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Local Spotlight

CYBER CRIMES



By Muna Al-Fuzai

muna@kuwaittimes.net

The rates of crime overall in Kuwait is on a downward trend. This is not the case, however, when one considers e-crimes despite the existence of a tough law punishable by imprisonment or large fines! How do we face cyber-crime? The Internet is accessible to everyone including the ignorant and educated without any restrictions. This has led to a rash of what have been labeled e-crimes in the region including online blackmail, insults and electronic thefts. As a result, the GCC states including Kuwait and the UAE have issued e-media or cyber crime law aimed at tackling such concerns. However they also repress free speech.

Government statistics in 2015 revealed the types and numbers of cyber crimes committed in Kuwait including 1212 cases total of which 305 were registered against users for cursing and making insults through chat programs and social media. Sixty five cases were registered for vice, 49 cases of theft (the hacking or stealing of Twitter and Facebook accounts) , 296 cases of misuse of means of communication, 55 cases of threats and blackmail, 46 cases of theft, contempt of religions and sects contempt and four cases where users were in violation of military law issues, 27 cases of scamming, five death threats, seven cases of inciting hatred against a class of the society, 40 cases of plagiarism and gatherings without a permit, 114 cases of incitement to immorality and debauchery, and 14 cases of broadcasting false news as well as other cases with unlisted 'crimes'.

This suggests we are seeing a rise in electronic crimes - or rather in reporting such as 'electronic' rather than just normal crimes of blackmail, insult or scamming and theft. Interior Ministry statistics reported that some crime rates have experienced a decline during 2015, falling 9 percent from 2014 figures. Drug offenses have decreased at a rate of 17 percent in addition to the lower rates of the number of registered cases, while the electronic crimes increased by 20 percent, the new crimes on society. Of course since we didn't really have 'cyber' crimes as an option 10 years ago all of the above would have been classed within the other types of regular crimes and so the rise is hard to accept on its face value.

But I think that the biggest obstacle comes when applying the new e-media law in practice. It's a modern law for crimes that are unusual and not like any of the daily crimes that people are already familiar with. We have to educate people about electronic crimes, so I still think it's important to focus on educating people especially young people and children of the seriousness of the matter and the penalties that await any of these in the event of misuse of social media.

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: Photo shows the front of a traditional Kuwaiti boom. — Photo by KUNA/Ali Al-Romi

KUWAITIS ROMANTICIZE THE IDYLIC ISLAND OF FAILAKA

KUWAIT: The island of Failaka is a historical national legacy with a history stretching back 3000 years, at one epoch being a sojourn for Alexander the Great of Macedonia and for extended periods a location where Kuwaiti people thrived and carried on a varied idyllic life. The island has been the only one among other Kuwaiti islands that has consistently been inhabited because it has been life-sustaining for its inhabitants with the availability of water, either rain water or subterranean water, for agriculture and farming.

Crops such as wheat, melons, onions, lentils, and carrots could be seen on the island as well as livestock, horses, and deer in addition to migrating swarms of birds which routinely sojourned there. Most of the inhabitants of Failaka over the

years set foot there as immigrants from well-known Arabian tribes who migrated from the Arabian peninsula region to the island where they took up fishing and pearl diving, among other things, for a living, said island historian Khaled Al-Ansari, in remarks to KUNA.

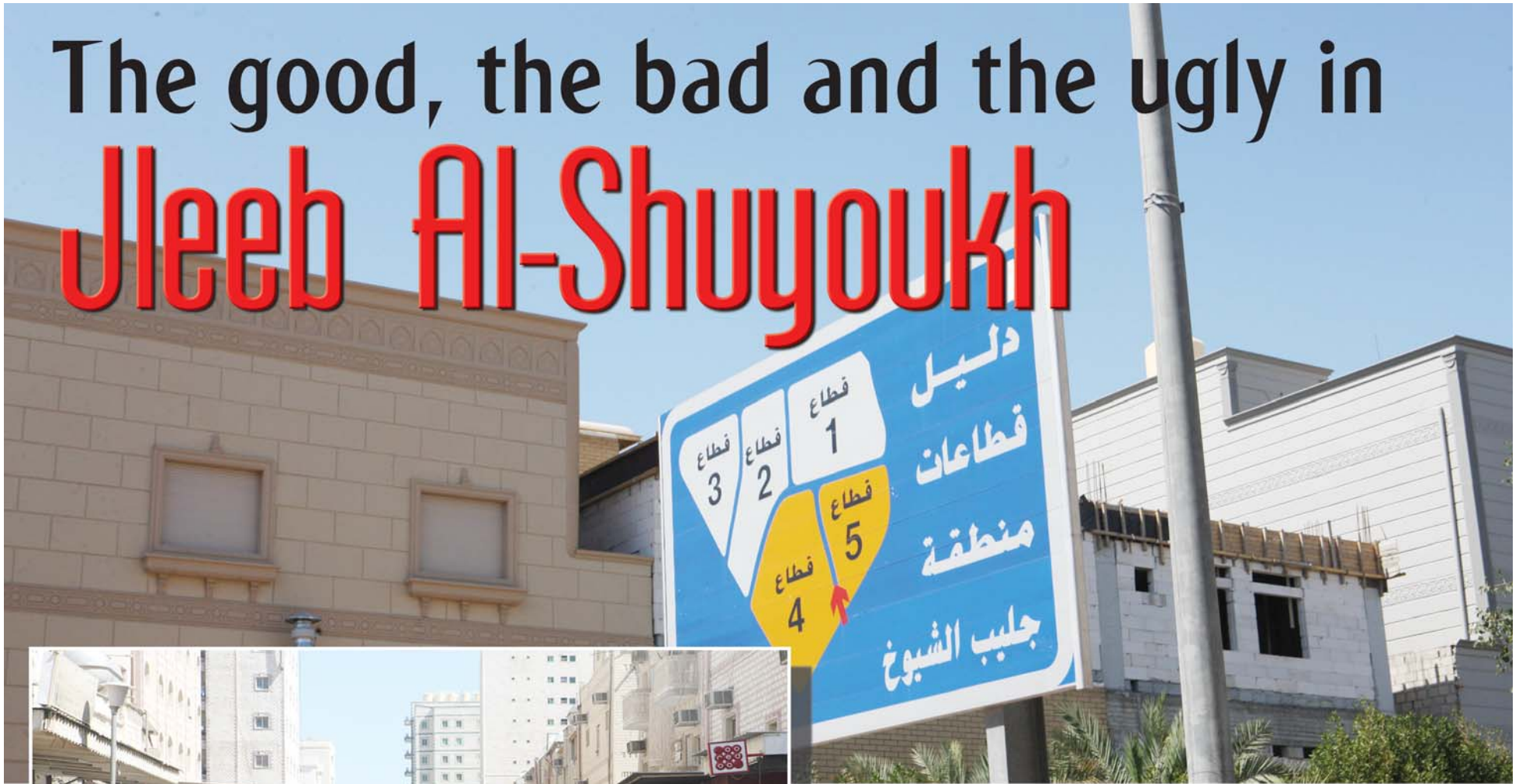
Numerous fishing and pearl diving boats and ships, including dhows, docked at the island's antiquated dock yards and marinas up until 1961 when a useful dock was built for boats and ships carrying passengers and cargo, said Al-Ansari. A few years later a larger dock was built. From ancient to recent times, the coastline of Failak has been dotted with the sight of fish traps, an old method for catching fish practiced more often than not by members of the Al-Awazim tribe as well as other island inhabitants, said the island historian.

Contact between the island inhabitants and mainland Kuwaitis has been ongoing since antiquated times as the islanders shipped their agricultural produce and fish to mainland markets right up until the late 1950s, he said, noting that numerous mainlanders used to vacation on the island and some still do so nowadays. Failaka Island boasts smooth, sandy beaches and arable soil and teeming marine life that could easily be exploited for tourism. It will always remain a lovely destination for mainlanders to connect with old Kuwait and a way of life than has vanished into history. — KUNA



Historic coins

The good, the bad and the ugly in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh



"Jleeb is like a sanctuary place for me and my family. I experienced heartaches and many other things, but I can only praise the place I called home..."



By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: One of the most infamous locations in Kuwait, it goes by many names. Indian and South Asian expats call it Abbasiya while expat Arabs call it Hasawi.

The area is officially called Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh. Translated from local dialect, it means an area with water wells owned by sheikhs. Traditional folklore says that bedouins used to camp in the area, watering their camps from the wells and this is why it was also known historically as 'Saihed al Awazem' (the area of Al-Awazim tribe).

Nowadays, the area is heavily populated by expatriate workers, mostly from South Asia and Arab countries such as Egypt and Syria. Currently it is flanked by major roads - Ghazali Expressway and the 6th Ring Road and is less than 5 kms from the Kuwait International Airport.

Why Abbasiya/Hasawi?

Abbasiya was derived from a businessman named Abbas Munawer Al-Rashidi. He was one of the founding members of Kuwait's parliament who owned a piece of land in Jleeb, but sold it in 1965. The name Hasawi, on the other hand, came from another businessman named Mubarak Al-Hasawi. He was also a prominent member of the National Assembly in the early years of the parliament in Kuwait. Now, the area is divided into five blocks. It's known more for its vice dens, overcrowding, impoverished neighborhoods, overflowing garbage bins and crime rates than for the hundreds of thousands of decent, hardworking folk who live there.

KUWAIT: Photos show various problem areas of Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

Continued on Page 4



Home away from home

A Filipina, who lived in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh for most of her life in Kuwait, says she liked the area very much and most of her unforgettable memories were formed in Jleeb. In fact, she was sad when she finally moved out last year when the building owner decided to construct a new multi-storey building on the same land.

"I got married, had kids and lived there for many years until they grew up and now they are in Manila for their college/university degrees," she said. "Jleeb is like a sanctuary place for me and my family. I experienced heartaches and many other things, but I can only praise the place I called home...My husband died in 2007 and I continued to stay because I have beautiful memories of the place and I don't want to lose them," she added. "They said Jleeb is un-organized, dirty and poorly maintained environment. Yes; I think it's true, but I don't really mind, I feel I am home if I am in Jleeb."

Many problems

Evanz, a 28-year-old expat from Ghana feels the same. "Oh well, this is where I live now, I don't really mind about the cares of this place; but yes, the place is not so well-maintained," Evan said. "In summer, the water is on and off all the time, so I have extra gallons of water so I can still shower every day," he said.

Ramesh, 50, from State of Rajasthan in India has called Jleeb 'a home' despite the obvious problems of sanitation and hygiene all over. "I don't see it worse. We have worst places in India. I lived here (in Jleeb) for

over 15 years and this place is a home for me too," he said. Ramesh lives just opposite his work at a small salon shop, near the police station. He works and goes home straight from his hair-cutting job.

Rajesh, 36, another resident of Jleeb who is from Kerala has many complaints about Jleeb. Compared to Salmiya where he lived for about a year, Jleeb needs proper rehabilitation and maintenance. "Maybe there is already a plan but I don't know. I see very often here some damaged drainage system, the smell is overpowering, especially if ministry fails to fix the problem as quick as possible," he said.

Another complaint was about the small and medium businesses which they also have in many places in Jleeb, but most of the time, it contributes to congested roads traffic problems on the roadside. "Imagine the traffic it created, I don't really know if the government cares about the residents of Jleeb any longer; small businesses on the side-streets usually delays our transactions automatically; it also affects the delivery of goods and services," he said.

Despite the many problems, the area thrives with a large community of small and medium businesses, hundreds of shops, baqalas, groceries and services as well as several major schools.

SCHOOLS IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS
OF JLEEB AL-SHUYOUKH

- Indian Educational School, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
- Indian Central School
- United Indian School Abbassiya
- Integrated Indian School Abbassiya
- Kuwait Indian School Abbassiya
- Al-Rashed Indian School
- Indian Learners Own Academy
- The New Philippines Kuwait International School
- The Pakistani Schools in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh
- Pakistan English School & College and more...



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- Free Camera Bag.
- One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait

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Fifth prize

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- One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Bahrain - Kuwait

Sixth prize

- Canon Camera PowerShot G15.
- Free Camera Bag.
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All photos should be submitted at the Kuwait Times newspaper before 17th of March 2016.

Rules & Conditions:

- The competition is open to individuals of all ages.
 - The submitted photos should be taken by the participant.
 - Every participant is allowed to submit maximum five entries.
 - The photos can be black and white or colour size 40X30 cm.
 - All entries should be provided a hard copy and Soft Copy on a CD (in high resolution) with photo of the participant needs to be included in the CD.
 - The original coupon should be attached to the back of each photo and should include a complete information about the participant.
- The coupons are advertised at Kuwait Times and Al Anba newspapers during the period of competition.
- All submitted photos will become property of Kuwait Times newspaper and can be used for different purposes.
 - The winners will be chosen by a panel of judges.
 - All photos must be original and should not be doctored with any design program, such as Photoshop.

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A PASSION FOR IRON



KUWAIT: Blacksmith Abdullah Ghulam at work. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

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Q&A with a blacksmith

By Faten Omar

Abdullah Ghulam, a 75-year-old Iranian blacksmith, has a passion and love for iron. Everything is very hands-on in his workshop, and even some of the tools he uses have been forged here. Ghulam allowed Kuwait Times into his workshop to see a demonstration of his work and the huge assortment of equipment, anvils and racks bristling with tools that have taken years to acquire.

Kuwait Times: What type of blacksmithing do you do? What do you make?

Ghulam: I have general knowledge of how to make and repair many things, from complex to simple objects. I take on pretty much anything that comes my way. I like making things that sell quickly.

KT: How and when did you get started in blacksmithing?

Ghulam: When I was in elementary school in Iran, my father started to teach me about blacksmithing, but I began actual work when I was 12 years old. My father made me learn more about blacksmithing to prevent me from causing trouble, and I did not like school anyway.

KT: What object or thing did you use as your first anvil?

Ghulam: My first anvil was my father's Mousehole Forge anvil back in Iran.

KT: Tell us about your first creation?

Ghulam: My first creation was a laundry dry rack made of iron.

KT: Who assisted you or encouraged you?

Ghulam: I was encouraged by my father till he died. But my sons and my grandsons hate my work as a blacksmith - they always tell me that I smell like iron.

KT: What event changed your attitude about blacksmithing?

Ghulam: Nothing changed anything; only that I want to learn more.

KT: What tools has changed or made your life easier in the shop?

Ghulam: The tools that have made the great-

est difference in the shop are better hammers, a knife grinder and bandsaw.

KT: What advice would you give to those starting out in blacksmithing?

Ghulam: I doubt anyone is interested in blacksmithing nowadays because it is a dying job, but the best advice I can give is to learn the basics of metal work before jumping into more specialized work. Learn about hammer blows and fire control and wear hearing protection and goggles, because this job could be dangerous. Apprentices need to know the process before they can put machinery in the mix.

KT: What are some of the interesting things that have happened to you in your life as a blacksmith?

Ghulam: I do not look at things the same way again. I only notice iron objects and wonder what I could have done if I had made them.



Preserving Kuwait's architectural heritage by drawing it

LOCAL GROUP OF SPECIALISTS DOCUMENT DISAPPEARING CITYSCAPE

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

The architectural landscape in Kuwait is renewing constantly. Old buildings are disappearing, replaced by skyscrapers and high-rises. Meanwhile, the facades of some old buildings are covered by modern claddings for the sake of beautification without repairing and restoring the interiors, just like temporary cosmetic surgery, the impact of which soon fades away. Change can be positive in architecture if construction is modern and environmentally friendly in line with the necessities of building more secure and sophisticated structures.

Some groups in Kuwait are seeking to preserve old buildings, fully aware that not every old structure has an historical value. In 2013, architect Hamad Al-Khulaifi, who holds an MA in Urban Design from Miami University, took a different path by organizing monthly architectural gatherings to help raise awareness and develop more understanding of the medium by drawing. "Drawing Kuwait" targets professionals and those interested in architecture and pushes them to continue developing their skills in drawing as well as studying buildings built in different areas of the country.

"Our goal is learning about architecture in an indirect way and expanding knowledge of the architects about their field. After we draw, we critique these buildings to not to fall for the same mistakes while designing. Also, we aim to bring the architecture community together," Khulaifi explained.

Mission of Drawing Kuwait

The first Drawing Kuwait event was at the Sawaber residential complex in Kuwait City. The construction of the complex, made up of 33 buildings and 528 apartments, ended in 1980. "We are now thinking to gather at the same place to draw it before it is demolished. Although we plan our gatherings in advance, sometimes we decide to go with no specific plan to study a place as soon as we know

that it will disappear. Take Bayt Lothan for instance. We organized a drawing gathering there after it was announced that it's going to be razed," he added.

After the gatherings became popular through social media, Hamad decided to



Arch. Hamad Al-Khulaifi



Arch. Fatima Al-Alawi

find partners who shared the same concerns and goals to help him in his mission. This led to architect Fatima Al-Alawi from the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) joining Drawing Kuwait. "The gathering is facing a problem. It seems that people come out of interest more than specialization. We urge the presence of specialists to achieve greater benefits in term of exchanging experiences and studying architectural forms to find drawbacks and advantages. In addition,

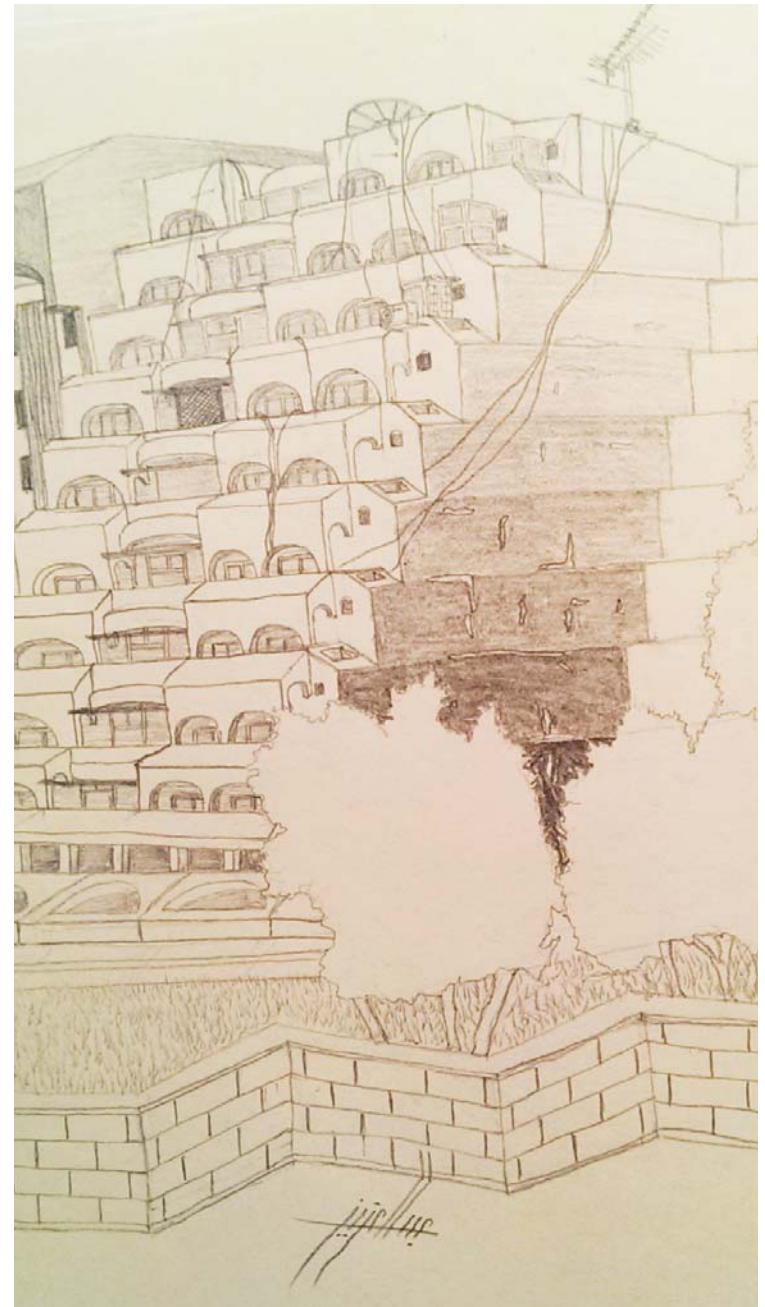
we want to introduce the importance of understanding architecture to our community," Alawi said. "My role as a partner focuses on everything related to writing articles and descriptions that accompany the sketches and publishing through social media," she added.

Drawing Kuwait's current season is likely to focus on Shaheed Park, Imam Al-Sadiq Mosque, Kuwait Towers, Kuwait University and the water towers. "As you see, we don't only focus on old buildings. So far, 12 gatherings have been organized since 2013. Our gatherings have been supported by the National Council for Culture, Art and Letters (NCCAL), the American Institute for Architecture Students - Kuwait University (AIAS) and the Kuwait Architecture Students Association (KASA)," Khulaifi said.

"We have hosted a number of experienced architects and artists such as artist Zahra Al-Mahdi and architects Waleed Shaalan, Ricardo Camacho, Muhannad Al-Baqshi and Sulaiman Al-Bader. Drawing Kuwait recently filed its nomination for the Kuwait First Award for Excellence presented by the Ministry of Youth," Khulaifi revealed.

"I hope in the future we take advantage of existing designs in other countries in addition to creating an archive of all the sketches drawn online. We still have a lot to do and a lot we want to change. We come up against property owners who have emerged from a society that does not care about the preservation of architectural heritage. The government also agrees to build badly designed buildings without taking into account the urban spaces around them," rued Khulaifi.

"But we are optimistic. Everything in this country is evolving - people in the past, for example, did not have an awareness of the health aspects of food or fashion, but now the situation is different. Architecture will take time to evolve after policy changes Kuwait. We are willing to work with all parties to provide all our experiences in order to counter the visual pollution in this country," he concluded.



Sketch by Abdulaziz Al-Awadhi. — Photos courtesy Drawing Kuwait



Sketch by Hamad Al-Khulaifi



Sketch by Ali Al-Yousifi



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday received Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. King Salman was accompanied by Saudi Crown Prince, First Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior Mohammad bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Deputy Crown Prince, Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. The meeting focused on historic and deep-rooted ties between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, in addition to discussions of regional and international developments.—KUNA

AMIR IN SAUDI FOR 'NORTH THUNDER'

'THUNDER' IN SAUDI DESERT AS HUGE MILITARY DRILL ENDS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, accompanied by a delegation of senior officials, arrived yesterday in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to attend the closing ceremony of military drills "Ra'ad Al-Shamal" (North Thunder) at King Khaled Military City, in Hafr Al-Batin, northern Saudi Arabia.

His Highness the Amir was welcomed upon arrival by Prince Mohammad Bin Naif Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the Crown Prince, the Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister, and Prince Mohammad Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the Deputy Crown Prince and the Second Deputy Premier and Defense Minister. His Highness the Amir was accompanied by First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, and Chief of Amiri Protocol Sheikh Khaled Al-Abdullah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah.

'Thunder' in Saudi desert

Meanwhile, warplanes roared overhead, tanks rumbled across the desert and smoke filled the sky yesterday during the final stage of what Saudi Arabia has billed as the region's biggest-ever military exercises. About 20 nations from the Middle East, Africa and Asia are taking part in the last day of the so-called "Northern Thunder" manoeuvres in the desert north of the



HAFAR AL-BATIN, Saudi Arabia: Smoke and fire billows following an aerial bombardment during the Northern Thunder military exercises in Hafr Al-Batin, 500 kilometers north-east of the Saudi Capital Riyadh. The exercises involve the kingdom and neighboring nations, which officials have described as the region's biggest drills. — AFP

kingdom, which began 12 days ago. Regional leaders including Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Sudan's Omar al-Bashir and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif joined Saudi Arabia's King Salman to attend the conclusion, the official Saudi Press Agency said.

Taking place near Hafr Al-Batin city in northeastern Saudi Arabia, close to the Kuwaiti and Iraq borders, the maneuvers are the "most important and largest in the region's history", according to Saudi authorities. A two-hour mock battle featuring fighter jets, attack helicopters and tanks was among the final events of the exercises, which Saudi Arabia has described as a show of regional unity. Riyadh has adopted a more assertive foreign poli-

cy since Salman took the throne early last year following the death of his half-brother king Abdullah.

It is leading a mainly Arab coalition fighting rebels in Yemen, is taking part in US-led air strikes against the Islamic State group and has offered to send special forces to fight IS in Syria. "Northern Thunder" is also taking place after tensions escalated between Sunni-dominated Saudi Arabia and its regional Shiite rival Iran, who back opposing sides in Syria and Yemen. Authorities have released few details of the extent of the exercises. But Saudi Brigadier General Ahmed Al-Assiri told reporters this week they were aimed at preparing to tackle the region's "terrorist menace" and were not directed against Iran. —Agencies

News

i n b r i e f

Kuwait demands Arab 'membership' in UNSC

NEW YORK: Kuwait's delegate to the United Nations Mansour Al-Otaibi called for a permanent 'membership' for Arab region in the Security Council (UNSC). In a speech read out on behalf of the Arab group at the 70th General Assembly discussion over UNSC reform, Al-Otaibi said that any expansion of the UNSC membership have to guarantee a fair representation to the Arab region in the Council, through both permanent and non-permanent seats. He clarified that Arab countries do not have the veto rights, of the UNSC permanent members, despite the fact that nearly 30 percent of the dossiers tackled by the UNSC are related to Arab issues. Al-Otaibi noted that the misuse of veto right by some countries have crippled the UN organization's ability to take necessary actions to maintain world security and peace.

Hanyang University launches 'Kuwait Center' to boost ties

SEOUL: South Korea's Hanyang University has launched 'Kuwait Center' - an initiative aimed at transforming the university into a focal point of academic interaction between South Korea and Gulf nations. In a statement, Hanyang University, which is ranked number 30th on QS University Rankings' list of top Asian universities, said that the initiative is a by-product of cooperation with the Public Authority for Applied Education (PAAET). 'Kuwait Center' will help catapult Hanyang University's entry into the Middle East, the statement said. PAAET member Abdulaziz Al-Najjar told KUNA that work to create this center had begun last year, part of a signed agreement between PAAET and the South Korean university.



Assistant Undersecretary for Commercial Supervision and Consumer Protection Department Eid Al-Rashidi

Kuwait keen on consumer protection development

DOHA: A visiting Kuwaiti official has underscored importance of the role played by Kuwait in consumer's protection and its openness to global free trade through the development of appropriate laws. Assistant Undersecretary for Commercial Supervision and consumer protection department Eid Al-Rashidi made the assertion yesterday to KUNA, on sidelines of his participation in the global workshop "Achieving Effective Consumer Protection and Competition through Cross-Border Cooperation" held in Doha, Qatar. He said that Kuwait was keen on participating actively with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to issue a Unified GCC consumer law, which was adopted at the GCC summit in Riyadh last December, stressing the importance of a uniform law to reduce commercial fraud against consumers.

Minister holds talks with Tunisian, Chinese envoys

KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah discussed with Tunisian Ambassador to Kuwait Ahmed bin Al-Sagheer means of cooperation in the fields of media, culture and youth. The Kuwaiti minister also received Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Wang Di, where they also tackled bilateral ties and boosting cooperation, a statement by the Ministry of Information said. Sheikh Salman stressed deep-rooted ties with both China and Tunisia, the statement added.

AMERICAN STABBED; US EMBASSY WARNS CITIZENS

KUWAIT: The US Embassy has confirmed that an American was stabbed yesterday in Fintas. His injuries are not life-threatening. The man who assaulted him is in police custody. The Embassy is not aware of specific, credible threats against US citizens. Nonetheless, US citizens residing in or visit-

ing Kuwait should remain vigilant regarding their personal security.

According to a report, a Kuwaiti in his twenties stabbed an American five times at the beach walk lane and then went to Fintas police station - claiming that he exchanged blows with the victim. The American was tak-

en to hospital by a passerby, and was totally conscious when police went to see him in the hospital.

The Embassy takes this opportunity to remind US citizens to review their personal security plans and remain alert to their surroundings at all times. Extremists may attack

in groups or alone, in planned actions or attacking targets of opportunity. Always exercise caution in places where US and Western citizens gather. The Embassy also recommends carrying a mobile phone at all times. Contact Kuwait Emergency Services at 112 if you need emergency assistance.



FIRE IN SABAH AL-SALEM

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: Fire broke out in a house in Sabah Al-Salem area. Qurain and Mishref fire centers responded and found the fire in a room on the first floor so the house was evacuated which firemen fought the blaze. No injuries were reported.

820 kilograms of meat destroyed

Statistics by Municipality Public Relations about the work of Food and Meat Department at Ahmadi branch revealed that 820 kilograms of meat unfit for human consumption were destroyed at Ahmadi slaughterhouse due to the spread of tape worm.

Environment police seize truck

Environment police seized a truck that hauls Nitrogen cylinders in violation of environmental rules and standards mentioned in article 22 of environment protection law 42/2014. The violator was taken to Naeem police station, and the vehicle was impounded.

Interpol hunt Kuwaiti

Lawyer Mohammad Dashti said that the International Interpol issued an arrest order against a Kuwaiti pharmacist accused of swindling KD 2.5 million. Dashti said the Kuwaiti pharmacist agreed with a group of doctors to bring in medicine from abroad, and received more than KD 2.5 million after convincing them that deal is guaranteed and profitable. She then wrote cheques for the money she received and then escaped out of the country. The cheques were found to be dud ones. Several cases have been filed against the suspect who escaped to Lebanon - and then Egypt where she was completing her higher studies.

Kuwaiti selling liquor

Police arrested a citizen for selling liquor in Rabiya area. The man got confused when a patrol approached him, so he was stopped and searched, and nine imported liquor bottles were found with him. He was sent to Drugs Control General Department.

NO WITHDRAWALS FROM 'NEXT GENERATIONS' FUND: MINISTRY

BLUEPRINT FOR ECONOMIC REFORMS TO BE SUBMITTED TO PARLIAMENT

KUWAIT: Kuwait is covering the public budget deficit and paying for current liabilities solely from the general reserves, the Ministry of Finance announced yesterday. The ministry in a statement categorically denied remarks attributed to Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh by some local newspapers saying that the State is withdrawing from the 'next generations' fund to finance the budget and pay dues. Decree-into-law 106/197 bars withdrawals from the coming generations' reserves.

In another development, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh said that the government will present the draft economic reforms to the National Assembly next week. The document consists of six axes foremost among which are the financial reform, redrawing of the state role in national economy, and revitalizing the private sector's role in economic recovery, Al-Saleh, also acting minister of oil, said.

