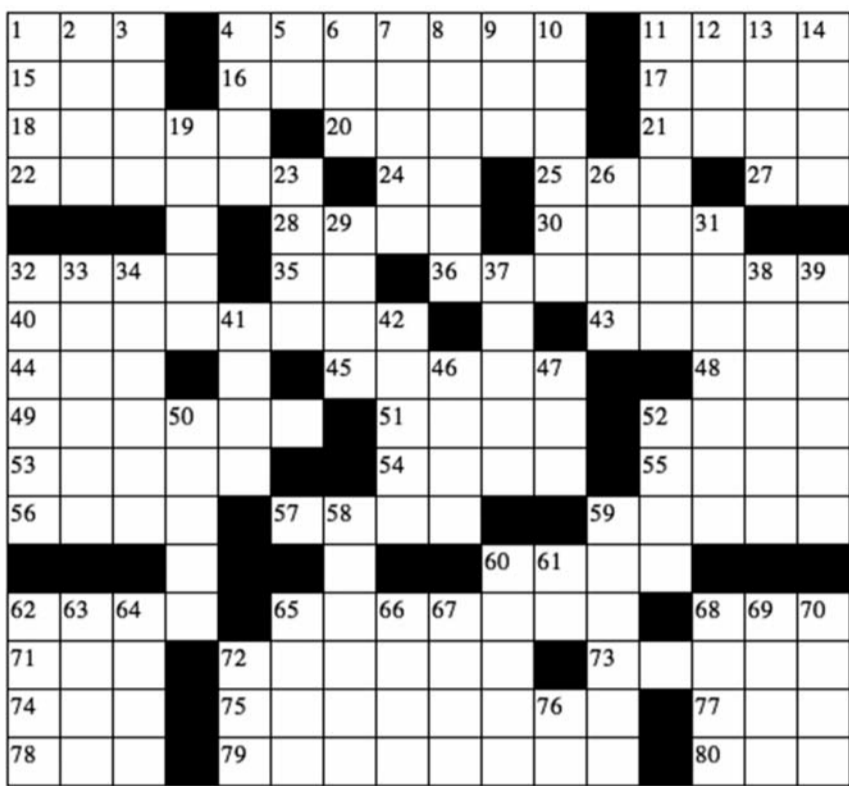
In case you are not travelling, your proper cancellation of bookings will help other passengers to use seats

Flight Schedule

Arrival Flights on Thursday 10/3/2016				Departure Flights on Thursday 10/3/2016			
Airlines	Ft	Route	Time	Airlines	Ft	Route	Time
MSC	415	Sohag	00:05	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
KLM	411	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:20	THY	767	Istanbul	14:45
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	KNE	481	Taif	14:50
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	JZR	1332	Al Najaf	14:55
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55	PAL	669	Dubai/Manila	14:55
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
THY	772	Istanbul	01:05	QTR	1079	Doha	15:10
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30	FDB	058	Dubai	15:10
DLH	635	Doha	01:35	AXB	394	Kozhikode	15:20
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:45	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	JZR	188	Dubai	15:40
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	KAC	617	Doha	15:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	741	Dammam	15:50
THY	768	Istanbul	02:50	KAC	613	Bahrain	15:50
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC	773	Riyadh	15:50
FDB	067	Dubai	03:05	SVA	505	Jeddah	16:00
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	KNE	473	Jeddah	16:05
QTR	1076	Doha	03:15	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:25
KKK	6507	Istanbul	03:20	OMA	646	Muscat	16:30
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:25	NIA	252	Alexandria	16:30
LMU	510	Cairo	03:40	JAD	302	Amman	16:40
JZR	503	Luxor	04:25	KAC	563	Amman	16:45
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:40	JZR	266	Beirut	17:05
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	KNE	475	Jeddah	17:25
QTR	8511	Doha	06:20	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	17:30
FDB	5061	Dubai	06:30	FDB	052	Dubai	17:35
BAW	157	London	06:40	QTR	1073	Doha	17:40
JZR	1143	Dammam	06:45	JZR	538	Cairo	17:45
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	06:55	RJA	641	Amman	17:55
KAC	412	Manila/Bangkok	07:20	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
QTR	1086	Doha	07:40	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	204	Lahore	07:40	JZR	184	Dubai	18:40
FDB	053	Dubai	07:45	MSR	615	Cairo	18:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50	JZR	238	Amman	18:50
SVA	512	Riyadh	07:50	JZR	124	Bahrain	19:10
KAC	382	Delhi	08:00	JZR	554	Alexandria	19:10
KAC	206	Islamabad	08:25	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
KAC	344	Chennai	08:30	ABY	124	Sharjah	19:25
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	08:30	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
KAC	352	Kochi	08:30	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	KAC	283	Dhaka	20:35
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:50	KAC	353	BLR	20:40
KAC	362	Colombo	08:50	QTR	1081	Doha	20:50
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	KAC	351	Kochi	20:50
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	543	Cairo	20:55
KAC	284	Dhaka	09:10	KAC	343	Chennai	21:00
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:20	MSR	619	Alexandria	21:05
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25	KNE	461	Riyadh	21:10
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ABY	122	Sharjah	21:15
OMA	641	Muscat	10:05	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
IRA	673	Ahwaz	10:10	FDB	062	Dubai	21:20
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	DLH	634	Doha	21:45
JZR	1331	Al Najaf	10:40	FDB	5054	Dubai	21:50
UAE	873	Dubai	11:05	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:15	JAI	571	Mumbai	21:55
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
NIA	151	Cairo	11:55	KAC	381	Delhi	22:00
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25	KAC	301	Mumbai	22:10
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
JZR	241	Amman	12:50	UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	QTR	1083	Doha	23:05
THY	766	Istanbul	13:45	KLM	417	Dammam/Amsterdam	23:05
KNE	460	Riyadh	13:50	KAC	205	Islamabad	23:10
FDB	057	Dubai	14:10	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:15
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	FDB	060	Dubai	23:35
AXB	393	Kozhikode	14:20	KAC	411	Bangkok/Manila	23:35
				KAC	415	Kuala Lumpur/Jakarta	23:40

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

CROSSWORD 1191



ACROSS

1. (computer science) A computer that is running software that allows users to leave messages and access information of general interest.
4. A cephalosporin that can be given parenterally (trade name Zinacef) or orally by tablets (trade name Cefdin).
11. With no effort to conceal.
15. Consisting of or made of wood of the oak tree.
16. Of the dull yellowish green of the meat of an avocado n 1.
17. A slender double-reed instrument.
18. At right angles to the length of a ship or airplane.
20. Person who makes a gift of property.
21. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
22. Popular music originating in the West Indies.
24. Being five more than fifty.
25. A state-chartered savings bank owned by its depositors and managed by a board of trustees.
27. A soft gray malleable metallic element that resembles tin but discolors on exposure to air.
28. An informal term for a father.
30. Of or relating to near the ear.
32. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
35. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
36. A port city in northeastern Greece on an inlet of the Aegean Sea.
40. A technician in charge of amplifying sound or producing sound effects (as for a TV or radio broadcast).
43. A pale rose-colored variety of the ruby spinel.
44. A form of entertainment that enacts a story by a sequence of images giving the illusion of continuous movement.
45. Loose temporary stitches.
48. A belief (or system of beliefs) accepted as authoritative by some group or school.
49. Make lighter or brighter.
51. A set of two similar things considered as a unit.
53. Power to control.
54. A genus of Mustelidae.
55. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
56. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
57. No longer having or seeming to have or expecting to have life.
62. A fraudulent business scheme.
71. An implement used to propel or steer a boat.
73. A burn cause by hot liquid or steam.
74. The law enforcement agency in the Justice Department.
75. English literary critic who collaborated with C. K. Ogden and contributed to the development of Basic English (1893-1979).
77. The cry made by sheep.
78. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
79. A great raja.
80. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.

