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Kuwait Times



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SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 2016

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Chaotic scenes
as Trump
cancels rally
amid protests



Kerry stresses
need to end
conflicts in
Syria, Yemen



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materclass
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ANOTHER KUWAITI KILLED IN LEBANON AMID TRAVEL ALERT

KILLERS OF TWO KUWAITIS ARRESTED • CITIZENS URGED TO LEAVE

BEIRUT: Kuwait's Ambassador in Beirut Abdulaal Al-Qenai said yesterday that Lebanese authorities informed him of a murder of a Kuwaiti citizen. Qenai, speaking to KUNA, said the embassy was in touch with security authorities to know details of the murder, and will follow up the investigations in this regard. The name or age of the murdered Kuwaiti was not available at the moment. The ambassador reiterated previous warnings against traveling to Lebanon and the importance of Kuwaitis in the country to leave immediately. He attributed the warning to critical security circumstances.

Late on Friday, the official news agency reported that Lebanese authorities arrested two Syrians for killing two Kuwaiti citizens in the Kahala neighborhood in eastern Beirut several days ago. It said the security authorities noted that the arrestees confessed to killing the two Kuwaitis with a hammer with the aim of stealing from them. They identified the Syrians only

with their years of birth, 1975 and 1977. Meanwhile, a source at Rafiq Al-Hariri Airport, who asked not to be named, told KUNA the bodies of the two Kuwaitis, in their 60s, would be flown back to Kuwait today.

The Kuwaiti Embassy appreciated the efforts of the Lebanese Internal Security Forces (ISF) which led, in a short time, to the arrest of the killers of the two Kuwaiti nationals. The embassy expressed profound gratitude to the Lebanese security personnel and politicians who expressed solidarity with Kuwait and denounced the despicable crime. It renewed condolences to the families of the two victims and voiced confidence that the impartial judiciary of Lebanon will give the perpetrators of the crime the appropriate punishment.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Qatar have also warned their citizens against traveling to Lebanon, and urged nationals in the country to leave. — KUNA



Min 16°
Max 29°
High Tide
02:44 & 14:40
Low Tide
08:59 & 21:29

CHASE ENDS WITH 6 SAUDIS DEAD AFTER OFFICER KILLED

FOUR TERRORISTS ON DEATH ROW

RIYADH: A chase in Saudi Arabia ended in a gunfight on Friday with the death of six suspects wanted for killing their relative, a special forces officer, the interior ministry said. Sergeant Badr Hamid Sareekh Al-Rashidi was murdered last month. The Arab News reported that the suspects were believed to be members of the Islamic State Sunni extremist group, but the ministry statement did not specifically mention such a connection. It said the security forces stand against anybody who wants to pursue "the dictates and directives of errant and corrupt organizations". The suspects "had taken advantage of the family ties"

between them and the victim, luring him to his death, the ministry said.

They opened fire on officers who located them driving towards Hail city northwest of Riyadh on Friday, the ministry said. "Their vehicle skidded towards a desert area and a chase took place. They were cordoned in a mountainous area in Hail, and police helicopters had them under surveillance," it said. They continued shooting despite calls to surrender, leading to an exchange of fire, it added. "As result they were all killed," but no security men were hurt.

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BUSINESS AS USUAL AT GITMO

GUANTANAMO BAY NAVAL BASE, Cuba: A length of razor wire dangles onto a chain-link fence, clinking gently in the warm breeze. Long, thick grass smoothers what once was a gravel prison yard. Animal droppings are everywhere. Over the past 14 years, nature has won control of Guantanamo Bay's Camp X-Ray, the notorious holding center briefly home to nearly 300 detainees pulled from the battlefield after the US-led invasion of Afghanistan. Gone are the inmates and their orange jumpsuits. Their tiny, open-air cages are now knotted with weeds and the wooden guard towers surrounding the facility look like they're about to collapse.

But just a short drive away, on the other side of a shrub-covered hill, a different story is playing out. Down a closely guarded access road, where an "Honor Bound to Defend Freedom" sign greets visitors, the extensive prison complex that succeeded Camp X-Ray remains home to dozens of terror suspects. Despite President Barack Obama's repeated efforts to close it since taking office in 2009, this facility is staying open - at least for now.

Last month, Obama handed Congress a Pentagon proposal to shut the prison which he has called a stain on America's conscience that catalyzes jihadi anger against the United States. But Republican foes immediately dismissed the plan, primarily because it seeks to bring high-risk detainees from this remote naval base in southeast-

ern Cuba to the United States - even though such a move is illegal under current US law.

Further dampening expectations, Republicans this week seized on a report by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence that found a recent increase in ex-detainees suspected of rejoining the extremist fight

Continued on Page 13



WASHINGTON: A man dressed as a detainee holds a sign calling attention to the detainees at Guantanamo Bay during a demonstration outside the White House on Friday. — AP

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AMIR CONGRATULATES ABUL GHAIT ON ARAB LEAGUE POST

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Friday congratulated Ahmad Abul Ghait on his selection as the next Arab League Secretary general, wishing him success in his new tasks.

His Highness the Amir, in a cable to Abul Ghait, said he was confident the upcoming Arab top diplomat's diplomatic experience would enable him to carry out his duties, thus boost common Arab action.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah congratulated Abul Ghait on his selection, wishing his success in his new duties. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a similar cable. —KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

KUWAITI WOMEN MADE SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS: SHEIKHA LATIFA

KUWAIT/PARIS: Chairperson of the Cabinet-affiliated Women Affairs Committee Sheikh Latifa Al-Fahad Al-Salem Al-Sabah has expressed satisfaction for Kuwait's ranking first at the Arab level for gender equality affirming that the country has made great achievements in women empowerment, boosting their role in sustainable development as well as attaining rights.

In a statement upon her departure to New York where she would head the Kuwaiti delegation taking part in the 60th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, Sheikh Latifa said Kuwaiti women boast of the great accomplishments, attained over the past 20 years, thus putting Kuwait on top at the Arab level with regard to gender equality, according to the report of the Global Economic Forum 2015.

The commission chair said she would present to the UN committee with a report about the Kuwaiti Government implementation of the Beijing declaration on women empowerment, measures that have been taken against indiscriminate violence, assuming senior and decision-making posts and executing development schemes.

Nonetheless, the Kuwaiti woman aspires to make more gains to enhance further her social status, Sheikh Latifa said, revealing that the delegation would urge the international community to adopt a more serious stance toward anti-women violence in many turbulent countries, namely Palestine where they continuously suffer under Israeli occupation.

The Kuwaiti delegation will also seek to implement the Kuwaiti initiative, presented during the 58th session, stipulating dis-

patch of women delegations to troubled regions in the Arab world and help women there in face of violence, killing and displacement. She added that she would address the session about the State of Kuwait aid to stricken countries.

Gender equality

Meanwhile, Chairperson of the international women's day summit Bashayer Al-Awwad, of Kuwait, said Friday that the first policy forum on mobile learning called for developing better mobile learning strategies. The forum, jointly organized by the

International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the UNESCO, falls in the framework of the ITU M-Powering Development Initiative, she told KUNA.

Awwad said the aim of the just-ended gathering was to harnessing mobile technology to achieve inclusive and equitable quality education. The forum brought together ministers of education and ministers in charge of telecommunications from 80 countries to examine the role that interagency collaboration can play to use of the mobile technology to improve the quality, equity and accessibility of education, she pointed out.

The ministerial forum reviewed the model implementation of the ITU M-Powering Development Initiative in four countries, namely Uruguay, Colombia, Peru and Costa Rica, Awwad went on. The forum is part of the UNESCO Mobile Learning Week (MLW) which was held between March 7 and 11, she said, adding that the key-speakers at the event included ITU Secretary General Houlin Zhao and UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova. —KUNA



Sheikha Latifa Al-Fahad Al-Salem Al-Sabah

KUWAIT DONATES TO COMPLETE CULTURAL CENTER IN MONTENEGRO

KUWAIT: Kuwait Ambassador to Serbia and Montenegro Yousef Ahmad Abdulsamad delivered yesterday on behalf of Kuwait Ministry of Endowment and Islamic Affairs a donation, totaling 310,000 euros, to help complete construction of a cultural center for students in the Republic of Montenegro.

The sum was handed over to Islamic Affairs representative of Sheikhdom in Montenegro Omar Kayoshai, and the donation will also help build a library, kindergarten, and various installation for services to Muslims in Montenegro.

During the meeting at Kuwait Embassy in Belgrade, Kayoshai said the center project is very important to education and for Muslims in the country, expressing his

utmost thanks to the State of Kuwait, Kuwait Embassy, and Kuwait Ministry of Endowment and Islamic Affairs for such generous contribution.

The ambassador meanwhile renewed Kuwait's commitment to support similar humanitarian and charity projects in various parts of the world, praising as well efforts exerted in Montenegro in coordination with Kuwait Embassy in Belgrade, Serbia.

On Friday, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) signed loan agreements with Vietnam and Kyrgyzstan worth KD 3.4 million (\$12 million) and KD 6 million (\$20.4 million) respectively. —KUNA

KUWAIT TAKES PART IN UN STATISTICAL MEETING

NEW YORK: A delegation representing Kuwait's Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) has taken part in the UN Statistical Commission 47th 4-day session that concluded with approving a draft global indicator framework intended for a global follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Undersecretary General for Economic and Social Affairs Wu Hongbo, in remarks delivered by Assistant Secretary General for Economic Development Lenni Montiel, said that completing the indicator framework is of "course not the end of the story - on the contrary, it is the beginning." The Statistical Commission will submit the initial global

indicator framework to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the General Assembly for adoption. Kuwait's Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) took part alongside 23 other member countries participating in different discussion panels and workshops. The four-day session, which kicked off early on Tuesday under the theme "Better Data, Better Lives," focused on the role of statistics and indicators in building databases that are capable of supporting and evaluating progress of achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The Kuwaiti delegation was led by CSB's acting director Mona Al-Da'as, as well as Sahar Al-Rudaini and Adyyan Maarafi. —KUNA

GCC RADIO-TV FESTIVAL KICKS OFF IN BAHRAIN TOMORROW

KUWAIT: The 14th edition of the Gulf Radio and TV festival, slated for the period of March 14-17 in Bahrain, teams with functions on the production and marketing of Radio and TV programs in the Gulf region, said director of GCC Joint Program Production Institution Ali Al-Rayyes yesterday.

The festival will consist, among numerous activities, of forums and lectures on media dealings with sports, social issues, and cultural concerns, he said, noting that early pioneers of the Radio and TV media

in the Gulf will be honored in special ceremonies.

He said the Institution he works for has contributed over the years to the annual success of the festival and this year was no exception as it will take part with a number of programs on Gulf music, children, traffic, the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, fighting human trafficking, and birds in Bahrain. He thanked Bahrain for organizing the festival this year which he said was a distinctive GCC event worth lauding. —KUNA

ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS DECLARE HEZBOLLAH A TERRORIST GROUP

JARALLAH LAUDS 'POSITIVE' MEETINGS IN CAIRO

CAIRO: Arab Foreign Ministers decided on Friday to consider the Lebanese Hezbollah group a terrorist organization. The foreign ministers' announcement came as part of their discussions of the Iranian interference in the internal affairs of the Arab countries, thus considered Hezbollah a terrorist group. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Arab Interior Ministers' have also declared Hezbollah a terrorist group.

The Arab foreign ministers, in a final statement following their two-day meeting, condemned Iran's repeated interference in Bahrain's affairs, helping and training terrorists, smuggling of weapons and inciting sectarian conflicts. They also condemned Iran for helping the establishment of terrorist groups in Bahrain. They said the Iranian acts were violating the UN Charter and international law. They commended the Bahraini security forces for thwarting terrorist attacks last January as well as the arrest of terrorists backed by Iran's revolutionary guards and Hezbollah.

Positive meetings

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah lauded the "positive" meetings of Arab foreign ministers, indicating that it showed consensus and solidarity among Arabs. It is a positive sign which expresses Arab ministers' keenness on pushing Arab joint action forward to attain the aspirations of Arab countries and people, Jarallah said, expressing "satisfaction" towards the so far outcomes of the two-day meeting.

There has been a "consensus" during the meetings among the participants on all the subjects that were discussed, he said, noting that foreign ministers discussed the situations in Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon, in addition to Turkish incursions into Iraqi territories, Iranian interference in Arab countries' interior affairs, and the possibility of holding the next Arab Summit in Mauritania.

Head of the Mauritanian delegation has addressed all details regarding the proposed dates for meetings of permanent envoys and preparatory ministerial meetings, Jarallah noted, adding that today's meeting also approved for the League's General Secretariat to issue a statement that confirms Mauritania as the host of the next Arab Summit.

On assigning Egyptian former foreign minister Ahmad Abul Ghait as the League's Secretary General, Jarallah expressed "total satisfaction" towards the decision, adding that "Kuwait has announced its full support and informed the Egyptian government about it."

He also expressed aspiration for "a positive and constructive role" by the new League's Secretary General, whose wide experience and expertise will enable him to perform well for the joint Arab action interest, wishing Abul Ghait good luck and success in his mission.

Humanitarian situation

The Arab League Council meanwhile lauded Kuwait's role in hosting international donor conferences to support the humanitarian situation

in Syria. The final statement of the session also praised role of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah during the 4th international donor conference for Syria, which was held in London last month.

The State of Kuwait hosted the previous three conferences in 2012, 2013 and 2014, as well as committed to its pledges of \$1.6 billion. The Council also commended efforts by the International Syria Support Group (ISSG), which aim at providing a healthy environment to launch negotiations between the government and opposition, paving the way for a UN-sponsored transitional government in the war-torn Arab country.

The ISSG consists of the Arab League, the EU, the UN, the US, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, China, Russia, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar. The ministerial council also called on the UN Security Council to shoulder its responsibility regarding developments in the Syrian file. It also welcomed "positive" outcomes of the expanded meeting for Syrian opposition that was held under the patronage of Saudi Arabia in Riyadh on December 8-9, 2015.

Furthermore, the Council "strongly" condemned terrorist crimes committed against civilians in Syria by the so-called Islamic State (IS) and other terrorist organizations. It urged donor states to fulfill their financial pledges made during the London conference, especially the ones related to supporting Arab countries neighboring Syria and hosting its refugees. —KUNA



Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah is pictured with the board members of the Public Authority for Youth.

YOUTH AUTHORITY ESTABLISHED AT AMIR'S BEHEST: MINISTER

KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said yesterday the Public Authority for Youth (PAY) was established in line with His Highness the Amir's directives.

In a press statement following his chairing the first board meeting of PAY, Sheikh Salman said PAY sought to translate His Highness the Amir's vision for the nation's youth into actionable policies. This vision, said the minister, has already gotten off the ground with His Highness launching the conference on youth issues under the banner line "Kuwait listens to its youth."

He stressed that this vision was being promoted by the office of the minister of state for youth affairs which in unison with PAY will plan, coordinate, and lay out strategies for the benefits of the nation's youth.

Meanwhile, Undersecretary of the State Ministry for Youth Affairs Sheikha Al-Zain Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah said that the country was committed to improving the status of the youth and the fact that government entities for the youth have been decoupled from those of sports underscored this commit-

ment. Sheikha Al-Zain has been selected for the position of deputy chairperson of the board of PAY. She said that the young personnel in the office of the state minister for youth affairs have succeeded in drawing up a

roadmap for PAY in concert with the office's strategy for 2014-2017 which seeks to imbue the youth with patriotic values and to have them become partners in the nation's sustainable development aspirations. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah chairs the Public Authority for Youth's board meeting. —KUNA

KUWAIT REPORTS TO OCHA ON RELIEF EFFORT FOR YEMEN



ARSAL: Kuwait Red Crescent Society workers distribute aid to Syrian refugees in the border town of Arsal, eastern Lebanon. —KUNA

NEW YORK: Kuwait's Permanent Delegate to the United Nations Mansour Al-Otaibi presented to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) a report on Kuwait's aid package for the Yemeni people. "The State of Kuwait has contributed \$17 million to the relief effort for the Yemeni people since the start of the aid campaign in last September until February 14, 2016," he said.

"The Kuwaiti assistance came at the behest of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah who instructed donating \$100 million in response to the humanitarian disaster in sisterly Yemen," Otaibi pointed out.

The delivery of aid, supervised by Kuwait Society for Relief, benefited a total of 4,908,326 people in various parts of Yemen. Other Kuwaiti assistance, amounting in value to \$4 million, was delivered Kuwait Red Crescent Society, he said, citing the report. The remaining part of the Kuwait aid package will be delivered by March 13, 2016, he added.

Syrian refugees

In other news, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) distributed humanitarian aid for hundreds of Syrian refugees in the border town of Arsal, eastern Lebanon. Aid packages were given to 300 Syrian refugees, which include food and hygiene materials, said Yusuf Butrus, coordinator of relief operations in the Lebanese Red Cross.

He said aid were not reaching Arsal just like they were reaching other refugee areas. This is because of the difficult terrain and security conditions. Butrus said KRCS has been exerting efforts to provide aid for thousands of Syrian families. There are more than a million Syrian refugees living in random camps in Lebanon. —KUNA

194 WORKERS NABBED IN FRIDAY MARKET CRACKDOWN

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Four inspection teams raided the Friday Market and filed 194 citations, the Manpower Public Authority's Deputy Chairman for Labor Protection Abdullah Al-Motoutah said. Violations detected during the crackdown include residency visa violations by government employees, dependents, laborers on government contracts and farm workers working at the market.

Motoutah said that the violators were arrested and referred to relevant authorities.

Taxi drivers

Acting Director of the Manpower Public Authority Ahmed Al-Moussa stressed that the support given on facilitating measures after assessing taxi offices' needs for labor was made upon instructions from minister Hind Al-Subaih. Speaking on receiving the chairman of Kuwait Automobile

Trading Union's Khairan Al-Ajmi, Moussa said the benefits were given to taxi owners due to the problems these companies suffer due to a lack of taxi drivers.

Fatal crash

A man was instantly killed and two others sustained serious injuries in a collision reported along the military convoy road north of Kuwait City in the early hours of yesterday, said security sources.

PANEL MEMBERS DISAGREE ON PHRASING NATURALIZATION BILL

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The parliament's interior and defense committee is due to meet today to discuss amendments suggested to the prisons and police force laws. Informed sources said that the most important topic on the committee's agenda would be the proposed bill on limiting the number of people to be granted citizenship at a time. The sources added that committee members seem to disagree on phrasing the law, which might exclude Kuwaiti women's children and only benefit bedoons (stateless). Members are also expected to argue about the numbers.

On a different concern, informed sources said that the government has urged the parliament's human resources committee to accelerate reviewing the payroll strategic alternative law so that it could be discussed and passed in this term. The source also highlighted that the government expressed wishes that lawmakers would stop trying to make political gains on discussing the law and only review it from technical points of view.

Budgets

Chairman of the parliament's budgets and final statement committee MP Adnan Abdusamad said that the committee discussed the budgets of the road and land transportation of the telecom and information technology authorities for 2016-2017 and found out that liabilities of some government bodies contradicted with those of the transport authority, but remarked that the law was flexible enough and that such problems would be resolved soon. Abdusamad also stressed that the monthly salaries of the telecom and information technology authorities' board members varied between KD 7,000-9,000, which was against the government's austerity plans.

MOH DIRECTLY ISSUES HEALTH CERTIFICATES

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality will stop fees for issuing health certificates as of today, Director Ahmed Al-Manfouhi announced, adding that those certificates would hence be issued by the Ministry of Health (MOH), who will collect the fees after the Finance Ministry approved the new measure. Manfouhi added that this step would help shorten the time needed for paper work and obtain the certificate issued instantly instead of having to wait for weeks before receiving it.

PAN-GULF INSTITUTION EXTOLS KUWAITI SUPPORT

MANAMA: Arabian Gulf University (AGU) President Dr Khalid Abdul-Rahman Al-Ohaly yesterday lavished praise on Kuwait for its unbonded support to AGU ever since its founding. Dr Ohaly gushed his praise in a press statement marking the signing of a cooperative agreement between AGU and Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR). The agreement covers joint pursuit of research projects, overseeing the thesis and dissertation process in technical and environmental subjects, exchanging teaching staff, organizing scholarly symposiums and seminars and workshops, said Dr Ohaly. He noted that the relations between AGU and Kuwait go back a long time ever since Kuwait embraced the notion of having a pan-Gulf university see the light, currently embodied in AGU which cannot do without Kuwait's support in its educational projects. — KUNA



KUWAIT: These photos provided by the Interior Ministry shows people arrested on drug trafficking charges in the period of March 2-8, 2016.

TEN ARRESTED ON DRUG TRAFFICKING CHARGES

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Narcotics detectives filed 10 drug trafficking and importing cases in the period of March 2-8, 2016 and arrested five Arabs and eight Asians in relation to those cases. The department's statistics also showed that detectives managed to seize one kilogram of marijuana, 1,608,000 illicit pills, 780 grams of hashish, 635 grams of heroin and 290 grams of methamphetamine. In addition, detectives also arrested eight people for assisting drug dealers and helped seven families send addicted family members to the psychological diseases hospital.

Diamond smuggling
Customs officers at the Saad Al-

Abdullah Airport arrested an Arab man with possession of six plastic bags of diamonds he had hidden in his clothes to avoid paying the custom fees, said security sources.

Dead baby

The dead body of a one-month-old baby was found on the beach outside of a Mahboula hotel, said security sources, noting that further investigations are in progress to identify the baby's parents and hold them legally accountable.

Harboring illegals

Residency detectives raided an office that had been harboring and recruiting a number of residency visa violators, said security sources, noting that the raid resulted in arresting 21

African nationals, including 19 women, in addition to three more people of African nationalities who ran the place.

Liquor possession

Two bedoons were arrested in Abu Halifa with two bottles of liquor, said security sources.

Traffic campaign

As part of its campaigns to protect motorists, Hawally traffic police impounded 19 vehicles, arrested 15 people for traffic violations and referred four juveniles to the juvenile prosecution, the interior ministry said in a statement, pointing out that six of the impounded vehicles were involved in an illegal race while nine were impounded for reckless driving.



DIVERS CLEAR UP SPOTS AROUND MESKAN ISLAND

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Dive Team concluded a clean-up campaign of waters around Meskan Island, removing two tons of harmful waste, team leader Walid Al-Fadhel said yesterday. The operation, which was designed in 2014, resulted in removing fishing and iron nets, sunken boats, and plastic objects, Fadhel said, affirming that the plan was designed to secure the navigation route off the island.

Meskan, one of Kuwait's islands, was in the past a gateway for wooden ships navigating to and from Iraq. It is located between Failaka island and Ras Al-Sabbiah. The divers faced some difficulties during the six-day operation, such as weather conditions and scatter of the abandoned materials over a large area, Fadhel added. — KUNA



In my view

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



By Muna Al-Fuzai

local@kuwaittimes.net

March 8 was International Women's Day. The 2016 theme for this day was "Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step it up for Gender Equality". This topic is worth considering. With the world in confusion now, we really need to consider the status of women in all countries with a special focus on gender equality as an issue of concern for women in Arab countries with emphasis on war and terror zones as well as areas of conflicts such as Syria and Iraq.

This day is the right time to revise the progress we made to rescue and support poor and troubled women in areas of disputes, and at the same time call on educated and rich women in Arab countries including Kuwait for a radical change to upgrade their level of participation and involvement in society's sustainable development as partners and not followers or slaves or observers from ivory towers.

Moreover, this day should be marked as a day of awareness and a call for all women not to accept less-favorable treatment because of their gender. A plea for women to think twice before blowing themselves up and killing themselves believing it's a heroic act and an act of love for their menfolk, because it is not.

While this topic is important because there are many injustices against women today, I have to exclude the UAE because it has several woman ministries and senior female officials. A big salute to Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum for supporting Emirati woman to be leaders in their society. His recent choice of female ministries was an act of courage, appreciation and determination to motivate educated and young women to play an extraordinary role in the history of their country and community. In the UAE, all days are women's days.

Just to remind everyone here in Kuwait, we have one woman minister since the last couple of years and zero female MPs in the 50-member parliament now. So when it comes to gender equality, let me remind you all that we don't have much to celebrate except hopes that maybe one day a woman would have the right opportunity to make a mark on the decision making process here. As long as Kuwaiti women fail to support other women to reach the parliament and have the power to put pressure on the government's formation to have more than a single woman, then there is no achievement worth mentioning or recording in history books or even weekly social magazines.

It is amazing that this day passed in Kuwait with little recognition except by a few societies that issued a press release on the need to support women. I thank them because they remind everyone that we still have a long road ahead.

A few months ago I was asked what's wrong with Kuwaiti women and why don't we see much of them in positions of decision-making? I believe women who are at the forefront are a major obstacle in the advancement of Kuwait today. They don't want to move out or support any woman to move forward in any senior position. For example, think of any government celebrations and you will only find the same repeated names that have been honored thousands of times, as if this is what Kuwait is all about. With all respect to them, they should step out, be less selfish and allow young Kuwaiti women to take the lead. But I don't see this happening. This issue of gender equality is a lesson that must be taught in schools.

So how can we face this problem here and what should we do to help other women? We need to ensure that all girls have access to education and reject discrimination against women under any circumstances. Another serious issue here is that we need to call for eliminating all harmful practices, such as early and forced marriages and female genital mutilation. There are many social practices and old traditions that are damaging women in conservative societies. We need more women in the field work of international organizations to carry out tough missions such as promoting gender equality.

Until next year, we need to pray that maybe we will have some real achievement for women in Kuwait at the hands of other Kuwaiti women.

UP TO 4,614 ILLEGAL RESIDENTS EMPLOYED IN 4 YEARS IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Up to 4,614 illegal residents have been employed in the public and cooperative sectors since launch of a program for hiring this segment of the society in March 2012, the Central Agency for Remedying of the Illegal Residents' Status announced yesterday.

Up to 1,903 have been registered in the public sector, 2,030 (of Kuwaiti mothers) in the military and 681 in the cooperative sector, said Walid Al-Asfour, the assistant general secretary for technical and information affairs at the apparatus.

The process for hiring the illegal residents had been launched in coordination with the Civil Service Commission in line with a program to secure jobs for this category of residents of Kuwait whose names had been enlisted in the 1965 census.

In the Ministry of Health, up to 990 illegal residents have been enrolled as doctors, nurses and personnel for other medical services, followed by the Ministry of Education, 408, mostly in the teaching sector. Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs came third, 144 employees, followed by the Public Authority for Industry (PAI), 72, the Sports and Youth Authority, 65, Ministry of Information, 55, and the remaining were distributed to other departments. — KUNA



A graffiti workshop.



Photographer Ahmed Al-Mudayyan from 'The Environmental Lens' group.

ADASA festival highlights youth innovations at Shaheed Park

Event fundamental incubator of visual art: Official



KUWAIT: Minister of Information Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah leads the audience as they stand for the national anthem.

— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Minister of Information Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah observes works at a pottery workshop.



An art workshop.



Undersecretary of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Al-Zain Al-Sabah



US Ambassador Douglas Silliman



The US Ambassador visits the Ministry of Education's pavilion.



Minister of Information Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah interacts with a participant at the event.

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

KUWAIT: A three-day festival was held at Shaheed Park during the weekend, showcasing visual arts by the youth. The opening ceremony of ADASA was attended by Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Al-Zain Mohammed Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, as well as the United States' Ambassador to Kuwait Douglas Silliman and a number of public figures. Sheikh Al-Zain said ADASA is entirely organized by the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs and it is considered as a fundamental incubator of visual art. "Here, at Al-Shaheed Park, our work today is the consolidation of the concept of celebrating work by providing space to show the youth's innovations and creations they can invest for the benefit of the country's future," she said.

Common vision

Ahmed Al-Mudayyan, a photographer, expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Youth for its support. "Our group, 'The Environmental Lens,' is made up of Kuwaiti

and expatriate photographers. We have a common vision, which is documenting biodiversity in Kuwait. We are looking for legal cover to work under its umbrella," he said. He said the ministry is facilitating access to licenses to reach some places with their equipment. "We

came to this park to showcase pictures of wildlife in Kuwait and explain them to visitors," he added.

The festival included a variety of workshops, music concerts and exhibitions of fine arts, graffiti, calligraphy, photography, short films and some utilitarian projects. It was

earlier announced that March 13 every year will be an official day to celebrate Kuwaiti youth, because it is the day on which the document "Kuwait Hears" was delivered from the youth to HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

OOREDOO KUWAIT REINFORCES PARTNERSHIP WITH MINISTRY OF YOUTH THROUGH 'ADASA'

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of the international Ooredoo Group, reinforced its partnership with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs through sponsoring Adasa, a festival for short films, art and music that comes as part of the Kuwait Youth Day initiative. The festival was held under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and took place Al-Shaheed Park throughout the weekend.

The festival was attended by the Minister of the State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, Sheikh Al-Zain Al-Sabah, other dignitaries and representatives of official authorities. From Ooredoo's side the event was attended by General Manager and CEO Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Thani, and Director of Corporate Communications Mijbil

Alayoub, in addition to a number of Ooredoo Kuwait's senior managers and executives.

In a speech at the opening ceremony, Ooredoo General Manager and CEO Sheikh Mohammed Al-Thani said: "This is not the first time that we partner with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, and it certainly won't be the last. We are happy to be working on an initiative that helps enrich the lives of youth and encourage them reach their potential. Our support for youth is deeply-rooted within our philosophy as a company that aims to enrich the lives of the communities in which it operates. We look forward for more opportunities that enrich youth's lives in the future."

The festival aims at encouraging and supporting youth, to materialize and showcase their artistic and creative work in different art fields, as well as encourage them to join relevant programs and courses in order to

further develop their skills and talents.

The festival included an art exhibition which showcased the longest graffiti wall, photography, pottery and many others. Another exhibition was also conducted during the festival, in collaboration with Sabah Al Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity and nonprofit able young groups. The festival also included a concert for Hamad Al-Ammari, TUMS and Sons of Yousef, as well as number of workshops, seminars, discussion panels, movies and theatrical shows.

Ooredoo Kuwait also took part of one of the sessions which actively discussed supporting youth's artistic projects; session was attended by Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, Assistant Undersecretary for Youth Projects Shafiq Omar and Chairman of Kuwait's National Fund for Supporting and Developing Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Mohammad Al-Zuhair.



Minister of Information Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah and Ooredoo's General Manager and CEO Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Thani tour an exhibition held as part of the festival.



Minister of Information Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah and Ooredoo's General Manager and CEO Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Thani attend an activity at the festival.

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Mr. Nabeel B. Ghareeb,
brother of

Rev. Amanuel B. Ghareeb
(Chairman of National Evangelical Church).



الكنيسة الانجيلية الوطنية / الكويت
The National Evangelical Church / Kuwait

Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Lightning illuminates the sky during a thunderstorm that hit Kuwait Friday night. Today's weather forecast is partially cloudy with light to moderate wind, and a chance for scattered light rain at night. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

CRACKDOWN AGAINST SMOKERS IN AVENUES

KUWAIT: In a broad crackdown campaign on violators of law banning smoking in public places, joint teams from the Environment Public Authority (EPA) and environment police toured the Avenues mall, and issued on-



KUWAIT: Joint teams from the Environment Public Authority (EPA) and environment police tour the Avenues mall. —KUNA

site-citations for violators.

"The campaign is meant to enforce provisions of the environment protection law which bans smoking in public places," EPA Director General Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah told reporters during the campaign. He added that the inspectors and environment police have issued on-the-site citations for dozens of the violators, both nationals and expats.

Sheikh Abdullah clarified that the EPA has launched an intensive awareness campaign in the mall ahead of today's move. The law-breakers will be fined KD 50 for the first instance and KD 100 for repeat offenses and would be given a 15-day ultimatum to pay the fine or be referred to prosecution, he said.

Meanwhile, the EPA Deputy Director General for Technical Affairs Mohammad Al-Enezi unveiled that 30 inspectors and policemen have participated in Friday's campaign. He lauded people and store's abidance by the law, noting that violators are only a small minority.

Enezi stated that the inspectors have also instructed stores and Tabaco vendors to remove advertisements that breach article number 56 of the law. The mall's administration was also asked to remove some smoking rooms which do not meet relevant standards, he said.

Meanwhile, Head of the Environment Police Department Lieutenant Colonel Hussein Al-Ajmi said that the Environment Police have prioritized the Avenues due to its importance as one of the main tourist destinations in Kuwait.

He stressed that malls' visitors should enjoy their shopping and entertainment experience in a pollution-free environment. He warned that stores and restaurants that violate the law would pay fine of KD 5,000.

Kuwait has issued a law banning smoking and shisha in all public places, including airports, cafes, restaurants, shopping centers and recreational areas. The ban issued upon a recommendation from the health authorities covers all forms of tobacco and is applicable in all areas of the country.

The ban was attributed to promoting public health and preserving people's safety. Under the ban, cafes, restaurants and hotels have to allocate a secluded area for smokers. The authorities warned that non-compliance with the ban could result in legal action against violators and announced that inspectors will monitor all public places to ensure full respect for the new rules. —KUNA

KUWAIT DIABETES SOCIETY LAUNCHES DIABETES CONNECTING NURSES PLATFORM

KUWAIT: Kuwait Diabetes Society, in partnership with Sanofi, announced the launch of an educational and interactive online platform called Diabetes Connecting Nurses. The platform is aimed at providing nurses with certified training on diabetes management and enabling them to connect with each other while learning from best practices, latest research and shared experiences. Launched in the Gulf countries, the platform will see participation from more than 100 nurses from the region and specifically in Kuwait; more than 25 nurses are enrolled.

"A nurse often plays the key role of acting as the link between doctors and patients. While providing them with knowledge and support, they also respond to patients' queries and concerns where the doctor may not always be available. However, we have noticed the need for specialized training to enhance the experience and knowledge which can help nurses in providing excellent patient care. The Diabetes Connecting Nurses platform is our effort to plug this need and meet the increasing demands for specialized nurses in the field of diabetes management," said Dr Hessa Al-Kandari, President of Kuwait Diabetes Society.

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EPA LAUNCHES SHUWAIKH BEACH CLEANING CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: The Environment Public Authority (EPA) launched yesterday a voluntary cleaning campaign of Shuwaikh beach in cooperation with the Embassy of Senegal in Kuwait, and participation of the Kuwaiti Dive Team. The event is part of the "It's worth our protection" campaign, which aims at raising public awareness on environment protection and promoting volunteering, EPA Chairman and General-Director Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said in a press statement.

The campaign sheds light on important environmental issues, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Humoud said, adding that the event also tends to interact directly with the people and encourage them to participate in the environmental development programs and activities.

He also mentioned that the voluntary event aims at promoting the new environment protection law in order to enhance the performance of local environmental bodies and organizations and control the number of violations of the Kuwaiti environment.

The state and private sectors' participation in the campaign is so important in various aspects, including bolstering the social and cultural awareness levels regarding environmental issues, he noted, praising the active participation by the Senegalese embassy and Kuwait Dive Team in the event's activities, setting a fine role model example in the field of environment service.

Meanwhile, Senegalese Ambassador Abdou Lahad Mbacke commended the efforts exerted by EPA in raising awareness among citizens and residents on environment law and preserving Kuwait, pointing out his mission's support to all effort towards preserving the environment. —KUNA

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Al-Anbaa

TRADITION TRADERS!

By Thaar Al-Rasheedi

For a full hour, I recently listened to a radio interview with a sociologist talking about the importance of protecting customs and traditions. He kept repeating the term 'customs and traditions', the need to maintain them and how the government should act in reinforcing the concept amongst citizens for 60 minutes.

After listening to his boring lecture about customs and traditions, I just remembered how a number of politicians, activists and even non-activists used to highlight such slogans whenever something new prevailed amongst the youth, and saw that such new things 'imported' by the youth were against traditions!

Well, I did not stop there but went back in an attempt to define those 'Kuwaiti customs and traditions' during which I looked for a special book that might define or outline them clearly to be used as references to determine whether this or that bizarre 'alien' action violates those traditions and norms. Honestly speaking, I did not find a single book determining the nature or laws about 'Kuwaiti customs and traditions'!

Before anybody starts judging me, I know for sure that customs and traditions are sets of non-written norms agreed upon by a certain society or community. Well, should we not record and document the norms that everybody claims to be advocating whenever changes in attire or behavior usually done by younger generations take place?!

What customs and traditions are they exactly talking about in Kuwait that has a diverse society including people from various origins, races, doctrines and sects? Each group has its own deep-rooted customs and traditions in this very small society and they have been passing them down through generations, and others must respect them.

Supposing that such customs and traditions do exist, which group's values should we adopt in judging any actions? Well, there is a general social taste and common norms that we can use as reference. These norms fit our society and any other similar conservative one. But to say that some customs and traditions can simply fit everybody is absolutely wrong and I believe this is nothing more than a slogan some people have been using whenever they want to try something new!

Customs and traditions' traders are usually politicians or people using such terms without really understanding them. A true society comprises of sets of customs and traditions that vary according to the society's components. They do not follow one pattern or come in one mold.

— Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Qabas

WHAT SHALL I DO?

By Muna Abdeljaleel

A Kuwaiti woman's daughter had just been diagnosed with lymphoma and thyroid cancer. She talked to me in stammering sentences. "The first diagnosis was cancer and the second was cancer too...my daughter is barely 15 years old, outstanding in school. Does she not have the right as a Kuwaiti citizen to get humanitarian opportunities in life? Are not we in the state of humanity?" she asked. "Of course, how is it possible not to have healthcare?!" I replied. She answered me with deep sadness: "How can't my daughter get opportunities for treatment by the most skilled doctors?"

She started telling her story: "My daughter suffered from flu symptoms for a year. We took her to the best doctors in government and private hospitals, and poured in her blood all chemical medications they prescribed for us, but to no avail, until her neck became swollen, and we noticed the presence of scattered glands in that area, until we found an endocrine specialist in a private clinic who told us to run a test on the cancer glands through a biopsy, and we were shocked with its advanced stage." She kept silent for a while, though I felt her "deep, noisy" silence shrouded with

the pain of a loved one. "We were told about a skilled doctor who is considered one of the best doctors in the world in this field... my daughter needs a plastic surgeon following the operation because the scar will cover a large area of the neck," she said.

"We wrote to the treatment abroad committee and they cooperated with us until we received the tragic news, only the patient will receive support, but as she is a child, she cannot go alone for treatment, and the companion receives a ticket only," she said. "We as a family are deep in debt because of life's circumstances, as we were not like those who "borrow" to buy a car or travel, but for what can be considered as tough circumstances."

Suppose that the mother will go with the girl - then is it in our religion for us to travel without a male guardian? How can the Cabinet take such a distant decision from humanity and shariah law? My brain stops to comprehend, as you my dear Kuwaiti woman with a broken heart lives in the country of humanity, democracy, freedom, culture and today... the Islamic capital!

— Translated by Kuwait Times

OVERSEAS TREATMENT BACK TO SQUARE ONE

KUWAIT: The treatment overseas issue could be brought back to square one after the parliament's health affairs committee recommended the cancellation of the government's decision to reduce its allowances. The panel also discussed what has been described as 'radical amendments' in the new chart. According to lawmakers who rejected the new changes, the committee's recommendations would be unanimously approved in parliament, leaving the government with only one of two options; either to accept the recommendations; which is more likely to happen, or to reject them. If the parliament goes with the second option, it could put it in a collision course with MPs who might go as far as grilling the health minister once more, or even the Prime Minister himself as threatened by MP Hamdan Al-Azmi. — Al-Jarida

TEACHERS' DEGREES EXAMINED TO AVOID FORGERY: MINISTER

KUWAIT: Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Bader Al-Essa recently set very strict preventive measures to avoid the recruitment of teachers carrying fake university degrees. Speaking recently to reporters, Essa underlined that the degrees and certificates of experience of new teachers from different nationalities who were hired locally were being 'meticulously examined' to avoid forgery. Further, Essa said that the ministry had already contacted Kuwait's cultural attaché in Cairo to enquire about the validity of certificates and degrees of around 48 Egyptian teachers who had been recently hired to work with the ministry during the school year 2016-2017. — Al-Rai

WE WILL NOT TOLERATE COMMUNAL GHETTOS: ALI

6,000 EXPATS DEPORTED SO FAR

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for General Security Affairs Maj Gen Abdul Fattah Al-Ali said security inspection campaigns over the past three months resulted in arresting over 47,000 expats in various areas around Kuwait as well as lessening the total number of crimes committed and imposing the respect of law on everybody, especially in areas that accommodate huge numbers of people belonging to a specific nationality, who thought that living in large communities of the same nationality would make them untouchable by law. "We will never tolerate the presence of any communal ghettos on Kuwaiti soil and the law will be imposed by force," he underlined.

Ali added that the inspection campaigns had been carefully planned to raid areas that harbored illegal residents and outlaws and stressed that they were successful thanks to cooperation with other official bodies and ministries. Ali emphasized that one of the most important and significant result of these campaigns was reducing crime rates by at least 24 percent as indicated by various police station records.

Moreover, Ali said that 6,000 out of the 47,000 people arrested during the campaigns had been deported, while wanted people were referred to relevant authorities. "Sixty percent of the people arrested in the campaigns were deported onsite after checking their legal statuses and IDs, 30 percent were referred to relevant authorities because



Maj Gen Abdul Fattah Al-Ali

they were found wanted and only 10 percent of them, who were mainly marginal laborers, were immediately deported," he explained.

Ali strongly denied abusive treatment of expats detained during the inspection campaigns and stressed that all arrests were videotaped and photographed to document the entire operation. He also stressed that the Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lt Gen Suleiman Al-Fahd never signs any deportation order unless the decision is backed by photos and documents. — Al-Rai

Crime

Report

Trio arrested for forging work permits

KUWAIT: Three Asians were arrested for forging work permits for KD 500 per transaction, said security sources. Case papers indicate that one of the suspects was arrested at a checkpoint in Rabiya with some fake official documents. The suspect confessed to forging work permits along with two other accomplices he led the police to.

Phone hacking

A citizen reported that a smartphone technician at a Hawally workshop hacked his mobile phone and remotely controlled it, said security sources. On summoning the technicians working in the workshop, they admitted that one of their colleagues, who had left a week earlier, used to register his own email on every device he repaired so that he could remotely control it, the sources noted. A case was filed and the suspect was listed for arrest on arrival.

Multiple charges

A citizen was arrested in Sabahiya for drug abuse, resisting arrest, ramming a police patrol car with his vehicle, driving a vehicle without a front license plate number and possessing illicit pills, said security sources.

Drug possession

A citizen was arrested in Hawally with 36 hashish joints, said security sources. Case papers indicate that on suspecting his vehicle, patrol officers stopped the man and noticed that he was acting strangely. On searching him, policemen found the joints. A case was filed.

Drunk man held

An Asian man was arrested after he got drunk and wandered fully naked around Rumaithiya streets, said security sources. He was taken to the proper authorities for further action.

Partygoer stabbed

A party in Khairan where alcoholic drinks were reportedly served to male and female attendants ended badly when two citizens fought and one of them stabbed the other in his arm and fled the scene, said security sources. They noted that the injured man had to be flown to Adan Hospital while the remaining men and women were arrested. A case was filed and a search is on for the stabber.

Thieves caught

Three Asians were arrested red-handed while trying to smash the window of a vehicle in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, and they later admitted that they planned to steal its contents, said security sources. They noted that policemen on patrol duty spotted the suspects trying to break open the vehicle and arrested them. The suspects admitted that they had started their criminal activity a week earlier and robbed several vehicles.

Reckless driving

A motorist was arrested for reckless driving, trying to escape arrest and ramming his vehicle into the Ahmadi security director's vehicle, said security sources.

Visa violators

Eighteen expats were arrested in Khaitan (near the pigeon roundabout) for violating residency visa laws, said security sources.

Citizens fight

Two citizens were arrested in Saad Al-Abdullah for fighting, after one of them made fun of the other over his baldness. — Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa

News

in brief

Investment projects at Kubbar, Um Al-Maradem

KUWAIT: The Finance Ministry requested allocating two islands to build an investment project according to the public private partnership concept. The ministry further indicated in a letter to Kuwait Municipality that it requests approval to study the best investment alternatives for the Kubbar and Um Al-Maradem islands; a job that it wants the Partnership Technical Bureau to be assigned to do while it would go ahead with the islands' allocation process. — Al-Qabas

Educators' retirement

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Education started informing employees with 34 years of service or more that they will be referred to retirement. According to sources, notices were last week distributed to different ministry departments to be handed over to a total of 435 employees, informing them that they will be considered officially retired by July 5, 2016. The notice also urges employees who wish to resign in order to benefit from certain privileges - such as the ability to apply for another public sector post - to do so before June 1, 2016. — Al-Qabas

Government cars

KUWAIT: Public sector employees who drive vehicles provided by the government were told to prepare a monthly statement that contains the meters' readings and details of the vehicle's itinerary during working hours. This step helps make sure that vehicles are being used for the purpose they were allocated for, said sources familiar with the news, adding that it comes as part of the state's spending control measures. — Al-Anbaa



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ABK PARTICIPATES IN 18TH GUST JOB FAIR

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently announced the successful conclusion of its participation in the Gulf University for Science and Technology's (GUST) 18th job fair, under the patronage of Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, which was held at the university campus on the 9th and 10th March, 2016.

The ABK Human Resources team was present at the job fair to engage with students and to share insights on how ABK could support them as they embark on this new journey.

ABK's participation reinforces its commitment to supporting Kuwait's youth, which is one of the Banks primary focuses. It provides fresh graduates with training and career opportunities in the Banking sector and works towards developing their skills and knowledge through the 'ABK Academy' in line with the nationalization policy.

For more information on Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) please visit www.eahli.com, or contact an ABK representative via 'Ahli Chat' or a customer service agent via 'Ahlan Ahli' at 1899899.

CRISIS OF REDUCING OIL SECTOR LABOR PRIVILEGES INTENSIFIES

KUWAIT: In a new development regarding the problem of reducing the privileges of oil sector employees, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's (KPC) CEO Nizar Al-Adsani is scheduled to meet tomorrow with heads of labor syndicates to discuss measures made by KPC to cut down expenses and stop the constant growth of payrolls' cost over the next five years. This comes following an agreement between KPC and oil syndicates to form a special joint committee to discuss various initiatives to cut down expenses.

Meanwhile, labor syndicates in the oil sector are set to meet today in a bid to reach an agreement on certain points of the view to be expressed by the union

representing oil and petrochemicals employees. On top of these issues is an agreement to reject giving away the privileges that oil sector employees enjoy, as well as rejecting the privatization of the oil sector.