The minister made the press remarks on the sidelines of Kuwait Investment Forum which came to a close this evening. "The reforms also include revamping the economic legislations and institutions, involving the public in funding the projects, and reforming the

labor market and the civil service system," he said. "The document, the fruit of several studies in the past, includes 80 practical programs of action with different time schedules. These include 23



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh

short-term programs, 13 medium-term programs and four short-to-medium term programs," Al-Saleh pointed out.

He affirmed that the state departments take seriously the implementation of these programs in the hope of realizing the objectives of the plan and revitalizing the national economy as early as possible. He highlighted the importance of rationalizing the state subsidy and ending all forms of extravagance in public spending as part of the financial

reforms with a view to enabling the state to carry out the ambitious projects in the housing and energy sectors.

"The government deals with the economic situation in a transparent way and therefore seeks to put the lawmakers in the picture of the risks of failure to adopt urgent measures to address the situation, serve the interests of the citizens and the state, and ensure decent living in a sustainable way as per the instructions of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah," he went on.

Asked about the treasury bonds, Al-Saleh said the joint committee, made up of the finance ministry, the central bank and the investment authority, will announce the volume of these bonds soon. The planned bonds, together with drawing from the reserve fund, will help generate funds for bridging up the budget deficit, he stated. Regarding the oil prices, Al-Saleh expected them to range between \$40 and \$60 per barrel in 2017-2018. Kuwait is working with Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to develop a joint stance inside the OPEC regarding the oil production and coordination with non-OPEC oil producers, he added. — Agencies

KUWAITI CHARGED IN BAHRAIN

MANAMA: Senior General Advocate Abdulrahman Al Sayed said the Public Prosecution had charged Kuwaiti national Abdulhameed Abbas Hussain Dashti with involvement through coercion, complacency and assistance in illegal public fundraising in contravention of the Penal Code and the Public Fundraising Regulatory Law. The prosecution referred the case against the suspect et alia to the Lower Criminal Court which on 15-12-2015 issued an executable two years jail sentence against him in absentia. In compliance with the court verdict, the Public Prosecution on 7-1-2016 addressed the Judiciary Authority in the State of Kuwait to take its actions regarding notification to the convicted Abdulhameed Dashti about the court ruling. The prosecution is awaiting reply to confirm serving him notification about the court ruling. The senior general advocate said once the verdict was publicized and time elapsed without the convict challenging the verdict, a final court ruling will be issued and the prosecution will accordingly take action to arrest the convict in compliance with the verdict which will be circulated internationally through the Interpol. —Agencies

CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS OVER BOY SCOUTS APPOINTMENT

KUWAIT: There seems to be new constitutional crises following the appointment of Dr Abdallah Al-Tareeji as chairman of the Board of Kuwait Scouts Society by Education and Higher Education Minister Bader Al-Essa. This would effectively make the lawmaker answerable to the minister, a contradiction of his role as an MP, reported Al-Jarida Arabic newspaper yesterday.

Constitutional expert Dr Mohammad Al-Faili said the society is part of the scouts movement, supervised by the Education Ministry and it is not an NGO, rather an organization that belongs to the ministry. Al-Faili said the formation of the society and its membership are under the executive branch represented by the ministry, so a member of parliament who is appointed chairman of the board will be in compromised situation because he would be working under the minister's authority.

Meanwhile, constitutional sources said the appointment of Al-Tareeji contradicts article 121 of the constitution which says: "It is not allowed for a member of parliament during his membership to be appointed to the board of company or contribute to commitments made by the government." The sources said the explanatory memo said "the MP does not practice an executive authority, rather he performs a representative and supervisory mission, while the minister practices that authority and takes over the administrative work in his ministry."

TWO KUWAITIS KILLED IN LEBANON

By Mishal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Lebanese security authorities have found the bodies of two Kuwaiti citizens murdered in their Kahala area apartment in Beirut. Sources said Lebanese judi-

cial police have open up an investigation. They said it is not yet known whether the murder motives are financial or political. Kuwait and other Gulf countries had earlier asked their citizens in Lebanon to leave, and not to travel there.

Friday Times International

FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 2016

Saudi could turn page if Iran changes policies: FM



EU ministers worry about draft deal with Turkey



All eyes on Trump as crucial Tuesday primaries approach



BAGHDAD: Civilians leave their houses after clashes between Iraqi Security forces and Islamic State group extremists outside Ramadi, west of Baghdad. Germany's federal criminal police said yesterday they are in possession of files containing personal data on members of Islamic State group and believe them to be authentic. — AP

GERMANY 'OBTAINS' FILES ON IS MEMBERS IS DEFECTOR BRINGS 'GOLDMINE' OF DETAILS ON 22,000 SUPPORTERS

BERLIN: Germany's federal criminal police said yesterday they are in possession of files containing personal data on members of the extremist Islamic State group and believe them to be authentic.

The announcement came after Britain's Sky News reported it had obtained 22,000 Islamic State files on the border with Turkey and Syria, files that detail IS fighters' real names, where they were from, telephone numbers, and even names of those who sponsored and recruited the militants.

Though the significance of these files is yet to be gauged, they could be the largest yet treasure trove of documents found on IS and the most significant leak on its past and present fighters and operations across the Mideast. They could also shape the campaign against the extremist group, which emerged from Al-Qaeda in Iraq. The cache, exposing its members and their families, could undermine its future ability to recruit and inspire would-be members.

US Army Col Steve Warren, spokesman for

the US-led coalition against the Islamic State, said the information could help the coalition fight the Islamic State group by aiding in a crack-down on IS's foreign fighter networks.

He said that while he was not able to verify the documents, he hoped that "if there is a media outlet that has these names and numbers, I hope they publish them." This would help bring attention to the problem of foreign fighters joining IS, and would help law enforcement crack down on the problem, he said. "This would allow the law enforcement apparatus across the world to become much more engaged and begin to help do what we can to stem this flow of foreign fighters - so we're hopeful that its accurate and if so we certainly plan to do everything we can to help," he said.

Stolen memory stick

A disillusioned former member of Islamic State has passed a stolen memory stick of documents identifying 22,000 supporters in over 50 countries to a British journalist, a leak

that could help the West target Islamist fighters planning attacks. Leaks of such detailed information about Islamic State are rare and give Britain's spies a potential trove of data that could help unmask militants who have threatened more attacks like those that killed 130 people in Paris last November.

A man calling himself Abu Hamed, a former member of Islamic State who became disillusioned with its leaders, passed the files to Britain's Sky News on a memory stick he said he had stolen from the head of the group's internal security force. On it were enrolment forms containing the names of Islamic State supporters and of their relatives, telephone numbers, and other details such as the subjects' areas of expertise and who had recommended them. One of the files, marked "Martyrs", detailed a group of IS members who were willing and trained to carry out suicide attacks, Sky said.

Richard Barrett, a former head of global counter-terrorism at Britain's MI6 Secret Intelligence Service, said the cache was "a

fantastic coup" in the fight against Islamic State. "It will be an absolute goldmine of information of enormous significance and interest to very many people, particularly the security and intelligence services," Barrett told Sky News. Sky said it had informed the British authorities about the documents which were passed to its correspondent, Stuart Ramsay, at an undisclosed location in Turkey.

Western security sources said that if genuine, the files could be gold dust as they could help identify potential attackers and the networks of sympathisers behind them, and give insight on the structure of the group. Reuters was not able to independently verify the documents, given their provenance. A selection of them was published in Arabic. Islamic State militants claimed responsibility for the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris and the Oct. 31 downing of a Russian passenger plane over Egypt's Sinai region that killed 224. They have promised more attacks on the West and Russia.—Agencies

Kuwait Times Encourage Capturing Movement Competition For 2016 Photography

*Sponsored by Zain - Burgan Bank and Naser Alsayer
the official dealer of Canon Camera in Kuwait Canon camera*



Kuwait Times hopes that its 2016 photography competition provides an opportunity for provisional photographer to take rare photos that reflect quick response in documenting action in their surroundings.

Capturing movements in photographs is the best skill to match the "KUWAIT IN OUR EYES" theme selected in Kuwait Times 10th annual photography competition which take place from 5th of Jan till 17th of March in corporation with Al-Anbae Arabic newspaper.

Adnan Sad the competition organizer and Kuwait Times deputy General Manager said photographers of all ages can take art with pictures of Kuwait environment surrounding for the slogan of "Kuwait in our eyes".

Each contestant can provide a maximum of five photos printed on 30x40 cm paper.

Photos with text or processed



through Photoshop or other photo processing software will be automatically disqualified. Only pictures taken correctly, snapped in Kuwait and that carry the photographers name are qualified to enter the competition. Saad added participants do not have to be provisional photographer or use

professional cameras to take the pictures. Anyone can participate by any camera as long as the picture is taken in creative way and in a high resolution, Saad said.

The main objective from the competition is to encourage and improve photography in Kuwait, and

showcase the talents of Kuwaitis and expatriate in the field of photography. The photos must put in envelope that has the competition's coupon fixed on the back.

The coupon are printed in Kuwait Time Newspaper and Al Anbae Arabic newspaper. The last day to submit the photos is 17th March 2016 to Kuwait Times. The winners will be awarded at the closing ceremony at Holiday Inn Salmya. All participants can get a special discount of 50% for a high definition prints, including delivery to their door step. Act now and use discount code (SHOOTWIN) during checkout. Download the free app for Mac and PC at www.albomii.com.

The competition is sponsored by Zain, Burgan bank and Canon Mr. Monjed Salha the General Manager of Holiday Inn and Saad confirmed that Holiday Inn Salmya will host the event.



THOUSANDS EVACUATED AS IRAQI FORCES ADVANCE AGAINST IS

BAGHDAD: Iraqi forces retook a town from the Islamic State jihadist group in Anbar province yesterday and evacuated 10,000 civilians as they advanced up the Euphrates valley, a security spokesman said.

"Counter-terrorism forces and army troops liberated the Zankura area in a swift military operation," Sabah al-Noman, spokesman of the elite Counter-Terrorism Service, told AFP. "They evacuated 10,000 people who were transferred to a safe area," he said. An army colonel in the region said they would be offered first aid and then taken to camps for displaced people. Zankura lies on a bend in the Euphrates river northwest of Ramadi, capital of Anbar province that Iraqi forces brought under full control last month.

The rural area around 125 kilometres (80 miles) west of Baghdad is on the way to Hit, a town which Iraqi forces have declared as their next target.

Noman claimed 80 IS fighters were killed in the operation but gave no figure for casualties in government ranks. "Our forces also arrested 56 Daesh (IS) members who had shaved their beards and were trying to blend in with the fleeing families," the spokesman said.

Noman said the Iraqi flag was raised on the highest building in Zankura. The sprawling province of Anbar—which borders Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia—was at the heart of the "caliphate" that IS proclaimed in 2014. The jihadist group still holds most of the province but the noose is tightening around some of its key bastions.

The city of Fallujah, 50 kilometres (30 miles) west of Baghdad, is almost completely surrounded by a mix of Iraqi forces. Federal forces are also pushing down from Salaheddin province towards Haditha, a city in western Anbar which IS never took but has attacked relentlessly since 2014.

The US-led coalition, which has played a significant part in enabling the advance of government troops across Anbar, reported four air strikes in the Ramadi area on Wednesday. According to the International Organisation for Migration, 44 percent of the more than 3.3 million people displaced in Iraq since the beginning of 2014 are from Anbar. — AFP



DAMASCUS: A Syrian man rides his bicycle past damaged buildings in rebel-held part of Jubar neighborhood in the Syrian capital Damascus on Wednesday.—AFP



RIYADH: Special forces perform during the Northern Thunder military exercises in Hafar Al-Batin, 500 kilometers north-east of the Saudi Capital Riyadh yesterday.—AFP

BANNERS AND SELFIES AS IRANIANS MARK REVOLUTION ANNIVERSARY

TEHRAN URGED TO RESPECT UN RESOLUTION 2231

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia and other Gulf monarchies could turn a page and build strong relations with Iran if it respects them and stops "meddling" in their affairs, Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir said Wednesday.

"If Iran changes its way and its policies, nothing would prevent turning a page and building the best relationship based on good neighborliness, with no meddling in the affairs of others," he told reporters in Riyadh. "There is no need for mediation" in such a case, said Jubeir, whose country severed all links with the Islamic republic in January after crowds attacked the kingdom's diplomatic missions in Iran.

Jubeir said relations with Tehran had deteriorated "due to the sectarian policies" followed by Iran and "its support for terrorism and implanting of terrorist cells in the countries of the region". "Iran is a neighboring Muslim country that has a great civilization and a friendly

people, but the policies that followed the revolution of (Ayatollah Ruhollah) Khomeini have been aggressive," he said.

Jubeir was speaking after a meeting of Gulf foreign ministers and their counterparts from Jordan and Morocco. In a joint statement, ministers meeting in Riyadh urged Iran to respect UN resolution 2231 which endorsed the nuclear deal and included curbs on ballistic missiles, as Tehran defiantly fired two more missiles on Wednesday.

The ministers "stressed the importance of implementing the (UN) Security Council Resolution 2231 concerning the nuclear deal, including what concerns ballistic missiles and other weapons," it said.

US Vice President Joe Biden said Wednesday that the United States would take action against Iran if the missile tests were confirmed.

Lebanon criticised

Sunni powerhouse Saudi Arabia and fellow Gulf nations also accuse Iran of supporting Shiite rebels in Yemen, as well as attempting to destabilise their own regimes. They also support rebels in Syria's five-year-old war while Tehran openly backs the regime of President Bashar al-Assad.

Gulf nations had recently classified Lebanon's Iran-backed Shiite Hezbollah movement as a terrorist group. Saudi Arabia recently blocked \$3 billion in military aid to Lebanon and urged its citizens to leave the country. Jubeir said Lebanon is now run by Hezbollah.

"What is disturbing in the Lebanon question is that a militia that is classified as terrorist controls decision-making in Lebanon," he said. Jubeir criticised a recent decision by a Lebanese court to release a Syria-linked former minister who is facing charges of having planned "terrorist" acts.—AFP

EU MPs SLAM EGYPT OVER ITALIAN STUDENT'S 'TORTURE' DEATH

STRASBOURG: The European Parliament yesterday called on Egyptian authorities to cooperate in probing the "torture and assassination" of an Italian student in Cairo, while lamenting that it was "not an isolated case" in Egypt saying it came within a context of deaths in custody in Egypt.

Giulio Regeni, a Cambridge University PhD student who was researching Egyptian labor movements, disappeared on January 25 and his badly mutilated body was found a week later. MEPs voted overwhelmingly in favour of a resolution saying that the parliament in Strasbourg, France, "strongly condemns the

torture and assassination under suspicious circumstances of EU citizen Giulio Regeni." There were 588 votes for the resolution, 10 against and 59 abstentions. The resolution "calls on the Egyptian authorities to provide the Italian authorities with all the documents and information necessary to enable a swift, transparent and impartial joint investigation into the case of Mr Regeni".

It urged Egyptian authorities to make "every effort" to bring Regeni's killers to justice. But MEPs also noted "with grave concern that the case of Giulio Regeni is not an isolated incident, but that it occurred within

a context of torture, death in custody and enforced disappearances across Egypt in recent years."

The European Parliament further urged the EU's 28 member states to stick to the bloc's rules on the export of military technology and surveillance equipment to Egypt.

The rules were adopted in 2013 after the ousting of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi by then-army chief and now President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi. Regeni went missing on the fifth anniversary of the start of the uprising which overthrew longtime autocrat Hosni Mubarak in 2011. Police had been deployed

across the city to prevent demonstrations.

His death has chilled relations between Rome and Cairo, with Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi last month warning Egypt its friendship was on the line over the investigation.

Regeni's slaying while he was in Cairo doing research for his doctoral thesis has also become a cause celebre amongst academics around the world and has turned the spotlight on what rights and opposition groups say are increasing abuses by security services under the military-backed government in Cairo. —AFP

POPE IMPOSES FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SAINTS

MOVE AFTER UNCOVERING GROSS ABUSES

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis imposed new financial accountability regulations on the Vatican's multimillion-dollar saint-making machine yesterday after uncovering gross abuses that were subsequently revealed in two books.

The rules require external vigilance over individual Vatican bank accounts created for beatification and canonization causes, as well as regular budgeting and accounting to make sure the donations from the faithful are being used as intended.

The reforms were imposed after Francis tasked a fact-finding commission to investigate Vatican finances, including at the Vatican's saints office. Two books by Italian journalists, based on the commission's confidential findings, revealed that the Vatican's secretive saint-making process brought in hundreds of thousands of euros in donations for each saintly candidate but had virtually no financial oversight as to how the money was spent.

The books estimated the average cost for each beatification at around 500,000 euros (\$550,000), with much of the proceeds going to a few lucky people with contracts to do the often time-consuming investigations into the candidates' lives. The family of one well-known investigator, for example, also had the Vatican monopoly on printing the documentation for each saintly cause, studies that often amount to dozens of volumes.

While candidates who inspire wealthy donors would sprint ahead, those with less wealthy fans would languish. American saints often cost the most precisely because the most money was

donated, and the postulator could spend it on the best researchers to get the cause through, according to the book "Avarice" by journalist Emiliano Fittipaldi.

Saintly cause

The new rules call for an administrator to be named for each saintly cause who must "scrupulously respect" the intention of each donation. The administrator must keep a running tab on expenditures and donations, prepare an annual budget and be subject to the oversight of the local bishop or religious superior. That person must approve the annual budget and send it to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints - the Vatican office responsible for reviewing saintly candidates, investigating miracles and preparing the cases for the pope's ultimate decision.

The rules also set out the mechanism by which each cause pays the congregation for its services finalizing the beatification or canonization, though it doesn't specify how much is given. Once the candidate is made a saint, the congregation decides what to do with any leftover funds, including sending them to a special solidarity account for less-well funded candidates.

The Catholic Church makes saints to give the faithful role models. The process is cloaked in secrecy and open to criticism, given that it deals with science-defying miracles and notoriously politicized choices. Pope John Paul II - himself canonized in near-record time in 2014 - declared 482 saints in his quarter-century papacy, more than all of his predecessors combined.

In the early church, saints were often made by



THE VATICAN: Faithful fill St Peter's Square during an unprecedented canonization ceremony by Pope Francis for two of his predecessors, John XXIII and John Paul III, at the Vatican. — AP

papal decree or popular acclaim. Over the centuries, the process has become far more detailed, legalistic, time-consuming and costly.

It usually starts in the diocese where the candidate lived or died. A postulator - essentially the cheerleader spearheading the project - gathers testimony and documentation to build the case and presents the report to the congregation. If the Vatican's experts agree the candidate lived a virtuous life, the case is forwarded to the pope

who signs a decree attesting to the candidate's "heroic virtues."

During the investigation, the postulator may come across information that someone was miraculously healed by praying for God's intercession through the candidate. If the cure cannot be medically explained, the case is presented to the congregation as the possible miracle needed for beatification, the first major step in the sainthood process.—AP

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EU MINISTERS WORRY ABOUT DRAFT DEAL WITH TURKEY

BRUSSELS: EU ministers raised doubts yesterday about the morality of a deal their governments are negotiating with Turkey to curb migrant flows to Europe as Ankara faces criticism on human rights.

European Union interior ministers were discussing a draft deal reached at an EU-Turkey summit on Monday, which involves a one-for-one swap of Syrian refugees, in hopes of sealing an agreement at a fresh leaders' meeting next week.

Austria's interior minister Johanna Miki-Leitner told reporters it is "very dubious" that Turkey should have seized opposition Zeman newspaper and then "confronts the European Union with a wish list three days later." With Turkey hoping Europe will reward its cooperation on migrants with visa-free access for its citizens, Miki-Leitner said: "I am seriously wondering whether we are taking ourselves and our values seriously or if we are throwing them overboard."

The EU has stopped short of condemning Turkey's seizure of the newspaper but has urged it to meet European standards of press freedoms in its drawn-out bid to join the EU, negotiations that Ankara wants accelerated in return for its cooperation on migrants.

Belgium's interior minister Jan Jambon said the Turks are "far removed from European principles and values" and raised questions about whether the deal could be finalised at a summit in Brussels March 17-18.

"We must look at the details to see if it's feasible," Jambon added. Belgian immigration minister Theo Francken meanwhile called for an "anti-drowning" plan to stop people dying in the Mediterranean.

Luxembourg's 'concerns'

Luxembourg's migration minister Jean Asselborn said EU countries have to check the deal "legally, diplomatically, politically, but as well humanly." He added: "We have to be careful that people who fled from Aleppo (in Syria) and are in the European Union (...) will not be sent back. There I have concerns." The United Nations' human rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al-Husseini voiced alarm yesterday over the draft deal that could see "illegal" collective and "arbitrary expulsions" of migrants from Greece to Turkey.

Concerns are all the higher as Turkey is not a full signatory to the Geneva Convention on refugees.

Under the deal, the EU would resettle one Syrian refugee from camps in Turkey in exchange for every Syrian that Turkey takes from Greece. Dutch migration minister Klaas Dijkhoff, whose country holds the six-month rotating presidency of the 28-nation EU, said the deal would be "temporary" if approved. He added: "And then we will have to talk with Turkey about a more permanent resettlement scheme in a sense of burden sharing."

Under the one-for-one deal, the resettlement places would be taken from an existing EU plan to resettle 22,000 Syrians from camps in the Middle East and from 54,000 unallocated places from a slow-moving EU plan to redistribute refugees from Greece and Italy.

Turkey's European affairs minister Volkan Bozkir said yesterday his country would take back "tens of thousands" of migrants, "not hundreds of thousands or millions", and they would "not include the existing refugees on the Greek islands". — AFP



BRUSSELS: German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere (L) greets Austria's Interior Minister Johanna Miki-Leitner prior to a Justice and Home Affairs Council, at the European Council in Brussels yesterday.—AFP



Refugee children help each other to jump over a mud puddle at the Greek-Macedonian border near the Greek village of Idomeni yesterday where thousands of refugees and migrants are trapped by the Balkan border blockade. — AFP

A MAJOR MIGRANT ROUTE CLOSES, BUT OTHERS ARE READY TO OPEN

REFUGEES USING SMUGGLERS TO FIND OTHER PATHWAYS

BRUSSELS: As the European Union tries to send thousands of migrants back to Turkey and close the heavily traveled Balkans route, concern is mounting that people desperate to find sanctuary or jobs in Europe are already using smugglers to find other pathways. Albania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania are alternative tracks, government ministers and experts say, and Spain is in contact with Algeria and Morocco to try to stop new routes opening from there.

"We must not let our guard down. We have to be careful," Spanish Interior Minister Jorge Fernandez Diaz warned yesterday as he arrived for talks with his EU counterparts in Brussels.

More than 130,000 migrants have entered Greece this year, but their path north through the Balkans to places like Germany and Scandinavia is essentially blocked, due to tight border controls.

Serbian officials said yesterday that around 150 people are coming to Serbia each day via a dangerous track through Bulgaria, and there are frequent reports of robberies and severe beatings by locals. Smugglers are likely to take advantage of the EU's tentative deal with Turkey coupled with the border chokeholds through the Balkans, some experts say. "This will be a major win for smuggling groups," Tuesday Reitano from the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime told The Associated Press. "The effects are already visible."

Reitano said groups of 50 or more migrants are already reported to have been smuggled through Albania by local mafia. Clandestine routes are opening again in Hungary, where authorities report that more people are breaching the razor-wire fence on its southern border. Italy fears many may head west toward Albania, and take to boats to cross the Adriatic Sea.

"So far we have no evidence of any huge flow," Italian Interior Minister

Angelino Alfano said. He acknowledged that it would be logical to expect movement given developments in the Balkans but that "this is not a fact today."

While the routes are tricky to monitor, and movements can change quickly from day to day, the EU's border agency Frontex said its personnel have not spotted big shifts yet. However, contingency planning is well under way should things change.

"Albania is just one of the possibilities," Frontex's deputy executive direc-

tor, Berndt Korner, said in Belgrade yesterday. "The same goes also for the western coast of Greece, the same might also go for Montenegro," he said. "(Whether) it goes up to Croatia remains to be seen, but it is definitely one of the possibilities that are under consideration." Once the weather improves, people could turn back to the dangerous route across the Mediterranean Sea from Libya to Italy. Thousands have died off the Italian island of Lampedusa in recent years trying to make that crossing.— AP

UKRAINIAN PILOT ON HUNGER STRIKE AGREES TO TAKE WATER

MOSCOW: A Ukrainian pilot on trial in Russia has agreed to take water but will continue a hunger strike following an appeal by Ukraine's president. Nadezhda Savchenko, who served in a volunteer battalion against Russia-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine and is accused of involvement in the deaths of two Russian journalists there, went on hunger strike and refused to take water after a court hearing last Thursday. Rights advocates feared she could die if she kept refusing water.

Mark Feygin, a lawyer for Savchenko, yesterday posted her letter saying that she will take water but continue the hunger strike. "I will do all I can in order to save myself for the fight ahead and victories for Ukraine and for the truth," she was quoted as saying.

Feygin on Wednesday posted a letter he said was signed by Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, pledging to do "all it takes" to bring Savchenko home and saying he was ready to offer Savchenko a government job.

However, Poroshenko's press office yesterday said that the president had not sent the letter, and Feygin acknowledged it was a hoax.

Savchenko was captured by the separatists in July 2014 and later surfaced in custody in Russia. She says the separatists handed her over to the Russians, who took her across the border. Moscow claims that Savchenko escaped from the rebels and crossed the border on her own before she was arrested.

Top officials in Ukraine and elsewhere have been advocating for Savchenko's release and have called her a prisoner of war. Russian officials have refused to discuss the possibility of a prisoner exchange while Savchenko is waiting for a verdict, expected at the end of March.

Dmitry Peskov, spokesman for President Vladimir Putin, yesterday told reporters that the Kremlin "made a note" of Poroshenko's reported statement as well as Savchenko's decision to take water but he refused to comment further.— AP



Protesters are removed as Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks during a campaign rally in Fayetteville, NC, on Wednesday. — AP



MIMAI: Democratic presidential candidates Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton respond to audience members at the Miami Dade College Kendall Campus in Miami on Wednesday.—AP

ALL EYES ON TRUMP AS CRUCIAL TUESDAY PRIMARIES APPROACH CLINTON AND SANDERS MOCK THE BRASH BILLIONAIRE

WASHINGTON: Republican leaders continued to agonize yesterday over how to stop Donald Trump's outsider drive for the presidential nomination ahead of Tuesday's crucial primary elections in Florida and Ohio, while even Democrats Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders mocked the brash billionaire in their latest debate.

Tuesday's outcome could seal Clinton's overwhelming lead in delegates who choose the party nominee this summer. For Trump, the Florida and Ohio votes likely would strengthen his front-runner status but would not secure his nomination. Trump has been very popular with Republican primary voters but is feared unelectable in the November general election because of his off-color language, his proposal to build a wall along the Mexican border and his denigration of Hispanics, Muslims and women.

In his latest blast, Trump on Wednesday night told CNN that "I think Islam hates us." "There's a tremendous hatred," he added. "We have to get to the bottom of it. There is an unbelievable hatred of us."

Trump has said he would temporarily ban non-citizen Muslims from entering the country. Trump's

candidacy has left Republican officials with the uncomfortable idea that their second least favorite presidential candidate, ultra-conservative Texas Sen Ted Cruz, may be the party's best last chance to stop him.

Possible Cruz supporters include reluctant Senate colleagues and former presidential rivals with strong ties to major donors, who have feared Cruz's purist ideology but dread a Trump nomination even more. Cruz on Wednesday announced the backing of one former primary opponent, Carly Fiorina, and is seeking the backing of another, Jeb Bush.

Outsider year

"It's an outsider year, and the most logical person to take on Trump based on past performance is Ted Cruz," said another former presidential opponent, South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham. Earlier in the year, Graham likened the choice between Cruz and Trump to "being shot or poisoned."

"He's not my preference," Graham said of Cruz. "But we are where we are. And if Trump wins Florida and Ohio, I don't know if we can stop him." In the latest Democratic debate on Wednesday night, Clinton faulted Sanders for repeatedly voting against a 2007 comprehensive immigration reform bill. He criticized her for opposing a 2007 effort to allow people who were in the country illegally to obtain driver's licenses.

Had the immigration package passed back then, Clinton said, "a lot of the issues we are still discussing today would be in the rearview mirror."

Sanders retorted that he opposed the legislation because it included a guest worker program "akin to slavery." Florida is home to nearly 1.8 million Hispanics, including about 15 percent of the state's Democrats. Clinton has been getting about two-thirds of Hispanic votes so far.

Both Clinton and Sanders found agreement in seeing Trump as worse on immigration than either of them. "We do not, as Donald Trump and others have done, resort to racism and xenophobia and bigotry," Sanders said.

Sanders's long-shot candidacy remained very much alive after he pulled off an upset this week in the industrial state of Michigan, where polls had showed him trailing by as much as 20 percentage points. Clinton has won 762 pledged delegates compared to 549 for Sanders, with 10 delegates from recent primaries still to be allocated. When superdelegates are included, Clinton leads 1,223 to 574, more than halfway to the 2,383 needed to win the Democratic nomination. Superdelegates are party and elected officials who can vote for any candidate.— AP

4-YEAR-OLD SHOT MOM, UNSURE HOW HE GOT GUN

PALATKA, Florida: Sheriff's investigators in north Florida were trying yesterday to determine how a 4-year-old boy got his hands on the gun they say he used to shoot his mother as she drove a pickup truck. Jamie Gilt, 31, of Jacksonville owns the .45-caliber gun the boy fired Tuesday afternoon, Putnam County Sheriff's Office spokesman Joseph Wells said.

Well said a deputy saw her behaving frantically inside the truck, which was stopped partially in the road. The deputy then saw she'd been shot in the back and the bullet had exited from her stomach area, Wells said.

Gilt told deputies her son had accidentally shot her, according to Wells. She was taken to a hospital and was in stable condition, but investigators had not been able to interview her, Wells said.

The boy, who wasn't injured, is with relatives. The Florida Department of Children and Families also is investigating. Under Florida law, it is a misdemeanor for someone to store or leave a loaded gun where a child has access to it. "They must keep firearms secured and locked," Wells said.—AP

5 KILLED AT US BBQ SHOOTING, SUSPECTS STILL ON THE RUN

WASHINGTON: An ambush-style shooting at a backyard barbecue in the northeastern US state of Pennsylvania has killed five people and at least two suspects are still on the run, authorities said yesterday.

Two men are in critical condition and a woman is stable in the wake of the bloodshed that unfolded at a home late Wednesday in the Pittsburgh suburb of Wilkesburg, police said in a statement. Four of the victims—three women and one man—died at the scene while another woman succumbed to her wounds in hospital, they said.