DOWN

1. Old World wild swine having a narrow body and prominent tusks from which most domestic swine come.
2. A very young child (birth to 1 year) who has not yet begun to walk or talk.
3. A brace that extends from the rear of the keel to support the rudderpost.
4. The battle in 202 BC in which Scipio decisively defeated Hannibal at the end of the second Punic War.
5. Being one more than three.
6. A sign of assent or salutation or command.
7. (archaic) Of persons.
8. Heavy closely woven fabric (used for clothing or chairs or sails or tents).
9. The capital and largest city of Japan.
10. A 10% solution of formaldehyde in water.
11. Fire-bellied toads.
12. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
13. Floor consisting of a large unpartitioned space over a factory or warehouse or other commercial space.
14. Made of fir or pine.
19. The ninth month of the Hindu calendar.
23. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
26. (dialect) A short straight stick of wood.
29. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
31. Class of protozoa having cilia or hairlike appendages on part or all of the surface during some part of the life cycle.
33. Aroused to impatience or anger.
34. Greek geometer (3rd century BC).
37. Out of bed.
38. The quarter of many North African cities in which the citadel is located.
39. The capital of Eritrea.
41. A software system that facilitates the creation and maintenance and use of an electronic database.
42. Greek mythology.
46. Being the one previously mentioned or spoken of.
47. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
50. Take away the weapons from.
52. Informal terms for a (young) woman.
58. A man who has been castrated and is incapable of reproduction.
59. A port city of south central Ukraine on an arm of the Black Sea.
60. (Greek mythology) Monster with nine heads.
61. Not out.
63. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
64. An elaborate song for solo voice.
65. Type genus of the Amidae.
66. A law passed by US Congress to prevent employees from being injured or contracting diseases in the course of their employment.
67. Dearly loved.
68. An amino acid that is found in the central nervous system.
69. Wearing or provided with clothing.
70. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
72. A human limb.
76. A person who announces and plays popular recorded music.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You need emotional stimulation today and should enjoy a diversified lifestyle. Don't spread yourself too thin and if possible, delegate responsibilities. Check all the aspects of a project you are working on to find out where your energies can be best applied. Obtaining and exchanging information takes priority this morning. You will find your friends true to their word and very helpful today. The more fact-gathering and detail-hunting you do the closer you are to making your dreams a reality. Make a list of repair needs that you can correct yourself, instead of calling in costly repair people. Plant some spring flowers today. This evening is a wonderful time to celebrate life with your family and friends in a leisure setting.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This is not the best time for career or vocational decisions and practical advice to others. Instead, you find yourself feeling more need for solitude. This is a great time to tend to paperwork or research. Follow through this week with any plans you made last week regarding higher education. Concentrate on the possible. Throughout today and the rest of this month, take on the art of being patient-there will be many times where this will really pay off for you. Find things to do that will keep you busy and productive when you may have to wait in a line or perhaps ride on public transportation. If you are thinking about a job in your home, think about the service industry. Consider some type of volunteer service within these agencies. ... Making life easier.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may have some difficulty speaking or getting your ideas and thoughts across to others today. Your abstract thinking is sometimes considered weird by others. However, great discoveries are made in this realm of thinking. While this process is natural for you, you must realize other people do not always follow your line of thinking, although they can be caught up in the general idea. You think you might say the wrong thing. However, luck seems to be on your side and plans, decisions and just finding your way through the problems you discover will end on a positive note. Good advice from a guide or older person will be a blessing-listen. You may find yourself being put to good use by your friends. Laughter and encouragement is good for all.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This is one of your best overall days. You are buoyed with confidence now to succeed at any project you attempt. You will be self-assertive, independent and can see clearly what your own interests are this whole spring. It is time for deep thought about a career change or conditions that affect your reputation. It is essential to become more effective in expressing your own thoughts as well as gaining the needed response or information from others by asking the right questions. Obtaining and exchanging information takes on more emotional significance for you now. Communicating feelings becomes more important. You could clash with young people or old habits. Your support system and environment may feel stressed but this is of short duration.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Acting on impulse today can be riskier than usual: steady yourself and try not to react too quickly. There could be some type of news you have been waiting to receive for a long time. A new family member or an approval on a new home, car, loan, etc., is thrilling but work must go forward. This is a day for creative thinking, knowing where to direct or solve issues. Concentration on professional subjects and the successful outcomes will most likely depend on your treatment of the subjects that come to your attention. Your day moves along quickly and you will be able to handle anything else that comes to your attention after your workday has ended. Now you can celebrate. Family members are happy with your actions.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Success in the workplace is easy to find because your determination and concentration are usually strong. Your imagination comes in very useful later today when you could be asked to counsel someone in matters of work issues. It may be easy to overextend your time or energies-work at a balance and teach through example. You can be a most captivating speaker and may be asked to speak at schools or events from time to time. The energies are ripe for the invitation to speak in the near future will be to your advantage. With a small amount of research you will be able to do a top-notch job on this speaking opportunity. After work you may want to stop by a bookstore that has music and find a good selection for someone's gift as well as some music for yourself.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

With the energies that are available today, you will find meaningful spiritual awakenings if you remain open to them. This may begin with the view of a sunrise before you drive into work and end with a determination to dedicate yourself to a dream. A problem-solving class will meet in groups and will benefit you in solving some challenging areas where you want growth or you want to give expression. Knowing things without knowing how you know them is typical for now. It is time to really gain a focus on the main path of your life: what it should be and where it should go from this point. Allow family members or friends to help you burst into spontaneous laughter-or see if you can create that for another. Enjoy new insights and a light heart today.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You are able to serve as a messenger today and some of what you impart is not just business. You enhance and encourage other people to improve and move forward upon their life path. You will carefully consider all the options in some particular situation today. You are wise to have caution when others try to talk you into some activity that is not really very good for anyone-careful. An idea for a play keeps running in your head and you might consider writing in order to get the idea to develop more clearly. You may have found a great pastime that has a most positive return. A missing animal from one of your neighbors may visit you late this afternoon. You enjoy a little time on the computer tonight to talk to your friends and pick up the latest news.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may have that feeling that anything is possible today. You are feeling good and everything around you seems to be coming up roses! Stability and permanence satisfy a deep emotional need. You are good at organizing your thoughts, particularly when you take the time to write out a plan. You are good at planning when it comes to travel and a family member or close friend may ask for your talents for travel planning for an upcoming wedding. You may find yourself inventing or contributing to some design or art project today as well. A dialogue with an older person may take place this afternoon. You seem more concerned now than ever with your relationships and now is when they are the most stable.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Career demands require hard work and long hours. This afternoon you may want to spend some time making some calls and setting appointments. There are opportunities to help friends later today. You feel good about being able to help others. Try to use caution by setting a time limit on your commitment. Look at the long-term and help the other person to do the same. Sometimes it is important to lend a helping hand and sometimes it is important to only lend your supportive assistance. Find ways to blend your energies now to eliminate frustrations. You are good at bringing the spiritual into your everyday life experience. Romance is highlighted this evening and there is a desire to try something new or go somewhere previously unexplored.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may find that you need to analyze a situation before you can give input today. Let others know that you will be working on calculating projects or working with numbers; they will leave you to your thinking. High-stress demands may be using up your spare time today. Find ways to cut corners soon. Take it easy on yourself and others by making notes of things you see that need changing. In a few days look at the notes again and see if you still feel the same. A little humor will see you through the rough spots now. Saying and writing things with style counts for a lot and this tends to bring out the social butterfly in all of us. This evening, neighbors or brothers and sisters will likely bring all kinds of good experiences to you.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

A group meeting this morning will clue you in on the professional activities for the rest of this month. Some of the people involved in the discussions may become involved in a sparring competition. It would be wise for you to take a noncommittal attitude for now. This particular day is for observing and review. You are doing some great work on staying balanced between intuition and practicality. Take some time this afternoon to visit a shoe store. Find the right type of shoe for your feet. You may experience problems with your feet over time-take care of them. A close friend may be saving a surprise for you when you least expect it. Stop worrying-things happen in their own time. You will find tonight enchanting.