In this regard, informed sources said that CEOs of different oil companies plan to hold several meetings with employees next week in order to brief them on the decisions to reduce privileges. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of Oil Anas Al-Saleh had denied on his Twitter account rumors that employees' rights would be negatively affected by the planned cost-cutting measures. — Al-Anbaa

ASHOUR DENIES MEETING SUBAIH

KUWAIT: MP Saleh Ashour refuted reports which suggested that he met with Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Subaih after filing a grilling motion against her last Wednesday. A local newspaper had reported recently that the two met at the National Assembly with attendance of Minister of Public Minister Dr Ali Al-Omar to discuss issues included in the

grilling. "I categorically deny the news which hinted that I have met with the social affairs minister," Ashour said in a statement. "She did not make a request or meet with me over the grilling." The lawmaker further criticized the minister for "going ahead with the cooperative societies' privatization in total disregard to MPs' opinions." — Al-Qabas



US and South Korea stage assault drill

SOUTH SUDANESE ARE DYING, AND 'NOBODY IS COUNTING'

CHAOTIC SCENES AS TRUMP CANCELS RALLY

TRUMP UNDER FIRE FROM RIVALS FOR RALLY VIOLENCE

CHICAGO: Donald Trump cancelled a rally in Chicago Friday in the face of huge protests, triggering chaotic scenes as demonstrators scuffled with supporters of the Republican White House frontrunner and police struggled to maintain order. The billionaire said he decided to call off the rally after consulting with police in Chicago, where tensions had been rising for hours in the build-up to the event at a sporting arena at the University of Illinois. "I don't want to see anybody hurt," Trump told CNN afterwards. "I think we made the right decision (to cancel)... even though our freedom of speech was violated."

Hundreds of protesters, many of them blacks and Latinos angered by Trump's incendiary anti-immigrant rhetoric, had massed outside and inside the venue itself, mingling with the candidate's supporters. CNN estimated there were between 8,500 to 10,000 people in the arena when tensions erupted into chaos. According to an AFP photographer at the scene, scuffles broke out as the decision to cancel was announced, with police struggling to separate angry supporters and protesters. News footage showed police wearing body armor escorting groups of people out of the building. Police reportedly said there were no arrests and no injuries. "We are not rapists," read one sign held by a protester inside the arena, referring to Trump's characterization last year of Mexicans rapists.

Critics have accused Trump of fuelling the toxic atmosphere. On February 1, as protesters interrupted a rally in Iowa, he encouraged supporters to "knock the crap out of them," and pledged to pay their legal fees. When a protester disrupted Trump's speech in Las Vegas, the brash billionaire said he would like to "punch him in the face." Trump dismissed the notion that he was responsible for whipping up tensions. In a statement, Trump's campaign said he had determined that "for the safety of all of the tens of thousands of people that have gathered in and



CHICAGO: Chicago police block streets outside a Trump rally at the UIC Pavilion in Chicago. —AFP

around the arena, tonight's rally will be postponed to another date." "Please go in peace," it added.

No regrets

Pundits said the chaos at the cancelled Trump rally was reminiscent of violent protests

at the 1968 Democratic national convention, also in Chicago, held when the United States was torn apart by opposing views on the Vietnam War. The ugly scenes come just days before the states of Florida, Ohio, Illinois and Missouri vote in the party primaries on March 15, with Trump looking to tighten his grip on

the Republican nomination. The sudden security concerns mark a major test for Trump as he seeks to lock up the nomination and turn his attention to doing battle against Democratic frontrunner Hillary Clinton.

After rattling the Republican establishment with his shock emergence as the man to beat,

Trump has been working in recent days hard to look presidential and shake off the brash, belligerent image that has defined his campaign so far. But Trump's rallies are known for being rambunctious affairs, and that seeped over into violence on Wednesday night in North Carolina when a 78-year-old white man in a cowboy hat punched a black protester in the face. John McGraw, who later said that next time "we might have to kill him," was charged with assault, battery and disorderly conduct for the sucker-punch.

The incident drew a sharp rebuke from Clinton and Democratic rival Bernie Sanders, but Trump blamed protesters for stirring trouble and pointed the finger at media for giving disproportionate air time to the disruption. Asked on CNN, after calm was restored in Chicago, whether he regretted his comments about protesters, or bore some responsibility for whipping up tensions, he refuted the notion. "No, I don't regret it at all," he said. "Overall I think we've been very mild with protesters." Trump, who is scheduled to hold a rally Saturday in Cleveland, Ohio, has called on Republicans to amass behind him to propel him into the White House.

On Friday he received a major boost, winning the endorsement of Ben Carson, the retired neurosurgeon who quit the presidential race last week. The real estate mogul closed a debate Thursday in Florida with rivals Ted Cruz, John Kasich and Marco Rubio by calling for the party to unite behind him to win the November general election, and doubled down on the theme on Friday. "The Republican Party should grab this, and we will have a victory like the Republican Party has never had before," he said. Many in the party see next Tuesday's votes as the last best chance to derail the insurgent candidacy of the billionaire mogul, who has so far won 15 of 24 primary races. —AFP

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ACTIVISTS WHO LIT SYRIAN REVOLT WASHED AWAY IN MIGRANT WAVE

BEIRUT: When hopeful pro-democracy activists in Syria took to the streets in 2011, they couldn't have imagined that five years later they might end up living as refugees in Europe. Using smartphones to keep up with the news from camps and relatives' homes thousands of kilometers away, they mourn a revolt that gave way to an internationalized war. "When I arrived in Germany, I felt like I was living with an open wound, like I'd lost my soul."

I felt guilty for leaving everything behind," says Jimmy Shahinian, a 28-year-old activist with sharp features and jet-black hair. "We had made a promise that we would change things," he tells AFP by phone from his new home, an apartment he shares with five other young men in Genthin, about 100 kilometers west of Berlin. Syria's conflict erupted on March 15, 2011, when protesters massed on the streets to demand that President Bashar Al-Assad step down. Activists took the lead, using Facebook and Skype to organize protests, speak with international journalists, and broadcast clever slogans calling for the regime's downfall.

Shahinian, a Christian, joined the movement, and was subsequently jailed and tortured. When the jihadist Islamic State group took over his native city Raqa in 2013, he began receiving terrifying death threats.

Smuggled into Turkey in an ambulance, Shahinian became one of nearly five million Syrians who have fled the country since the conflict began. But even in Turkey, where at least three young anti-IS activists have been assassinated in recent months, he felt unsafe.

"I had no choice but to leave," he says. Like most other new arrivals in Germany, his first port of call was an asylum-seeker camp, where he shared a room with some 10 other people. He tries to keep his cause alive by volunteering for a civil society group in Berlin named Citizens for Syria and learning German, though he admits "it is very hard to get used to the new life." "I suppose it's always this way. We sparked the revolution, and the spark is always the first to burn."

'Besieged in my head'

Some, like citizen journalist Yazan, are unable to abandon a cause that they were ready to die for. Yazan lived through a brutal, nearly two-year siege in the Old City of Homs, once known as the "capital of the revolution" but now squarely back in regime hands. He would spend his days snapping photos of children playing in rubble, rebels standing guard, wounded being rushed to dismally equipped field hospitals and cats wandering through ancient architectural gems reduced to ruins. By night, Yazan would sign into

Skype to speak to journalists covering Syria, shedding light on the destruction of Homs and on military developments on the frontlines. After surviving daily bombardment and eating little more than weeds for months, he has spent the past year in the quiet comfort of his uncle's idyllic home in Saint Etienne, central France. Although he lives in a different world, Yazan says the conflict, and its root cause, remain with him. He spends his nights poring over activists' Facebook pages, following minute-by-minute developments on the ground. "In Syria my body was besieged. Here, I am besieged in my head," says the 30-year-old. He admits he can't move on while his father and brother remain among the estimated 200,000 people held in the regime's hellish jails. "Here I can eat, I can sleep in safety. But however hard I try, I can't imagine the future," Yazan says. "My whole life is on hold until the regime falls."

Major powers 'playing field'

Ahmad Al-Rifai, a 24-year-old who spent months taking photos in opposition strongholds across northern Syria, is also in Germany—where more than one million asylum requests were registered last year. He blames the Syrian government but also the international community for the transformation of the revolt into a war that has killed



PIRAEUS: Syrian student Mohammed Sawadi (center) looks across at other migrants at the port of Piraeus, near Athens. — AP

270,000 people. "In the good old days, the people would decide when and where to protest, or when to go on strike," Rifai says.

"Now, the Syrian people have no decision-making power at all. Syria has become a playing field for major powers like Russia, the United States and Iran." Despite the pain of watching his ravaged country from afar, Rifai

tries to stay hopeful. He has learned to speak German since arriving in Aachen city in 2014, and he serves as a translator between newly arrived refugees and Red Cross volunteers. In April, he will start an internship with a digital media company. He hopes one day to return to Syria, to help rebuild. "Once an activist, always an activist," he says. — AFP



BOR: Photo shows sheets covering the bodies of 16 people, allegedly civilians killed when they took cover near Leudit church in Bor town, according to the South Sudanese military. The number of deaths in South Sudan's two-year civil war has gone largely unrecorded. — AFP

SOUTH SUDANESE ARE DYING, AND - 'NOBODY IS COUNTING'

BODIES BULLDOZED INTO MASS GRAVES; EATEN IN RITUAL CANNIBALISM

NAIROBI: The many ways people have died during South Sudan's two-year civil war are well-documented, but the number killed is unknown. Men, women and children have been shot, speared, burned, castrated, hung, drowned, run over, suffocated, starved and blown up, their corpses abandoned where they fell, bulldozed into mass graves or, in at least one case, eaten in ritual cannibalism. But the UN has stuck to a guesstimate of 10,000 dead since the early months of the war, even as the killing escalated and spread across the country.

A year into the war, in November 2014, the International Crisis Group (ICG) which has closely tracked the fighting said at least 50,000 had died. This month, the UN finally caught up, quoting the same figure but over a two-year span. Sudan expert Eric Reeves, a professor at Smith College in the US, said failure to count the dead was a failure of morality. "If we give up on establishing mortality estimates we are, in one way or another, saying that the lives don't really count," he said. Aid workers and officials who did not want to speak on the record said the true figure might be as high as 300,000 - a figure comparable to the number killed in Syria during five years of fighting.

Relatives killed

"The level and intensity of violence has been above and beyond what we have seen almost

anywhere else," said one worker for an international aid agency which operates in multiple conflict zones, and who asked not to be named. Over 30 aid workers have been killed since war broke out in December 2013. The minimum figure of 50,000 is of those killed in direct conflict, but if those killed as a consequence of war are included the numbers skyrocket.

That would include starvation from aid blockades, such as the 40,000 people the UN warned last month were in "catastrophic" conditions—potentially famine, if the areas were not too dangerous to gather the data needed to declare it—as well as documented atrocities such as civilians suffocated in shipping containers. It would also include those who died due to lack of healthcare following the targeted destruction of hospitals. Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has warned of "far-reaching consequences for hundreds of thousands of people" with six of its clinics and hospitals attacked, looted or torched—sometimes repeatedly.

In terms of health, easily preventable and treatable malaria has become the biggest killer, according to World Health Organization (WHO) morbidity statistics. The UN says recent malaria levels are "unprecedented" with numbers doubling, even quadrupling in some areas, from previous years. Multiple armed forces have carried out ethnic massacres, and these are no low-level bush war skirmishes.

Battles have been fought with modern weaponry, including helicopter gunships, rocket launchers, heavy artillery and amphibious tanks able to hunt down rebels into once isolated swamps. State capitals have been razed. Some figures are clearly documented: 2.3 million people forced from their homes, 6.1 million in need of emergency food aid, 15,000 child soldiers recruited, 200,000 civilians sheltering inside UN "Protection of Civilians" camps, or the \$1.21 billion the UN needs in funding.

'Post-genocide Rwanda'

But deaths go largely unrecorded. "We've lost count," UN peacekeeping chief Herve Ladsous said this month although no one—including the 14,000-strong UN peacekeeping force—ever kept a tally. Counting the dead in war zones is tricky but not impossible, and the handful of reports that have been done indicate staggering levels of killing. A UN Development Program (UNDP) survey—based on over 1,500 interviews across the country—reported 63 percent had a close family member killed.

Other indicators showed 18 percent had a child abducted, 14 percent were tortured, 33 percent had a relative "disappear", 55 percent had their home destroyed, and 48 percent had been sick without medicine. In the worst battle zones, the figures are even higher. Questionnaires conducted by the South Sudan

Law Society (SSLS) in the UN peacekeeping base in the north-eastern town of Malakal—home to 47,000 people fleeing conflict—found the number with a relative killed was 77 percent. The UN survey also found 41 percent showed signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). "These rates are comparable to those found in post-genocide Rwanda, post-genocide Cambodia," the report read.

Evidence rotting away

Another UN study in the northern Unity region, described its findings as "shocking": almost three-quarters of deaths recorded were from violence. Of the 10,553 deaths examined, 7,165 of those were from violence, plus a further 829 people who drowned in swamplands, where many hide from fighting. "Documenting the impact of war is also important for recovery processes, including accountability, reconciliation and healing," the January report read. Analysts say the failure to clarify a clear toll dishonors victims, contributes to South Sudan's suffering staying off the international radar and enables impunity for the killers. As war drags on, despite an August peace deal, the evidence of those killed is rotting away. Human Rights Watch, which documented mass graves in the eastern town of Bor in January 2014, warned that, "evidence is literally disappearing into unmarked graves." — AFP

News

in brief

Riot breaks out at prison in Alabama

ALABAMA: A riot broke out at a prison in southern Alabama, authorities said yesterday, and a local news website said inmates had set fires and overturned beds. An unidentified dispatcher with the Escambia County Sheriff's Office confirmed the disturbance at the Holman Correctional Facility in Atmore, about 50 miles north of Mobile, but declined to give details about the situation. It was unclear what caused the riot and whether there were any casualties. "We are not taking any calls," said a woman who answered the phone at the prison. She then hung up. News website Al.com posted photos and a video it said showed prisoners setting fires and roaming freely in the facility. Several inmates covered their faces with white towels in the video, which appeared to have been shot by an inmate.

Four shot at Muslim cemetery in Canada

COCHRANE: The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said four men were shot at a Muslim cemetery just outside of Calgary on Friday afternoon. Sgt Jack Poitras said the shooting happened near Cochrane and the injured people were being treated at Calgary hospitals. A police spokeswoman at the scene said all suffered non-life-threatening injuries. Police said there was a funeral at the cemetery and a group of people remained at the site following the service. Poitras said it appears the shooting involved people who were in the group. Zouheir Osman, who is in charge of the cemetery, said a service for a 21-year-old man was taking place before the shooting. He said he left shortly before the shots were fired. Osman said he didn't believe the shooting had anything to do with the man being remembered at the funeral.

Canadian man charged with trying to join terror group

MONTREAL: Canadian authorities have charged a Quebec man for attempting to leave the country to take part in a terrorist group, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police said Friday. Ismail Habib, 28, was also charged with making a false statement to obtain a passport, the RCMP added. He faces 10 years in prison. "This case clearly demonstrates that the RCMP and its partners are committed to investigating and prosecuting those who threaten Canada's national security," police Assistant Commissioner James Malizia said. Habib, who has an Afghan father and a Canadian mother, was trying to reach Syria, where his wife and 5-year-old daughter have been living for a year, local media reported. The authorities had revoked his passport in 2012 after he was detained in Turkey and deported to Canada.

PLAYERS IN SYRIA'S MULTI-FRONT WAR

BEIRUT: Syria's war has in five years spiraled into a complex, multi-front conflict, with regime forces, rebels, Kurds and jihadists carving out zones of control as world powers conduct air campaigns. Here are the main players:

Regime and allies

The Syrian army's 300,000-strong pre-war force has been halved by deaths, defections and draft-dodging. It now controls about a third of Syrian territory, where roughly 60 percent of the population lives. Around 150,000 to 200,000 men serve in pro-regime militias, primarily the 90,000-strong National Defense Forces. Militias from Lebanon, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan have also bolstered the regime forces. Experts say Lebanon's Shiite Hezbollah has deployed between 5,000 and 8,000 fighters in Syria. Key regime backer Russia launched air strikes in Syria on September 30, allowing the government to regain territory lost more than three years ago. Iran has remained a staunch ally of President Bashar Al-Assad, sending military advisers and financial aid.

Rebels

The Free Syrian Army coalition has slowly been replaced by a myriad of

mainly Islamist factions. The rebels remain in several areas across Syria, mainly around Damascus, in the country's south, in parts of Aleppo province and in the east of Aleppo city. Ahrar al-Sham is among the most powerful Islamist rebel groups in Syria. Founded in 2011 and financed by Turkey and Gulf states, according to experts, it is present mostly in the northern Idlib and Aleppo provinces. Jaish al-Islam (the Army of Islam) is the most important rebel group in Damascus province. Its stronghold is in the Eastern Ghouta region, east of the capital. The Southern Front is a coalition of rebel groups that hold swathes of territory in Daraa province.

Al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda-affiliated Al-Nusra Front is the most important jihadist group in the country after its rival, IS. It is essentially made up of Syrian jihadists and aspires to create an Islamic emirate. Led by Abu Mohammad al-Jolani, it has forged alliances with other rebel groups in Idlib and Aleppo. It is also present in Damascus province's Eastern Ghouta, as well as in Daraa, Homs and Hama provinces, where it is outnumbered by other rebel forces. Al-Nusra is listed by Washington as a terrorist group.

Together, Al-Nusra and Ahrar Al-Sham lead a key rebel alliance called the Army of Conquest which has driven the regime out of Idlib province.

Islamic State group

IS is the most well-organized, resource-rich and brutal anti-regime force in Syria. Since 2013, it has seized large parts of Syria's territory, and it announced a "caliphate" across Syria and Iraq in 2014. Tens of thousands of



HOMS: A man rides a bicycle through a devastated part of Homs, Syria. — AP

foreign fighters have joined its ranks. Headed by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, IS militants are fighting on several fronts: against the regime, Al-Nusra, rebels and Kurdish groups. It has suffered a series of setbacks in Syria since 2015, losing Kobane and Tal Abyad on the Turkish border. It now controls less than 40 percent of Syria, including Deir Ezzor and most of the border with Iraq in the east, Raqa and part of Aleppo province in the north and Palmyra in the centre. — AFP

OPPOSITION TO ATTEND SYRIA PEACE TALKS AS TRUCE HOLDS

BEIRUT: Syria's opposition said it will attend fresh peace talks next week, stoking hopes the war-ravaged country may be able to end five years of civil war and move toward elections in 18 months. A nearly two-week truce has created a lull in fighting between the Russian-backed regime and non-jihadist rebels ahead of a new round of indirect negotiations due to start on Monday in Geneva. The UN's envoy for Syria called Friday for elections in the war-ravaged country to be held by the middle of 2017. But in a worrying development ahead of the negotiations, government raids reportedly killed seven civilians in Syria's second city, Aleppo. The US State Department said Friday the truce "has produced a dramatic reduction in violence" but warned the regime was still carrying out attacks. "Despite the reduction in violence nationwide, we remain deeply concerned by continued specific violations to the cessation of hostilities, including attacks on civilians and opposition forces by the regime and its supporters," spokesman John Kirby said.

The Riyadh-based High Negotiations Committee, the main Syrian opposition grouping, agreed on Friday to attend the UN-backed talks. The HNC said it would focus on creating a "transitional governance body with full executive powers", but insisted Syrian

President Bashar al-Assad "will have no place" in a future government. A plan agreed by world powers last year called for six months of negotiations followed by a transitional government, a new constitution and elections within 18 months. Last month Assad's regime announced it would hold parliamentary elections on April 13 instead, drawing criticism.

'Need to talk about Syria'

UN envoy Staffan de Mistura has said "substantive" talks will begin Monday in Geneva and last no longer than 10 days. "New elections... should be held 18 months from the start of talks, that is from March 14," de Mistura told Russia's RIA Novosti state news agency, in comments translated into Russian. In addition to planning the polls, the focus in Geneva will be on the formation of "an inclusive new government" and a new constitution, said the envoy. A source close to Syria's government told AFP this week its delegation would be attending the talks. The complex war, which is to enter its sixth year next week, has killed more than 270,000 people and displaced half the population. Russia on Friday urged the UN to include Kurds, which have been a major force fighting jihadist groups such as Islamic State and control about a tenth of Syrian territory. — AFP

BLIZZARD HITS CALIF

SAN FRANCISCO: A storm front that closed schools and snarled Northern California traffic moved south Friday, drenching the Los Angeles area with brief but fierce downpours that snapped power lines, sent hikers up a tree and prompted a spate of flood advisories. The afternoon rain fell in torrents in foothill areas, dumping nearly a quarter-inch in five minutes in the northeastern suburb of La Canada Flintridge, the National Weather Service reported.

In Riverside, east of Los Angeles, the storm snapped a dozen power poles, littering roads with electrical lines, closing streets and leaving about 3,000 customers without electricity, city and fire officials said. In Los Angeles, a power line fell on a car in the San Fernando Valley, trapping the driver until the line could be de-energized so firefighters could move in for a rescue, fire department spokeswoman Margaret Stewart said. In the Hollywood Hills, firefighters rescued two hikers who climbed a tree and were afraid to risk a rain-soaked trail on Mulholland Drive, Stewart said.

However, no major flooding was reported, she said. Locals suffering through years of drought and a dry winter were happy to see the wet weather. "I love the smell, the fresh clean air because it takes the dirt out of the air. I like seeing it. It's been awhile," Peer Swan, a board member of the Irvine Ranch Water District, told KABC-TV. "I'm afraid that when I have to walk up to my car without an umbrella I'm going to get drenched, but I don't mind." Skies began to ease after a few hours, but forecasters also warned of gusty winds - potentially reaching 60 to 75 mph - in some mountains and deserts with some snow in the mountains. The storm was expected to move south and east before leaving the state today. Northern California was hard hit earlier. Schools were shuttered, and residents

snapped up sandbags. Nearly 400 flights were delayed because of weather at San Francisco International Airport and about 75 were canceled, most of them smaller planes, officials said. Roads were closed because of floods and mudslides. The closures included a portion of California Highway 1 in Mendocino County where overnight slides nearly toppled a California Department of Transportation dump truck with an employee inside. The truck hit a guardrail - stopping its fall - and landed at a 45-degree angle. The employee was uninjured. Scattered power outages affected several thousand people.

The latest in a series of storms moved in Thursday night, adding more moisture to an already wet March that has resulted in mudslides and swollen creeks. A mudslide was likely to blame for a commuter train that derailed east of San Francisco on Monday, injuring nine. Bobby Rehfeldt of Goodman Building Supply off US 101 in Mill Valley, said Friday that most of the customers in the busy store were thrilled with the rain, although some are understandably unhappy about leaks. "Lots of people are buying tarps and roof patch and heat guns to dry stuff up, anything for getting water off the ground, and sandbags are flying out of here," he said. "It's just rain, and we need it." California is entering its fifth year of drought, and water watchers say anything helps, although it will take years of normal or above-normal rainfall to right the deficit. Rain moved down the Central Coast and into Southern California during the morning, but only a few sprinkles fell during the funeral for former first lady Nancy Reagan at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, northwest of Los Angeles. A waterproof tent behind the library shielded those attending the service. — AP

LOUISIANA REELING FROM DAYS OF POUNDING RAIN

COVINGTON: Roads were submerged, bridges washed out, and cars abandoned in rivers and streams as Louisiana struggled Friday from days of severe weather that forced residents across the state to flee their homes. The rain and flooding is part of a weather system that has affected Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee and Alabama. At least three people have died in Louisiana alone. The system that dumped as much as 20 inches of rain in some areas was slowly moving out of the region, but the effects could still be felt as rivers in some areas were waiting to crest, more rain was expected Saturday and water in other areas was still draining.

In neighboring Mississippi, the worst appeared yet to come as officials said as many as 1,000 residents could see their homes flooded by the rapidly rising Leaf River in Hattiesburg, Petal and surrounding areas. In southwest Louisiana, a band of rain dumped 10 to 15 inches of rain across some areas late Thursday and into Friday, sparking vicious flash flooding. Allen DeWeese was living in the Land-o-Pines campground in Covington with his 10-year-old son when the rushing waters of the Tchoufoune River destroyed his trailer. "They're calling it Land-o-Lakes right at the moment," he joked, while smoking a cigarette at a shelter set up in Covington. His trailer? "It's destroyed. It's underwater."

He planned to spend the night at the shelter. After that, he wasn't sure. "I'll take it day-to-day," he said. Parish officials there said three local rivers were reaching historic levels and would continue to rise. In nearby Tangipahoa Parish, Sheriff Daniel Edwards said close to 50 roads were closed because of high water and an estimated 300 to 400 people had to evacuate. Further to the east in Washington Parish, swollen rivers and creeks led to widespread flooding, prompting rescues from scores of homes. The Coast Guard even had use a helicopter to pluck someone trapped on a roof.



LOUISIANA: A car sits in flooded water at Nash's Express convenience store in Hammond, La. — AP

15-20 inches

In northern Louisiana, the deluge has dumped 15-20 inches this week. In Ouachita Parish, well over 1,000 people have been evacuated, said Glenn Springfield, a spokesman for the sheriff's office. He said they started doing water rescues early Wednesday morning and have been "doing those pretty much around the clock nonstop since then." People were sandbagging their homes and water had washed out roads and bridges, he said. In Bossier Parish, another area in northwest Louisiana clobbered by the rain, at least 1,000 people were evacuated by first responders, said Bill Davis, a spokesman for the sheriff's department.

He said officials expect waters to overtop the Red Chute Levee but it's too soon to say by how much or what damage it could cause. Brenda Maddox was forced to flee her home of 26 years. The couple left Thursday with four days of clothes packed. On Friday they came back to retrieve their car from the flooded

streets and were going to an RV park to wait out the rain. "We'd heard we'd get a lot of rain, but it all came so sudden," she said. "We hate to leave, but we thought we'd get out while we can." At the Pecan Valley Estates mobile home park, Sam Cassidy and his wife were the last holdouts Friday - worried looters might come if they left.

Thursday morning, with waters creeping up his front steps, he stood in waist-deep water watching his neighbors evacuate. An alligator swam by. By night it looked like a "horror movie." "It was pitch black, the houses were empty. It's been an adventure," he said. The severe weather system that has dumped rain across the state has been feeding off of moisture from the Gulf of Mexico, said Frank Revitte, from the National Weather Service in Slidell. It was starting to move slowly to the northeast, he said, giving the state a chance to dry out, but additional showers are expected today. — AP

NANCY REAGAN MARRIAGE, ERA REMEMBERED

SIMI VALLEY: Nancy Reagan is once again with her beloved Ronnie. The former first lady's life was celebrated Friday by 1,000 invited guests who gathered at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library to pay final tribute to her and to the enduring love she and her husband shared during a storied 52-year marriage. The funeral also marked one of the last chapters of a fading political era that stirs nostalgia among American conservatives. Without Mrs. Reagan, her son said, the Republican renaissance of the 1980s might not have happened.

"There would be no Ronald Reagan Presidential Library without a President Ronald Reagan, and there likely wouldn't have been a President Ronald Reagan without a Nancy Reagan," said Ron Reagan, delivering the last of several eulogies during the 90-minute service. Mourners from the top ranks of Washington and Hollywood heard how President Reagan was generally affable and trusting, but Mrs. Reagan was made of different cloth.

Fiercely protective

She could be gracious and quick with a laugh, but also fiercely protective of her husband and sometimes quick to anger at any perceived slight directed at him. "I think we can admit that she was not always the easiest person to deal with," her son said, drawing laughter from an audience filled with politicians, heads of state, actors, musicians, a former president and several first ladies. "She could be difficult. She could be demanding. She could be a bit excessive. Truly, she could be a royal pain in the ass when she wanted to be," he continued. "But usually only so my father didn't have to be."

"If you happen to run into the ghost of Don Regan sometime, you can just ask him," he added, referring to the former White House chief of staff Mrs Reagan pushed her husband to fire after the two feuded over policy issues. "Occasionally I've thought that even God might not have the guts to argue with Nancy Reagan," quipped the couple's daughter, Patti Davis. Each speaker also noted the couple's enduring love. "When they were together, he hid love notes around the house for her to find," said another Reagan former chief of staff, James Baker. "She reciprocated by secreting little notes in jellybeans in his suitcase."

Defined by their love

"Ronald and Nancy Reagan were defined by their love for each other," Baker continued. "They were as close to being one person as it is possible for any two people to be." President Reagan spoke in public so warmly, and so often, about his wife, former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney recalled, that he once told Reagan he was making every other world leader look bad in front of their wives. "Well, Brian," he said the president told him with a smile, "That's your problem." The guest list for the funeral told the story of the couple's life together, which stretched from Hollywood's Golden Age to the California statehouse during Reagan's time as governor to the White House.

The gathering also brought together Democrat and Republican, an unusual tableau at a time of deep division in Washington and on the 2016 campaign trail. Mourners included former Reagan administration official Ed Meese, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich (Republican) and Nancy Pelosi (Democrat), Mike Love of the Beach Boys and singer Johnny Mathis. Among those in the front row were first lady Michelle Obama, who was seated next to former President George W Bush. Former first lady and current presidential candidate Hillary Clinton sat between Bush's wife, Laura, and former first lady Rosalynn Carter.

'Just Say No'

Gov Jerry Brown escorted Mrs Obama to the funeral, while former Gov Arnold Schwarzenegger arrived with his ex-wife, Maria Shriver. The actor Mr T, who became friendly with Mrs Reagan during her "Just Say No" to drugs campaign, arrived wearing an American flag bandanna. Heavy rain had been forecast for the ceremony, and guests were ushered into a cavernous waterproof tent behind the library. But a drenching downpour held off until the event concluded. Mrs. Reagan, who died Sunday at 94, was buried next to her husband on the library grounds.

The sprawling, Spanish mission-style library is located between the Reagans' post-White House home in the upscale Bel Air section of Los Angeles and Rancho del Cielo, the "ranch in the sky" where the Reagans spent their leisure time, sometimes on horseback, in the rugged mountains near Santa Barbara. On Wednesday and Thursday at the library, more than 5,500 mourners filed slowly past the former first lady's closed casket, blanketed with white roses and peonies, Mrs Reagan's favorite flower. Tears often fell. The crowd, many in graying years, spoke to a time when it was "morning again in America" and the nation followed the Reagan doctrine to weaken Soviet influence during the Cold War. — AP

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CUBAN EXODUS LEAVES ELDERLY BEHIND

HAVANA: They have lived through dictatorship, the Cuban Revolution, the Missile Crisis, the Cold War, the near-starvation of the "special period" and rapprochement with the United States. Now, many of Cuba's senior citizens are alone, left behind by an exodus of younger generations that has given the country a rapidly aging population. "I'm 88 years old. My son doesn't send me anything. At first he sent a little money, but I don't even hear from him now," said Leocadia Aguilera, whose son Valentin, a martial arts expert, left two years ago for the United States.

Leaning on her cane, the brown-skinned, white-haired former hospital janitor said she was scraping by with the help of the Catholic Church, which supplements her tiny pension from the state. The average retiree in Cuba gets a pension of \$10 a month. To help impoverished seniors, the Church runs a charity called the "Grandparents' House" in Havana, where aging Cubans gather to talk, share their hardships, watch TV and play dominoes. "My 'brothers' here are the only family I have," said 93-year-old Raimundo Aleman, who arrives at the center every morning at dawn

to help out in the kitchen.

The retired delivery-truck driver's only close relatives are his three children in the US. Politics drove the first major wave of Cuban migrants to the United States, after Fidel Castro's band of rebels overthrew dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1959. More recently, it is the communist island's economic woes that have sent younger Cubans abroad. Cuba is doing better than during the economic crisis in the 1990s provoked by the collapse of the Soviet Union, its main benefactor—the so-called "special period."

The economy grew a respectable four percent last year. But tentative economic reforms by Castro's successor, his 84-year-old younger brother Raul, have so far failed to deliver the hoped-for results. This year, the government is forecasting just two-percent growth. And the thaw with long-time enemy the United States has only accelerated the Cuban exodus. Last year, 43,000 Cubans entered the US, a new record. The restoration of US-Cuban ties after more than half a century of enmity has raised fears on the island that Washington will soon change its preferential policies on Cuban immigrants, which

fast-track them for permanent residency.

Loneliness and poverty

"Today, emigration mainly involves the relatively young, from 20 to 45 years old," said demographer Alina Alonso. Often, those who reach the US then bring over family members, but senior citizens are frequently left behind. Today, 12.6 percent of Cuban households consist of just one person, a retiree. The government runs some 150 retirement homes, but they tend to be overcrowded and poorly maintained.

Many would rather scrape by on their meager pensions and the money they get from the Church, which receives state funding and foreign donations to assist the elderly. "They take good care of me here," said Maria Angelica Vidal, a 72-year-old former English teacher with a son in Haiti and grandson in the US. At the Grandparents' House, she gets food, clothing, medical care and most importantly, affection. Cuba, where nearly 20 percent of the populace is over 60, is on track to have the oldest population in Latin America by 2030. It is currently second only to Uruguay. — AFP



HAVANA: Cuban Maria Angelica Vidal shows pictures of her son at her house in Havana. Abandoned elderly people, have become a secondary effect of the unstoppable Cuban emigration, the second country with most aged population in Latin America, after Uruguay. — AFP



HAVANA: High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission in the Juncker Commission, Federica Mogherini (left) and Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodriguez attend a press conference in Havana on March 11, 2016. — AFP

EU, CUBA NORMALIZE TIES IN 'HISTORIC STEP'

A STEP TOWARD ENDING CUBA'S STATUS AS A PARIAH

HAVANA: The European Union and Cuba signed a deal Friday to normalize relations, including an agreement on the delicate issue of human rights—a breakthrough just ahead of US President Barack Obama's historic visit to the island. The agreement, the culmination of nearly two years of negotiations, is a further step toward ending the communist country's status as a pariah in the West. It comes just as Obama prepares to put a capstone on the rapprochement he and Cuban President Raul Castro announced in December 2014, settling aside more than half a century of animosity rooted in the Cold War.

"This is a historic step in our relationship," said EU Foreign Policy Chief Federica Mogherini at a signing ceremony in Havana. "The agreement marks the beginning of a new era in our bilateral relations," she added, before heading to a meeting with Castro. Cuba was previously the only country in Latin America without an international cooperation deal with the 28-member bloc. The EU slapped sanctions on Cuba and suspended cooperation in 2003 over a crackdown on journalists and activists, and had since 1996 officially used its foreign policy to encourage human rights advances in the country. That so-called "common position" was vehemently rejected by Cuba as interference

in its domestic affairs. "This accord marks the end of the common position," Mogherini said. The European Parliament must still ratify the deal for it to take effect. The text of the so-called "political dialogue" agreement has not been published. The two sides said in a statement that it set the stage for relations based on "respect, reciprocity and shared interests." The EU had said it was seeking a more constructive approach to engage Havana and persuade Castro's government to sign a series of international human rights treaties. Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez said the deal was the result of "a dynamic process that was not without complexity."

'Credibility' for Cuba

The agreement is a win-win deal, according to political analyst Joaquin Roy of the University of Miami. "Cuba gains in credibility and the EU casts off a weight because it never really gained anything with the 'common position,'" he said. The EU and Cuba began talks on restoring ties in April 2014, and had already reached a deal on trade. They moved to accelerate the process after Cuba and the United States announced their historic rapprochement and then renewed diplomatic relations in July. Some EU coun-

tries had warned against losing out to the United States.

Spain, which counts Cuba as a key trade partner, urged fellow members to "give EU businesses the chance to compete with American companies" on the island. Many EU members continued to maintain bilateral relations with Havana despite the rupture in ties with the bloc. Their trade with Cuba has made the EU the island's second-largest trade partner after Venezuela, with 2.6 billion euros in trade in 2013. The United States, despite reopening its embassy in Havana, has yet to lift its trade and financial embargo on Cuba.

Obama has repeatedly urged Congress to end the more than 50-year-old policy, but his Republican opponents, who control both chambers of Congress, accuse him of betraying the cause of human rights in Cuba by engaging with the Castro regime. Obama will visit Cuba from March 20 to 22 — the first visit by a US president since 1928, and a symbolically charged coda on his decision to restore ties. EU negotiator Christian Leffler said the bloc had not rushed to finish the deal before Obama's trip. "We're very happy we could do it now," he said, saying the fact the deal came just before Obama's visit was a "coincidence." — AFP

AS NORWEGIAN KILLER SUES FOR RIGHTS, SURVIVORS STAY AWAY

STOCKHOLM: It's a tough pill to swallow for many survivors and families of victims that Anders Behring Breivik, who killed 77 people in gun and bomb attacks in 2011, gets another day in court, this time claiming to be a victim of human rights abuses. Gone from the public eye for four years, Norway's worst mass killer is suing the government over his solitary confinement, which he says is inhumane.

Some survivors will try to ignore the four-day trial starting Tuesday in a gym-turned-courtroom inside Skien prison, where Breivik is serving a 21-year sentence for terrorism and mass murder. "I won't read newspapers that week," said Dag Andre Anderssen, who survived Breivik's shooting massacre on Utøya island and is the deputy leader of a support group for survivors and the bereaved. "Most people will just try to get on with their lives and not be affected. But for some maybe traumas will come back."

In violence that had seemed unfathomable in peaceful Norway, Breivik detonated a car bomb in Oslo's government district before opening fire on a left-wing youth camp on Utøya on July 22, 2011.

Eight people were killed in the bombing and 69, mostly teenagers, died in the shooting massacre. Some were shot at point blank as they pleaded for mercy; others drowned in a chilly lake as they fled the island in panic.

Describing himself as a patriot and militant nationalist, Breivik showed no remorse in his 2012 trial, where he dismissed the victims as traitors for supporting immigration. He didn't appeal his sentence, which can be extended for as long as he's considered a danger to society. But he soon started complaining about the restrictions he was facing in prison as the sole inmate of a high-security unit, where he has three cells at his dis-

posal. In letters to media, including The Associated Press, Breivik accused prison officials of "low-intensity torture" for frequent strip searches and for keeping him in isolation and preventing him from establishing contacts with other right-wing extremists.

Hunger strike

In 2013, he threatened to go on a hunger strike unless he got better video games, a sofa and a larger gym. The lawsuit alleges that his prison conditions breach the European Convention on Human Rights. The government has rejected that claim, noting that Breivik moves freely among his three cells and has daily access to an exercise yard as well as a TV and a video game console. "There is no evidence that the plaintiff has any physical or mental problems as a result of the prison conditions," the government's attorney, Marius Emberland, said in a pre-trial submission to the court.

Emberland said Breivik's isolation and other restrictions are justified given his stated intention to use his prison time to build extremist networks. In an online manifesto posted before the attacks, Breivik wrote that "patriotic resistance fighters" should consider prisons as "training barracks" from where we draw many of our forces."

Many foreign observers were stunned at how respectfully Norwegian authorities treated Breivik during the criminal trial, allowing him to read political statements and enter the courtroom with defiant clenched-fist salutes. Norwegian officials said it was important to give him the same rights as any other defendant, and even the survivors of his attacks largely agreed. Anderssen, the Utøya survivor, called Breivik a "unique" inmate in Norway's prison system, which is focused on rehabilitating rather than punishing criminals. — AP



Self-confessed mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik

SPY AGENCIES TO CELEBRATE LGBT STAFF, ENCOURAGE NEW RECRUITS

WASHINGTON: US spy agencies will publicly celebrate their lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees and encourage new LGBT recruits at the South by Southwest festival in Austin, Texas next week, the office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) said on Friday. In a presentation titled "America's LGBT Spies: Secret Agents of Change," three serving intelligence officers will describe their own experiences as publicly gay individuals working for agencies once known for clannishness, paranoia and bigotry. While individual spy agencies have sometimes made presentations or statements publicly welcoming gay employees, next week's presentation will be the first time the US intelligence community as a whole will do so.

In a circular promoting next week's event, ODNI said that in years past spies were "forced to stay closeted to keep their jobs," but over the years employees' "personal struggles and pioneering efforts ... have paved the way for a culture of inclusion." The circular says the current director of national intelligence, retired General James Clapper, is "a self-declared LGBT ally." While Clapper himself will not attend the Austin event, it will be introduced by Stephanie O'Sullivan, Clapper's principal deputy.

In her opening remarks, O'Sullivan is

planning to note that the public embrace of LGBT rights and employees by US spy agencies follows a declaration by Stonewall, a leading British gay rights group, that rated MIS, Britain's ultra-secretive domestic intelligence service as the UK's most gay-friendly employer. In a telephone interview with Reuters on Friday, Katrina Gossman, a senior FBI special agent in the science and technology branch of ODNI, said that in 2004 she became the first FBI employee to marry her partner under Massachusetts' gay marriage law. She said the FBI initially extended her and her partner full marriage benefits, only to rescind them because of a bill passed by Congress.

But Gossman, who led FBI efforts to handle and analyze key video evidence collected at the scene of the Boston Marathon bombing, said she helped to change the FBI's internal policies and eventually the law that interfered with her and her partners' benefits was rescinded. Other speakers at the Austin conference will be Kris Gill, an official of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), and Tracey Ballard, a 30-year Central Intelligence Agency veteran. Ballard, who said little about her work, said she had come out and been accepted at the CIA as long ago as 1988. — Reuters

VENEZUELAN PROTESTERS SEEK MADURO'S OUSTER

CARACAS: Venezuela's opposition called a national day of protest yesterday, the opening salvo in its new strategy to oust President Nicolas Maduro. After winning by a landslide in legislative elections only to see its authority hamstrung by the courts, the opposition is counting on the power of the street to force the deeply unpopular Maduro to list-

ten to calls for change.

Seventeen years into the socialist "revolution" launched by the president's late mentor Hugo Chavez, a punishing economic crisis has stoked outrage in the on-booming oil giant, where chronic shortages of basic goods, long lines and soaring prices have become the norm. After weeks debating its plan

of attack, the fractious opposition coalition, the Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD), announced it would use not one but all options available to oust Maduro, including a recall referendum and a constitutional amendment reducing the presidential term.

But with an unfriendly Supreme Court likely to stand in its way, it is placing special emphasis on its call for protests—a potentially explosive path amid the tensions tearing at Venezuela, after anti-government demonstrations in 2014 left 43 people dead. Maduro led a rally of his own yesterday morning in Caracas, at the same time as the opposition demos. Officially, his is a protest against the United States' decision to renew sanctions on several top Venezuelan officials, first imposed a year ago over a government crackdown on opposition leaders.

But beneath the anti-American rhetoric he and Chavez have long relied upon to whip up their leftist supporters, the rally is a clear attempt to counter the opposition's protests. The two demonstrations

will be held in different parts of the capital, but the security situation is nevertheless tense given the violence of 2014. "We're not afraid of the game. It's clear that it's the people who decide," said opposition lawmaker Freddy Guevara, calling to oust Maduro by year's end. "The best exit (from the crisis) would be for him to allow a political solution, and the fastest way would be for him to agree to resign," he said.

Maduro, however, shows no willingness to quit without a fight. The protests come against the backdrop of a deep economic morass exacerbated by the crash in the price of oil, which long funded Chavez and Maduro's lavish social spending. Despite holding the world's largest crude reserves, Venezuela's economy contracted 5.7 percent last year, its second year of recession. Political analysts meanwhile say all the constitutional options to force Maduro from power face likely rejection by the Supreme Court or the National Electoral Council—both of which the opposition accuses the president of packing with allies.—AFP



BOLIVAR: Military police officers patrol the streets of Tumeremo, Bolivar state, Venezuela on March 11, 2016. — AFP



KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN STUDENTS ART COMPETITION

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- 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.
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HONDURAS UNLEASHES 'AVALANCHE' OPERATION ON GANGS

TEGUCIGALPA: Honduran authorities looking for new ways to combat gangs terrorizing the country are waging an operation called "Avalanche" to seize bank accounts, properties and even a small hospital from wealthy crime bosses. Already 137 accounts, a dozen houses, 188 vehicles and the hospital in the northern city of San Pedro Sula have been confiscated from suspected chiefs of the feared Mara Salvatrucha gang, also known as MS-13, according to the head of the police investigation division, Ricardo Castro.

The total value of the assets seized so far is \$9 million, with most or all of it believed to have come from the extortion of owners of shops and public transport companies, he said. The police operation, which began February 23, is continuing with no defined end date. Twelve gang leaders and associates

have been arrested to date in the swoops, including the mayor of the town of Talanga, east of the capital Tegucigalpa, and a former police officer. The effort to scoop up the ill-gotten gains runs in parallel with an armed crackdown by police and soldiers to curb gang activities.

Those confrontations have netted more young members from the rival 18 gang than ones from MS-13. "We felt that MS-13 was not being adequately addressed and so we adopted a different strategy, attacking its economic resources," a prosecutor, Oscar Chinchilla, explained. A criminologist, Arabeska Sanchez said that "the government has finally found a formula to control crime and dismantle the gangs' structures." He added: "For the first time, we know where the money from the extortions has gone, and this looks like

a successful operation."

The manager of a transport company, Jorge Lanza, welcomed the new tack taken by the police. "Whatever method that can end this sad situation (of extortion) is welcome," he said. "This operation 'Avalanche' should be made permanent, not just for a week or two," he added, explaining that police and military protection on public transport was only occasional. Lanza said more than 80 people died last year in assaults on buses by gang members angry that owners of the companies refused to pay their "war tax" of \$45 per bus per week. Up to five different gangs, including MS-13 and 18, were behind the extortions. According to Honduras' national anti-extortion taskforce, last year 669 youths demanding the "war tax" were arrested. More than 4,000 people were victims of extortion. — AFP



TALANGA: Honduran Military Police escort Talanga's Mayor Jorge Neftali Romero after he was arrested in Talanga, 50 km from Tegucigalpa. Honduran authorities looking for new ways to combat gangs terrorizing the country are waging an operation called 'Avalanche' to seize bank accounts, properties and even a small hospital from wealthy crime bosses. — AFP



POHANG: South Korean and US soldiers take a position during an annual joint military landing exercise in Pohang, on South Korea's southeast coast yesterday. — AFP

US AND SOUTH KOREA STAGE ASSAULT DRILL

NORTH THREATENS TO WIPE OUT ENEMIES

POHANG: US and South Korean troops staged a big amphibious landing exercise yesterday, storming simulated North Korean beach defenses amid heightened tension and threats by the North to annihilate its enemies. The landing and assault drills on South Korea's east coast were part of eight weeks of joint exercises between the allies which the South has said are the largest ever. The North has denounced the exercises as "nuclear war moves" and threatened to respond with an all-out offensive.

Tension on the Korean peninsula has been high since the North conducted its fourth nuclear test in January and followed that with a long-range rocket launch last month, triggering new UN sanctions. About 55 US marine aircraft and 30 US and South Korean ships, including the USS Bonhomme Richard and USS Boxer, which carry AV-8B Harrier attack jets and V-22 Osprey aircrafts, took part in the assault on beaches near Pohang city, the US navy said. "They will penetrate notional enemy beach defenses, establish a beach head, and rapidly transition

forces and sustainment ashore," the US military based in South Korea said in a statement before the exercise.