"The ballistic evidence on the scene leads police to believe that two different weapons were discharged from two different people," according to the statement.

No one has been taken into custody and police were urging witnesses to come forward to aid their investigation, which they said was still in its preliminary stage. Wilkesburg has a population of about 16,000 and is located around six miles (10 kilometers) east of Pittsburgh. Police said shots were fired from an alley and that when partygoers tried to seek cover in the home, someone on the side or backyard adjacent to the residence fired at the back porch, where all four deaths at the scene occurred. Lieutenant Andrew Schurman of the Allegheny County Police Department told AFP that investigators currently do not believe that anyone in the backyard or at the party fired back during the shooting.

"We're still trying to identify all the victims and what their connection is to the party," he said. According to CBS affiliate KDKA, neighbors reported hearing 30 to 40 shots ring out. Emergency dispatchers said seven ambulances were called to the chaotic scene, according to local broadcaster WPXI.

'Quiet' street

Neighborhood resident Kayla Alexander told WPXI that the street where the shooting occurred is not known for crime. "This street is always quiet, there's nothing but kids on this street," Alexander said.

"I'm shaken ... it's pretty sad."

Local media footage from the scene early Thursday showed a massive police presence and streets blocked off as visibly distraught groups of onlookers wept and hugged. WPXI reported that some said they had lost family members. "My baby! My baby!" one woman at the scene could be heard screaming according to WTAE-TV Pittsburgh.

Multiple shell casings littered the ground in the alley as detectives scoured the scene, the broadcaster reported. The rampage represents the latest mass shooting to rock the United States, where such attacks have become commonplace. Last month, a factory worker killed three people and wounded 17 in a shooting spree in Kansas.

Other recent mass shootings include a rampage by an Uber driver that left six people dead in Michigan and the December terror attack in San Bernardino, California, in which 14 people lost their lives. Gun violence is responsible for some 30,000 deaths per year in the country, with 330 mass shooting incidents recorded last year.— AFP



NAYPYITAW: Henry Van Hti Yu (left) an ethnic Chin and a lawmaker of the National League for Democracy party who has been nominated as a presidential candidate by the NLD talks at his official accommodation in capital Naypyitaw, Myanmar yesterday. — AP

MYANMAR'S NLD NAMES SUU KYI CONFIDANT AS CANDIDATE

HTIN KYAW PROPOSED AS LOWER HOUSE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

NAYPYITAW: Myanmar's National League for Democracy (NLD) proposed a close friend of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi as its presidential candidate yesterday, ending a four-month wait for the identity of the president expected to rule in her name. The NLD nominated Htin Kyaw, who joined the party just two months ago, as its lower house candidate. Thanks to the party's crushing majority, that makes him near-certain to become titular head of the country's first democratically elected government since the army seized power in 1962 when the full parliament votes next week.

The wildly popular Suu Kyi and the NLD won a landslide electoral victory in November, but she is barred from holding the presidency herself under a junta-drafted 2008 constitution because her children are

not Myanmar citizens. Suu Kyi has said that she would run the country regardless through a proxy. Until yesterday, she and the NLD leadership had kept the identity of their nominee a closely guarded secret even from rank-and-file MPs.

Htin Kyaw runs a charity founded by Suu Kyi and has been a trusted member of her inner circle since the mid-1990s. He is not a lawmaker. NLD central executive committee member Han Tha Myint confirmed to Reuters that Htin Kyaw was the party's preferred presidential candidate. Suu Kyi told NLD lawmakers at a meeting after the nomination that she had considered the loyalty and discipline of Htin Kyaw and other candidates before making her choice. "I believe the people will be happy about the results," she said. "We'd like to form a government

which is transparent."

Candidates needed to be able to command the respect of both the domestic and international community, she added. "I'm very happy," said lower house NLD lawmaker Myint Myint Soe. "I believe our leader Aung San Suu Kyi chose the right people for these positions. I know U Htin Kyaw personally and I think he is a nice person." In an earlier statement, released before the nomination was revealed, Suu Kyi had urged patience from her supporters. "The NLD is determined to meet people's expectations and will do its best," she said.

Indirect election

Under Myanmar's indirect system for electing a president, three candidates are nominated - one by the lower house, one by the upper house, and one by the military bloc in parliament, who under the constitution hold a quarter of seats in both houses. After the candidates have been vetted by a parliamentary commission, both houses will come together to vote in a joint session, with the winner elected president and the two losing nominees becoming vice presidents. Suu Kyi told NLD lawmakers late on that the presidential vote would take place on March 15. Because the NLD has a comfortable majority in both chambers it effectively controls two of the nominations.

The NLD nominated Henry Van Thio, a member of the Chin ethnic group from Chin state in the country's northwest bordering India and Bangladesh, as its candidate from the upper house. The party wants Van Thio to become a vice president to represent the country's myriad ethnic minorities, said executive committee member Han Tha Myint. That is in line with Suu Kyi's goal of forming a government for national reconciliation. She hopes to end conflict between state forces and numerous armed ethnic groups in the country. "I am happy and honored personally, as well as a Chin ethnic, to be selected to do the highest duty for our country," Van Thio said as he left parliament. "We, the ethnic people, will do our best for every sector in the nation-building process." — Reuters

EX-PM THAKSIN FEARS THAI JUNTA WILL CLING TO POWER

NEW YORK: The Thai military junta wants to cling onto power as long as possible, the country's fugitive former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said in an interview in New York, not ruling out a return to politics. The telecoms tycoon, who was toppled in a 2006 coup and now lives in self-exile overseas, said he "wished" he could go home but would consider a return only if it would "benefit the country and the people." In May 2014, Thailand's generals deposed the government of Thaksin's younger sister Yingluck and are now redrafting the constitution, although the junta chief has vowed to hold elections in 2017.

Thaksin said he did "not believe" the elections promise and heavily criticized the junta, who say a new constitution is necessary to curtail corruption. "If we look at their behavior, as if they would like to stay as long as possible," he said in an interview at a New York hotel, when asked how long he thought the military would hold onto

power. The former prime minister repeatedly expressed concerns about the future of Thailand if the new constitution is adopted.

The junta justified its power grab as a bid to restore order and protect the monarchy, headed by the revered but frail 88-year-old King Bhumibol Adulyadej. Parties led by or aligned to the Shinawatras have won every election since 2001, and they are loved in the nation's rural north for their populist policies. But the clan's enemies, including large parts of the military, judiciary and royalist elite in Bangkok and the south accuse them of cronyism, corruption and financially ruinous politics. Nearly two years later Thaksin said the junta had done "nothing on reconciliation" and were "not providing justice for all, just only trying to use the law to benefit their own politics." He said he wanted the country to prosper and Thai people guaranteed freedom of speech and human rights protections. — AFP

NORTH KOREA FIRES MISSILES, LIQUIDATES SEOUL'S ASSETS JAPAN LODGES PROTEST AT N KOREA EMBASSY IN BEIJING

SEOUL: North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles into the sea yesterday in defiance of a UN Security Council resolution, as South Korean and US forces conducted massive war games. The North also announced yesterday it has scrapped all agreements with the South on commercial exchange projects and would "liquidate" South Korean assets left behind in its territory.

North Korea has a large stockpile of short-range missiles and is developing long-range and intercontinental missiles as well. The missiles fired yesterday flew about 500 km off its east coast city of Wonsan and were likely from the Soviet-developed Scud series, South Korea's defense ministry said. Japan, which is within range of the longer-range variant of Scud missiles or the upgraded Rodong missiles, lodged a protest through the North Korean embassy in Beijing, Japan's Kyodo news agency reported. North Korea often fires short-range missiles when tensions rise on the Korean peninsula. Pyongyang gets particularly upset about the annual US-South Korea drills, which it says are preparations for an invasion. The US and South Korea remain technically at war with the North because the 1950-53 Korean War ended in an armed truce instead of a peace agreement. Around 17,000 US military personnel are participating alongside some 300,000 South Korean troops in what South Korea's Defense Ministry has called the "largest-ever" joint military exercises. North Korea on Sunday warned it would make a "pre-emptive and offensive nuclear strike" in response to the exercises.

'Liquidating' assets

After yesterday's missile launches, North Korea announced it would "liquidate" South Korean assets left behind in the Kaesong industrial zone and in the Mount Kumgang tourist zone. Seoul suspended operations in the jointly-run zone last month as punishment for the North's rocket launch and nuclear test. Mount Kumgang was the first major inter-Korean cooperation project. Thousands of South Koreans visited the resort between 1998 and 2008. Seoul ended the tours in 2008 after a North Korean soldier shot dead a South Korean tourist who wandered into a restricted zone. North Korea is also livid about stepped up United Nations sanctions adopted last week following its recent nuclear test and long-range missile launch. South Korea's foreign ministry said yesterday's missile launches again violated a series of UN Security Council resolutions and it would refer the matter to the Council sanctions committee mandated to enforce the resolutions. Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Hong Lei described the situation on the Korean Peninsula as "complex and sensitive". "All sides should stop their provocative words and deeds to avoid a further rise in tensions," he said. — Reuters



JODHPUR: Indian police recruits perform a routine on a motorcycle as they take part in a passing out parade at The Rajasthan Police Training Centre (RPTC) in Jodhpur yesterday. — AFP



KABUL: In this file photo, Afghan women chant slogans during a protest demanding justice for a woman who was beaten to death by a mob after being falsely accused of burning a Quran in downtown of Kabul. — AP

AFGHAN LEADER REOPENS CASE OF WOMAN LYNCHED BY MOB

RIGHTS GROUP SLAMS AFGHANISTAN'S JUDICIAL SYSTEM

KABUL: The Afghan president has ordered his government to reopen the case of a woman beaten to death last year by a frenzied mob outside a Kabul shrine, just days after the country's highest court reduced the sentences of the 13 men convicted of her murder. Ashraf Ghani's move comes ahead of the first anniversary of Farkhunda Malikzada's killing and as a leading international rights group issued a report slamming Afghanistan's judicial system over its failure to deliver justice in the high-profile case. In its statement, Human Rights Watch called it a "bitter irony" that the Supreme Court in Kabul had confirmed the reduced sentences on March 8, the International Women's Day.

The 27-year-old Malikzada was attacked and lynched on March 19 last year outside a shrine in the Afghan capital after one of the men in the group shouted that she had burned a Quran, the Muslim holy book - an accusation that was later found to be false. The brutal slaying stunned the country and

led to calls for reform of the judicial system, long plagued by corruption, partisanship and incompetence, and stronger protection for women from violence. A spokesman for Ghani, Zafar Hashemi, said the newly-appointed attorney general had been instructed by the president to "make justice for Farkhunda his top priority and reopen the case."

"The president has assigned a senior and dedicated adviser from his legal team to follow up and provide support to Farkhunda's family lawyers," Hashemi told The Associated Press. "He asks for regular reporting on her case and puts significant pressure on law enforcement authorities to make sure that justice is delivered." Four men were originally sentenced to death for Malikzada's murder and another nine were handed long prison sentences. However, the Supreme Court this week upheld a lower court's decision to reduce the sentences for all convicted.

Three of the death sentences were com-

mutated to 20 years in prison and the fourth to 10 years. The other nine men convicted in the case also had their prison terms slashed. Initially, 30 men were charged with Malikzada's murder. Footage taken on cell phones of the attack showed Malikzada being punched, kicked and beaten with wooden planks, after which the crowd threw her from a roof, ran over her with a car and crushed her with a block of concrete. They then set her body ablaze on the bank of the Kabul River.

The incident triggered widespread demonstrations, across Afghanistan and internationally, demanding justice for women in a country where they are widely treated with contempt and where they have their constitutional right to protection from violence routinely breached. An Afghan civil rights group has erected a memorial to her on the river bank. The New York-based rights group said that by commuting the death sentences, the Afghan justice system "averts the further cruelty of capital punishment," but added that justice had not been done for Malikzada. "At every stage of this case, the Afghan criminal justice system failed to adequately investigate, hold to account or appropriately punish those responsible," HRW said.

Shukria Jalalzay, the director of the Afghan Women's Coordination and Promotion Organization, said rights groups continued to exert pressure on Ghani to keep his word on ensuring justice for Malikzada. "It has been almost a year and slowly the punishments for those convicted of her murder are decreasing," she said. Like many activists, Jalalzay said she believes the police's role in the attack resulted in the politicization of the case. The cellphone footage from the attack has shown police stood by watching while Malikzada was being beaten to death. A total of 19 police were prosecuted for their failure to prevent her death. HRW noted that "the court lightly disciplined only 11" policemen. Those hearings were separate from the trials of the attackers. — AP

AUSTRALIA SENDS BOAT CARRYING BANGLADESHIS BACK TO INDONESIA

KUPANG: Six Bangladeshi migrants caught entering Australian waters by the country's border patrol have been sent back to Indonesia on a fishing boat, an Indonesian official said yesterday. The move drew criticism from the Indonesian foreign ministry, which reiterated its opposition to Australia's controversial policy and warned such acts could be dangerous at sea. The six men and two Indonesian crew departed the eastern Indonesian city of Kupang last week bound for Australia.

Local water police chief Teddy John Sahala Marbun said they reached Australian waters after three days at sea but ran into engine trouble, and were rescued by Australia's border patrol as their boat began to sink. "After several days of sailing, the Australian customs vessel then entered Indonesian waters and handed the men over to an Indonesian fishing boat," he said. "They gave the fishermen fuel and other logistics, and asked them to return the men to East Nusa Tenggara (in eastern Indonesia)." The crew have been detained in Kupang and could face people smuggling charges, which carry a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison. The boat's captain Isai Rano admitted he was paid 92 million Indonesian rupiah (about \$7,000) to take the six Bangladeshis to Australia, Marbun said. Immigration officials are still questioning the Bangladeshis about how they managed to enter Indonesia, while police search for other possible suspects. "We are having a problem communicating because they only speak very little English," Marbun said.

Canberra's hardline policy of intercepting and turning back boats trying to reach Australia has largely stemmed the flow of vessels, but some still try to make the journey. The controversial approach has caused particular tensions with Indonesia, the transit point for many would-be refugees and economic migrants en route to Australia. Indonesian foreign ministry spokesman Arrmanatha Nasir said Jakarta's position on the policy remained unchanged. "We do not support such acts, especially when done on water. It could potentially be dangerous," he told reporters. It would also not provide a permanent solution to illegal migrant issues, he added. — AFP

WATCHMAN AT THE END OF THE WORLD

CAPE HORN: Balancing work and family life is a challenge for most of us, but few come up with solutions as extreme as Jose Aguayo's. The Chilean sailor, whose job used to keep him away from his family for long stretches, decided recently to move the whole clan to Cape Horn, near the tip of South America, where he watches over a lighthouse above the treacherous Drake Passage and spends more time-a lot more time-with his wife, son and daughter.

It is a harsh environment of numbing cold and bitter wind, and the nearest town is more than five hours away by boat. But to the 36-year-old and his family, this remote outpost at the end of the world is now home. "The kids motivated me a little bit," he said, explaining why he volunteered for the job. "I'm a sailor, so I spend a lot of time at sea. Vicente is 11 and I've been sailing for 10 years. So they wanted to be with their dad, and what better way than being here." Manning a lighthouse that sits above the spot where the Atlantic meets the Pacific, Aguayo guides ships through a tempestuous stretch of sea that has killed more than 10,000 sailors and shipwrecked 800 vessels since the 17th century.

Known for its icebergs, large waves and strong currents, the Drake Passage between South America and Antarctica used to be an essential channel of world trade, until the Panama Canal was completed a century ago. These days, there is much less traffic. But Aguayo, who arrived in November, still starts his day at 3:00 am, taking meteorological measurements. By six, he is greeting the tourist boats that ferry curious sightseers to this remote outpost during the southern hemisphere summer. "We've had 4,000 visitors to the island so far. They ask me how I can still be smiling," Aguayo said. Cape Horn is the scene of more shipwrecks than any other ocean region in the world, according to the Chilean navy. Its stories of death and survival in extreme circumstances have inspired the likes of French writer Jules Verne whose book "The Lighthouse at the End of the World" could well describe Aguayo's office-and Chilean writer Francisco Coloane, who set his collection "Cape Horn" there. "Sailors say that navigating Cape Horn gave commanders, captains and crew the envied rank of a true man of the sea and the indisputable right to be listened to everywhere with admiration and respect," said Chilean naval commander Ivo Brito Sanchez at commemorations in January to mark 400 years since the cape's discovery. — AFP

HONG KONG TURNS AWAY NORTH KOREA FREIGHTER

HONG KONG: Hong Kong has turned away a North Korean freighter seeking to dock following new UN sanctions over Pyongyang's nuclear test and rocket launch, the government said yesterday. A government spokeswoman said the Gold Star 3 vessel was rejected when it arrived in Hong Kong waters Wednesday. "The vessel was refused entry into Hong Kong waters on March 9 as it is on the annex of the Resolution of the United Nations Security Council," a government spokeswoman said in an emailed statement. "Hong Kong, being part of the People's Republic of China, has the responsibility to implement the sanction measures decided by the UNSC."

South Korea's Yonhap news reported, citing an unnamed source, that the Gold

Star 3 arrived in the southern Chinese city in an attempt to "get fuel and supplies for its crew", but sailed to international waters after it was turned away. The ship is among 31 vessels run by North Korean shipping firm Ocean Maritime Management which is covered by the sanctions, the report said. The UN Security Council last week imposed the toughest ever sanctions on North Korea in response to its fourth nuclear test and rocket launch. Backed by the body's 15 members, including China, North Korea's sole ally, the resolution requires countries to take the unprecedented step of inspecting all cargo to and from North Korea, impose trade restrictions and bar vessels suspected of carrying illegal goods for North Korea from ports. — AFP

EQUAL RITES: TIBETAN NUNS SEEK MATCHING STATUS

SERTAR: With a shaved head, flowing burgundy robes and religious devotion, Xinde Shijiamouni has all the trappings of a Tibetan Buddhist monk. But her serenity is troubled because as a nun, she cannot reach the same clerical status as a man. In harsh terrain and relative isolation, Tibetan culture has long been patriarchal. Now more than 100 nuns at the Larung Gar Buddhist Institute—the largest Tibetan Buddhist academy in the world—are challenging that, holding study sessions on feminism and sparking a nascent religious movement. The group have published a series of books on female Buddhist figures and put out a magazine once a year.

But many senior monks view their calls with suspicion, decrying gender equality as a “Western concept”. “If you look at Buddhist law, you can see both genders should be equal,” said Xinde Shijiamouni—whose name is a pseudonym meaning “The Heart of the Buddha”. “But many on the outside don’t understand the dharma, and many on the inside choose to ignore it.” More than 10,000 men and women study at the institute, living in red wooden huts that cram into a steep valley at 4,000 meters altitude in an ethnically Tibetan part of Sichuan province, besieging the main buildings.

Part of the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism, it was its first college to allow women to achieve a khenmo—the equivalent of a doctoral degree in divinity. But the genders lead largely separate existences, with women barred from the academy’s monastery, men not allowed to enter the nunnery, and the accommodation all single-sex. Neither Tibetan Buddhism nor the institute allow women to achieve the same religious status as men, denying them the highest rank of ordination, bhikkhuni, which is held by tens of thousands of monks.

“We should be able to do as well as monks,” a senior nun declared at a graduation ceremony at the Larung Gar nunnery last year. One activist nun, who declined to give



SERTAR: Buddhist nuns leave the monastery after praying at the Larung Gar Buddhist Institute in Sertar county (known as Seda in Chinese) in the remote Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in southwest China's Sichuan province. — AFP

her name for fear of reprisals said: “We’re doing this because we nuns have been under attack for so long. We need to teach women to stand up for themselves.” But China’s government takes a dim view of religious and political movements not directly under its control—including women’s rights campaigners. An annual meeting of feminist nuns from across Tibetan areas has to be held in secret because it lacks official approval.

Women’s work

Beijing is deeply opposed to Tibetan nationalism and has been seeking to reduce the number of students at Larung Gar for over

a decade. About 2,000 of the distinctive red student huts were demolished in 2001. Most of the novices are female, but according to researchers the stark gender inequality in Tibetan society contributes to many nuns’ choice to take the cloth. Arranged marriages, domestic abuse and conflict with mothers-in-law all contribute to the decision to become a nun, said Nicola Schneider, of the East Asian Civilisations Research Centre in Paris, who has done extensive field work in Tibetan nunneries. “Aside from the religious aspect of working for karma and having a better reincarnation, another reason women become nuns that is not very openly talked about is that life

as a Tibetan laywoman is hard,” she said.

Women do most of the work in rural and pastoral families, who make up more than 90 percent of Tibetans, she added. As well as their theoretical discussions, the Larung Gar nuns have an outreach program for laywomen in surrounding areas on female health issues. “All religions teach compassion and helping others, we’re helping women to improve their health,” said one nun. “That’s not a controversial issue.” Palmo, a professor of Tibetan literature at Northwest University for Nationalities who does outreach work with rural women, believes the nuns will have an impact. — AFP

FUKUSHIMA MISTAKES LINGER AS JAPAN MARKS 5TH ANNIVERSARY

FUKUSHIMA: The complacency and cosy relationships blamed for the Fukushima nuclear accident are still a problem in Japan, experts warn, even as the country faces the probability of another earthquake and tsunami that could dwarf the 2011 catastrophe. Today marks the fifth anniversary of the natural disaster that claimed about 18,500 lives, flattened coastal communities, and set off the worst atomic crisis in a generation.

But, as officials vow to prevent a repeat, some critics say Tokyo’s push to restart switched-off nuclear reactors is proof that the lessons of the tragedy have not been learned. And many question whether Japan has done enough to tackle some of the key causes of the accident that unfolded on March 11, 2011 – an ill-fated belief in the nation’s disaster management and clubby ties between politicians, bureaucrats and the nuclear industry.

“These kind of relationships can be seen in other countries but Japan is a standout,” said Muneyuki Shindo, an honorary politics professor at Chiba University. “Ties between the bureaucracy and industry are still very strong—it’s a legacy of government-led development when the country was underdeveloped” after World War II. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has made bringing nuclear power back online a priority for the resource-poor country—a move backed by the business community but strongly opposed by a wary public.

Japan’s entire stable of reactors was shuttered in the aftermath of the disaster, when a huge undersea quake sent a tsunami smashing into the coast, swamping the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant and sparking meltdowns.—AFP

CHINA URGES DIPLOMATS, UN TO BOYCOTT DALAI LAMA IN GENEVA

US SPONSORING EVENT ON SIDELINES OF UN RIGHTS FORUM

GENEVA: China has written to diplomats and UN officials urging them not to attend a Geneva event today where the Dalai Lama will speak, reasserting that it opposes his appearance at all venues due to his “separatist activities”. Reuters reported in October that China is waging a campaign of intimidation, obstruction and harassment that Western diplomats and activists say is aimed at silencing criticism of its human rights record at the United Nations.

In a letter seen by Reuters yesterday, China’s diplomatic mission in Geneva raised objections about the presence of Tibet’s exiled spiritual leader on the panel of Nobel laureates, being held at the Geneva Graduate Institute. “Inviting the 14th Dalai Lama to the aforementioned event violates the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China, in contravention of the purposes and principles of the U.N. Charter. China resolutely opposes the 14th Dalai Lama’s separatist activities in whatever capacity and in whatever name in any country, organization or event,” it said.

The letter was dated March 8, the day

that the event – being sponsored by the United States and Canada – was announced. “The Permanent Mission of China kindly requests the Permanent Missions of all Member States, UN agencies and relevant International Organizations not to attend the above-mentioned event, nor meet the 14th Dalai Lama and his clique.” The Dalai Lama, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, fled into exile in India in 1959 after an abortive uprising against Communist rule. China views him as a separatist, but the monk says he only wants genuine autonomy for his Himalayan homeland.

No delegation is making a formal complaint about China at the four-week session but there has been criticism recently of its mass arrests of lawyers, including from the United States. A joint statement critical of China, sponsored by about a dozen countries including the United States, is to be read out at the forum around midday (1200 GMT), the US mission’s spokesman in Geneva said. He declined to comment on China’s request for a boycott, saying: “I refer you to Chinese

authorities for their views. We do not comment on the substance of our diplomatic exchanges.”

Philippe Burrin, director of the Geneva institute, said that “pressures are being applied from various sides” but the event would not be cancelled. “This is a question of freedom of expression and academic freedom to organize an event,” he said. “It is not an event on Tibet, it is not on a politically sensitive subject, ie territorial issues, but on the role of civil society in promoting human rights,” he said. UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Kate Gilmore, the panel’s moderator, is believed to be one of the first senior UN officials to meet the Dalai Lama. The event, which also features Nobel laureates from Iran and Yemen, is taking place on the sidelines of the annual session of the UN Human Rights Council, which monitors and examines violations worldwide. Yesterday was the fifty-seventh anniversary of the beginning of the Tibetan people’s peaceful uprising against China’s invasion and occupation of Tibet.—Reuters

Friday Times

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Lifestyle

FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 2016

A woman takes a selfie with papier-mache pandas, created by French artist Paulo Grangeon, as they are displayed outside the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (BACC) in Bangkok yesterday. The event, consisting of placing 1,600 papier-mache pandas in various cities around the world in collaboration with the WWF, is aimed at raising awareness of the endangered species.— AFP

The fairytale rise of singer **Gavin James**

In Ireland everything happens in pubs," says Gavin James, widely seen as the next big singer songwriter. That was certainly true for him. It was against the hubbub of laughter and conversation that the young red-haired singer honed his delicate, angelic voice and where one night in Dublin he met Ed Sheeran. The encounter with music's most famous redhead would change his life. They met, as he tells it, "in a pub at three in the morning."

British singer Sheeran, who last month won the Grammy for the best song of the year, "was giving a secret concert in Dublin and a friend of mine called me really drunk to tell me to come quick he was in the pub. I was in another pub down the road so I came around and we got talking." We found a guitar and we played all night, passing the guitar back and forth and jamming..." When his head had cleared, Sheeran—who comes from an Irish family—tweeted his discovery to his nearly 17 million followers, adding: "Also, record labels, if you ignore Gavin James, you are losing out." Later when they bumped into each other again in another Dublin pub, Sheeran asked him to be his support act at the 82,000-capacity Croke Park stadium.

'Ginger mafia'

"It was mental," says the singer, laughing off jokes that he and Sheeran were part of a "ginger mafia". "In Ireland we are not short of red-haired people," he adds. Less than two years later James is about to release his first studio album, "Bitter Pill", having played stadium and concert halls across the United States, Britain and Ireland supporting Sheeran as well as Sam Smith, Taylor Swift and James Blunt. But as the 24-year-old points out, he was far from an overnight success. He began on the pub circuit at 17, dropping out of music college to often play three gigs a day while working in a supermarket.

"Some days I would wake up sounding like Morgan Freeman," he jokes. "I started playing in pubs in front of five or six people, and most of them weren't listening. By the end I was playing in front of 600. It was weird. I would ask them if they wanted me to play (Steve Earl's) 'Galway Girl', but they wanted my songs. "It wasn't as if I was thrust out straight away in front of 10,000 people," he says, but still his success was dizzying. His apprenticeship had taught him how to charm a crowd. "In the pubs I would be com-



This file photo shows Irish singer-songwriter Gavin James performing at the Pinkpop festival in Landgraaf on June 12, 2015. — AFP

peting with hen nights who would be jumping on your lap, but if you play along and tell jokes and are nice they would listen... and I learned how to use my voice better."

Although he comes from a musical family—his sister is a gospel singer and his great grandparents were opera singers—he credits his musical education to his big brother listening to the radio at night in bed. "I think that's how it got into my soul."

Songs about alcoholism, bullying

As a boy, James began playing Irish music on a tin whistle and accordion before passing via the hard rock of Green Day and Slipknot to Bob Dylan, Frank Sinatra and Sam Cooke to a sound that is somewhere between soul and folk. But it is James' delicate "falsetto, soprano, I don't know what you would call it" voice, he says, which stands out most. Given the way "I look, I should really

sound like a rugby player," he adds. His songs are mostly about love that has gone wrong, with the striking video for "For You" touching on the very un-pop music subject of parental alcoholism.

The title track of his album "Bitter Pill", which is released on Friday, is about the break-up with a "girl who wanted me to give the singing up", while the song "22" tackles bullying, something he long suffered himself growing up in the working class Stonebatter neighborhood of Dublin. "I was bullied a lot at school. It was terrible, really terrible but it stopped, and it was fine from about 15 onwards." The song helped make his name in Ireland, turning a small acoustic album, "Live at Whelan's" recorded at the legendary Dublin pub, into a number one album there. James begins a European and US tour in Paris on March 14. — AFP

Azealia Banks



Azealia Banks, explosive force on Twitter, quits

Hip-hop star Azealia Banks, an explosive presence on Twitter where she relished taking other artists to task, has abruptly deactivated her account as she deplored US media culture. "I'm finally making the decision to eject from social media," she tweeted late Tuesday to her followers, calling US media culture "disgusting and junky." Her Twitter account had vanished Wednesday and she made her Instagram postings private. Her Facebook page showed nothing since August. The African American artist has been famous for her acerbic tweets directed at other artists, most notably Australian artist Iggy Azalea whom she mocked as "Igloo Australia" and accused of exploiting black culture.

Attacking other prominent rappers, Banks has accused Eminem of sexism, charged that Nicki Minaj was unfairly playing racial politics and appeared to wish violence on Action Bronson for past insults. Even some admirers of Banks have voiced unease about tweets in which she urged followers to burn down the homes of descendants of slave traders and employed homophobic slurs, even though she herself identifies as bisexual. More recently Banks gave a tongue-in-cheek endorsement to Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump—also known for his prolific use of Twitter—saying that the billionaire "is evil like America is evil" and hence the country's fitting leader. Despite the attention to her provocative social media persona, the New York native has won wide praise for her music, notably her single "212" in which her character snatches a woman from a man whose sexuality she then mocks. — AFP

Nearing 70, **Sally Field** plays a woman still coming of age

It sounds like a misprint, but it's not: Sally Field has headlined just one movie in the last two decades. The reasons why are many. Hollywood doesn't exactly churn out good parts for middle-aged or older actresses, even for beloved two-time Oscar winners. Field has also been drawn elsewhere, back to television, where she got her start in the 1960s on "Gidget" and "The Flying Nun." And then there's the fact that Field isn't much inclined to play, as she says, "the traditional mother thing."

