

Amir patronizes youth excellence award ceremony



US strike kills 40 Qaeda militants at Yemen camp



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INNOVATION, DIGITAL STRATEGIC FOCUS FOR ZAIN: AL-KHORAFI

TELECOM GIANT RECORDS KD 1.14 BILLION - IN REVENUES



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KUWAIT: A picture taken from a window of the Al-Safat business centre shows the skyline of Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

GULF MIGRANT WORKERS - THE BIGGEST VICTIMS OF OIL SHOCK

ARREST WARRANT FOR MP DASHTI

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Attorney General Chancellor Dherar Al-Assousi yesterday issued an arrest warrant against MP Abdulhameed Dashti after the parliament lifted his immunity over a case filed against him for slandering Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the judges in the Abdali cell case. Notably, Bahrain's Public Prosecution had issued a directive including an Interpol arrest warrant against Dashti.

Commenting on the arrest warrant issued by the Public Prosecutor, Dashti, who is currently abroad, stressed that such a measure was unprecedented. He said that the Public Prosecution had dealt with him differently in three previous cases. "Things are obviously different this time and the Public Prosecution made a decision to summon a lawmaker over opinion-related issues," Dashti added, describing what happened as an unprecedented disaster for civil liberties in Kuwait. Kuwait has witnessed a dramatic decline in free speech and civil liberties in the last few years. Several activists, journalists and politicians had their citizenship revoked or been jailed for political dissent.

LONDON: Saudi Arabia's army of migrant workers will be among the biggest losers from the slump in oil prices and the impact will reverberate to poor countries across the Middle East and South Asia where many of them originate. Saudi Arabia relies more heavily on migrant labor than any other large country except neighboring United Arab Emirates, according to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

The oil boom brought an unprecedented influx of migrants mostly from poorer countries in the Middle East and South and Southeast Asia. The number of migrants resident in the kingdom has almost doubled from 5.3 million in 2000 to 10.2 million in 2015. Saudi Arabia hosts more migrants than other country in the world other than the United States (47 million), Germany (12 million) and Russia (12 million).

Migrants account for 32 percent of the resident population, up from less than 25 percent in 2000. In the case of males the share is as high as 39 percent. The share of migrants in the population and the workforce has increased despite attempts to encourage the employment of locals

under official "Saudisation" policies pursued fitfully over the last four decades. In 2015, Saudi Arabia hosted 1.9 migrants from India, 1.3 million from Indonesia, 1.1 million from Pakistan, 970,000 from Bangladesh, 730,000 from Egypt, 620,000 from Syria, and 580,000 from Yemen, according to the UN.

Smaller but significant numbers of migrants came from Afghanistan (365,000), Sudan (365,000), Nepal (380,000), Myanmar (200,000), Jordan (180,000), Ethiopia (125,000) and Lebanon (115,000). In 2014, migrant workers sent home to their families an estimated \$36 billion. Remittances from workers in Saudi Arabia play a crucial role in some of the smaller and poorer economies of the Middle East and Asia. But now that economic model is under threat from the slump in oil prices, which has pushed the government budget deep into the red and the economy close to recession.

Intensified efforts at Saudisation of the workforce are a centre piece of the government's program for adjusting to lower oil prices and creating more private sector employment.

Continued on Page 13

KUWAIT: Zain Group held its 2015 General Assembly at the company's headquarters in Shuwaikh yesterday. The leading mobile telecom, with operations in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, recorded revenues of KD 1.14 billion (\$3.78 billion) for 2015 and a net income of KD 154 million (\$513 million) for 2015. Zain also achieved a customer base reach of 45.6 million in 2015, a 3 percent increase year-on-year. The Kuwait-based telecom has focused on digital innovation as a key growth market in Kuwait and regionally.

"Innovation and the Digital space are a key strategic focus for Zain," explained Bader Al-Khorafi, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group. "In 2014, we established our Zain Digital Frontier and Innovation unit tasked with cementing the position of the group within the digital space. ZDFI focuses on the areas of innovation, digital services, corporate venturing and smart cities.

To date, we have already made investments in NexGen, a smart cities operating company, we have acquired a mobile application development business (FOO) and we are in the process of launching an OTT video service in collaboration with other telecommunications operators and media partners. We are also looking at bringing digital transformation to our core business - including the use of big data analytics to enhance customer experience."

Zain also promotes a strong community outreach and corporate social responsibility program that aims to contribute to Kuwait's long term growth and development. "Through our corporate sustainability drive, we are focusing on addressing deficits in our communities. At the same time, we are providing avenues for entrepreneurship and inno-



Bader Al-Khorafi, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group.

vation in our societies," Al-Khorafi said during Zain's GA meeting.