The North's military said it was prepared to counter the US and South Korean forces "with an ultra-precision blitzkrieg strike of the Korean style". "The revolutionary armed forces of the DPRK holding tightly the arms to annihilate the enemies with towering hatred for them are waiting for the dignified Supreme Command to issue an order to launch a preemptive strike of justice," it said in comments carried by the state KCNA news agency. DPRK stands for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

CNN reported yesterday that North Korea has been searching for one of its submarines that has been missing for days off its east coast. The submarine may be adrift under the sea or have sunk, perhaps after a technical problem during an exercise, CNN quoted US officials with intelligence of secret US monitoring of the North's activities as saying. North Korea has said it is developing submarine-launched ballistic mis-

siles although doubts about that were raised after Western experts said publicly released footage of tests appeared to be fake. On Thursday, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un watched as his forces fired two short-range ballistic missiles into the sea. This month the North conducted drills with what it said were newly developed large caliber rocket launchers.

Kim has ordered the country to improve its nuclear attack capability by conducting more tests, in defiance of a UN Security Council resolution adopted last week in response to the isolated state's latest nuclear test. Kim also said his country had miniaturized nuclear warheads to mount on ballistic missiles, although the US and South Korean governments have expressed doubts about that too. The South Korean and US militaries have said they had notified the North of "the non-provocative nature" of the exercises involving about 17,000 American troops and more than 300,000 South Koreans. The United States has about 28,500 troops stationed in South Korea. — Reuters

BIG AUDIENCE FOR DALAI LAMA AS BEIJING FUMES

GENEVA: The Dalai Lama took part in a panel of Nobel Peace Prize laureates in Geneva on Friday, addressing a full auditorium about Chinese repression in his native Tibet despite Beijing having urged people to shun the event. China wrote this week to diplomats and UN officials calling on them not to attend the panel at Geneva's Graduate Institute, saying it opposed the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader's appearance at all venues due to his "separatist activities". "One part of the human brain usually develops common sense. Some of these (Chinese) hardliners, that part of brain is missing," the crimson-robed Dalai Lama, 80, told the audience of students and diplomats.

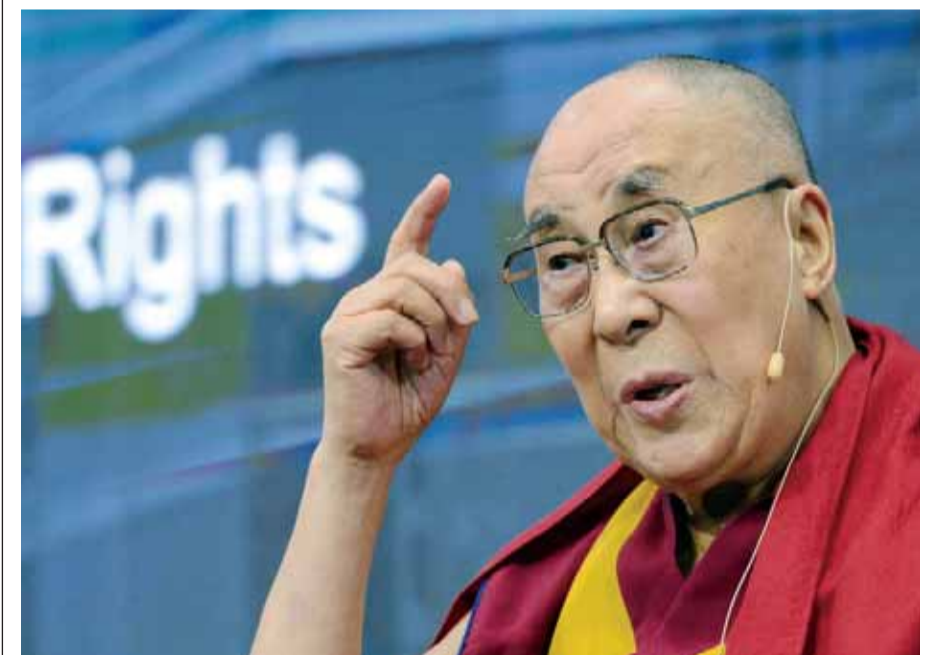
Earlier he told reporters: "Wherever my name is there they usually criticize and protest. That's quite new routine, normal, nothing special." China's Foreign Ministry said in statement it had lodged a protest with the United States, which along with Canada had sponsored the event, and that it had expressed its "strong dissatisfaction" with Washington. The Dalai Lama is not a purely religious figure, but somebody who has engaged in "anti-China separatist activities" for a long period, the ministry said.

"He was the biggest serf owner in old Tibet, and has no qualifications at all to talk about human rights," it added, referring to the period before what China calls its "peaceful liberation" of the remote

Himalayan region in 1950.

The United Nations also needs to respect the principles of its own charter and respect and support efforts of member states to maintain their sovereignty and territorial integrity, it added. The two-hour panel was moderated by UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Kate Gilmore, along with laureates from Yemen and Iran. The Dalai Lama fled into exile in India in 1959 after an abortive uprising against Communist rule. Beijing blames him for unrest in Tibetan areas and self-immolations that have taken more than 140 lives since 2011, and says he seeks independence for his homeland.

He denies the charges, and says he only wants genuine autonomy for Tibet. A Buddhist group leading a global campaign of harassment against the Dalai Lama has called off its demonstrations and disbanded, according to a statement on its website. A Reuters investigation revealed in December that the International Shugden Community (ISC) was backed by China's ruling Communist Party. The Dalai Lama told Reuters on Friday he was aware of the decision by the ISC to disband. He also told journalists he had not yet received an official invitation to visit Taiwan, but it was up to the government of the self-ruled democratic island which Beijing claims is an integral part of China. — Reuters



GENEVA: Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama speaks during a debate about the Nobel Laureates on Human Rights 'a view from civil society', in the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, in Geneva. — AP

US, AT UN, TO RAISE IRAN'S DANGEROUS MISSILE TESTS

UNITED NATIONS: The United States will raise during UN Security Council consultations next week the issue of Iran's recent ballistic missile launches and is urging countries to cooperate on undermining Tehran's missile program, the US envoy to the United Nations said on Friday. "We will raise these dangerous launches directly at Council consultations, which we have called for, on Monday," US Ambassador Samantha Power said in a statement. "These launches underscore the need to work with partners around the world to slow and degrade Iran's missile program."

A series of ballistic missile tests this week conducted by Iran's Revolutionary Guard units drew international concern. The United States, France and other countries said that if confirmed, the new launches of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles would violate UN Security Council resolution 2231. Power said Iran's missile launches were "provocative and destabilizing." Moreover, Iranian military leaders have reportedly claimed these missiles are designed to be a direct threat to Israel, she said.

"We condemn such threats against another UN member state and one of our closest allies," Power added that Washington would continue to demand "full implementation of resolution 2231, which expressly prohibits third-party support to Iran's ballistic missile program, as we also consider our appropriate national response." The closed-door consultations on Iran will take place Monday morning. The 15-nation Security Council is scheduled to hold separate consultations on Syria at 10 am ET (1500 GMT).

The United States has said Iran's missile tests do not violate the terms of an historic nuclear deal between Tehran and six major

powers, which resolution 2231, adopted in July 2015, endorsed. The UN missile restrictions and an arms embargo on Iran are not technically part of the nuclear agreement. Council diplomats say they will first await confirmation from national intelligence agencies about whether the missiles Iran has fired were nuclear-capable. They also say that Russia and China, which had opposed continuing UN restrictions on Iran's missile program, would likely block council action.

Iran's Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday that the tests were not in violation of the nuclear agreement, which led to lifting of sanctions in January. Western diplomats say resolution 2231, which "calls upon" Iran to refrain from certain ballistic missile activity, offers no green light for nuclear-capable missile launches by Tehran and is therefore a clear ban. However, they acknowledge that Russia, China and Iran likely interpret that language as an appeal to Iran to voluntarily refrain from missile activity. Tehran has also said that none of its missiles are designed to carry nuclear weapons.

While no new UN sanctions may be imminent, Western diplomats say that the United States and some of its allies could take additional punitive action in the form of unilateral national sanctions against Iran over the latest missile launches, something Washington has done previously. When UN sanctions on Iran were lifted in January, the Security Council's Iran sanctions committee was shut down. But council diplomats said they expect the former chair of that now-defunct committee, Spain, will take on the task of overseeing the monitoring of Tehran's compliance with resolution 2231. — Reuters

US FEDS OFFER REWARDS FOR ESCAPED CONVICTS

ALBUQUERQUE: With the headcount complete, the two guards pulled away from a state correctional center in a remote part of southeastern New Mexico with five prisoners and all of their belongings in tow for the last leg of what had already been a long journey. It wasn't long before they stopped in the next town to put gas in the van. After leaving the convenience store in Artesia, the guards turned off the main highway and crossed through nearly 200 miles of desert and a mountain range before arriving at their final destination in Las Cruces around 1 am Thursday.

Then came the startling discovery. Undeterred by shackles, two prisoners - a convicted murder and another convict with a violent history - somehow slipped away in white prison jumpsuits and vanished into the night with no one noticing, possibly for hours. They hitched a ride and made it to Albuquerque around the same time that authorities notified the public of the escape. Corrections officials struggled Friday to answer embarrassing questions about the

missteps that could have been made that night, including how the men could escape when authorities say they were last accounted for in leg irons and belly chains. The questions only helped to highlight concerns raised in recent months as the department struggles with a budget crisis, a guard shortage, overworked employees and other problems.

Gregg Marcantel, the state corrections secretary, said the two unidentified guards were placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation into the escape. "Anything less would be remiss," he said as he left Friday's briefing. State Police Chief Pete Kassetas wouldn't say whether investigators had determined how Joseph Cruz, convicted in the death of a man over drugs in Raton, and Lionel Clah, who was serving time for armed robbery and shooting at a police officer, escaped the fortified prison van that was transporting them from the state penitentiary in Santa Fe to the southern region of the state.

Authorities raised the likelihood that the getaway happened at the gas station in Artesia, was planned and that the fugitives were receiving assistance from others. But they wouldn't disclose what surveillance video from that gas station may have revealed. "We're definitely talking to family members, friends, associates, whatnot. They're getting help, no doubt about it," Kassetas said. The state also announced it's partnering with the US Marshals Service in the search for the convicts. Tips have come in from as far away as Texas and California. Federal authorities said they're offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to each of the convicts. — AP



VICKSBURG: Vicksburg police work at the scene where escaped murder suspect Rafael McCloud was killed after he was shot by a homeowner during a hostage situation in Vicksburg, Miss. — AP



A surfer rides a wave near the snowy beach of Unstad on Lofoten Island, Arctic Circle, on March 9, 2016. — AFP

KERRY STRESSES NEED TO END CONFLICTS IN SYRIA, YEMEN

HAFR AL-BATIN, Saudi Arabia: US Secretary of State John Kerry stressed the need to move now to end the conflicts in Syria and Yemen in talks with top Saudi officials on Friday, a senior US official said. Kerry also sought to reassure officials of the importance of US-Saudi ties a day after President Barack Obama was quoted in a US magazine as saying regional rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran need to "share the neighborhood" and establish a "cold peace".

Meeting at a Saudi military base outside Hafr Al-Batin near the Saudi border with Iraq, Kerry held talks with Saudi King Salman, Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Nayef, Defense Minister Mohammed bin Salman and Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir. "We have to talk about Syria," Kerry said after he met the king as he began a separate discussion with the three other officials, according to a US pool reporter accompanying him. They were joined by Emirati Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan at the northeastern King Khalid Military City base, scene this week of the "Northern Thunder" exercise. Syrian peace talks are set to get under way in Geneva next week, and the main Syrian opposition group, which is backed by Saudi Arabia, has said it will attend. The UN-brokered talks will take place two weeks after the start of a cessation of hostilities agreement that has reduced the violence but not completely stopped

the fighting, with further outbreaks reported in western Syria on Friday. The cessation is the first truce of its kind in a five-year-old war that has killed more than 250,000 people and driven millions of Syrians from their homes.

"Kerry emphasized that now is the time to keep moving forward toward ending the conflicts in Syria and Yemen," a senior US State Department official said in an email. Washington and allies including Saudi Arabia and Turkey back opposition groups representing political and armed factions in Syria's civil war while Russia and Iran support President Bashar Al-Assad.

In another regional conflict, Riyadh and a coalition of Arab states entered Yemen's civil war a year ago in an attempt to restore President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi after the Houthis and forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh ousted him. The US official said Washington supported UN efforts to get all the Yemeni parties into talks. He also said that during his meetings, "Kerry reaffirmed the strong US commitment to our valued and important partnership with Saudi Arabia."

Sunni-majority Saudi Arabia and Shiite majority Iran are locked in a regional power struggle. Saudi Arabia, a US partner, may have been irked by an article in The Atlantic magazine quoting Obama as saying the two "need to find an effective way to share the neighborhood and institute some sort of cold peace." — Agencies



HAFR AL-BATIN: Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz meets US Secretary of State John Kerry on Friday. — AFP

LEBANESE GOVT APPROVES PLAN TO SOLVE TRASH CRISIS

BEIRUT: The Lebanese government announced yesterday a temporary solution for the country's eight-month trash crisis by opening three landfills as thousands protested in downtown Beirut. Information Minister Ramzi Jreij said after an eight-hour Cabinet meeting that the temporary solution will last four years and by then a permanent solution will be in place. In Beirut more than 2,000 protesters rejected the option of temporary landfills and demanded a more long-term waste-disposal plan.

The trash crisis began in July, when the country's main landfill in the town of Naameh just south of Beirut was scheduled to close, with no real alternative landfills available. Naameh area residents said the dump was over capacity and began blocking the roads to prevent garbage trucks from reaching it. As garbage began piling up in Beirut, protesters formed the "You Stink" movement, demanding sweeping reform in Lebanon's government. The government had been working on a plan to export the garbage. But this was scrapped last month because the firm chosen failed to obtain documents showing that Russia, the intended destination, had agreed to accept it.

Since the peaks of the protest in the summer, authorities have blunted the public anger by ensuring that the streets of

Beirut are kept relatively garbage-free. However, the trash has been pushed to the city's periphery, where it piles up along the roadside and the banks of the Beirut River. Jreij said that the Naameh landfill will be reopened for two months to take in tens of thousands of tons of trash that have piled around the country. He added that two other landfills and treatment plants will be opened, north and south of Beirut.

Jreij said the state will compensate areas that host landfills with significant payments and development projects. He said the government will pay \$6 for every ton that is sent to Naameh. Jreij said the government will distribute \$40 million this year to municipalities that agree to host landfills and spend another \$50 million over the next four years on development projects in those areas.

Assad Thebian, one of the protest organizers since the trash crisis began, told AP that activists are studying the government's plan and will make an announcement soon. Earlier yesterday, more than 2,000 protesters chanted: "We are fed up." The protesters vowed to escalate tomorrow by "paralyzing the movement in the country". Wasef Haraka, one of them, said the government plan was unsustainable. "We will continue to confront this matter in the street to find a sustainable, real, hygienic solution," he said. — Agencies



BEIRUT: Lebanese women wave their national flag and hold placards as they take part in a protest yesterday against corruption and the garbage crisis. Picture in the back shows assassinated president-elect Bashir Gemayel. — AFP

CHASE ENDS WITH 6 SAUDIS DEAD AFTER...

Continued from Page 1

Separately, death sentences against four Saudi men convicted of terrorism have been confirmed by 13 judges, a Saudi newspaper reported, raising the possibility of a new round of executions two months after 47 people including a prominent Shiite cleric were put to death. International rights groups said the families of three young Shiite men feared their sons, arrested for involvement in anti-government protests while under the age of 18, were among those facing the death penalty. One is a nephew of Sheikh Nimr Al-Nimr, the cleric whose execution in January led to a rupture of diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Officials from the Saudi justice ministry and the interior ministry were not immediately available to comment.

Saudi newspaper Okaz said: "The four terrorists awaiting the implementation of the death sentences complement the first group of 47." It said a total of 13 judges had considered the cases in three levels of hearings, but did not identify the four men. Rights group Reprieve, which campaigns against the death penalty, said: "While details of the four in line for execution remain unclear, the reports will raise

fears for three juveniles who are awaiting execution after their sentences ... were upheld in the SCC (Specialized Criminal Court) last year."

The three are Dawoud Al-Marhoon, arrested in 2012; Abdullah Hassan Al-Zaher, who was 15 when he was arrested in 2011; and Ali Al-Nimr, aged 17 when he was detained in 2012. France has called on Saudi Arabia not to execute Nimr, arguing he was a minor at the time. Amnesty International said: "If these executions go ahead, Saudi Arabia will demonstrate its utter disdain for international law, which prohibits executions of people for crimes committed under the age of 18."

In November last year, two Saudi newspapers reported that Saudi Arabia was planning to execute more than 50 people for "terrorist crimes" that killed more than 100 civilians and 71 security personnel. The 47 executed on Jan 2 were mostly Sunnis convicted of Al-Qaeda attacks in the kingdom a decade ago. Four, including the older Nimr, were members of the Shiite minority who were accused of involvement in shooting policemen. Nimr's execution sparked demonstrations in eastern Saudi Arabia and in Iran, where angry crowds ransacked the Saudi embassy in Tehran, prompting Riyadh to break off ties with Iran. — Agencies

BUSINESS AS USUAL AT GITMO

Continued from Page 1

against America and its allies. Of the 676 men released under Obama and his predecessor, George W Bush, 118 are suspected of re-engaging, the report found, noting that further recidivism was likely among those currently slated for release. "We assess that some detainees currently at Gitmo (Guantanamo) will seek to re-engage in terrorist or insurgent activities after they are transferred," the report states. Today, 91 inmates remain. Thirty-five are approved for transfer to another country, but the process of putting security guarantees in place is painstakingly slow. The rest face ongoing - and indefinite - detention.

AFP got a tour of Guantanamo Bay last week during a visit by General Joe Dunford, the US military's top officer. Dunford visited the two main prison camps, where he saw several detainees and met the troops who guard them. He said he was pleased with how the facility is being run. "The basic operation of Gitmo, I am proud of it," he said, using the naval base's nickname. "I am proud of the young men and women who are actually doing really hard work every day."

The four-star general chose not to weigh in on the political debate swirling around the prison, but said he was satisfied inmates are well cared for, despite numerous claims to the contrary from former prisoners and rights groups. "When it comes to American values demonstrated on a day-to-day basis, we don't have to really hide what's going on in Gitmo from anybody," he said. Realistically, Obama

has scant chance of closing Guantanamo during his remaining 10 months in office. He is considering an executive order to shut it, but such action would prove deeply controversial. And even if he were to succeed, a future US president could quickly reopen it. Republican frontrunner Donald Trump intends to fill Guantanamo with "bad dudes," and fellow conservatives, Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz, want to send Islamic State captives there. Navy Captain Christopher Scholl, a military spokesman, said inmates follow Guantanamo news closely; they have access to some 300 channels, including Arabic-language broadcasters. "It was very calm," Scholl said of the day Obama announced his closure plan. "There was more curiosity of what's going to happen next, to see if they're going to go to the States." Most inmates currently are housed in two jails known as Camp 5, which opened in 2004, and Camp 6, which opened in 2006 at a cost of \$37 million.

Well-behaved detainees live in Camp 6 and have access to communal areas. The non-compliant inmates are kept at Camp 5, which has equipment to protect guards from "splashing" - the grim practice of hurling bodily fluids and excrement at guards. The riskiest detainees, including the five men accused of plotting the Sept 11, 2001 attacks, are incarcerated at another, secret prison camp elsewhere on the base. Scholl said Obama's plans have had no impact on the prison's day-to-day workings. A force of about 2,000 guards and staff keep the facility running - more than 20 workers per inmate. "It's business as usual right now," Scholl said. "Operationally, there are no changes." — AFP

Kuwait Times

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Washington Watch

NYT TRIES TO
WHITEWASH
ISRAELI POLL

By Dr James J Zogby

This past week, the Pew Research Center released the results of a massive poll of Israeli public opinion - focusing on their attitudes toward religion, identity, values, and political issues facing their country. In the days that followed the release, a number of articles appeared in Israel and the US commenting on the study's findings. The strangest and most troubling of them was a piece titled "Deep Rifts Among Israeli Jews Are Found in Religion Survey". It was printed in the New York Times on March 8, 2016. Written by Isabel Kershner, the article was a transparent effort to combine straight reporting with tortured apologetics.

Kershner began the piece with a simple recitation of a few of the poll's findings: "A majority of Israeli Jews marry within their own religious or secular groups" and the different sub-groups "largely separate social worlds" and have "starkly contrasting positions on many public policy issues" like whether West Bank settlements contribute to Israel's security.

Kershner's straightforward reporting ended, however, when she came to one of the poll's more disturbing findings - "that nearly half of Israeli Jews said that Arabs should be expelled from Israel". Unable to allow that result to stand on its own, in the same sentence, Kershner added "although Israeli pollsters found the wording of the question problematic".

The addition of that phrase was a classic example of deflection - a device often used in New York Times' articles to sow doubt or confusion among readers so as to soften the blow of facts that are damaging to Israel. Here's how it works - first the "fact" is stated. Then it is quickly followed (usually in the same sentence) by an unsubstantiated remark that questions the "fact". The reader is then left confused.

Kershner didn't get around to explaining exactly what was "problematic" about the wording of the poll question until she meandered for several paragraphs discussing other results from the poll. Only then did she return to the "transfer" issue, devoting the last full one-quarter of her piece to quotes from Israeli pollsters telling us that "the phrasing of the question is very blunt" or that it is possible that Israeli Jewish respondents may have understood the question to imply that Arabs would "voluntarily" leave or be compensated for leaving [as if that would somehow make it better?].

Kershner quoted another pollster who agonized over the transfer question, saying "I would feel uncomfortable incriminating the Israeli public based on one question" adding her fear that this "one question" would "be used as a weapon" by Israel's critics.

Troubling

Actually, the question was quite clear. And it wasn't the only question in the poll in which Israelis displayed troubling views. And, while I might quibble with the term "weapon", it would be irresponsible not to raise serious questions about what this poll reveals about racism in Israel.

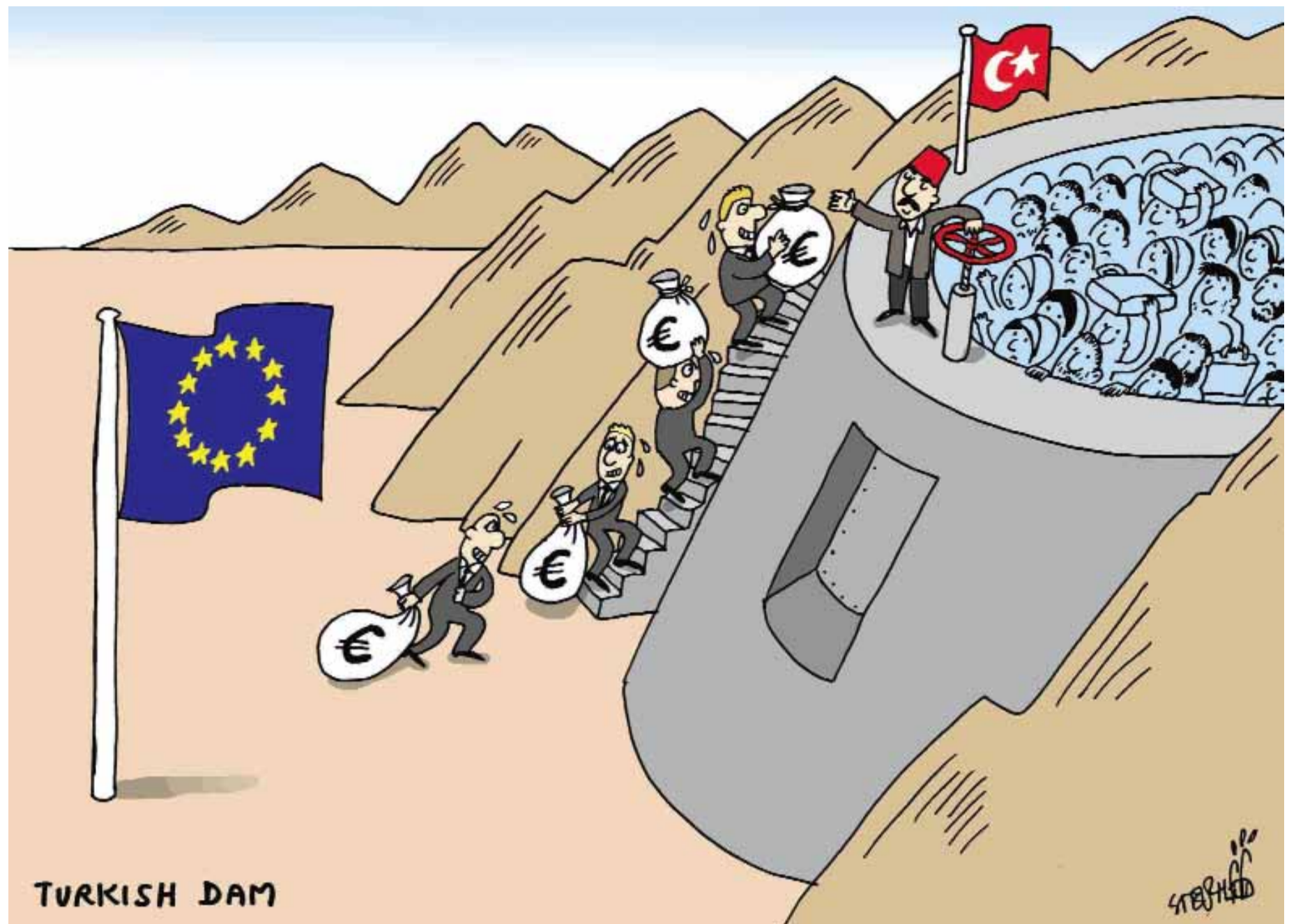
First let's look at the "problematic" question and ask whether it was too vague, too blunt, or too unclear. Here is what Israelis were asked: do you agree or disagree with this statement "Arabs should be expelled or transferred from Israel"? In response to this direct question - 48 percent of Israeli Jews agreed, while 46 percent disagreed. Among Israelis who are religious and those who received a Jewish education - two-thirds agreed with the idea that Arabs should be expelled or transferred.

This is not the only disturbing finding in this poll. Israeli Jews were also asked if they agreed with the statement "Jews deserve preferential treatment in Israel". 79 percent agreed - including well over 95 percent of those who are religious and those who received a Jewish education.

The bottom line is that Israeli political culture has become increasingly intolerant. With 8 in 10 Israeli Jews supporting preferential treatment for themselves at the expense of the 20 percent of the population that is Arab and with almost one-half of Israeli Jews calling for Arab citizens to be expelled or transferred - we can only conclude that this is a society and a political culture that is in trouble. This dangerous reality needs to be confronted honestly and directly. Whitewashing this situation only allows the danger to grow. The Times has done Israelis, Palestinians, and its readers a disservice.

NOTE: Dr James J Zogby is the President of the Arab American Institute

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CHICAGO CHAOS TESTS TRUMP PROMISES OF UNITY

By Steve Peoples and Julie Pace

Donald Trump says he can unify the country. Now, he gets a chance to prove it. The Republican presidential front-runner canceled a Friday night rally in Chicago rather than enter a tense cauldron of animosity between his supporters and protesters - some of whom then proceeded to face off in several violent altercations as the political gathering veered dangerously close to a riot. It was an ugly incident unlike anything seen in presidential politics in decades, adding a dark chapter to the already unconventional 2016 White House campaign. And it comes as Trump makes calls for unity a central part of his closing argument ahead of Tuesday's state of primary elections in five delegate-rich states.

The Chicago chaos presents the biggest leadership test yet for the Republican outsider, the deeply divided Republican Party and an even more sharply splintered nation that he seeks to lead. And while extraordinary by any standards, perhaps the biggest surprise was that it didn't happen sooner. Since casting Mexicans immigrants as rapists and criminals in his June announcement speech, Trump has encouraged supporters to embrace anger tinged with xenophobia. In recent weeks, his rallies have featured several minor incidents of violence involving protesters, almost all of them minorities, with Trump repeatedly encouraging his supporters to fight back - and to do so with violence if necessary.

On Friday morning, Trump cheered a supporter who punched a black protester in the face earlier in the week. The aggressor was later charged with assault. "The audience hit back," Trump said, suggesting his supporter was provoked. "That's what we need a little bit more of." At a Friday afternoon rally in St Louis, before the canceled event in Chicago, he panned protesters as weak "troublemakers" and ordered them to "go home to mommy." "These are not good people, just so you understand," Trump said. "These are not the people who made our country great. These are the people that are destroying our country."

Unprepared

Dismissed by his critics as an entertainer woefully unprepared to lead a nation, Trump now has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in a crisis. Yet he showed little evidence in the immediate aftermath of the incident that he would make good on his pledge to unify the

country with any kind of contrition. "I don't take responsibility. Nobody's been hurt at our rallies," he told CNN during one of many television interviews he gave late Friday, during which he said he decided to cancel his appearance to avoid more serious violence or even death. "There's very few people hurt. And we should be given credit for that."

Republicans have spent months tiptoeing around Trump, fearful of alienating his loyal and enthusiastic supporters. Trump has filled the void left by party leaders' tepidness with rhetoric aimed squarely at Hispanics, Muslims and those who come to his rallies to protest. At Thursday night's GOP debate, less than 24 hours before Trump's Chicago rally, all three of his remaining presidential rivals sidestepped questions about whether they were concerned about earlier incidents of violence at the frontrunner's event. None directly said Trump bore responsibility.

On the debate stage, Texas Sen Ted Cruz said candidates "need to show respect to the people," but also sympathized with frustrated Americans. Ohio Gov John Kasich said he worried about violence at rallies and broadly called for unity. And Florida Sen Marco Rubio said that while he's concerned about "violence in general in this society," Americans should use their anger as motivation to take action.

But with the scenes from Chicago blanketing cable news Friday night, they were suddenly far more willing to put the blame on Trump. "In any campaign, responsibility starts at the top," Cruz said late Friday. "Any candidate is responsible for the culture of the campaign. And when you have a campaign that disrespects the voters, when you have a campaign that affirmatively encourages violence, when you have a campaign that is facing allegations of physical violence against members of the press, you create

an environment that only encourages this sort of nasty discourse." Rubio said Trump needs to "own up" to the impact of the rhetoric he's used. "There are consequences to the things people say in politics," he said.

Trump's rivals are faced with the prospect that they've taken a stand too late - and that their earlier silence has amounted to tacit support for the brash billionaire's actions. The high-stakes primary contests in Ohio, Florida and three other states are just a few days away. Trump blamed the state of the nation's economy and President Barack Obama's leadership when asked about what prompted the violent clash at his rally. "It's a divided country," he said. "It's been that way for a long time. It's very sad to see. It's divided among many different groups." Voters now get to see whether he can help bridge those divisions, or will make them worse. — AP

TRUMP: QUIET THINKER
VS FLASHY SHOWMAN

By Julie Pace

Are there two Donald Trumps? The quiet thinker and the flashy showman? Depends on which one you ask. "Perhaps there are two Donald Trumps," the Republican presidential frontrunner said during an understated news conference Friday at his over-the-top Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida. "I'm somebody who is a thinker. I'm a big thinker." But after more questions from reporters intrigued by what may lie beneath Trump's bombastic public image, the real estate mogul changed his mind. "I don't think there are two Donald Trumps," he said, making no effort to address the contradiction.

The inquiries were prompted by comments from Ben Carson, the retired neurosurgeon and former presidential candidate who declared his support for Trump earlier in the day. In explaining what drew the soft-spoken doctor to a brash reality television star who once called him "pathological" and compared him to a child molester, Carson said there were two sides to Trump. "There's the one you see on stage and there's the one who's very cerebral, sits there and considers things very

carefully," said Carson, who joined Trump for the news conference. "You can have a very good conversation with him. And that's the Donald Trump that you're going to start seeing more and more of right now."

Even before Carson's comments, Trump was beginning to adjust the public image that he's spent years carefully cultivating, first in the tabloids, then on reality television and social media, and most recently, during his unexpected White House bid. With the GOP nomination now within sight, he is dialing back some of his rants against his rivals, and he avoided attacking them altogether during Thursday night's debate. He's suggested he may not be such a hardliner on issues like immigration after all, noting that it's important for leaders to have "flexibility" on important matters. He's also been emphasizing party unity, a far cry from the days when he threatened to run for president as an independent if Republican leaders didn't treat him fairly.

Some of Trump's changing public face can be chalked up to the kind of evolution in both tone and policy that presidential candidates generally make when they start looking to

broaden their appeal with a general election audience. Trump leads the Republican race after 24 voting contests and could put the GOP nomination out of reach for his rivals if he wins Tuesday's winner-take-all contests in Florida and Ohio. For Trump, a strong pivot could be crucial if he hopes to have a chance of winning in the fall, when the electorate will be more diverse than the GOP primary voters who cheer his red-meat remarks.

The Republican candidate has a remarkable level of unpopularity for a leading politician, with 67 percent of Americans saying they view the billionaire unfavorably, according to a new ABC News/Washington Post poll. More than half see him as "strongly" unfavorable. He's spent much of the primary season making comments deemed offensive to minorities and women. He's faced criticism for the aggressive handling of protesters at his rallies and his own comments that can appear to stoke that behavior. And he's also sparked concerns with allies abroad when he's promised to free American intelligence agencies to torture detainees and vowed to temporarily ban non-citizen Muslims from coming to the United States. — AP

LULA CAST IN FAMILIAR ROLE OF MARTYR

By Paulo Prada

Criminal charges and a request by prosecutors to jail Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva are putting the former Brazilian president and leftist icon back in a role he has long relished: that of the martyr. The 70-year-old former metalworker, still a hero to blue-collar Brazilians because of an economic boom that created millions of jobs during his two terms as president, has known since his days as a union leader how to cast himself as the victim of an oppressive elite, galvanizing the working class behind him.

Last week, after federal police took him into custody briefly for questions about a far-reaching graft probe around Brazil's state-run oil company, Lula said he "felt like a prisoner" and urged leftist organizations, from landless peasants to labor unions, to rally. "Summon me," he said, asking them to show support. "I am going to travel this country." For the beleaguered government of President Dilma Rousseff, Lula's successor and protegee, any traction Lula gets could provide relief at a time when it is crippled by impeachment proceedings, an economy that shrunk by 3.8 percent last year and a corruption scandal that is drawing ever closer to her inner circle.

"This is a paralyzed government that needs any help it can get," says Carlos Melo, a political

scientist at Insper, a Sao Paulo business school. "Even if Lula himself has lost some support, he still knows how to mobilize the party militants. The government will hitch a ride on that." Of course, Lula's circumstances are far different from four decades ago, when he mobilized hundreds of thousands of workers against a military dictatorship and played a role in restoring democracy to Latin America's biggest country.

Federal prosecutors say they believe Lula accepted illicit payments and favors connected to the giant kickback scandal around Petroleo Brasileiro SA, the oil company. In a separate, but related investigation, state prosecutors in Sao Paulo, Brazil's industrial capital and the cradle of Lula's Workers' Party, have charged him with crimes including fraud and money laundering. Lula has denied any wrongdoing.

'An Act of Injustice'

The widening scandal, and the allegations against him, have eroded the popularity of Brazil's first working-class president, who enjoyed approval ratings of nearly 90 percent when he left office at the end of 2010. In a recent Datafolha poll simulating the presidential election in 2018, when Lula could attempt to return as the Workers' Party candidate, he had 20 percent of the vote, slightly less than the centrist

candidate who heads the chief opposition party.

On Thursday, the state prosecutors asked a judge to jail Lula, pending further legal proceedings. The move was criticized as slipshod by many jurists, who argue that a world-famous leader poses virtually no flight risk. Rousseff, in comments to reporters on Friday, said the request "exceeds the limits of good sense, is an act of injustice." Even Workers' Party rivals said it could provide ammunition for those who characterize the ongoing investigations as a witch hunt.

Indeed, in a statement late Thursday, Lula's defense cast him as a historic underdog still fighting oppression. The request is an effort "to gag a political leader, to impede his expression of thought and even the exercise of his rights," wrote Cristiano Zanin Martins, one of Lula's attorneys. "Only in the dictatorship, when all rights of the citizen were suspended, were opinions and the exercise of rights reason to deprive liberty."

Rousseff on Friday said she would be proud to have Lula in her government, referring to the possibility that the government could shield Lula by appointing him to her cabinet. Under Brazilian law, that would require any legal charges against him to go before the Supreme Court. People familiar with the possibility, how-

ever, say that Lula is unlikely to accept such an offer, because doing so could be interpreted as an admission of guilt. More likely, they say, Lula will continue efforts to rally what's left of his political base.

Today, opposition groups have scheduled the latest in a series of demonstrations to express support for Rousseff's ouster. In addition to ongoing impeachment proceedings, launched last year over accounting tricks in the government budget, Rousseff faces a court decision over the alleged use of kickbacks to finance her 2014 re-election campaign. Rousseff denies both sets of accusations. So far, the demonstrations have been lackluster, composed mostly of upper and middle-class whites who traditionally oppose the Workers' Party. But the growing tension has led some government leaders to ask leftist groups to refrain from inciting clashes of the sort that erupted between supporters and opponents outside Lula's home and the Sao Paulo airport where he was questioned last week. "You have a government that may not conclude its term and the prospect of Lula in jail," says Alberto Almeida, a consultant at the Instituto Analise, a political and social analysis firm in Sao Paulo. "They (the Workers' Party) are at the point where the only defense is to attack." —Reuters

CECCHINATO FACES MATCH-FIXING PROBE

MILAN: Italian Davis Cup player Marco Cecchinato is reportedly under investigation by his national tennis federation over suspicions of match-fixing during a tournament last October. Cecchinato was the fourth seed at a Challenger tournament in Morocco where he coasted to victory in his first two matches before losing the quarter-final 6-1, 6-4 to 19-year-old Polish qualifier Kamil Majchrzak, who is ranked 338th by the ATP. Suspicions were raised further by the existence of inconsistent betting patterns relating to their quarter-final meeting on the day of the match. The Italian federation was notified and, according to widespread reports, is expected to discipline Cecchinato at a hearing that has yet to be announced. Riccardo Accardi, a friend of Cecchinato and a fellow tennis professional, has also been implicated in the affair. The news will come as a huge blow to the 23-year-old Cecchinato, who, ranked 89th in the ATP rankings, made his Davis Cup debut last week. Italy had already qualified for the quarter-finals after racing to a 3-0 lead over Switzerland when Cecchinato won his team's fourth point in a 6-3, 7-5 singles win over Adrien Bossel. — AFP



YORKE WANTS GIGGS IN CHARGE OF MAN UTD

SINGAPORE: Manchester United should sack Louis Van Gaal and install his assistant Ryan Giggs as manager, according to former striker Dwight Yorke who wants to launch his own managerial career at struggling Aston Villa. The former Trinidad and Tobago striker said changes were needed at United, with the 20-times English champions sixth in the Premier League, out of the Champions League and suffering a 2-0 loss to arch-rivals Liverpool in the Europa League this week. "At the end of the day, it's all about results," Yorke was quoted as saying by Singaporean daily The New Paper on Saturday after a promotional event in the Southeast Asian citystate. "In the two years that he's (Van Gaal) been there, he's spent tons of money, brought in tons of players, and simply hasn't got the results that he and everyone else had hoped to. "You see a lot of young managers, Zinedine Zidane's been given the opportunity at Real Madrid, you got Luis Enrique at Barcelona, Pep Guardiola who's coming to Manchester City, Tottenham's Mauricio Pochettino, they're all ex-players. — Reuters

KARANKA'S FUTURE SHROUDED IN DOUBT

LONDON: Aitor Karanka's future as Middlesbrough manager is shrouded in doubt after the Championship promotion contenders announced he will not be in charge for today's trip to Charlton. Karanka is believed to be unhappy with his players after some poor performances in recent weeks and the Spaniard stormed away from Middlesbrough's training ground on Friday following a heated meeting with the squad. The 42-year-old questioned the players' desire to win promotion to the Premier League following their midweek loss at lowly Rotherham and is said to have told them he no longer wanted to manage them during the training ground showdown talks. Karanka's dramatic departure triggered speculation that he is set to quit and that outcome remains likely after Middlesbrough confirmed assistant coach Steve Agnew will take charge at Charlton today. "Middlesbrough Football Club can confirm that Aitor Karanka did not take training on Saturday morning," the statement read. "Assistant Head Coach Steve Agnew will take charge of the team for Sunday's fixture at Charlton Athletic. — AFP



OOREDOO LAUNCHES NEW ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN WITH MESSI

KUWAIT: Following on from the remarkable success of Ooredoo's "Simply Do Wonders" advertising campaign with Lionel Messi, the company yesterday launched "Together We Do Wonders", a sequel to the award-winning campaign, which will again feature Ooredoo's Global Brand Ambassador, Lionel Messi.

Ooredoo's new commercial received its world premiere at a special event in Barcelona, attended by Lionel Messi; Waleed Al Sayed, Group Deputy CEO, Ooredoo, and other senior Ooredoo executives. It was held in parallel with the GSMA Mobile World Congress event taking place that week.

The commercial, which features the same young cast as the previous film, plays on Ooredoo's key themes of teamwork, technological skills and striving to do your best.

This time around, as well as highlighting the possibilities that technology can bring, Ooredoo is also using the campaign to showcase its global CSR initiatives and its support for sport across its footprint.

As part of the campaign, Ooredoo has launched a dedicated micro-site with an online strategy game, "Stand for Good", at

www.standforgood.com. The game asks players to digitally "capture" a football pitch in locations across Ooredoo's footprint, and then asks them to hold the pitch for 12 hours in order to be entered into a draw to win a return flight to Barcelona to meet Messi and watch him play.

As well as being able to enjoy the online game, players will also have the opportunity to champion some of the key community projects supported by Ooredoo, such as the Mobile Health Clinics in Indonesia, Myanmar, Algeria and Tunisia in partnership with the Leo Messi Foundation.

Speaking at the launch event in Barcelona, Waleed Al Sayed, Deputy Group CEO, Ooredoo, said: "Our first campaign encouraged young people to 'simply do wonders' - to be the best they could be, which is something we hope to inspire across our footprint. Our new 'Together We Simply Do Wonders' campaign aims to inspire young people to help those in need, and support sport for the less fortunate. We're very proud to continue our great work with Leo Messi, and thank him for his on-going support for our initiatives."

Lionel Messi, football star and Ooredoo Global Brand Ambassador, said: "The Leo Messi Foundation is pleased to work with Ooredoo on a wide range of programmes to support people around the world, and I'm delighted this new campaign enables fans to make a contribution to and raise the profile of these efforts."

Ooredoo's CSR initiatives supported by the campaign include its work with the Leo Messi Foundation on its mobile health clinic programme, which provides healthcare services for remote areas in Indonesia, Myanmar, Algeria, and Tunisia.

The programme, which brings healthcare to disadvantaged communities, delivered brand-new mobile health clinics in Algeria in 2015, and provided services to 73 villages in Myanmar, with 75% women as beneficiaries. The Mobile Health Clinics have also been highly active in Indonesia with 16 mobile clinics travelling across the region.

You can play "Stand for Good" at www.standforgood.com. You can see Ooredoo's new "Together We Do Wonders" advert at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ToTHkEJFE>



AVONDALE: Kyle Busch, driver of the #18 Skittles Toyota, poses for a photo after winning the Coors Light Pole Award during qualifying for the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Good Sam 500 at Phoenix International Raceway on Friday in Avondale, Arizona. — AFP

KYLE BUSCH GETS NASCAR POLE

AVONDALE: Kyle Busch earned the pole at Phoenix International Raceway and Jimmie Johnson escaped serious injury after a scary crash in NASCAR Sprint Cup qualifying Friday. Johnson was on his second lap in the final round on the mile oval when he had an issue on the left side of his car and rammed into the second turn wall at full speed. The right front of the No. 48 car took the most damage and Johnson was able to climb out after the car slid onto the grass.

The six-time Cup champion was examined and released from the infield care center. "Certainly a lot of straight in an area of the track that I didn't need to have straight. We'll have to

get to the bottom of it," Johnson said. "Just a really hard impact to the outside wall. Thankful that we have SAFER barriers and soft walls. But very disappointed because we had such a fast race car." After the red flag to clean up the wreck, Busch won his 18th career pole and his first at Phoenix since 2012.

Carl Edwards qualified second and Daytona 500 champion Denny Hamlin third, giving Toyota the top three spots for the race today. Kurt Busch was fourth, and Johnson fifth on a rough day for Hendrick Motorsports. Dale Earnhardt Jr., who won November's rain-shortened race to end Kevin Harvick's four-race win

streak at Phoenix, failed to advance past the first round and will start 26th. The first round of qualifying including a bizarre red flag after Casey Kahne's car began smoking near the dash while he was running second. The Hendrick driver said he tried to turn the car off and it kept running.

Kahne's car was towed to the garage. He earned the 24th spot, but will need a new engine and will start at the rear Sunday.

Harvick, who has dominated at Phoenix, complained of a loose car in practice, qualified 18th at the mile tri-oval. Ty Dillon, filling in for the injured Tony Stewart, scraped the wall in the first round and will start 28th. — AP

LIN DAN PUMPED TO REACH ALL ENGLAND SEMIFINALS

BIRMINGHAM: Lin Dan gave a double fist pump and primal scream. Then he yelled again. That's how much beating Jan O Jorgensen in the All England Championships quarterfinals meant to the badminton superstar on Friday.

Humbled by Jorgensen in the quarters of the world championships last August, Lin was up for their first meeting since then, and showed his enduring class by winning 10-21, 21-9, 21-15 in 67 minutes.

Meanwhile, women's defending champion Carolina Marin of Spain overcame bogey player Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand to advance, but 2015 finalist Saina Nehwal of India and former champs Li Xuerui and Wang Yihan of China lost.

Jorgensen ran over Lin so easily in the first game that a repeat of their worlds result was on the cards. But Lin suddenly tuned in, ending rallies quickly with smash winners, pulling the Dane at his whim, and making play look easy. Lin jumped to 10-1 in the second game and 8-0 in the third, leaving Jorgensen remonstrating with the referee and gradually taking on the air of a man who knew he was being outclassed. "Jan was consistent and really aggressive in the first game, and I was making a lot of mistakes," Lin said. "I was really happy how I regrouped. My movement and instinct became much better."

"I was really excited when I won, it was special. He beat me at the world champs so I was extra focused." Lin won the last of his five All England titles in 2012, then came out of semi-retirement last year to prepare for a gold-medal tilt at a third consecutive Olympics. He won the German Open last weekend, and has reached the All England semifinals for a second straight year. A different Chinese teammate stands in his way: Top-ranked Chen Long stopped Lin last year, but this time he faces Xue Song, the latest prodigy. Lin won their only two matches in mid-2014.

Unseeded Xue dispatched Chen on Thursday, then took out sixth-ranked Viktor Axelsen of Denmark 21-19, 23-25, 21-11 in the

quarters. Tian Houwei, China's third-best player after Chen and Lin, progressed after beating Kento Momota of Japan 19-21, 21-15, 21-16. Tian will face the unseeded Hans-Kristian Vittinghus, who made up for the exit of Danish teammates Jorgensen and Axelsen by saving two match points in beating Marc Zwiebler of Germany 21-15, 13-21, 22-20.