WORD SEARCH

Animals 1

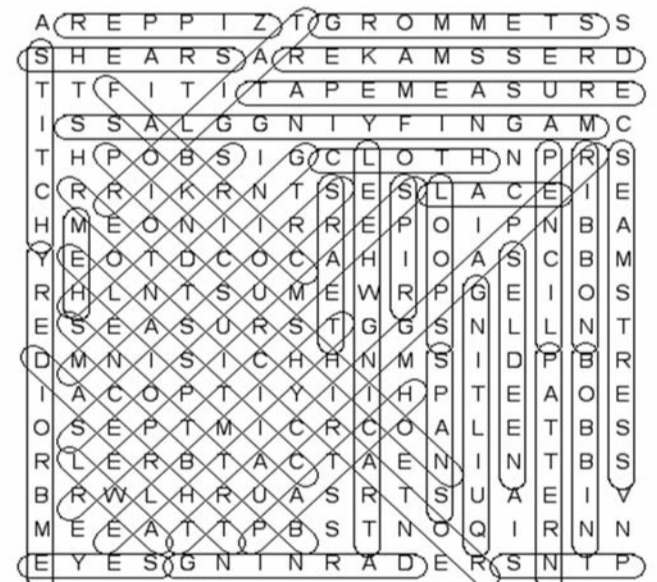
Find and circle all of the animals that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional animal.



- | | | | | |
|------------|---------|-------------|------------|------------|
| AARDVARK | DONKEY | HIPPOTAMUS | OTTER | SALMON |
| ALLIGATOR | DOVE | JACKAL | PANTHER | SLOTH |
| BABOON | EAGLE | JELLYFISH | PARROT | SWAN |
| BARRACUDA | ELK | KIWI | PEACOCK | SWORDFISH |
| BEAR | FERRET | LEOPARD | PELICAN | TIGER |
| BISON | FOX | LION | PIG | TORTOISE |
| CAMEL | GECKO | LLAMA | PORCUPINE | TROUT |
| CHIMPANZEE | GOAT | MACAW | QUAIL | TURKEY |
| CHINCHILLA | GOPHER | MACDOWLARK | RACCOON | VULTURE |
| COBRA | HAMSTER | MINK | RAVEN | WOLVERINE |
| COUGAR | HAWK | MOOSE | REINDEER | WOODPECKER |
| CROW | HERON | NIGHTINGALE | ROADRUNNER | WREN |

Yesterday Solution

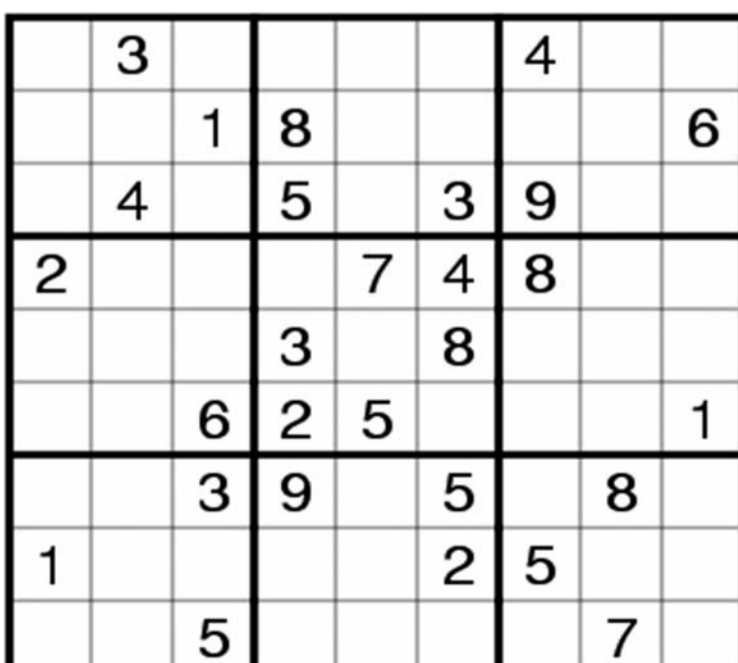
Sewing



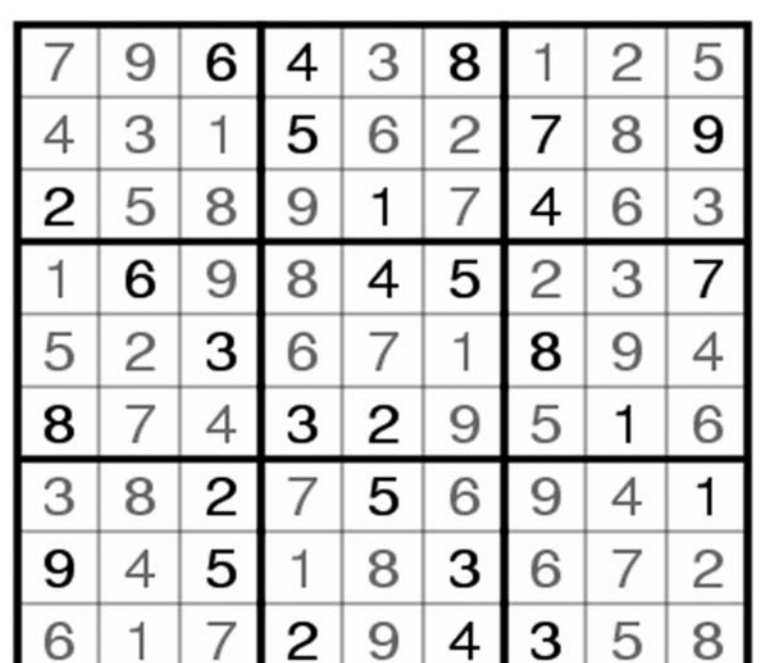
- | | | | |
|------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| AWL | HEM | PINS | SPOOL |
| BOBBIN | HOOKS | QUILTING | STITCH |
| BUTTONS | LACE | RIBBON | TAILOR |
| CLOTH | MAGNIFYING GLASS | RIPS | TAPE MEASURE |
| DARNING | MENDING | ROTARY CUTTER | TEARS |
| DRESSMAKER | NEEDLES | SCISSORS | THIMBLE |
| ELASTIC | PATCH | SEAM RIPPER | THREAD |
| EMBROIDERY | PATTERN | SEAMSTRESS | TRACING PAPER |
| EYES | PENCIL | SHEARS | TRACING WHEEL |
| FABRIC | PINCUSHION | SNAPS | ZIPPER |
| GROMMETS | | | |

The hidden sentence is: A STITCH IN TIME SAVES NINE

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution





In this Sept 15, 1997 file photo, producer George Martin, second right poses for photographers with musicians Mark Knopfler, Paul McCartney and Sting, prior to the start of the Music for Montserrat benefit concert in London. — AP/AFP photos



In this Oct 30, 2002 file photo, Beatles producer George Martin touches a statue of John Lennon in a park in the Vedado neighborhood of Havana, during his visit to Cuba.

'Fifth Beatle' George Martin dies at 90

Legendary British record producer George Martin, who turned the Beatles into the best-selling band in history, has died aged 90, his family said yesterday, as tributes poured in for "a giant of music". Beatles drummer Ringo Starr was the first to give the news, tweeting a picture of the "Fab Four" with Martin and saying: "God bless George Martin peace and love to Judy and his family... George will be missed". Paul McCartney—the only other surviving member of the band signed up by Martin in 1962 — penned a tribute, calling him "a true gentleman" and "a second father".

"If anyone earned the title of the fifth Beatle it was George," McCartney wrote on his website. "I'm so sad to hear the news... he was a true gentleman and like a second father to me. The world has lost a truly great man who left an indelible mark on my soul and the history of British music," he said. Martin's family confirmed that the producer, who helped revolutionize the sound of pop music, died at home on Tuesday, and thanked "everyone for their thoughts, prayers and messages of support". Martin signed up the Beatles to his Parlophone label after hearing their demo record, recognizing their potential while criticizing their composition skills.