'Drive carefully'

"I'm certainly at a point in my life where I don't do anything that I don't want to do," Field says. "There are things that come to me, maybe the script is good but you don't really need me in this movie to stand at the door and say, 'Drive carefully.'" "Hello, My Name Is Doris" is a reminder of what the movies have been missing out on. In the film, directed and co-written by Michael Showalter, Field stars as a spinsterish, daydreaming New York accountant who, after her mother dies, cautiously begins seeking out new experiences and pursuing — comically, awkwardly, sweetly — a much younger man: an art director at her Manhattan office played by Max Greenfield.

The film, which opens Friday, is a blend of tones — broadly funny, dramatically tender — and populated by veteran performers like Tyne Daly, Stephen Root and Peter Gallagher. Holding it all together is the ever-plucky Field, outfitted with two pairs of eyeglasses around her neck and a nest of hair, Field's intentionally messy version of a Brigitte Bardot doo. Made for only about \$1 million and shot in three weeks, it's an unusually indie project for Field, who jumped at the chance to play Doris. The hunt for such characters in a male-dominated industry, Field says, has been the story of her career.

"It's always been a struggle. It's not a new struggle to me," she said in a recent interview. "But certainly as I've gotten older, put it this way, it doesn't get easier." Field has followed the rising outrage over gender equality in the movie industry with a mix of optimism and wariness. She's spent years watching women filmmakers fail to land big movies and female-led films be passed over by studios. "Certainly you

can't say that nothing has happened. There has been a lot of movement," says Field. "But it has been SO gradual. I've been here for going on 53 years. It's been so incredibly, incrementally gradual."

In person, Field, aside from looking stunning for a woman nearing 70, is disarmingly direct. Those who work with her say that straightforward matter-of-factness is how she approaches making a movie, too. "As soon as you say anything to her that has to do with her status or stature, she'll just say 'Oh shut up!'" says Greenfield. "She doesn't let you treat her that way for more than half a second." "Hello, My Name Is Doris" began as an eight-minute short by Laura Terruso, then a film student at New York University. Her teacher, Showalter, thought it was worth developing and the two stretched the story into a feature screenplay. Showalter, an alum of the sketch comedy troupe "The State," considered Field the "pie-in-the-sky" casting option, and was flabbergasted when she agreed. Her presence and focus, he says, led the cast and crew to "raise their game to meet her."



In this March 2, 2016 photo, Sally Field poses for a portrait while promoting her new film 'Hello, My Name Is Doris,' at The Four Seasons in Los Angeles. — AP



The Vuitton girl, Alicia Vikander, caps Paris Fashion Week

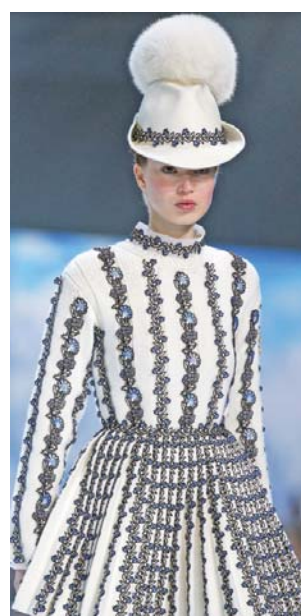


Still basking in the media spotlight since her acclaimed performance in "The Danish Girl," all eyes were on Oscar winner Alicia Vikander at Louis Vuitton's star-filled show Wednesday. Here are the highlights of the fall-winter 2016 collections, including reports from Vuitton, Miu Miu, Moncler Gamme Rouge and Kenzo.

Vuitton front row

Vikander wowed the fashion media at Vuitton on Wednesday morning in a pared down, geometric Nicolas Ghesquiere look that proved that less is more. With no make-up and a chic messy center parting, the 27-year-old Swedish actress rocked a navy statement coat with cream bands and cropped pants. The look's geometry perfectly mirrored the Louis Vuitton Foundation backdrop as she posed for photos - with its figurative angular glass, wood and metal architecture, designed by architect Frank Gehry. Joining her in the front row was fellow Oscar winner Jennifer Connelly and Selena Gomez.

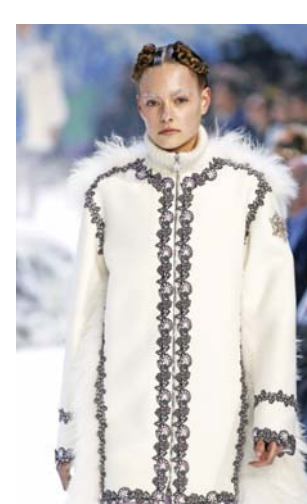




Kenzo's contradictory styles

It was one of the wackiest Kenzo collections Humberto Leon and Carol Lim have produced since joining the house in 2011. The idea was simple enough: to push the creative envelope as much as possible in every of the 54 zany looks, then mix in a dose of gold tiger print. The result? Exaggerated proportions - billowing oversize shirts and dresses - contrasting with divergent styles, sheeny fabrics and prints, sometimes for good and sometimes for bad. A ruffled oversize 19th-century schoolmistress shirt in check with gray skirt was - daringly - twinned with pink and black tiger print stripper boots and space-age eye makeup.

There was also a surreal note in the clothes' proportions. One gold tiger print coat was so huge that the poor model beneath looked like she had fallen from another planet. It might not be everyone's cup of fashion tea, but it was a striking look and at the very least belies the creative confidence Leon and Lim now have after five extremely successful years at the French house.





**Moncler Gamme
Rouge's hills are alive**

Giambattista Valli headed to the Austrian hills of "The Sound of Music" for his snowy, Edelweiss-infused collection Wednesday that was executed with finesse. Since he took over this arm of Moncler, the floral-loving Italian designer has set most of his shows upon a hill or meadow to combine the house's outdoorsy vibe with his love of flowers. Wednesday's show was no exception - and the snow-capped peaks of the Tyrol were the season's backdrop to looks that riffed on traditional Tyrolean dress.

The "dirndl," a traditional Alpine peasant dress worn in Germany, Austria and the South Tyrol, was reimagined in white fur, sheer tulle and embroideries as the suspenders. Pale blue tights, meanwhile, led down to black leather platform clogs. Valli is a master of detail. Snow appeared as an optical blurry print in one short coatdress - and, elsewhere, morphed into the endangered Edelweiss flower as immortalized by the Oscar-winning film. — AP



Models present creations for Moncler Gamme Rouge.



Mix up your hummus game with carrot puree topped with lamb

By JM Hirsch

Here's how it works. I start with a base. The base should be something easily spread. Hummus is a great choice. Many salads and roasted vegetables work, too. Savory yogurt dips work, particularly if you're going for a Greek menu. Whatever you opt for, this base is spread thick over a large serving platter.

Next, you decide what to top that with. I love roasted or seared meats that have been cut into bite-size portions. Roasted vegetables would be a great vegetarian version. Same for beans and cheese. Whatever you go with, this is heaped on top of the base layer. You finish with a sprinkle of something that ties everything together, such as chopped fresh herbs or crumbled goat cheese. Now set the platter in the center of the table and give your guests

something to scoop with. Could be flatbread. Could be lettuce leaves. Could be tortilla chips. And that's it. Get everyone to dig in, quite literally.

Some of my favorite versions of this have included a Frito pie (a layer of corn chips topped by grilled and sliced flank steak, cheese and other taco toppings); a garlicky hummus topped by ground beef browned with onions and served with flatbread; and tzatziki topped with roasted root vegetables and crumbled feta cheese.

Lately, I've been making this version, which is both unusual, yet familiar and comforting. It starts with a base of carrot hummus (made as you would regular hummus, but substituting cooked carrots for the chickpeas) topped with seared leg of lamb seasoned with cumin and topped with crumbled soft goat cheese. Sound like a lot to coordinate? It's actually quite simple and comes together in no time.

CARROT HUMMUS WITH CUMIN LAMB AND GOAT CHEESE

Ingredients

Start to finish: 45 minutes

Servings: 6

2 pounds carrots, trimmed and cut into 2-inch chunks

1 cup water
5 tablespoons tahini
4 cloves garlic
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and ground black pepper
1 1/2-pound boneless leg of lamb
1 tablespoon canola oil
1 large yellow onion, diced
1 tablespoon cumin seeds
2 ounces crumbled soft goat cheese
2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint
Pita bread, warmed, to serve

Preparation

In a medium saucepan, combine the carrots and water. Bring to a simmer over medium-high. Cook until the carrots are very tender and there are only a couple tablespoons of water remaining in the pan. Transfer the carrots and liquid in the pan to a food processor. Add the tahini, garlic, lemon juice and olive oil. Process until smooth, then taste and season with salt and pepper. Set aside. Trim as much fat as possible from the lamb, then cut it into 1-inch cubes. Season the cubes with salt and pepper.

In a large skillet over medium-high, heat the canola oil. Add the lamb cubes and sear on all sides until nicely browned but not quite cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes. You may need to do this in batches, adding a bit more oil with each batch. Transfer the cooked lamb to a plate. Return the skillet to the heat and add the onion and cumin seeds. Sauté for 5 minutes, or until the onion is tender.

Bring to a simmer, stirring and scraping the bottom to deglaze the pan. After 1 minute, return the lamb and any juices on the plate to the skillet, stir well and heat for 1 minute. Season with salt and pepper. To assemble, use a large spoon to spread the carrot hummus over a serving platter, creating a slight depression at the center. Spoon the lamb and onions over the hummus. Sprinkle with crumbled goat cheese and mint. Serve with pita bread. — AP



Want to cut fat but keep the flavor? Consider cottage cheese

By Melissa D'arabian

Cottage cheese is a staple in my home. I love its creamy, mild flavor. It pairs perfectly with some garlic and herbs to make a protein-packed crudite dip, yet it also is at home in a quick dessert of cottage cheese and unsweetened applesauce (a d'Arabian weeknight favorite). Half a cup offers tons of protein (14 grams) plus calcium and vitamins, and all for just about 80 calories and only 3 grams of carbs. Plus, it's inexpensive!

Cottage cheese is more than just a snack; it's also a handy and nutritious ingredient. I love using it as a swap for ricotta in just

about any recipe. Simply spoon the cottage cheese straight from the carton and use or, for extra points, drain or blot the excess moisture from the cottage cheese and pulse in the food processor and you'll have almost exactly the texture of ricotta cheese.

You can even use cottage cheese as a base for a lusciously creamy salad dressing! Just blend up the cottage cheese with a few tablespoons of very hot water, which will soften the curds just enough to make the results creamy. Add smashed garlic, lemon juice, fresh herbs and black pepper, and you have a tasty dressing or dip. One of my favorite ricotta indulgences is Italian ricotta cake, which is something between a classic cake and a

cheesecake. Sweet and fatty, a little sliver goes a long way.

Here is my cottage cheese makeover of this yummy (calorie-dense) treat. I use cottage cheese, of course, but I also cut the butter way down and kept the sugar on the lower end (1 1/2 teaspoons per serving). Loads of lemon zest keep it exciting, and the almond flour ensures that the fats are healthy (and offer a smidge of protein and nutrients). All of which makes my lemon cottage cheese cake not exactly as authentic as a trip to Rome, but certainly a perfect way to end a springtime meal.

LEMON COTTAGE CHEESE CAKE

Ingredients

Start to finish: 1 hour

Servings: 12

3 eggs, separated

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature

3/4 cup granulated sugar

1/2 cup low-fat cottage cheese

1/4 cup grated lemon zest (2 to 3 lemons)

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 cup almond flour or meal

1 1/4 cups whole-wheat pastry flour (or all-purpose flour)

1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

3/4 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

1/4 cup low-fat milk

Preparation

Heat the oven to 350 F. Coat a 9-inch round cake pan with cooking spray, then line with kitchen parchment. In a medium

bowl, use an electric mixer to whip the egg whites to stiff peaks, then set aside. In a large bowl, use the mixer to beat together the butter and sugar for 1 minute. Add the egg yolks and mix again until creamy and pale, about 2 minutes. Add the cottage cheese, lemon zest and vanilla, then mix on medium until very well blended and the cottage cheese is broken down a little.

In a medium bowl, sift together the almond flour, pastry flour, cinnamon, baking powder and salt. Mix half of the dry ingredients into the butter and egg mixture and mix on low with the mixer. Add the milk and the remaining dry ingredients, then mix on low to blend. Using a rubber spatula, fold in half of the whipped egg whites rather briskly until well mixed into the batter. Fold in the second half of the egg whites very gently, until blended in, but not deflated.

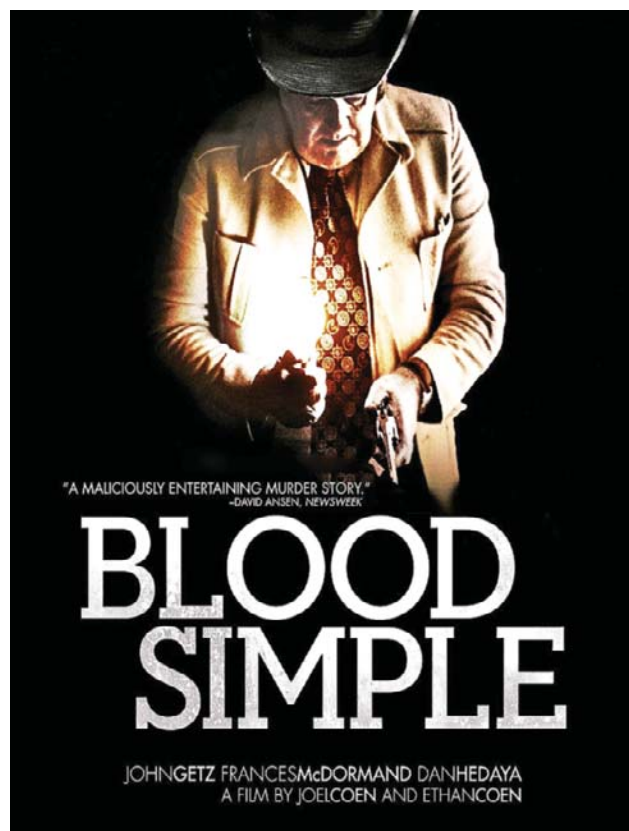
Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake on the oven's middle shelf until the cake is golden and springs back under light pressure, about 35 minutes. Let cool for 15 minutes before removing from the pan, then let cool completely. Once cooled, dust the top with powdered sugar and serve with raspberries and mint, if desired.



Movies

The most critically acclaimed films of the Coen Brothers

For more than two and a half decades now, Joel and Ethan Coen have been thrilling critics - and, here and there, audiences - with their distinctive blend of dark humor, colorful violence, and singular visual flair. The brothers are easily two (or is that one?) of the most respected directors in the business. Their latest effort, *Hail, Caesar!*, hit theaters a few weeks ago, and to celebrate, we've collected their most definitive directorial efforts.

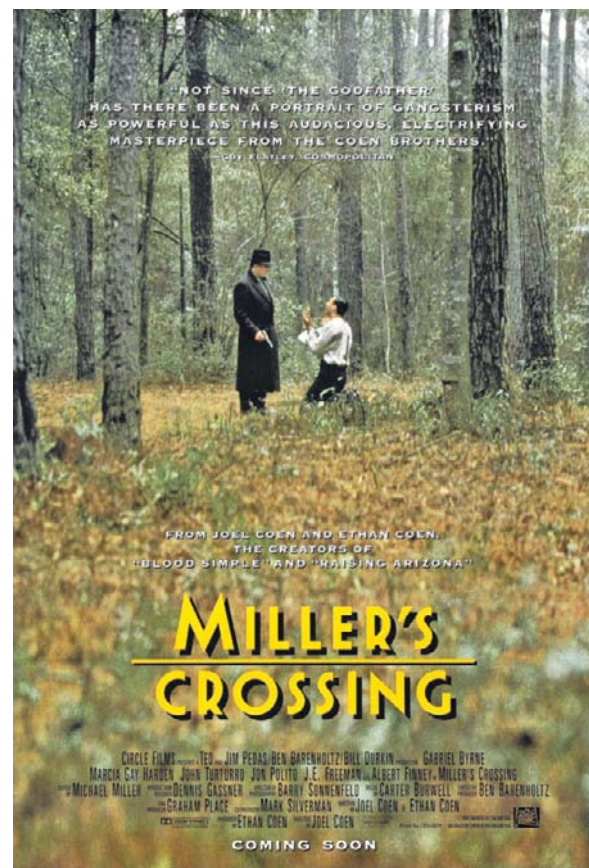


BLOOD SIMPLE (1984)

Combining the shocks of a slasher film with the moral ambiguity and twisty plotting of film noir, the Coens' debut, *Blood Simple*, shook American independent cinema to its core. Creepy and deliriously malevolent, it's the story of a bar owner who hires a sketchy private eye to kill his cheating wife (Frances McDormand); double and triple crosses and bloody mayhem ensues. With their first film, the Coens showed an aptitude for the stylistic quirks that would become their trademark - namely, a love of the ghoulish balanced with a loopy sense of humor.

RAISING ARIZONA (1987)

The first Coen brothers film to display their knack for quirky comedy, *Raising Arizona* helped seal the filmmakers' reputation and cement their loyal following. Nicolas Cage and Holly Hunter are brilliantly cast as a cop and ex-con husband/wife duo who resolve their infertility with kidnapping. Though not their biggest hit, it's infinitely quotable ("Edwina's insides were a rocky place where my seed could find no purchase"), and the original score by Carter Burwell is not to be ignored.



MILLER'S CROSSING (1990)

As an homage to classic gangster movies, *Miller's Crossing* is hypercharged; the language is harsher, the violence more brutal, the plotting more labyrinthine. Albert Finney and Gabriel Byrne star as Irish mobsters, threatened externally by the Italian mob and internally by their shared love of a woman (Marcia Gay Harden). This intriguing tale of loyalty features impeccable 1920s decor and a streak of dark humor; it's arguably the Coens' most straightforward work.

27 FARGO

a thriller by joel & ethan coen



a lot can happen
in the middle of nowhere.

FARGO (1996)

Prior to No Country For Old Men, the macabre, pitch-black comedy Fargo was the Coens' most decorated film, with seven Oscar nominations and two wins: Best Actress (Frances McDormand) and Best Original Screenplay. Fargo details a ransom kidnap scheme gone wrong, with very pregnant cop McDormand investigating the crime as the bumbling perpetrators attempt to cover their tracks. The Coens' bleak humor and taste for blood and violence never mixed as well as it did in Minnesota, so the people over at FX decided to create an offshoot television series - with the Coens on board as executive producers - and it's gone on to win some awards of its own.

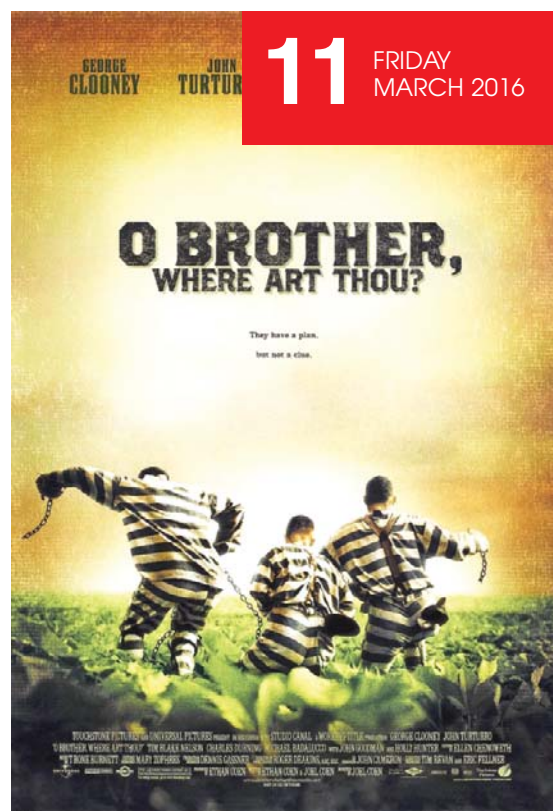
TRUE GRIT (2010)

It takes some major stones to step into John Wayne's boots for a remake of one of the Duke's classic pictures, so even if the Coen brothers' True Grit had well and truly stunk, we'd have to give their version credit for having something extra in its saddlebag - namely Jeff Bridges, who took the role of the cantankerous Rooster Cogburn and made it his own. Of course, it didn't hurt that Bridges (in vintage late-period marbled-mouthed form) was surrounded by an ace supporting cast that included Matt Damon and Hailee Steinfeld, or that the Coens went back to Charles Portis' original novel for inspiration; in the end, the result was a career-launching hit for Steinfeld, a mainstream hit for the Coens, and another critically acclaimed outing for Bridges - all of whom earned Oscar nominations for their work.



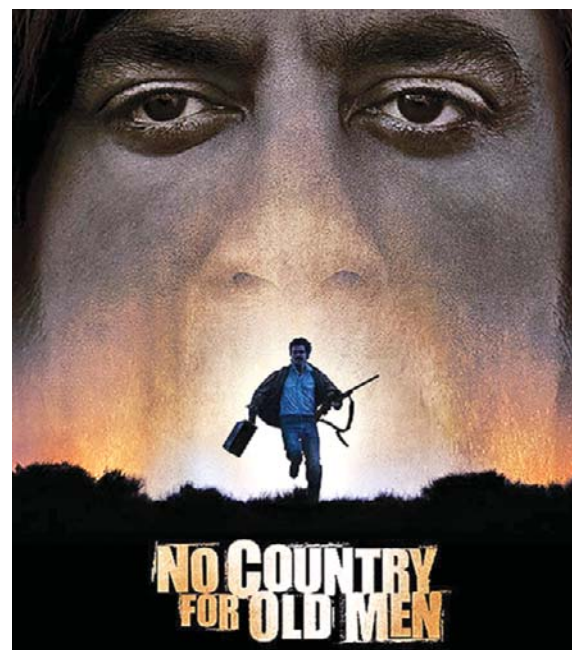
INSIDE LLEWYN DAVIS (2013)

A brilliantly cast ensemble period drama shot through with pitch-black, borderline misanthropic humor and topped off with a killer soundtrack, Inside Llewyn Davis checks off any number of the boxes filmgoers have learned to associate with the Coen brothers, so it's very much to the film's credit that it somehow manages to feel fresh anyway. This is due in no small part to the work of Oscar Isaac, who plays the titular struggling folk musician with an utter lack of vanity while infusing the character with enough essential humanity to temper his overall lack of likability - and to the Coens' screenplay, which serves as a savagely honest, yet ultimately affectionate, look at the self-delusional struggle for artistic purity as a means to its own end. — (www.rottentomatoes.com)



O BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU? (2000)

With O Brother, Where Art Thou?, the Coen brothers took their thriller tropes (ill-fated criminal plans, ironic stereotypes, and a detached tone) and magically applied it towards an Odyssey-inspired farce. Starring George Clooney as the beleaguered but resourceful Odysseus, O Brother is a sepia-toned fantasia of throwaway jokes, slapstick, and killer bluegrass. In fact, the music proved popular enough to spawn a virtual cottage industry with multiple soundtracks, a documentary, and even a national tour.



NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN (2007)

Though the Coens have long been revered for their intermittently manic and macabre storylines, they've never made Oscar bait. It's perhaps logical, then, that the massive Academy sweep they enjoyed with No Country for Old Men seemed like overdue praise. In No Country, based on the stoic anti-western novel by Cormack McCarthy, Josh Brolin's protagonist sees a way out of his trailer in a bag of bloodied bills. Chance and destiny are invoked in the most resonant, least pretentious way in the sinister form of Anton Chigurh (Best Supporting Actor Javier Bardem), the hit man who coldly and relentlessly hunts Brolin's Llewellyn. No Country is impeccable: the cinematography is breathtaking, the dialogue efficient, and the direction assured.

Friday Times

FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 2016

Travel

Best places to travel in May 2016

Choose to travel in May and you're in for a treat — especially if you're keen to explore new cultures and ancient cities. Fancy losing yourself in the souks and sounds of Fez during a world music festival? How about a Nordic knees-up on Bergen's waterfront? From rural Serbia to the Silk Road, our travel experts have a few thoughts on where to go in May.





Visit the ancient Silk Road in Bukhara

Late spring is an ideal time to visit Uzbekistan. The frigid winter is given over to blooming tulips and trees laden with apricots, walnuts and pistachios. Bazaars air out their dust after the long freeze, and merchants once again adorn alleyway tables with colorful spices and silks.

Bukhara, in central Uzbekistan, is often considered to be Central Asia's holiest city. During the 9th and 10th centuries, it flourished as a centre for philosophy, religion and poetry. Every May, Bukhara's traditional heritage and arts are celebrated during the Silk and Spices Festival. The old town is bedecked with medieval ornaments and plays host to parades, traditional dances, musical performances, demonstrations of handicrafts like jewelry-making and ceramics, and a huge silk and spice bazaar.

Temperatures can inch towards 30°C in the spring sunshine, but there is reprieve to be found in the echoing tiles of Bukhara's ancient monuments. Take time for a moment of spiritual reflection in Central Asia's oldest remaining mosque - the 9th century Maghoki-Attar - as well as a wander through the Ark, a massive 5th century fortress. Once feet are tired, grab a table on the lovely roof terrace at

Minzifa, where your meal comes with unbeatable views of Bukhara's iconic blue tiled domes.

Join the celebrations in Bergen, Norway

Visit the diminutive Norwegian city of Bergen in May, and you'll be in for a month of celebrations. On syttende Mai (17 May), Norwegians gather together to honor their Constitution Day, a thoroughly jolly day out where families and friends line the streets wearing bunader, the national dress, to wave the Norwegian flag in celebration of their independence, watch parades, and wish each other a hearty gratulerer med dagen (congratulations with the day). While 17 May is celebrated all over Norway, witnessing the festivities from beside the higgledy-piggledy, ancient harbor side wooden buildings of Unesco-protected Bryggen is really something special. After some restorative ice cream and waffles, take the 8-minute journey up Mt Floyen on the Floibanen funicular for sweeping views of the city and beyond. If you're feeling particularly sprightly, you can walk up in under an hour.

Later in the month, the two-week-long Bergen International Festival highlights the

greatest artistic talent from around the world. Kicking off on 25 May this year, it's the largest festival of its kind in the Nordics and promises a calendar of events filled with music, dance, opera, theatre and visual art.

Be mesmerized by sacred music in Fez, Morocco

May is easily the best time to visit Morocco, with the weather sunny and pleasant and the summer crowds yet to arrive. This year, it also coincides with the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music (Fes des Musiques Sacrees, fes-festival.com), a gathering of creative minds from around the world.

From 6-4 May 2016, a melange of musicians, artists and intellectuals will descend upon the 1200-year-old city of Fez and come together to produce a fusion of music, religion and art. The festival is fuelled by the belief that music can heal the world and break down all barriers.

Every evening, major concerts are held at the palace courtyard of the 14th century Bab Al Makina, headlined by renowned international musicians. There are also free concerts held in the gardens of Dar Tazi and Boujloud Square, as well as parties and art exhibitions at the Batha Museum.

Ease into summer in Vojvodina

Serbia's northern Vojvodina province is a slow traveler's dream. Its laid-back lifestyle is best explored by car, or cycling the Danube Bike Trail through sunflower-streaked fields; alternatively, the convivial city of Novi Sad (of Exit festival fame) is a great base for leisurely day trips. Stay at salaoi (farmsteads) or restored manor houses for a taste of old-world rural glamour and a spin in a horse-drawn carriage, and feast on fish specialties while being serenaded by lute players at bohemian riverside taverns dotted around the region.

Meet Vojvodina's multicultural heritage and ancient history in the art-nouveau marvels of Austro-Hungarian Subotica and the ruins of Sirmium, one of the Roman Empire's four capitals. Stretch artistic boundaries from the naive-art village of Kovačica to the avant-garde Muzej Macura (muzejmacura.com) on the Danube. Test your horse-riding skills at the 240-year-old stud farm of Zobnatica and go fishing and bird watching in the rare wetlands of Carska Bara nature reserve. Or simply spend blissful days vineyard- and monastery-hopping in the forested hills of Fruška Gora. The choices seem endless, just like those Pannonian Plain horizons.





Find your perfect festival in Chicago

The month of May in Chicago has every-
one brimming with anticipation, full of excitement for all that summer offers. Ready to shake off winter's weighty layers of flannel and fleece, people throng to the city's outdoor spaces to soak up festivals of every sort, along with much needed vitamin D.

The Chicago Beer Classic (chicagobeerclassic.com) takes place on 7 May at Soldier Field, featuring new and local brews, and the price of admission even includes a pretzel necklace, the perfect pairing for your beers. Summer Camp Festival (summercampfestival.com) is the first big music fest of the summer, combining childhood camping nostalgia with

three days of music from 100 bands. If indoor pursuits are your thing, the Chicago Critics Film Festival (chicagocriticsfilmfestival.com) showcases the best indie and under-the-radar movies of the year.

They say laughter is the best medicine, and Chicago will certainly cure what ails you with two comedy festivals this month. The Chicago

Improv Festival (chicagoimprovfestival.org) kicks off its 18th year on 2 May, offering up a week of off-the-cuff hilarity in venues around the city. The month finishes with laughs at the quirkily-named Second Annual 26th Annual Comedy Festival (26comedy.com), a mix of comedy acts, film screenings, and panel discussions.





Aries (March 21-April 19)

A generally busy day can be a good thing but even a good thing needs some stress relief. Call your loved one before the day is over and make an appointment with each other to share a massage. You might stop by the health food store this afternoon and pick up some silky soft, wonderfully good smelling massage oil-a most pleasurable escape. Your interest may be piqued by the avenue of making money through rational, intellectual processes, rather than brute, physical action. You show more interest in cultural or literary affairs regarding the spending of money than just merely collecting material goods; this is good. You are apt to obtain success financially through the power of attraction. Expect a sense of good will.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You have a natural sense for what the public wants. Dealing with the public today, you may gain some insights from others that are new to you. Patience, persistence, fairness and a sense of limits are in order. Today after work is a good time to double your money. We are not talking about gambling here; perhaps your eye for antiques or your knowledge of the resale value for some item will be the focus of your monetary gain. Whatever the situation is today, the energies work in your favor to create extra funds. You should feel very good about an event that is fast approaching-you are ready. Accept an invitation or volunteer to speak or coordinate activities at this event. There are opportunities now to show off your talents.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Pay attention to detail today. A small mistake can be quite costly and you are known for catching those small mistakes. There are plans in the making for your recognition. Unexpected medical expenses today may have family members fussing. Consider accessing your nutritional intake and if you have caught the flu-baby yourself and take each day, one step at a time-slowly. If you do not have the flu, keep away from other people's faces. Dedicated time, budgeting and positive interaction with loved ones after the workday is most helpful. You are respected as a good family person. When your home life is of high standard, other parts of your life also work well. With a strong family unit, you will continue to have a good support system.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Pay attention to detail today. A small mistake can be quite costly and you are known for catching those small mistakes. There are plans in the making for your recognition. Unexpected medical expenses today may have family members fussing. Consider accessing your nutritional intake and if you have caught the flu-baby yourself and take each day, one step at a time-slowly. If you do not have the flu, keep away from other people's faces. Dedicated time, budgeting and positive interaction with loved ones after the workday is most helpful. You are respected as a good family person. When your home life is of high standard, other parts of your life also work well. With a strong family unit, you will continue to have a good support system.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Everything points to your taking control of negotiations or projects that you have never had the opportunity to do before. Whatever the case, today promotes energies that will help you show off your talents and your ability to be supportive, creative and organized. You could be most persuasive with others and eloquent in speech. You could feel great support from the people that know you and you will have encouragement for whatever you are trying to accomplish. This afternoon, a new exercise program makes you feel like a new person. Of course, you realize this is a steady process. You may also enjoy the fun part of exercise. The fun part of today may be the new people you meet. Take a buddy to exercise with you. A gift awaits you-tickets?