Marin lost all four of her previous matchups with Ratchanok, and labored for nearly an hour for a 21-17, 21-19 win she described, probably because of their history, as "really good." In the semis she will play Nozomi Okuhara of Japan, who rubbed out 2009 champ Wang Yihan of China 21-9, 21-13. Okuhara has beaten Marin in their last two matches.

The other semifinal pitches two-time champ Wang Shixian of China against Tai Tzu-ying of Taiwan. Wang Shixian somewhat avenged her lopsided loss to Li in the German Open final last Sunday when she won their high-quality quarterfinal 16-21, 21-18, 21-17 to even their head-to-head at 77. Wang Shixian has a 6-2 record against Tai, who won their last meeting in the quarterfinals a year ago. Tai beat third-ranked Nehwal for a fifth straight time, 21-15, 21-16. "I was not that surprised," Tai said. Her ranking dropped from No. 3 to 9 in the last four months, which meant she was the best player not to be seeded. She's heading back up the rankings. — AP



Lin Dan

ZIDANE VEHEMENTLY DEFENDS UNDER FIRE NADAL

MADRID: Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane has launched a staunch personal defence of Spanish tennis star Rafael Nadal after the 14-time Grand Slam champion was accused by a former French sports minister of covering up a failed drugs test.

Roselyne Bachelot, France's sports minister between 2007 and 2010, claimed Nadal had faked an injury in 2012, when he missed the final six

months of the season due to knee problems, to cover up a failed test.

"I feel bad for Rafa Nadal because he is a gentleman, a person that has shown the values he has and that everyone loves," Zidane said of Nadal, who is an honorary member of Real Madrid.

"He is a professional and I know him a little. I feel bad for what they have said.

"He has to leave all this to one side and think that everyone who loves

sport, loves Rafa Nadal, whether they be French, Spanish or American."

Real Madrid also released a statement in defence of one of Spain's most loved and admired sportsmen.

"Rafa Nadal represents the fundamental values of sport. His greatness and his incredible achievements have always been based upon a foundation of exemplary conduct, unwavering work, talent and astonishing levels of commit-

ment." Bachelot's comments came in the wake of five-time Grand Slam champion Maria Sharapova's admission that she failed a drug test at the Australian Open.

And Nadal shot down the latest wave of accusations against his achievements in the sport ahead of his return to action this week in Indian Wells.

"I have never had the temptation of doing something wrong. I am very far from that, doping," said Nadal.

"I heard it a few times again about doping...and I am a little bit tired with that." Nadal's uncle and coach, Toni Nadal, went further as he furiously called Bachelot an imbecile on Spanish radio.

"These days, instead of proving someone's guilt, you have to prove your innocence," he told Rac1.

"Then an imbecile like this person can say any nonsense and see what happens." — AFP

SHARAPOVA LASHES OUT AT CRITICS OVER POSITIVE TEST

INDIAN WELLS: Maria Sharapova hit back Friday at suggestions she received five separate warnings about changes to tennis' anti-doping rules which ultimately led to her testing positive for a banned drug.

A defiant Sharapova defended herself in a post on her Facebook page, saying that she received one clear notice in December titled "Main Changes to the Tennis Anti-Doping Programme for 2016."

"I should have paid more attention to it. But the other 'communications'?"

They were buried in newsletters, websites, or handouts," the Russian star said. Former world number one Sharapova



Maria Sharapova

announced Monday that she failed a drug test at the Australian Open in January.

Sharapova tested positive for meldonium, which was added to the World Anti-Doping Agency's banned list on January 1.

The 28-year-old Sharapova also insisted Friday that she has never faked an injury to try and foil the drug testers.

"I won't pretend to be injured so I can hide the truth about my testing," said Sharapova, vowing to set the record straight over her supposed multiple warnings. "I am determined to fight back," she said. "No excuses, but it's wrong to say I was warned five times."

The Times of London on Wednesday reported that Sharapova had received five separate notifications that meldonium was to be banned. The newspaper said three

correspondences had been sent by the International Tennis Federation [ITF] and two from the Women's Tennis Association (WTA). WADA had also issued communications in September that the substance was to be added to the banned list from January 1.

The Times said all of the warnings from the ITF and WTA arrived in December, with the final reminder landing on December 29. Sharapova said on December 18 she received an email titled "Player News" and mixed in with the rankings, tournament news, bulletins, and birthday wishes was the notification of changes to the anti-doping rules.

'CLICK, HUNT, CLICK, HUNT'

"In other words, in order to be aware of this 'warning,' you had to open an email with a subject line having nothing to do with anti-doping, click on a webpage, enter a password, enter a username, hunt, click, hunt, click, hunt, click, scroll and read.

"I guess some in the media can call that a warning. I think most people would call it too hard to find."

Sharapova said earlier this week that she used meldonium for the past decade to treat illnesses, a heart issue and a magnesium deficiency. Sharapova also took issue with reports that the normal course of treatment with meldonium spanned four to six weeks.

"I didn't take the medicine every day. I took it the way my doctor recommended I take it and I took it in the low doses recommended," she wrote. "I'm proud of how I have played the game. I have been honest and upfront." Sharapova said she is eager to have her hearing with ITF officials so she can give her side of the story.

"I look forward to the ITF hearing at which time they will receive my detailed medical records."

She said she hopes to return to tennis but also admitted that because of the scandal her career may be in jeopardy.

"I hope I will be allowed to play again," she said. "But no matter what, I want you, my fans, to know the truth and have the facts." — AFP

RADWANSKA ADVANCES AT INDIAN WELLS

INDIAN WELLS: Polish third seed Agnieszka Radwanska survived a scare to defeat Slovakian veteran Dominika Cibulkova 6-3, 3-6, 7-5 in her opening Indian Wells match on Friday.

Radwanska struggled at times during the two hour, 41 minute match but she managed to keep intact her record of never having lost in the first round in 10 straight appearances in the WTA and ATP hardcourt event at Indian Wells.

Radwanska, who turned 25 on Sunday, won three tournaments in 2015. She has made the semi-finals in all three tourna-

ments she has played this year, winning the title in Shenzhen, China. Shenzhen was her 18th career WTA singles title.

She finished with six aces, just one double fault and won 56 percent of her first serve points on Friday.

She advances to the third round, where she will face Monica Niculescu, who beat Heather Watson 6-4, 2-6, 6-2. In other women's matches on Friday, ninth seed Petra Kvitova needed three sets to beat Danka Kovinic 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (7/5) and Jelena Jankovic dominated Carina Witthoef 6-1, 6-3. — AFP



INDIAN WELLS: Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland plays Dominika Cibulkova of Slovakia during the BNP Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden on Friday in Indian Wells, California.—AFP



INDIAN WELLS: Serena Williams plays Laura Siegemund of Germany during the BNP Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden on Friday in Indian Wells, California. — AFP

VENUS ENDS BOYCOTT, SERENA WINS OPENER

INDIAN WELLS: Venus Williams finally made peace with Indian Wells tennis fans Friday by ending her 15-year boycott of the hardcourt tournament, but she couldn't put away her Japanese opponent.

Williams' hopes for a storybook ending in her return to the California desert were dashed when she lost 6-4, 6-3 to qualifier Kurumi Nara in a second-round match delayed 30 minutes because of a storm.

The 35-year-old Williams received a hearty reception from the main stadium crowd of about 7,000, with some in attendance standing up to cheer.

But it was a more low-key response than the 57-second standing ovation that Serena received here last year when she ended her 14-year boycott of the joint WTA and ATP Tour event. "It is time to move on and let the past be the past. When I was out there I didn't think back. It was a long time ago," said Venus, who was seeded 10th in the tournament.

In 2001, spectators at Indian Wells booed Serena during the final and jeered her sister and father Richard Williams when the pair arrived to watch the match. Richard Williams alleges that racist comments were directed at them.

"We could have come back here and everyone could have picked up where they left off,"

Venus said. "There had to be a change of attitude on both ends. It isn't always easy. Us, the fans and the city had to have a positive attitude about it." Venus' upset loss to the world number 89 dashed any hopes that the Compton, California, sisters could meet in the quarter-finals at Indian Wells, one of the biggest events on the tennis calendar outside of the Grand Slams.

Serena breezed through her opening match on Friday, beating German qualifier Laura Siegemund 6-2, 6-1. Serena advances to the third round where she will face unseeded Yulia Putintseva of Kazakhstan.

Venus is a former world number one and the first African-American to become the top-ranked women's player in the world.

Tenth-seeded Venus blasted three aces but made four double faults and won just four of 12 break points in the 101-minute match.

A rain and wind storm struck in the middle of the first set as the driving showers sent spectators and players running for cover. "It was a tough day," Venus said. "Very tough conditions. Just brutal out there."

'SHANK SHOTS KEPT GOING IN'

Venus added that luck wasn't on her side Friday. "She played well. Her shank shots kept

going in. I thought, 'How do I get some of mine in?'" Venus said.

This was Serena's first competitive match since her Australian Open final defeat to Angelique Kerber. The world number one didn't look rusty from the nearly two-month layoff as she saved three-of-three break points on her serve and broke the German's serve four times.

"The key was my intensity," Serena said. "She was close to breaking me at one point and I knew if I didn't give 100 percent at that point it was going to be a long night."

Meanwhile, Polish third seed Agnieszka Radwanska survived a scare to defeat Slovakian veteran Dominika Cibulkova 6-3, 3-6, 7-5 in her opening match. She advances to the third round, where she will face Monica Niculescu, who beat Heather Watson 6-4, 2-6, 6-2.

In other women's matches on Friday, defending champion Simona Halep cruised past American Vania King 6-1, 6-1; eighth seed Petra Kvitova needed three sets to beat Danka Kovinic 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (7/5); and Jelena Jankovic dominated Carina Witthoef 6-1, 6-3.

On the men's side, qualifier Bjorn Fratangelo defeated Teymuraz Gabashvili 6-4, 6-4 to set up a second round clash with world number one Novak Djokovic, who is hoping to win his third straight Indian Wells title. — AFP

CONFIDENT DJOKOVIC SHOOTS FOR ANOTHER DESERT TITLE

INDIAN WELLS: Novak Djokovic's opponents have learned over the years that it is never wise to bet against him and it will be no different as he begins his quest for a third consecutive Indian Wells title. Djokovic is also aiming for his fifth overall at this week's ATP and WTA Tour tournament, one of the biggest events on the tennis calendar outside of the four Grand Slams.

"My approach is not that I have to win this, or I am supposed to win this, but I am going to win this," Djokovic said Friday. "Then I am able to believe in myself and that confidence has brought me to where I am today." He is the heavy favourite to take another title at Indian Wells and hopes to use that as a stepping stone towards his first French Open crown which would complete the career Grand Slam.

If Djokovic defends his title in California it would make him the most successful player in the history of the hardcourt tournament. "I like the speed of the courts here," he said. "I feel comfortable. The ball bounces high and I grew up on clay so I am used to high bounces." Djokovic also enters Indian Wells with a 16-1 record this year. His only loss was to Feliciano Lopez in the quarter-finals of the Dubai Tennis Championships. He has dropped just four out of 39 total sets. The 28-year-old Serb opened the season by winning the Doha title and then followed by capturing his 11th career Grand Slam crown and a record-tying sixth Australian Open.

In his last tournament in Dubai, he was forced to retire in the quarter-finals because of an eye infection. It snapped a streak of 17 straight finals going back to last year's Aussie Open.

"It was a couple of not easy weeks for me health-wise," Djokovic said. "It is the first time in my life I have had some kind of issue with my eye." Djokovic has won 11 straight matches in Indian Wells since his latest loss to del Potro in the semi-finals three years ago. Djokovic and

Roger Federer own the tournament record with four titles each. Federer is not here but the unseeded del Potro is after having missed the last two tournaments with injury.

The draw sets up a possible semi-final clash between Djokovic and Spaniard Rafael Nadal. They're almost even in their 47 career meetings,

with the Djokovic owning a 24-23 advantage.

"All in all I feel good," he said. "I have already adjusted to the time zone of the west coast. I am getting back to normal. Hopefully I will be able to play my best from the beginning." "The Grand Slams are the biggest but Indian Wells is right behind it." —AFP



INDIAN WELLS: Novak Djokovic of Serbia addresses the crowd gathered at the unveiling of a mural in his likeness during the BNP Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden on Friday in Indian Wells, California.—AFP



ICC WORLD TWENTY20

WORLD TWENTY20 LIKELY TO BE FOR BATSMEN RATHER THAN SPINNERS

NEW DELHI: High scores are expected in the World Twenty20 as India continues its practice of producing batsmen-friendly pitches for limited overs games, unlike the traditional turning pitches used for test cricket.

India has recently produced some very benign pitches, including in last year's five-game home one-day series where South Africa piled up 438-4 at Mumbai in the decider.

Former Pakistan captain Rashid Latif believes only the best spin bowlers will

be able to make an impact. "There will be more batting-friendly pitches because it's a Twenty20 format and the ball won't get much old," Latif told The Associated Press. "Only spinners like (Ravichandran) Ashwin, (Shahid) Afridi and (Ravindra) Jadeja could trouble the opposition, and that too because they have loads of Twenty20 experience behind them. Otherwise, I don't see spinners getting huge turn."

South Africa allrounder David Miller feels the pitches won't get a chance to

provide aid to spin. "It's only a match of three hours duration and so it (pitch) is not going to break up," Miller said.

"We have to assess it quickly and react to that," South Africa allrounder Jean-Paul Duminy though is fancying his prospects at the World Twenty20 with his handy spin bowling and as one of the better players of slow bowling on surfaces like in India.

"Indian pitches are going to give me a lot of opportunities," Duminy said ahead of the World Twenty20

"Hopefully, I can make them count. But generally guys have gained experience to play this game in different conditions in different ways." England's big-hitting batsman Alex Hales agrees with Duminy that batsmen have methods of combating any turn that does arise. "If you look down our order there are good players of spin," Hales said in reference to Joe Root and captain Eoin Morgan. "Everyone has to have their own methods. Some like to move their feet and some guys are sweeping, but

we're all confident in our own methods." The Super 10 stage of the World Twenty20 gets underway on Tuesday with a Group 2 game between India and New Zealand at Nagpur. Australia, Pakistan and a qualifier from an ongoing preliminary league complete the group. The West Indies, England, South Africa, Sri Lanka and a qualifier will be in Group 1. The semifinals will be played in New Delhi and Mumbai and the final will be at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on April 3. —AP

STARS BEAT BLACKHAWKS TO GO TOP OF WESTERN CONFERENCE

DALLAS: Jason Spezza scored in his fifth straight game, Tyler Seguin and Jamie Benn ended goal-scoring slumps and the Dallas Stars regained the Western Conference lead by beating the Chicago Blackhawks 5-2 on Friday night. Dallas improved to 41-20-8 with 90 points, one more than St. Louis and two more than Chicago. Each team has 13 games remaining. Kari Lehtonen made 21 saves for the Stars, who are 3-0-1 in their last four games. Antoine Roussel and Ales Hemsky also scored. Teuvo Teravainen and Tomas Fleischmann scored for Chicago. Benn's power-play goal at 10:42 of the second gave Dallas a 4-0 lead. Blackhawks coach Joel Quenneville then removed Corey Crawford, who had 16 saves. Scott Darling finished with 10 saves. He was pulled for an extra skater with 8:10 to play and returned after Ales Hemsky's empty-net goal with 4:31 left.

BLUES 5, DUCKS 2

Vladimir Tarasenko had two goals and an assist, Jake Allen got his fifth straight win and St. Louis beat Anaheim. Jori Lehtera and Patrik Berglund sparked St. Louis with third-period goals 64 seconds apart for a 3-1 lead. Paul Stastny also scored for the Blues. Allen made 26 saves and improved to 4-0-0 career against the Ducks. It was also his career best 23rd win of the season. Ryan Getzlaf and Rickard Rakell scored for the Ducks, and Frederik Andersen made 18 saves.

PENGUINS 3, BLUE JACKETS 2

Marc-Andre Fleury became the 20th NHL goalie with 350 victories and Pittsburgh beat Columbus. Kris Letang, Chris Kunitz and Carl Hagelin scored for Pittsburgh, and Evgeni Malkin and Phil

Kessel each had two assists. The Penguins jumped ahead of Detroit for the first wild-card spot in the Eastern conference. Fleury made 11 of his 25 saves in the third period. Gregory Campbell had a goal and an assist and Cam Atkinson also scored for the Blue Jackets, who came into the game with points in 12 of their last 15 games. Sergei Bobrovsky made 28 saves in his first action since Jan 21.

FLYERS 3, LIGHTNING 1

Steve Mason made 18 saves, Sam Gagner and Matt Read both scored power-play goals and Philadelphia beat Tampa Bay. Brayden Schenn also scored for the Flyers. Philadelphia had been off since beating the Lightning 4-2 Monday night in Philadelphia to end Tampa Bay's franchise-record nine-game winning streak. The victory moved the Flyers within two points of Detroit for the second Eastern Conference wild-card spot. The Lightning, second in the Atlantic Division, got a goal from Brian Boyle, and Ben Bishop made 19 saves. Tampa Bay is 0-2-1 since their long winning stretch was stopped.

COYOTES 4, FLAMES 1

Brad Richardson scored twice after Antoine Vermette put Arizona ahead early in the third period and the Coyotes beat Calgary to snap a 10-game road winless streak. Boyd Gordon also scored for Arizona, and Louis Domingue made 24 saves. Shane Doan had two assists and has 41 points this season, giving him his 14th season with at least 40. The Coyotes are 2-8-1 in their last 11 games. Mikael Backlund scored for Calgary, and Joni Ortio made 22 saves. The Flames are 1-1-1 halfway through a six-game homestand. — AP



NAGPUR: Afghanistan cricketers Shahzad Mohammadi (C) and Gulabdin Naib (R) celebrate after winning their T20 World Cup cricket match against Zimbabwe at the VCA stadium in Nagpur yesterday. — AFP

AFGHANISTAN THUMP ZIMBABWE TO MAKE WORLD T20 MAIN DRAW

ENGLAND BEAT NZ IN WORLD T20 WARM-UP

NEW DELHI: Afghanistan roared into the main draw of the World Twenty20 with an emphatic 59-run victory over Zimbabwe in a first round Group B match yesterday.

Mohammad Shahzad (40) gave Afghanistan a flying start before Mohammad Nabi (52) and Samiullah Shenwari (43) added 98 runs off 64 balls to power them to 186-6, their highest total in this format.

The associate nation then returned to bowl out Zimbabwe for 127 to register a memorable victory over a full-member nation and join England, South Africa, West Indies and Sri Lanka in Group One of the Super 10 stage of the tournament.

"This was a very important match for us. People in Afghanistan are crazy about cricket. They love the game, so (winning it) was very important for us," victorious captain Asghar Stanikzai said.

With a place in the main draw at stake, Stanikzai opted to bat and was vindicated as Shahzad set alight Nagpur's VCA Stadium with his swashbuckling batting.

The portly 28-year-old hit Tendai Chatara for four successive boundaries after a quiet opening over, forcing the pacer off attack.

Donald Tiripano was pressed into service but there was no respite from Shahzad who hit him for three successive fours. Shahzad greeted left-arm spinner Sean Williams by hitting his first delivery for a six but fell in the same over after a 23-ball blitz attempting a reverse sweep.

His dismissal triggered a mini-collapse as Afghanistan, cruising at 49 for no loss in the fifth over, slumped to 63-4 in the eighth.

Nabi then joined forces with Shenwari to first steady the innings before accelerating. Beneficiary of a missed stumping opportunity, Nabi hit Wellington Masakadza for two sixes in the same over and brought up his maiden fifty in 30 balls before falling in the final over.

Zimbabwe's erratic bowlers conceded 25 extras, including 17 wides, to make things difficult for themselves. Chasing a daunting target, Zimbabwe lost their top half for 65 inside 12 overs. Tinashe Panyangara's unbeaten 17 was

the top score in the Zimbabwe innings which ended with two balls left.

Leg-spinner Rashid Khan was the pick of the Afghan bowlers, claiming three for 11 in his tidy four overs but Nabi, who also got a wicket with the ball, was adjudged man-of-the-match.

Meanwhile, England defeated New Zealand by six wickets in their World Twenty20 warm-up match in Mumbai yesterday.

New Zealand won the toss and elected to bat with captain Kane Williamson smashing a 63 that included nine fours as the Black Caps made 169 for eight in their 20 overs.

The second highest scorer for New Zealand was Ross Taylor who finished on 19 not out at the western Indian city's Wankhede Stadium.

England opener Jason Roy then powered his way to 55 off 36 balls, including seven runs and two sixes, while Alex Hales notched 44 as England reached 170 for four with four balls remaining.

Leg-spinner Adil Rashid was the standout performer of England's bowling attack, grabbing three wickets for just 15 runs. — Agencies



DALLAS: Artem Anisimov #15 of the Chicago Blackhawks skates the puck against Jamie Benn #14 of the Dallas Stars in the second period at American Airlines Center on Friday in Dallas, Texas. — AFP

NHL results/standings

Pittsburgh 3, Columbus 2; Philadelphia 3, Tampa Bay 1; St. Louis 5, Anaheim 2; Dallas 5, Chicago 2; Arizona 4, Calgary 1.

Western Conference						
Central Division						
	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS
Dallas	41	20	8	223	198	90
St. Louis	40	20	9	178	168	89
Chicago	41	22	6	195	168	88
Nashville	34	21	13	187	173	81
Colorado	35	30	4	186	195	74
Minnesota	31	27	10	178	171	72
Winnipeg	27	35	5	173	201	59
Pacific Division						
Los Angeles	40	22	4	179	152	84
Anaheim	37	21	9	167	159	83
San Jose	37	24	6	198	177	80
Arizona	29	32	7	181	211	65
Vancouver	26	28	12	160	190	64
Calgary	28	35	5	182	213	61
Edmonton	27	36	7	169	205	61
Eastern Conference						
Atlantic Division						
Boston	38	23	8	210	187	84
Florida	37	21	9	187	163	83
Tampa Bay	39	24	5	186	163	83
Detroit	33	23	11	170	179	77
Montreal	32	30	6	186	190	70
Ottawa	31	30	8	198	218	70
Buffalo	27	33	9	164	188	63
Toronto	22	33	11	159	197	55
Metropolitan Division						
Washington	49	13	5	217	155	103
NY Rangers	39	22	6	192	173	84
NY Islanders	37	20	8	189	163	82
Pittsburgh	35	24	8	183	170	78
Philadelphia	32	23	11	170	175	75
Carolina	31	26	11	168	183	73
New Jersey	32	29	7	151	170	71
Columbus	28	32	8	180	211	64

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

AUSSIES BANK ON IPL EXPERIENCE IN W T20

NEW DELHI: Skipper Steve Smith said yesterday that Australia were determined to break their World T20 hoodoo, saying his team's vast experience of playing in the Indian Premier League would give them a definite edge.

Five-time World Cup champions Australia have been under-performers in the shortest format and their best showing in the tournament has been the runners-up finish in 2010 when they lost the final to England. "Traditionally we haven't done as well as we would have liked in this format of the game. This is a tournament that has eluded us so we are here to try and win it," Smith told reporters in Kolkata at Australia's opening press conference of the 16-team tournament.

"We feel pretty settled, we have 15 guys who can give this tournament a pretty good shake," he added.

Smith, who leads the team in all the three formats, said they will be banking on their all-rounders who have recently performed well. He said inclusion of debutant leg-spinner Adam Zampa in the squad will boost the team's bowling department on slow Indian tracks. The 26-year-old skipper said his team will adapt to the conditions quickly and will fully utilise the Indian experience to win the cup. "We know what to expect from the conditions over here, a lot of us have played here before, either in IPL or against

India so we know what to expect and we're ready for the challenge," the skipper said. Smith and five of his teammates in the World T20 squad are part of the various IPL franchises and their familiarity with Indian pitches will auger well for them.

Coming into the sixth edition of the tournament at the back of a 2-1 T20 series win against South Africa, the fifth-ranked side will play New

Zealand in their opener on Friday. Australia will play favourites India on March 27 and Smith insisted that there is no added pressure on the side that recently lost the T20 series 0-3 against the MS Dhoni-led side.

"I don't think there is any pressure. I think playing a world cup...playing in international cricket, there is always lots of pressure. So for us it's taking each game at a time," he said. — AFP



KOLKATA: Australia's captain Steve Smith gestures as he answers a question during a press conference ahead of the World T20 cricket tournament in Kolkata yesterday. — AFP

WENGER CHALLENGES ARSENAL TO SHOW MORE CONSISTENCY

LONDON: Arsene Wenger has told his Arsenal stars to show more consistency as the FA Cup holders try to get their spluttering season back on track in today's quarter-final against Watford. Wenger's side host the Hornets at a time when they are languishing eight points behind leaders Leicester in the Premier League and teetering on the brink of another tame Champions League exit.

On Wednesday, Arsenal must overturn a two-goal first-leg deficit in the Champions League against holders Barcelona in the Camp Nou to avoid crashing out of Europe's elite club competition.

Most Gunners supporters would admit the FA Cup represents by far the

most realistic chance of silverware after winning it for the last two seasons, but Wenger refuses to rule out a dramatic turn of fortunes both at home and abroad.

"I haven't given up on the Premier League at all and I've said that many times, nor the Champions League," Wenger said. "We have to take care of the next minute and the next minute is an FA Cup game."

"Is it the best chance to win a trophy? It's still far away. We must win the next game and prove that we can show consistency again."

Losing Aaron Ramsey to injury for the rest of the campaign would be a major blow to any renewed challenge in

the league, but Wenger remains adamant that his season is not at an end.

The Wales midfielder suffered a thigh injury in Tuesday's 4-0 FA Cup fifth round replay win at Hull just 15 minutes after coming off the bench in the second half.

POSITIVE

When asked whether Ramsey's season was over Wenger insisted: "I don't believe that. At the moment his clinical signs are quite positive. I would say four weeks. It was a bit worse than I thought because I didn't see it."

"Usually when a player gets injured with a muscle, he stops and I did not

have that feeling of precaution so I thought he would be available for Sunday." Per Mertesacker and fellow centre-back Gabriel also suffered injuries against Hull at a time when Laurent Koscielny is already sidelined.

"Mertesacker came off injured but should be available," Wenger added.

"Koscielny is not far. 'Will I risk him or not? There is a little medical risk but I have not made a decision yet. 'Francis Coquelin is coming back from suspension and Hector Bellerin is now available. 'My gut feeling is that Gabriel will join in tomorrow and be available.' Arsenal beat Watford 3-0 at Vicarage Road in October but the Hornets' utility man Ikechi Anya believed his side were

hard done by on that occasion. "When we played them at home it was a false result, we were very much in the game," he said.

"I think they had a 12-minute spell when they scored three times, and it makes you think it was a beating, but we had our chances before that."

"I'm sure with the strikers we've got, at the Emirates, hopefully they take their chances and we can attack them from the get go. 'We're only one win away from Wembley, that's a great incentive for us, and we're all looking forward to it. 'We can go out and look to express ourselves, there's no pressure on us, 9,000 fans are coming and we can try and make them proud.' —AFP



OAKLAND: Golden State Warriors' Stephen Curry passes the ball to James Michael McAdoo (20) as Portland Trail Blazers' Meyers Leonard and Maurice Harkless, right, defend during the second half of an NBA basketball game Friday, in Oakland, Calif. —AP

WARRIORS STRETCH RECORD STREAK, BEAT BLAZERS IN SO

OAKLAND: Stephen Curry scored 34 points, Klay Thompson had 37 and the Golden State Warriors avenged their worst defeat of the season by beating the Portland Trail Blazers 128-112 on Friday night, extending their record regular-season home winning streak to 47 games. The Splash Brothers combined to shoot 15 for 25 on 3-pointers and went 26 for 55 overall, with Thompson joining Curry as the only players with 200 3s in four straight seasons. They scored 30 or more points in the same game for the sixth time in their careers. Draymond Green added 17 points, 13 rebounds and seven assists. The Warriors are 29-0 at Oracle Arena this season. They are 58-6 overall. CJ McCollum scored 18 points and Portland topped the defending champions with 19 3s to Golden State's 18 as the teams combined for the most 3s in NBA history - on 37-for-76 shooting. The Trail Blazers beat the Warriors 137-105 in Portland in Feb. 19.

points, and Matt Barnes had a triple-double with 26 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists, in Memphis' victory over New Orleans. JaMychal Green added a career-high 21 points and grabbed 10 rebounds to help Memphis win for fifth time in its last seven. Rookie point guard Briante Weber, signed to a 10-day contract earlier in the day, added 10 points and seven assists. Jrue Holiday led the Pelicans with 34 points and 10 assists, while Anthony Davis had 25 points and 13 rebounds.

ROCKETS 102, CELTICS 98

James Harden scored 32 points, including Houston's final eight, and Rockets snapped Voston's home winning streak at 14 games. Michael Beasley added 18 points and eight rebounds, and Dwight Howard had 12 points and 12 rebounds for Houston. The Rockets have won three straight - all on the road. Isaiah Thomas led the Celtics with 30 points.

HEAT 118, BULLS 96

Goran Dragic scored a season-high 26 points, Josh Richardson added a career-high 22 and Miami used a big fourth quarter to beat short-handed Chicago. Luol Deng had 19 points for the Heat. They outscored the Bulls 34-15 in the final period on the way to their sixth win in seven games. Pau Gasol led Chicago with 17 points, 12 rebounds and nine assists. Justin Holiday scored a season-high 14 points, but the Bulls came up short on a night guards Derrick Rose and Jimmy Butler sat with injuries. Chicago lost its second straight.

CLIPPERS 101, KNICKS 94

Chris Paul had 24 points and 15 assists and JJ. Redick added 20 points in Los Angeles' victory over New York. DeAndre Jordan had 19 rebounds along with 10 points. Kristaps Porzingis led the Knicks with 23 points in 31 minutes after getting into early foul trouble. Carmelo Anthony and Robin Lopez each had 20.

HORNETS 118, PISTONS 103

Marvin Williams tied a career high with five 3-pointers and scored 22 points, and Charlotte beat Detroit for its sixth straight win. Nicolas Batum added 17 points and 11 assists, and Kemba Walker had 16 points and eight assists after scoring at 30 points in four straight games. The Hornets have won 12 of their last 14 games. Kentavious Caldwell-Pope had 24 points for Detroit.

76ERS 95, NETS 89

Carl Landry scored 16 points, and Nerlens Noel had 13 points and 11 rebounds to help Philadelphia snap a 13-game losing streak with a victory over Brooklyn. Ish Smith added 10 points, nine assists and seven rebounds for the 76ers (9-56). They won for the first time since Feb. 6, also against Brooklyn. Brook Lopez scored 24 points for the Nets.

TIMBERWOLVES 99, THUNDER 96

Ricky Rubio made a 3-pointer with 0.2 seconds left to lift Minnesota past Oklahoma City. Rubio finished with 13 points and 12 assists for his eighth double-double of the season, and the Timberwolves snapped a 10-game losing streak against the Thunder. Gorgui Dieng had 25 points and nine rebounds for Minnesota, and Andrew Wiggins added 20 points, five steals and four assists. Kevin Durant scored 28 points, and Russell Westbrook had 26 for the Thunder.

MAGIC 107, KINGS 100

Aaron Gordon had 20 points and 11 rebounds, and Victor Oladipo scored six of his 18 points during a 40-second stretch in fourth quarter to lead Orlando past Sacramento. Evan Fournier and Jason Smith scored 16 points apiece, and C.J. Watson added 10 points and five assists to help the slumping Magic end their three-game losing streak. Kosta Koufos had 19 points for Sacramento.

GRIZZLIES 121, PELICANS 114, OT

Lance Stephenson scored a career-high 33

JAZZ 114, WIZARDS 93

Shelvin Mack scored a career-high 27 points in Utah's victory over Washington. Mack shot 11 for 17 from the field with an array of interior floaters and three 3-pointers. Gordon Hayward had 18 points, and Rodney Hood added 14 for Utah. John Wall had 24 points and nine assists, and Markieff Morris added 16 points for Washington. —AP

NBA results/standings

Charlotte 118, Detroit 103; Philadelphia 95, Brooklyn 89; Houston 102, Boston 98; Miami 118, Chicago 96; Memphis 121, New Orleans 114 (OT); Minnesota 99, Oklahoma City 96; Utah 114, Washington 93; Orlando 107, Sacramento 100; Golden State 128, Portland 112; LA Clippers 101, NY Knicks 94.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference			
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division			
W	L	PCT	GB	Oklahoma City	44	21	.677
Toronto	43	20	.683	Portland	34	32	.515
Boston	39	27	.591	Utah	30	35	.462
NY Knicks	27	40	.403	Denver	27	38	.415
Brooklyn	18	47	.277	Minnesota	21	45	.318
Philadelphia	9	56	.138				
Central Division				Pacific Division			
Cleveland	46	18	.719	Golden State	58	6	.906
Indiana	34	30	.531	LA Clippers	42	22	.656
Detroit	33	32	.508	Sacramento	25	39	.391
Chicago	32	32	.500	Phoenix	17	48	.262
Milwaukee	27	38	.415	LA Lakers	14	52	.212
Southeast Division				Southwest Division			
Miami	38	27	.585	San Antonio	55	10	.846
Charlotte	36	28	.563	Memphis	39	26	.600
Atlanta	36	29	.554	Houston	33	32	.508
Washington	30	34	.469	Dallas	33	32	.508
Orlando	28	36	.438	New Orleans	24	40	.375

PSG POISED TO LIFT CROWN AS MONACO HELD BY REIMS

MONACO: Paris Saint-Germain's path to claiming the Ligue 1 title in record time this weekend was cleared on Friday as nearest challengers Monaco were held 2-2 at home by Reims. A win at lowly Troyes today would give Laurent Blanc's side 77 points — 25 more than Monaco who are currently second with 52 points after 30 games — and a fourth successive crown to round out an excellent week after reaching the Champions League quarter-finals.

Until now the fastest a team has won the French league title was after 33 games when Gerard Houllier led Lyon to the crown in 2007. Monaco are targetting the second direct Champions League spot with Leonardo Jardim's side having no room for error with Lyon, the only team to beat the Parisians this season, third, seven points behind the Principality side. Monaco had gotten off to a bright start with winter signing Vagner Love getting a first half double.

The Brazilian opened after just five minutes at Stade Louis II only for Gaetan Charbonnier to get the equaliser six minutes later following a superb cross from Nicolas De Preville.

Vagner got his second on 37 minutes following an error by Charbonnier only for fellow Brazilian Diego to pull Reims level after 79 minutes, for a precious point as they sit three points above the drop zone. "Our situation isn't good," said Jardim. "I'm not happy. At 2-1 we had the chance to score a third and we missed. When you miss the third goal you give a lot of confidence to your rivals."

He added: "But there are eight games left, 24 points to collect. The third (placed team) will play against the fourth (Rennes-Lyon), both won't win." Lyon, coming off last weekend's 5-1 win against Guingamp, travel to another Brittany side Rennes on Sunday, with the hosts also in impressive form having beaten Nantes 4-1 last Sunday. Rennes are just a point behind Lyon along with Nice who travel to Montpellier. —AFP



Laurent Blanc

UNBEATEN BUFFON GOES PAST ZOFF AS JUVE HEAP PRESSURE ON NAPOLI

MILAN: Gianluigi Buffon's impressive unbeaten run in Serie A gave Juventus a second reason to celebrate on Friday as the champions opened up a six-point lead on title rivals Napoli with a 1-0 win over Sassuolo.

Paulo Dybala's superb 36th minute strike made the difference in Turin as Juve, bidding for a record-equaling fifth consecutive crown, took their unbeaten run to 19 games to keep the pressure on Napoli ahead of their trip to Palermo on Sunday.

Reputed giant-killers Sassuolo were unbeaten since a 2-0 home defeat to Roma in early February, Eusebio Di Francesco's men beating Lazio and AC Milan amid a recent three-game winning run.

But their winning streak came to an end when Dybala latched on to Juan Cuadrado's well-worked delivery, controlled on the right side of the area and beat Andrea Consigli at the 'keeper's far post with a superb curling drive. Dybala's 14th strike this season saw him overtake his previous best of 13 while at Palermo, and although he admitted it wasn't "my best goal", he told Sky Sport: "It wasn't too bad either."

"In the first half of the season, we were given up for dead, but now we're here at the top, in the Italian Cup final (against AC Milan) and travel to Bayern Munich next week."

When Juve travel to the Allianz Arena looking to build on a shaky 2-2 draw from the first leg of their Champions League last 16 tie, they will be hoping Buffon remains impervious.

The Italy veteran started the game unbeaten over 836 minutes and, having surpassed the legendary Dino Zoff's tally of 903 minutes in the 67th minute, he went on to finish on 926 minutes unbeaten, just three behind the 929-minute record set by Sebastiano Rossi with AC Milan in 1994. "This win was crucial for our campaign, and for the record of Buffon who totally deserves it," said Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri. Juve started brightly and after just 25 seconds Dybala's volley from Mario Mandzukic's lay-off skimmed the crossbar, while the Bosnian drilled wide from Dybala's pass soon after.

MOMENTUM

Brazilian wingback Alex Sandro saw his back-post header from a free kick blocked by Consigli, while Sassuolo were denied a 20th minute lead when Alfred Duncan fired wide when he ran unchecked on to a cutback into the area. Allegri's patience on the touchline was stretched further on 25 minutes when Sami Khedira bundled Dybala's cut-back over from close range after Mandzukic's weighted delivery into the box.

Juve had the momentum, with Dybala linking well with Cuadrado but then firing Sandro's inviting backheel over.

Dybala made amends on 36 minutes when a one-two with Cuadrado saw the Colombian draw three players and then find Dybala in space to beat Consigli with a great curling drive from 20 yards.

Juve remained in command after the restart but a mazy run by Nicola Sansone kept Juve's back three on their toes, and then Buffon courted controversy when he appeared to handle outside the area.

Juve were running out of ideas but after applause for Buffon just after the hour Juve moved up a gear, only for Khedira to fumble Dybala's cutback and then Cuadrado scuff the follow-up.

Paul Pogba replaced Khedira with 18 minutes on the clock but Buffon was at full stretch to parry Sansone's well-hit drive.

At the other end Kwadwo Asamoah got a shot away that failed to threaten but Juve crept closer to their second when Cuadrado controlled well to set up Pogba for a first-timer that forced Consigli into action.

With one eye on their Champions League decider away to last 16 opponents Bayern Munich on March 16, Allegri replaced Dybala with Alvaro Morata 10 minutes and the Spaniard snap shot after bursting into the area had Consigli scrambling onto his back. Sassuolo refused to buckle though, and soon after Buffon was forced down desperately to save at the second attempt from Sansone's drive as Juve's defence backed off tamely. —AFP



TURIN: Juventus' German midfielder Sami Khedira(L) fights for the ball with Sassuolo's Italian forward Diego Falcinelli during the Italian Serie A football match between Juventus and Sassuolo on Friday at the Juventus Stadium in Turin. —AFP



BARCELONA: FC Barcelona's Lionel Messi, right, duels for the ball against Getafe's Alvaro Pereira during a Spanish La Liga soccer match at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona, Spain, yesterday. — AP

MESSI, NEYMAR HELP BARCA TO 12TH STRAIGHT LA LIGA WIN

BARCELONA: Lionel Messi scored, provided three assists and missed a penalty as Barcelona pressed home their advantage at the top of La Liga with a 6-0 thrashing of Getafe yesterday.

Juan Rodriguez's own goal opened the scoring before Messi saw his penalty saved by Vicente Guaita, teed up by Munir El Haddadi and Neymar and smashed home his 36th goal of the season all before half-time. Neymar and Arda Turan rounded off the scoring to seal Barca's 12th straight La Liga win after the break.

A 37th consecutive game without defeat opens up an 11-point lead on second-placed Atletico, who host Deportivo la Coruna later.

Real Madrid are now 15 points adrift of Barca in third ahead of their trip to Las Palmas today. An eighth defeat in nine games leaves Getafe just a point above the relegation zone. "This is a unique team, different to the rest and which does things that make it seem like there is nothing the opponent can do," said Barca boss Luis Enrique.

"It is a great pleasure to be in this position." The European champions weren't even at full strength as Enrique left Luis Suarez on the bench ahead of Barca's return to Champions League action against Arsenal on Wednesday.

Yet, the hosts still only took seven minutes to break the deadlock as Jordi Alba's driven cross towards Messi was scooped into the far corner of his own net by Rodriguez.

Barca's one fallibility this season was exposed moments later when Neymar was chopped down by Emiliano Velazquez inside the area.

Messi took responsibility, but for the ninth time in 20 spot-kicks Barca failed to convert, as Guaita dived to his left to turn the five-time World Player of the Year's effort to safety.

Guaita's intervention kept Getafe in the game for just a further nine minutes as Messi directed Andres Iniesta's through ball onto El Haddadi's head for the second. Gerard Pique then hit the bar as Getafe failed to contain the waves of Barca attacks.

Neymar's display had been under scrutiny after he took advantage of being suspended for last weekend's 4-0 win at Eibar to fly back to Brazil to celebrate his sister's birthday.

Yet, the break seemed to do the 24-year-old good as he raced onto a brilliant Messi pass to slot home his first goal in four games. Messi then took out his frustration at not netting from the spot to rifle home the fourth from outside the box five minutes before half-time.

The pattern continued after the break with Messi in generous mood with another clinical through ball for Neymar to sweep home his 25th goal of the season.

And Turan added a sixth just before the hour mark with an acrobatic overhead kick

which left Guaita flatfooted. Iniesta was rested for the final half hour ahead of Arsenal's trip to the Camp Nou, despite Barca holding a commanding 2-0 first-leg lead.

Yet, Suarez didn't get the chance to further his case in the battle with Cristiano Ronaldo to be La Liga's top scorer as he remained on the bench for the full 90 minutes. — AFP

Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLAND FA CUP	
Arsenal v Watford	16:30
beIN SPORTS 2 HD	
Man United v West Ham	19:00
beIN SPORTS 1 HD	
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE	
Liverpool v Chelsea	19:00
beIN SPORTS	
Aston Villa v Tottenham	19:00
beIN SPORTS 2 HD	
SPANISH LEAGUE	
Levante v Valencia	14:00
beIN SPORTS 3 HD	
Sevilla v Villarreal	18:00
beIN SPORTS 3 HD	
de Bilbao v Real Betis	20:15
beIN SPORTS 3 HD	
Las Palmas v Real Madrid	22:30
beIN SPORTS 3 HD	
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE	
Chievo Verona v AC Milan	14:30
beIN SPORTS 4 HD	
Udinese v AS Roma	17:00
beIN SPORTS 4 HD	
Genoa v Torino	17:00
beIN SPORTS 1 HD	
Carpi v Frosinone	17:00
beIN SPORTS	
Fiorentina v Verona	17:00
beIN SPORTS 9 HD	
SS Lazio v Atalanta	22:45
beIN SPORTS 5 HD	
Citta v SSC Napoli	22:45
beIN SPORTS 4 HD	
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA	
Bayer 04 v Hamburger	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Dortmund v Mainz 05	19:30
beIN SPORTS 5 HD	
FRENCH LEAGUE	
ES Troyes v PSG	16:00
beIN SPORTS 6 HD	
Nantes v Angers	19:00
beIN SPORTS	
Stade Rennes v Lyonnais	23:00
beIN SPORTS	



INGOLSTADT: Stuttgart's Kevin Großkreutz, left, challenges for the ball with Ingolstadt's Robert Bauer during the German Bundesliga soccer match between FC Ingolstadt and VfB Stuttgart in Ingolstadt, Germany, yesterday. — AP

PELLE STRIKES TWICE AS SOUTHAMPTON BEAT STOKE



STOKE-ON-TRENT: Graziano Pelle ended a 13-game goal drought with a brace as Southampton won 2-1 at Stoke City yesterday to steal a march on their European qualification rivals. The Italy striker struck twice in the first 30 minutes and despite Marko Arnautovic reducing the arrears and Southampton substitute Sadio Mane seeing red at the death, Ronald Koeman's side held on for victory. In ending a three-game winless run in the Premier League, Southampton climbed above Mark Hughes's Stoke to seventh place, three points below Manchester United,

who currently occupy the last Europa League slot. It was Southampton's first league win at the Britannia Stadium since April 2006.

Stoke welcomed captain Ryan Shawcross back after eight games out with a back problem and they made a positive start, Giannelli Imbula shooting wide after a positive run and Ibrahim Afellay seeing a shot blocked. But no sooner had Southampton stirred as an attacking force, Stoke goalkeeper Jack Butland tipping Pelle's header over the bar, than they went ahead.

From Steven Davis's left-wing corner, Pelle rose at the near post to glance a header past Butland.

Butland parried from Shane Long shortly after, but on the half-hour the Stoke goalkeeper was at fault as Pelle swapped passes with Dusan Tadic before curling in a tame shot that the England international should have saved. To make matters worse for the home side, winger Xherdan Shaqiri was then forced off holding the top of his thigh, with Bojan Krkic coming on.

Southampton squandered a gilt-edged chance to effectively kill the game off before half-time as Long freed Tadic, whose decision to cut inside onto his right foot allowed Geoff Cameron to come across and block. Stoke sought to exploit the let-off and reduced the deficit in the 52nd minute, Arnautovic flicking the ball into the roof of the net from Afellay's cross.

Stoke pushed for a leveller, but found no joy, Afellay shooting over from range and Virgil van Dijk brilliantly diverting Mame Biram Diouf's shot over the bar.

Southampton should have been awarded a penalty when Tadic was sent sprawling by Butland after knocking the ball past him, only for referee Lee Mason to shake his head.

After Southampton substitute James Ward-Prowse had struck the bar with a

free-kick, Mason angered the visitors again by showing Mane a straight red card for an aerial challenge on Erik Pieters, but Koeman's men survived. — AFP



STOKE-ON-TRENT: Stoke City goalkeeper Jack Butland in action, during the English Premier League soccer match between Stoke City and Southampton, at the Britannia Stadium, in Stoke-on-Trent, England, yesterday. — AP

BOURNEMOUTH SET FOR SURVIVAL AFTER COOK DOWNS SWANSEA



BOURNEMOUTH: Bournemouth look set to preserve their Premier League status after Steve Cook's late strike clinched a 3-2 win over fellow strugglers Swansea yesterday. Eddie Howe's side embarked on their first ever top-flight campaign widely tipped for a quick return to the Championship, but they seem certain to defy the pundits' predictions after a thrilling clash at Dean Court. Max Gradel put Bournemouth ahead before Swansea forward Modou Barrow equalised to become the first Gambian to score in the Premier League. Josh King restored the hosts' advantage, then Gylfi Sigurdsson drew Swansea level, only for Cook to win it for Bournemouth with 12 minutes left. Bournemouth's third successive win lifts them 13 points clear of the relegation zone on 38 points with eight games remaining. Given that 37 points was enough points to stay up in each of the last four seasons, the Cherries should be back in the Premier League next season. Swansea's future is less certain after a loss that leaves them eight points above the bottom three.