'Giant of music'

British Prime Minister David Cameron tweeted that Martin was "a giant of music". Abbey Road, the iconic studios in London where Martin and the band most famously worked, issued a statement honoring "Sir George" for "transforming

music recording with his creative flair, innovation and passion." Martin was born on January 3, 1926, a carpenter's son from north London, and learned the piano as a teenager, dreaming of becoming a composer and performer like Sergei Rachmaninov. After serving in World War II, he studied at the prestigious Guildhall School of Music and began playing the oboe in bars and clubs around London.

His first job was at the BBC's music library. He then joined the record label Parlophone, a division of EMI, and rose to become its head by 1955 at the age of just 29. Martin quickly realized the Beatles' potential after first hearing them in 1962. "I liked them as people apart from anything else and I was convinced that we had the makings of a hit group," he told Melody Maker magazine in an interview. But he added: "As composers, they didn't rate. They hadn't shown me that they could write anything at all." The band's first single "Love Me Do", which reached number four in the charts in October 1962, "was pretty poor but it was the best we could do," he said.

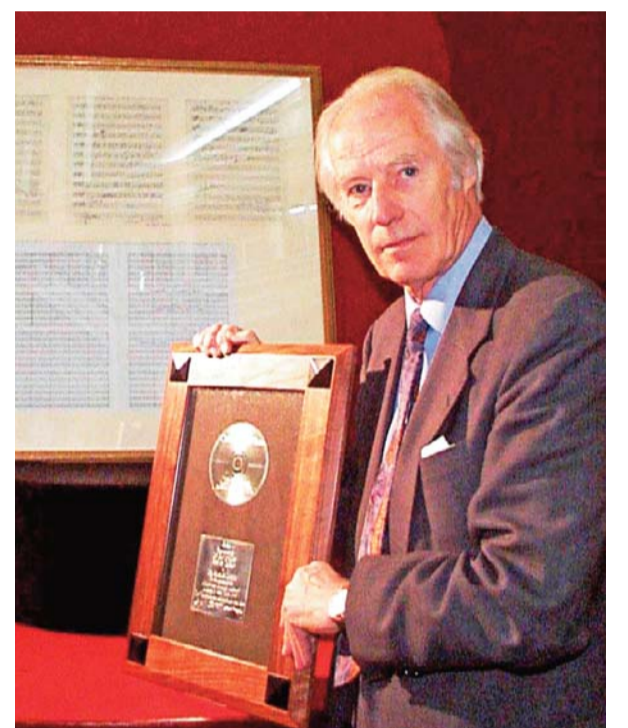
30 number one singles

That was followed by "Please Please Me", which made number two, and "From Me To You" in April 1963 — their first chart-topper. He also composed scores for the Beatles films "A Hard Day's Night" and "Yellow Submarine". Martin helped combine the sophistication and discipline of his classical background with their raw rock'n'roll attitude, spearheading the new generation of "British Invasion" groups. From the string octet on

"Eleanor Rigby", the layered psychedelia of "Strawberry Fields Forever" to the orchestral section on "A Day In The Life", Martin's arrangements gave colour and shape to the musical ideas of John Lennon and McCartney, earning him the nickname the "Fifth Beatle".

Martin described the creative process of "A Day In The Life" during a 2012 interview with the Wall Street Journal. "Paul suggested an orchestral orgasm, so I scored 24 measures, from the lowest note to the highest. I told the orchestra: 'Make your own way up there. If you're playing the same note as the chap next to you, you're wrong.'" He was quick to use new technologies, and the use of reversed samples and randomly spliced together snippets of recordings helped develop the band's later psychedelic sound, spawning a whole new genre of pop music. After the band split, Martin went on to work with other artists including Bob Dylan, Sting and Elton John. He produced 30 British number one singles, won six Grammys and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1996. The Beatles have sold over 1.6 billion records. — AFP

This file photo taken on May 4, 1999 shows Beatles producer George Martin at Sotheby's in London during the announcement of the sale of the instrumental score and BPI sales award for Candle in the Wind '97, the tribute song re-written for the funeral of Diana Princess of Wales.



This image released by Polk and Co, shows cast members, from left, Catherine Ricafort, Roger Bart, Baylee Littrell, Seth Rudetsky, Rachel York, Kevin Chamberlain and Olivia Phillip during a performance of, 'Disaster!'. — AP

Janet Jackson cancels European shows

Janet Jackson on Tuesday apparently canceled a planned European tour, the latest sudden change in her schedule since she reported a mystery illness in December. The pop superstar removed from her website all dates from her European tour, which was due to begin on March 30 in Birmingham, England. She offered no explanation and her representatives did not immediately comment.

But several ticket holders wrote on social media that they had received email notices from promoters that no new dates would be scheduled and that fans would be offered refunds. The apparent cancellation is the latest twist for Jackson, who announced on Christmas Eve that she was postponing shows in North America but later offered new dates, saying she would go ahead with the

European tour. She initially explained that she needed an urgent operation, but offered no details.

The 49-year-old sister of "King of Pop" Michael Jackson later elaborated only by denying rumors that she had cancer. Jackson's website still lists her US shows, which are scheduled to resume on May 14 in Las Vegas, as well as a recently announced March 26 performance to close the Dubai World Cup horse race. Jackson, who is married to Qatari businessman Wissam Al-Mana, has not performed since a tour of Japan in November that followed a string of North American dates. Last year, she released "Unbreakable"—her first album since her brother's death in 2009 — on which her voice often sounds eerily like Michael's. — AFP



This file photo taken on May 23, 2013 shows US singer Janet Jackson arrives for the amfAR's 20th Annual Cinema Against AIDS during the 66th Annual Cannes Film Festival. — AFP

All aboard the cheerfully campy musical 'Disaster!'

Welcome aboard the Barracuda, a floating casino and discotheque of dubious construction. It's 1979 and we're anchored to a pier in New York City's Hudson River, but about to set sail on a side-splittingly funny evening of singing, dancing and near-death experiences. Directed by Jack Plotnick with a book by Plotnick and Seth Rudetsky, the musical "Disaster!" is a campy carnival of clichés and gleefully cheesy comedy. Previously performed in two small off-Broadway theaters, it's a riotous spoof of the 1972 film "The Poseidon Adventure," with hilarious references to other disaster films.

The creative team has adroitly expanded the special effects and choreography to fill the Nederlander stage on Broadway, where "Disaster!" opened Tuesday night. The book skillfully weaves a range of popular songs from the 1970s, including "I'd Really Love to See You Tonight," "Knock Three Times," "Hooked on a Feeling," and two iconic feminist anthems, "I Will Survive" and "I Am Woman." Plotnick kicks the show into high gear with the energetic opening number "Hot Stuff," as lyrics cleverly shift in meaning among various characters. Tony Award-winner Roger Bart is confidently smarmy as Tony DelVecchio, the corner-cutting casino owner. Co-writer Rudetsky is nerdy perfection as Professor Ted Scheider, the disaster-predicting expert whom Tony will, of course, ignore until the Barracuda is upside down and floating out to sea.

Armed only with colorful polyester and spangled outfits, how will the passengers possibly survive an earthquake, a tsunami and encounters with a few piranhas and sharks as the ship fills with water? Then there's that inferno in the kitchen — and look out for a swarm of cuddly vermin. But at first,

it's just a party boat. Unexpectedly reunited lovers are charmingly enacted by Kerry Butler as Marianne, a feminist journalist working to expose Tony's shady business practices, and Adam Pascal, winningly earnest as Chad, the handsome ex-fiance she dumped a few years back. Inimitable Tony-winner Faith Prince is bursting with charm as Shirley Summers, secretly suffering from a terminal illness whose symptoms include uncontrollable cursing and eye-winking. Shirley's out to party with her just-retired husband, Maury (Kevin Chamberlain), and duet on "You're Still The One." In addition to shamelessly milking her symptoms with comic genius, Prince deftly leads the entire cast in tap-dancing the emergency escape instructions in Morse code.