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your professional or educational process is moving right along-just like clockwork. Now is a great time to make some changes in your habits. A bad habit can change or a new habit can be introduced. Variety satisfies a deep inner need and you may sense that now is a good time to stir the pot or add a little spice-legally, that is. Make sure you do not overextend your energies-perhaps, a wonderfully stimulating play or concert before the end of this month can be inspiring and enjoyable. If you are a musician, you may want to gather your musician friends for a jam session in the evening. Being on the go and keeping a finger to the winds of change make you feel in touch. Learning and communicating with others is greatly satisfying.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Ambition takes center stage now. Reward and recognition are yours for the making-but you must make them happen, you cannot simply wait around and expect them to appear. You seem to have developed a knack for being in the right place at the right time-you certainly have many friends in high places. This afternoon you may enjoy being with your friends. One friend could be moving and need your help and then you may enjoy a pizza party after the moving. Lots of communication is enjoyed. With your ability to put your thoughts into words, you easily captivate others. There is a chance to understand those around you and to have a special time with these friends. There is definitely a sense of harmony-making this a happy time.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Communications are clear and you may find yourself conversing with many, many people on many, many subjects. Working with-rather than against-the flow of the energies should be easy to do today. Business is improving and others can almost see you holding your breath! There are possibilities to branch out with your investments soon. Be wise to seek counsel in these investments-don't just jump at the first idea. Although you are quite lucky, gambling is not your best option just now. An early evening get-together with friends is something you may enjoy. The energies are in the direction of good health as well as the desire to socialize. You are particularly witty and make for fun company. Music this evening may be of your own making.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Some people are silent and just have nothing to say . . . So don't push. This morning, people are busy and rushing to finish some project. You may be the lucky one and either you finish ahead of time or you lead the pack, so to speak. This afternoon you will find some interesting and positive changes with your co-worker friends. Your emotions or other people's feelings may seem very clear to you now. This afternoon you may engage in a very romantic interlude. You may feel the need to secure your own feelings about yourself through your mate or loved one. You may also try to increase your power of attraction, consciously or subconsciously. Purchasing new clothes may be part of your activities this evening. It would be good to have new exercise clothes.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Some preplanned group meeting may find you needing to leave work a little earlier than usual. You may be involved in some sort of political group for the next few weeks. You will probably enjoy working with such a diversified group of people. If you have not done it already, consider changing your investment strategy-you can obtain advice. The afternoon is a good time to talk with family members. News concerning a family member will be positive . . . And you were so worried-relax. There is a lot of drive available on your creative side, making you very passionate and expressive. You may be able to enjoy and value your own life situation or feel especially kind toward a friend or loved one. Conversations are constructive.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You can feel very good about yourself when you step outside the boundaries of your own expertise and try something new. You may surprise yourself at how well you perform and how interesting a new subject matter can be for a change. This may not be long-term but it is good to be focused. At home this afternoon you may discover that the neighborhood is planning some steps to neighborhood improvements. You might volunteer to write a couple of letters to some elected city officials for aid. This evening, you may discover that romance, as well as work, can be much better if you occasionally try something new. You and your loved one will have some special time together this evening. Good feelings make this a happy time.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

This morning you will probably find yourself leaning over heavy books or lugging catalogs back and forth to your desk. What this amounts to is research and frustrations and then, finally, success. The research you so meticulously worked through may be what helps you complete a difficult process. Special praises are sung in your direction for whatever project you attempt next. It may occur to you that because you are so good at your job you are consistently asked to step beyond your work duties. It may be time now to request a new job title and become a member of management. You enjoy close relationships and today is the day to soak it up. All of those considerate things you do for other people have not been forgotten.

COUNTRY CODES

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

amc

01:35

Final Combination

03:10

Mississippi Burning

05:30

High Spirits

07:05

Big Screen

07:20

Race For The Yankee Zephyr

09:10

Death Rides A Horse

11:05

Les Miserables (1998)

13:15

Beauty Shop

15:00

The Secret Of Santa Vittoria

17:15

Impromptu

19:00

Groundhog Day

20:45

Big Screen

21:00

The Patriot

23:40

Geronimo: An American Legend

ANIMAL PLANET HD

00:50

River Monsters

01:45

I'm Alive

02:40

Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet

03:35

Tanked

04:25

Animal Cops South Africa

05:15

Gator Boys

06:02

Treehouse Masters

06:49

Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet

07:36

Monkey Life

08:00

Monkey Life

08:25

Animal Maternity Ward

09:15

Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet

10:10

Treehouse Masters

11:05

Tanked

12:00

Animal Maternity Ward

12:55

Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet

13:50

Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet

14:45

Gator Boys

15:40

Treehouse Masters

16:35

Tanked

17:30

Animal Cops South Africa

18:25

River Monsters

19:20

Big Fish Man

20:15

Tanked

21:10

Echo And The Elephants Of Amboseli

21:40

Echo And The Elephants Of Amboseli

22:05

Treehouse Masters

23:00

Big Fish Man

23:55

Gator Boys

BBC FIRST

00:20

Doctors

00:55

Eastenders

01:25

Holby City

02:20

Stella

03:10

Doctors

03:40

Eastenders

04:15

Starlings

05:05

Death In Paradise

06:00

Starlings

06:50

Holby City

07:50

Doctors

08:20

Eastenders

08:50

Stella

09:45

Death In Paradise

10:40

The Musketeers

11:35

The Musketeers

12:30

The Musketeers

13:30

Holby City

14:25

Doctors

14:55

Eastenders

15:25

Death In Paradise

16:25

Death In Paradise

17:20

Death In Paradise

18:20

Doctors

18:50

Doctors

19:25

Father Brown

20:15

War And Peace

21:00

War And Peace

21:50

Doctor Foster

22:50

Stella

23:35

Doctors

Bloomberg TELEVISION

00:00

What'd You Miss?

01:00

Charlie Rose

02:00

First Up With Angie Lau

03:00

First Up With Angie Lau

04:00

Trending Business

05:00

Trending Business

06:00

Asia Edge

07:00

Bloomberg West

08:00

Charlie Rose

09:00

Countdown

10:00

Countdown

CCTV NEWS

10:30

On The Move

11:00

On The Move

12:00

The Pulse

13:00

Bloomberg Surveillance

14:00

Bloomberg Surveillance

15:00

Bloomberg Go

16:00

Bloomberg Go

17:00

Bloomberg Go

18:00

Bloomberg Markets

19:00

Bloomberg Markets: European

Close

20:00

Bloomberg Markets

21:00

Bloomberg Markets

22:00

Bloomberg Markets

22:30

Brilliant Ideas

23:00

Bloomberg Markets

CCTV NEWS

00:00

News Update

00:30

Dialogue

01:00

News Update

01:15

China 24

02:00

The Heat

02:30

News Update

03:00

Global Business

04:00

News Update

05:00

News Update

06:30

Dialogue

07:00

News Hour

08:00

Global Business

09:00

News Update

10:30

Sports Scene

11:00

Global Business

12:00

News Update

12:30

Culture Express

13:00

Africa Live

14:00

News Update

14:30

Dialogue

15:00

News Update

15:15

China 24

16:00

News Update

CNBC

16:15

Global Business

17:00

News Update

17:15

World InSight

18:00

Asia Today

18:30

Culture Express

19:00

News Update

19:30

The Heat

20:00

Africa Live

21:00

Global Business

21:30

Dialogue

22:00

News Update

22:15

China 24

23:00

News Update

23:15

World InSight

CNBC

01:00

The Edge

01:30

Tech Transformers: Kevin Spacey

02:00

U.S. Squawk Alley

03:00

Asia Squawk Box

05:00

Asia Street Signs

07:00

Fast Money: Half Time Report

08:00

Capital Connection

09:00

Squawk Box Europe

12:00

Europe Street Signs

13:00

Worldwide Exchange

14:00

U.S. Squawk Box

17:00

Squawk On The Street

19:00

U.S. Squawk Alley

20:00

Fast Money: Half Time Report

21:00

U.S. Power Lunch

ci crime & investigation network

00:00

My Crazy Ex

01:00

Crime Stories

Discovery CHANNEL HD

02:00

Born To Kill

03:00

Ms. Murder

04:00

The First 48

05:00

Born To Kill

06:00

50 Ways To Kill Your Lover

07:00

The FBI Files

08:00

The FBI Files

09:00

Homicide Hunter

10:00

Beyond Scared Straight

11:00

Deadly Wives

12:00

Crimes That Shook Britain

13:00

Nightmare In Suburbia

14:00

The First 48

15:00

Homicide Hunter

16:00

Martina Cole's Lady Killers

17:00

The FBI Files

18:00

Crimes That Shook Britain

19:00

Nightmare In Suburbia

20:00

The First 48

21:00

Homicide Hunter

22:00

Deadly Wives

23:00

Crimes That Shook Britain

Discovery CHANNEL HD

00:20

Fast N' Loud

01:10

Salvage Hunters

02:00

Redwood Kings

02:50

Kings Of The Wild

03:40

What's In The Barn?

04:05

The Liquidator

04:30

Garage Gold

05:00

How Do They Do It?

05:30

Chasing Classic Cars

06:00

You Have Been Warned

06:50

The Weapon Hunter

07:40

Big Giant Swords

08:30

The Island With Bear Grylls

09:20

Men, Women, Wild

10:10

So You Think You'd Survive?

11:00

Salvage Hunters

11:50

Redwood Kings

Discovery CHANNEL HD

12:40

Kings Of The Wild

13:30

Fast N' Loud

14:20

Street Outlaws

15:10

Extreme Car Hoarders

16:00

The Island With Bear Grylls

16:50

The Island With Bear Grylls

17:40

The Island With Bear Grylls

18:30

The Island With Bear Grylls

19:20

The Island With Bear Grylls

20:10

The Island With Bear Grylls

21:00

Fast N' Loud Clip Shows

21:50

Street Outlaws

22:40

Extreme Car Hoarders

23:30

Saving Africa's Giants With Yao Ming

ID INVESTIGATION DISCOVERY

00:40

Who On Earth Did I Marry?

01:05

Who On Earth Did I Marry?

01:30

The Haunted

02:20

Ghost Lab

03:10

Deadly Affairs

04:00

True CSI

04:45

Who On Earth Did I Marry?

05:10

Who On Earth Did I Marry?

05:30

The Haunted

06:20

Fatal Encounters

07:10

On The Case With Paula Zahn

08:00

Dr G: Medical Examiner

08:50

On The Case With Paula Zahn

09:40

Fatal Encounters

10:30

Murder Shift

11:20

Deadly Affairs

12:10

True Crime With Aphrodite Jones

13:00

The Will

13:50

I Almost Got Away With It

14:40

California Investigator

15:05

Dr G: Medical Examiner

15:55

Fatal Encounters

16:45

On The Case With Paula Zahn

17:35

Murder Shift

18:25

I Almost Got Away With It

19:15

The Will

20:05

Deadly Affairs

20:55

True Crime With Aphrodite Jones

21:45

California Investigator

22:10

Who On Earth Did I Marry?

22:35

Who On Earth Did I Marry?

23:00

True Crime With Aphrodite Jones

SC DISCOVERY science

00:35

Race To Escape

01:20

How It's Made: Dream Cars

01:44

How It's Made: Dream Cars

02:08

Mega Builders

02:55

Cosmic Collisions

03:42

Science Of The Movies

04:29

Race To Escape

05:16

Mega Builders

06:03

Cosmic Collisions

06:50

Engineering Thrills

07:37

How Do They Do It?

08:00

How Do They Do It?

08:23

Race To Escape

09:08

Science Of The Movies

09:53

Engineering Thrills

10:38

How It's Made: Dream Cars

11:00

How It's Made: Dream Cars

11:23

Invent It Rich

12:08

Cosmic Collisions

12:53

Engineering Thrills

13:38

Race To Escape

14:23

How It's Made: Dream Cars

14:46

How It's Made: Dream Cars

15:10

Science Of The Movies

15:57

Invent It Rich

16:44

Cosmic Collisions

17:31

Engineering Earthquakes

18:18

Science Of The Movies

19:05

Race To Escape

19:50

Da Vinci's Machines

20:40

How The Universe Works

21:25

How It's Made: Dream Cars

21:50

How It's Made: Dream Cars

22:15

Science Of The Movies

23:00

Da Vinci's Machines

23:45

How The Universe Works

Discovery world

00:40

HMS Ark Royal

01:30

Zero Hour

02:20

Origins

02:40

Chasing Classic Cars

03:05

Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations

Discovery CHANNEL HD

03:50

Bush Pilots

04:35

American Guns

05:20

Extreme Engineering

06:05

Codes And Conspiracies

06:50

HMS Ark Royal

07:35

Origins

08:00

Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations

08:50

100 Miles From Nowhere

09:40

Extreme Engineering

10:30

Codes And Conspiracies

11:20

Origins

11:45

Chasing Classic Cars

12:10

Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations

13:00

100 Miles From Nowhere

13:50

Extreme Engineering

14:40

Codes And Conspiracies

15:30

Origins

15:55

Chasing Classic Cars

16:20

Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations

17:10

100 Miles From Nowhere

18:00

Extreme Engineering

18:50

Codes And Conspiracies

19:40

Origins

20:05

Chasing Classic Cars

20:30

Unsolved History: Korean

Disney CHANNEL

00:00

Violetta

00:45

The Hive

00:50

Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

01:15

Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

01:40

Hank Zipzer

02:05

Binny And The Ghost

02:30

Violetta

03:15

The Hive

03:20

Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

03:45

Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

04:10

Hank Zipzer

04:35

Binny And The Ghost

05:00

Violetta

05:45

The Hive

05:50

Mouk

06:00

Lolirock

06:25

Sofia The First

06:50

Gravity Falls

07:15

Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir

07:40

Jessie

08:05

Shake It Up

08:30

Shake It Up

08:55

That's So Raven

09:20

That's So Raven

09:45

Austin & Ally

10:10

Austin & Ally

10:35

A.N.T. Farm

11:00

A.N.T. Farm

11:25

Jessie

11:50

Jessie

12:15

Cars Toons

12:20

Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir

12:45

Fish Hooks

13:00

Fish Hooks

13:10

Austin & Ally

13:35

Austin & Ally

14:00

Liv And Maddie

14:25

Descendants Wicked World

14:30

Liv And Maddie

14:55

Dog With A Blog

15:20

Dog With A Blog

15:45

Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir

16:10

Violetta

17:00

I Love Violetta

17:10

Starstruck

18:40

Descendants Wicked World

18:43

Best Friends Whenever

19:05

Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir

19:30

Violetta

20:20

I Love Violetta

20:30

A Goofy Movie

21:55

Violetta Recipes

22:00

Binny And The Ghost

22:25

Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

22:50

Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

23:10

Hank Zipzer

23:35

Binny And The Ghost

Disney Junior

00:05

Henry Hugglemonster

00:20

Calimero

00:35

Zou

00:50

Loopdidoo



47 RONIN ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 01:05 Art Attack

01:30 Henry Hugglemonster

01:45 Calimero

02:00 Zou

02:15 Loopdidoo

02:30 Art Attack

02:55 Henry Hugglemonster

03:05 Calimero

03:20 Zou

03:30 Loopdidoo

03:45 Art Attack

04:10 Henry Hugglemonster

04:20 Calimero

04:35 Zou

04:45 Loopdidoo

05:00 Art Attack

05:25 Henry Hugglemonster

05:35 Calimero

05:50 Zou

06:00 Loopdidoo

06:15 Art Attack

06:35 Henry Hugglemonster

06:50 Calimero

07:00 Zou

07:20 Loopdidoo

07:35 Art Attack

08:00 Calimero

08:10 Zou

08:25 Loopdidoo

08:40 Miles From Tomorrow

09:05 Sofia The First

09:30 Goldie & Bear

09:45 Jake And The Never Land Pirates

10:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse

10:35 Doc McStuffins

11:00 Sofia The First

11:30 Goldie & Bear

12:00 Miles From Tomorrow

12:25 Special Agent Oso

12:40 The Hive

12:50 Handy Manny

13:15 Jungle Junction

13:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse

14:00 Sofia The First

14:25 Goldie & Bear

14:50 Doc McStuffins

15:15 Zou

15:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse

15:55 Loopdidoo

16:10 Miles From Tomorrow

16:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates

17:00 Sofia The First

17:25 Jungle Cubs

17:50 Aladdin

18:15 Gummi Bears

18:40 Goldie & Bear

19:05 Miles From Tomorrow

19:30 Sofia The First

19:55 Doc McStuffins

20:20 Jake And The Neverland Pirates

20:35 Miles From Tomorrow

21:00 Goldie & Bear

21:30 Sofia The First

22:00 Jungle Cubs

22:25 Aladdin

22:50 Gummi Bears

23:20 Lilo And Stitch

23:50 Zou
- 
- 00:00 Programmes Start At 7:00am

07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil

07:25 K. C. Undercover

07:50 Supa Strikas

08:15 Annedroids

08:40 Lab Rats

09:10 Kirby Buckets

09:35 Wander Over Yonder

10:00 Rocket Monkeys

10:25 Ultimate Spider-Man

10:50 Boyster

11:20 Boyster

11:45 Pair Of Kings

12:10 Pair Of Kings

12:35 Lab Rats

13:00 Lab Rats

13:30 Phineas And Ferb

13:55 Phineas And Ferb

14:20 Kickin' It

14:45 Kickin' It

15:10 Guardians Of The Galaxy

15:15 Rocket Monkeys

15:40 Wander Over Yonder

16:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil

16:30 Kirby Buckets

16:55 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything

17:25 K. C. Undercover

17:50 Supa Strikas

18:15 Lab Rats

18:40 Mighty Med

19:10 Annedroids

19:35 Star vs The Forces Of Evil

20:00 Kirby Buckets

20:25 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much



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- Everything

20:55 K. C. Undercover

21:20 Pickle And Peanut

21:45 Lab Rats

22:10 Mighty Med

22:40 Super Matrak

23:05 Super Matrak

23:30 Boyster
- 
- 00:00 Christina Milian Turned Up

00:55 The Grace Helbig Show

01:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

02:20 E! News

03:15 Giuliana & Bill

04:10 E! Entertainment Special

05:05 E! Entertainment Special

06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

07:50 Style Star

08:20 E! News

09:15 Giuliana & Bill

10:15 Giuliana & Bill

11:10 The Grace Helbig Show

11:35 The Grace Helbig Show

12:05 E! News

13:05 Fashion Police

14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

15:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

16:00 Dash Dolls

17:00 Dash Dolls

18:00 E! News

19:00 Christina Milian Turned Up

20:00 WAGs

21:00 WAGs
- 
- 00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

01:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers

01:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers

02:00 Tia Mowry At Home

02:30 Tia Mowry At Home

03:00 Man Fire Food

03:30 Man Fire Food

04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

04:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

05:00 Iron Chef America

06:00 Chopped

07:00 Man Fire Food

07:30 Man Fire Food

08:00 Chopped

09:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics

09:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics

10:00 The Kitchen

- 11:00 The Pioneer Woman

11:30 The Pioneer Woman

12:00 Chopped

13:00 Guy's Big Bite

13:30 Guy's Big Bite

14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

15:00 Man Fire Food

15:30 Man Fire Food

16:00 Chopped

17:00 The Kitchen

18:00 The Pioneer Woman

18:30 The Pioneer Woman

19:00 Chopped

20:00 Iron Chef America

21:00 Follow Donal... To Europe

21:30 Follow Donal... To Europe

22:00 Australian Food Adventures With Matt Moran
- 
- 00:20 Pawn Stars

00:45 Pawn Stars Australia

01:10 Aussie Pickers

02:00 Alaska Off-Road Warriors

02:50 American Pickers

03:40 Shipping Wars

04:05 Shipping Wars

04:30 Pawn Stars

05:00 Hoard Hunters

06:00 The Curse Of Oak Island

06:50 Search For The Lost Giants

07:40 Hunting Hitler

08:30 American Restoration

08:55 Mountain Men

09:45 Ax Men

10:35 Swamp People

11:25 American Restoration

12:15 Counting Cars

12:40 Counting Cars

13:05 American Pickers

13:55 Hoard Hunters

14:45 Search For The Lost Giants

15:35 Hunting Hitler

16:25 Counting Cars

16:50 Alone

17:40 Down East Dickering

18:30 Duck Dynasty

18:55 Duck Dynasty

19:20 Ax Men

20:10 Swamp People

21:00 Storage Wars: New York

21:25 Storage Wars: New York

21:50 Pawn Stars

22:15 Pawn Stars Australia

22:40 Hunting Hitler

23:30 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 
- 00:10 The Chase

01:05 Emmerdale

01:30 Eggheads

02:00 Coronation Street

- 02:30 Big Star's Little Star

03:25 The Chase: Celebrity Specials

04:20 Seven Days With,Ä¶

05:15 Come Dine With Me Couples

06:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?

07:00 Eggheads

07:30 Grantchester

08:25 Seven Days With,Ä¶

09:20 Big Star's Little Star

10:15 The Chase

11:05 Eggheads

11:35 Come Dine With Me Couples

12:30 Who's Doing The Dishes?

13:25 Emmerdale

13:50 Emmerdale

14:20 Coronation Street

14:45 Big Star's Little Star

15:35 The Jonathan Ross Show

16:30 The Doctor Blake Mysteries

17:25 Shetland

18:20 Emmerdale

18:45 Emmerdale

19:10 Coronation Street

19:35 The Jonathan Ross Show

20:30 The Doctor Blake Mysteries

21:25 Shetland

22:20 Coronation Street

22:50 Emmerdale

23:15 Emmerdale

23:40 Seven Days With,Ä¶
- 
- 00:10 Eat Street

00:35 Eat Street

01:00 Confucius Was A Foodie

01:50 The Best Job In The World

02:15 Eat Street

02:40 Eat Street

03:05 Cruise Ship Diaries

03:30 Tales From The Bush Larder

03:55 Tales From The Bush Larder

04:20 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia

04:45 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia

05:10 Eat Street

05:35 Eat Street

06:00 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia

06:25 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia

06:50 Confucius Was A Foodie

07:40 The Best Job In The World

08:05 Eat Street

08:30 Eat Street

08:55 Cruise Ship Diaries

09:20 Tales From The Bush Larder

09:45 Tales From The Bush Larder

10:10 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia

10:35 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia

11:00 Eat Street

11:25 Eat Street

11:50 Tripping Out With Alie &

- Georgia

12:15 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia

12:40 Confucius Was A Foodie

13:35 Rustic Adventure Argentina

14:00 Eat Street

14:30 Eat Street

14:55 Cruise Ship Diaries

15:25 Tales From The Bush Larder

15:50 Tales From The Bush Larder

16:20 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia

16:45 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia

17:15 Eat Street

17:40 Eat Street

18:10 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia

18:35 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia

19:05 Cruise Ship Diaries

19:30 Tales From The Bush Larder

20:00 Tales From The Bush Larder

20:25 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia

20:50 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia

21:15 Eat Street

21:40 Eat Street

22:05 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia

22:30 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia

22:55 Confucius Was A Foodie

23:45 Rustic Adventure Argentina
- 
- 00:30 Suburgatory

01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore

01:30 Web Therapy

02:00 Curb Your Enthusiasm

02:30 The League

03:00 Your Family Or Mine

03:30 Living With Fran

04:00 My Big Fat Greek Life

04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon

05:30 Modern Family

06:00 Mad Love

06:30 Community

07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers

08:00 My Big Fat Greek Life

08:30 Breaking In

09:00 Your Family Or Mine

09:30 Kevin From Work

10:00 I Hate My Teenage Daughter

10:30 Community

11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon

12:00 Mad Love

12:30 My Big Fat Greek Life

13:00 Breaking In

13:30 Community

14:00 Living With Fran

14:30 Kevin From Work

- 15:00 I Hate My Teenage Daughter

15:30 Suburgatory

16:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore

16:30 Mad Love

17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers

18:00 Fresh Off The Boat

18:30 Black-Ish

19:00 Parks And Recreation

19:30 The Simpsons

20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon

21:00 Suburgatory

21:30 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore

22:00 Community

22:30 Curb Your Enthusiasm

23:00 The League

23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 
- 00:00 Pusher

02:00 Outpost: Rise Of The Spetsnaz

04:00 The River Wild

06:00 47 Ronin

08:00 Metro

10:00 Snitch

12:00 Toxin

13:45 47 Ronin

15:45 King Arthur

18:00 Snitch

20:00 X-Men Origins: Wolverine

22:00 Waist Deep
- 
- 00:00 All The Wrong Reasons

02:15 You Again

04:15 UHF

06:00 50 First Dates

08:00 Renaissance Man

10:15 UHF

12:00 You Again

14:00 Dunston Checks In

15:45 Renaissance Man

18:00 Man Of The House

20:00 The Hot Chick

22:00 Hot Tub Time Machine 2
- 
- 01:00 The Wee Man

03:00 Decoding Annie Parker

05:00 Filly Brown

07:00 Mr. Pip

09:00 Late Bloomers

11:00 Reclaim

13:00 The Truth About Emanuel

15:00 Shanghai Calling

17:00 Late Bloomers

19:00 What Maisie Knew

21:00 Every Day

23:00 Only Lovers Left Alive
- 
- 01:45 Won't Back Down

03:45 The Grand Budapest Hotel

05:30 The Doctor

07:30 Sunshine On Leith

09:30 Manny

11:00 The Doctor

13:30 October Sky

15:30 Upside Down

17:30 Manny

19:00 Escobar: Paradise Lost

21:00 The Brass Teapot

23:00 God's Pocket
- 
- 01:00 Lizzie Borden Took An Ax

03:00 Louder Than Words

05:00 Big Game

07:00 The Book Of Life

09:00 Selma

11:15 Oggy & The Cockroaches: The Movie

13:00 Draft Day

15:00 The Single Moms Club

17:00 The Maze Runner

19:00 Seventh Son

21:00 Tomorrowland

23:15 Birdman

WORD SEARCH

Animals 2

Find and circle all of the animals that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional animal.

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

- ANTELOPE

BAT

BEAVER

BOBCAT

BUFFALO

CHEETAH

CHICKEN

COYOTE

CRANE

DEER

DOLPHIN

DUCK
- ELEPHANT

EMU

FLAMINGO

FROG

GAZELLE

GIRAFFE

GOOSE

GORILLA

HEDGEHOG

HEDGEHOG

HORSE

HUMMINGBIRD

IMPALA
- JAGUAR

KANGAROO

KOALA

LAMPREY

LEMING

LYNX

MARLIN

MOCKINGBIRD

MONKEY

MOUSE

OCTOPUS

ORANGUTAN
- ORCA

PANTHER

PARAKEET

PARTRIDGE

PENGUIN

PORPOISE

PUMA

RABBIT

RATTLESNAKE

RHINOCEROS

ROBIN

SHEEP
- SHREW

STORK

TURTLE

WALLABY

WALLABY

WEASEL

WHALE

YAK

ZEBRA

Yesterday's Solution

Animals 1

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

- AARDVARK

ALLIGATOR

BABOON

BARRACUDA

BEAR

BISON

CAMEL

CHIMPANZEE

CHINCHILLA

COBRA

COUGAR

CROW
- DONKEY

DOVE

EAGLE

ELK

FERRET

FOX

GECKO

GOAT

GOPHER

HAMSTER

HAWK

HERON
- HIPPOPOTAMUS

JACKAL

JELLYFISH

KIWI

LEOPARD

LION

LLAMA

MACAW

MEADOWLARK

MINK

MOOSE

NIGHTINGALE
- OTTER

PANTHER

PARROT

PEACOCK

PELICAN

PIG

PORCUPINE

QUAIL

RACCOON

RAVEN

REINDEER

ROADRUNNER
- SALMON

SLOTH

SWAN

SWORDFISH

TIGER

TORTOISE

TROUT

TURKEY

VULTURE

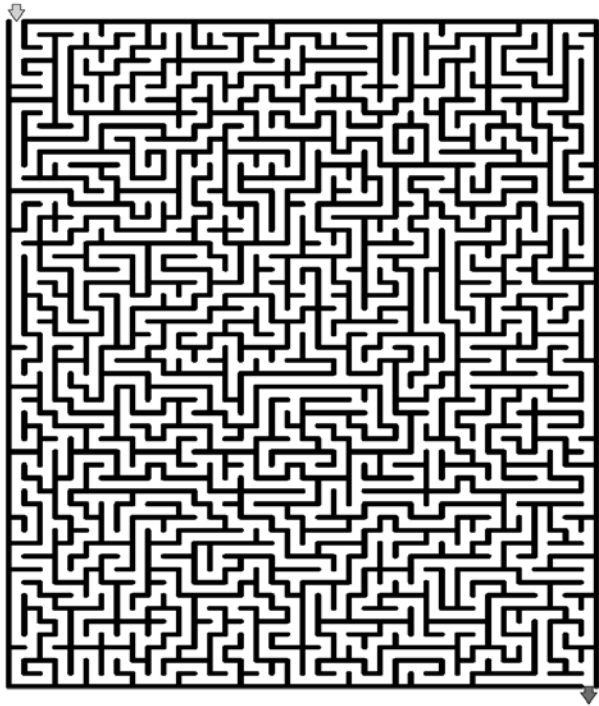
WOLVERINE

WOODPECKER

WREN

The hidden animal is: AMERICAN CROCODILE

CHALLENGING MAZE



CROSSWORD 1192

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		12	13	14
15				16									17		
18				19							20	21			
22			23				24				25		26		
27			28		29				30		31				
		32						33					34	35	36
37	38		39			40			41						
42		43			44			45			46				
47					48			49	50	51		52			
53			54	55				56			57		58		
59						60					61	62			
			63		64				65	66					
67	68	69						70					71	72	73
74															
79				80							81		82		
83				84									85		

ACROSS

- A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- In a carnal manner.
- Type genus of the Muridae.
- A doctor's degree in education.
- Trees and shrubs having berries or drupes or capsules as fruits.
- (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- A fine coating of oxide on the surface of a metal.
- A linguistic element added to a word to produce an inflected or derived form v 1.
- A genus of Placidae.
- Characterized by lightness and insubstantiality.
- Being or occurring at an advanced period of time or after a usual or expected time.
- A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- Aroused to impatience or anger.
- Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- Unsegmented worms.
- A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.
- Of or relating to Dante Alighieri or his writings.
- God of love and erotic desire.
- Young sheep.
- Type genus of the Todidae.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- A colorless and odorless inert gas.
- The residue that remains when something is burned.
- Having nine hinged bands of bony plates.
- African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
- 100 toea equal 1 kina.
- Japanese ornamental tree with fragrant white or pink blossoms and small yellow fruits.
- Not contained in or deriving from the essential nature of something.
- The hair growing on the lower part of a man's face.
- (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
- A soft heavy toxic malleable metallic element.
- Of or relating to a creed.
- An associate degree in applied science.
- A worker who attaches something by nailing it.
- Having an irregularly notched or toothed margin as though gnawed.
- The former capital and 2nd largest city of Brazil.
- Shaped or conditioned or disciplined by training.
- (archaic or Scottish) Faithful and true.
- Automatic data processing by electronic means without the use of tabulating cards or punched tapes.
- Proceed or issue forth, as from a source.
- The twelfth month of the civil year.