"Last year, we sponsored the Pan Arab MITEF Enterprise Forum start-up competition with the aim of promoting innovation and engaging aspiring entrepreneurs in mentorship, networking and development. We will continue this in 2016 with the aim of inspiring creativity amongst our youth." Zain is a leading telecommunications operator across the Middle East and Africa providing mobile voice and data services to over 45.6 million active customers as of 31 December, 2015. Zain operates in Bahrain, Kuwait (its home market), Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and South Sudan. Zain is listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange. (See Page 25)

BELGIUM MOURNS, HUNTS IS SUSPECTS



BRUSSELS: This undated handout photo released by the federal police shows a combination of two pictures of Najim Laachraoui. Police is looking for Laachraoui as part of the investigation into the Paris terrorist attacks. — AFP

BRUSSELS: Belgian police have identified a prime suspect in Tuesday's Brussels blasts and two suspected suicide bombers, linking them directly to Islamic State militants behind last November's Paris attacks, Belgian media reported yesterday as the country began three days of mourning for the victims. Najim Laachraoui, 25, is believed to be the man seen on CCTV pushing a baggage trolley alongside the bombers and then running out of the Brussels airport terminal.

Earlier some media reported that he had been captured in the Brussels borough of Anderlecht, but they later said the person detained was not Laachraoui. Police and prosecutors refused immediate comment but the federal prosecutor was due to hold a news conference at 1200 GMT. The death toll in the attacks on the Belgian capital, home to the European Union and NATO, rose to at least 31 with some 260 wounded, Health

Minister Maggie De Block said on VRT television. It could rise further because some of the bomb victims at Maelbeek metro station were blown to pieces and victims are hard to identify.

One of the suspects seen on CCTV pushing baggage trolleys at Brussels airport just before the explosions was identified as Brahim El Bakraoui, public broadcaster RTBF reported. It said his brother, Khalid, blew himself up on the metro train. Both had criminal records for armed robbery but had not previously been linked by investigators to Islamist militants. Laachraoui is wanted in connection with the Paris attacks. His DNA was found on at least two explosives belts used in those attacks and at a Brussels hideout used last week by prime Paris suspect Salah Abdeslam, who was arrested last Friday after a shoot-out with police.

Continued on Page 13

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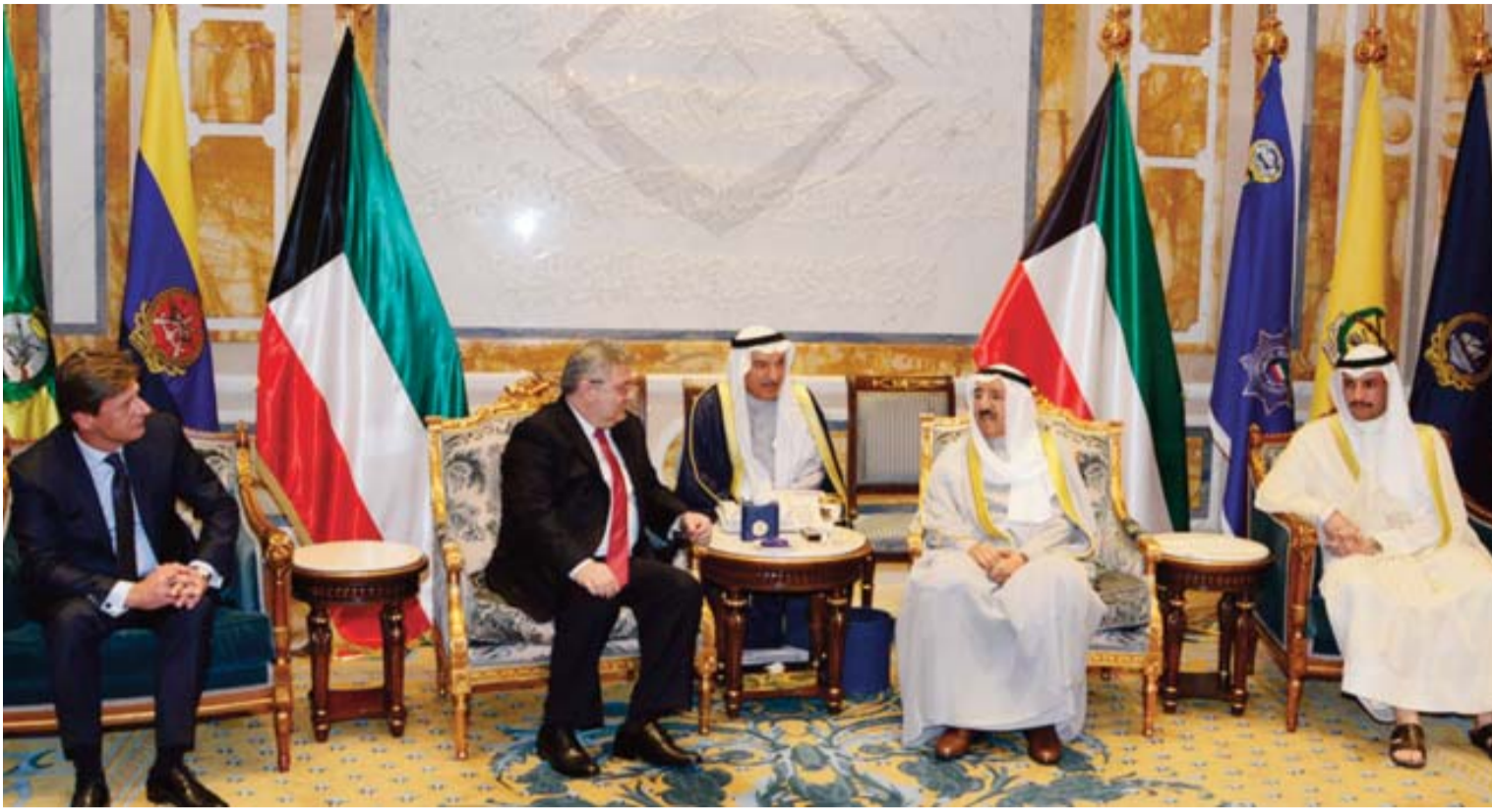
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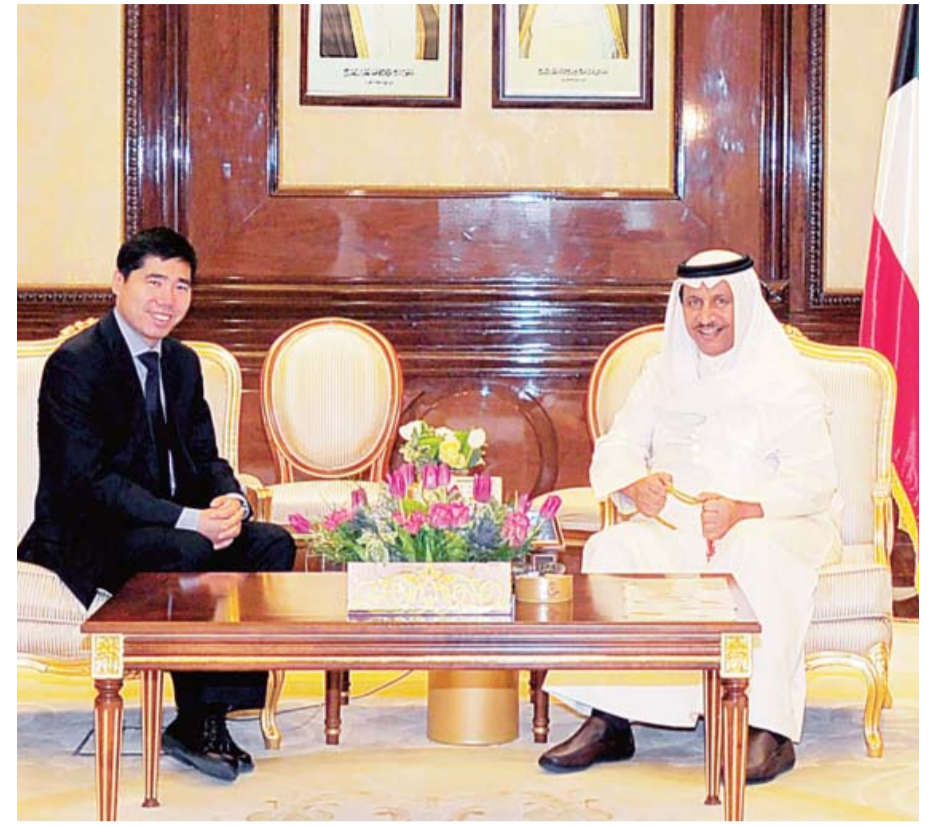
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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Speaker of the Georgian Parliament David Usupashvili. —Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with China's Ambassador to Kuwait Wang Di.