Jennifer Simard quietly steals scenes as a deadpan singing nun with a gambling addiction, and brings down the house performing an increasingly lascivious version of "Never Can Say Goodbye" to a slot machine. Rachel York gives class to leggy lounge singer Jackie, a single mother of twins. She plaintively sings "When Will I Be Loved?" with Baylee Littrell, who provides plenty of sight gags as both twins, scampering to be in two places at once. While laughs are guaranteed at the mere sight of down-on-her-luck actress Lavora, (a sassy Loretta Nicole), there's ever-pessimistic scientific input from the Professor. But some character will always pop up with a new rescue idea, and there is high hilarity on these high seas. — AP

Smith, Bowie releases set for Record Store Day

Rare or new releases by musical giants including Patti Smith, David Bowie and The Doors will come out next month for Record Store Day, the growing celebration of vinyl's resurgence. Created in 2007 by independent US stores as a quirky tribute to their existence, Record Store Day has developed into an annual rite for shops around the world seizing on the growing market for vinyl. The latest Record Store Day will take place on April 16 and feature more than 300 special releases in the US market.

Organizers revealed the latest offerings at Electric Lady, the studio in New York's Greenwich Village built by Jimi Hendrix, which announced it was launching a series of re-recordings of classic albums made there. The first, to go on sale for Record Store Day, will be punk godmother Patti Smith's legendary debut album "Horses," which she remade live last year at Electric Lady to mark the work's 40th anniversary. Lenny Kaye, the guitarist who worked with

Smith both on the original and the new live version of "Horses," said that the two first met when he was a clerk at a Greenwich Village record store. "One of the beautiful things about a record store is that it's a gathering place," Kaye told the news conference. "I always thought that it was a place where, in a weird way, social misfits came to find their community," he said. Record Store Day will feature three releases from rock icon David Bowie, who died in January, including a disc of six songs he recorded in 1966 for his early label Pye in Britain. Bob Dylan will put out a limited batch of records with four songs from his forthcoming album, "Fallen Angels," a month before its release, although the disc will also go on sale in Japan where the rock icon is touring.

Tributes to Paris attack victims

Record Store Day has dedicated its 2016 edition to victims of the November 13 attacks in Paris, where 90 people were killed by Islamic extremists at the Bataclan nightclub. Metallica-

longtime supporters of Record Store Day—already announced the release of a 2003 concert at the Bataclan, with proceeds going to victims of the attacks. Newly revealed Record Store Day offerings dedicated to Paris victims include a live version of "Roadhouse Blues" by The Doors, the 1960s California rockers who enjoy a major fan base in France.

Pop duo Twenty One Pilots and metal band Anthrax are also releasing works whose proceeds will go to Paris attack victims. The global market for vinyl has soared in the past decade, increasing by nearly 55 percent in 2014 alone, according to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry.

The growth has been led by audiophiles in Western countries and Japan, although vinyl still represents just two percent of the global industry which has been rapidly transformed by the rise of streaming.

Mainstream interest

But in a sign of the rising interest in vinyl, Record Store Day 2016 will include works by chart-topping artists including a limited-edition picture disc of Justin Bieber's latest album "Purpose." Record Store Day co-founder Michael Kurtz hailed the inclusion of mainstream acts, saying he hoped to bring in young music fans and did not judge their tastes. "I love art, I worship it, but if you get too serious about it, it kind of loses its validity to someone who's 15 or 17 years old who's just discovering everything, and their moment in time is Justin Bieber," he said.

"Let them celebrate, let them be part of it—and discover Patti Smith." The latest Record Store Day will also include the launch of a documentary film, "The Smart Studios Story," which looks at the legendary recording post in Madison, Wisconsin that generated classic alternative albums such as Nirvana's "Nevermind" and Smashing Pumpkins' "Gish." —AFP



Michael Kurtz (right), co-founder of Record Store Day, and Lee Foster (left), manager of Electric Lady Studios, sit next to a poster advertising a special release by The Doors during a news conference inside Electric Lady Studios in New York City. — AFP

Antalya: Turkey's Riviera



Paradise on earth, land of mythology

Located on Anatolia's flourishing southwest coast bordered by the Taurus Mountains, Antalya is the largest Turkish city on the Mediterranean coast with over one million people in its metropolitan area. It is the land of history and monuments. It is a 'paradise' on earth, the land of mythology and legends. It is the most beautiful Turkish city, a 'Turkish Riviera' where sun-rays meet with seawater, providing very promising investment opportunities as the flourishing heart of tourism in Turkey.

Antalya is a resort destination in Turkey and gateway to its southern Mediterranean region, known as the turquoise coast for its blue waters. During the Roman era, Antalya was a major port city; today, a modern metropolis surrounds ancient fortifications. Beaches are flanked by large hotels, and popular outdoor activities include golfing, diving and hiking the 500-km Lycian Way footpath.



Following the recent Turkish-Russian crisis and the drop in numbers of tourists visiting Turkey, the first Antalya International Summit for Middle East & North Africa was held to encourage both Arab tourists and investors to visit Turkey. The summit was sponsored by Turkish Airlines and organized by the West Mediterranean Development Agency with full support from the Turkish cabinet investment support agency.



It attracted over 240 travel agents and media from various Arab countries in addition to some GCC and Arab diplomats in Turkey. The summit was inaugurated by Turkish Minister of Tourism and Culture Hussein Piman, who stressed that Turkey would always remain an island of stability and security thanks to its democracy, history and people.

Turkish Airlines' vice president of sales and marketing in the Middle East Adam Sialan stressed that the carrier has developed its fleet and has been awarded the world's best carrier award for five consecutive years. He added that Turkish Airlines has over 300 offices worldwide and flies to over 266 destinations. Antalya Governor Muammer Turker stressed the significance of

his city as a major tourist destination because of its nature and luxury hotels.

Beautiful Belek - Turkey's hidden gem

Belek is one of the centres of Turkey's tourism industry and home to more than thirty four-star and five-star hotels. It is increasingly in the spotlight for being a beautiful resort town on the Turkish Riviera of Antalya, which is well known for its white-sand beaches surrounded by pine forests. Its old downtown is testimony to Turkey's traditional culture and charm; and in addition, one can make the most of amazing sights such as Duden Waterfall-Kapuzkaldiran, Mount Olympus and spectacular views over its natural, green landscape.

History

The history of Belek dates back to the 4th Century BC. Over the ages, it has come under the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine as well as Seljuk influence, which has impacted the architecture and history of the place. When King Attalos II handed the territory over to the Romans in 133BC, the Roman influence became predominant and found expression in the architecture of large buildings, stadiums, gymnasiums, turrets and mosques - many theatres were also built during this period.



Out and About

Antalya Downtown offers visitors the chance to spend the whole day wandering down the streets of the old downtown and experience the true culture of the area with all its local spices and traditional food. The old town is also the perfect opportunity for visitors to pick Turkish handicrafts and souvenirs for friends and family back home, in addition to delicious Turkish delights also make nice gifts.

Antalya Aquarium is a great place to visit, especially if you are with your family. As the world's biggest tunnel aquarium with a length of 131 meters and a width of 3 meters, it offers visitors a journey with the most colourful, unusual and often deadly marine life. The aquarium



also has multi-dimensional movie technology in its Oceanride XD Cinema, with its extraordinary features that are highly impressive.

Golf: If you are into sports and a fan of Golf in particular, Belek has 14 huge and beautiful golf courses. Designed by famous names like Feherty, and Montgomerie, these courses have given Turkey international golfing credibility, and have ensured that a golf holiday in Turkey is a once in a life time opportunity.

Steps of Discovery

Mount Olympos is a must see for all tourists coming to Turkey. A mountain which is roughly 15 km north of the city, Olympos offers a beautiful view of the whole town. Visitors can soak in the lush greenery of bay trees, and pines, while appreciating the importance of this historic landmark, which was once one of the members of the Lycian Federation in Lycian times.

The Belek town mosque is one of the town's most historic landmarks. It is beautiful and relaxing, especially during the evening. Located in the centre of the town, the mosque stands alongside statues and a waterfall. All this, en route to lovely shops which can be found on the tree-lined boulevards of the town.