Swansea head coach Francesco Guidolin had missed his team's last two matches after the Italian was hospitalised with a chest infection. Guidolin was still recovering so, although he picked the team after leaving hospital this week, his assistant Alan Curtis took charge again. Bournemouth were quickly into their stride and King headed just over from Gradel's cross before Andrew Surman hit a post with a curling free-kick. Gradel was the game's most influential figure though and he opened the scoring in the 37th minute.

Lukasz Fabianski made a hash of punching clear when he came for Adam Smith's cross and Ivorian winger Gradel pounced with a cool finish into the far corner for his first Premier League goal. Gradel charged towards the Bournemouth bench to celebrate with the medical staff who helped him during his long spell out with a cruciate ligament injury earlier this season.

The visitors hit back two minutes later as Barrow cut in from the right before curling his shot into the far corner for his first ever Swansea goal. But Gradel was proving impossible for Swansea to subdue and in the 50th minute he drove forward before picking out King, who drove his shot past Fabianski's unconvincing attempted save at his near post. Barrow turned provider in the 62nd minute when his cross found Sigurdsson for a smart turn and blistering drive into the top corner for the Iceland midfielder's seventh goal in his last 11 games.

There was no let-up from the hosts however and they regained the lead in the 78th minute when Cook headed Matt Ritchie's corner into the roof of the net. — AFP



BOURNEMOUTH: AFC Bournemouth's Matt Ritchie, center, and Swansea City's Neil Taylor, left, during the English Premier League soccer match at the Vitality Stadium, Bournemouth, England, yesterday. — AP

PALACE PONCE LATE TO REACH FA CUP S-FINALS

READING: Crystal Palace reached the FA Cup semi-finals for the first time in 21 years as Yohan Cabaye's controversial penalty inspired a 2-0 win at second tier Reading on Friday. Alan Pardew's Premier League strugglers looked as though they would have to settle for a replay with just minutes left in the quarter-final at the Madejski Stadium. But Yannick Bolasie won a debatable 86th minute penalty after tumbling following the slightest contact with Reading defender Jake Cooper, who was sent off for the foul.

France midfielder Yohan Cabaye stepped up to convert the spot-kick and Fraizer Campbell added Palace's second goal with virtually the last kick.

The Eagles' late flourish takes them into the last four for the first time since 1995 when they were beaten by Manchester United in a replay. They last made the final in 1990 when Pardew, then a journeyman Palace midfielder, was the goal-scoring hero in a famous semi-final upset of Liverpool.

Palace's progress to the semi-finals at Wembley is at odds with their terrible league form and they arrived at Reading on a 12-match winless run that had seen them slide towards the relegation zone.

It was a much-needed boost for Pardew, who cut his managerial teeth at Reading before walking out in 2003 to take charge of

West Ham. He received a frosty reception from Royals fans on his latest return, but eventually had the last laugh.

"I haven't seen the penalty again and I'm not going to even give it an opinion. I've had enough trouble with penalties!" Pardew said in reference to Liverpool's dubious penalty winner against Palace last weekend. "It was a tricky tie for us but we were really good and should have wrapped it up before the penalty. "We've been terrific in the cup but edgy and nervous in the league. Hopefully we can take this into league."

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

Chances were at a premium and it took over 20 minutes for Reading, 14th in the second tier, to threaten for the first time when Michael Hector's header was comfortably saved by Wayne Hennessey.

Palace gradually began to exert a measure of control and Cabaye's free-kick drew a fine save from Ali Al Habsi.

Emmanuel Adebayor should have put Pardew's men ahead when the Togo forward held off Paul McShane for a strike that was too close to Al Habsi. Reading forward Ola John fared no better than Adebayor when a golden opportunity fell his way just before half-time, with his hesitancy allowing the Palace keeper to save after he misjudged a cross.—AFP

Sports

Venus ends
boycott, Serena
wins opener



Afghanistan
thump Zimbabwe
to make World
T20 main draw



SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 2016

BOURNEMOUTH SET FOR SURVIVAL AFTER COOK DOWNS SWANSEA Page 19



LIVERPOOL: Chelsea's Diego Costa, center, narrowly fails to score past Everton's goalkeeper Joel Robles during the English FA Cup quarter-final soccer match between Everton and Chelsea at Goodison Park Stadium yesterday. — AP

LUKAKU SINKS CHELSEA, COSTA SENT OFF

LIVERPOOL: Romelu Lukaku scored two superb goals to give Everton a 2-0 FA Cup quarterfinal victory yesterday over his former club Chelsea, for whom Diego Costa was sent off. As a fractious match neared its conclusion, Lukaku took a Tom Cleverley pass in his stride after 77 minutes and powered past four defenders before burying an unstoppable shot into the back of the visitors' goal. Just five minutes later, after neat passes from Gareth Barry and Ross Barkley, it was left to Lukaku to deliver the killer blow with another emphatic finish that earned Everton a place in the semifinals.

The controversy was still to come, however, as Costa earned a second yellow card after 84 minutes as he reacted to a Barry foul by motioning his head towards the Everton man and apparently threatening to bite him. Barry did not cover himself in glory and after being booked for his part in that flashpoint, he

received a second yellow three minutes later for a foul on Cesc Fabregas, which meant that both teams finished with 10 men.

Defeat brought an end to a miserable week for Chelsea, who were eliminated from the Champions League by Paris Saint-Germain on Wednesday and no longer have any chance of winning any silverware this season. Everton's new co-owner Farhad Moshiri was in attendance at Goodison Park for the first time since paying a reported £200 million (\$287.7 million) to buy 49.9 percent of the club, having made a pre-match address to supporters in the media. In it, he talked of investment in players, as well as a pledge to hold onto existing talent and solve the club's search for a new state-of-the-art stadium.

But the future of manager Roberto Martinez was not on the agenda, despite disquiet among Everton

supporters over the club's current 12th-place standing in the Premier League. There was little for the home fans to cheer in the early stages, apart from a first-minute Cleverley volley into the body of Chelsea goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

Costa Goes Close

Costa was the victim of a crude early foul from Barry and retaliated within seconds, earning a caution as he challenged the Everton midfielder with a leading arm. Chelsea left-back Kenedy was fortunate not to be cautioned after two clumsy trips on Aaron Lennon, while Costa made the most of slight contact with home defender Phil Jagielka off the ball, appealing for a penalty that was instantly rejected. Nor were Everton blameless, with Jagielka booked just before the interval for a wild kick at Fabregas. From the ensuing free-

kick, Joel Robles made the first meaningful save of the game by tipping over a dipping effort from Willian. Courtois was also pressed into action before the interval, diving smartly to make a routine stop from another long-range Cleverley shot. Chelsea's goal was threatened again soon after the restart, Ramiro Funes Mori rising well to meet a Cleverley corner with a header that just cleared the crossbar. Chelsea finally showed some attacking intent, after 56 minutes, and almost scored from their first meaningful foray into Everton territory.

Fabregas found Costa, who beat Funes Mori and rounded Robles, only to steer a low shot across goal and wide from a difficult, narrow angle. Courtois was again pressed into action when he rushed from his line to dispossess Lukaku, but the Belgian striker, sold by Chelsea in 2014, would have the last laugh. — AFP

CITY TITLE HOPES HIT BY NORWICH STALEMATE



NORWICH: A resolute Norwich City placed a significant dent in Manchester City's Premier League title aspirations with a hard-fought 0-0 draw at Carrow Road yesterday.

Manchester City enjoyed plenty of possession, but aside from a Sergio Aguero effort that was superbly saved by John Ruddy in the first half, they created precious little.

It could have been so much worse for Manuel Pellegrini's side had Patrick Bamford's 25-yard half-volley that crashed against the woodwork just before the break been a fraction lower.

Norwich remain in the bottom three, below fourth-bottom Sunderland on goal difference, while Manchester City are now nine points behind leaders Leicester City, who host Rafael Benitez's Newcastle United tomorrow.

The result also jeopardised the visitors' hopes of Champions League qualification, which would be an embarrassing scenario ahead of Pep Guardiola's arrival as manager.

Manchester City began with a 4-4-2 formation, the muscular presence of Wilfried Bony providing support for 21-goal striker Aguero in attack.

Immediately the visitors took charge of possession, with David Silva drifting in from the left flank to link the attack, while Jesus

Navas provided width on the right.

Norwich had claimed just one point from their previous nine league matches their worst run since 1946 — and they looked edgy in the opening exchanges against a team who had won 3-0 at Carrow Road in the FA Cup earlier in the season. It was certainly a safety-first approach from manager Alex Neil, whose 4-2-3-1 formation quickly reverted to a 4-5-1 when Norwich lost the ball.

Ruddy, the Norwich goalkeeper, was called into his first serious action on 15 minutes when he unconvincingly tipped Aguero's swerving free-kick over the bar after Gary O'Neil was penalised for a push on Ferdinandinho.

SHOT-SHY CITY

Aguero, who has five goals in five appearances against Norwich, then flashed an angled low drive just wide of Ruddy's left-hand post from 18 yards.

The Argentine striker was an excellent outlet for the visitors and he forced a terrific low save from Ruddy after wriggling free of Timm Klose.

Norwich, though, led by the excellent Klose, were resolute in defence and snapped into tackles as they began to squeeze their opponents back.

In the closing stages of the first half they grew in confidence in possession and came the closest to opening the scoring.

Bamford, on loan from Chelsea and making his first start in the Premier League, unleashed an instinctive drive from 25 yards that rattled the bar.

Despite losing the lively Nathan Redmond to injury, Norwich finished the half strongly,



NORWICH: Norwich City's Jonny Howson, left, and Manchester City's Jesus Navas battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match yesterday. — AP

with Matt Jarvis seeing his deflected goal-bound shot loop into the air and land agonisingly wide of Joe Hart's goal.

Pellegrini's side dominated after the break and even more so when Raheem Sterling replaced the ineffective Bony.

But Norwich simply refused to buckle and their stubborn rearguard offered excellent protection for Ruddy, who was rarely troubled as the away team failed to muster a single shot on target after the break.

A double substitution of Dieumerci Mbokani and Cameron Jerome added fresh legs to the Norwich attack. Manchester City continued to hammer away at the yellow and green wall bravely defending their penalty area, but it was a wall that could not be breached. — AFP

BURNLEY MOVE CLOSER TO PREMIER LEAGUE RETURN

LONDON: Burnley moved a step closer to returning to the Premier League as the Championship leaders swept to a 3-1 win at Huddersfield yesterday. Sean Dyche's team are nine points clear of the play-off places after goals from Stephen Ward, Sam Vokes and Ben Mee scored in the first half.

Joe Lolley briefly made it 2-1 before Mee scored just before the break to give the Clarets a sixth successive second tier victory.

"The energy of the side is great and we will physically go as hard as we can to get where we want to be," Dyche said. "It was a very powerful performance and we never looked under pressure." Second placed Middlesbrough, with manager Aitor Karanka's future in doubt after a reported bust-up with his players, are seven points behind the leaders, but have two games in hand and can close the gap if they beat Charlton on Sunday with assistant head coach Steve Agnew in charge.

Third placed Hull missed the chance to go above Middlesbrough after being held to a 1-1 draw by lowly Milton Keynes Dons at the KC Stadium.

Antony Kay opened the scoring for the visitors just after the restart but Sam Clucas levelled two minutes later for the Tigers, who leapfrogged Brighton in third on goal difference.

"At the end of the day I pick the team but I scratch my head and ask why we've played like that in the first half," Hull manager Steve Bruce said. "We've got to take away the nerves and

a little bit of edginess which may be creeping in." Fifth placed Derby blew a 3-0 lead with just seven minutes left as struggling Rotherham mounted a stunning recovery to draw 3-3.

Leon Best grabbed a brace, including a stoppage-time equaliser, after Danny Ward started the comeback on 83 minutes, with Neil Warnock's side now just one point from safety.

Tom Ince's brace and Chris Martin's 14th goal of the season had given the Rams a commanding second-half lead after they scored three goals in 10 minutes. Aiden McGeady, Gary Hooper and Marco Matias netted as 10-man Sheffield Wednesday remain in the final play-off place after a 3-0 win at Nottingham Forest.

The Owls ended a five-match winless run as they stayed sixth despite Barry Bannan's second half red card. Cardiff's 1-0 win over Ipswich, thanks to Bruno Ecuele Manga's first-half winner, kept their promotion hopes alive while denting the Tractor Boys' own ambitions.

At the bottom, Bolton's slim survival hopes continued to fade after Marnick Vermijl's late winner earned a 2-1 win for Preston.

Lee Tomlin's stoppage-time winner moved Bristol City above Fulham and four points clear of the relegation zone as they won 2-1 at Craven Cottage.

Leeds secured a third straight win with a 2-1 victory at Blackburn, while QPR beat Brentford 3-0 in a west London derby at Loftus Road. — AFP

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NEW DELHI: Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley (left), Prime Minister Narendra Modi (center) and Managing Director for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Christine Lagarde (right) look on during the inauguration of the conference "Advancing Asia- Investing for the future" in New Delhi yesterday.—AFP

ASIA REFORMS KEY FOR WORLD GROWTH: IMF CHIEF

INDIA RBI CHIEF WANTS GLOBAL RULES OF CONDUCT FOR CBS

NEW DELHI: Asia is "the world's most dynamic region" but structural reforms are key given its increasing importance to the global economy, International Monetary Fund chief Christine Lagarde said in New Delhi yesterday. Asia already accounts for 40 percent of the world economy and stands to deliver nearly two-thirds of global growth over the next four years, Lagarde, the IMF managing director, told the Advancing Asia conference in the Indian capital.

"Given this vital economic role, making the most of Asia's dynamism is of great interest to the entire world," Lagarde, on stage with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said. "Increased interconnectedness means that Asia now affects the world more than ever before," she said. "By the same token, Asia is now more deeply affected by global economic developments than ever before and must respond to them."

With the global economy facing challenges, it is key that Asian countries carry out structural reforms to boost competitiveness and jobs and ensure growth in future, she said. Lagarde cited examples including the need for China to rebalance its economy away from debt-led investment, the need for corporate governance reforms in Japan and for improvements in Indian infrastructure. Strengthening the business environment and developing bond markets will be crucial across the region, she said.

Also speaking at the conference, Prime Minister Modi said that India has "dispelled the myth that democracy and rapid economic growth cannot go together". India's government has projected economic growth of 7.6 percent for the financial year 2015-16, making it the world's fastest-growing major economy.

"My agenda of 'reform-to-transform' still needs to be finished," Modi said. In January the IMF lowered its outlook for global economic growth this year, warning of substantial risks in major emerging market economies. Slower Chinese growth, a stronger US dollar, collapsed oil prices and political turmoil could wreak further havoc in struggling economies like Russia and Brazil, putting the brakes on the global recovery, it said.

Global rules

Reserve Bank of India governor Raghuram Rajan called yesterday for global central banks to adopt a system for assessing the wider impact of their actions, including unconventional monetary policies now in use.

Rajan proposed that a group of academics should measure and analyse the "spillover" effects of monetary policies and indicate which should be used and which avoided. He suggested a traffic light system, grading policies green, orange or red. The monitoring sys-

tem could be implemented through an international agreement along the lines of the Bretton Woods currency accord or via the International Monetary Fund.

Rajan's speech was the highlight of a three-day International Monetary Fund event in New Delhi, attended by IMF chief Christine Lagarde and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at which worries about the global economy were front and centre.

"The international community has a choice," Rajan said. "We can pretend all is well with the global financial non-system and hope that nothing goes spectacularly wrong. Or we can start building a system for the integrated world of the 21st century."

Rajan's speech came days after the European Central Bank eased monetary policy further by cutting all its main interest rates, expanding asset purchases and launching a loan program which could see it pay banks to

lend to firms and households.

The Bank of Japan has also taken interest rates into negative territory for the first time while the US Federal Reserve is expected to tighten monetary policy only gradually after years of near-zero rates and quantitative easing.

Rajan has been a vocal critic of such policies, saying central banks seeking to fulfil domestically focused mandates are ignoring the impact of their actions on the global economy. Yesterday's speech was the most comprehensive given on the subject by Rajan, who is widely credited with having predicted the global financial crisis that began in 2007.

The former IMF economist, tipped by local media as a potential successor to Lagarde, also called on the Fund to take a lead role in ensuring policies adopted by its members do not have "beggar-thy-neighbor" consequences. "We need new rules of the game,

enforced impartially by multilateral organizations, to ensure countries adhere to international responsibilities," he said.

Lagarde had advice of her own, urging Asian nations on Saturday to employ growth-friendly monetary and fiscal policies to counter challenges posed by a fragile global economy.

Rajan's policies

When Rajan became RBI Governor in September 2013, India was in the midst of its worst currency crisis in more than two decades as fears the Fed would begin tightening policy exposed the country's weak finances and big current account deficit. India eventually stabilized the rupee, partly by building up its foreign exchange reserves, but his ringside view of the crisis has made him a strong critic of the kind of stimulus measures adopted by developed economies in recent

years. Yesterday, he warned that such policies spook people into fearing "calamity is around the corner", leading them to save rather than to spend and thus diminishing any benefits.

Rajan has stated India will not follow other countries and devalue its currency, a view endorsed yesterday by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who ruled out 'beggar thy neighbor' policies. Early in his tenure, Rajan raised interest rates to tackle double-digit inflation but the RBI cut by 125 basis points last year as consumer prices eased, to help boost an economy growing fast by global standards but below its potential.

Markets expect another 25 bps cut in the next month after the government stuck to its fiscal deficit target for the year starting in April. That pledge was praised yesterday by Rajan, although he declined to comment on whether it would affect the central bank's monetary policy stance. — Agencies

CHINA'S INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT GROWTH WANES

BEIJING: China's industrial production during the first two months of the year grew at its slowest rate since the global financial crisis, the government said yesterday, with top officials vowing to support growth and the volatile stock market.

The measure, which gauges output at the country's factories, workshops and mines,

rose 5.4 percent year-on-year in January and February. The figures were the weakest since November 2008 as China seeks to effect a difficult transition from an investment and export-driven growth model to one led by consumer spending.

Despite the darkening outlook the People's Bank of China governor Zhou

Xiaochuan told reporters Saturday that there was no need for "excessive" monetary stimulus to hit the government's target of at least 6.5 percent growth over the next five years.

And while worries about the economy have weighed on investors this year and spurred a stock market slump, yesterday the chairman of the China Securities Regulatory Commission said at a briefing that the state would intervene "if the market is not working properly at all or continues to fail".

"It will be too early to talk about withdrawing" state support for stocks "for rather a long time into the future", Liu Shiyu said. Retail sales, a key indicator of consumer spending, increased 10.2 percent in the same period, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said. Fixed-asset investment, a measure of mainly government spending on infrastructure, expanded 10.2 percent on-year for the first two months of 2016.

Results fell short of economists' expectations, according to a survey by Bloomberg News, which predicted a year-on-year increase in retail sales of 10.9 percent, while industrial production was projected to expand 5.6 percent.

Restoring confidence

NBS analyst Jiang Yuan blamed the disappointing industrial output data on sluggish foreign demand, the government's efforts to cut pollution-heavy production of steel, cement and coal and slumping output of tobacco products. "The decline in industrial output growth in the January-February period was due to industrial structural reforms

and the unstable basis of an industrial recovery as well as seasonal factors," Jiang said in a statement.

The NBS released statistics covering two months to smooth out distortions due to China's Lunar New Year holiday last month. Wang Baobin, another NBS analyst, attributed accelerating fixed-asset investment to government policies and construction projects to support the economy and a pickup in property investment growth to three percent compared to one percent for all of 2015.

"The government continued to earmark funds at the start of this year to accelerate the start of a series of major constructions," Wang said. But analysts with investment bank CICC Macro said that the pick-up in public infrastructure spending will not boost private sector investment unless "their confidence can be restored". China's leaders have sought to reassure global investors during the annual meeting of the rubber-stamp National People's Congress (NPC), with the country's top economic planner saying last week that the country "absolutely will not have a hard landing".

Premier Li Keqiang set the growth target for this year in a range of 6.5-7 percent, acknowledging in a speech opening the NPC that "China will face more and tougher problems and challenges in its development this year, so we must be fully prepared to fight a difficult battle". The data are the latest snapshot of the health of the Asian colossus—a major driver of the global economy—which grew 6.9 percent last year, the slowest rate in a quarter century. —AFP



BEIJING: People take rest on the life-size sculptures of shoppers on display at a shopping mall in Beijing. In a new effort to dispel anxiety about China's cooling economy, the central bank governor said yesterday, the country can hit this year's official growth target and Beijing has no need to weaken its currency to boost sagging exports. —AP

ENHANCE YOUR CAREER WITH THESE 6 HIDDEN GEMS

Bayt.com weekly market report

KUWAIT: If you're familiar with the Bayt.com brand then you will know that Bayt.com is more than just a job site. Serving the region since 2000, Bayt.com is home today to over 24 million members and helps more than 40,000 employers to create employment opportunities. For the past 16 years, we have made it our mission to empower professionals and organizations with the best information, tools and technologies to boost their career and hiring and build their lifestyles of choice.

Here, the career experts at Bayt.com, the Middle East's leading job site, give you some of the many career-boosting features to help you enhance your career:

1. Get referred

Recommendations are a great way to display the great work you've done in positions you've held and projects you've worked on. Your managers, friends and colleagues can write about your skills and what a valuable addition you were to their teams. You can add recommendations from your friends to your Bayt.com public profile through Facebook, or simply by entering the emails of the friends and colleagues you'd like to receive recommendations from.

2. Network for jobs

With Bayt.com, you can tap into your friends' career networks by identifying those who work for companies you are

targeting. On your Workspace, pay attention to your friends' updates and get the inside scoop on new jobs in their companies, what salary to expect, what interview style is favored, and other vital information to get you through the door. Networking on Bayt.com makes it easy for you to invite friends who are not on Bayt.com in order for them to enjoy the myriad of life-enhancing benefits the job site has to offer.

3. Get jobs in your inbox

With Bayt.com's free job alerts, you will instantly be notified when a job you are targeting is posted on the website, by sending you an email or a message to your phone. A great opportunity won't

wait, so don't miss out on the thousands of jobs posted every day on Bayt.com.

4. Map your career

Bayt.com's unparalleled Career Map allows you to identify which exact skills are in most demand in your target industry, and how you can map a career path in that specific industry. The Career Map is a great way to identify which skills to hone and which skills to acquire - or forget.

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Are you being fairly paid? How can you enhance your compensation? Get local and regional salary information for your particular job role and industry on

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CARACAS: Venezuela's Economic Vice President Miguel Perez Adad, right, speaks with his assistants after an interview at his office in Caracas on Friday. Adad said that Venezuela is cutting non-oil imports to \$15 billion. The steep decline suffered by oil prices has forced the Venezuelan Government to impose significant cuts in their accounts. —AP

BURGAN BANK SUCCESSFULLY CLOSES KD 100M TIER 2 CAPITAL ISSUANCE

BANK RECEIVES STRONG SUPPORT FROM LOCAL INVESTORS

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank KSCF. (Burgan Bank or the Bank), has successfully closed its KD 100 million Tier 2 capital issuance. The issuance has both a fixed rate and a floating rate tranche with the fixed rate coupon at 6.00 percent and the floating rate coupon at 6.20 percent (CBK discount rate plus 3.95 percent).

Burgan Bank received strong interest and support for the bond issue from local investors with the order book closing significantly oversubscribed despite challenging market conditions.

The issuance, which is fully compliant with the BASEL III guidelines by Central Bank of Kuwait, will further boost Burgan's capital adequacy ratio by over 2 percent.

Majed Essa Al-Ajeel commented: "We are delighted and thankful for the trust shown by the investment community in Burgan Bank and its prospects. The issuance of the LT2 bonds denominated in Kuwaiti Dinars will help Burgan to further strengthen its capital base. It also stems from our interest and responsibility to promote efficient capital markets practices by attempting to develop a debt capital market in Kuwait and help in building a local yield curve." Al-Ajeel concluded: "I would like to take this

opportunity to thank the Central Bank of Kuwait, and Capital Markets Authority for the Continuous cooperation and support". KIPCO Asset Management Company (KAMCO), NBK Capital and Gulf Bank acted as joint lead arrangers for the issuance.

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENA region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Burgan Bank's brand has been created on a foundation of real values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression, to remind us of the high standards to which we aspire. "People come first" is the foundation on which its products and services



Majed Essa Al-Ajeel

are developed. The bank was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2008, making it the first bank in the GCC, and the only bank in Kuwait to receive such accreditation for the third consecutive year. The Bank also has to its credit the distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twelve consecutive years.

GULF BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF AL-DANAH DAILY DRAWS

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its Al-Danah daily draws on 6 March 2016 announcing the names of its winners for the week of 28 February - 3 March 2016. The Al-Danah daily draws include draws each and every working day for two prizes of KD1,000 per winner.

The winners are: (Sunday 28/2): Ahmed Thamer Jaber Hayef Aarmach, Sameera Ebrahim Abukhamsin (Monday 29/2): Sudhir Kumar Uberoi, Salma Ahmad Khaled Al-Mkainzi (Tuesday 1/3): Lafi Mohammad Ajeel Al-Enizi, Diana Sadek El-Sadek (Wednesday 2/3): Shrinivas Aparaju Vinkat, Raed Ali Abdullah Al-Mansour (Wednesday 3/3): Mariam Hussain Rezeq Abo Helal, Haidar Madi Fairouz

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah 2016 draw lineup includes daily draws (2 winners per working day each receive KD1000). Al-Danah's 1st Quarterly draw for the prize of KD200,000 will be held on

31 March, the 2nd Quarterly draw for the prize of KD250,000 will be held on the 30th of June and the 3rd quarterly draw for the prize of KD500,000 will be held on September 29th. The final Al-Danah draw for KD 1 million will be held on 5 January, 2017 whereby the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced.

Five reasons why the Al-Danah account is the best:

- 1) Kuwait's single biggest yearly cash prize of KD 1 million
- 2) Kuwait's biggest quarterly cash prizes, up to KD500,000
- 3) Two winners of KD1,000 every working day
- 4) The most opportunities to win
- 5) Only bank that transfers your chances to win from year to year

Win big, live big, with Al-Danah 2016. Al-Danah also offers a number of unique services including: the Al-Danah deposit only ATM card which helps account holders deposit their money at their convenience; as well as the Al-Danah calculator to help customers calculate their chances of becoming an Al-Danah winner.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers who open an account and/ or deposit more will enter the draw within two days. To take part in the Al-Danah 2016 upcoming quarterly and yearly draws, customers must have an Al-Danah account containing at least KD 200; customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches, transfer on line, or call the Customer Contact Center on 1805805 for assistance and guidance.

MOZAMBIQUE'S 'TUNA BOND' HEADS TOWARD DEFAULT WATERS

JOHANNESBURG: Debt issued by Mozambique's state-run tuna-fishing company Ematum may net a ratings downgrade after the agency Fitch said the state's offer to exchange outstanding liabilities for a fixed rate sovereign note could represent a default.

Dubbed the tuna bond, the original \$850 million bond was issued in 2013 and presented as funding for "tuna fishing and related infrastructure" although it quickly became apparent that much of the cash was for maritime surveillance and security.

Fitch said late on Friday it was placing Mozambique's Long-term foreign and local currency Issuer Default Ratings (IDRs) of 'B' on Rating Watch Negative (RWN) because of its concerns about the bond.

Such a move would be a fresh blow to the deteriorating investor image of Mozambique, one of the world's poorest countries, which sits on vast untapped reserves of natural gas but has been hard hit by the slump in global commodity prices. Mozambique this week asked holders of bonds in Ematum to swap the debt for new US dollar-denominated 2023 bonds to smooth its debt maturity profile. The Mozambique government is offering to exchange 2020 maturing bonds, with \$697 million outstanding that paid a 6.305

percent coupon, into a new fixed rate sovereign note due 2023.

"In Fitch's view, the offer could constitute a Distressed Debt Exchange (DDE) under the agency's criteria, which we would consider a default event," Fitch said in a statement. "If Fitch deems the exchange offer to be a DDE, the agency would downgrade Mozambique's Long-term foreign currency Issuer Default Ratings to 'C' from 'B', indicating that default is highly likely in the near term," it said.

Conversely, Fitch said it could remove the rating watch if the transaction was not judged to be a distressed debt exchange. "The funds raised were originally intended for the development of Ematum's tuna-fishing capabilities, but according to the IMF, \$500 million was spent on maritime security equipment instead," Fitch said.

"The government subsequently incorporated the \$500 million into the budget while the remaining \$350 million is booked on Ematum's balance sheet," it said.

Mozambique is set to publish more details of its exchange offer, including coupon and pricing, on March 17. The metal currency has fallen by a third against the dollar over the past 12 months as investors worry about the government's ability to manage its finances. — Reuters

KUWAIT OIL PRICES RISE TO \$33.57PB

KUWAIT: Kuwait oil price rose 28 cents to \$33.57 per barrel on Friday compared to \$33.29 pb in Thursday's trades, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. Oil prices on the international markets dropped on Friday, causing the American crude to follow suit, falling from the highest level in three months, amid forecast that the US crude reserves would post record hikes. —KUNA

FAO EXPERT TO ARRIVE IN EGYPT TODAY, WORK ON ERGOT LAWS

ABU DHABI: A UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) expert will arrive in Cairo today to study the effect of ergot fungus found in wheat and help develop new policies to combat the threat it poses to the world's biggest wheat importer. The FAO expert will participate in a workshop aimed at producing new legislation alongside a newly-formed committee tasked with assessing the dangers of ergot, the agriculture ministry said yesterday.

The committee includes the head of the ministry's health and plant health committee Ali Suleiman, the new head of its quarantine authority Ibrahim Ahmed Imbaby, the head of the plant pathology research institute Ashraf Khalil, and the head of the food technology research institute Ihab Essawi. — Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.652
Indian Rupees	4.510
Pakistani Rupees	2.880
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.081
Nepali Rupees	2.813
Singapore Dollar	221.710
Hongkong Dollar	38.891
Bangladesh Taka	3.847
Philippine Peso	6.468
Thai Baht	8.615

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	80.510
Qatari Riyal	82.933
Omani Riyal	784.174
Bahraini Dinar	801.780
UAE Dirham	82.198

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	35.500
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	38.603
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.409
Tunisian Dinar	150.120
Jordanian Dinar	425.510
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.012
Syrian Lira	2.152
Morocco Dirham	31.432

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	301.750
Euro	339.770
Sterling Pound	437.240
Canadian dollar	230.340
Turkish lira	105.430
Swiss Franc	310.120
Australian Dollar	231.440
US Dollar Buying	300.550

GOLD

20 Gram	252.210
10 Gram	129.030
5 Gram	65.360

UAE EXCHANGE CENTRE WLL

CURRENCIES	TELEX TRANSFER PER 1000
Australian Dollar	201.91
Canadian Dollar	219.82
Swiss Franc	306.95
Euro	336.85
US Dollar	299.90
Sterling Pound	431.04
Japanese Yen	2.67
Bangladesh Taka	3.817
Indian Rupee	4.375
Sri Lankan Rupee	2.083
Nepali Rupee	2.732
Pakistani Rupee	2.860
UAE Dirhams	0.08161
Bahraini Dinar	0.7970
Egyptian Pound	0.03819
Jordanian Dinar	0.4265
Omani Riyal	0.7788
Qatari Riyal	0.08269
Saudi Riyal	0.07994

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	301.800
Canadian Dollar	226.655
Sterling Pound	428.990
Euro	332.430
Swiss Frank	302.245
Bahrain Dinar	798.415
UAE Dirhams	82.410
Qatari Riyals	83.620

Saudi Riyals	81.160
Jordanian Dinar	425.140
Egyptian Pound	38.431
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.082
Indian Rupees	4.467
Pakistani Rupees	2.876
Bangladesh Taka	3.839
Philippines Peso	6.410
Cyprus pound	574.830
Japanese Yen	3.675
Syrian Pound	2.370
Nepalese Rupees	3.790
Malaysian Ringgit	73.835
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.710
Thai Bhat	9.510
Turkish Lira	103.515

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.427994	0.436994
Czech Korune	0.004485	0.016485
Danish Krone	0.041241	0.046241
Euro	0.331755	0.339755
Norwegian Krone	0.031881	0.037081
Romanian Leu	0.086558	0.086558
Slovakia	0.008976	0.018976
Swedish Krona	0.032156	0.037156
Swiss Franc	0.301037	0.311237
Turkish Lira	0.099647	0.109947
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.220045	0.231545
New Zealand Dollar	0.197811	0.207311
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.223068	0.231568
US Dollars	0.297650	0.302150
US Dollars Mint	0.298150	0.302150

Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003429	0.004003
Chinese Yuan	0.044958	0.048458
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036833	0.039583
Indian Rupee	0.004268	0.004658
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002590	0.002770
Kenyan Shilling	0.003019	0.003019
Korean Won	0.000244	0.000259
Malaysian Ringgit	0.069968	0.075968
Nepalese Rupee	0.002860	0.003030
Pakistan Rupee	0.002705	0.002985
Philippine Peso	0.006333	0.006613
Sierra Leone	0.000067	0.000073
Singapore Dollar	0.216841	0.222841
South African Rand	0.013884	0.022384
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001705	0.002285
Taiwan	0.009084	0.009264
Thai Baht	0.008285	0.008835

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.793724	0.801724
Egyptian Pound	0.033329	0.037665
Iranian Riyal	0.000083	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000194	0.000254
Jordanian Dinar	0.421588	0.429088
Jordanian Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.000251
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020546	0.044546
Nigerian Naira	0.001242	0.001877
Omani Riyal	0.777347	0.783027
Qatar Riyal	0.082172	0.083385
Saudi Riyal	0.079580	0.080530
Syrian Pound	0.001278	0.001498
Tunisian Dinar	0.146472	0.154472
Turkish Lira	0.099647	0.109947
UAE Dirhams	0.081174	0.082323
Yemeni Riyal	0.001364	0.001444

OUTPUT FREEZE AGREEMENT HELPS OIL

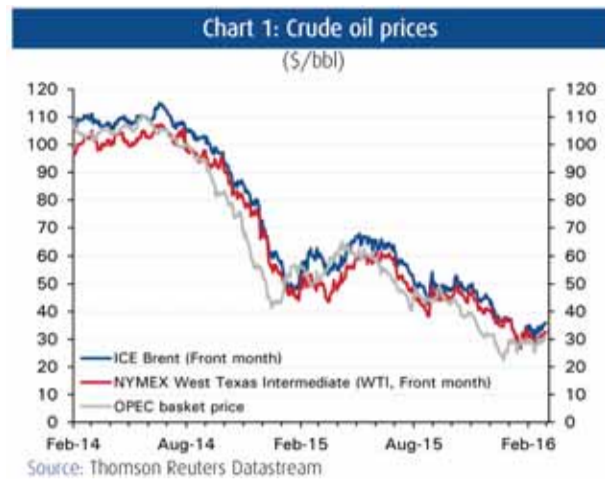
IEA SAYS OIL MARKET WILL REBALANCE IN 2017/2018

NBK OIL MARKET REPORT

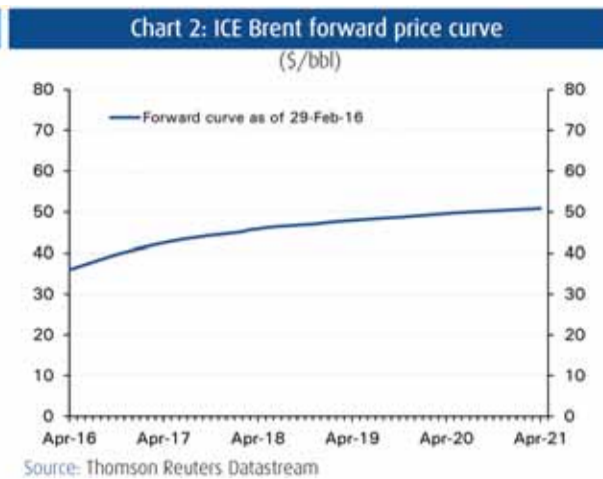
KUWAIT: Amid increased volatility, oil prices were supported in February by the Saudi-Russian agreement to cap production at January's levels. February was a volatile month for oil prices, with daily swings of more than 7 percent witnessed on four occasions. By the end of the month, the international crude benchmark, Brent, recorded its first month-on-month gain since October, rising by 3.5 percent to \$35.9 per barrel (\$/bbl). The US marker, West Texas Intermediate (WTI), closed the month roughly level with where it ended in January, at \$33.7/bbl.

Amid overwhelmingly bearish market sentiment related to a crude supply glut that has so far shown little sign of unwinding, oil prices received support from the recent entente between non-OPEC Russia and Saudi Arabia over capping oil production. The two oil producers, which together account for 22 percent of global crude supply, agreed to freeze output at January's levels provided other OPEC members such as Iran and Iraq follow suit. Despite welcoming the Saudi-Russian move, neither Iran nor Iraq is likely to commit to any agreement, least of all Iran, which is emerging from three and a half years of sanctions and is desperate to recapture the market share it lost to rivals during that period. Furthermore, towards the end of the month, oil prices, especially Brent, were boosted by news that crude supplies from northern Iraq and Nigeria had been curtailed as a result of a pipeline stoppage and leak, respectively. The loss of approximately 600,000 barrels per day (b/d) of crude from Iraqi Kurdistan and 250,000 b/d of Forcados grade crude from Nigeria, pushed Brent up to an eight-week high of \$37/bbl on 26 February. Once again, this demonstrates the ever-present risk of supply disruptions in geopolitical hotspots such as the Middle East and Africa.

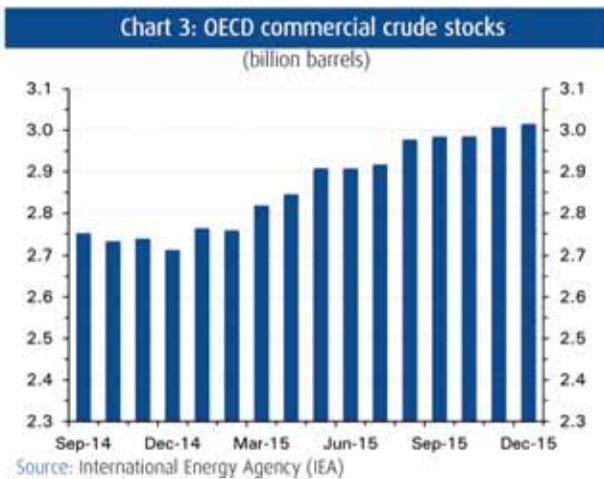
Indeed, many, including the International Energy Agency (IEA), are growing increasingly concerned about the prospect of future supply outages having an outsized impact on oil markets. With upstream oil investment being pared back by 24 percent as oil majors adjust to the new era of lower prices and OPEC spare production capacity at a historically low level (equivalent to 2.5 percent of global oil supply), there is little spare supply to compensate for any potential loss of output. This would set markets up for a period of greater price volatility and higher price spikes.



Source: Thomson Reuters Datastream



Source: Thomson Reuters Datastream



Source: International Energy Agency (IEA)

For the time being, however, oil markets are saturated and prices are depressed. Iran's reentry to international markets in January following the lifting of sanctions, coupled with sustained commercial crude stock builds and the resilience, albeit weakening, of US shale production, continue to weigh heavily on sentiment.

Rebalance

According to the IEA, the supply overhang that has characterized oil markets since 2014 is not expected to fully unwind until 2017/2018 at the earliest. Even then, oil prices are not likely to recover significantly before the enormous stocks of crude and refined products that have accumulated over the last few years begin to draw down.

In its recently released Medium-Term Oil Market Report 2016, the IEA estimates that supply, having exceeded demand by 0.9 mb/d in 2014 and by 2 mb/d in 2015, will see the gap narrow to 1.2 mb/d this year before roughly balancing demand in 2017. (Charts 4 and 5.)

Demand is forecast to rise by 1.2 mb/d this year and to continue growing by an annual average of 1.3 mb/d over the medium term to 2021. Supply growth is set to slow considerably, from a high of 2.8 mb/d in 2015 to 0.4 mb/d this

year, led by a 0.6 mb/d decline in non-OPEC supply, especially US shale oil. From 2018 onwards, however, as oil prices recover to levels that make oil production more profitable, non-OPEC supply growth is expected to rebound to average 0.7 mb/d.

OPEC output rises

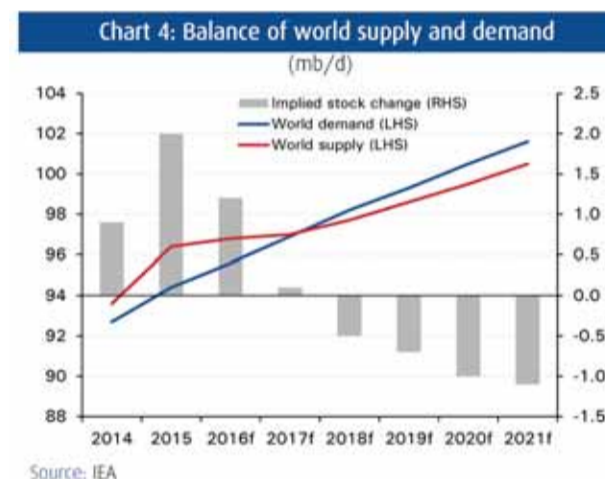
January saw OPEC crude output increase by 132,000 b/d to 32.3 mb/d, according to OPEC secondary source data. Excluding the 700,000 b/d contributed by Indonesia, which rejoined the group last December, aggregate OPEC output stood more than 1.5 mb/d higher than a year ago. Once again, Iraq and Saudi Arabia posted the largest gains among the group's Arab oil producers, supplying an additional 60,000 b/d and 44,000 b/d, respectively. Kuwait recorded a small increase of 17,000 b/d in January. Nigeria's increase of 74,000 b/d was the largest among OPEC members in January.

Iran, for its part, boosted output by 38,000 b/d to 2.9 mb/d in January after sanctions were lifted. Iranian production should top the psychologically important 3.0 mb/d level sometime over the next two months; the last time the Islamic Republic pumped at this level was in May 2012, just

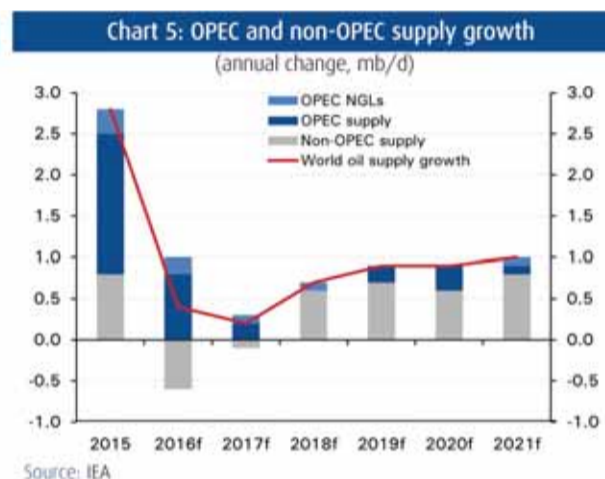
before international sanctions were applied.

Iran also managed to export its first post-sanctions shipment of crude, of around 4 million barrels, to several European customers, including France's Total. The deal with Total, which is reported to involve the purchase of 160,000 b/d of Iranian crude, comes in the wake of a visit to Europe by a delegation of Iranian business officials headed by President Rouhani earlier in the month. Iran has had to offer steeper discounts on its crude than it had originally envisaged in order to successfully compete with the likes of Saudi Arabia and Iraq in an oversupplied market.

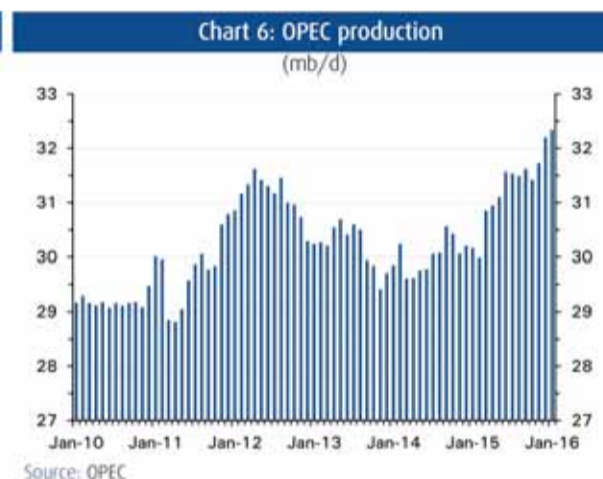
Looking ahead to the rest of 2016 and beyond, Iran and, to a lesser extent, Iraq are likely to be the largest sources of OPEC supply growth. The IEA considers a 1 mb/d increase in Iranian production capacity to 3.9 mb/d to be a realistic medium-term target for the country. The Iranian authorities, in contrast, have set themselves a goal of 5 mb/d by 2020. Output increases of that magnitude (73 percent), however, would not be possible without considerable investment and access to new technology. In view of Iran's uncertain domestic politics, the current environment of low oil prices and increased cost-cutting by oil companies, that seems overly ambitious.



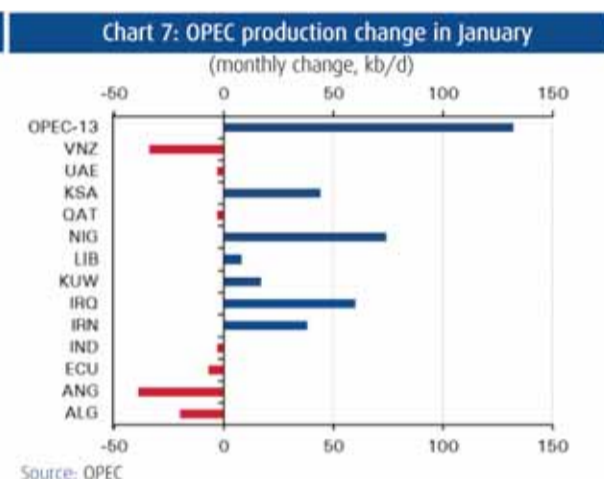
Source: IEA



Source: IEA



Source: OPEC



Source: OPEC

KFH NAMES 7 WINNERS OF BANKING CARDS CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) named 7 winners of the 8th draw of the new banking cards promotional campaign themed "Shop and Win Back Up to KD 50,000 with KFH Cards"

500 of their daily spends for 100 days ending April 19th 2016. KFH Credit and Prepaid cards used in domestic and international retail spends and KFH Debit cards used in international

clients new promotions and discounts in order to distinguish them among peers, not to mention to further bolster bank's leading position in the field of banking cards.

KFH marketing campaigns play a significant role in underlining KFH's principles that include boosting sales, and benefitting clients and merchants.

This new campaign is part of KFH's efforts to reward its clients and grant them additional value; thus achieving customer satisfaction and boosting their confidence. The campaign also aims at enhancing the bank's presence especially that it dominates the largest market share in the field of banking cards.

It is worth noting that KFH has won several awards in the field of banking cards which reiterates its success and efficiency in banking cards market. KFH enjoys high confidence and leadership in the market in addition to high quality products which have enabled it to achieve growth in cards market and increase the number of customers. KFH occupies the leading position as the issuer of banking cards and one of leading banks at the GCC level.



that had been launched in an attempt to encourage clients to use KFH credit, prepaid and debit cards while making purchases in Kuwait and overseas.