DOWN

- (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
- Belonging to or befitting a supreme ruler.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.

Daily SuDoku

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

- An oleoresin used in varnishes and ointments.
- A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
- Of flax, hemp, or jute, so as to promote loosening of the fibers form the woody tissue.
- Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
- An inflammatory disease involving the sebaceous glands of the skin.
- Having or showing profound knowledge.
- A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
- An affirmative.
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- Any division of quantity accepted as a standard of measurement or exchange.
- A French marshal who distinguished himself in the War of the Austrian Succession (1696-1750).
- A closely cropped haircut.
- Any of numerous low-growing cushion-forming plants of the genus Draba having rosette-forming leaves and terminal racemes of small flowers with scapose or leafy stems.
- God of the Underworld.
- 1 species.
- The noise made by a short puff of steam (as from an engine).
- Swelling from excessive accumulation of serous fluid in tissue.
- An unskilled painter.
- A nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trade name Ansaed) that is administered only orally.
- A clique that seeks power usually through intrigue.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- Any of a group of antidepressant drugs that inhibit the action of monoamine oxidase in the brain and so allow monoamines to accumulate.
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- Armor plate that protects the foot.
- A very light colorless element that is one of the six inert gasses.
- A small ball with a hole through the middle.
- (of tempo) Moderately slow n.
- Lower in esteem.
- Diabetes caused by a relative or absolute deficiency of insulin and characterized by polyuria.
- United States swimmer who in 1926 became the first woman to swim the English Channel (1903-).
- Fear resulting from the awareness of danger.
- A radioactive transuranic element produced by bombarding plutonium with neutrons.
- A sudden short attack.
- A program under which employees regularly accumulate shares and may ultimately assume control of the company.
- A Russian river.
- Period extending from Dec. 24 to Jan. 6.
- (Old Testament) The eldest son of Isaac who would have inherited the Covenant that God made with Abraham and that Abraham passed on to Isaac.
- A small wooded hollow.
- A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
- United States sculptor and architect whose public works include the memorial to veterans of the Vietnam War in Washington (born in 1959).
- A Mid-Atlantic state.

Yesterday's Solution

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

TUNISIA FIGHTS PALM-KILLING BUGS THREATENING ITS DATES

TUNIS: Armed with insecticide and an awareness campaign, date-exporting Tunisia is battling a bug that devours and kills palm trees and whose spread threatens an environmental and economic disaster. Originally from Asia, the red palm weevil was first spotted three years ago in the north of Tunis after infested ornamental palms were imported into the country, according to experts. The beetle, whose adult is barely a few centimeters (around an inch) long and whose larvae feeds off palm trunks, has already infested hundreds of around 30,000 palms in the area. In a country that exports 100,000 tons of dates worth \$215 million each year, authorities fear the pest could spread south towards its 40,000 hectares (almost 100,000 acres) of date palm plantations.

Dates are a valuable agricultural export in Tunisia-second only to olive

oil-and last year helped to shore up the country's struggling economy after deadly attacks hit its key tourism sector. From the centre of Tunis to the affluent northeastern suburb of La Marsa, you only need to look up to see rows of infested palm trunks, decapitated where once green fronds have decayed. Palms infested by weevils perish irreversibly. Once fronds at the top of the trunk turn brown and start to droop, it's usually too late.

'Real plague'

"It's a real plague that attacks more than 20 varieties in total," said Mohamed Habib Dhouibi, the scientist selected to lead Tunisia's battle against the insect. "Before we chop down the date palm trees, we have to treat them for 24 to 48 hours to prevent the spread of the weevil," he said, watching a tree being injected

with insecticide in the capital's northern suburb of Ariana. Female weevils use their snouts to chew a hole in palm tissue and lay their eggs there, according to the US-based Centre for Invasive Species Research.

Male weevils, meanwhile, release pheromones to attract other weevils to palms that are suitable for their larvae to eat. But these pheromones can also be used against them. When combined with fermented palm material and insecticide, they make enticing traps to catch and kill the pest. "We've bought 10,000 pheromone traps to set them up all around" Greater Tunis, Dhouibi said. "I think with those, we'll be able to eradicate the weevil. But it will require time-three, four, five years-and perseverance." The plan, approved in September by the government, also includes awareness-raising sessions on what an infested palm looks like and a hotline for residents to call in and report suspicious trunks.

A total of 4.2 million dinars (\$2 million) have been set aside for the debugging operation, said Agriculture Minister Saad Seddik, visiting the site in Ariana. Environmental activist Boubaker Houman-who heads the Association of the Friends of Belvedere, the capital's main park-said he was delighted the weevils were finally being tackled. But he said he regretted all the damage to the capital's palms so far and feared that part of the city's "green heritage" would inevitably be lost. "If you walk around the park, you'll see palm trees that are more than 100 years old and 20 to 30 meters (65 to 100 feet) high," he said. "Like olive trees, they're an



TUNIS: Photo shows palm trees infected by the red palm weevil. Armed with insecticide and an awareness campaign, date-exporting Tunisia is battling a bug that devours and kills palm trees and whose spread threatens an environmental and economic disaster. — AFP

integral part of the Mediterranean landscape."

Date growers 'scared'

Dhouibi said it was a shame it took three years before authorities adopted drastic measures towards exterminating the weevils. "Our wealth lies in date palms," he said. Anis Hassen, head of Tunisia's date producers' association in Tozeur, around 450 kilometers southwest of Tunis, said he and his fellow growers were worried. "Everyone who works here is talking about the weevils," said the man in his forties, as he showed AFP around his plantation under a cloudy sky. "Definitely, we're scared. That's why our eyes are like this, always wide open" on the lookout for infested palms, he said. The date sector provides "jobs for tens of

thousands of people. You can just imagine how many families that is," he said. "We hope the authorities will be able to fight back before it's too late."

US entomologist Mark Hoddle, who heads the Centre for Invasive Species Research, visited Tunisia in October to tell of how red palm weevils were eradicated in South Carolina. According to the US embassy, "12 percent of Tunisians depend on date farming". The agriculture minister said authorities aimed to bring the situation under control by springtime so the pests would not reach date-producing areas. "Our follow-up and monitoring strategy will allow us to stop this plague right here," Seddik said, pointing out that the producing areas were 500 kilometers away. — AFP



TUNIS: Cars drive past palm trees infected by the red palm weevil. — AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
THE LARGEST CIRCULATION DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF





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



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FOR RENT

New flat in Jabriya

3 bedrooms, 3
baths, kitchen

Contact:
97414191

Prayer timings

Fajr:	04:52
Shorook	06:11
Duhr:	12:00
Asr:	15:20
Maghrib:	17:49
Isha:	19:06

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- Transferable residency (NonGovernment Contract)
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Please send CV, Civil ID and Passport Copy to
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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (10/03/2016 TO 16/03/2016)

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Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 2016

THOUSANDS PROTEST OVER FRENCH JOBS REFORM



In crowded Cairo, ride-hailing apps leave cabbies fuming

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GLOBAL VOLATILITY SHAKING UP LIVING COSTS

SINGAPORE RETAINS THE TOP SPOT AS TOKYO DROPS AGAINST GLOBAL PEERS

SINGAPORE: Yo-yoing currencies, spiralling inflation and plunging commodity costs are shaking up the rankings of the world's most expensive cities, an annual survey said yesterday, with Tokyo sliding and Shanghai shooting up.

Political uncertainty and global economic volatility have up-ended the list of pricey places, according to a cost of living index compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit. "Only eight cities of the 133 surveyed have seen their ranking position remain unchanged in the last 12 months," the EIU said. Perennially-expensive Japan-whose capital was the planet's costliest city for much of the last two decades-has dropped against global peers, thanks to

a much weaker yen.

Tokyo-in 11th place globally-is now only as expensive as Shanghai, where rising prices are hitting consumers in the pocket. The collapse of the Brazilian Real has sent the relative cost of living in Rio De Janeiro down 52 places to 113th-making it half as costly as New York. "In nearly 17 years of working on this survey I can't recall a year as volatile as 2015," said Jon Copestake, an EIU survey editor. "Falling commodity prices have created deflationary pressures in some countries, but in others, currency weakness caused by these falls has led to spiralling inflation," he added.

Singapore retains the top spot in the list-thanks

chiefly to the eye-watering cost of owning a car in the city state-with Zurich and Hong Kong tied in second place. Hong Kong's currency peg to the US dollar was propelling the former British colony up the rankings, the EIU said, with the value of the greenback pushing New York into the top 10 and to its highest place since 2002. Asian cities tended to be the priciest locations for general grocery shopping, with Seoul the most expensive for everyday food, while recreation and entertainment was a big drain for European locations. Resource-backed currencies like the Australian dollar also weakened because of lower commodities demand from China, edging cities like Sydney and Melbourne out of this year's top 10 list. — AFP

The 10 most expensive cities

- 1 — Singapore
- 2 — Zurich
- 2 — Hong Kong
- 4 — Geneva
- 5 — Paris
- 6 — London
- 7 — New York
- 8 — Copenhagen
- 8 — Seoul
- 8 — Los Angeles



SINGAPORE: People walking on a promenade in front of the skyline of the Singapore financial business district at night. Singapore retains the top spot in the list — thanks chiefly to the eye-watering cost of owning a car in the city state — with Zurich and Hong Kong tied in second place. —AFP

ECB CUTS RATES, BOOSTS ASSETS BUYS

FRANKFURT: The European Central Bank cut all three of its interest rates and expanded its asset-buying program yesterday, delivering a bigger-than-expected cocktail of actions to boost the economy and stop ultralow inflation becoming entrenched.

The ECB cuts its deposit rate deeper into negative territory, charging banks more for parking their cash, and increased monthly asset buys to 80 billion euros from 60 billion euros, exceeding expectations for an increase to 70 billion. Surprising markets, it cut its main refinancing rate to zero from 0.05 percent. The euro fell around 1 percent against the dollar.

Hoping to boost lending, consumption and inflation, the ECB said it would also start buying corporate debt and would also launch four new rounds of cheap loan packages, to be extended by banks to the real economy. The ECB has little to show for the 700 billion euros it has spent buying government bonds and other assets in the past year, as tumbling raw materials prices blunt the impact of its quantitative easing.

That raises the risk that people will lose faith in the bank's commitment to its man-

date. Inflation has been below the ECB's nearly 2 percent target for three years and is likely to remain so for many more. The ECB cuts its deposit rate to -0.4 percent from -0.3 percent, in line with expectations, but it also surprised markets by cutting its other two interest rates.

As well as the refinancing rate, which means banks can now borrow at its weekly auctions at no cost, it cut the marginal lending rate, used by banks to borrow from the ECB overnight, to 0.25 percent from 0.3 percent. Attention now turns to ECB President Mario Draghi's 1330 GMT press conference, where he will comment on the decisions and unveil the bank's fresh inflation and growth forecasts.

Although inflation expectations have fallen sharply in recent months on lower crude oil prices, Europe's growth prospects have held up relatively well as domestic consumption is proving resilient to a slowdown in emerging markets. Weak business and industrial sentiment indicators have however suggested that Europe is facing increasing headwinds, particularly from slowing growth in China. — Reuters

To develop the understandings and capabilities of young Kuwaitis Ooredoo Kuwait Sponsors Professor Muhammad Yunus Seminar



Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of the International Ooredoo Group, sponsored Professor Muhammad Yunus's seminar, entitled 'Redesigning Economics to Redesign the World'. 2006 Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus is a former economics professor at the University of Chittagong, one of Bangladesh's main universities and founder of Bangladesh based microcredit institution Grameen Bank. The seminar was held under the patronage of His Highness the Amir at The Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Tuesday, and was attended by a number of Ooredoo Kuwait's senior managers.

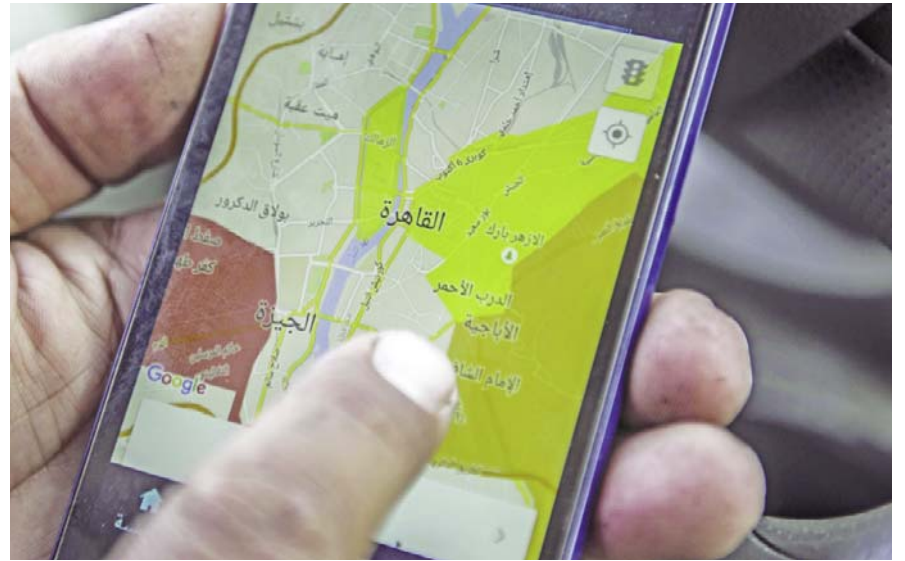
Professor Yunus was invited by Intedad, an exhibition organizing company, to speak about his own experience in the charity field and present a case study on the foundation of Grameen bank. Grameen aims at providing the required support to needy people so they can start their own small businesses as a source of income.

During the seminar, Professor Yunus showcased most of his accomplishments in this field and the causes which concerned him until he became an internationally recognized

figure. While speaking at the seminar he emphasized on the fact that the joy he gained during the past years working in the charity field is more satisfying than any financial gain.

Commenting on the sponsorship, Ooredoo Kuwait's Corporate Communications Director said: "We are honored to collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and pleasure to sponsor Professor Muhammad Yunus's seminar. We highly believe in the positive impact such seminars would have on refining youths minds and broaden their horizon to reinforce the importance of charity work and its high impact it has on their societies."

On another note, Daoud Sulaiman Marafie, General Manager of Intedad company expressed his gratitude and appreciation to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, for his patronage to Professor Muhammad Yunus's seminar, as well the other sponsors including Ooredoo Kuwait, stressing on the key role the company is playing in supporting youth of Kuwait and adopting numerous important initiatives as a part of its social responsibility program.



CAIRO: Ahmed Mahmoud, 53, an Egyptian driver working for Uber Transportation Company in Egypt waits for customers on February 23, 2016 in Cairo. (Right) Mahmoud checks a map on his phone. — AFP

IN CROWDED CAIRO, RIDE-HAILING APPS LEAVE CABBIES FUMING

UBER SAYS EGYPT ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING MARKETS

News

in brief

US DOLLAR STABLE AGAINST KD AT 0.300

KUWAIT: The exchange rate of the US dollar against the Kuwaiti dinar stabilized at KD 0.300, while the euro went up to KD 0.330 compared to the exchange rates for Wednesday, said a statement by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) yesterday. According to the CBK, the exchange rate of the sterling pound went up to KD 0.427 while the Swiss franc was stable at KD 0.301. Exchange rate of the Japanese Yen firmed at KD 0.002. The US dollar pared gains against other major currencies and returned to get close to its lowest level in two weeks, which witnessed no changed interest rates, as well as investors awaited the European Central Bank (ECB) meeting scheduled for yesterday, where the markets awaiting for this meeting amid hopes that the European financial authority would take further stimulus package.

UAE's Arabtec to build \$300m tower project

DUBAI: Arabtec Holding, the Dubai-listed construction company, said yesterday it had been awarded a contract to build a 1.1 billion dirham (\$300 million) twin-towers project in central Dubai. Comprising 50-storey towers, the project includes residential apartments with a total area of more than 227,800 square metres, it said. Construction will start imminently and last 2-1/2 years, it added.

Egypt's annual urban consumer inflation eases

CAIRO: Egypt's annual urban consumer and core inflation eased for a second consecutive month in February but rose month on month as food prices continue to climb in the Arab world's most populous country. Egypt's government, which is struggling to revive the economy after a 2011 uprising, has been trying to fight food price increases which could fuel public anger. In November it said it would control the prices of certain essential goods. The central bank also hiked interest rates in December, citing inflationary pressures. Annual urban consumer inflation eased for the second consecutive month to 9.1 percent in February from 10.1 percent in January, the central said yesterday. Core inflation, which excludes items such as fruit and vegetables whose prices fluctuate widely, eased to 7.5 percent in February down from 7.73 percent in January.

CAIRO: For 32-year-old banker Hani, it was always a nightmare riding in Cairo's battered taxis through traffic gridlock and thick exhaust fumes that sputter out of rickety vehicles. But with the arrival of ride-hailing apps Uber and Careem, Hani now travels with ease across the vast city of 25 million-notorious for its dusty streets and polluted air. The use of the smartphone applications has taken off in Cairo, so much so that Uber says the Egyptian capital is one of its fastest growing markets. But not everyone is happy. Taxi drivers have been protesting against them for weeks as they lose more and more clients to the rival services. Many commuters have taken to social media to share their experiences.

"I took a taxi with my children, and the driver lit a cigarette. I asked him to stop, but he said there is pollution everywhere and made us get out on a bridge," Egyptian singer Samia Jaheen tweeted.

Commuters like Hani say they are tired of conventional taxis and see the new options as a welcome change. "I think and my friends also feel that these apps have made life easy," said Hani, who uses Uber or Careem at least twice a week.

"Some use Uber even to send their children to school." Hani's frustration with taxis is common in Cairo, where a typical ride in a traditional black or white cab tests the patience of most people. Journeys often start with the driver ruminating over whether to take the trip, and then they often suggest a price or ask "how much will you pay".

'They've snatched our bread'

The suggestion of turning on the meter is often a non-starter for drivers. On the other hand, many of them are rigged to make fares more expensive. After a deal is agreed, a hair-raising ride ensues as the taxi accelerates past trucks and minibuses, swerving at the last moment to avoid potholes and bumps. In summer, when temperatures soar around 40 degrees Celsius (over 100 Fahrenheit), most drivers refuse to turn on their air conditioners, and some ask for more money to do so. At the end of the ride, many drivers will say they do not have change after taking their payment.

Taxi drivers are up in arms as commuters unsurprisingly flock to Uber and Careem. For weeks they have been demonstrating against the two ride-hailing services.

"They've snatched our bread. We roam for hours without finding customers," said Adel, 48, who drives a taxi to supplement his earnings as a technician.

The father of three said he spent about 6,000 euros (\$ 6,600) just to get a taxi license. He said most cabbies avoid using meters because of low prescribed fares. "A car that runs daily costs money... we need to increase the meter rate. It's unfair to the driver," an agitated Adel said.

Mahmoud Lotfy, who drives his brother's taxi, said conventional cabs should be operated by companies in a similar way to ride-hailing services. "In this way, a driver who commits a mistake can be held accountable," he said. Uber, which began operations five years ago in San Francisco and is now operating in about 60 countries, and the United Arab Emirates-based Careem are meanwhile winning new customers daily.

Safety, comfort, cleanliness

"Safety, customers' comfort and cleanliness is what Uber brought," said Ahmed Mahmoud, an Uber driver. Mahmoud makes more than 8,000 Egyptian pounds (\$1,022, 940 euros) per month, an earning well above the average monthly salary of 3,000 pounds

for a mid-level government employee.

"Uber in Egypt offers work opportunities for over 2,000 drivers a month. More than 40 percent of drivers were unemployed prior to joining Uber," said Abdel Latif Wakid, director of operations of Uber in Egypt. Careem, which operates across 20 cities in the Middle East, has also made inroads in Egypt.

But the apps have met opposition. In February, two videos published by newspapers caused a stir. The footage shows taxi drivers posing as passengers hailing Uber cars and then handing them over to traffic police on allegations their vehicles were unregistered. A senior traffic official told AFP the two companies were operating "illegally" as their cars were not in the category of passenger transport vehicles.

Hossam Ossama, an owner of a limousine service that partners with Uber, said 70 percent of his fleet of about 500 cars is privately owned. Three of his cars were briefly confiscated, he said, arguing that his company was legally entitled to work since it paid taxes. "We are in contact with the authorities to explain our mode of operation," he said. On Wednesday, a cabinet statement said a ministerial panel had been formed to look into the status of the two ride-hailing services. — AFP

OIL PRICES EASE OFF MULTI-MONTH HIGHS

LONDON: Oil prices dipped yesterday, after hitting three-month highs this week, with analysts warning that larger gains would be unwarranted as refineries enter seasonal maintenance and a global glut weighs. Brent crude futures were at \$40.71 per barrel at 1149 GMT, down 36 cents from their last close, having earlier this week peaked at \$41.48, the highest level since Dec. 9.

US crude was down 14 cents at \$38.15 per barrel, having hit \$38.51 on Tuesday, also its highest since Dec 9. "Fundamentally you would expect prices to weaken from here because we're about to head into peak refinery turnaround season," said Virendra Chauhan, an analyst at Energy Aspects. "We expect weakness in the physical market as demand from refineries comes off." Global demand for crude oil typically dips when

refineries around the world enter seasonal maintenance in spring, ahead of peak summer demand. Prices rose as much as 5 percent on Wednesday, after a big gasoline inventory drawdown in the United States overshadowed record-high crude stockpiles. But analysts warned that a global crude production overhang of more than 1 million barrels per day (bpd) showed few signs of abating.

The focus lies on a potential agreement to rein in output between producers from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, led by Saudi Arabia, and non-OPEC exporters including Russia. Yet beyond announced talks about freezing output near record levels - which Latin American producers said yesterday had been delayed - no deal has been reached. —Reuters

JAPAN FIRMS HANG LOOSE ON CASH FOR INVESTORS, TIGHT ON WAGES

TOKYO: Japanese firms sitting on more than \$3 trillion of cash are buying back their own shares at a record rate, while turning a deaf ear to calls from Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to step up spending on wages and investment to support the economy.

In February alone, taking advantage of low prices, Japanese companies from Softbank to Nissan announced they would buy back a total of \$9.3 billion in shares, according to Thomson Reuters data - the highest since November 2010 and a monthly amount surpassed only five times in the last 30 years.

Japan's largest companies are under pressure to boost meagre returns for their investors, but the volume of cash funnelled back raises doubts over the effectiveness of policies to revive growth with cheap cash, part of the government's "Abenomics" stimulus program. Instead, companies are either sitting on cash - inventories and cash balances are at record levels - or returning it to their shareholders, unable to find investment prospects. Total shareholder returns, which include dividends as well as buybacks, are at record highs.

"This may be a rational behaviour for individual companies but if it becomes excessive, that could be a setback against Abenomics," said Taro Saito, director of economic research at NLI Research Institute. Since Abe came to power, promising to lift the economy out of the doldrums with an unprecedented monetary boost, Japanese companies have bought back or announced plans to buy back shares worth more than \$79 billion. That would have been enough to build 100 car factories or 30 semiconductor plants. There is little sign of buybacks cooling substantially, as companies continue to take advantage of low share prices. Overall capital expenditure, meanwhile, remains below pre-financial crisis levels.

Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal, Japan's largest steelmaker, announced plans in February to buy back 100 billion yen of shares - just over 4 percent of its outstanding stock. The company has already set aside cash to overhaul facilities in Japan and sees the increase in treasury stock as a tool for the future. Base wage increases, it argues, would have raised fixed costs as steel prices languish. "It is in preparation for our strategic actions in the future," Nippon Steel Executive Vice President Katsuhiko Ota said last month. That could mean taking control of affiliates or reinforcing alliances, as it did with Suzuki Metal Industry last year, through a share exchange.

WAGE STAGNATION

Another channel for cheap money to boost consumption and growth could have been wages, as large companies post record profits. But government calls for wage rises to banish the deflationary mindset that has bedevilled Japan since the early 90s have gone mostly unheeded. Price-adjusted wages fell 0.9 percent last year, the fourth straight decline, and a Reuters survey last month showed that 84 percent of big companies plan to raise pay less than 2 percent this year.

Fears of job cuts prompted workers at Toyota, which sets the tone for much of Japan Inc, to seek a monthly increase of just 3,000 yen (less than \$27) - half of last year's sum. "Given slowing inflation, we can't justify demanding higher pay this year," said Masahiro Inoue, deputy secretary-general of the Japan Council of Metalworkers' Unions (JCM) which represents about 2 million workers from leading industrial unions.

The unions have also swallowed the rise in buybacks without any hint of distaste. "As long as share buybacks are reasonable and our pay demand is satisfied, I see no problems," a unionist at a car manufacturer said on condition of anonymity.

And yet companies are awash with cash. Government data showed corporate internal reserves stood at 350 trillion yen (\$3.11 trillion) in the fiscal year to March 2015, against 300 trillion yen two years earlier. In comparison, capital spending was only 70 trillion yen, up 5 trillion yen in the past three years but still below the 76.8 trillion yen seen before the 2008 global financial crisis.

"The fundamental problem is a lack of investment opportunities. Many firms are struggling to find a place to invest due to waning growth prospects of Japan's economy," said Hidenobu Tokuda, senior economist at Mizuho Research Institute. — Reuters

EMIRATES SEES LOWER OIL INDUSTRY DEMAND

QUESTIONS AIRBUS PROPOSAL TO ADD BIGGER A350

BERLIN: Emirates airline will show "significantly higher" 2015/16 annual profits, but some business has evaporated due to the recent slump in oil prices, its president Tim Clark said yesterday.

The Dubai carrier is considering downgrading A380 services to Houston because of falling demand from the oil industry, which overall represents its biggest corporate customer, Clark told reporters during the ITB tourism exhibition in Berlin.

"On the one hand you save on the operating costs, but your yield starts to fall because your corporate business is disappearing so it's a double-edged sword," Clark said. "On balance, the air-

line community is doing better as a result of the lower oil price."

The remarks echo cautionary comments by the head of Qatar Airways, who said on Wednesday that premium-cabin yields were falling because of reduced spending by oil-producing countries and weaker business sentiment. Clark said Emirates is still interested in an upgraded version of the Airbus A380 superjumbo, known as the A380neo, a project shelved for the time being by the European planemaker as it focuses on a potential bigger version of its A350 model.

Clark questioned Airbus's proposal to add to the A350 family and contrasted

the clarity of its wide-body decisions unfavourably with that of its US competitor Boeing.

"There seems to be a certain amount of cloudiness down there. One minute they are quite keen - I don't know if they can afford to do the A380neo and the (new) A350," he said.

"Airbus have got to rationalise a few things," he added. In 2014, Emirates cancelled an order for 70 A350 aircraft. It is now in the advanced stage of once again evaluating the A350-900 against Boeing's 787-9 and 787-10, Clark said, but he declined to say when the mid-sized jet contest would be settled. — Reuters



LAGOS: People wait for fuel at a filling station in Lagos on Wednesday. Unions shut down operations at Nigeria's state oil firm on Wednesday in protest at restructuring plans, a spokesman said, in a move that could worsen fuel supplies in Africa's largest producer. — AFP

STRIKE AT NIGERIA STATE OIL FIRM SUSPENDED AFTER TALKS: NNPC

LAGOS: A strike at Nigeria's state oil producer has been suspended after talks between trade unions and the company's head, who is also the minister of state for petroleum, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corp (NNPC) and union leaders said yesterday.

The strike began on Wednesday in reaction to an announcement a day earlier that the West African country's president had approved splitting NNPC into upstream, downstream, gas power marketing, refinery groups, and ventures divisions. President Muhammadu Buhari has prioritised reforming the oil sector in Africa's biggest crude-producing country

in an effort to rid it of the corruption and mismanagement that have stunted development in what is also the continent's biggest economy.

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) said 7,000 of its members, including refinery workers and maintenance staff, had walked out due to what it called a lack of consultation and were joined by Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) members. Following exhaustive deliberations, "the corporate-wide strike has been suspended", a tweet on NNPC's Twitter account said.

"The Group Executive Councils of PENGASSAN and NUPENG (have) resolved to support the restructuring and change process," it added in a second message. PENGASSAN's acting general secretary, Lumumba Okugbawa, confirmed the strike had been suspended. He said the decision was taken after 10 hours of talks, ending at 0300 GMT between minister Emmanuel Ibe Kachikwu, NNPC executives and union officials. "Management agreed that there would be further collaboration ... with a view to considering any suggested amendments. Our input would be taken into consideration," he told Reuters. — Reuters

MOTORBIKE GIANT HERO UNVEILS \$125M R&D CENTRE

JAIPUR: Auto giant Hero unveiled a new \$125 million design centre in India yesterday, complete with 10 miles (16 kilometres) of test track and giant 3D printers, as it seeks to cement its status as the world's top-selling motorbike manufacturer.

The opening of the facility on the outskirts of Jaipur comes as part of a rapid expansion by a company that sold more than 6.6 million bikes last year and is about to start exports to Nigeria.