Duden Waterfalls - Karpuzkaldiran are another sight worth seeing in the province of Antalya. The waterfalls, formed by the recycle station water, are located 12 km north-east of Antalya. They end where the waters of the Lower D,den Falls drop off a rocky cliff directly into the Mediterranean Sea.

Dining Out

Among the specialties in Belek, one can have a soup called kulakli whose ingredients are chickpeas and small pieces of diced meat; tahinli piyaz, which is a dried-bean salad seasoned with crushed sesame seeds; tandir kebab; kabak tatlisi (pumpkin desert) sweetened with crushed sesame seeds and grape syrup and bergamot jam.

Transportation

There are three modes of transportation inside Belek-city bus, metro or cab. They are all convenient. In Antalya in general, the public bus system is the best method of getting to most parts of the region. It is not necessary to rent a car or taxi. The public transportation options in Antalya are efficient, inexpensive and convenient for tourists trying to get to most of the major destinations and attractions. The dolmus (shared taxi

service) is a perfectly legitimate and efficient mode of transportation and visitors are encouraged to try it.



Getting there

Turkish Airlines offers international flights to Antalya with a one stop flight in Istanbul or direct flights from Istanbul to Antalya for local flyers. As 'Europe's Best Airline', for the fifth year running at the Skytrax 2015 awards, Turkish Airlines continues to impress travellers with its award-winning service and unsurpassed country network.

Turkish Airlines Miles & Smiles loyalty programme rewards frequent flyers, Wingo promotions provide competitively priced tickets, and guests travelling business class can enjoy the recently enhanced luxury CIP lounge in Istanbul.





US musician Pharrell Williams attends the Chanel show during the 2016-2017 fall/winter ready-to-wear collection fashion show on March 8, 2016 in Paris. — AP/AFP photos



Korean actress Park Shin-hye (left) and a guest attend the Chanel show.



Editor-in-chief of Numero magazine Babeth Dijan (left), Willow Smith (center) daughter of Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith (right).

1980s glam makes a Paris comeback as Chanel stays classy



It was back to the future on the Paris catwalks Tuesday as Chanel cleverly tweaked its back catalogue only for Saint Laurent to revive a look that some thought best forgotten. In what could be his last show for the label, designer Hedi Slimane—the man credited with the skinny black jeans look and making grunge glam—was judged to have given the brand “the finger” by parodying its founder Yves Saint Laurent’s least glorious period.

The hugely-influential *Women’s Wear Daily* was scathing about his collection which went hell for shiny snakeskin leather for late 1980s vamp, claiming it was drawing on a time when “Yves Saint Laurent was well past his creative prime”. Slimane sent out a succession of very short one-shouldered dresses with gigantic bows, belts and black angel or bat wings that would not have looked out of place in “Miami Vice”. Their full-throttle glamour had some style editors shifting awkwardly in their chairs, each of which carried a brass plate onto which their names had been engraved.

Catsuits

Vogue, however, was complimentary, hailing “Slimane firing on full on Eighties glam... clubland style”. The verdict on social media was mixed. While one style editor wryly described one dress as “Batwoman”, a red heart-shaped fur coat provoked another fashion fan to tweet: “I can’t believe Saint Laurent murdered Gossamer from Looney Tunes to make a coat”—referring to the hairy red monster who is always trying to eat Bugs Bunny. “It must have been parody-as in giant middle-finger parody,” Bridget Foley of *Women’s Wear Daily* wrote of the show staged late Monday in a Left Bank mansion.

“Hey,” Hedi Slimane said with every look, “you who didn’t love my indie-druggie-grungy-disaffected LA youth routine these past four years. How ‘bout Eighties camp couture?... The parody didn’t play nicely.”

Shoulder pads

Foley was not a fan either of the exaggerated padded shoulders of his coats. “Just how silly can a shoulder treatment get? Answer: Pretty silly.” There was no such controversy at Chanel, where designer Karl Lagerfeld, who was only hitting his stride in the 1980s, continued his modernizing riff on the brand’s core looks, with lots of boucle wool jackets, coats and skirts, piles of pearls and big necklaces. The Kaiser, as Lagerfeld is known, created an old-fashioned couture salon inside the French capital’s Grand Palais. His models strode down the aisles in front of stars that included singer Pharrell Williams in riding hats.

While Coco Chanel loved to sport a boater, Lagerfeld told AFP that the hats were “something you could nearly

wear on your bike and on your motorbike because they can protect you. “They are quite tough... but at the same time they have a frivolous note with a piece of jewelry of a flower there,” he added. A strong equestrian theme ran right through the collection with the hats decorated with rosettes and black riding boots open at the ankles. Despite the set evoking the nostalgia of an old couture show, Lagerfeld, 82, said there was nothing old-school about his clothes.

“These dresses are not old couture, the collection has a more street attitude,” he insisted. The models were not tottering in high heels he said, because these clothes “were made for walking, like Nancy Sinatra’s song”. “These Boots Are Made For Walking”. French designer Agnes b celebrated her 40 years in the business with a typically timeless and elegant collection that reflected women’s fashion over decades, starting with a billowy white 1940s style silk skirt ensemble.

And in a witty final twist to mark International Women’s Day, she sent two modern brides down the runway, one in a white catsuit and veil and in the other in a silver wool-trimmed bomber jacket, before the models held up letters reading “Vive les femmes!”. US actress Eva Longoria later sat in the front row at Taiwanese luxury label Shiatzy Chen, appearing in head-to-toe black with a long-sleeved see-through blouse and equally transparent skirt. The actress is set to release her own autumn clothing line which she teased in an Instagram post a week ago. — AFP





Willow Smith does a kick boxing move before Chanel's Fall-Winter 2016-2017 ready to wear fashion collection presented in Paris.—AP

Willow Smith, 15, becomes new face of Chanel

Willow Smith, the 15-year-old daughter of the US actor Will Smith, was named Tuesday as an ambassador for French fashion house Chanel. The actress and singer, who made her screen debut at seven in the 2007 film "I Am Legend" which starred her father, was on the Paris front row Tuesday to see Chanel's autumn-winter catwalk show with her mother actress Jada Pinkett Smith. She posed for the cameras in a black and silver mesh-effect Chanel catsuit before the show outside the Grand Palais in the French capital.

She is the luxury brand's youngest "trendsetter", following Hollywood star Johnny Depp's 16-year-old daughter Lily-Rose who was named a Chanel ambassador in July. Chanel's designer Karl Lagerfeld said last year that he had taken Violette d'Urso, the 15-year-old daughter of his former inspiration Ines de la Fressange, as his latest "muse". After Tuesday's catwalk show the 82-year-old legend reappeared to take his bow holding the hand of his seven-year-old godson Hudson Kroenig-son of the model Brad Kroenig-whose coat echoed the collection.

Chanel said Willow Smith had been wearing their clothes for "public appearances since 2013 and her first encounter with Karl Lagerfeld was in 2014 when he photographed her for the American magazine V." Smith recorded her first album at the age of 10 and supported singer Justin Bieber the following year on a part of his European tour. Her rapper and actor brother Jaden Smith appeared in a skirt earlier this year in a photoshoot to promote the Louis Vuitton spring-summer collection. Paris fashion week has been more diverse than ever in terms of age and race of those on the catwalk, despite a row over rapper Kanye West's favorite designer Demna Gvasalia only casting white models for his two shows. — AFP



Fashion



German designer Karl Lagerfeld for Chanel with his godson Hudson Kroenig.



Models present creations for Chanel during the 2016-2017 fall/winter ready-to-wear collection fashion show.



Models present creations for Louis Vuitton during the 2016-2017 fall/winter ready-to-wear collection fashion show yesterday in Paris.

Paris fashion bows before 'geriatric starlet' Iris Apfel, 94



This file photo taken on December 3, 2014 shows Iris Apfel, Design Entrepreneur speaking onstage at the The New York Times International Luxury Conference at the Mandarin Oriental in Miami, Florida. — AFP

Move over models of the moment Gigi Hadid and Kendall Jenner. The real star of Paris fashion week is a wise-cracking 94-year-old New Yorker. "Someone once told me, 'You are not pretty, and you never will be,'" Iris Apfel joked to reporters as she was whisked with the occasional aid of a wheelchair between a reception in her honor and yet another catwalk show. "But it doesn't matter. You have something else you have style." The flamboyant interior designer who was a fixture on front rows of Paris fashion shows for half a century is again the toast of the town.