For every KD 10 spent on their KFH cards, clients will get a chance to enter a draw and win back up to KD

retail spends are eligible for the daily draw.

The winners are: Bodor Alshemari, Sharifa Almekhlef, Iman Alajmi, Ghada Eid, Jassem Alnasrallah, Meshari Bin Ghaith and Ali Algharballi.

KFH strives to continuously offer its

NBK OFFERS ITS EXPATRIATE CUSTOMERS CHANCES TO WIN A RANGE ROVER EVOQUE

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) launched its new "Transfer Your



Ghadeer Al-Awadi, NBK's Assistant General Manager, Consumer Banking Group

Salary to NBK and Win' campaign, exclusively for its expatriate customers. This campaign allows existing and new customers who transfer their salary to NBK to enter a draw to win a new Range Rover Evoque.

The campaign will run until 31st of

December. New customers will have one chance to win a new Range Rover Evoque, while existing customers will get two chances in the draw that will occur in Feb 2017.

"This campaign is part of NBK's approach to reward expats with new and special offers," said Ghadeer Al-Awadi, NBK's Assistant General Manager, Consumer Banking Group. "NBK expands its focus by offering customers unique and wide range of services and benefits."

"New and existing customers will receive a host of offers and unique services, including chances during the year to win a brand new Range Rover Evoque," Al-Awadi added. NBK provides its customers with easy, convenient and fast services. Customers will enjoy an easy salary transfer process, instant card issuance and faster approval with NBK loans. Moreover, unique services and benefits are available to suit the customer's lifestyle and needs. This includes the NBK Rewards program, the largest loyalty program in Kuwait that offers guaranteed rewards and instant redemption service at many of the best international and local brands in Kuwait.



NBK also provides its customers with complete banking solutions via its regional and international network of branches to experience convenience services. New NBK customers will also enjoy a free credit card for the first year. Complimentary airport lounge access, concierge service and many exclusive global offers are available when using NBK Credit Cards.

NBK pioneered many firsts in both the local and regional markets by offering innovative products and value added services.

CHINA'S LABOR LAW UNDER FIRE AS RESTRUCTURING THREATENS JOBS

BEIJING: China's labour protections are coming under fire from high places as economic restructuring pits officials concerned about social stability against a lobby arguing inflexible policies are stifling job creation and suppressing wages. Company executives, especially at foreign or private firms, have long been critical of labour contract legislation and minimum wage laws that make it difficult for owners of an ailing business to turn it around or find willing buyers.

Now policymakers anxious to modernise China's slowing economy and slash overcapacity in heavy industry are making similar noises. The export powerhouse province of Guangdong, a trillion-dollar economy that often leads the way on market reforms, said on Tuesday it would scrap scheduled rises to the local minimum wage in 2016, and keep it at 2015 levels - slightly over 1,500 yuan (\$230) per month - through 2018. On the same day, the official Xinhua media service highlighted comments by finance minister Lou Jiwei, who criticized China's Labor Contract Law in a speech during the annual meeting of parliament.

The law dates to 2008, when China had a reputation for sweatshops staffed by underpaid workers, an embarrassment for a

ruling party that monopolised power in the name of socialism. The law fixed a 40-hour working week for most employees, regulated maternity leave, and required businesses to be able to prove their case for sacking employees for incompetence or criminality or face heavy penalties.

Its standards aspire to those of developed economies, rather than emerging markets, though enforcement is weak. The EU, for example, limits the working week to 48 hours, while China's maximum is about the same, after allowing up to 36 hours a month overtime. Regulations say minimum wages should be between 40 and 60 percent of the local average - though in practice 30-40 percent is typical - compared with about 30 percent in the United States and 50 percent in Britain.

Protections against dismissal are comparable to Japan's. "The Chinese government wanted the best, the most polished labor legislation they could find, and simply imposed it on an economy that couldn't cope with it," said Geoffrey Crothall, communications director at China Labour Bulletin. Chinese wages have risen at double-digit rates since the 2008 act, so factory workers now earn significantly higher than competi-

tors in Bangladesh, Vietnam and Cambodia, and some think labour protections are hampering an economic transformation that will benefit workers in the long run.

"For enterprises and employees, the Labor Contract Law is unbalanced," Lou said, adding it encouraged companies to move jobs from China to other countries. "Who eventually bears the costs? The working class who the law was intended to protect," Lou said. Labor activists say the protections are still needed, and businesses often break labor law with impunity, especially if they have local government connections. The Xinhua article was circulated in both Chinese and English with supportive comments from regulators, exciting speculation that changes to the law could be afoot.

The timing could suit Beijing, which aims to reduce overcapacity in several industries, laying off an estimated 6 million workers at state-owned firms in the process. It wants to do so without a spike in unemployment or crimping domestic consumption, but strong labor protections make companies unwilling to create new jobs or pay much for the jobs they do create. —Reuters



YANGON: People walk inside the premises of the Yangon International Airport's new Terminal 1 in Yangon yesterday. Improvements at Yangon Airport's international and domestic terminals will accommodate increasing numbers of travellers that is expected to reach 6 million passengers annually, as a proposed new international airport in the nearby Bago region by 2022 is in the planning stage, according to news reports. —AFP

Mohamed Naser Al Sayer and Toyota Unveils

THE NEW GENERATION 2016 **FORTUNER**
 REAL DESIGN. REAL PERFORMANCE
 EXPERIENCE A NEW KIND OF ADVENTURE



The new generation Fortuner is not an evolution, it's a revolution in the mid-size SUV market. Great looking, inside and out, with more space, more specifications and more safety features than ever before. The new generation Fortuner delivers robust, rugged power and exciting, luxurious drive wherever your journey takes you.

All-new Fortuner with Refined Style and Comfort to Add to its Impressive Off-road Capability

- Compelling design will appeal to customers with its tough and forceful appearance combined with fluid lines
- Fortuner showcases its excellent utility with ample cabin space and convenience features for a superb driving experience
- Outstanding driving performance comes courtesy of a powerful engine and superior driving dynamics
- Full suite of advanced safety technologies ensures highest levels of protection

Mohamed Naser Al Sayer, one of the Al Sayer Group Holding Companies held a press conference to unveil the all new Fortuner 2016. The event which was held at the Coral Ballroom Sheraton Hotel was attended by Mubarak Naser Al Sayer CEO Al Sayer Group Holding, Johan Heislitz Senior Business Director Toyota Kuwait, delegates from Toyota Motor Corporation Japan Osamu Tomioka, Assistant Chief Engineer, Kazuma Shibata, Assistant Manager and Mr. Takayuki Yoshitsugu, Chief Representative, Mr. Hironatsu Tanigawa from the Middle East and North Africa Regional Office Dubai along with distinguished representatives from the media and General Managers from Al Sayer Group Business Units and members from Toyota Kuwait sales division.

The launch of the 2016 Fortuner unveils a second generation model which builds on its heritage of being a durable sport utility vehicle (SUV) with impressive off-road capabilities. With the new Fortuner, Toyota has focused on creating a more distinctive, sleek and powerful design while improving performance and adding a wide variety of features to increase convenience, safety and ride comfort.

Speaking during the occasion Mubarak Naser Al Sayer CEO Al Sayer Group Holding said "The All New Fortuner 2016 is all set to be unveiled. Tough SUV having earned great reputation over the past 10 years, is arriving "fully changed" ground-up. Fundamentally redefining Design and Performance. Toyota is committed to making ever better cars, its brand promise focuses on "Peace of mind" & "Waku-Doki". At Al-Sayer we reciprocate this spirit with our efforts to deliver best-in-class facilities and services in addition to excellence in customer care. Driven by Best in the Business approach Al Sayer is always committed to introducing innovative customer solutions. For Toyota and Al-Sayer the future is about building on success

adopting the philosophy of Customer First."

Johan Heislitz Senior Business Director Toyota Kuwait said "Over the past 10 years the first generation Fortuner has emerged as an unstoppable SUV. Today Fortuner is a market leading model in the mid-size SUV segment. Carrying this legacy the All New Fortuner 2016 is all set to be unveiled. Pushing the dimensions of design and performance, towards even more stylish look and comfortable driving experience. At Al-Sayer we are honoured to offer our customers the World's leading cars from Toyota with the best value added benefits, after sales service in addition to outstanding customer service, all for a great Toyota ownership experience."

Sharing Toyota's development philosophy for the vehicle, the Fortuner's Executive Chief Engineer, Hiroshi Nakajima, explained: "Our development concept was to build a true SUV that has style and confidence. The all-new Fortuner is the outcome of our continuous efforts to redefine toughness while offering our customers powerful vehicles with drastically improved off-road capabilities. To ensure peace of mind for our customers, we developed a new stronger frame which enables the vehicle to withstand rough road conditions, in addition to an improved four-link suspension system for a more comfortable drive. The new engine offers high torque at lower RPMs. Furthermore, the design concept is rough but cool, with three bold, iconic lines. On top of all this, the all-new Fortuner offers premium utility and safety features."

According to Takayuki Yoshitsugu, Chief Representative, Middle East and North Africa Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, "The all-new Fortuner is a completely redesigned SUV

that enhances driving confidence on every level while setting a new standard for SUVs all around the world. It debuts a compelling design with a strong identity, expressing refinement and innovation as well as being functional and tough. It also epitomises Toyota's focus on developing vehicles with impressive quality, durability, reliability and off-road ability. The result of this is a comprehensive revamp, creating a unique SUV that's every bit as comfortable on the school run as it is on the region's toughest off-road trails. We sincerely appreciate the support of all our customers and we look forward to delighting them with this latest model."

Compelling Design

Toyota has created a new "Solid Fluidity" design language for the Fortuner which expresses toughness and wideness through the high body axis, the bulging wheel arch flares as well as the chunky trapezoidal front bumper.

The large, slanted upper grille is framed by thick chrome plating that extends around the sleek, aggressive headlamps, while the prominent trapezoidal front bumper creates a sense of depth. Sophistication and refinement on the other hand is reflected in the detailing – slender headlight clusters that are fused with the front fenders, the three lines that score the sculpted roof line and flanks, as well as the sleek rear combination lamps and license plate garnish that blend with the complex surfaces of the rear body.

The Fortuner has a tough yet smart rear design that defies the typical unrefined image of an SUV. The rounded upper body is highlighted by chrome-plated moulding that wraps around from the sides to the back glass and is in contrast to the shape of the rear bumper, which has protruding corners. The sleek,



thin rear combination lamps and license plate garnish blend gracefully with the rear body.

There are 8 exterior colours: Phantom Brown ME, Nebula Blue ME, Super White 2, White Pearl CS, Silver ME, Attitude Black MC, Gray ME and Avant-Garde Bronze ME. Phantom Brown has been newly developed to offer appeal to the new Fortuner, with highlights that glimmer in the light. Luxury is expressed in two shades of brown. One offers richness and depth, while the other glimmers with high material quality regardless of being in the city or off-road.

Excellent Utility

The Fortuner's ample cabin space is complemented by superb convenience features, culminating in a sublime driving experience. The interior exhibits the toughness of an SUV, tempered with the elegance of a premium sedan. A focal point of the dashboard architecture is the vertical centre cluster flanked by columns of soft simulated leather upholstery that offer leg support from both sides. In fact, soft-touch textures and exquisite chrome detailing liberally pepper the cabin; all beautifully harmonising with the clear blue interior illumination.

The interior has stylish white ambient lighting which is easy on the eyes and is used throughout the interior of the vehicle, creating a warm atmosphere that passengers enjoy. The air conditioner not only maintains a comfortable cabin temperature, but it can also be used to warm or chill drinks. It has a high-efficiency compressor which decreases engine load and enhances cooling performance, contributing to excellent fuel economy performance.

Other innovative touches (model dependent) include a 7-inch tablet-inspired multimedia touchscreen display that allows easy operation of both the audio and navigation systems, a Smart Entry & Start system, an electronic 4WD switch and second-row seats with one-touch operation for ease of folding. The third row seats are equipped with a fixed hook attachment for simple and convenient stowage. There are no fewer than 15 storage areas in the new Fortuner.

In terms of seats, two sophisticated colours, Brown and Chamcha, further enhance the sense of material quality available for the luxurious genuine leather seats. The front seats are given a sporty seat shape that flares out at the shoulders on both sides. A comfortable length for the front seat cushions has been ensured, while the cushioning has been optimised to enhance support. The cushion shape for the second-row seat has been optimised to provide better support, enhancing ride comfort. The folding process for the second-row seat (as passengers enter or exit the third-row seats) has been simplified.

With a full-colour display, the Rear View Monitor System ensures peace of mind when reverse parking. Drag and flick (similar to that of smartphones and tablet devices) operation is also supported. The Auxiliary (AUX) and Universal Serial Bus (USB) ports





have been equipped near the console tray, where small items can be stored. Smartphones and portable media devices can be used freely. The Fortuner also has a 6 speaker specialised audio equalizer to achieve low-distortion playback at low range and a clear playback at middle to high range.

The Fortuner has a 4.2-inch Thin Film Transistor (TFT) type Multi-information Display which is flanked by strips of blue ambient light on each side. It is located on the dashboard in between the speedometer and the RPM gauge. It shows driving information, navigation display function, Eco Drive Indicator (Eco Judge/ Eco Wallet), idling-stop time and also has an audio operation function. An entertainment display function is also provided.

The vehicle is also equipped with a power back door system that can be opened and closed electronically with a switch. With the memory function, users have the option of storing an automatic stop position for each time the back door opens.

Outstanding Driving Performance

The Fortuner is available with two petrol engines. The available petrol engines include a 2.7-litre four-cylinder engine which produces 164hp and 25.0 Kg-m of torque and the 4.0-litre V6 engine, which churns out 235hp and 38.3 Kg-m of torque.

The Fortuner has a 6-speed automatic transmission which maximises engine potential and multi-stage gears optimised to improve drive force in the low-speed range. Optimised gear ratios have been set to provide an acceleration feel with powerful torque.

The Fortuner has a newly developed frame structure with rigidity increased to the limit, delivering exceptional toughness in the harshest environments while preventing torsion and distortion to provide a stable driving experience. More spot welding points have been used and body rigidity has been increased, thereby improving steering response. As a result, the feeling of steering input and rear end grip are enhanced.

On the ride and handling front, an all-new frame has been bolstered by strengthened cross members, side rails and suspension towers, enhancing the torsional and bending rigidity of the frame. This not only improves durability, but also enhances quality and safety.

The Fortuner's suspension comfortably absorbs the



vibration to provide a ride that you would expect from a luxury SUV. The suspension uses a double wishbone (front) and a four-link suspension (rear) combination that has been redesigned for optimised comfort. An additional rear stabiliser has been installed to aid on-the-road smoothness and stability.

There is a Drive Mode Switch which offers a choice of ECO or POWER driving, while an easy-to-use 4WD Switch is also equipped. The Drive Mode Switch allows the driver to select a preferred drive mode – Eco for optimum economy or Power for enhanced acceleration. The Eco Mode reduces power consumption in relation to acceleration and cooling in consideration of the environment. Fuel economy is further improved. The Power Mode provides sharper acceleration response, ensuring a more agile drive. A dial type 4WD switch is equipped with a sleek design and is easier to operate compared to the previous lever type switch.

The steering wheel has a Tilt & Telescopic steering

column and features a bold shape, a substantial pad and thick chrome ornamentation which combine in harmony with the instrument panel. A paddle shift allows gear changes without releasing the wheel for a sporty drive.

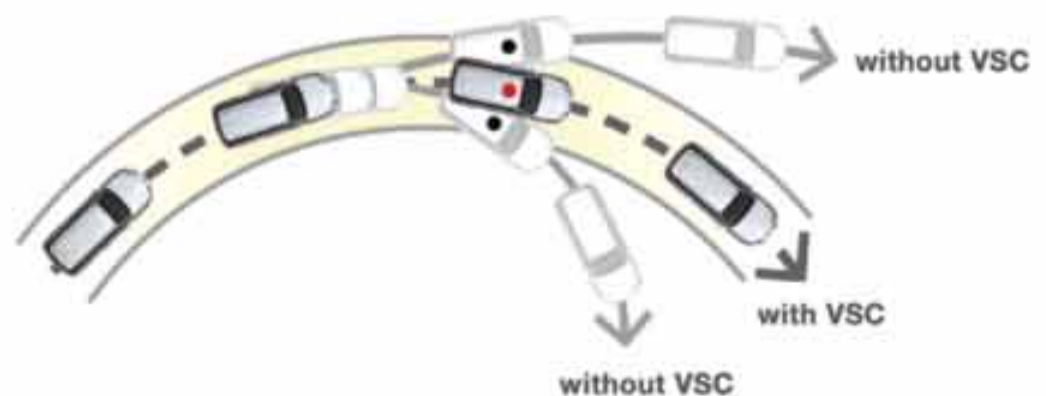
The Fortuner is fitted with newly developed 17-inch all-terrain tires, which boast high running performance both on and off-road. Newly developed 18-inch highway-terrain tyres have also been designed for the road. The new tread pattern takes into consideration noise reduction on paved roads and fuel economy performance, in addition to contributing to stable driving.

Advanced Safety Technology

The Fortuner is equipped with comprehensive safety systems to protect its occupants. These include Anti-lock Braking System (ABS) with Electronic Brake-force Distribution (EBD). In addition to ABS, which prevents the tyres from locking during braking, EBD is equipped

to perform measured brake force distribution between the front and rear wheels according to the vehicle condition. As a result, the force required to operate the brake pedal is reduced, ensuring strong braking performance.

The Fortuner comes with the Supplemental Restraint System (SRS) for the front seats along with a knee airbag for the driver. In terms of seatbelts, a three-point Emergency Locking Retractor (ELR) seatbelt is equipped on all seats. When impact is suddenly applied during a collision, the seatbelt locks to restrain the passenger. A pretensioner and force limiter function are also provided for the front seat belts. When a strong impact is received, the seat belt instantly retracts to prevent load exceeding a specified amount from being applied to the seat belt, reducing impact to the chest of the passenger during a collision. A top tether anchor compatible with the Child Restraint System (CRS) is present for the second-row seat.



SECTORS' WEEKLY TRADING ACTIVITY					SECTORS INDICES PERFORMANCE				
Sector	Volume	To Market %	Value	To Market %	Sector	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
OIL & GAS	77,626,162	7.81%	1,502,116	2.20%	OIL & GAS	745.31	756.32	-1.46%	-8.97%
BASIC MATERIALS	1,514,015	0.15%	449,083	0.66%	BASIC MATERIALS	917.61	929.45	-1.27%	-6.97%
INDUSTRIALS	56,831,704	5.72%	3,899,149	5.71%	INDUSTRIALS	987.16	979.21	0.81%	-5.36%
CONSUMER GOODS	5,164,183	0.52%	2,438,292	3.57%	CONSUMER GOODS	1,096.61	1,069.39	2.55%	0.16%
HEALTH CARE	246,852	0.02%	46,666	0.07%	HEALTH CARE	985.04	972.22	1.32%	6.45%
CONSUMER SERVICES	32,278,050	3.25%	3,060,096	4.48%	CONSUMER SERVICES	940.71	939.17	0.16%	-6.74%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	31,718,394	3.19%	5,844,858	8.56%	TELECOMMUNICATIONS	633.04	612.92	3.28%	5.75%
BANKS	129,143,674	13.00%	19,857,810	29.08%	BANKS	827.15	825.08	0.25%	-8.81%
INSURANCE	224,234	0.02%	27,651	0.04%	INSURANCE	1,044.06	1,051.08	-0.67%	-7.36%
REAL ESTATE	269,014,482	27.08%	13,226,608	19.37%	REAL ESTATE	836.72	835.74	0.12%	-11.06%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	389,284,791	39.19%	17,828,142	26.11%	FINANCIAL SERVICES	575.09	560.73	2.56%	-3.41%
TECHNOLOGY	338,979	0.03%	24,993	0.04%	TECHNOLOGY	880.06	915.87	-3.91%	7.30%

KUWAIT EQUITIES BUOYANT, INDICES UP

BAYAN WEEKLY MARKET REPORT

KUWAIT: Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) ended last week in the green zone. The Price Index closed at 5,284.87 points, up by 0.78 percent from the week before closing, the Weighted Index increased by 1.50 percent after closing at 367.53 points, whereas the KSX-15 Index closed at 871.70 points up by 2.00 percent. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover increased by 15.20 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching KD 13.66 billion, whereas trading volume average was 198.68 million shares, recording an increase of 27.67 percent.

As for the Kuwait Stock Exchange's daily performance during the last week, the stock market initiated the first session of the week recording good growth to its three indicators, supported by the active purchasing activities executed on a mix of small-cap and operational stocks, in light of an increased trading activity whereas the session witnessed the largest trading volume since approximately more than nine months, to reach 288,241,621 traded stock; the cash liquidity also increased significantly by 66.05 percent compared to the last week's end session, supported by some positive factors headed by the increased oil prices and the 2015 annual results for the listed companies.

On the second session of the week, the market witnessed mixed closing for the three indices, as the Price Index declined due to the selling for profit operations executed on the stocks that previously increased, while the Weighted and KSX-15 indices were able to realize limited increase by the end of the session supported by the random purchasing operations witnessed by the leading stocks. On the mid of week session, the three stock indicators were able to realize gains, supported by the speculative operations on the low priced stocks and the random purchasing operations executed on some leading stocks which caused it to compensate its previous session losses, in light of a declined trading activity, especially the volume.

Also, on Wednesday's session, the three stock indicators returned to fluctuate and closed mixed, as the Price Index decreased slightly as a result to the selling for profit operations of stocks that realized previous increases, in a correction move and reestablishment of

new financial positions at new price levels, while the Weighted and KSX-15 indices were able to realize limited gains by the end of the session, supported by the random purchasing operations witnessed by some leading stocks in the market, amid a declined volume and limited increase in the value.

Moreover, the three market indicators were able to hold in the end of week session to close in the green zone and realize different gains, whereas the Price Index was able to compensate its previous session's losses, supported by the random purchasing operations executed on the low-priced stocks, while

the Weighted and KSX-15 indices' performance improved, supported by the limited purchasing operations executed on the operational stocks.

By the end of last week, the number of the listed companies that disclosed its 2015 financial results reached around 98 company, representing 52.13 per-

cent of the 188 listed companies in the official market, whereas it realized around KD. 1.35 billion in profit, or 4.95 percent compared to the same companies results for 2014. On the other hand, the market capitalization for KSE reached by the end of last week KD 24.36 billion, increasing by 1.59 percent

compared to its level in a week earlier, where it was KD 23.98 billion. On an annual level, the market cap for the listed companies in KSE declined by 3.58 percent from its value at end of 2015, where it was KD 25.27 billion.

As far as KSE annual performance, the price index ended last week recording 5.88 percent annual loss compared to its closing in 2015, while the weighted index decreased by 3.71 percent, and the KSX-15 recorded 3.19 percent loss.

Sectors' Indices

Eight of KSE's sectors ended last week in the green zone, while the other four recorded declines. Last week's highest gainer was the Telecommunication sector, achieving 3.28 percent growth rate as its index closed at 633.04 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Financial Services sector's index closed at 575.09 points or 2.56 percent increase. The Consumer Goods sector came in third as its index achieved 2.55 percent growth, ending the week at 1,096.61 points.

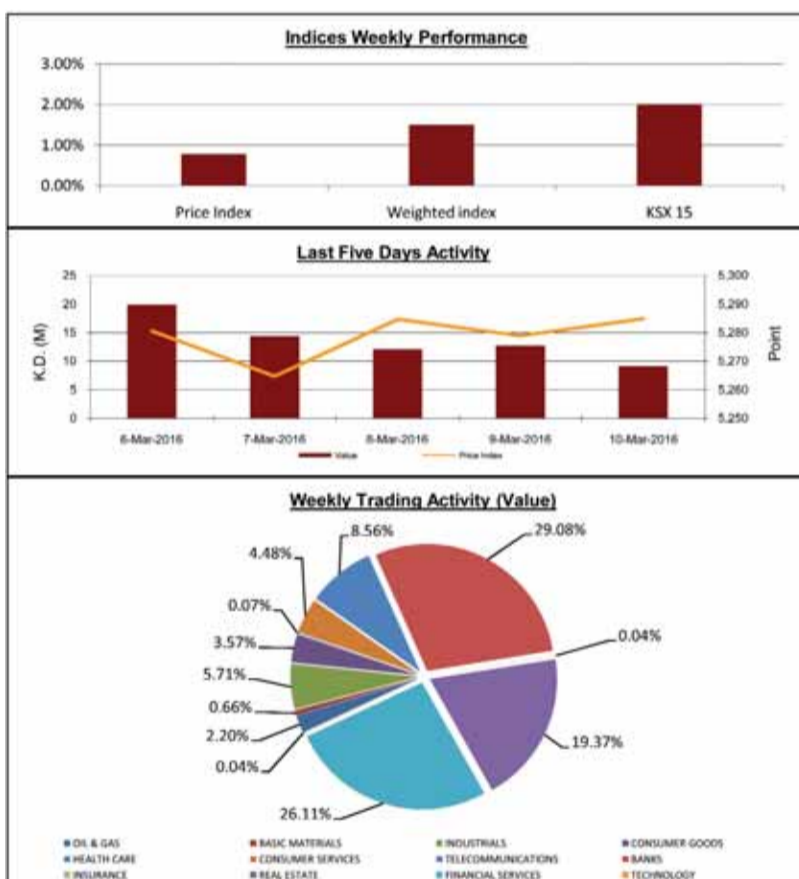
On the other hand, the Technology sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 3.91 percent to end the week's activity at 880.06 points. The Oil & Gas sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 1.46 percent, closing at 745.31 points, the least declining sector was the Insurance sector, as its index closed at 1,044.06 points at a loss of 0.67 percent.

Sectors' Activity

The Financial Services sector dominated a total trade volume of around 389.28 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 39.19 percent of the total market trading volume. The Real Estate sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 27.08 percent of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 269.01 million shares.

On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around KD 19.86 million or 29.08 percent of last week's total market trading value. The Financial Services sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 17.83 million representing 26.11 percent of the total market trading value. - Prepared by the Studies & Research Department, Bayan Investment Co.

KSE INDICES				
	Price Index	Weighted index	KSX 15	
Weekly	Last week	5,284.87	367.53	871.70
	Previous week	5,244.00	362.10	854.63
	Change (Point)	40.87	5.43	17.07
	Change (%)	0.78%	1.50%	2.00%
Annual	Last year	5,615.12	381.70	900.43
	Change (Point)	-330.25	-14.17	-28.73
	Change (%)	-5.88%	-3.71%	-3.19%



MARKET ACTIVITY			
	Last Week	Previous Week	Ch. %
Volume	993,385,520	778,107,339	27.67%
Value (K.D)	68,278,420	59,270,196	15.20%
Deals	20,384	18,616	9.50%

MARKET CAPITALISATION (K.D.)			
Last Week	Previous Week	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
24,360,720,148	23,978,954,855	1.59%	-3.58%

TOP GAINERS OF THE WEEK				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
IFAHR	192.00	152.00	40.0	26.32%
GNAHC	37.50	30.50	7.0	22.95%
SENERGY	10.50	9.00	1.5	16.67%
FOOD	2,560.00	2,200.00	360.0	16.36%
ALMUDON	35.00	30.50	4.5	14.75%

TOP LOSERS OF THE WEEK				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
ZIMAH	76.00	89.00	-13.0	-14.61%
SANAM	30.00	35.00	-5.0	-14.29%
REAM	146.00	166.00	-20.0	-12.05%
WETHAQ	28.50	31.50	-3.0	-9.52%
FUTURE	100.00	110.00	-10.0	-9.09%

STOCK MARKET EXTENDS RALLY TO A FOURTH WEEK

WALL STREET WEEKLY REPORT

NEW YORK: A jump in crude oil and a rise in European markets set off a rally in US stocks to cap a four-week winning streak for major indexes. Investors bought across industries from the start of trading on Friday. Drillers, refiners and other energy companies rose sharply as the price for US crude hit a high for the year. Devon Energy jumped 11 percent and Southwestern Energy gained 10 percent.

Just a month ago, investors were dumping shares amid talk of a possible US recession. The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell to almost a two-year low. But confidence has returned as data has suggested the US economy is strengthening. "While things aren't great, they're not the disaster we thought," said Bill Strazzullo, chief market strategist at Bell Curve Trading. "We've rallied after a horrendous start to the year."

The S&P 500 is up now nearly 11 percent from Feb 11. On Friday, the S&P 500 gained 32.62 points, or 1.6 percent, to 2,022.19. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 218.18 points, or 1.3 percent, to 17,213.31. The Nasdaq composite climbed 86.31 points, or 1.9 percent, to 4,748.47.

US crude gained after the International Energy Agency said signs that the market has "bottomed out" have emerged. Energy companies have been shutting down rigs and laying off thousands of workers as oil prices plunged to around \$30 per barrel, from well over \$100 per barrel just two years ago. US crude has risen 47 percent from a 13-year low of \$26.21 a month ago. Bank stocks also rose sharply. That sector had been beaten down in recent weeks as investors worried about loans to highly leveraged energy companies going bad. The rally has got some investors worried, though.

Chief Equity Strategist Phil Orlando of Federated Investors said the "terrific four-week run" makes him a "little nervous." Among his

concerns are a steeper China slowdown, a US dollar strengthening even more and hurting US exports, no relief from the corporate profits drop over the last year and more surprises in the presidential election.

"Don't discount the fiscal policy uncertainty

of the election," he warned. Xavier Smith, manager of the Centre Global Select Equity Fund, said he doesn't buy the oil rally, either.

"Oil is a proxy for the overall economy, and it's not going on four cylinders anywhere," Smith said. "So why would oil be strong? It

doesn't make any sense." European markets rose sharply as investors hoped that the European Central Bank's latest blast of stimulus policies would help revive the region's economy. Germany's DAX gained 3.5 percent, France's CAC 40 advanced 3.3 percent and

Britain's FTSE 100 rose 1.7 percent.

The ECB moves included three interest rate cuts, loans to banks, and the expansion of a bond-buying stimulus program. Shares in banks, which will be supported by the ECB loans, were among the biggest gainers. Investors turn their attention to a meeting of the U.S. Federal Reserve next week. Unlike its counterparts in Europe and Japan, the Fed is looking to wind down its economic stimulus, though most

investors do not expect it to tighten credit next week. The Fed raised rates for the first time in nine years in December.

Among stocks making big moves, driller Anadarko Petroleum rose \$3.79, or 9 percent, to \$46.29 after saying it would cut 1,000 workers, or 17 percent of its work force.

Power company Pepco Holdings fell \$2.18, or 9 percent, to \$22.07 after officials for the District of Columbia where it operates rejected a proposal to salvage its troubled \$6.8 billion merger with Exelon Corp. District regulators rejected the merger twice before. US crude added 66 cents, or 1.7 percent, to \$38.50 per barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, which is used to price international oils, gained 34 cents, or 0.8 percent, to \$40.39 a barrel. Wholesale gasoline rose 0.5 cents to \$1.444 a gallon, heating oil rose 0.2 cents to \$1.218 a gallon and natural gas gained 3.4 cents to \$1.822 per 1,000 cubic feet. The dollar strengthened to 113.70 yen from 113.11 yen while the euro fell to \$1.1157 from \$1.1196. US government bonds fell, pushing their yields higher. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 1.98 percent from 1.93 percent late Thursday. Industrial and precious metals were mixed. Gold fell \$13.40 to \$1,259.40 an ounce. Silver climbed 5.6 cents to \$15.61 an ounce and copper rose 2.1 cents to \$2.24 a pound. —AP



NEW YORK: Trader Luke Scanlon (left) works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on Friday. Stocks are opening broadly higher on Wall Street following a rally in Europe and an upturn in energy prices. —AP

NEVER TRIED VIRTUAL REALITY? HERE'S WHAT IT FEELS LIKE

By Frazier Moore

NEW YORK: It doesn't take a high-tech headset to see that virtual reality is the rage. It's being touted as the future for all things sensory, from games to film and television, from storytelling to visual art. My response as a television critic - and as a dyed-in-the-wool TV viewer - is to ask what this all means to me.

I am not typically an early adopter. My beat as a journalist isn't newfangled gadgetry. I'm a TV-centric content guy, scrambling to keep up with the torrent of programs that, however more plentiful and varied their providers, still contain themselves in two dimensions. Even so, VR seems a force to be reckoned with. So I grabbed a Samsung Gear VR headset for a maiden voyage.

Virtual reality is the link to an alternate reality, and instantly I'm all in! For example, I find that a wooded, birds-tweeting forest on a sunny day is a far more agreeable environment than my stuffy apartment. And that's even before Reese Witherspoon appears over a rise and, puffing with her backpack, rests herself on a nearby rock.

In character from her 2014 film "Wild," she is bedraggled but radiant and seems close enough and real enough to bother for a sip of her water. Alas, all too quickly Witherspoon resumes her solitary trek, vanishing through trees in the opposite direction too absorbed in her odyssey to have paid me any notice.

But a dinosaur does. With "Jurassic World: Apatosaurus," I am in a different kind of forest, stationed a few yards from a colossal dozing reptile sprawled on the forest floor. Then, during this two-minute interlude, it blinks awake, clambers to its feet, spots me and, staring me right in the face, takes a curious sniff.

These adventures pale in wonder to Cirque du



LAS VEGAS: In this Jan 6, 2016 file photo, people react as they wear Samsung Gear VR goggles at CES International. — AP

Soleil's "Kurios: Cabinet of Curiosities," which sweeps me into a wondrous spectacle. Beautiful and dazzlingly weird, the dozen-and-a-half performers cavort on a stage where they accept me as a spellbound intruder. They put on quite a show.

Or, maybe more accurately, many shows. As I share their 360-degree space, where and what I look at is up to me. I am free to bob and swivel my head to fix my gaze on anyone or anything. I literally get to call the shots. And after a half-dozen viewings, with my attention leap-frogging from one direction to another, I still can't take in all the revelry. If joining a famed entertainment troupe is remarkable, an even bigger blast is

gaining entry to a painting by Vincent Van Gogh.

More authentic

Thanks to a VR reimagining of Van Gogh's 1888 "The Night Cafe," I can take my place within the brushstrokes of the Cafe de la Gare and its scattering of tables and chairs, billiard table and lone patron come to life. But there's more to explore than the single room the painting has immortalized. Through a doorway in the corner, I can stray into a never-before-seen side room, where a pianist plays a melancholy tune and - lo and behold - Vincent himself sits listening while meditatively smoking his pipe.

Unlike VR video captured with stationary 360-degree cameras, this Van Gogh tribute is more like a video game, letting me interact more authentically with my surroundings. I can step up to a table or a person, but no farther, as if these objects were really in my way. And unlike many VR experiences, this one is open-ended. I am free to linger in this otherworldly, painterly realm to my heart's content. At this cafe, there is no last call. And I am in no hurry to leave.

Why would I? Despite the possible onset of a headache or queasiness (nothing comes without a price, including this technology in its infant stage), VR is a habitat of countless possibilities, an exhilarating refuge that yanks me from the sidelines and thrusts me into the action. Could VR ever become the default mode for its audience? I can imagine a time when immersion in VR might be as normal a state of self-imposed isolation as earbuds piping music from an iPod is now.

But more pertinent to me, a television guy, is this question: As VR evolves as technology and art, what will be its impact on the act of vegging out with old-fashioned TV? Television has long reigned as the province of the couch potato, viewing passively while free to do other things: answer email, fix a snack or just nurse a beer. But lost in VR's altered state, I could easily miss my mouth when trying to take a sip. VR demands full commitment.

Could be, as VR comes of age, television will become not quite old hat, but instead what radio became with TV's birth: an atmospheric add-on, just one part of the everyday sensory mosaic. Similarly, TV, with its grip on public consciousness downgraded, might be recast as an omnipresent supplement to real life. Not supplementing, but supplanting real life: That's what VR aims to do. — AP



SEOUL: South Korean professional Go player Lee Sedol waits after putting the first stone against Google's artificial intelligence program, AlphaGo, during the third match of the Google DeepMind Challenge Match. — AP

SOFTWARE BEATS HUMAN GO CHAMP TO CLINCH SERIES

SEOUL: Google's Go-playing software defeated a human champion for the third straight time yesterday to clinch the best-of-five series and establish its superiority in an ancient Chinese chess-like game long thought to be the realm of humans. South Korea's Lee Sedol, one of the world's best Go players, remained winless against AlphaGo, Google DeepMind's artificial intelligence machine, after another close match in Seoul. Despite losing the series, Lee is scheduled to play twice more against AlphaGo, on Sunday and Tuesday.

The highly anticipated showdown between human and machine has crushed the pride of Go fans, many of them in Asia, who believed Go would be too complex for machines to master. Some thought it would take at least another decade for computers to beat human Go champions. Many top Go professionals commented that AlphaGo displayed unorthodox, question-

able moves that initially befuddled humans but made sense in hindsight. Lee looked shaken in the post-match news conference, apologizing to his fans for what he said was a "powerless display" against the game-playing machine. He said he felt extreme pressure heading into the third match, but that with the series now decided, he might have a better chance in the final two matches because "the psychological part matters to humans." Google co-founder Sergey Brin, who was in Seoul to watch the third match, described Go as a "beautiful game" and said he was excited that the company has been able to "install that kind of beauty in our computers."

In Go, which is considered to be far more complex than chess, two players take turns putting black or white stones on a 19-by-19 square grid. The goal is to put more territory under one's control by surrounding vacant areas with the stones. — AP



NEW YORK: In this Wednesday, March 9, 2016 photo, Google User Experience Researchers John Webb pose for a photo with Google's User Experience van. — AP

GOOGLE HITTING THE ROAD FOR VITAL USER FEEDBACK

SAN FRANCISCO: Google is about to embark on an old-school search, swapping its Internet algorithm for a custom-built van that will cruise across the US to find out how people use its online services and react to new features.

The white van emblazoned with Google's colorful logo and an invitation to "shape the future" of the world's most powerful Internet company is scheduled to pull out Monday on a six-week road trip. Google is using the van to help it break out of its Silicon Valley bubble. The van will make multiday stops in seven states, stopping near colleges, libraries, parks and some of Google's own regional offices in hopes of finding out how average Americans are using the company's multitude of digital offerings.

About 500 walk-up volunteers will be invited to step inside the van designed to serve as a mini-version of Google's Silicon Valley laboratories, where most of the company's user studies are conducted. Once inside, researchers will watch, question and record how the volunteers use apps and other services on their smartphones in sessions that will last 15 to 90 minutes. They will receive gift cards and Google t-shirts in return for their time.

A few may even get a glimpse at ideas that Google's engineers are still refining before the company decides whether to release them as products to the general public. The plan to build a research lab on wheels grew out of Google's recognition that most people don't live and think the same way as the population living in the San Francisco Bay Area, where the company does most of its user research.

Thick of the action

In this geeky and affluent area, the day's biggest worry sometimes boils down to how long it will take to summon an Uber ride to a fancy restaurant. "We are trying to understand the whole end-to-end experience, which is why we are trying to get out to more locations and see more people so we can gather more context," says Laura Granka, a lead Google researcher focusing on Internet search and maps. Google is usually in the thick of the action on people's computers and mobile devices, with seven different services boasting at least 1 billion users: Internet search, YouTube, maps, Chrome browser, Android software for mobile devices, Google Play and Gmail. — AP

GIRLS KEEP OUT: FEMALE GAMERS FACE VILE ABUSE

ONLINE THREATS A FREQUENT FLASHPOINT, ISSUE

NEW YORK: Nico Deyo, a 33-year-old e-commerce specialist from Milwaukee, used to enjoy mixing it up with players from around the world in the popular online fantasy game "World of Warcraft." Then a stalker began harassing her on the game's forums, impersonating her in the game and, later, sending her barrages of Twitter messages, some threatening her with graphic rape and murder.

While the stalker didn't drive her from the game, the experience helped sour her on multiplayer gaming. "There's a lot of things about the community that are very hostile," she says of Warcraft. Deyo largely gave up the game almost two years ago and now mostly spends her time on playing other games by herself.

Deyo is far from alone. In the male-dominated world of multiplayer online games like "Grand Theft Auto," "Halo," and "Call of Duty," many women say they've had to take drastic steps to escape harassment, stalking and violent threats from male players. Some quit particular games. Others change their screen names or make sure they play only with friends.

'Geek culture'

Online harassment of women, often involving threats of horrific violence, has become a big issue - and video games are a frequent flashpoint. Two years ago, the online "GamerGate" movement, ostensibly a protest over the ethics of game journalists, also fueled Twitter attacks on female critics replete with gutter-level abuse and assault threats. Some targets left their homes or canceled speaking engagements, fearing for their safety.

On Saturday, the South by Southwest Interactive festival plans a daylong summit on online harassment; one panel will address problems in "gaming and geek culture." That summit, however, almost never happened; last October, the festival canceled two gaming-issue panels after receiving "numerous threats of on-site violence." Organizers reversed themselves a few days later after BuzzFeed and Vox Media threatened to boycott the festival entirely.

Online gaming companies, however, have been slower to act. Major console makers Microsoft and Sony and game developers like Blizzard Entertainment have "terms of service" that explicitly ban stalking and other harassing behavior. The companies have the right to ban reported bad actors from their public forums. Players say that rarely happens - and when it does, as in Deyo's case, their harassers often follow them onto Twitter and other social channels.

Valid gamers

Becky Heineman, the 52-year-old founder of the Olde Skuul game studio in Seattle, was an aficionado of shoot-em-ups like "Halo" and "Call of Duty." But constant catcalls from other players and questions about her bra size or "whether I do it on top or bottom, or other derogatory things," she says, wore her down. Reporting her harassers never seemed to make a difference, she says. She limited her play to friends for a while, but now mostly focuses on simple single-player games like "Cookie Clicker" on her phone and computer.

Contrary to popular stereotypes, women are avid video gamers; one recent survey showed that about half of all women play video games, about the same as men (note that these surveys also include mobile games which have a vast majority of female players). But men are far more likely to identify themselves as "gamers," and experts say that "hard-core" shooting and action games remain mostly male. It's only recently that "women players have been recognized as valid gamers that are interesting for companies," said Yasmin Kafai, a University of Pennsylvania professor who focuses on gender and gaming.

Microsoft says recent changes to its Xbox Live service make it more likely that players with bad reputations will end up playing each other. It adds that its enforcement team monitors complaints at all times and that all reports are investigated. Sony, Blizzard and the Entertainment Software Association, a trade group, did not respond to requests for comment. Those moves don't impress some women in the industry.



SEATTLE: In this Tuesday, Dec 16, 2014, photo, longtime video game developer Becky Heineman poses for a photo at her workspace. — AP

"While they have very good statements about harassment and, you know, responsibility to the community and all that kind of stuff, the enforcement side of it is pretty lax," says Kate Edwards, executive director of the International Game Developers Association. "Players basically have to adopt their own strategies to deal with it."

Just mute messages

Games and online game networks, for instance, let players "mute" messages from opponents and turn off voice chat, where trash talk can easily shade over into harassment. Xbox Live also labels players who get lots of complaints with a red marker so that other players can avoid them. But constantly muting or reporting other players interrupts what's supposed to be a fun pastime. And it doesn't change harassing behavior.

"If I just block somebody, is that stopping them from doing the abuse?" says Kishonna Gray, an Eastern Kentucky University professor who wrote a book about racist and sexist interactions within Xbox. "They can go to the next person and do the same thing."

That's especially true when harassment shades into the real world. Mercer Smith-Looper, a 27-year-old Boston woman, found it annoying when male players patronized her and told her how to play. Then she started receiving unwanted gifts - a necklace, a sword - in the mail. One gamer unexpectedly showed up at her workplace after calling her repeatedly. Fed up, she changed her gamer name and now sticks to play-

ing privately with friends or alone. "I'm kind of in hiding," she says.

What would effective anti-harassment measures look like? Experts like Edwards and Gray point to Riot Games, the maker of "League of Legends," for its efforts to change player culture. Riot built a system based on artificial intelligence and player feedback to determine appropriate behavior during gameplay, and uses it to punish or reward players who draw complaints, according to the company's online support documents.

When players show "signs of toxicity," Riot can block them from competitive play, limit their chats or ban them entirely. The company shows players what behavior other players didn't like when it punishes them. Jeffrey Lin, Riot's lead game designer for social systems, has said that because of these efforts, only 2 percent of its global games experienced racist, homophobic, sexist language or excessive harassment. Riot Games declined to comment when contacted by The Associated Press.

IGDA's Edwards acknowledges that dealing with harassment is a difficult challenge. "You're dealing with minors versus adults," she says. "You're dealing with free speech issues. It's a struggle for companies to figure out exactly how to approach it." And while Riot-style moderation might limit harassment, it's unlikely to solve the problem on its own. "This is a social and cultural problem, not a technological one," says Dmitri Williams, CEO of game analytics firm Ninja Metrics. — AP

CAPITAL ONE LETS USERS PAY BILLS VIA AMAZON'S ECHO

NEW YORK: Capital One has teamed with Amazon to let owners of Amazon's Echo smart speaker system pay their bills and get other account information through voice commands. Amazon's Echo speakers use a voice-command service called Alexa to help users perform various tasks, such as turning on smart lights, playing music or setting a kitchen timer. The number of so-called "skills" Alexa can perform has been growing since the Echo became widely available last year and now numbers more than 100.

The Capital One service will be the first time a credit-card company has been involved, however. Capital One will let users check their credit card balance, review recent transactions, pay their credit card bill and perform other tasks simply by talking to the device.

Users can sign up for the service via the Amazon Echo setup app. There they can set up a checking account link if they want to pay their credit card balance via the Echo. Then, to set up a session with Capital One, they give a com-

mand such as: "Alexa, ask Capital One for my Quicksilver Card balance" or "Alexa, ask Capital One to pay my credit card bill."

Security concerns have swirled around Amazon's Echo since it debuted, since the \$179 device is always "on." But Ken Dodelin, vice president of digital products management at McLean, Virginia-based Capital One, said the service is secure. "As a bank we're very attuned to security concerns," he said. When a user of the service asks Alexa to perform a Capital One task, they will be prompted for a four-digit personal key that users set up when they enable the skill. The key is optional, but the default is set to on, Dodelin said.

After a user says the key, the session with Capital One will be unlocked for five minutes, and then the user has to say the key again. The service will work via Alexa on the Echo, the recently announced \$129.99 Amazon Tap and the \$89.99 Echo Dot, which are both variations of the Echo speaker; and Amazon's Fire TV devices. — AP

EUROPE, RUSSIA EMBARK ON SEARCH FOR LIFE ON MARS

PARIS: Europe and Russia are set to launch an unmanned spacecraft tomorrow to smell Mars' atmosphere for gassy evidence that life once existed on the Red Planet, or may do so still.