AMIR RECEIVES GHANEM, GEORGIAN SPEAKER

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace the Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem. Ghanem briefed His Highness the Amir on outcomes of the 134th session of the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) conference, which recently concluded in Lusaka, Zambia.

Ghanem also introduced to His Highness Speaker of the Georgian Parliament David Usupashvili on the occasion of his visit to the country.

Earlier, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-

Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. Separately,

His Highness the Prime Minister received Georgian Speaker Usupashvili and his accompanying delegation. Chief of the accompanying mission of honor MP Hamad Al-Harshani attended the meeting. His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak also received China's Ambassador to Kuwait Wang Di. —KUNA



Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub

GHANEM'S SPEECH CAME AT RIGHT TIME: PALESTINIAN AMBASSADOR

KUWAIT: A speech recently delivered by Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem before the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Zambia came at a very critical time when the Palestinian cause needed support, Ambassador of the state of Palestine to Kuwait Rami Tahboub said in a statement to the press yesterday.

"Ghanem's speech directly addressed the problem and gave a clear message to the world that the Palestinian cause is still the core of the conflict and the base of the terrorism that our region and the entire world suffers from," Tahboub emphasized. He pointed out to Ghanem's statements when he said that Israel practices 'state terrorism' against the unarmed Palestinian people, and that this was not

different from other forms of terrorist attacks.

Tahboub added that both the Palestinian people and media have keenly followed Ghanem's speech "which expressed the feelings of Kuwait and the Kuwaiti people towards the Palestinian people's sufferings." "This proves once more how dedicated Kuwaitis are to the Palestinian cause, especially since the Palestinian revolution was launched on Kuwaiti soil," he underlined. Tahboub further credited His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for "planting the love of Palestine and its people in the hearts of the Kuwaiti people." "Thanks to this, the Palestinian cause has come to be integral to the Kuwaitis' culture and life," Tahboub added.