Her very individual style is the subject of an exhibition at the posh Parisian department store, Le Bon Marche, and she is the star of a new advertising campaign for the carmaker Citroen, as well as the face of the Australian label Blue Illusion's "Ageless" range. A fashion institution immediately recognizable by her oversized owl glasses, Apfel's fame spread beyond the style pages after the success of Albert Maysles' 2014 documentary about her, "Iris".

It helped to turn her into what she calls a "geriatric starlet", with everyone from Alexander Wang to rapper Kanye West declaring themselves fans of the world's chicest nonagenarian best known for her love of baubles. In a year when mature women have been a common sight on the Paris catwalk, dominating the Undercover and Manish Arora shows, Apfel trailblazer for the much older woman.

'She's an inspiration'
"She represents the epitome of style and elegance. She's perfection," American model Leigh Lezark told a French TV channel after meeting her at the Dries Van Noten show. The Belgian designer was equally effusive, telling her that he was "thinking about you"

when he was creating his much-praised collection. "She is an idol and an infinite source of inspiration for me," he told Canal+. "I want everyone to live like her with grace and style. She wears the most amazing things. And she never wears the same thing twice."

Never one to shy away from colour or unconventional silhouettes, Apfel urged young women at one gathering to abandon the modern "uniform of black tights or jeans with a sweater, boots and a leather bomber jacket." Instead she told them to "dare to be different. Be yourselves, be individual. 'If you wear something and it doesn't work, don't worry,' she quipped, "the style police are not going to arrest you."

Museums have been falling over themselves for years to get their hands on the huge collection of couture Apfel has amassed over nearly seven decades, filling two floors of her Park Avenue apartment with work by the great designers of the 20th century. New York's Metropolitan Museum staged the first major retrospective of her wardrobe in 2005, with Apfel admitting she was as likely to pick up interesting jewellery in a Harlem junkshop as in Tiffany's.

The key to enjoying life, she said, was to never stop working. "I haven't," she told guests at a reception in her honor at the American embassy in Paris.

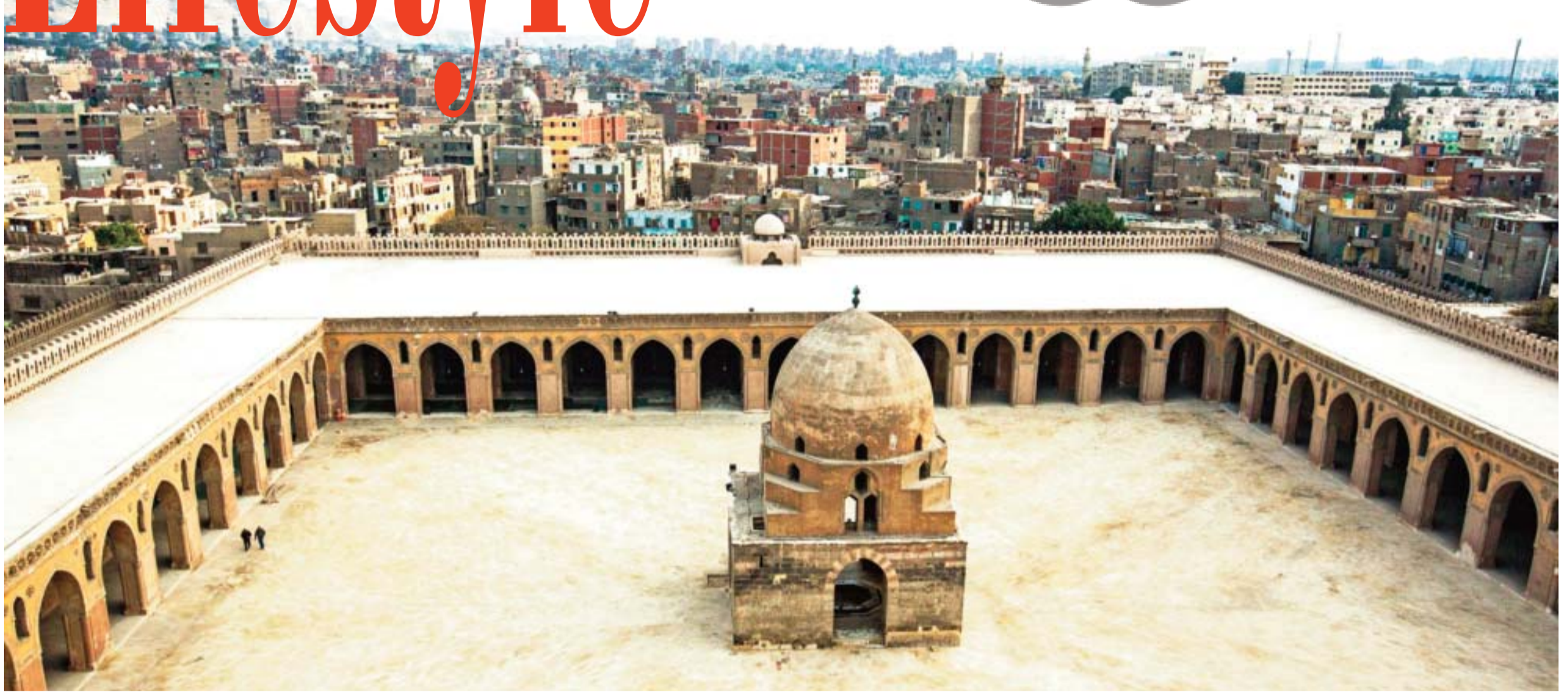
"If I sat down it would be a disaster... People just roll over. Life can be very grey. You have to look at the better side of it and do things that help you and the world," she added. "Try new things. Don't let age and numbers frighten you. You have to find your own bliss, be as individual as you can, and don't go with the herd." — AFP

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 2016

'Fifth Beatle' George Martin dies at 90

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Visitors walk in the courtyard of Ahmed Ibn Tulun Mosque, one of the oldest mosques of the city and the largest in size in Cairo, Egypt. — AP photos

Ancient mosque offers respite from Cairo chaos

Amid Cairo's cramped mass of humanity and traffic, with its incessant honking and haggling, visitors will be hard-pressed to find some solitude. But if you're willing to go off the beaten tourist track a bit, serenity can be found. The expansive Mosque of Ahmed Ibn Tulun is not as famous as Al-Azhar Mosque or the Mohamed Ali mosque inside the Citadel fortress, but it's a rare oasis of silence in one of the world's busiest, and loudest, cities. The mosque, completed in 879, is considered the oldest in Cairo that has survived in its original form, and the third largest in the world by area. Local legend claims it was built on the hill where Noah's Ark landed after the flood.