ExoMars 2016, the first of a two-phase Mars exploration, will see an orbiter hoisted from Kazakhstan at 0931 GMT Monday on a Russian Proton rocket. With its suite of high-tech instruments, the Trace Gas Orbiter or TGO, should arrive at the Red Planet on October 19 after a journey of 496 million kilometres (308 million miles). Its main mission to photograph the Red Planet and analyse its air, the TGO will also piggyback a Mars lander dubbed Schiaparelli.

"Rocket roll-out our #ExoMars 2016 mission is at the launch pad!" the European Space Agency (ESA) tweeted Friday. ExoMars is a two-step collaboration between ESA and Russia's Roscosmos space agency. The second phase, a Mars rover due for launch in 2018, seems likely to be delayed over money worries.

But the first phase is going ahead as planned, and with high expectations:

"Determining whether Mars is 'alive' today", according to an ESA document. A key goal is to analyse methane, a gas which on Earth is created in large part by living microbes, and traces of which were observed by previous Mars missions.

"TGO will be like a big nose in space," according to Jorge Vago, ExoMars project scientist. Methane, the ESA said, is normally destroyed by ultraviolet radiation within a few hundred years, which implied that in Mars' case "it must still be produced today."

The question is: By what? Methane can either be generated in a biological process, such as microbes decomposing organic matter, or geological ones involving chemical processes in hot liquid water under the surface. TGO will analyse Mars' methane in more detail than any previous mission, said ESA, to try and determine its likely origin.

Anybody out there?

Another key element of the ExoMars 2016 mission is Schiaparelli, named after a 19th century Italian astronomer whose discovery of "canals" on Mars caused people to believe,

for a while, that there was intelligent life on our neighboring planet. Schiaparelli is a "demonstrator" module to test heat shields and parachutes in preparation for a subsequent rover landing on Mars, a feat ESA said "remains a significant challenge."

During its few live days on the surface of Mars, Schiaparelli will also measure atmospheric particles, wind speed and temperatures. The TGO's main science mission is scheduled to last until December 2017, but it has enough fuel to continue operations for years after, if all goes well.

As for the next phase, ESA director general Jan Woerner has mooted a possible two-year delay, saying in January: "We need some more money" due to cost increases.

The rover has been designed to drill up to two metres (2.2 yards) into the Red Planet in search of organic matter, a key indicator of life past or present. Scientists widely accept that liquid water, an essential ingredient for life, once flowed on Mars. Last September, researchers unveiled "the strongest evidence yet" the planet may still host water in the form of super-salty streaks of brine. — AFP



A handout picture taken and released by the European Space Agency (ESA) on Friday shows the Russian Proton rocket, that will launch tomorrow the ExoMars 2016 spacecraft to Mars, during its transfer to the pad of the launch complex at the Baikonour spaceport, Kazakhstan. — AFP



Children walk in a makeshift camp yesterday at the Greek-Macedonian border, near the Greek village of Idomeni, where thousands of refugees and migrants are stranded by the Balkan border blockade. — AFP

CHILDREN EXPOSED TO RAW SEWAGE, NOXIOUS FUMES AT GREEK CAMP

'CHILDREN ARE ILL WITH HIGH FEVERS, COUGHS AND VOMITING'

IDOMENI, Greece: At a migrant camp on the Greece-Macedonia border, children queue barefoot in the mud and rain for a single sandwich, others wade about in flooded fields.

Days of heavy rain have turned Greece's Idomeni border camp into a foul-smelling bog, exposing migrant children to raw sewage, noxious fumes and bitter cold, with aid workers describing conditions as "critical". More than 14,000 mainly Syrian and Iraqi refugees including many children are camped out at the squalid camp where they have been stranded by Skopje's decision to close the frontier. Macedonia has not let anyone enter since Monday.

In an effort to keep warm and dry, thousands of migrants are burning whatever they can lay their hands on. "People are trying to stay warm so they are burning plastic, they are burning their clothes," Imad Aoun of charity Save the Children said.

'Pretty critical'

"A lot of children are inhaling this toxic gas. There have been a lot of cases reported of children with respiratory conditions just because they have been here for so long," he said. Aoun described the conditions as "pretty critical", adding that they were some of the "worst that we've seen".

"The bathrooms are flooded, there is sewage water everywhere, you see a lot of children as well playing in the sewage water," he said. The tent settlement—where many of the migrants have now been for weeks was originally set up for just 2,500 people. With around

14,000 in the camp now, a further 6,000 have been forced to sleep in muddy fields and ditches.

"This area is a sinkhole, it draws in all the rainfall of the region," a government source in Athens said.

The refugee build-up began in mid-February after a string of countries including Macedonia started limiting the number of people allowed to cross their territory en route to wealthier countries such as Germany and Scandinavia. Late Tuesday, Slovenia and Croatia both said no migrants would be allowed to cross, with Serbia indicating it would follow suit.

Long queues

The Greek government has now stationed medical teams in the area to provide primary healthcare. There are already long queues outside the two mobile units, with hundreds of parents holding crying and coughing children. "Dozens of children are severely ill, suffering from high fevers, coughs and vomiting," executive director of the Doctors of the World charity, Leigh Daynes, said after a visit to the border. "Even before (Tuesday's) border closure our medics saw many children suffering from diarrhoea, hypothermia, croup and severe nappy rash," Daynes said in a statement.

Dozens of people have also suffered panic attacks, fainting and hysteria after realising that they could no longer continue their journey, he added. The most serious cases have been taken to hospital in Kilkis, the nearest Greek town around 50 kilometres (31 miles) from Idomeni, which is already overwhelmed.

"We currently have 34 children suffering from res-

piratory ailments, viral infections and gastroenteritis," said Vassilis Triantafyllidis, head of the local medics' union. Several pregnant migrants have given birth at the hospital, with others miscarriage due to poor conditions at the camp, he said.

'It was hell'

Government officials are urging refugees to abandon Idomeni and seek shelter in less crowded relocation camps elsewhere in Greece. "We are telling them that 20 kilometres away there is shelter, hot food and healthcare," said a government source.

"It will take some time for the message to sink in, they have to hear it from people they trust," the official added. Over 400 people have left since Wednesday to return to the port of Piraeus a distance of around 600 kilometres—from where they will be shared out between camps with spare capacity.

"I'm going to Trikala (in central Greece)," said Jalla, a 19-year-old Afghan. "They told us the camps are clean, with doctors and real dormitories," she said.

Giwan Al Haije and his wife Urmen, a young Syrian Kurdish couple, have decided to apply for relocation within the EU. Out of 160,000 asylum seekers set to be transferred from Greece and Italy under the relocation program, fewer than a thousand have left so far.

"We want to apply for the program because my wife fell ill at Idomeni. It was hell there," Giwan said. "We've had enough of camps, having lived in one at Erbil (in northern Iraq) and another one in Turkey," he said. — AFP

BRAZIL MOTHERS LEFT TO RAISE MICROCEPHALY BABIES ALONE

CAMPINA GRANDE, Brazil: Ianka Barbosa was 7 months pregnant when she found out her child had microcephaly. Before the baby was even born, the father had gone. Barbosa, 18, blames the break-up on her baby's abnormally small head and brain damage that doctors link to the Zika virus she contracted during pregnancy.

"I think, for him, it was my fault the baby has microcephaly," said Barbosa, wearing a blue dress and cradling tiny two-week old Sophia in a cramped bare brick house where she now lives with her parents in Brazil's northeast.

"When I most needed his help, he left me." The house, which overlooks a polluted stream on the edge of a poor neighborhood, is now home to a family of nine. Only Barbosa's father has a job doing occasional building work.

Her ex-partner, Thersio, says he does not see Sophia, but avoids discussing microcephaly and blames Barbosa's parents for the break-up. "I gave her the choice, are you your parents' woman or mine... And she chose her parents."

Single parents are common in Brazil where some studies show as many as 1 in 3 children from poor families grow up without their biological father, but doctors on the frontline of the Zika outbreak say they are concerned about how many mothers of babies with microcephaly are being abandoned.

With the health service already under strain, abortion prohibited, and the virus hitting the poorest hardest, an absent father is yet another burden on mothers already struggling to cope with raising a child that might never walk or talk.

At a specialized microcephaly clinic in Campina Grande, psychologist Jacqueline Loureiro works with mothers to help them cope with stress and trauma. Of the 41 women she counsels, she says only 10 receive adequate financial or emotional support from their partners.

"At first many of the women say they have a partner, but as you get to know them better

you realize the father is never around and the baby and mother have effectively been abandoned," Loureiro said. Loureiro blames Brazil's macho culture, which she says is particularly strong in the northeast.

Gender roles are strictly defined and women still tend to care for the baby and look after the household. The added burden of having a child with microcephaly strains this dynamic, says Loureiro, and often the man ends up leaving or refusing to help.

SPECIAL NEEDS AND DIVORCE

Much remains unknown about Zika, including whether it actually causes microcephaly in babies. Brazil said it has confirmed 745 cases of microcephaly since October, and considers most of them related to Zika infections in the mothers. It is investigating another 4,230 cases of suspected microcephaly. Until the World Health Organization declared Zika a global health emergency last month, there was little interest in microcephaly and no data for its toll on parents. But studies into children with other special needs shows it substantially increases the chance of marital breakdown.

Jennifer Lewis, who runs the US based Microcephaly Foundation and has a 12-year-old daughter with the condition, is not surprised fathers in northeast Brazil are abandoning partners and children. Her charity has a network of around 5,000 families and she says the majority are single mothers.

"I see single mothers all the time, where the fathers have left, the fathers have got scared. I even see married couples where the father has pretty much nothing to do with the child," she said in a phone interview from Phoenix, Arizona.

Campina Grande's health secretary, Luzia Pinto, told Reuters the city is planning to provide housing for mothers and children with microcephaly through a government housing program in order to help with the crisis. She also ensured a psychologist was hired at the clinic to offer support. — Reuters



AMSTERDAM: This court sketch made on October 24, 2014 shows Mark van Nierop, a Dutch dentist suspected of mutilating patients, in a court in Amsterdam. Mutilation, violence against vulnerable persons, fraud, forgery: the Dutch Jacobus Marinus - called Mark - Van Nierop, nicknamed "the dentist of the horror" in Nievre is set to be heard tomorrow by the French Criminal Court of Nevers for the defense plea. — AFP

'GOOD' CHOLESTEROL CAN SOMETIMES BE BAD

LONDON: So-called "good" cholesterol may actually increase heart attack risks in some people, researchers said on Thursday, a discovery that casts fresh doubt on drugs designed to raise it.

High density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol is generally associated with reduced heart risks, since it usually offsets the artery-clogging effects of the low density (LDL) form. But some people have a rare genetic mutation that causes the body to have high levels of HDL and this group, paradoxically, has a higher heart risk, scientists reported in the journal Science.

"Our results indicate that some causes of raised HDL actually increase risk for heart disease," said lead researcher Daniel Rader of the University of Pennsylvania. "This is the first demonstration of a genetic mutation that raises HDL but increases risk of heart disease."

The scientists found that people with the mutation had an increased relative risk of coronary heart disease almost equivalent to the risk caused by smoking. Normally, HDL is an important helper in the smooth running of the cardiovascular

system by ferrying cholesterol to the liver, where it is eliminated. But this process is disrupted in people with a faulty version of a gene known as SCARB1, leading to high levels of HDL that fails to do its job, Rader and colleagues found. The mutation appears to be specific to people of Ashkenazi Jewish descent.

The finding could help explain why drugs that boost HDL have so far failed to deliver expected benefits in clinical trials. Over the past decade, three experimental drugs known as CETP inhibitors from Pfizer, Roche and Eli Lilly have flopped in tests, leaving Merck's anacetrapib as the only one remaining in late-stage studies.

Peter Weissberg, medical director at the British Heart Foundation, which supported the research, said the new research had shed light on a major puzzle and could open up new medical avenues in the longer term. "These unexpected findings pave the way for further research into the SCARB1 pathway to identify new treatments to reduce heart attacks in the future," he said in a statement. — Reuters

FDA EXPANDS USE OF PFIZER DRUG FOR RARE FORM OF LUNG CANCER

WASHINGTON: The Food and Drug Administration expanded approval of a Pfizer drug to treat a small subset of lung cancer patients with a rare mutation. The agency said Friday that Xalkori capsules are now approved for patients with the ROS-1 gene mutation, who make up about 1 percent of US patients with non-small cell lung cancer, the most common form of the disease.

The twice-a-day drug is part of a new generation of medications that fight disease by targeting specific genes found in certain patients. It was initially approved in 2011 for another subset of lung cancer patients who have an abnormal gene that stimulates tumor growth.

The drug blocks certain proteins found in tumors with genetic mutations, with the aim of slowing the spread of cancer. "Lung cancer is difficult to treat, in part, because patients have different mutations,

some of which are rare," said Dr. Richard Pazdur, FDA's director for cancer drugs, in a statement. "The expanded use of Xalkori will provide a valuable treatment option

for patients with the rare and difficult to treat ROS-1 gene mutation." Like most new cancer drugs, Xalkori carries a hefty price tag: \$14,336 per month, or about

\$172,000 per year. That number does not take into account discounts and rebates often negotiated by insurers. Pfizer posted sales for the drug of \$488 million in 2015, according to its annual report.

The FDA approved the new indication based on a study in 50 patients in which 66 percent of patients saw their tumor shrink partially or completely. That benefit lasted about 18 months for the typical patient. The most common side effects of Xalkori include vision disorders, nausea, swelling, diarrhea and inflammation.

About 188,000, or 85 percent, of the 221,000 lung cancer cases diagnosed each year are non-small cell lung cancer. Roughly three-fourths of patients aren't diagnosed until tumors have spread, which dramatically reduces their life expectancy. Shares of New York-based Pfizer Inc. rose 90 cents, or 3 percent, to close at \$30.49. — AP



The Pfizer logo is displayed at world headquarters in New York. The Food and Drug Administration expanded approval of a Pfizer drug to treat a small subset of lung cancer patients with a rare mutation. — AP

US GIVES TENTATIVE OK TO TESTING GM MOSQUITOES



An *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is photographed through a microscope at the Fiocruz institute in Recife, Pernambuco state, Brazil. A field trial releasing genetically modified mosquitoes in Florida would not harm humans or the environment, according to documents released on Friday by the US Food and Drug Administration. — AP

WASHINGTON: US regulators tentatively agreed on Friday to permit a field test of genetically modified mosquitoes that are designed to help limit the spread of Zika virus and other infectious diseases.

In a document published on its website, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said male mosquitoes called "OX513A" are unlikely to present risks to humans, animals or the environment.

However, the proposed test in the Florida Keys off the southeastern tip of the United States will not be given the final go-ahead until the FDA receives feedback from the public and other stakeholders, a process that will take months. The genetically modified "Aedes aegypti" mosquito by British company Oxitec carries a gene that significantly shortens its life, while offspring die before reaching adulthood.

The aim is to eliminate wild mosquito populations that spread infectious diseases such as Zika, dengue, chikungunya and West Nile. The genetically modified

mosquitoes have been found to be effective in reducing the wild mosquito population in small tests carried out in Brazil and a few other countries.

The FDA fast-tracked the Oxitec application, with the pending arrival of warm weather that encourages the breeding of disease-spreading mosquitoes, an FDA official recently told Congress.

The continental US has not yet seen any cases of active Zika transmission but there are fears mosquitoes can spread the virus in parts of the US during the warmer months. Authorities have also said mosquitoes are becoming resistant to insecticides, adding urgency to the task of finding a way to reduce their numbers. The FDA's decision was based heavily on an environmental impact assessment submitted by Oxitec, whose parent company is American biotech firm Intrexon. The documents from the FDA and Oxitec said the genetically modified mosquitoes are unlikely to "escape" and form large wild

populations because they are designed to die young.

Additionally, they should be safe for humans and other animals because the mosquitoes released in the test will be mostly male. Only female mosquitoes bite and feed on blood.

"FDA found that the probability that the release of OX513A male mosquitoes would result in toxic or allergenic effects in humans or other animals is negligible," it said in the documents released Friday.

The mosquito-borne Zika virus is blamed for a spike in cases of the birth defect microcephaly in Brazil and other Latin American countries most affected by the outbreak. Scientists have not confirmed the link between Zika and microcephaly, a serious and irreversible condition in which babies are born with abnormally small heads and deformed brains, but health authorities have advised pregnant women not to travel to areas affected by Zika. — AFP

LIBERIA SHUTTERS RED CROSS AMID INQUEST INTO EBOLA SPENDING

MAN DIES IN HONDURAS WITH SUSPECTED ZIKA LINK

MONROVIA: Police shuttered the offices of the Liberian branch of the Red Cross on Thursday, days after the president dismissed its board of directors amid an investigation into the use of funds destined for the fight against recently ended Ebola outbreak.

Some 11,300 people died during the two-year epidemic, the worst on record, in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. Over 4,800 of them died in Liberia, which was declared free of active transmission of the virus in January but only after a massive influx of foreign assistance including the deployment of U.S. soldiers to the West African nation.

While President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's office gave no reason for the decision announced on Tuesday to dismiss the Red Cross's board, the organisation has faced a string of graft accusations in the local press. The board rejected the decision claiming that the president had overstepped her authority, and senior managers were holding a meeting at the main office in the capital Monrovia when police arrived on Thursday. "The human resource managers told us to leave the building with our belongings because the

president had sent police officers to lock it ... They locked the building and left with the keys," said one employee present at the offices.

The Liberian Red Cross's secretary general and head of programs were both suspended in November, accused of misusing \$1.8 million in donor funds. Neither they nor the board members suspended this week have responded publicly to graft charges. "The president (Johnson Sirleaf) is saying that there is a problem," Liberian Red Cross president Emmanuel Kparh told reporters on Thursday. "If there was a problem, what do you do? Do you condemn before you solve or look into the problem?"

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) carried out an audit of its member organisation in Liberia last year. "We found some irregularities and that led to an investigation," said Benoit Matsha-Carpentier, a Geneva-based spokesman for the IFRC. He said that donors had given money to the IFRC that it had in turn redistributed to the Liberian Red Cross.

The irregularities revealed by the audit concerned

the use of funds intended for the Ebola response, he said, but declined to give further details. The results of the investigation have not yet been made public. "We have noted the decision of the president and next week a team of officials from Geneva is going to Monrovia," he said. The closure of the offices will have no effect on the operations of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which also operates in Liberia but is a separate organization.

Death in Honduras

Honduran authorities on Friday announced the death of a 22-year-old man from the neurological disorder Guillain-Barre syndrome who was also suspected of having the Zika virus.

"We have notification of one death due to Guillain-Barre syndrome, very probably linked to the Zika illness," the deputy health minister of Honduras, Francis Contreras, told reporters. If confirmed, it would be the first death related to Zika in the Central American country where 15,732 suspected cases have so far been reported, including 185 pregnant women.

The World Health Organization declared the Zika outbreak, which is suspected of causing thousands of babies to be born with abnormally small heads, or microcephaly, in Brazil, an international health emergency on Feb. 1. Much remains unknown about Zika, including whether the virus actually causes microcephaly, which can result in developmental problems.

Brazil said it has confirmed 745 cases of microcephaly, and considers most of them to be related to Zika infections in the mothers. Brazil is investigating more than 4,900 additional suspected cases of microcephaly. But the Zika outbreak has also been accompanied by an increase in Guillain-Barre, in which the body's immune system attacks part of the nervous system. Some 57 cases of Guillain-Barre have been reported in Honduras so far this year, compared with 112 for the whole of 2015, according to local authorities.

Usually occurring a few days after exposure to a virus, bacteria or parasite, Guillain-Barre causes gradual weakness in the legs, arms and upper body, and can result in total paralysis. Zika is carried by mosquitoes, which transmit the virus to humans, though the US Centers for Disease Control said on Feb. 23 it was also investigating possible cases of sexual transmission. The outbreak has spread to many parts of Latin America and the Caribbean and the WHO estimates Zika could eventually affect as many as four million people in the region. The WHO is investigating a "strongly suspected" relationship between Zika and microcephaly, a condition marked by abnormally small head size. There is no vaccine or treatment for the virus and some 80 percent of people infected show no symptoms. — Reuters



A health agent scoops water from a boat docked at the Jurujuba beach during an operation to eradicate the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, in Niteroi, Brazil. On Friday, US health officials are revising their Zika travel warnings, saying it's OK for pregnant women to travel to Mexico City and other destinations at high elevations. — AP

TRAVEL OK TO HIGH-ELEVATION CITIES IN ZIKA COUNTRIES: CDC

NEW YORK: The US government revised its Zika travel warnings Friday, saying it's OK for pregnant women to travel to Mexico City and other places at high elevation in outbreak regions.

The kind of mosquito that spreads the Zika virus is rare at higher elevations because of the lack of humidity and other conditions, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Infections from Zika or the related dengue virus haven't been seen high up. Since mid-January, the health agency has advised pregnant women to avoid travel to areas with Zika outbreaks because the virus may be linked to a surge of birth defects in Brazil. The list has grown to about three dozen destinations, most in Latin America or the Caribbean.

Friday's revision excludes any part of those countries above 6,500 feet (2,000 meters). CDC officials insisted science drove the change, but acknowledged there were concerns that overly broad travel warnings might unnecessarily hamper trade and tourism. "I suspect several countries will be quite pleased" by the revision, said Dr. Martin Cetron, who leads CDC's division of global migration and quarantine.

Five of the countries have large cities or sizeable areas at high altitudes, including

Mexico City, Bolivia's La Paz and Colombia's Bogota. Mexico Health Department's Dr. Cuatlahuac Ruiz Matuz said authorities there had objected to a blanket travel advisory for the country before it was issued, and had lobbied CDC for a change.

"Now they are correcting things a little bit," Ruiz said. He argued that the CDC should be even more specific and report where Zika has been detected. There have been 143 confirmed cases in Mexico, 128 in the southern states of Chiapas and Oaxaca. The remaining 15 are spread over six other states.

Besides the capital, Mexico has other large cities such as Puebla, Toluca and Guanajuato and the popular tourist destination of San Cristobal de las Casas at elevations above 6,500 feet.

Experts think most people infected with Zika virus don't get sick. And those that do usually develop mild symptoms - fever, rash, joint pain, and red eyes. But the unexpected numbers of birth defects in Zika outbreak areas of Brazil have raised alarms.

An estimated 40 million US travelers went to Zika outbreak destinations last year, including about a half million pregnant women, CDC officials estimate. The CDC advises all travelers to Zika areas to use insect repellent and take other steps to avoid mosquito bites. — AP

BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR GUN BUYERS COULD SAVE LIVES: US STUDY

BOSTON: Laws requiring background checks for buyers of guns and ammunition, as well as requirements that firearms be traceable, could sharply reduce gun deaths in the United States, according to a study published on Thursday. Many state-level gun regulations have little effect on the number of gun-related homicides and suicides. But "stand-your-ground" laws, which allow people to use deadly force in self-defense even if fleeing is an option, tend to raise the number of gun deaths, the study by Boston University researchers published in the Lancet medical journal found.

"Very few of the existing state-specific firearms laws are associated with reduced mortality, and this evidence underscores the importance of focusing on relevant and effective firearms legislation," said Sandro Galea, dean of the School of Public Health at Boston University, an author of the study.

"Implementing universal background checks for the purchase of firearms or ammunition, and firearm identification nationally could substantially reduce mortality in the U.S."

About 90 people die of gun-related injuries, both homicides and suicides, in the United

States each day. The study found that nationwide adoption of background check laws as well as measures making it easier to track spent ammunition back to the gun that fired it could reduce gun-related deaths by as much as 80 percent. The study looked at how deaths in 2010 were influenced by gun laws put into place in 25 states the year before.

It found that closing loopholes allowing gun buyers to avoid background checks when purchasing guns was the most effective way of reducing gun-related deaths.

Other regulations, including requiring more stringent record-keeping by gun dealers or mandating gun locks, had no measurable effect on gun-related deaths.

Opposition to gun regulations is strong in the Republican-led US Congress, which has resisted measures pushed by Democratic President Barack Obama after a series of mass shootings including the massacre of 26 young children and educators in Newtown, Connecticut, in 2012. In a January executive order, Obama imposed gun control measures that included requiring more gun buyers to undergo background checks. — Reuters

CLINIC

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CONGRESS LEADERS UPBEAT ABOUT UDF VICTORY IN KERALA ELECTIONS

By Sajeev K Peter

The ruling United Democratic Front (UDF) coalition is optimistic that it would win the upcoming assembly elections and retain power in Kerala, said two leaders of the Congress party here yesterday.

Roy K Poullose, the president of the Idukki district committee of the Indian National Congress and Adv. Dean Kuriakose, Kerala State president of the Youth Congress, remained upbeat that the ruling alliance would emerge victorious in the upcoming elections despite an acrimonious campaign against it by the opposition parties. Kerala assembly elections are scheduled to be held on May 16, 2016.

The two leaders arrived in Kuwait on Friday to attend a convention organized by the Overseas Indian Cultural Congress (OICC) for its members from the Idukki district of Kerala. The

convention was held at the United Indian School, Abbassiya on Friday, officially flagging off the electioneering campaign of the party in the assembly election.

"The UDF stands a good chance of retaining power. The opposition Left Democratic Front (LDF), unlike UDF, does not seem to have a positive agenda to present before the people. That is the reason why they continue to create a smokescreen by raising non-issues such as solar scandal or bar bribery scam to divert the attention of the electorate from serious issues like development of the state," said Poullose.

"On the contrary, the UDF, led by the Congress party is discussing the issue of development as its key plank during the electioneering," He said pointing out that the government has successfully implemented several milestone projects during this tenure.

Kuriakose, who contested last parliament election from the Idukki constituency as the

UDF candidate, said he hoped that the Congress party high command would nominate more young leaders this time when it finalizes the list of candidates for Kerala. "The state unit of the Youth Congress is of the considered view that there should be adequate representation of the youth in the assembly in order to balance the demographic proportion of Kerala. Those leaders who contested elections for four times or more must voluntarily give way to the second and third generation of leaders so that the voice of the youth would be heard in the assembly," he said.

Kuriakose, who was appointed the Kerala State Youth Congress president three-and-half years ago, and Poullose, who is active in Kerala politics for the last 40 years, were given a rousing welcome at the Kuwait International Airport on their arrival on Friday. Kuriakose left Kuwait after a two-day visit yesterday while Poullose will leave for India today.



The Kuwait Banks Club is organizing a football tournament for local banking sector employees.



It was a glamorous moment at the Life Abundant International Fountain Church on Friday as family, friends and well-wishers gathered to celebrate with Willy and family for their child dedication ceremony. 'May God bless baby Catharine as she grows to be a blessing to the family' Amen.

NAFO HONORS STUDENTS

NAFO Kuwait recently conducted a glamorous ceremony to honor meritorious and outgoing students of NAFO family. The function was held at NAFO Recreation Center, Salmiya. The ceremony started at 7:00 pm with a prayer song chanted by Sruthi Uday, Vaishnav Anilkumar and Raghav Udaymembers of "NAFO Symphony". NAFO General Secretary, Murali Nair, welcomed the gathering followed by an audiovisual presentation of students honored.

NAFO outgoing students, Anjana Ramesh, Sreerag Suresh Nair and Vinayak Unnikrishnan were honored with NAFO gold medals and appreciation certificates, by the invited guests, officials and senior members of NAFO family.

NAFO meritorious student of Class X, Anamika Anilkumar was also honored with NAFO medal and appreciation certificates. Vijay Karayil (NAFO Patron) B S Pillai, (NAFO Advisory Board member), Rajan Menon (Former NAFO President), TKV Pradeepkumar (NAFO Treasurer) presented the medals and certificates to the students honored.

After receiving NAFO honors and appreciations, all students thanked NAFO for having provided them with a strong platform to improve their extracurricular skills and personal abilities. While felicitating the outgoing students, K C Gopakumar (NAFO President) Vijay Karayil (NAFO Patron), Dr P C Nair (NAFO Advisory Board), K N S Das (NAFO Member) Vijayan Nair (NAFO General

Committee Convener) and Krishnan Pillai (NAFO Joint Treasurer) reminded them about their future challenges, duties and responsibilities, and wished all of them a bright and prosperous future.

Program flyer of 13th NAFO Anniversary Celebrations - a Live-in Music Show by sensational music band 'Masala Coffee' was also officially released on the occasion.

'Masala Coffee' a cocktail of beats, steps and theater of acts topped with the sweetest nostalgia of Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam and English melodies, will be staged on Friday, 13th May, 2016, at the American International School, Maidan Hawally.





JERUSALEM COMMITTEE LAUNCHES PALESTINIAN HERITAGE FESTIVAL

By Faten Omar

The Kuwaitis for Jerusalem Committee (KJC) launched its fourth annual festival dedicated to Palestinian heritage yesterday at the Women's Cultural Social Society (WCSS) in Khalidiya. The event seeks to promote Palestinian culture and raise awareness about the Palestinian issue. "The purpose of the event is to foster relations between Kuwaitis and Palestinians and to remind the young generations of Palestinian culture. Kuwaitis for Jerusalem is a joint committee of the Women's Cultural Association and Kuwait Graduates Society, an annual activity held to bring together the Palestinian and Kuwaiti peoples, as well as provide an opportunity for young people to display their activities and products, and it is a chance for everyone to spend a fun day in a family atmosphere," said Luwla Al-Mulla, President of WCSS.

She pointed out that the WCSS is proud to host the event to support the

Palestinian cause. She added that the event will have a lot of activities such as a Palestinian heritage band performing a traditional folklore dance known as Dabke, traditional Palestinian songs and Palestinian handmade products in the bazaar showcasing the country's traditional clothes, scarves and various souvenirs. Families can enjoy entertainment programs for their children and all attendees can get a taste of Palestine's rich culinary heritage, sampling special Palestinian dishes.

Dr Abdullah Marouf, an Al-Aqsa Mosque researcher, will give a visual presentation about Al-Aqsa, along with a photo exhibition about Gaza and Palestine by cultural activist and photographer Tariq Al-Bakri Kuwaiti lensman Dr Ibrahim Arkhas. "It should be a very good example for other Arab people in establishing such committees for supporting Palestine. This is really needed in this very crucial time that the Palestinian cause is passing through, especially in Jerusalem where there is continu-

ous aggression by Israeli settlers," Mulla said.

The Kuwaitis for Jerusalem committee was founded by WCSS in conjunction with the Kuwait Graduates Society in 2000. Its objectives are to support and help Palestinians and to underline the role Kuwaiti people play in supporting pan-Arab issues. The committee focuses on supporting long-term projects inside Palestinian territories of an educational or health-oriented nature, as well as projects that enhance solidarity between the people of Kuwait and Palestine.

The committee also supports projects to rehabilitate wounded and disabled Palestinians. It finances projects that contribute to halting the Judaization of Jerusalem by rebuilding houses torn down by Israeli occupation forces. It follows up all adopted projects to ensure transparency and that financial aid goes to deserving parties. It also supports a number of afflicted families and provides financial support to orphans living in occupied territories.



—Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



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

Time	Programme	Time	Programme	Time	Programme
11:45 AM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	12:30 AM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	2:30 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT
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6:45 PM	TRIPLE 9	5:00 PM	TRIPLE 9	10:15 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT
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9:15 PM	ZOOPTOPIA	9:15 PM	ZOOPTOPIA	8:45 PM	ZOOPTOPIA
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12:45 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	12:15 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	12:15 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN
3:15 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	2:30 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	2:30 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN
5:30 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	4:45 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	4:45 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN
7:45 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	7:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	7:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN
9:45 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	9:15 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	9:15 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN
12:05 AM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	11:30 AM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	11:30 AM	LONDON HAS FALLEN
12:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	12:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	12:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN
2:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	2:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	2:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN
4:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	4:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	4:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN
6:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	6:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	6:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN
8:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	8:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	8:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN
10:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	10:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	10:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN
12:05 AM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	12:05 AM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	12:05 AM	LONDON HAS FALLEN
11:30 AM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	11:30 AM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	11:30 AM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR
1:45 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	1:45 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	1:45 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR
4:00 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	4:00 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	4:00 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR
6:00 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	6:00 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	6:00 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR
8:15 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	8:15 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	8:15 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR
10:15 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	10:15 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	10:15 PM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR
12:15 AM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	12:15 AM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR	12:15 AM	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR
12:00 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	12:00 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	12:00 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT
2:30 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	2:30 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	2:30 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT
5:00 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	5:00 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	5:00 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT
7:30 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	7:30 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	7:30 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT
10:00 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	10:00 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	10:00 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT

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changer, new tyres, new
battery, registration upto
Dec 2016. Please call
99218172. (C 5143)

EMERGENCY 112
Prayer timings
Fajr: 04:45
Shorook: 06:04
Duhur: 11:58
Asr: 15:20
Maghrib: 17:53
Isha: 19:10

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

Flight Schedule

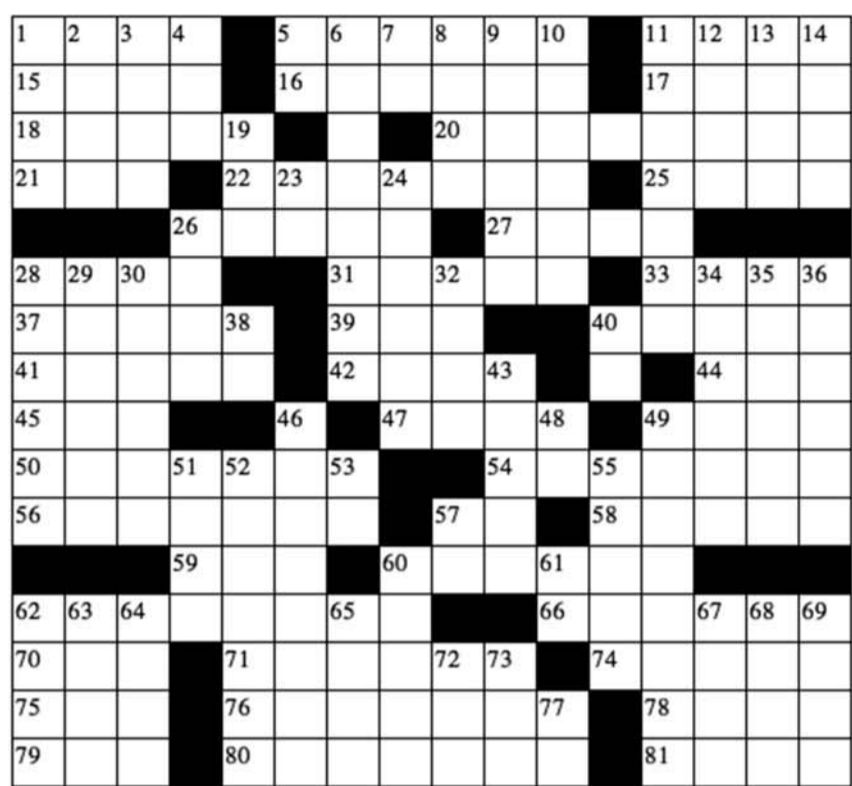
Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)
In case you are not travelling, your proper cancellation
of bookings will help other passengers to use seats

Arrival Flights on Sunday 13/3/2016			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
MSC	415	Sohag	00:05
JZR	239	Amman	00:25
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55
RJA	642	Amman	01:05
THY	772	Istanbul	01:05
ETH	3402	Addis Ababa/Riyadh	01:30
DLH	635	Doha	01:35
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:45
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:25
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30
THY	768	Istanbul	02:50
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55
FDB	067	Dubai	03:05
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10
CEB	7694	Manila	03:15
QTR	1076	Doha	03:15
KKK	6507	Istanbul	03:20
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:25
KAC	544	Cairo	03:35
LMU	510	Cairo	04:05
PGT	860	Istanbul	04:15
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55
QTR	8511	Doha	06:10
FDB	5061	Dubai	06:30
BAW	157	London	06:40
KAC	412	Manila/Bangkok	07:20
QTR	1086	Doha	07:40
FDB	053	Dubai	07:45
SVA	512	Riyadh	07:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50
KAC	382	Delhi	08:00
OMA	641	Muscat	08:00
KAC	354	BLR	08:15
KAC	206	Islamabad	08:25
KAC	352	Kochi	08:30
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	08:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:50
KAC	362	Colombo	08:50
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00
KAC	284	Dhaka	09:10
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:20
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:40
IRC	528	Ahwaz	10:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
UAE	873	Dubai	11:05
SYR	341	Damascus	11:25
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55
SAW	701	Damascus	12:20
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10

Departure Flights on Sunday 13/3/2016			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
KAC	791	Madinah	13:25
SAW	702	Damascus	13:35
JZR	176	Dubai	13:45
MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
FDB	058	Dubai	15:10
QTR	1079	Doha	15:10
AXB	394	Kozhikode	15:20
GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
KAC	617	Doha	15:45
SVA	503	Madinah/Jeddah	15:45
KAC	773	Riyadh	15:50
KAC	741	Dammam	15:55
KNE	473	Jeddah	16:05
ABY	128	Sharjah	16:25
OMA	646	Muscat	16:30
JZR	266	Beirut	17:05
JZR	238	Amman	17:30
ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	17:30
FDB	052	Dubai	17:35
QTR	1073	Doha	17:40
JZR	538	Cairo	17:45
UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
RJA	641	Amman	17:55
SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	184	Dubai	18:40
MSR	615	Cairo	18:50
JZR	124	Bahrain	19:10
FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
ABY	124	Sharjah	19:25
UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
KAC	283	Dhaka	20:35
KAC	361	Colombo	20:45
QTR	1081	Doha	20:50
KAC	351	Kochi	20:50
ETD	920	Sharjah	21:00
OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
FDB	062	Dubai	21:20
MSR	619	Alexandria	21:45
DLH	634	Doha	21:45
FDB	5054	Dubai	21:50
DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
JAI	571	Mumbai	21:55
QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
KAC	381	Delhi	22:00
JZR	502	Luxor	22:00
ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
KAC	301	Mumbai	22:10
MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
QTR	1083	Doha	23:05
KLM	417	Dammam/Amsterdam	23:05
KAC	207	Islamabad	23:10
ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:15
FDB	060	Dubai	23:35
KAC	411	Bangkok/Manila	23:35
KAC	415	Kuala Lumpur/Jakarta	23:40

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

CROSSWORD 1194



ACROSS

1. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
5. Become imbued.
11. A collection of objects laid on top of each other.
15. Fleshy and usually brightly colored cover of some seeds that develops from the ovule stalk and partially or entirely envelopes the seed.
16. Fruit or seed of the cowpea plant.
17. Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
18. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
20. A nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trade name Lodine).
21. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
22. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
25. Any orchid of the genus *Disa*.
27. The bags of letters and packages that are transported by the postal service.
28. Most important element.
31. The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
33. A state in the western United States.
37. Retinal protein formed by the action of light on rhodopsin.
39. The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
41. All the plant and animal life of a particular region.
42. A distinguished female operatic singer.
44. Primitive predaceous North American fish covered with hard scales and having long jaws with needle-like teeth.
45. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
47. A island in the Netherlands Antilles that is the top of an extinct volcano.
50. A member of a North American Plains people (now living in Oklahoma and Wyoming).
54. Any of various plants of the genus *Althaea*.
56. Usually tropical slender-bodied long-legged moth whose larvae are crop pests.
58. A language group of the Hokan family.
59. And nothing more.
62. Any ameba of the genus *Endamoeba*.
66. An organ in its earliest stage of development.
70. The cry made by sheep.
71. A mass of ice and snow that permanently covers a large area of land (e.g., the polar regions or a mountain peak).
74. A gland in which gametes (sex cells) are produced.
75. An oral poliovirus vaccine (containing live but weakened poliovirus) that is given to provide immunity to poliomyelitis.
76. A whimsically eccentric person.
78. A line made of twisted fibers or threads.
79. A negative.
80. Inability to use or understand language (spoken or written) because of a brain lesion.
81. Knock unconscious or senseless.

DOWN

1. An informal term for a father.
2. An elaborate song for solo voice.
3. The basic unit of money in Ethiopia.
4. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part

Yesterday's Solution

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

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

A moneymaking activity with friends may prove to be quite successful. Put your mind to work and take care of any details; mental discipline should come easily. Problems and obstacles that have given you trouble before will find easy explanation under your keen examination. Do not worry too much about what others think of your abilities-this is a great time to get much accomplished. Money and love make you feel more secure today. It is easy to become the center of attraction as you are filled with a great deal of magnetism. Finding ways in which you can be helpful to your family is always appreciated. The afternoon can be enjoyed with family and friends. Doing most anything together, whether it is work or play, has rewards.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You have lots of enthusiasm to accomplish your goals. Possessions, investments and real estate are highlighted now. Getting rid of the things that no longer serve a purpose could be of use to others, in turn, bringing you monetary rewards. Your investment in a home or property could bring you a high price, particularly if you are trying to sell. The new and unexpected may figure in your living situation or surroundings soon. An insight about your support system, your mother or other females may be important. You could discover a student or a young person that opens up to you. This can be a far-reaching, creative and even romantic phase-a time you will look back on with pride and fondness. A love relationship can flourish this evening.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your confidence is working for you today. It may, however, be healthy to spend some time away from loved ones in order to focus your thoughts this morning. This is the type of morning to get outside and ride a horse, walk, bicycle or just enjoy a bit of music through your battery-powered radio or perhaps a digital or compact disk player. You may also want to get a special gift for someone's birthday. A few chores this afternoon will place you back in your home where communication is easy and interaction with family is upbeat and positive. You have some understanding about the process of life and matters of practicality. This evening will bring about some fun times, perhaps that birthday party for a friend or relative.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

An intuitive push to be powerful and in control is important to you today because you want to be able to have more power, perhaps to make decisions or lead groups. All of this may lead to a greater interest or experience in handling business matters. A friend or business associate will give you some new ideas on money-making opportunities. You could decide to end a relationship after feeling left out for much too long. Family ties mean more to you now. A family member respects your privacy. This is not a good time to dive into group activities as there are too many things on your mind. Music, art or any other form of creativity may be enjoyed today. Try to take any spiritual or mystical studies with a grain of salt. There is a similar thread running through the different religions that you have studied-take a look.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may be experiencing confusion over your financial affairs. Use this time to take stock of your accounts and debts so that you will know exactly where you stand and how to proceed with the work that is needed to take care of your finances. Be careful of misplaced affections this afternoon. The romantic dreamer side of you is in full blossom. You have an inclination to engage in new projects or invest your emotions in a person that may be a little off the mark from where you want to go with your romantic life. Make a concentrated effort to get back on track in your search for a sweetheart. Your siblings or peers come to you for comfort and advice; be patient, you make more of a positive difference in people's lives than you think.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Work may be slowing down a bit and you could consider this a time to take advantage of the lull in business-go on a vacation or consider the new ways to advertise for future business. A friend may take you aside today to ask you to join him or her in a bit of travel. This could be a fun time. Consider packing a sketch book or camera in your backpack and let yourself go! You are needed in the business but this is a good time to gain new ideas and then you can help someone while they take some time to travel or be at home. Neighborhood children play a part in this afternoon's fun and you may find yourself involved in some silly craft-perhaps some funny hats. Your creative side is showing and if a problem needs solving, you can quickly find a creative solution.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your mind takes a contemplative turn today and the needs and desires of others take precedence over your own. It is a good time to sit down with a loved one or friend and discuss what each of you need from the relationship that is deepening. Reality is the key, making this day favorable for both you and your friend or loved one. Making your mark on the world has special significance. Achievement, ambition and authority are the things that take on importance. Organizing and administering people and projects will become central to your lifestyle. This could mean a change of job or a jump to volunteer in some cause. Anytime you spend in meditation will create insights you would not have otherwise enjoyed. Consider this a routine.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Playing with young people and family will build a good connection between relations. Changing your plans to accommodate others may be the order of the day. You may be able to bring a group together with words or ideas. Movies, books and all forms of escape prove enjoyable. There is a chance to understand those around you although confusion about someone else's motives may motivate you into taking control in some decision making. There are good feelings and a sense of support and harmony available that make this a good time. Creative pastimes are soothing to you-do not ignore that avenue of release when tensions mount. Romance is favored this evening. A new partner or a renewal of a remembered love is present.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Be wise in the way that you share your money. Always put aside the necessary sum that will take you into that good feeling of security and paying bills. After you have saved enough to live on for three months, you could then begin to invest, as well as share your income that is above and beyond this total. Any tax or inheritance should be placed in the hands of a competent lawyer or accountant. If you feel you can afford one, you might be happiest if you acquired a fulltime professional money manager. Your relationships, especially with women, will be more harmonious now. Your health is excellent all month but find time to relax-the strain of stress can tell a different story at month's end. Enjoy planning some future travel.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Looking around this morning, you may take into consideration some of the changes you will want to make in the landscape around your place this spring. Herbs might be fun to grow and herbs growing throughout the garden or in special places around the landscape may call to the butterflies and hummingbirds. A little research today may find you making out a list and drawing up a plan. If your household has other occupants, you might find some space for a favored vegetable that can be grown. You may see a healing from a past quarrel today. Before becoming involved with getting your words heard, hear your lover's words first; your needs will be realized. A romantic phase that is now beginning is thrilling.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

A garage sale may be the activity for today. Your spring cleaning may have brought forth some monetary possibilities. Don't be too surprised when unexpected friends drop over in the afternoon. This may be the boost you need to lift your own spirits. You may feel that you are in touch and in harmony with others; the lines of communication are open. Lovers, children and other people of things dear to your heart are emphasized now. Being appreciated and admired for your gifts and talents is a powerful need. This can be an expansive, creative and even romantic phase, a time you will look back on with pride and fondness. You can demonstrate great understanding and sensitivity to the needs of others. Think about updating your picture album.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may find a link to a few relatives at this time. There is a sign on an apartment or an advertisement that has printed on it the same name you have. This is a good time to seek someone in the family to cosign on an apartment or phone installation or even an automobile. Later today you will find great pleasure in doing a good deed for someone that never seems to ask for anything. Someone you know very well is redecorating before summer comes. You will be able to add some ideas that will help to create a comfortable atmosphere. This evening others want to entertain you. A friend will compliment you on your good taste. You have quite a fondness and respect for a loved one's actions.

WORD SEARCH

Sports

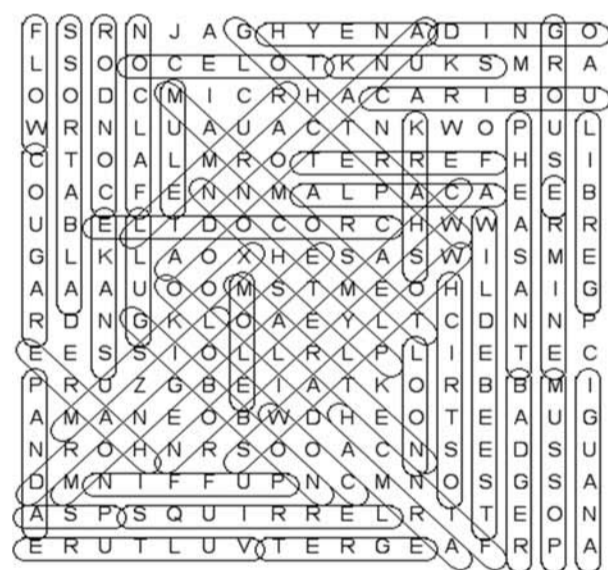
Find and circle all of the Sports that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a Vince Lombardi quotation.