FORMER TUNISIAN FM CALLS FOR ARAB UNITY TO KEEP SECURITY INTACT

KUWAITI REITERATES CONDEMNATION OF BRUSSELS ATTACKS

KUWAIT: Former Tunisian foreign minister Taieb Baccouche called on Arab nations yesterday to remain united to keep security in the Arab world intact. Delivering a lecture at Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute, entitled "Development of Regional Events and its Effect on International Relations," Baccouche said that "security remains the primary goal, as any threat to one Arab nation is a threat to all."

It is imperative to form concerted and well planned strategies to overcome any challenges, Baccouche said. He also warned of negative implications of what he called, "foreign intervention" into internal Arab affairs. The former Tunisian foreign minister pinpointed Tuesday's "terrorist" attacks in Brussels as a "testament" to the spread of terrorism across the globe.

Moreover, Baccouche noted that the revolution in his country had a ripple effect on many nations across the Arab world. Speaking about a Tunisian national dialogue quartet's win of the Nobel peace prize in 2015, Baccouche hailed it as a victory for the civilian population.

Meanwhile, Baccouche said his lecture comes as part of a series of agreements between his country and Kuwait, adding that he is hopeful of increased cooperation between both nations. Director General of Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute Ambassador Abdulaziz Al-Sharekh extolled Baccouche, as a man with extensive knowledge in political and educational realms.

The former Tunisian foreign minister previously served as the minister of education and official spokesperson of the government, in addition to chief of the Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR). Deputy foreign minister Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and a number of foreign ministry officials, were in attendance at the lecture.



KUWAIT: Former Tunisian foreign minister Taieb Baccouche (left) speaks during a lecture at Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute, as the institute's Director General Ambassador Abdulaziz Al-Sharekh looks on. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Brussels attacks

Meanwhile, Sheikh Dr Ahmad Al-Sabah reiterated Kuwait's condemnation of the terrorist attacks that targeted an airport and a subway in Brussels on Tuesday, leaving in their wake numerous dead and injured bystanders.

"We condemn vehemently the terrorist attacks that took place yesterday in Brussels targeting innocent civilians," the official said following the lecture, reiterating Kuwait's condemnation of all acts of terror everywhere.

Regarding the lecture, he said Baccouche reviewed momentous events that have impacted

the Arab world and Tunisia in particular in the past five years, which resulted in Tunisia in the adoption of the values of democracy, civil society, and the rule of law. The acting deputy foreign minister congratulated Tunisia on getting the Noble Peace Award and wished it much prosperity in the years ahead. Earlier yesterday, Baccouche met with First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, in attendance of Sharekh, Sheikh Dr Ahmad Al-Sabah and Deputy Minister for Arab World Affairs Ambassador Aziz Rahim Al-Daihani, as well as a number of senior foreign ministry officials. — KUNA



NEW YORK: Chairperson of Kuwait Cabinet's Committee on Women's Affairs Sheikha Latifa Al-Fahad Al-Sabah attends the 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW60). — KUNA

KUWAITI WOMEN INT'L PARTICIPATION BOOSTS THEIR STATUS, ROLE: OFFICIAL

NEW YORK: Chairperson of Kuwait Cabinet's Committee on Women's Affairs Sheikha Latifa Al-Fahad Al-Sabah stressed importance of boosting Kuwaiti women participation to contribute to implementing development plans thus serving community. Sheikha Latifa made her remarks on Tuesday on the sidelines of the 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW60), where she heads the Kuwaiti delegation to the event. "Giving Kuwaiti women their full rights and reinforcing their status in the society boost their national role in sustainable development and decision making," she said.

The Kuwaiti government has come a long way in empowering women and eliminate gender discrimination in the country, Sheikha Latifa said, noting that Kuwaiti women have always been proactive in perusing education and employment as they still aspire for more gains and achievements.

Kuwait' earning the first rank in promoting gender equality among Arab countries,

according to the World Economic Forum, boosts women's status in the country and motivates them to achieve quicker steps toward attaining advanced international ranks, she said.

Sheikha Latifa expressed her hope that the Kuwaiti political leadership provides women in the country with more initiatives and opportunities, especially since Kuwaiti women proved their competency in various vital positions.

Setting May 16th as Kuwaiti Women's Day confirms the government's conviction of women's role in the society, and keenness on investing women's skills and potentials in pushing the development march in the country, she said. Kuwaiti women's presence at international events is important in bolstering their contribution to women issues, in addition to benefiting from the experiences and expertise of other countries around the world in the women empowerment field, she added.— KUNA

ALGHANIM INDUSTRIES, GULF BANK HOST 'WOMEN IN CORPORATE WORLD: BEYOND GLASS CEILING' CONFERENCE

ADDRESSING GENDER DIVERSITY ISSUES IN WORKPLACE

KUWAIT: Alghanim Industries and Gulf Bank are pleased to announce they are holding a conference entitled 'Women in the Corporate World: Beyond the Glass Ceiling' on Wednesday, May 4, 2016 at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel.

This non-profit conference will bring together key influential international, regional, and local leaders together to discuss the important issue of gender diversity in the workplace. The format of the conference will include keynote speakers and panel discussions. This is also intended to create a networking platform to exchange various ideas on achieving success in the corporate environment. As part of this important conference, a Kuwait-wide survey is being conducted to better understand key motivating factors and challenges for women in Kuwait's workforce. This research will enrich our understanding of the drivers that incentivize women to work, and the results of the survey will be revealed at the conference.