Chairman Pawan Munjal said Hero was now selling its low-velocity bikes and mopeds in nearly 30 countries and had set itself a target of 10 million annual sales by the end of the decade, despite a recent tail-off in the Indian market.

"My dream has been to make this company the world's number one company in the field of two wheelers—not just in numbers, which we are now," Munjal said at the inauguration in the northern city. Set on 247 acres (100 hectares) of scrubland, the site features a network of 14 different test tracks and includes 45 different types of road surfaces.

The total cost is estimated at 8.5 billion rupees (around \$126 million). The research centre includes zones for every step of the design process, including workshops where clay models and then prototypes of the bikes are crafted, and laboratories where endurance tests are conducted. While cameras were barred from the research centre, journalists were shown giant 3D printers that engineers said were among the largest in the world.

Markus Braunsperger, the company's German chief technology officer and former BMW employee, said the facility was rare because it included such extensive testing facilities on the same site where the bikes are designed. He added that the 500-strong engineering workforce had been hired with an eye on ensuring their skills could meet world-class standards. The increasing gridlock on India's roads has been a major factor in fuelling the appetite for motorbikes in the world's second most populous market. Hero, which split from long-time partner Honda around five years ago, has emerged as the market leader by selling models with prices that start at less than 40,000 rupees (\$600).

Its main overseas markets are in Latin America and Africa, where two-wheeled vehicles are often the best way to overcome rush-hour logjams. "We are in 26 to 28 countries already. This month we should be starting in Nigeria and very soon we should be going into Mexico," said Munjal. The chairman, whose late father founded the company in the 1950s when it made bicycles, acknowledged there had been a slight dip in the Indian market.

"The market in India right now is not at its best. We are hoping that things will get better, especially in the rural sector," he said. Braunsperger said India would remain "its bread and butter" market and Hero's challenge was to meet the aspirations of what is due to be the world's biggest country within a decade. —AFP



JAIPUR: A view of the 16-kilometer-long test tracks, with 45 different surfaces, at auto giant Hero's new "Centre of Innovation and Technology" (CIT) facilities on the outskirts of Jaipur in the Indian state of Rajasthan yesterday. — AFP



PARIS: Students block the entrance of the Voltaire high school in Paris to protest against the controversial labour reforms yesterday. The placard reads: "The laws they write, they won't live them". — AFP

THOUSANDS PROTEST OVER FRENCH JOBS REFORM PRESSURE ON HOLLANDE'S GOVERNMENT

PARIS: Hundreds of thousands of French students and workers took to the streets in protest at labor reforms Wednesday, heaping pressure on President Francois Hollande's already unpopular and fractured Socialist government.

The plan, aimed at boosting hiring, would remove some of the obstacles to laying off workers. Young people were among the most vocal opponents to the measures they fear will make their future more uncertain, even though the government claims they are the age group it is most trying to help.

Teenagers and students threw eggs and firecrackers as they marched in Paris, directing their anger at Labour Minister Myriam El Khomri, whose name is on the draft law. The strikes were compounded by a rail strike for better working conditions that left many commuters stranded.

Several unions said up to half a million people took part in demonstrations across France, with the CGT union claiming 100,000 protested in Paris. Police put the national total at 224,000, with fewer than 30,000 in the main march in the east of the capital. By promoting the reforms that would allow bosses more flexibility in hiring and firing, Prime Minister Manuel Valls has alienated a range of left-wing forces including within his own government.

"This law is absurd: night work, abusive

firings... it is distressing to see this, especially from the Socialists," said Lucie Ferreira, 21, an IT student demonstrating in Paris. The reforms aim to bring down unemployment of more than 10 percent, with youth joblessness nearer to 25 percent. 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 see working hours rise to 40 hours a week.

"Like many students, I work to pay for my studies. This law will prevent me from limiting my work hours," said Flora, 20, a history student among around 10,000 protesters at the Place de la Republique in Paris. "When will I have time to study? This law is completely irrational. In reality, nobody really works 35 hours a week anymore, it is 40 or more to make a living. How much will it end up being with this law?" An online petition against the draft law has attracted more than a million signatures, while a poll showed seven in 10 people oppose the planned changes.

Hollande, who campaigned on a promise to improve prospects for young people and faces a re-election bid next year, said during a Wednesday cabinet meeting that the government would remain open to dialogue but underscored that "adapta-

tion" was needed. "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," he said ahead of the protests.

String of short-term contracts

Many young people, including graduates, find themselves working on short-term contracts for several years after their studies, or doing internship after internship while hoping to secure a job. Their situation contrasts with the cherished job security afforded by full-time contracts in France, which are fiercely defended by unions. Prime Minister Manuel Valls has held talks with unions this week in a bid to salvage the law, after the chorus of opposition derailed a plan to submit the proposals to the cabinet this week. Supporters of the reforms believe they are essential to reviving a stagnant economy and creating jobs, and El Khomri has argued that much of the opposition to her law stems from misinformation and false rumours. Outspoken Economy Minister Emmanuel Macron said Tuesday that as unemployment had not dropped below seven percent in 30 years, the government had no choice but to change the status quo. "Have we tried everything? Let us look outside France. —AFP

N KOREA TO LIQUIDATE SOUTH ASSETS IN JOINT PROJECTS

SEOUL: North Korea said yesterday it would dispose of all assets left behind by South Korean firms involved in two now-shuttered joint projects, further raising already elevated tensions on the divided Korean peninsula. "We will completely liquidate all assets of South Korean firms and related institutions left behind in our region," the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea said in a statement carried by the North's official KCNA news agency.

The projects involved are the Mount

Kumgang tourism resort and the Kaesong joint industrial complex. The committee said the move was a response to unilateral sanctions announced by South Korea on Tuesday to punish the North for its January nuclear test and last month's long-range rocket launch. "From this time on, we nullify all agreements adopted by North and South Korea on economic cooperation and exchange programs," the committee said. The South announced the suspension of operations at the Seoul-funded Kaesong industrial complex last month, saying

that money Pyongyang made from the venture was going towards its nuclear weapons program. The shock announcement prompted the North to expel all South Koreans from the estate and freeze all assets there, shutting down the last symbol of cross-border economic cooperation. An association representing the 120 firms operating factories in Kaesong, which lies just across the North Korean border, estimated the value of the assets left behind at 820 billion won (\$663 million).

The estate employed more than 53,000

North Koreans making items such as textiles, footwear and cheap electronics. Mount Kumgang was the first major inter-Korean cooperation project, and thousands of South Koreans visited the Seoul-funded resort between 1998 and 2008. The South suspended the tours in 2008 after a North Korean soldier shot dead a female tourist from the South who strayed into a restricted zone. In response, the North scrapped a deal with the resort's developer-Seoul's Hyundai Asan company—and seized its properties there. — AFP



QINGDAO: Shoppers wait in line to have their produce weighed in a grocery store in Qingdao in eastern China's Shandong province. China's inflation accelerated to 2.3 percent in February, driven by a jump in food prices, but stayed below the government's official target for the year. — AP

CHINA CONSUMER INFLATION RISES TO 2.3% IN FEBRUARY

POSITIVE SIGN AS DEMAND GROWTH COULD PROD ECONOMY

BEIJING: China's consumer inflation jumped to 2.3 percent in February, its highest in nearly two years, official data showed yesterday, in a positive sign for demand in the world's second-largest economy.

Food prices surged during the annual Lunar New Year holiday, with pork prices jumping 25.4 percent year-on-year, and vegetables up a hefty 30.6 percent.

The rise in the consumer price index (CPI) released by the National Bureau of Statistics was the largest since July 2014, and came in ahead of market forecasts of 1.8 percent in a survey by Bloomberg News. The producer price index (PPI), which measures prices of goods at the factory gate, fell 4.9 percent year-on-year, meeting expectations and an improvement on January's 5.3 percent drop.

But it was the 48th consecutive monthly fall as overcapacity in manufacturing drags on China's growth, with the protracted PPI declines now extending to four years-boding ill for industrial prospects.

Moderate inflation can be a boon to consumption as it pushes buyers to act before prices go up, while falling prices encourage shoppers to delay purchases and companies to put off investment, both of which can hurt growth.

Analysts expected a rise in CPI due to a traditional surge in demand for the week-long holiday, known as the Spring Festival in China, as well as unusually cold winter weather in February pushing up food prices. The increase was "mainly impacted by the cold snap and the Spring Festival", National

Bureau of Statistics analyst Yu Qiumei said in a statement.

"Most of the country was hit by wind storms, a temperature drop, rain and snow storms in the middle of February, affecting the production and transportation of fresh vegetables," Yu said, adding that vegetable prices surged 29.9 percent from January, the highest monthly rise since March 2008.

Analysts with ANZ Research noted that the spike in food prices was temporary, so that consumer inflation was likely to be "mild" in coming months. As the inflation rate was "significantly below the government's three percent target", they added, the central bank "will need to inject more liquidity to the real economy". Beijing lowered its growth target last week at the annual meeting of the rubber-stamp National People's Congress, setting a target of 6.5 to 7.0 percent expansion for 2016, down from "around seven percent" last year.

Holiday haircuts

The inflation figures are a glimmer of good news for China's economy, which saw its slowest growth rate in a quarter of a century last year. The slowdown comes as Beijing strives to effect a difficult transition in the country's economic model away from reliance on exports and fixed-asset investment towards one driven by consumers.

Officials have been on a charm offensive to reassure investors they have ample monetary and policy tools to maintain growth while making much-needed overcapacity cuts.

Worries about the outlook still weighed on markets yesterday-auto sales edged lower year-on-year in February, figures showed-and the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index closed down more than two percent. "If inflation pressure doesn't ease, the space for use of monetary policy will be limited," Hong Hao, an analyst at BOCOM International told AFP.

But Nomura analyst Zhao Yang said the inflation figures did not "limit room for further monetary easing". He added that PPI weakness suggested "industrial growth momentum is softening". — AFP

CHINA'S AUTO SALES RISE 5.1% IN JAN-FEB

BEIJING: China's auto sales growth decelerated to 5.1 percent in January and February as demand for lower-priced domestic brand SUVs soared but sedan purchases contracted, an industry group reported yesterday. Sales of sedans, SUVs and minivans in the biggest auto market by number of vehicles sold totaled 3.6 million in the two-month period, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers. Sales for the first two months are reported together to factor out the impact of the Lunar New Year holiday, a two-week slowdown that occurs at different times during that period each year.

SUV sales soared 54.8 percent in January and February from a year earlier while sedan sales fell 12.5 percent, according to the CAAM. Chinese brands accounted for 60 percent of the SUV market. Total vehicle sales, including trucks and buses, rose 4.4 percent to 4.1 million in January and February.

Auto sales suffered an unexpectedly sharp contraction from June through August, rattling a global industry that is counting on China to drive revenue. Demand rebounded in September after Beijing cut sales taxes on vehicles with smaller engines.

China's auto market has been cooling since growth peaked at 45 percent in 2009. Sales have been dented by measures imposed by Beijing, Shanghai and other major cities to curb smog and congestion by limiting new vehicle registrations. In December, half the vehicles in Beijing were ordered off the road on alternate days after the Chinese capital's air pollution spiked to dangerous levels.

In January, auto sales rose 9.3 percent and total vehicle sales gained 7.1 percent, according to the CAAM. February auto sales contracted by 1.5 percent to 1.4 million while total vehicle sales declined 0.9 percent to 1.6 million. Sales by China's lower-priced domestic brands grew at more than double the market's overall pace, rising 12.6 percent in the first two months of the year to 1.7 million vehicles.

Sales of Chinese-brand sedans fell 21.2 percent to 362,000 but SUV sales soared 64.1 percent to 763,000. China's total auto sales last year were 21.1 million units. — AP



WUHAN: Workers inspect a Kadjar SUV at a Dongfeng Renault manufacturing plant in Wuhan in central China's Hubei province. — AP

EU TO KEEP STRONG TRADE DEFENSES EVEN WITH CHINA SHIFT

WASHINGTON: The European Union must maintain solid trade defenses even if it decides to grant China market economy status, EU Trade Minister Cecilia Malmstrom said on Wednesday.

Malmstrom told reporters in Washington that the discussion within the EU on China's trading status did not alter the need for China to deal with its excess steel production capacity now flooding global markets. "Whatever happens to market economy status, China needs to behave responsibly and to make sure that its overproduction of steel isn't dumped into the global market," Malmstrom said.

The European Commission, the EU's executive branch, intends to decide by December whether to grant China market economy status, which would limit the EU's power to impose duties on excessively cheap Chinese imports.

Reuters reported exclusively on Friday that the European Union was considering making a change in China's market economy status conditional on China sharply reducing the amount of steel it exports to Europe. Malmstrom declined to comment

directly on the internal market economy discussions, but said that the EU was pursuing remedies with China on a "parallel track" to reduce overcapacity and unfair steel trading practices.

The EU was analyzing the consequences of granting full or partial market economy status or not making any changes, she said. "We need to make a very thorough assessment of this and we need to deal with the steel crisis. On trade, we also need to maintain solid trade defense instruments towards China and others, now and after December," Malmstrom added.

As China's economy has slowed, the government has pledged to give more free rein to market forces, though some foreign businesses have expressed disappointment at the speed of those reforms. China's official Xinhua news agency said in a commentary on Thursday the EU should quickly grant market status as Beijing has vowed to "continue to mitigate the government interference on pricing" in industries such as energy, transport and telecommunications. — Reuters

S KOREA KEEPS INTEREST RATE AT RECORD LOW 1.5%

SEOUL: South Korea's central bank yesterday kept its key interest rate unchanged at record lows, refusing to cut further as it looks to nurture growth in the anaemic economy while also preventing a flight of capital from the country.

While the decision to keep borrowing costs at 1.5 percent for a ninth-straight month were expected, the BOK has faced growing calls for another reduction with exports tumbling as economic woes in key market China show no sign of abating.

South Korea's exports have fallen for 14 consecutive months since the start of last year, plunging 12.2 percent year-on-year in February alone. "The trend of improvement in the Korean economy is weakening, due mainly to continuing sluggishness of exports," the central bank said in a statement.

But there are concerns that a further rate cut would spark a fresh exodus of foreign funds, putting additional pressure on, bonds, shares and the Korean won. It would also embolden already highly indebted households and companies to take more loans, putting them further debt into and worsening one of South Korea's most acute domestic economic headaches.

Collective household debt stood at a record high of 1.2 trillion won (\$995 billion) at the end of December. "Household debts have reached a high level indeed, and it's a constant source of our concern to curb them," governor Lee Ju-Yeol told reporters. Lee said he was sceptical that the benefits of any further interest rate cut would outweigh the potential disadvantages. "I don't think the current rates are restraining the real economy," he said. — AFP

PAKISTAN WILL NOT SEND TEAM UNTIL SECURITY ASSURANCES MET

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's interior minister yesterday ruled out sending the national cricket team to India for the World Twenty20 until security assurances come from New Delhi, saying the threats from extremists are concerning. The Pakistan team were due to fly out on Wednesday to play in the World Twenty20 cricket tournament but their departure was put on hold by the government.

"Until and unless clear guarantees on security come from the Indian government, unfortunately we are not in a position to decide sending the team," Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan told the media. Khan said the government and every Pakistani want-

ed to see the former champions play in India.

"Despite a lot of apprehensions and the fact that India do not want to play Pakistan (in bilateral series) on one or other pretext, the government and every Pakistani fan want to see our team, who are former champions, to go and play," he said. "This is a world event, but can cricket be played under the shadow of threats? It is the government's responsibility to ensure security of our players and that we are doing."

Pakistan sent a security assessment team to India on Monday after voicing repeated concerns about arrangements, saying there had been threats

from Hindu activists. On Wednesday the International Cricket Council (ICC) and Board of Cricket for Control in India (BCCI) shifted the March 19 game after the chief minister of the north Indian state of Himachal Pradesh refused to provide security for the match.

Khan said the first part of Pakistan's demand was met when the match was shifted from Dharamsala to Kolkata, but added that even a full to capacity Eden Gardens stadium could be risky. "What are we demanding? We are demanding an even playing field," said Khan. "We want our players to play without any pressure," said Khan. "There will be near to 100,000 people

at Eden Gardens and even a bottle thrown at our players can disturb them."

Diplomatic tensions have meant that the two teams have not played any bilateral series for more than three years, and their rivalry is restricted to multi-national tournaments such as the World T20. The arch-rivals have not played a full series since 2007 and although Pakistan did tour India late in 2012 for a short limited over series that failed to revive the ties fully. India did not play an agreed series with Pakistan in December last year, citing refusal from New Delhi amidst heightened tensions between the South Asian nuclear rivals. — AFP



NAGPUR: Sean Williams (right) of Zimbabwe plays a shot as Scotland's Matt Cross looks on during the World T20 cricket tournament match between Scotland and Zimbabwe at the Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium. — AFP

ZIMBABWE ELIMINATE SCOTLAND FROM WORLD T20, WIN BY 11 RUNS

NAGPUR: Sean Williams stroked a brisk fifty before the bowlers ensured a second straight win for Zimbabwe, beating Scotland by 11 runs in the World Twenty20 in Nagpur yesterday. Electing to bat, Zimbabwe suffered from regular wicket-fall but Williams' 36-ball 53 enabled the side to post 147 for seven, a score which proved enough against a seemingly brittle Scotland batting.

Skipper Hamilton Masakadza gave the new ball to his brother and left-arm spinner Wellington Masakadza who bagged four wickets to help bundle out Scotland for 136 in 19.4 overs, in the must-win Group B match.

Zimbabwe though had a terrible start after a mid-pitch collision between the openers which resulted in the run out of Hamilton and an injury to Vusi Sibanda's chin.

The incident forced a six-minute stoppage time but did little to improve Zimbabwe's batting prospects as wickets continued to tumble against a discipline Scottish attack. Williams then mixed the right dose of caution and aggression to guide the side to a respectable score with some help from lower-order batsmen Malcom Waller and Elton Chigumbura.

The Scotland batting also faltered against an inspired Zimbabwe attack

that rattled the top-order to reduce them to 20 for four in 3.1 overs. Richie Berrington and captain Preston Mommsen did put up some fight with their 51-run sixth wicket stand but Zimbabwe bowlers made sure they had the last laugh.

Left-arm spinner Wellington bagged four scalps while medium-pacer Tendai Chatara and Donald Tiripano picked up two wickets each. It was the second group win for Zimbabwe, who had beaten Hong Kong in the opening game and will need to top the group to move into the Super 10 stage. Scotland lost their opening game to favourites Afghanistan by 14 runs. — AFP

BANGLADESH BOWLERS REPORTED FOR ACTION

NEW DELHI: Bangladesh bowlers Arafat Sunny and Taskin Ahmed have been reported for suspect bowling actions during their side's opening match in the World Twenty20, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said yesterday.

Off-spinner Sunny, 29, and paceman Ahmed, 20, turned out for Bangladesh in a qualifying match against the Netherlands in Dharamsala on Wednesday. Bangladesh won the match by eight runs. The bowlers' action would now be scrutinized further by the ICC under its process relating to suspected illegal bowling action. "The ICC is working with the Bangladesh cricket team management to confirm times for the independent testing of both bowlers at the ICC-accredited testing centre in Chennai," the game's world governing body said in a statement.

Both players will be allowed to continue playing until the results of the tests are declared. The ICC launched a crackdown against suspect actions in 2014, which resulted in several leading bowlers being reported. Other bowlers who have been up hauled up include Pakistan's Saeed Ajmal and Mohammad Hafeez, Bangladesh's Sohag Gazi, New Zealand's Kane Williamson, Sri Lanka's Sachithra Senanayake and Tharindu Kaushal. — AFP

AUSTRALIA AND SOUTH AFRICA CONFIDENT FOR WORLD T20

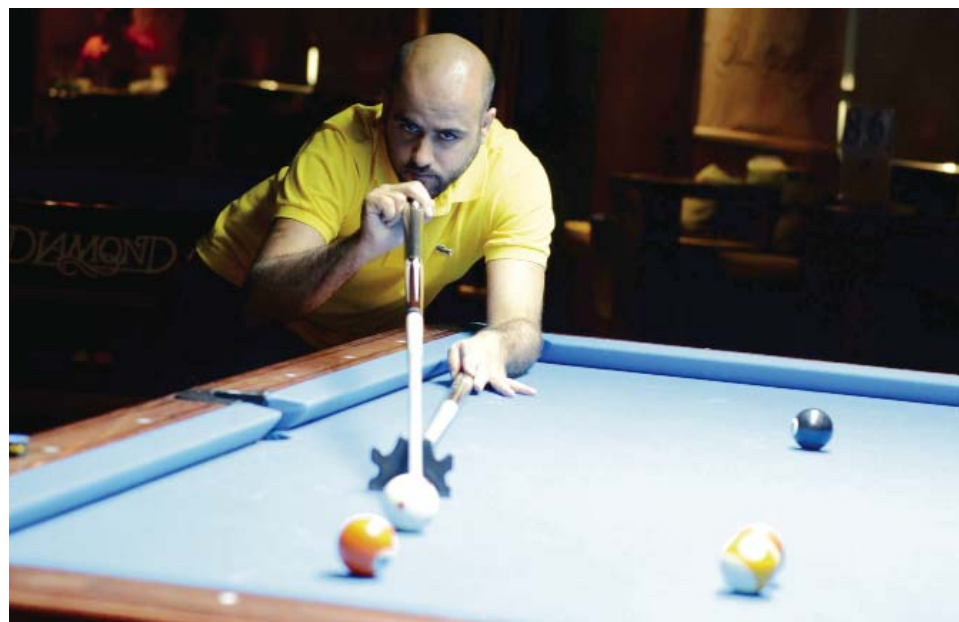
CAPE TOWN: Australia clinched the series with a six-wicket win in the third and final Twenty20 international against South Africa at Newlands on Wednesday, but both teams believe they have reason to be confident ahead of the World Twenty20 in India next week. Australian captain Steve Smith said the series win, built on strong batting performances in the last two matches, were an ideal boost for his side. South African captain Faf du Plessis said he was disappointed to lose the series but believed his team had played good cricket in all three matches.

"We need to look at where we made mistakes," said Du Plessis after Australia chased down a target of 179 with four balls to spare. "Credit to Australia, they chased down what we thought was a good score. They kept playing aggressively and kept scoring boundaries. How you win games like that is to get one or two wickets and squeeze the opposition but we couldn't do that."

But Du Plessis said South Africa could do well in India. "This team has got really good results in the sub-continent, so we'll be really confident. But we've got a lot of work still to do before the first game. Our basics at crucial times let us down." Smith did not attend the press conference after the match but praised his players at the post-match presentation and said they would be confident going into the tournament in India.

Opening batsman Usman Khawaja said at the press conference: "Losing that first game and coming back to win the next two games was a pretty good thing with the World Cup coming up." Khawaja said although Australia had a "big batting line-up", it was important for individual players to take responsibility.

"We don't want to rely on everyone else. You want the guys at the top to score the majority of the runs but if that doesn't happen you know you have some really good guys to come." Khawaja cautioned that conditions in India were different but said: "We've got a lot of players who have a lot of experience over there. It's about doing what we do well and executing it." — AFP



KHALID AL-GHUNAIM 9 BALL TOURNAMENT COMPLETES GROUP QUALIFICATION GAMES

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Matches between professionals at the late Khalid Al-Ghunaim 9 Ball Tournament being held at Hot Shot Plazio in Hawally, were hot and strong at the end of the group qualification matches. Kuwait's Omar Al-Shaheen and Mishal

Al-Mardhi, UAE's Omran Salem and Mohammad Al-Housani made it to the next rounds along with ranked world champions Ralf Souquet of Germany, USA's Shane Van Boening, Polish Champions Mathews Thomas and Philippines Alan, Alvis, Ruholio Junior, Tommy and Youhan. There is still a chance for 16 players to make it to

the next stage including Kuwait star Abdallah Al-Yousuf and Fawaz Al-Rashidi.

Meanwhile, the final match in the youth category will be between Abdallah Shiha and Mohammad Al-Muhanna who beat Abdallah Al-Enezi in the semifinal round. In the women's category Shahad Khader took the title after

defeating Dalal Al-Mathen 5/1, while third place went to Dina Khader after defeating Noura Al-Busaili 5/3. Shahad said she was happy to participate in the late Khalid Al-Ghunaim tournament and thanked sponsor Fahad Khalid Al-Ghunaim for giving women the opportunity to compete.

US MUSLIM FENCER READY FOR OLYMPICS

LOS ANGELES: Ibtihaj Muhammad hopes her history-making appearance at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics will help change attitudes towards Muslims in the United States when she becomes the first American athlete to compete wearing a hijab. The talented 30-year-old African-American saber fencer has already guaranteed her spot on the US Olympic team after earning enough points at the World Cup in Greece in January to qualify.

Muhammad's qualification comes against an ugly backdrop of anti-Islamic rhetoric in the United States, with Republican presidential contender Donald Trump vowing in December to bar all Muslims from entering the country if elected. For Muhammad, the bigotry is nothing new. She has been confronted with discrimination ever since childhood, when her skin color and hijab would often provoke lingering stares or abuse.

Muhammad hopes that her participation in the Olympics may play a small role in shifting those kinds of attitudes. "It's a tough political environment that we're in right now, it's not easy," Muhammad told reporters on Wednesday at the US Olympic team media summit. "Muslims are under the microscope and I'm hoping to change the image that people may have of Muslim women. 'I know that Muslim women are very, very diverse, especially here in the United States. We come in all different shapes, colors and sizes and we come from different backgrounds and are productive members of society. I want people to see that.'"

Toxic climate

Muhammad would not be drawn on what life for Muslims in the United States might look like if Trump is elected to the White House in November. "I hate to talk about what ifs," she said. "I'm hoping we can change direction a little bit and see Muslims in more of a positive light and try to combat the negative imagery that we are shown every day. Can I influence the debate? I don't know. I'm just trying to do well in Rio."

The toxic climate has brought practical concerns. After several stories involving Muslims being barred from boarding planes, Muhammad revealed she had harbored fears of suffering a similar fate during qualifiers for Rio. "When Muslims were being kicked off flights in the middle of Olympic qualifiers that was a real worry-am I going to be allowed to board my flight to make it to my Olympic qualifier?"

The fact that she is expected to speak about weighty issues relating to her race, religion and gender-rather than merely her sport-does sometimes take its toll, Muhammad acknowledged. — AFP

SUPER BOWL CHAMPS SCRAMBLING FOR A QB

ENGLEWOOD: John Elway is scrambling again. The general manager of the Super Bowl champions has a huge hole to fill with Brock Osweiler bolting to the Houston Texans 48 hours after Peyton Manning's retirement. That leaves Trevor Siemian as the only quarterback on the Denver Broncos' roster. The second-year pro from Northwestern has taken just one NFL snap, a kneel-down at that.

If Elway's sweating it, he's certainly not showing it. "We've stayed true to our philosophy of building a team with players who want to be Denver Broncos and want to be here. That's been a successful approach for us," Elway said. "While we did offer a very competitive and fair long-term contract to Brock, we ultimately had to remain disciplined while continuing to assemble a roster that can compete for championships."

So, now the man who famously declared there was no Plan B when he lured Manning to Denver four years ago must find a passer who will defend Denver's title in 2016. "We've now turned our attention to other options at quarterback and we are confident that we'll find the right player and person for our team," Elway said. "Our organization thanks Brock for his contributions and wishes him all the best."

Free agents

Elway could turn to free agents such as Robert Griffin III or Ryan Fitzpatrick - whose agent, Jimmy Sexton, also represents Osweiler. Or he could pursue a trade - Colin Kaepernick, anyone? He'll almost cer-

tainly select a quarterback in the early rounds of next month's draft, too. Osweiler made \$660,000 last year and Denver offered him about \$16 million a year. ESPN reported Osweiler's four-year deal with the Texans is worth \$18 million annually with \$37 million guaranteed.

"Shocked," tweeted Broncos cornerback Chris Harris Jr. "I thought Brock wanted to play with us lol" Instead, he'll play against them - the Texans are among the teams that'll visit Denver next season when the Broncos become the sixth team to open defense of its Super Bowl championship with a new QB under center.

They're the first to lose their top two quarterbacks and face this level of uncertainty. The Broncos also will have to replace defensive end Malik Jackson, who went to Jacksonville for six years and \$90 million, and linebacker Danny Trevathan, the leading tackler on the league's No. 1 defense, who rejoined John Fox in Chicago on a four-year deal worth \$28 million.

They have in-house candidates for those vacancies. In the midst of the big Broncos breakup Wednesday, Denver did agree to a three-year deal with versatile tackle Donald Stephenson, who spent his first four seasons with the Chiefs, to bolster its offensive line. The Broncos knew they'd lose several key members of their team after beating the Carolina Panthers in Super Bowl 50, although Osweiler's price tag took may by surprise.

Elway's main offseason priority was keeping Von Miller, so he placed the exclusive franchise tag on his star linebacker. That bought him more time to work out a

long-term deal with the Super Bowl MVP - and paved the way for Osweiler's big payday.

Skyrocketing value

Osweiler's value skyrocketed when Kirk Cousins and Sam Bradford re-signed with their respective teams in recent days, leaving Osweiler as the top QB available, and then the Texans decided he was their man. Osweiler served as Manning's apprentice for 3 1/2 years, then went 5-2 when Manning was sidelined with a torn ligament in his left foot last season.

Manning worked his way back into shape with the help of an orthotics guru who set up shop in his garage and stealthy workouts with practice squad receiver Jordan Taylor and sidelined tight end Jeff Heuerman. Finally, Manning was summoned from the bench in the third quarter of the season finale against San Diego when Denver's offense sputtered under Osweiler. Manning led a comeback that secured the AFC's top playoff seed and coach Gary Kubiak named him the starter for the playoffs.

Although he was disappointed at being demoted, Osweiler pledged his full support for Manning and Kubiak. At the Super Bowl, Osweiler provided encouragement on the sideline as Manning struggled, completing just 13 passes for 141 yards. Thanks to Denver's dominant defense, it was enough. And in the aftermath of Denver's win, Elway said he wanted Osweiler back, proclaiming: "We wouldn't have been world champs without Brock." — AP

CURRY LONG SHOT HIGHLIGHTS WARRIORS WIN VS. JAZZ

OAKLAND: Stephen Curry sank a 55-foot shot at the halftime buzzer as the Golden State Warriors extended their NBA record regular-season home winning streak to 46 games by beating the Utah Jazz 115-94 on Wednesday.