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

- | | | | |
|------------|----------|---------------|------------|
| ARCHERY | CROQUET | JAI ALAI | SOCCER |
| BADMINTON | CYCLING | LACROSSE | SOFTBALL |
| BASEBALL | DARTS | POLO | SQUASH |
| BASKETBALL | FENCING | RACQUETBALL | SURFING |
| BILLIARDS | FISHING | RUGBY | SWIMMING |
| BOCCIE | FOOTBALL | RUNNING | TENNIS |
| BOWLING | GOLF | SKATEBOARDING | VOLLEYBALL |
| BOXING | HANDBALL | SKATING | WRESTLING |
| CRICKET | HOCKEY | SKIING | |

Yesterday Solution

Animals 3



- | | | | |
|-----------|--------|----------|------------|
| ALBATROSS | EGRET | LIZARD | PUFFIN |
| ALPACA | ERMINE | LOON | PYTHON |
| ANACONDA | FALCON | MARMOSET | SHARK |
| ARMADILLO | FERRET | MARTEN | SKUNK |
| ASP | FINCH | MOLE | SNAKE |
| BADGER | GERBIL | MONGOOSE | SQUIRREL |
| CARIBOU | GIBBON | MULE | SWALLOW |
| CHAMELEON | GROUSE | MUSKOX | VULTURE |
| CONDOR | GULL | OCOTOT | WARTHOG |
| COUGAR | HARE | OSTRICH | WILDEBEEST |
| COW | HYENA | PANDA | WOLF |
| CROCODILE | IGUANA | PHEASANT | |
| DINGO | LEMUR | POSSUM | |

The hidden animal is: JAMAICAN WOODPECKER

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Luxembourg	00352
Albania	00355	Macau	00853
Algeria	00213	Macedonia	00389
Andorra	00376	Madagascar	00261
Angola	00244	Majorca	0034
Anguilla	001264	Malawi	00265
Antigua	001268	Malaysia	0060
Argentina	0054	Maldives	00960
Armenia	00374	Mali	00223
Australia	0061	Malta	00356
Austria	0043	Marshall Islands	00692
Azerbaijan	00994	Martinique	00596
Bahamas	001242	Mauritania	00222
Bahrain	00973	Mauritius	00230
Bangladesh	00880	Mayotte	00269
Barbados	001246	Mexico	0052
Belarus	00375	Micronesia	00691
Belgium	0032	Moldova	00373
Belize	00501	Monaco	00377
Benin	00229	Mongolia	00976
Bermuda	001441	Montserrat	001664
Bhutan	00975	Morocco	00212
Bolivia	00591	Mozambique	00258
Bosnia	00387	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Botswana	00267	Namibia	00264
Brazil	0055	Nepal	00977
Brunei	00673	Netherlands	0031
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burkina	00226	New Caledonia	00687
Burundi	00257	New Zealand	0064
Cambodia	00855	Nicaragua	00505
Cameroon	00237	Niger	00227
Canada	001	Nigeria	00234
Cape Verde	00238	Niue	00683
Cayman Islands	001345	Norfolk Island	00672
Central African	00236	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chad	00235	North Korea	00850
Chile	0056	Norway	0047
China	0086	Oman	00968
Colombia	0057	Pakistan	0092
Comoros	00269	Palau	00680
Congo	00242	Panama	00507
Cook Islands	00682	Papua New Guinea	00675
Costa Rica	00506	Paraguay	00595
Croatia	00385	Peru	0051
Cuba	0053	Philippines	0063
Cyprus	00357	Poland	0048
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Portugal	00351
Czech Republic	00420	Puerto Rico	001787
Denmark	0045	Qatar	00974
Diego Garcia	00246	Romania	0040
Djibouti	00253	Russian Federation	007
Dominica	001767	Rwanda	00250
Dominican Republic	001809	Saint Helena	00290
Ecuador	00593	Saint Kitts	001869
Egypt	0020	Saint Lucia	001758
El Salvador	00503	Saint Pierre	00508
England (UK)	0044	Saint Vincent	001784
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Samoa US	00684
Eritrea	00291	Samoa West	00685
Estonia	00372	San Marino	00378
Ethiopia	00251	Sao Tome	00239
Falkland Islands	00500	Saudi Arabia	00966
Faroe Islands	00298	Scotland (UK)	0044
Fiji	00679	Senegal	00221
Finland	00358	Seychelles	00284
France	0033	Sierra Leone	00232
French Guiana	00594	Singapore	0065
French Polynesia	00689	Slovakia	00421
Gabon	00241	Slovenia	00386
Gambia	00220	Solomon Islands	00677
Georgia	00995	Somalia	00252
Germany	0049	South Africa	0027
Ghana	00233	South Korea	0082
Gibraltar	00350	Spain	0034
Greece	0030	Sri Lanka	0094
Greenland	00299	Sudan	00249
Grenada	001473	Suriname	00597
Guadeloupe	00590	Swaziland	00268
Guam	001671	Sweden	0046
Guatemala	00502	Switzerland	0041
Guinea	00224	Syria	00963
Guyana	00592	Serbia	00381
Haiti	00509	Taiwan	00886
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Tanzania	00255
Honduras	00504	Thailand	0066
Hong Kong	00852	Togo	00228
Hungary	0036	Tonga	00676
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tokelau	00690
Iceland	00354	Trinidad	001868
India	0091	Tunisia	00216
Indian Ocean	00873	Turkey	0090
Indonesia	0062	Tuvalu	00688
Iran	0098	Uganda	00256
Iraq	00964	Ukraine	00380
Ireland	00353	United Arab Emirates	00976
Italy	0039	United Kingdom	0044
Ivory Coast	00225	Uruguay	00598
Jamaica	001876	USA	001
Japan	0081	Uzbekistan	00998
Jordan	00962	Vanuatu	00678
Kazakhstan	007	Venezuela	00582
Kenya	00254	Vietnam	0084
Kiribati	00686	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands US	001340
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Wales (UK)	0044
Laos	00856	Yemen	00967
Latvia	00371	Yugoslavia	00381
Lebanon	00961	Zambia	00260
Liberia	00231	Zimbabwe	00263
Libya	00218		
Lesotho	0026		
Lithuania	00370		

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



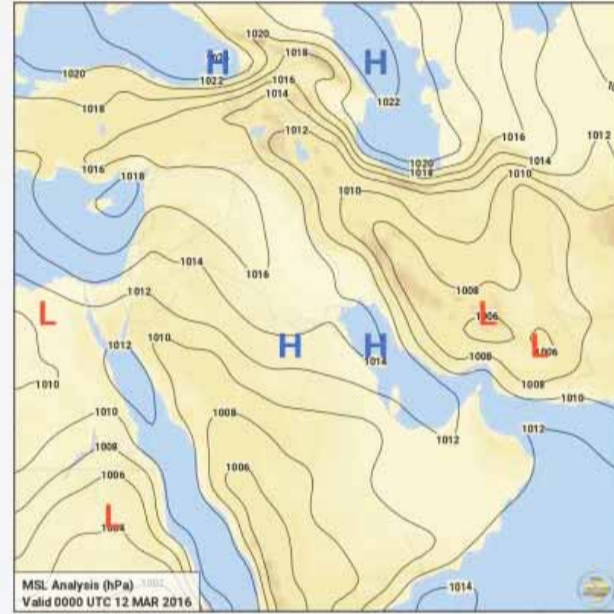
Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours
Issued 12/03/2016-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 28 °C

By Day : Clouds will increase gradually with light to moderate north westerly to northerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h
By Night : Partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate northerly to north easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Expected Weather	partly cloudy	partly cloudy + scattered rain	partly cloudy	sunny
Min Temp °C	19	20	18	17
Max Temp °C	29	26	28	29
Wind Direction	variable	variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly	south easterly changing to north westerly	variable wind changing to light to moderate north westerly
Wind Speed km/h	06 - 22	15 - 40	15 - 40	08 - 30

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C	REC	Max °C	EXP
KUWAIT CITY	20		27	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	17		28	
ABDALY	17		30	
BUBYAN	19		24	
JAHRA	19		30	
FALAKA ISLAND	19		26	
SALMIYAH	20		26	
AHMADI	21		26	
JAL ALIYAH	16		29	
QAROH ISLAND	19		25	
UMM AL-MARADEM	20		25	
NUWAISIB	18		30	
WAFRA	16		30	
MANAGISH	16		31	
SALMY	17		31	
MUTRIBA	16		31	

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	29
Min Temp (°C)	16
Max Rel Hum (%)	78
Min Rel Hum (%)	28
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	60 SE
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	2.11 mm

Prayer Times

Fajr	04:43
Sunrise	06:02
Zuhr	11:58
Asr	15:22
Sunset	17:54
Isha	19:11



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghy	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaezem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s. Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarouf	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gupje	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammes Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123

Gossip

Styles has landed his first major film role



The One Direction hunk is jetting across the pond to star in World War II blockbuster 'Dunkirk' - which is being directed by legendary filmmaker Christopher Nolan who helmed 'The Dark Night' trilogy - opposite Tom Hardy and Oscar winner Mark Rylance. A source revealed: "Harry has gone straight in at the top. 'Dunkirk' will be massive. "He was asked to audition for the part - which will be substantial - and impressed Christopher. This is now a great chance for him to show his acting skills and put himself in the frame for more huge movie roles. One Direction are on a break from the music industry but have insisted they'll be back, but when they do return it's likely the 22-year-old star will be a

familiar face in Hollywood movies too. The source added to The Sun newspaper: "Music is still very much on his agenda and he would like to do both going forward." "Dunkirk" will tell the story of the difficult evacuation of the Allied forces from the beaches and harbour of Dunkirk, France, in June 1940 which Sir Winston Churchill - the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom at the time - described as a "miracle of deliverance".

Madonna demands Ritchie leave sons out of family documentary



The 57-year-old pop legend has scuppered her ex-husband's and his new wife Jacqui Ainsley's plans to release the film which would reveal the family's connection to the religion, after refusing to allow Rocco, 15 and David Banda, 10, to be a part of it. A source shared: "Madonna is the one who introduced Guy to Kabbalah and she doesn't want it to go ahead. It was top secret, but she found out about it because David told her. "She doesn't want Rocco or David to be in it, and they are having to rework it. It's caused a big problem. "Now the whole thing could be shelved. It's caused a lot of added stress." Guy doesn't follow the religion which derives from Judaism, though the film - shot at Guy and Jacqui's Wiltshire home - was set to explore the whole family's interest in spiritualism. The source added to the Daily Mirror: "This has been a very special project for Guy and Jacqui, something they have worked very hard on. They hope they can work it out." Meanwhile, Rocco left Madonna's 'Rebel Heart' tour late last year to stay with his father and subsequently defied a court order to return to his mother and siblings which also include Lourdes, 19, and Mercy, 10, for Christmas. Now the former couple are in a court battle and a ruling is expected soon on whether the teenager should return to his mother's care.



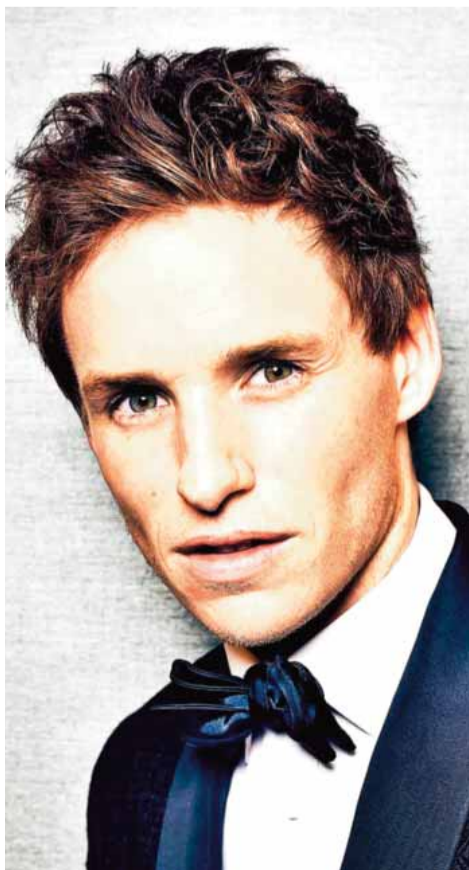
Beckham has reportedly bailed out wife's fashion empire

The 40-year-old heartthrob swooped in to help his wife's business by transferring her £5.2million worth of "contracts" after her designer brand lost £3.8million in a year. Despite scooping a turnover of £34million, Victoria, 41, seemingly needed the cash because she set up a store in Mayfair, London, in 2014, which cost nearly £3million to build. Her company's Directors Report states: "The contracts held by the company relating to the David Beckham brand were transferred during the year to DB Ventures Ltd, a sister company of David Beckham Brand Holdings Ltd which is focused on exploiting the David Beckham brand." However, chartered

accountant and tax lecturer Robert Leach explained the bailout isn't unusual because it was simply a transfer of cash between the couple's profitable companies. He told The Sun newspaper: "The accounts suggest it is a transfer of operations between companies owned by Victoria and David. In effect the couple are simply moving the profits between themselves." The former Spice Girl set up her brand in 2008 and has enjoyed huge success in the fashion world since. The pretty brunette was named designer brand of the year at the British Fashion Awards in 2011 and Entrepreneur of the Year 2014 by Management Today magazine.

Redmayne plans to be a 'hands-on' dad

The 'Danish Girl' actor is excited about the impending of his and wife Hannah Bagshawe's first child, though he admits he is also feeling a little bit scared of the big change and responsibility. He said: "It's our first child, so obviously there's a mixture of emotions. "Joy, excitement and a bit of fear. I can't wait. I'll be a hands-on dad." And the 'Theory of Everything' star - who married Hannah in 2014 - admits becoming a dad will cap off an "amazing" period in his life. He said: "Having a baby is the perfect ending to what's been an amazing year. "I still pinch myself - every actor thinks about living the Hollywood dream and making it over here is incredible. "I'll always stay grounded and I don't take anything for granted." For his next movie role, Eddie, 34, is hoping to work in a new place. He told Closer magazine: "I'm desperate to travel and I keep saying to my wife, 'Can we go abroad to work?' "I've just finished a film based in New York and we shot it all in Watford. "The majority of the 'Danish Girl' was shot in Hertfordshire. We'll see."



Elisabeth Moss is 'too good' at being alone

The 'Truth' actress - who has been single since splitting from cinematographer Adam Arkapaw two years ago - doesn't "need" a relationship but would like to find love again at some point. She said: "I almost feel like I've gotten too good at being on my own. "I think that you get to a place where you don't really need a relationship. And I do think that is a good thing - it shouldn't be something you need. "But, of course, I don't want to be alone my whole life." Elisabeth was previously married to Fred Armisen for less than a year but the experience hasn't put her off tying the knot again, though it did teach her more about what a marriage should be. She said: "I'm still totally a romantic. And it definitely hasn't changed my

idea of what a marriage should be. "But one of the biggest lessons I learned is that marriage itself is not the be all and end all. "An honest, trusting, compatible relationship is actually the most important thing. "I think before I was married I thought marriage meant you would have that. I now understand they are two separate things." And the 33-year-old star thinks her past experience has made her a better partner. She added to Red magazine: "I'm happy I learned that. And that I got it out of the way. "I don't have any regrets and I feel I'm in more of a position to be a good partner to somebody than I ever was, because I know exactly who I am now."



Peter Andre puts socks down his trousers to boost bulge

The 'Mysterious Girl' hitmaker admitted he required some help to make his manhood more impressive in an infamous picture from his 2012 calendar shot. He said: "Listen, I was determined to prove that a lot of these models, whether you're well blessed or not, love to put socks down there." "At the end of the day, you've got to because it's a photo shoot. "I have no fear of telling people this is what they do - this is what I'm going to do and this is how good it looks. "I don't need any more than that. No, I had a full pair folded up." Peter was known for his six pack stomach in his 90s pop hey day and was delighted to get his toned physique back while training for 'Strictly Come Dancing' last year as he usually "can't be bothered" to work so hard. He told heat magazine: "My abs have been hibernating for years but they're starting to make an appearance. "I'm wondering if at some point on this tour I might have to do a 20-year flashback. "When I did 'Strictly' I got them back to my 'Mysterious Girl' days. I should have done a photoshoot - I don't know why I didn't. "I'm one of those people that, because I trained so much when I was a kid, if I really set my mind to it for two or three months, I can have it straight back. "But the point is, I can't be bothered half the time - I love my food too much."



Zayn Malik has shaved his head, gets a new tattoo

The 'Pillowtalk' hitmaker took to his Instagram account to debut the new inking, an intricate bird with the letters 'M.O.M.' inked around it. At first glance, it may seem the former One Direction star has tattooed a sweet tribute to his mother Trisha, but on closer inspection, it is more likely to be linked to his new album title - 'Mind of Mine'. The pictures posted on social media also show off two new neck tattoos - one, a swallow bird similar to what his former bandmate Harry Styles has on his chest and the other, a simple flower. Fans of the chart topping boy band may still be reeling over Zayn's departure from

the group a year ago but will be pleased by the 23-year-old singer's recent upload - as a One Direction surferboard can clearly be seen in the background. Meanwhile, Zayn was previously forced to deny his album release date is anything other than a coincidence, after it was revealed 'Mind of Mine' will be unveiled on March 25, exactly one year after he quit One Direction. He said: "I don't know, is that how it works out? It's March 25, it wasn't planned that way. It works that way. It just seems to coincide with the iTunes launch and everything. Maybe it's a sign."



Gossip



Watts feels she can improve as an actress

The 'Allegiant' star has revealed she looks up to Meryl Streep and Helen Mirren and says the women have inspired her to want to be a better actress. She told Los Angeles Confidential's Spring Fashion Forward issue: "This isn't the life I imagined. In many ways, it's far, far better, and yet I look at what's possible - I mean, look at Frances McDormand or Helen Mirren or, come on, Meryl Streep - and I go, 'Okay, there's still a lot of room to grow and improve.'" And whilst Naomi would love to emulate their careers, she fears being held "hostage" by the paparazzi. She explained previously: "It's tough. The whole paparazzi

thing is a big downer. I wish they weren't around so often. I probably should care more about the way I look and how I go out. But I can't - I'm a mom. I have to get out the door quickly. Some days I've got it under control, but some days I don't. "I just wish they weren't around so often capturing those awful moments. Because let's face it: Everyone has their good days and bad days. But whatever - it's not going to make me change my life. I'm not going to be held hostage."

Ciara is engaged to Russell Wilson

The 'Dance Like We're Making Love' hitmaker is set to walk down the aisle with the American football star after he proposed to her as they vacationed in paradise. Sharing a sweet picture of Russell down on one knee, she wrote: "God Is Good! Grateful For You @DangRussWilson. You Are Heaven Sent. I'm Looking Forward To Spending Forever With You ... I Feel Complete. (sic)" The Seattle Seahawks player also posted a video taken just after the proposal, where Ciara can be seen flashing her stunning diamond ring. He tells the camera: "She said yes! Yeah! Making this thing happen. My baby." To which she adds: "Yay! I'm so excited. God is so good." Sharing the

video on his social media page, the 27-year-old sportsman wrote: "She said Yes!!! Since Day 1 I knew you were the one. No Greater feeling... #TrueLove @Ciara (sic)" Meanwhile, the 30-year-old singer - who already has son Future, 21 months, from a previous relationship - recently revealed she'd love to have a family with Russell. She said: "I definitely [want more kids], yes. [Russell and I] discuss a lot of things ... a lot of good things! He is just an amazing guy. Honestly, him being in my life is really sweet ... Life is pretty good, I can say that."



50 Cent thinks he's a 'target' because he has money

The 'In Da Club' hitmaker slammed the "system" after he was called to court to explain photos posted online, which appeared to show him with a lot of money, despite filing a Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last year. Writing on his Instagram page, he shared: "The system is so messed up, the law applies differently to people based on the personal perception of them. It's amazing how bad it is it's sad. #EFFENVODKA #FRIGO #thisimageiscourtapproved. "When you make money you become a target. Not only by people who feel their competitors, but by system itself. The lawyers take someone's case to go after your hard earned money pro bono. #EFFENVODKA #FRIGO #thisimageiscourtapproved." Meanwhile, the 40-year-old rapper - real name Curtis James Jackson III - previously told a court the money in his social media photographs is fake and just a promotional prop for his range with EFFEN Vodka. He said: "As a hip-hop artist and entertainer, it is imperative that I continue to project inspirational goals of success in order to preserve my brand and those I represent. "What I say and what I do on social media has a direct impact on my music sales and the viewership on my television shows."



Nyong'o thought things would 'go back to normal' after her Oscar

The 33-year-old star triumphed in the Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role category at the 2014 Academy Awards for her role in '12 Years a Slave' but didn't realise it would have such a profound effect on her life. She said: "Right after the Oscars, I had no idea what I was going to do next. Zero clue. There's part of me that thought my life would go back to normal. Like at school. But it didn't. I did not get out of that unscathed, you know?" Ahead of her role in the historical drama, the 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens' actress shaved off her hair and admits she wasn't sure she could pull it off at first. She explained to the April issue of InStyle magazine: "I wasn't sure if I could pull off [the bald look]. Because hair is the frame of the face, right? And we spend so much time on it, trying to get it perfect. It often defines one's beauty and feminine value. "Almost on a whim, I was like, 'What if I didn't have it?' And so I shaved it all off - I was a complete baldy! It was shocking at first, especially for my mom. But I learned to embrace my features. And I like myself a lot more now that I'm not constantly fussing over my hair."



Lohan's new boyfriend wants to help her re-launch her career

The 29-year-old actress-and-singer has been dating 22-year-old Russian business man Egor Tarabasov around seven months and her father Michael Lohan has revealed he's helping the 'Mean Girls' star take a step in a positive direction both personally and professionally. Egor currently works in London as the managing director of Home House Estates, but wants to see his girlfriend back on the big screen where she belongs now she's overcome her personal troubles. Speaking to the New York Post newspaper, Michael said: "He's a great influence. He has a lot of strong connections in Russia - these are big people and they're very supportive. He wants things to be in the right place for Lindsay and he's wise beyond his years." Michael, 55, says Egor has his complete blessing to date his daughter - whose last film role was in 'The Canyons' in 2013 - and he says they make a lovely couple. Michael added: "He's grown up with money but he's not spoiled. He's not the kind of guy to just sit back and spend his money. She may be older than him, but Lindsay is younger at heart. If she's happy, I'm happy." This week, Lindsay opened up on her romance with Egor, revealing she met him last summer. She said: "I haven't known Egor for that long. We've been together for about seven months. But I do have a boyfriend and he is a great guy. I met him in the summer. I'm really happy."



The 29-year-old British actor has avoided the social media platform up to now because he knows his fame from the 'Twilight' films means he will have to deal with countless obsessed 'Twihard' fans. But he admits he has been thinking about setting up an account in recent months, however, he has resisted so far because he thinks he would become obsessed with the micro-blogging platform. He said: "Sometimes I think I would like to have a Twitter account. But I know I would spend too much time on it. I would lose myself in it all night long. I really hope to avoid this kind of life [spent on social media]. It is the reason why I don't sign up." Pattinson - who is engaged to singer FKA Twigs - is one of the most written about men in the world and he sometimes lets curiosity get the better of him and search for news about himself on Google, something he usually regrets. The screen heartthrob - who was previously in a relationship with his 'Twilight' co-star Kristen Stewart - shared: "I admit I still fall into the trap, fall into Internet limbo by looking at what is said about me. At least I never felt the need to leave comments! "I know who I am, well, almost. Everything resides in the 'almost.'" Pattinson has grown to accept the reality he is major celebrity but admits the fame game does get him down on occasions. Discussing the impact being globally famous has had on him, he told Numero Homme magazine: "Sometimes I have times when it makes me completely mad. I wonder what people are looking for when they type my name. Certainly gossip. "That said, my career has not suffered from it. I am not blacklisted from anywhere yet. I am working with whomever I want ... So I don't have the intention to force the audience to change their point of view. I need things to happen in an organic way. Maybe one day I'll be seen differently."

Pattinson considering joining Twitter



Sir Ian McKellen and Sir Patrick Stewart are to star in 'No Man's Land'

The legendary British thespians have already acted in the Broadway version of Harold Pinter's classic absurdist drama at The Cort Theatre, from 2013 to 2014, and will be reunited on stage at London's Wyndham's theatre from September 8. Ian - who first met his close pal Patrick on the set of the original 'X-Men' movie in 2000 - will take on the role of Spooner, an unkempt poet, while Patrick plays millionaire writer Hirst in the story which follows the writers who reminisce about the past at a Hampstead pub. Ian is thrilled to be reprising his part, telling the Daily Mail newspaper: "It's a very English play. It's lovely to come back to it." However, the multi-award-winner has not always been

a fan of the drama and Patrick had to do a lot of persuading to get him on board. The former 'Star Trek: The Next Generation' actor previously said: "I had been working on Ian for months about 'No Man's Land'. I'd say, Ian are we ready yet? 'No, no, I'm not ready yet'. So the director very cleverly arranged to do a read through, brought in two other actors and one afternoon we sat around a dressing room and read the play. It was a beautiful thing to watch Ian getting why we knew he was perfect casting for this role. The deal was done, and after that we had to think about where we'd do it." — Bangshowbiz





Actor and comedian Steve Martin, who is guest curator of an exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts devoted to Canadian modernist Lawren Harris, smiles, while seated in front of Harris's "North Shore" painting during a gathering at the museum in Boston. — AP photos



Steve Martin stands next to Harris's "Mountain Forms" (left).

Comic to curator: Steve Martin behind art museum exhibit

Comedian, writer, producer and musician Steve Martin can add another line to his resume: art museum curator. The 70-year-old actor, who rose to fame on "Saturday Night Live" and starred in films including "The Jerk" and "Father of the Bride," makes his curatorial debut in Boston this weekend, with an exhibition of Canadian landscapes by painter Lawren Harris.

The collection at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts focuses on stark, slightly abstracted paintings of the Rocky Mountains and the shores of Lake Superior completed from 1921 through 1934 by Harris, who is well known in Canada but less familiar to US art lovers. Martin joked that when he first saw a Harris painting,

he mistook it for the work of American landscape artist Rockwell Kent, a contemporary of Harris, who lived from 1885 through 1970.

"I thought that this was the best Rockwell Kent I've ever seen and I looked and it was Lawren Harris," the white-haired actor recalled on a tour of the gallery on Friday. "And I thought, 20 years ago, 'Oh, I've discovered somebody,' not knowing that he was already Canada's most important artist at that time."

The exhibit, "The Idea of North: The Paintings of Lawren Harris," features 30 modernist landscapes by the Canadian painter, alongside similar work by US artists including Georgia

O'Keefe and will be on display through June 12. Martin, who has won an honorary Academy Award for his long film career as well as several Grammy Awards for his bluegrass and Americana albums, said that when he was first asked to curate the exhibit, he refused.

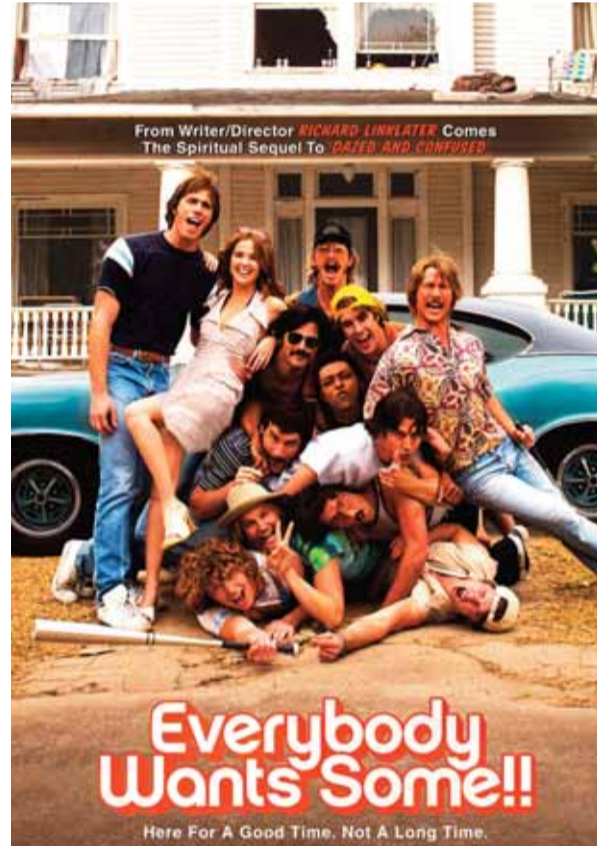
"My first instinct was, 'Of course not.' And I thought about it overnight and I thought, 'You know, that's an interesting proposition,'" he said. "He's the only artist I could conceive of curating because his masterpieces, all in Canada, are known, they're unknown in America and I happen to have a love of him."

Much of the exhibit features views of a stylized version of

Canada's far north, typified by "Isolation Peak," which shows a lone triangular outcrop of rock looming over snow-covered hills. "It's so moody and thoughtful, this picture, and hence emotional," Martin said. Martin is well known for branching out into new creative fields throughout his career, but said the role of a curator was a one-time-only performance. "I'm retired," the still boyish-looking actor said. "I'm retired from curating." — Reuters



Richard Linklater arrives at the premiere of "Everybody Wants Some" at the Paramount Theatre during South by Southwest in Austin, Texas. — AP



SXSW Film Review

Linklater stays brilliant with 'Everybody Wants Some!!'

After the dramatic one-two punch of "Before Midnight" and "Boyhood," a master of the modern hangout movie achieves his most sustained comic bliss-out in years with "Everybody Wants Some!!" Billed quite accurately as a "spiritual sequel" to 1993's "Dazed and Confused," Richard Linklater's latest acutely funny, achingly perceptive retro-sociology lesson follows a team of '80s college baseball players wasting a longish weekend together before the start of a new school year; many scenes of pot smoking, disco dancing, knuckle flicking, skirt chasing and other forms of competitive male sport (and some baseball here and there) predictably and hilariously ensue.

Linklater indulges his characters' antics with such wild, free-flowing affection that you might miss the thoughtful undertow of this delightful movie: Few filmmakers have so fully embraced the bittersweet joy of living in the moment-one that's all the more glorious because it fades so soon. Linklater loyalists will surely embrace the picture with all the restraint of mud-wrestling frat boys tearing open a keg, to borrow some imagery from his own play-book.

Beyond that core audience, it's less certain that everybody will want some of Paramount's April 1 release, which features a star-free cast and looks to generate a warm but perhaps less ardent critical embrace than the filmmaker's recent work. Still, as the now 55-year-old Linklater has noted in interviews, "Everybody Wants Some!!" represents a logical follow-up to not only "Dazed and Confused," the quintessential movie about 1970s high-school life (and arguably high-school life period), but also his career-crowning "Boyhood," which concluded its 12-year narrative shortly after its protagonist left home for college.

It's the fall of 1980 — as one might glean, roughly, from the sight of a vinyl stash in the backseat of a '72 Oldsmobile coupe-when we first meet Jake (Blake Jenner, "Glee"), a promising pitcher starting his freshman year at a fictitious southeast Texas university. Moving into the rundown house reserved for the baseball team, Jake is greeted with an uneasy mix of camaraderie and hostility by his fellow players, some of whom-like the cocky McReynolds (Tyler Hoechlin, sporting a Burt Reynolds mustache), a heavy hitter on the field and elsewhere-hardly bother to hide their scorn for freshmen in general and pitchers in particular.

But there are friendlier personalities in the mix, too, like Finn (a terrific Glen Powell), a paisley-shirted smooth talker and the group's most adventurous pickup artist; all-around

nice guy Dale (J. Quinton Johnson), whose standing as the team's sole black player goes casually unremarked upon; Roper (Ryan Guzman), a sort of pack leader who takes Jake and some of the others out for a welcome-week joyride; and Willoughby (Wyatt Russell), the self-styled truth teller who pauses long enough between bong hits to urge everyone to reject the false self and "just be weird." Most of Jake's teammates need no such encouragement, like his stick-in-the-mud roommate, Billy Autry (Will Brittain), who would be the team's designated outcast if not for Niles (Justin Street), who harshes everyone's mellow with his belligerent, self-aggrandizing rants.

The film registers with the lightest possible touch in a nonstop romp whose pitch-perfect period detailing (courtesy of production designer Bruce Curtis) somehow feels both matter-of-fact and tongue-in-cheek. We learn a lot about who these guys are simply by watching them gyrate beneath a disco ball or compare "Space Invaders" strategies. (This being a Linklater movie, games of pinball and foosball are par for the course.) The waterbed, presumably enjoying the height of its popularity, figures prominently in an early throwaway gag. The acting here is too good, for starters, and Linklater's storytelling is so loose and untethered that your average "and then the plumber arrives" set-up looks over-plotted by comparison. This is the rare mainstream movie that, rather than treating its characters' sex drives as an opportunity for crass cynicism or mindless vulgarity, wears its libido bravely, and thoughtfully, on its sleeve.

Where are we all headed? Who are we now, and what might we yet become? Are we winners or losers, and is the game even worth playing? Linklater may pose these questions of identity within the conventions of a booze-and-testosterone-fueled stoner entertainment, but he's on to something when he lingers on McReynolds' rage after he loses a table-tennis match, or the confusion that ensues when Jake and his friends wander into a punk concert, a randy country-western bar or a theater-geek costume party, and wonder how much they can try to blend in without betraying their true selves. "Everybody Wants Some!!" itself may be an elaborate game of '80s dress-up, but its artifice becomes its own form of authenticity, right down to its perfect final shot: For the better part of two hours it conjures a vision of the past so alive you can just about touch and smell it-and then it slips away, dreamlike, as though back to the decade whence it came. — Reuters

Legendary keyboardist Keith Emerson dead in apparent suicide

Keith Emerson, the flamboyant yet accomplished keyboardist who pioneered the use of synthesizers in rock music, was found dead Friday in an apparent suicide. He was 71. The English virtuoso, who became famous for his dazzling stage feats with band Emerson, Lake and Palmer, died from a bullet wound to his head at his condominium in the Los Angeles area, police said. His longtime girlfriend, Mari Kawaguchi, called police at 1:30 am (0930 GMT).

"It is being investigated as a suicide," said Sergeant Erika Aklufi, a police spokeswoman in oceanside Santa Monica. Former bandmate Carl Palmer mourned Emerson as "a pioneer and an innovator whose musical genius touched all of us in the worlds of rock, classical and jazz." "Keith was a gentle soul whose love for music and passion for his performance as a keyboard player will remain unmatched for many years to come," Palmer said in a statement.

Inspired by Jimi Hendrix's theatrics with the electric guitar, Emerson created a new showmanship with the keyboards as he would attack the keys with knives and play the organ upside down with the giant instrument suspended over him.

He reached the height of his mainstream fame in 1974 when Emerson, Lake and Palmer closed California Jam, considered the last in a generation of great rock festivals which drew some 250,000 people to a speedway and was broadcast on ABC television. Emerson, with his always flowing hair, ended the festival by strapping himself to a grand piano and playing as it spun around some 50 feet (15 meters) in the air.

Asked later about his attention-grabbing performances, Emerson told the British publication CounterCulture: "Guitar players were the most mobile musicians on the stage and it's very difficult to make a 350-pound Hammond part of you." "That part of the act was something that just felt natural to do; something that allowed me to be more expressive," he said.

Elaborate musical concepts

Emerson studied classical piano as a child in England and eventually took up the Hammond organ as he became intrigued by jazz. But Emerson's career-and, to an extent, the trajectory of rock-changed when he heard the influential 1968 album "Switched-On Bach" by Wendy Carlos, who performed classical pieces on the Moog synthesizer.



In this Aug 12, 1999 file photo, musician Keith Emerson plays the new Van Koeveing Interactive Piano, designed by electronic engineer Bob Moog, in Beverly Hills, Calif. — AP

The early-generation analog synthesizers-whose creator, US engineer Robert Moog, would become a friend-had gradually been finding their way into popular music, most notably appearing on The Beatles' 1969 album "Abbey Road." But Emerson was considered the first to make the synthesizer a central rock instrument on its own, taking it on tour.

After his band The Nice disbanded in 1970, the keyboardist joined percussionist Palmer and singer and guitarist Greg Lake to form Emerson, Lake and Palmer, which became a force in 1970s progressive rock, a genre that emphasized advanced musical structure. The trio won a wide following around the world but especially in Japan and Britain. Several albums including "Tarkus," "Trilogy" and "Brain Salad Surgery" entered the top five on the British chart.

"Tarkus," released in 1971, was especially innovative with the first track running more than 20 minutes long and inspired by the fictional Tarkus character-which would appear on stage-that was half tank, half armadillo. The band also brought an experimental take to classical music, releasing a live album of Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition." — AFP

'Dog Whisperer' Millan says animal cruelty claim misguided

An animal cruelty complaint that sent authorities to "Dog Whisperer" Cesar Millan's rehabilitation center has been blown away out of proportion, the dog trainer said Friday. The complaint was started online and based on footage from Millan's television show "Cesar 911," in which a French bulldog-terrier mix named Simon chases a farm pig and nips its ear, making it bleed. The complaint is misguided because it was a happy ending - the pig was fine and the dog was rehabilitated, Millan said. Animal control officers and sheriff's deputies visited his ranch Thursday night, but no action was taken. In a telephone interview from Iowa with The Associated Press, Millan said that when he returns from his speaking tour, he would cooperate fully with both departments.

The dog trainer who television made famous said he has used the same technique to help aggressive canines hundreds of times. The training involves getting the dog together with the animal it doesn't like (whether it is another dog, a cat or a horse) so the two can learn to get along. Millan, 46, is a self-taught dog trainer who became internationally known for his work on a previous show, the "Dog Whisperer," which won him an Emmy nomination.

'Out of proportion'

"I do have a large group of fans and a small group of people who don't agree with me. They are taking this the wrong way and blowing it way out of proportion," Millan said. Calls and emails were not immediately returned by Los Angeles County Animal Control. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, whose deputies accompanied animal control to Millan's center in Santa Clarita, confirmed there were no arrests or animal seizures on Thursday night.

Millan was working with an aggressive dog named Simon, who was attacking his owner's pet pot-bellied pigs. A promotional clip on National Geographic's website showed Simon chasing a pig and biting its ear. The clip was altered with music from "The Exorcist" horror film and type describing what they said was happening. Jill Breitner initiated the petition on Change.org, calling for Nat Geo WILD to take the show "Cesar 911" off the air. Friday morning, the number of signatures was closing in on 10,000.

A new clip was released Friday showing the full context of the encounter, said Chad Sandhas, senior director of talent and media relations for National Geographic Channels. In it, the pig is calm and is tied to Simon with a long leash, as if taking him on a walk. The show initially aired on Feb. 26. The pig was tended to immediately, healed quickly and showed no lasting signs of distress, Sandhas said. The extra clip reveals that "Cesar and his animal pack effectively helped Simon to overcome his aggressive behavior toward other animals; as a result, Simon did not have to be separated from his owner or euthanized," he said. — AP



This Aug 19, 2006 file photo shows television personality and dog psychologist Cesar Milan arrives for the Creative Arts Emmy Awards in Los Angeles. — AP

Fashion



Rachel Oddman, center, receives a roaring cheer from the crowd as she models her own creation during the Carter Burden/Leonard Covello Senior Program annual fashion show. — AP photos



Feng Chaun Lok, center, dances as she models her own creation.

Seniors walk the runway at NYC senior center fashion show



William Dionne, left, executive director of the Carter Burden Center for Aging, introduces Maria Ortiz as she models her own creation.



Rachel Oddman gets made up before she takes the runway to model.



Kris Allen, left, receives applause from the crowd.



Al Rosteing, center, models his aging "Elvis" attire.



Ruth Isaac models a Calvin Klein outfit she altered to model.

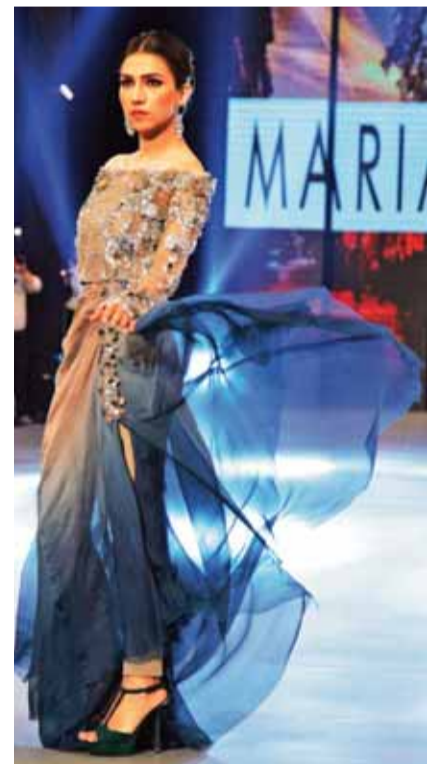
Wearing colorful outfits and high-heeled shoes, a group of senior citizens took to the red carpet Friday at a New York City senior center's third annual fashion show. Some of the models at the Carter Burden/Leonard Covello Senior Program's fashion show wore outfits they had made in the center's sewing class.

Rachel Oddman was met with roaring applause and cheers as she strutted down the red carpet at the senior center in Manhattan's East Harlem neighborhood in an outfit she created herself. Others, like Ruth Isaac, wore more traditional outfits. She modeled a Calvin Klein outfit that she altered.

"The joy of a fashion show like this is that it celebrates beauty at any age," said William Dionne, the center's executive director. Before the seniors took to the runway, they shared laughs together as they had their makeup done by volunteers from Macy's.

The senior center provides meals, day trips, computer training and other services. It also helps clients apply for government benefits and access medical care. — AP

Pakistan Fashion Week



Models present the latest creations during Fashion Week by the Pakistan Fashion Design Council in Lahore. — AP photos



An international hot air balloonist makes a final check before inflating during the International Hot Air Balloon Fiesta in Putrajaya on March 11, 2016. The event is taking place from March 11 to 13. — AFP

Hollywood learns new storytelling language for VR

What happens to a film's story when blades of grass are more interesting than the plot? When you can lean in so close to an actor you ought to feel their breath? When a few simple steps around a room can make you dizzy?

Virtual reality filmmakers are grappling with these challenges as they explore a medium that hasn't had a century to develop the way movies have. Much the way early cinematographers had to discover cuts, wide shots and perspective, VR filmmakers find themselves making things up as they go along, often mashing up traditional movies and video-game techniques along the way.



Creative director Saschka Unseld during an interview at the Oculus Story Studio.

Consider for a second how we've all internalized the visual language of film. Quick cuts skip over time and space to get to a story's point. Wide shots give us a godlike perspective. Zooms and tight focus naturally draw our attention to specific points. Audiences have been trained to stitch it all together into a fluid narrative.

Now picture yourself in the middle of the action. With a headset strapped over your eyes and ears, sometimes with a controller in your hand, you are completely immersed in the virtual world. Things can happen behind you. There are characters and places to explore from different angles. It's all a work in progress, one that more consumers will see when the long awaited Oculus Rift VR headset ships later in March. It's crucial for VR filmmakers to get storytelling

right, or the whole virtual reality boom could turn out to be just another sandbox for hardcore video gamers.

Just let go

This was one of the first lessons for Oculus Story Studio, a hub for digital animators and experimental filmmakers in San Francisco's trendy South of Market district. In an early version of the Oculus short "Lost," audiences got distracted by looking at foliage or the moon and didn't pay attention to a giant, disembodied hand that's the subject of the piece, says creative director Saschka Unseld. So creators added a full 40 seconds to let viewers get oriented, and then just let go. "Once you have the audience interested, they will look wherever the story happens," Unseld says. "But losing that control of focus of the audience is something that took a while to get over."

Subtle cues drive the action

In "Henry," another Oculus short, you find yourself standing inside a lonely hedgehog's computer-generated house. You're free to look around at anything, but it's not until you set eyes on the kitchen door that Henry shows up. "That's a triggered moment that makes you feel like you discovered Henry in a very natural way," says director Ramiro Lopez Dau. Some viewers try to hug Henry, Dau says - but he doesn't hug back.

Let the viewer discover who they are

At Montreal-based Felix & Paul Studios, filmmakers have explored the traditional separation between film and filmgoer by making "Who am I?" a central question - sometimes even a mystery - for VR participants. In the short film "Strangers with Patrick Watson," for example, a man riffs on a piano and sings. From a seat in the player's cluttered apartment, you can look at his wall art, peruse his collectibles and even watch his dog.

In Felix & Paul's "Jurassic World: Apatosaurus," you start off in a forest next to a jeep; a coffee mug and two-way radio lay within arm's reach. Turns out you're a park ranger visiting a sleeping diplodocid. That helps explain why the dinosaur just sniffs you in a familiar way and goes back to its daily routine chewing leaves.

A short based on the movie "Wild" takes things to a surreal new level. As her omniscient voice narrates, actress Reese Witherspoon hikes up and sits on a rock

beside you. Then she looks right through you, and suddenly Laura Dern, playing Witherspoon's deceased mother, makes you turn to the right. Dern then talks through you to her daughter as if you're the ghost. Later, a curious fox comes up to sniff you, a reminder that you that you do, in fact, exist - virtually, at least. "We don't ask people to come out of those things and say, 'I completely figured it out,'" says Felix Lajeunesse, the studio's creative director.

Sudden movement = nausea

Vrse, a Los Angeles-based virtual reality studio that

people feel sick - the same way taking off and landing in a plane feel a lot worse than just cruising at 30,000 feet. Many virtual reality filmmakers avoid motion because it induces nausea, but Milk says injecting a touch of acceleration is a new way for directors to provoke an emotional response. "You couldn't do this in a traditional, rectangular film," he says.

What is narrative, anyway?

Can a story be an exploration of a space? Can it be just a moment in time and a way to understand a situation's context? Creator Mac Cauley wrestled with these



In this photo taken Tuesday, Nov 17, 2015, the "Henry" movie team conducts a daily at the Oculus Story Studio, a hub for digital animators and experimental filmmakers in San Francisco's trendy South of Market district. — AP photos

has worked with The New York Times, Vice News and others, has a signature documentary style involving a voice-over and stationary VR camera placement right in the middle of the action. But it unhooked the camera in "Millions March NYC," an 8-minute VR documentary on racial-profiling protests that Vrse produced with Vice News. Creative director Chris Milk acknowledged the hand-held camera and bouncing, shaky movements make the viewer "a little queasy."

It still proved a point. Turns out it's not motion so much as the acceleration and deceleration that makes

questions in "The Night Cafe," a scene painted in the impressionist style of Vincent Van Gogh. A trackpad lets you move around. Turn a corner and there's Van Gogh, listening to a piano player. A future version may include characters that react to your movement and talk back. "Each person's going to have their own experience of it," Cauley said. "That's what makes the interactive medium of virtual reality so personal." — AP



An art director works on visual development at the Oculus Story Studio.



Ramiro Lopez Dau, director and animation supervisor, works at his desk.



An art director works on visual development.