The issue of gender diversity and equality in the workplace in an important local and international issue. Many studies show the positive business and financial impact of having a workplace that is more appealing to women. International Monetary Fund (IMF) statistics suggest that the Middle East gender gap is three times larger than in most developing economies.

At the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos this year, workplace diversity was highlighted in their Global Gender Gap Report 2015. Studies from this report show the strong correlation between gender equality and GDP per capita. While Kuwait ranks the highest among Arab countries in the WEF Global Gender Gap Report, it should also be noted that the MENA region

also has the lowest-ranked country in the index. As such, much work remains to be done to bring this topic to the forefront and offer solutions designed to increase female participation in the workplace.

Initiatives such as this conference not only

improve internal company cultures, but will positively reflect on society and push the region as a whole forward economically and in a socially responsible direction. Both Alghanim Industries and Gulf Bank are committed to gender parity and meritocracy in the workplace.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Information and Youth Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah, Youth Ministry Undersecretary Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah and the awarded participants are pictured in a group photo. — Amiri Diwan photos

AMIR PATRONIZES YOUTH EXCELLENCE AWARD CEREMONY

AMIR'S CARE FOR YOUTH LED TO TANGIBLE OUTCOMES: MINISTER

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday patronized and attended Kuwait's award for youth excellence and creativity ceremony, held at Bayan Palace. In a key address at the ceremony, the Minister of Information noted that His Highness the Amir's care for the youth led to establishment of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, three years ago, noting that the young department, mostly staffed by junior citizens, has adopted more than 350 voluntary and scientific programs for the adolescents.

The ceremony kicked off with arrival of His Highness the Amir at the venue, where he was welcomed by the Minister of Information, Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah and the Ministry Undersecretary Sheikha Al-Zain Sabah Nasser Al-Saud Al-Sabah.

It was attended by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, senior sheikhs, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister, Finance Minister and Acting Oil Minister Anas Khaled Al-Saleh, other ministers and State officials.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah awards one of the winners, as Information and Youth Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah looks on.

Tangible outcomes
Minister of Information Sheikh Salman, in his statement, expressed admiration of His Highness the Amir's care for the youth that led to tangible outcomes, namely establishment of the ministry for youth affairs, which in turn spearheaded a host of national projects and programs aimed at promoting moderation and renunciation of violence.

Moreover, the ministry has adopted up to 350 youth initiatives and programs, related to voluntary work and scientific research, set up electronic portals for boosting acquaintance among the youngsters and conducted a poll on a 4,000-youth sample "with aim of mapping out a better national strategy for the youth to empower them to be involved in the state institutions, the civil community and the private sector."

Minister Sheikh Salman extended gratitude to Their Highnesses the Crown Prince and the Prime Minister, the National Assembly Speaker and other leaders for supporting youth programs and activities. He in conclusion expressed confidence in the young citizens' role for pushing ahead on the path for accomplishing Kuwait's prosperity.

Mohammad Nasser Al-Arfaj, the official spokesman of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, also made a statement noting that both the ministry, founded only three years ago, and the employees, are young, indicating that the personnel are in their thirties.

Kuwait Listens
Arfaj also thanked His Highness the Amir and the government for their support to the Kuwaiti youth, and keenness to listen to their views as part of the 'Kuwait Listens' initiative. Designating March 13 a day for the Kuwaiti youth is part of His Highness the Amir's great attention to youth and the 'Kuwait Listens' initiative which has offered young people the chance to take part in drawing up a roadmap for the future of the nation, he said.

The ministry's senior media official said that up to 500 young people had applied to the award, only 173 met the conditions. The first top ten were honored this morning, as well as other participants. This is the first time the competition is organized in Kuwait, and the Arab World, with awards totaling KD 100,000 in ten categories, Arfaj said.

Further efforts
Aisha Al-Abdullah, whose collection of poetry won the arts and culture award, said that the prize encouraged her to lavish further efforts to manifest how the Kuwaiti youth are interested in reading and culture. Winner of the architecture, planning and housing prize Deima Al-Ghneim said the idea behind her project is based on cultural tours around Kuwait to present strategic studies on the urban structure of the country.

Saud Walid Al-Fadel, who was awarded the voluntary work prize, said that it had crowned his efforts to work harder for the good of the nation. Meanwhile, Mohammad



A winner receives his award from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Al-Hendi, winner of the Sharia sciences award, expressed gratitude to the political leadership and Sheikh Salman, and the staff of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, for organizing the competition. Hendi presented video footages, each of three minutes on YouTube, for teaching the correct way of reciting the Holy Quran. —KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah honors a winning participant.



Information and Youth Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah and Youth Ministry Undersecretary Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah present a gift to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



Information and Youth Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah and Youth Ministry Undersecretary Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah present a gift to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

CROWN PRINCE ATTENDS KUWAIT UNIVERSITY GRADUATION CEREMONY

AMIR CONGRATULATES FRESH GRADUATES

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attended on Tuesday the annual graduation ceremony for Kuwait University's 45th batch of the academic year 2014-15 at KU's stadium at Shuwaikh education area.

Upon arrival, His Highness the Crown Prince was received by Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Bader Al-Essa, KU President Dr Hussain Al-Ansari, and senior education ministry officials and the organizing committee.