Klay Thompson scored 23 points while Curry wound up with 12 points and 10 assists on a quiet night in which he struggled to find his range early as the Warriors (57-6) improved to 28-0 at Oracle Arena this season. Curry is 4 for 11 on shots from 40-plus feet (36.4 percent) this season and 13 of 27 (48.1) from 30 feet and beyond. The reigning MVP missed his first five shots of the game but let it fly from beyond midcourt to give his team a 52-41 lead at the break, taking off in an all-out sprint for the tunnel without celebrating as his teammates collectively threw their arms in the air in admiration and awe.

"It was a great exit. That was fantastic," Golden State head coach Steve Kerr said. "When he shoots it, you know it has a chance. It's incredible. I've never seen anybody that accurate from midcourt. It always looks good, even the ones that miss. He gives it a chance every time."

Oklahoma City's Russell Westbrook had 25 points, a career-high 20 assists and 11 rebounds to help the Thunder beat the Los Angeles Clippers 120-108. According to STATS, it was the first triple-double with at least 25 points, 20 assists and 10 rebounds since Magic Johnson did it for the Los Angeles Lakers in 1988.

"That's unheard of," said Kevin Durant, who himself had 30 points and 12 rebounds. "Words can't even describe it because it looks so effortless, easy and smooth in the game, and you don't even know what's going on."

Westbrook made 9 of 15 shots and all seven of his free throws. It was the 30th triple-double of his career, his 11th this season, and second straight. "More important just to see all my teammates happy and all see my teammates enjoy the game and enjoy this win," Westbrook said. "That's the most important part for me, is just making sure everybody feels comfortable about their game."

OKLAHOMA CITY 120, CLIPPERS 108

Russell Westbrook had 25 points, a career-high 20 assists and 11 rebounds to help the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the Los Angeles Clippers 120-108 on Wednesday night. According to STATS, it was the first triple-double with at least 20 points and 20 assists since Rod Strickland did it for the Washington Wizards in 1998. It was the 30th triple-double of Westbrook's career and his 11th this season. The Thunder are unbeaten this season when Westbrook gets a triple-double. Kevin Durant had 30 points and 12 rebounds, and Serge Ibaka added 15 points for Oklahoma City. Jeff Green scored 23 points, JJ Redick had 22 and Chris Paul added 12 points and 16 assists for the Clippers.

CAVALIERS 120, KINGS 111

Kevin Love converted a four-point play with 1:32 remaining, Kyrie Irving scored 30 points and Cleveland hung on to beat Sacramento. LeBron James had 25 points and 11 rebounds. Tristan Thompson added 18 points and 15 rebounds, and Love finished with 17 points and 10 rebounds. DeMarcus Cousins had 29 points and 11 rebounds for the Kings. They trailed 109-100 with under 5 minutes to play before using an 8-0 run to close within one.

CELTICS 116, GRIZZLIES 96

Isaiah Thomas scored 16 of his 22 points in the third quarter as Boston turned a three-point deficit into a 16-point lead before coast-



OAKLAND: Golden State Warriors' Stephen Curry, center, drives the ball between Utah Jazz's Chris Johnson (23) and Derrick Favors (15) during the first half of an NBA basketball game. — AP

ing to their 14th straight home victory, over Memphis. The Celtics have not lost in Boston in more than two months, a span that has seen them climb from ninth in the East into the conference's No. 3 seed. Two nights after surprising East-leading Cleveland - despite being without four starters - Memphis sustained a collapse that was exacerbated by the loss of guard Mario Chalmers in the third quarter to what the team called a right foot injury. Chalmers did not appear to sustain any contact before pulling up and then needing assistance off the court, unable to put any weight on his leg. JaMychal Green had 17 points and 13 rebounds for the Grizzlies.

HORNETS 122, PELICANS 113

Kemba Walker scored 35 points as Charlotte held off New Orleans for its 11th victory in 13 games. Walker shot 9 of 18 from the

field and had five 3-pointers for his fourth-straight 30-point game. He also added seven assists and seven rebounds for Charlotte. Courtney Lee had 16 points and Nicolas Batum added 15 as all five Charlotte starters reached double figures in scoring midway through the third quarter. Anthony Davis had 40 points and 13 rebounds and Jure Holiday scored a season-high 38 points for New Orleans. The injury-plagued Pelicans fell to 7-24 on the road.

PISTONS 102, MAVERICKS 96

Marcus Morris scored 20 points, including two 3-pointers during a decisive fourth-quarter run, and Andre Drummond had 25 points and 17 rebounds in Detroit's victory over Dallas. Drummond leads the NBA with 54 double-doubles. Tobias Harris added 19 points for Detroit. Chandler Parsons and Dirk

Nowitzki each scored 25 points for Dallas. The Mavericks have lost a season-high four straight games.

BUCKS 114, HEAT 108

Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 24 points and Khris Middleton made four free throws in the closing seconds to help Milwaukee hold off Miami. Jabari Parker added 23 points, Middleton had 22, and Miles Plumlee scored a season-high 18 for the Bucks. They snapped the Heat's winning streak at five games. Luol Deng had 20 points and 11 rebounds for Miami. Hassan Whiteside added 23 points and 13 rebounds and Dwyane Wade had 18 points. After Wade scored on a fast-break layup to cut it to 110-106, Middleton made two free throws. Joe Johnson scored off a pass from Wade but Middleton answered with two more free throws.

ROCKETS 118, 76ERS 104

James Harden scored 29 points and Dwight Howard added 21 points and 18 rebounds to help Houston beat Philadelphia. Patrick Beverly added 16 points - all in the first half - and Trevor Ariza finished with 15 for Houston. The Rockets, who are currently holding the eighth and final playoff spot in the Western Conference, have won three of their last four to even their record at .500. Ish Smith scored 21 points and Nerlens Noel and Robert Covington had 17 points apiece for the 76ers. They have lost 13 straight to drop to 8-56.

KNICKS 128, SUNS 97

Sasha Vujacic scored a season-high 23 points in a rare start, Carmelo Anthony also had 23 and New York beat Phoenix. Vujacic was 7 of 8 from the field and tied a career high by going 6 of 7 from 3-point range. He made his first start since last November and had not played in two of the Knicks' last three games. The Knicks hit a season-high 16 3s. Derrick Williams scored 18 points and Jose Calderon added 10 points and 12 assists. Rookie Devin Booker led Phoenix with 32 points.

NBA results/standings

Boston 116, Memphis 96; Charlotte 122, New Orleans 113; Houston 118, Philadelphia 104; Milwaukee 114, Miami 108; Detroit 102, Dallas 96; NY Knicks 128, Phoenix 97; Oklahoma City 120, LA Clippers 108; Cleveland 120, Sacramento 111; Golden State 115, Utah 94.

**Eastern Conference
Atlantic Division**

	W	L	PCT	GB
Toronto	42	20	.677	-
Boston	39	26	.600	4.5
NY Knicks	27	39	.409	17
Brooklyn	18	46	.281	25
Philadelphia	8	56	.125	35

Central Division

Cleveland	45	18	.714	-
Indiana	34	30	.531	11.5
Chicago	32	30	.516	12.5
Detroit	33	31	.516	12.5
Milwaukee	27	38	.415	19

Southeast Division

Miami	37	27	.578	-
Atlanta	36	28	.563	1
Charlotte	35	28	.556	1.5
Washington	30	33	.476	6.5
Orlando	27	36	.429	9.5

**Western Conference
Northwest Division**

Oklahoma City	44	20	.688	-
Portland	34	31	.523	10.5
Utah	29	35	.453	15
Denver	26	38	.406	18
Minnesota	20	45	.308	24.5

Pacific Division

Golden State	57	6	.905	-
LA Clippers	41	22	.651	16
Sacramento	25	38	.397	32
Phoenix	17	47	.266	40.5
LA Lakers	14	51	.215	44

Southwest Division

San Antonio	54	10	.844	-
Memphis	38	26	.594	16
Dallas	33	32	.508	21.5
Houston	32	32	.500	22
New Orleans	24	39	.381	29.5

NADAL SAYS WEARY OF DOPING RUMORS

INDIAN WELLS: Rafael Nadal on Wednesday defended his training methods and vehemently denied he had ever used a banned substance to get an edge or to speed up recovery from injury. Nadal was at the Indian Wells tournament discussing Maria Sharapova's failed drug test. "She should be punished"—when he seized the opportunity to scotch unfounded rumors that he had used performance-enhancing drugs.

"I have never had the temptation of doing something wrong. I am very far from that, doping," said the 14-time grand slam

winner, who has been hard hit in recent years by injury. "I am a completely clean guy. I worked so hard during my career that when I get injured I never take nothing (banned) to be back quicker."

Throughout his trophy-laden career Nadal, 29, has been periodically dogged by whispers of doping. "I heard it a few times again about doping from my person and I am a little bit tired with that," Nadal said, adding that he sees himself as an ambassador for tennis and wouldn't tarnish his image as a role model for young players.

'Values of the sport'

"I believe in the sport and the values of the sport," the Spaniard said. "The sport is an example for society. It is an example for the kids and if I am doing something that goes against that, I will be lying to myself, not lying to my opponents." Nadal said over the course of his career he has taken advantage of some new treatments for his knee problems, like stem-cell therapy and Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP) therapy, often known as blood spinning.

"I have been open all my career. I never tried to hide nothing that I did," Nadal said.

"I did PRP and then I did stem cells. "The first time with PRP it worked fantastic and the second time it was bad. I had to stop playing tennis for seven months. "And with stem cells I used it two times on my knees and it worked very well. "I am not doing, never did, and never going to do something wrong." Nadal added there is a Spanish team doctor who monitors what medication the players are taking to make sure it is safe. "He has been the doctor for all the Spanish players for a number of years. I would never take nothing that he doesn't know about," he said. —AFP



INDIAN WELLS: Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland fields questions from the media at the WTA All-Access Hour during the BNP Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden. — AFP

TENNIS PLAYING IT SAFE BY KEEPING MEDICINE BASIC

INDIAN WELLS: The shock of Maria Sharapova's failed drug test has cast a spotlight on the attention to detail her fellow players apply to medications and supplements, and most say they take as little as possible.

With Russian Sharapova now facing a ban of up to four years pending an investigation by the International Tennis Federation, the tennis world has been served a timely reminder that playing safe when it comes to drugs is always the best strategy. "You can get pretty generic stuff now that makes you feel better if you're sick and it's got to be a very special case for me to take something specific," big-serving American Sam Querrey told Reuters on Wednesday. "You've just got to be responsible for everything you take. You have to check everything in this day and age with USADA (United States Anti-Doping Agency). I don't take caffeine. I just drink water and Gatorade."

"I don't even take any shakes or mixed drinks or anything like that. If I have flu, I take an aspirin or a Tylenol (paracetamol). I keep it very basic." Spanish left-hander Rafa Nadal,

a 14-times grand slam champion, adopts a similar strategy. "I am not taking many things," Nadal told reporters at Indian Wells ahead of the BNP Paribas Open. "I am just taking the things when I am on the tennis court, in the orange bottles. "I use two bottles - one has water and one has only mineral salts, and that's it. Anti-inflammatories sometimes - Ibuprofen or Voltaren. "The other things I sometimes take are natural things, just medicine if I have need to overcome something when I feel not good." Sharapova stunned the tennis world with her announcement on Monday that she had tested positive for meldonium, which some researchers have linked to increased athletic performance and endurance.

Made 'a huge mistake'

Though she had been taking the Latvia-pioneered drug for a decade on the advice of her family doctor, it has been outlawed by the World Anti-Doping Agency since Jan. 1 but the Russian said she made "a huge mistake" and continued using it. That error by one of the most experienced players on the WTA circuit shocked her peers and has refo-

cused their attention to their own medical needs.

"If any of my friends or I go to a doctor, we bring our banned list and that's how we go if we are getting medications or supplements," American doubles specialist Bethanie Mattek-Sands, 30, told Reuters. "You go on the USADA website and look up pretty much any supplement, any ingredient, any medication. And it's due diligence, it's a part of being a pro athlete. "The lists change when new medications come out, and you always have to be aware of that. From my first day as a professional, they tell you that you are responsible for everything that's in your body."

While Nadal does not check for himself the email notifications sent to players before the start of each year about substances and medications on the banned list, he has implicit trust in his medical team. "My doctor is the doctor of the Spanish Federation with a lot of years experience," said the Spaniard. "He is the doctor for all the Spanish tennis players so I have full confidence in him and I never take nothing that he doesn't know. — Reuters

RACKET FIRM GIVES MARIA BENEFIT OF DOUBT

LONDON: Racket firm Head intends to extend its contract with five-times grand slam champion Maria Sharapova despite her failing a drugs test at this year's Australian Open, CEO Johan Eliasch said yesterday.

The 28-year-old Russian will be provisionally suspended by the International Tennis Federation (ITF) from this weekend after she admitted at a news conference on Monday taking the banned substance meldonium. Swiss watchmaker TAG Heuer cut ties with Sharapova this week, while Nike and Porsche have distanced themselves from her.

However, Eliasch said Sharapova, under contract with Head since 2011, had 'earned the benefit of the doubt' after making an 'honest' mistake. "For a decade Maria Sharapova has been a role model and woman of integrity who has inspired millions of fans around the world to play and watch tennis," he said in a statement.

"The honesty and courage she displayed in announcing and acknowledging her mistake was admirable. HEAD is proud to stand behind Maria, now and into the future and we intend to extend her contract. "We look forward to working with her and to announcing new sponsorships in the weeks and months ahead."

In Los Angeles on Monday, Sharapova said she had been taking meldonium, also known as mildronate, for 10 years because of health problems and regular bouts of flu. The drug, produced in Latvia but unavailable for purchase in the United States where Sharapova is based, was only added to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) list of banned substances in January.

Manufactured for people suffering from heart problems, it can also increase blood flow and improve exercise capacity. Head said they were convinced Sharapova had not taken the drug to gain any advantage. "It is common ground within the scientific community that in order for meldonium to have any relevant performance enhancing effect it has to be taken in daily dosages in excess of 1,000 to 2,000mg," the statement said.

"According to the attorney for Maria, her dosage was significantly less than that." While underlining Head's commitment to clean sport, Eliasch said he trusted Sharapova's explanation that she had not realized meldonium had been banned by WADA. "In the absence of any evidence of any intent by Maria of enhancing her performance or trying to gain an unfair advantage through the use of mildronate, we further conclude this falls into the category of 'honest' mistakes," he said. Russian biathlete Eduard Latypov was suspended from competition on Thursday after testing positive for meldonium, the latest in a flurry of athletes to fall foul of the drug. — Reuters

FRENCH SOCCER HQ RAIDED IN SWISS CASE AGAINST BLATTER

GENEVA: Swiss authorities say evidence has been seized in a search at the French soccer federation headquarters for their criminal case against former FIFA president Sepp Blatter. The office of Switzerland's attorney general on Wednesday said the governing body for French soccer consented to the search carried out Tuesday with the cooperation of the French Financial Prosecution Office.

Criminal proceedings were opened against Blatter last September for suspected financial mismanagement over a \$2 million payment he approved from FIFA funds for Michel Platini in 2011. "Documents were seized in connection with the suspected payment," the Swiss federal prosecution

office said in a statement, which detailed a formal request for help from French authorities on Jan. 14.

Blatter and Platini were both banned from soccer for six years after an investigation by FIFA's ethics committee. They are appealing against their sanctions at the Court of Arbitration for Sport. Both men have constantly denied wrongdoing and claimed they had a verbal deal for additional salary that former France great Platini would receive for working as Blatter's presidential adviser from 1999-2002.

'Accused person'

Before the payment was revealed in September, Platini had been the leading

candidate to succeed Blatter as president in FIFA's emergency election on Feb. 26. The payment emerged during a wider investigation led by Switzerland's attorney general, Michael Lauber, of FIFA business. The investigation includes suspected money laundering in the 2018 and 2022 World Cup bidding contests.

Platini's status in the Swiss investigation is "between a witness and an accused person," Lauber has said. The case against Blatter also involves alleged misappropriation of FIFA funds during his more than 17 years as FIFA president, which formally ended two weeks ago. He allegedly arranged an undervalued deal for 2010-2014 World Cup broadcast rights for the

Caribbean with former FIFA vice president Jack Warner.

Platini has previously said he asked Blatter for a salary of 1 million Swiss francs when approached in 1998 to work for the newly-elected president. Blatter said there was a contract for 300,000 Swiss francs, the same as FIFA's then secretary general in line with its salary structure, plus a "gentleman's agreement" to get the rest later.

Swiss law obliged FIFA only to pay the deferred money within five years. It was not until 2010 that Platini, by then president of the governing body for European football and a FIFA vice president, reportedly asked for the balance, and was paid in February 2011. — AP



NANJING: Former English Premier League Chelsea's player Ramires Santos do Nascimento of Brazil waves to Chinese soccer fans as he arrives at Nanjing Lukou International Airport. — AP

AS CHINA SEASON STARTS, FAMOUS IMPORTS STILL A MIXED BLESSING

BEIJING: After the \$300 million splurge on high-profile foreign stars in the preseason transfer window, there was one striking statistic from the opening round of the Chinese Super League. Of the 16 goals scored, not one could be attributed to a homegrown Chinese player.

The influx of expensive imports has strengthened Chinese Super League clubs and increased attendances at home and the league's profile overseas, but has compounded concerns about the effects of too many overseas strikers in the domestic competition.

Brazilians Ramires and Alex Teixeira cost Jiangsu Suning more than \$80 million, and both scored in the first round. Asian champion Guangzhou Evergrande paid almost \$50 million to Atletico Madrid for Jackson Martinez, and the Colombian international duly scored for his new team. The closest there was to a local goal came from Taiwanese international Chen Po-liang. With the array of foreign and creative strikers in the league, the Chinese attacking talent is being crowded out.

"From the perspective of the develop-

ment of Chinese football, it's a despicably bad thing," the Guangzhou Daily News reported. Dejan Damjanovic agrees. The Montenegrin striker was the third-highest scorer in the 2015 Chinese Super League while playing for Beijing Guoan in a year when only two local forwards finished in the top 15 marksmen.

"This is the problem," Damjanovic told The Associated Press. "In all teams, it is the foreigners who are making the difference and scoring the goals and so clubs are buying strikers and midfielders to help them achieve their aims." The problems this creates for the national team are evident.

Reliance on strikers

China needs to defeat Qatar on March 29 to have any chance of progressing to the final round of Asian qualification for the 2018 World Cup. The country has only appeared at one World Cup, in 2002, when China lost all three games and failed to score a single goal.

"Generally, the national team of China is having problems because of this," added Damjanovic. "Chinese strikers when they

play, they are not scoring too much. A few of them are doing good jobs but others are struggling. There needs to be improvements. They need to improve their young players and the youth facilities if they want to be one of the best leagues and national teams in Asia."

Australian midfielder Erik Paartalu, who spent a season with Chinese Super League team Tianjin Teda in 2013, said the issue needs to be addressed if Chinese football is to advance. "The clubs just want a big name to attract crowds and to make their owners look good," Paartalu said. China "won't have any success at international level anytime soon if it continues because (local forwards) need to be playing. And there isn't many Chinese playing outside of China."

The reliance on foreign strikers has been an issue across Asia for some time. Even Japan and South Korea, the continent's most successful countries, struggle to produce top-class goalscorers. It is perhaps becoming more extreme in China, though. In the 2015 J-League season, seven of the top 10 scorers were Japanese. In South Korea, half of the top 10 were Korean. — AP

VETERAN PIZARRO FIRED UP FOR BAYERN RETURN

BERLIN: Evergreen Claudio Pizarro is relishing his return to Bayern Munich tomorrow as the 37-year-old cannot stop scoring in Germany's top flight. The Peru striker is out of contract at Werder Bremen in June, but is enjoying the Indian summer of his career and is Werder's top scorer this season.

He has netted 11 league goals this season, scoring five times in his last three games, including a hat-trick in Werder's shock 4-1 thrashing of Bayer Leverkusen last week. Pizarro had two separate stints at Bayern from 2001-2007 and then 2012-2015.

He left at the end of last term, returning to Bremen for the fourth time, after Bayern boss Pep Guardiola deemed him surplus to requirements. "Of course it will be a special game for me against former colleagues at the Allianz Arena," he said. "I hope we can beat Bayern and, best of all, with a goal from me."

With his 38th birthday approaching in October, Pizarro is to Germany's top flight what Ryan Giggs was to England's Premier League. The Welshman retired in 2014, aged 40, having played nearly 700 games for Manchester United, scoring over 100 goals. Pizarro holds the German league records for the most goals (187) and games (405) and has no thoughts of retiring. He even wants to play at the 2018 World Cup in Russia with Peru. While Bayern want to become the first club to win four straight Bundesliga titles, Bremen are just focusing on staying up, as they remain only three points from the relegation play-off place. "It is important that we look positively ahead, rather than downwards," he added.

'Too much pressure'

"It's crucial that we pick up points from game-to-game. 'We're on a good run now and if we keep it up, I am confident we won't slide back towards the bottom.' Bremen have shot up to 13th in the table with back-to-back wins, while Bayern's lead is now five points after defeat to Mainz was followed by a crucial draw with Dortmund.

Pizarro's nine goals in the second half of the season means he has scored more times than even Bayern's star striker Robert Lewandowski. "We're slowly getting used to Claudio scoring in every game, without wanting to, of course, put him under too much pressure," said Bremen captain Clemens Fritz.

If he needed any extra incentive, his 100 goals for Werder leaves him just one short of the club's record of 101, held by current board member Marco Bode. "We have nine games left, he'll do it," said Bode. "Perhaps he'll even manage it in Munich." — AFP



Claudio Pizarro



LONDON: Paris Saint-Germain's Swedish forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic celebrates scoring his team's second goal during the UEFA Champions League round of 16 second leg football match between Chelsea and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) at Stamford Bridge. — AFP

IBRAHIMOVIC SILENCED HIS DOUBTERS: BLANC

LONDON: Paris Saint-Germain coach Laurent Blanc said that Zlatan Ibrahimovic had answered his critics by inspiring his team to victory over Chelsea in the Champions League last 16. Ibrahimovic created the opening goal for Adrien Rabiot and then volleyed in a 67th-minute winner as French champions PSG won 2-1 at Stamford Bridge on Wednesday to complete a 4-2 aggregate victory.

The outspoken Swede, sent off during PSG's success against Chelsea in last season's competition, has faced criticism throughout his career for failing to reproduce his domestic form in European competition, but Blanc said that he had proven his worth.

"Zlatan played a match in keeping with what he's done this season," the former France defender told reporters in his post-match press conference. "You always have doubts because it's Ligue 1. That's the truth. You ask if he can play like that in the Champions League. He gave his response tonight. "He has important qualities for us. He moves the two centre-backs around in the opposing team. "Technically he sees things very quickly. When he drops deep-which we ask him to do-he helps put our game in place. He played a great match like lots of PSG players tonight, like pretty much the whole team.

"It won't give him confidence as he already has huge confidence in himself. But a goal and an assist will do him well, and the coach and the club get the benefit." Chelsea's interim manager Guus Hiddink also heralded Ibrahimovic, whose contract expires at the end of the season, when he was asked if the 34-year-old could cut it in the Premier League.

"He's proving already many, many years what kind of player he is," said the Dutchman, who lost goal-scorer Diego Costa and Eden Hazard to injury in the second half. "He's a personality, he's the boss in this team and they use him perfectly. "He's not the youngest, but for his age, for a footballer he's doing very well. He can adapt himself, also through his big personality, in any league in Europe."

Chelsea 'in transition'

With Chelsea 10 points below the top four in the Premier League, they face next season being almost certainly their first without Champions League football since Russian billionaire owner Roman Abramovich bought the club in 2003. Tomorrow's FA Cup quarter-final at Everton represents their last potential path to silverware this season and Hiddink said the club's hierarchy would need to think hard about their next managerial appointment.

"Chelsea is now in a transition period," said Hiddink, who has returned last season's Premier League champions to an even keel after succeeding the sacked Jose Mourinho in December. "They have to see how to go on and try to regain the usual terrain where Chelsea used to be. Chelsea must consider its short future, how to handle this."

Hazard was booed off by some fans after sustaining a hip injury and also came under fire on social media for swapping shirts at half-time with PSG winger Angel di Maria, but Hiddink refused to condemn him. "I'm aware. It should not be done," he said of the shirt-swap. "But in some countries it's usual that you do it (at half-time) and not after the game. Maybe they're both used to doing that. Don't over-value this issue." —AFP

BUFFON EYES RECORD AS JUVE PREPARES FOR SASSUOLO

MILAN: Juventus welcomes Sassuolo in a very different position to the last time the two teams met. When they faced each other back in October, Juventus had won only three of its first nine matches. The four-time defending champion went on to lose 1-0 in Reggio Emilia, finishing the round in 12th spot.

Juventus has won 17 of its 18 matches since that sobering night - setting a new club record - and head the standings. "It was certainly a low point in our season," said Italy forward Simone Zaza, who joined Juventus from Sassuolo last summer. "Afterwards, the more experienced heads in the dressing room made themselves heard.

"Certainly it wasn't a nice night, even if, personally, I also experienced intense emotions because it was a return to my past. At the end of the match we were all disappointed and when we met up at training, we confronted our problems and each one of us managed to show our true potential." Sassuolo has also continued picking up positive results and three successive wins have lifted it up to seventh, three points below AC Milan in the fight for Europe.

Juventus plays today and can move provisionally six points clear of second-placed Napoli, which visits Palermo on Sunday night. Roma will be looking to keep up the pressure on the top two and boost its claim for third and the final Champions League spot when it visits Udinese on Sunday.

After seven successive wins, Roma is five points below Napoli and three above Fiorentina, which hosts bottom club Hellas Verona. Inter is two points further back and welcomes Bologna Saturday. Also this weekend, it's: Empoli vs Sampdoria; Chievo Verona vs AC Milan; Carpi vs. Frosinone; Genoa vs Torino; and Lazio vs Atalanta. Here are a few things to know about Serie A this weekend:

Unbeatable Buffon

Much of Juve's run of impressive results has been down to its invincibility at the back. Juventus hasn't conceded in nine successive league matches and goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon will be minutes away from setting a new Serie A record if his side makes it a 10th against Sassuolo.



TURIN: Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon reacts during the Champions League, round of 16, first-leg soccer match between Juventus and Bayern Munich at the Juventus stadium. — AP

Buffon has not been beaten in Serie A in 836 minutes, the third-longest stretch in league history. The unbeaten record in Serie A is held by Sebastiano Rossi, who kept a clean sheet for 929 consecutive minutes for AC Milan from Dec. 12, 1993, to Feb 27, 1994, beating the previous mark set by former Juventus goalkeeper Dino Zoff in 1972-73 by 26 minutes.

If Juventus keeps a clean sheet against Sassuolo, Buffon will match Rossi's 22-year record by not conceding in the first three minutes in the following weekend's derby match at Torino. Between those two matches, Juventus visits Bayern Munich in the last 16 of the Champions League. It drew 2-2 with the German side in the first leg.

Managerial merry-go-round

It's all change again at Palermo. Walter Novellino has confirmed he has reached an agreement to become the struggling club's eighth coach this season after Giuseppe Iachini left for the second time following a row with controversial president Maurizio Zamparini.

Counting caretakers, Palermo have had six different coaches this season: Iachini

(twice), Davide Ballardini, Fabio Viviani, Guillermo Schelotto, Giovanni Bosi and Giovanni Tedesco. Zamparini has made nearly 60 coaching changes in 29 years as a club owner, first at Venezia and then at Palermo.

Novellino worked under Zamparini at Venezia - winning promotion to Serie A - and is one of the few not to have been fired by him. Palermo is winless in its past nine matches and has fallen to 17th, one point above the relegation zone.

Relegation six pointer

Carpi and Frosinone have started believing in the great escape as they inch closer to securing a second ever season in Serie A. Frosinone has won three of its past six matches to move to within a point of safety, while Carpi is four points further back following three successive draws.

Carpi hosts Frosinone on Sunday before facing the other side in the bottom three, Verona, the following week. Two victories could catapult it out of the relegation zone. A win for Frosinone this weekend would also boost its chances and likely consign Carpi to going straight back down. — AP

US DOWN GERMANY TO WIN FOUR-NATION CUP

MIAMI: The United States came from behind to defeat Germany 2-1 and win the inaugural SheBelieves Cup on Wednesday in a repeat of last year's FIFA Women's World Cup semi-final battle. Alex Morgan and Sam Kerr scored first-half goals for the American women after the hosts had been rocked by a 30th-minute Anja Mittag strike as Germany took the lead in Boca Raton, Florida.

Victory meant the US women finished the four-nation tournament on top of the group with a 100 percent record after winning their matches against England and France. The United States kicked off the match with the

nucleus of the team which was victorious in the World Cup last year.

Five of their line-up-Carli Lloyd, Hope Solo, Morgan, Becky Sauerbrunn and Tobin Heath-had played more than 100 internationals each. That core of experience proved vital after the hosts fell behind to Mittag's thunderous right-footed strike after half an hour.

The goal ended a run of 781 minutes without conceding a goal for the informal US team. However, the hosts got back on level terms in the 37th minute after a fine piece of skill by Morgan, who latched onto a long pass, flicked the ball over her shadowing defender and then rammed home the finish.

It was the 26-year-old Morgan's 64th international goal. Four minutes later and Kerr made it 2-1 when her shot from distance bobbed on the uneven playing surface and beat Almuth Schult in the German goal.

The victory extended a remarkable run of results for the American women, who are unbeaten in 2016 as they build towards the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, where they will seek to defend their 2012 crown.

In the day's other game, England and France ground out a 0-0 draw to finish the tournament at third and fourth in the table respectively with one point each. — AFP



KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN STUDENTS ART COMPETITION

HELLO ARTISTS...

Welcome to the Student's Art Competition. I hope you are ready to paint a beautiful painting and win wonderful prizes. The theme for your painting must be related to planting and greening, basically anything pertaining to our environment. We are looking for a great painting. So, please pick up your color pencils, paint brushes, crayons or whatever you prefer and start drawing and painting.

Good luck to you, our young artists.

- Competition is open to ages from (6 - 8) (9 - 11) (12 - 14) and (15 - 17) & Special needs.
- The competition is open for all schools in Kuwait (Government and Private)
- The competition will start on January 28th and will continue till March 19th 2016.
- 10 winners from each category will receive valuable prizes.
- All participants will receive a certificate of appreciation.
- All schools participating in the

competition will receive an appreciation plaque.

- Any school or individual interested to participate in this competition is welcome to visit the office of Kuwait Times and collect the drawing sheets.
- Drawing sheets will be given to schools FREE of charge.
- Only drawing sheets provided by the Kuwait Times will be allowed.
- You can use any kind of color pencils, paint brushes or crayons.

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