Upon entering, you encounter the huge square plaza, surrounded by four shaded pathways that include patches of green rugs for prayer and long lines of hanging lanterns. The arches between the columns showcase a variety of sculpted patterns. If the backdrop looks familiar to movie buffs, it's because Roger Moore confidently strolled down these pathways as James Bond in a memorable scene from "The Spy Who Loved Me." It's not unusual to find only a handful of oth-

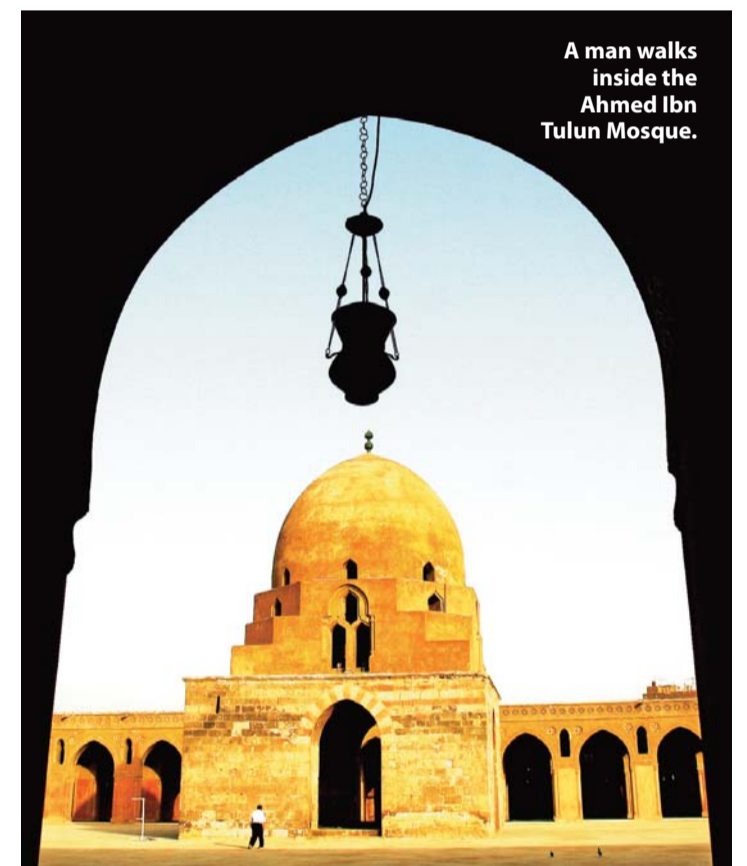
er visitors on site and the unexpected quiet allows one to observe the various formations of shadows and the rays of light creeping through the intricately carved stone windows. The only noise here is that of the birds chirping from the rafters.

Vantage point

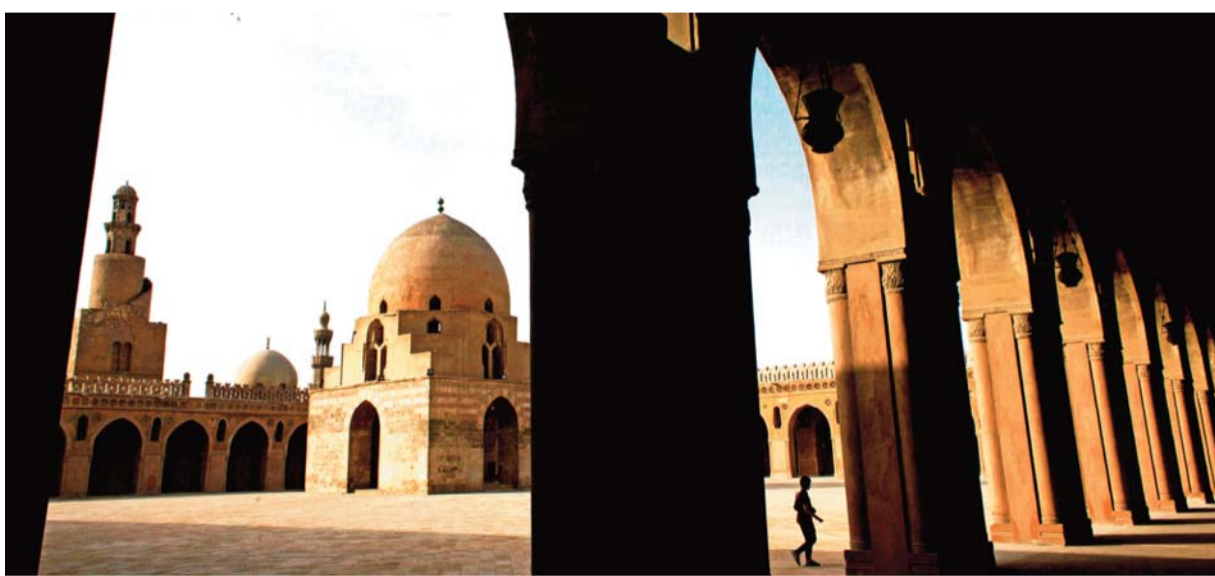
Once you've absorbed the calming karma of the courtyard, you can ascend the minaret's exterior stone staircase where a panoramic, albeit hazed-by-pollution, view of Cairo is revealed and you can take in the sheer expanse of the sprawling metropolis. From this vantage point it's easy to see why Cairo is known as "the City of the Thousand Minarets." The vista of mosques, broken roads, bumper-to-bumper traffic and roofs littered with satellite dishes will remind you of the intensity from which you have just escaped. Entrance to Ibn Tulun mosque is free but donations are gladly accepted and actively encouraged from the men who attach cloth bags to your shoes in deference to the site's sanctity. Within the same compound one can include a visit to the

Gayer-Anderson Museum, which boasts an impressive collection of Egyptian artifacts and relics. It provides a glimpse into the life of history-obsessed retired British officer John Gayer-Anderson - who made it his home - and offers perhaps the best example of domestic Cairo architecture. The museum is built from two houses dating back to the 15th and 16th century and is connected by a bridge supported by the outer wall of the mosque. Highlights include an internal well, rooms devoted to the varied Chinese, Turkish and Syrian oriental styles and a courtyard that has another unlikely feature for Cairo - green grass. The rooftop terrace is impressive and has been used as a set for several movies, including the Bond one where Moore battles a henchman on it and then flings him off the roof.

The museum, too, can be quite empty, with an accompanying guide turning on the lights of each room for a lone visitor. Entrance costs 40 Egyptian pounds (about \$5). But it's worth a visit if only to prolong a relaxed outing before heading out once again into the hectic streets of Cairo. — AP



A man walks inside the Ahmed Ibn Tulun Mosque.



A young man walks in the Ahmed Ibn Tulun mosque.



An Egyptian Muslim prays inside Ahmed Ibn Tulun Mosque.



A street musician plays while walking through an alley in the Khan El-Khalili market, a popular destination for tourists in Cairo, Egypt. — AP photos

Khan El-Khalil Bazaar offers a taste of Cairo

When it comes to Cairo tourism, it's all about the Pyramids and a trip to this sprawling metropolis filled with mosques, markets and monuments would not be complete without a visit to the collection of ancient pharaonic wonders in Giza, on the outskirts of the city.

But a proper visit entails some time and effort and is tough to pull off for business travelers on tight time constraints. If all you have is an hour or so for a quick getaway, your best bet is probably a visit to the city's famous Khan El-Khalili Bazaar that has been operating since the 14th century. Here you can get a brief taste of Cairo's feverish pace in an old-style marketplace of cramped, maze-like alleyways filled with merchants peddling their wares to tourists and Egyptians alike.

There are spices, perfumes and jewelry to choose from as well as pottery, traditional Egyptian garb, belly-dancing outfits and any type of souvenir you can imagine. But be prepared to hone your bargaining skills ahead of time - the merchants here are expert negotiators and have been known to start their offers at three to four times the actual market value. As long as you don't mind the haggling, and don't get bogged down in it for too long, it can be an

entertaining part of the experience. Be sure to get off the main drag and venture into the arched inner alleys for a more intimate take of the sights, smells and sounds.

Aside from shopping, you can also stop at a traditional coffee and tea shop for a hot drink or to smoke a shisha, the ornate Egyptian water pipe of fruit-scented tobacco. Al-Fishawi is the most well-known shop and is legendary for being open consecutively for centuries.

It's a close taxi ride from the city center and if you have some extra time you can combine a visit with a quick glimpse of two adjacent sites: Al-Azhar mosque, renowned as the epicenter of study in the Sunni Muslim world, and Muizz Street, the historic spine of Islamic Cairo. Located just behind the Khan, Muizz Street is lined with several monumental and beautiful mosques and was recently renovated with new paving and lighting - making for a dramatic and lovely nighttime visit with fewer tourists. There's plenty more to explore in Islamic Cairo but if all you have time for is a glimpse, the colorful market and its surroundings give a good sneak peek sense of the city. — AP



In this file photo, Romi, 26, displays one of the items offered for sale at his souvenir store in the Khan El-Khalili market.



An Egyptian vendor reads a newspaper as he waits for customers in the Khan El-Khalili market.



Foreigners and Egyptians stroll through the Khan El-Khalili market.