The ceremony was also attended by National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, senior sheikhs, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Hamad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Hamad Al-Sabah, senior Army, police, and National Guard officials, and senior state officials. The ceremony kicked off with a

recitation from the Holy Quran and was followed by His Highness the Crown Prince's speech marking the occasion.

New generation
His Highness the Crown Prince said that "Kuwait celebrates today a new generation of graduates who will join other generations into serving their country and help their country prosper." His Highness Sheikh Nawaf expressed his pleasure and blessing on this dear occasion to all students and conveyed congratulations of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince thanked all students and faculty members for their tremendous hard work, and encourage all graduates to open their minds and benefit from new technologies and uphold Islamic ethics and modernization of Islam.

Later, Minister Essa delivered a speech and praising students for their achievement. Essa also



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is pictured with a graduate.

encouraged the students to continue their efforts and to excel in serving their country. Meanwhile, KU President Dr Ansari hailed the achievement of the students and thanking them for their hard work.

Ansari also thanked the mothers and fathers of students for their efforts throughout the years. Furthermore, Shouq Al-Shatti a student delivered a speech on behalf the students thanking all guests, including the university's faculty for their work throughout the years.

Amir congratulates graduates
Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir on Tuesday congratulated Kuwait University's graduates, their parents and teachers on the occasion of obtaining bachelor degrees. His Highness the Amir, in a cable to Minister Essa, wished of the fresh graduates best of luck in their future careers.

He urged them to contribute to the service of their country with the objective of development and prosperity of Kuwait. His Highness the Amir praised Allah the Almighty to protect Kuwait and bestowed the country with security, stability and prosperity. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (center), National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem (left) and Sheikh Faisal Al-Saud Al-Sabah attend the graduation ceremony. — Kuwait University photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Education Minister Dr Bader Al-Essa are pictured with Kuwait University staff and newly graduates.



Graduates of Kuwait University's 45th batch of the academic year 2014-15.

CITIZENSHIP CASE REVERSED, NEXT HEARING SET FOR MAY 5

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The administrative court set a hearing for May 5 to review a case demanding the withdrawal of a Kuwaiti national's citizenship. Ahmed Al-Jabr Kathem Aafat Al-Shammari was the owner of Al-Youm TV channel and Aalam Al-Youm newspaper, both of which were shuttered by the government.

The Court of Cassation had accepted Shemmari's lawsuit challenging the withdrawal of his citizenship and annulled an earlier verdict passed by the court of first instance. In the Cassation Court's verdict, the court noted that the citizenship withdrawal's decision should come by a court order because Shemmari received his citizenship

passed down from his Kuwaiti father. Notably, the Cabinet had agreed last July to issue a draft decree on the withdrawal of Shemmari's citizenship.

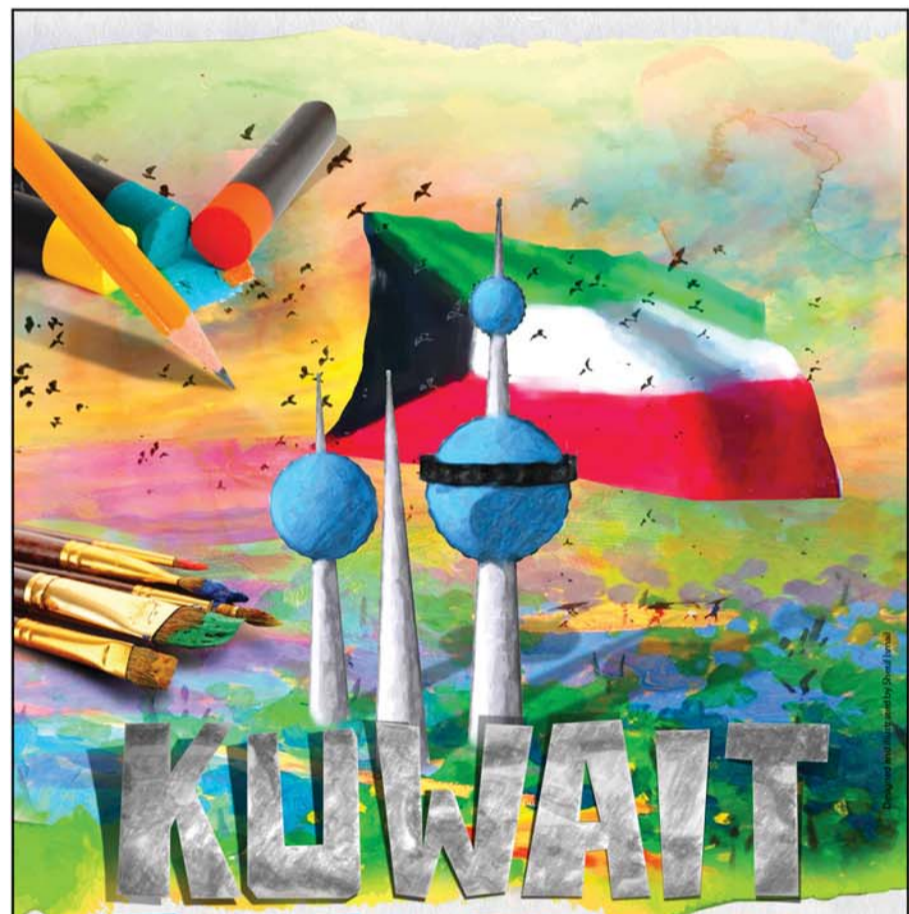
Commenting on the cassation court's verdict, lawyer Meshari Al-Ossaimi stressed that the court had set things right in terms of hearing citizenship-related cases in court. "The court differentiated between those who got citizenship by force of law because they had Kuwaiti fathers and those who were granted citizenship," Ossaimi explained, pointing out that courts are accordingly not authorized to view cases belonging to the second category because granting and withdrawing citizenship was a sovereign practice.

KUWAIT HOSTS 8TH GIS CONFERENCE MARCH 28

KUWAIT: Kuwait's eighth geographical information system (GIS) conference will kick off on March 28, and will last for two days, the country's GIS users announced yesterday. In a press statement, head of the conference's media committee Dr Anwar Al-Harbi said that the conference would showcase how instrumental geography is to build an adept and safe society, while also displaying the latest GIS features.

A multitude of GIS professionals and experts will convene in the country for the conference, Harbi noted. Scheduled for the conference are more than 20 lectures aimed at familiarizing the international community with the perks of the GIS system, Harbi said.

Moreover, the conference would also serve as a platform for which to exchange GIS data and expertise, he added. Amongst the issues to be discussed at the conference is the use of the GIS system to provide government services, as well as internet use to facilitate work in various government bodies, the head of the conference's media committee said. Results of a recently held juvenile arts contest will be announced during the conference, Harbi noted, adding that the contest featured more than 253 participants from schools nationwide. A slew of local and international companies, in addition to numerous government bodies will partake in the conference, he said. —KUNA



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MP TO GRILL COMMERCE MINISTER OVER SMES

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Chairman of the parliament's legislative committee MP Mubarak Al-Hurais announced his intention to file a grilling motion soon against Minister of Commerce and Industry Yousuf Al-Ali, accusing him of failure to put the small and medium enterprises (SME) law into practice three years after it has been passed in parliament. Hurais added that the minister had been stalling and ignoring the law for over a year "while more than 90 applications were already made by young people who wish to start their own small businesses."



MP Mubarak Al-Hurais



Commerce Minister Yousuf Al-Ali

are working on a project that automatically links traffic fines among them. The project is expected to be ready before the end of this year. The project aims at creating a system to collect traffic fines committed by GCC citizens and residents holding GCC driver's licenses in any of the GCC member states. In this regard, informed sources said that automatic linkage between the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain has already been done, that linkage between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia is in the final stages and that 95 of the linkage between Saudi Arabia and Bahrain was done.

Oil sector

MP Talal Al-Jallal expressed total rejection of imposing the strategic payroll alternative system on oil sector employees, reiterating this particular sector's importance as the sole source of national income. "Undermining the rights of those employees would have serious and dangerous consequences on state revenues," he warned.

Jallal added that the project

might be useful for other sectors, where employees might get more privileges as a result. "But oil employees will lose a lot under the new system," he proclaimed, calling for exempting oil sector employees from the project so as not to lose national expertise in the field. He also rejected attempts to privatize the oil sector. Meanwhile, MP Madhi Al-Hajri warned the Deputy

Prime Minister, Finance Minister and Acting Oil Minister Anas Al-Saleh of imposing the new system on oil sector employees because he would, then, follow on his colleague Abdullah Al-Tamimi's footsteps and grill the minister.

Traffic fines

Traffic departments at Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states

Companies to run schools

Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Bader Al-Essa said that three local companies were qualified to run two schools in each governorate according to the build-operate-transfer (BOT) system. The minister explained that the companies would only run administrative works at the schools while the teaching staff would still be subject to the Ministry of Education.



KUWAIT: Members of a gang arrested yesterday for offering illegal domestic help services.



An environment police officer is seen during a crackdown on factories in Subhan yesterday.

SEVENTEEN PEOPLE ARRESTED IN FAKE DOMESTIC HELP OFFICE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Residency affairs department detectives arrested a number of African and Asian nationals who scammed people by offering illegal domestic help services. Police discovered the gang while inspecting domestic help offices, as they found an office that offered fake contracts and receipts to clients. Further investigations revealed that the suspects would make contact with domestic helpers and urge them to run away from their legal sponsors' houses then facilitate for their ille-

gal work. Police also raided four apartments operated by the gang and arrested 17 domestic helpers, including nine men and eight women.

Suspects caught

A total of twelve fugitives were arrested during a recent police crackdown, and were sent to authorities to face charges related to nonpaid debts. The debts that the suspect owed to others vary in quantity between KD 500 and KD 35,000, said security sources. Meanwhile, police arrested a number of people found in posses-

sion of drugs and paraphernalia.

Environmental crackdown

Environment police, in cooperation with Environment Public Authority (EPA) carried out a surprise inspection tour in Subhan against environmental violations such as gas emissions, pollutants or radiations that are in violation of the environmental law. The campaign resulted in filing several citations for violations against petrochemical, wood, and fiber factories, and sent them to the public prosecution.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) and the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) met yesterday at the site of Jaber Al-Ahmad Causeway to follow the progress of implementing preventive conditions required for the project, in order to guarantee the safety of causeway users in the future. The meeting was headed by MPW Assistant Undersecretary for Roads Engineering Ahmad Al-Hussan, and KFSD official Major General Khalid Al-Mikrad. —By Hanan Al-Saadoun

News

in brief

KUWAITI 'FASHIONISTA' GETS 10 DAYS JAIL

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The public prosecution yesterday detained a well known fashion blogger in Kuwait for 10 days and referred her to the criminal court on charges of forgery. She allegedly left using her friend's passport before the forgery was discovered at Dubai airport and she was returned to Kuwait.

Child allowances

A court yesterday issued a verdict entitling Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaiti to get allowances for their children. Notably, MSAL, Hind Al-Sabeeh had announced that the total number of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis was 2123 and that they were already being paid the total of KD 3,303,051 but the number later on increased to 2137.

Traffic committee

Head of the structural plan committee in the Municipal Council Ali Al-Moussa said that the committee yesterday discussed a proposal on establishing a temporary committee to solve the traffic congestion problems.

DIRECT AID SOCIETY INAUGURATES EDUCATIONAL CENTER IN TANZANIA

KIGOMA: The Direct Aid Society inaugurated yesterday an educational facility in the Western Tanzanian town of Kigoma, an initiative aimed at giving children access to much needed education. General Manager of the Direct Aid Society Dr Abdullah Abdulrahman Al-Sumait, along with First Secretary at the Kuwaiti embassy in Tanzania Mohammad Al-Omairi and Mayor of Kigoma region Mohgahsmi Makayta attended the initiation ceremony of the facility, named after prominent Kuwaiti philanthropist Abdulrahman Al-Sumait.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's embassy said that Makayta conveyed gratitude to Kuwait for the country's philanthropic efforts in all parts of the African continent. As a result of a surge in the number of students, education is scarce in the East African nation, Makayta noted. The facility stretches on 150,000 square meters and contains a school, which accommodates 480 students, and an orphanage, in addition to a clinic and a mosque. —KUNA



KUWAITI LAW MAINTAINS SALARIES OF STATE'S EMPLOYEES: OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: Kuwait's laws stress the need to maintain salaries and financial privileges of the state's employees, said an official. The strategic payroll alternative project seeks to address the issue of salaries' gaps, Undersecretary of the Finance Ministry Khalifa Hamada, added in a

citizens.

The project will raise burdens on the State's budget, in the first year of implementation, up to KD 300 million. But it will, in the long run, save money due to a decrease of new employees' salaries, he stressed. Subsidies provided by the State con-

fy sources of income, in addition to spending rationalization. "Our duty as government bodies is to collect bad debts to alleviate the budget's burdens," he said, noting that adopting new policy at the ministry generates revenues to the State.

Eman Al-Mutairi, assistant secre-

ment, adding that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its axes and goals included important paths for Kuwait in cutting spending.

She stressed the significance of shedding light on the goals of sustainable development and its economic, social, environment axes. She called for creating new jobs for youth and empowering women economically.

Money waste

Mohammad Al-Awwash, assistant undersecretary of informative planning and development sector at Ministry of Information, said the committee tasked with addressing money waste includes some government bodies and held more than 15 meetings to be briefed on the plan of rationalizing spending. The committee was keen to bring together all officials at ministries and research bodies so as to review visions pertaining to determination of priorities and expenditure rationalization, he said.

Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi, an official at Kuwait Institute for Scientific Researches spoke about effects of low oil prices on economies of GCC member states. The conference kicked off Tuesday under the auspices of Deputy Premier, Finance Minister and Acting Oil Minister Anas Al-Saleh. Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah attended the conference. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Khalifa Hamada (left), Mohammad Al-Awwash (second from left), and Eman Al-Mutairi (right) attend a session during the national conference on priorities. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

speech at the national conference on priorities which kicked off on Tuesday.

The project will increase salaries of current job categories which did not enjoy any privileges, he said, indicating that there would be many economic and financial reforms aiming to enhance the role of the private sector and create opportunities for

sumes about a quarter of the budget and there is a study seeking to decrease it, he said.

Sources of income

Meanwhile, Undersecretary of Information Ministry Tareq Al-Mezrem stressed keenness on raising the State's resources and diversi-

ty general of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (SCPD), underlined the importance of diversifying sources of income so as to maintain sustainable development.

She said making use of rationalization of public spending is related to best performances of the govern-

KU EXTENDS PARTNERSHIP WITH ENERGY FIRM TOTAL

KUWAIT: The Kuwait University's College of Engineering and Petroleum announced yesterday the extension of its agreement with the giant French energy company Total for two more years. The agreement, initially signed in 2013 for three years, aims at having students of the College of Engineering and Petroleum receive instruction and training at Total facilities in addition to having the College staff be sent to Total in France to become acquainted with the latest advances in the energy field, said in a press statement today dean of the College Dr Abdullahif Al-Khelaifi.

The two-year extension will avail the College and Total to pursue topics on research and development to the best interest of both sides, said the dean, noting that Total will offer scholarships to students of the College to pursue post-graduate work in French institutions.

Total will also provide the training of the students of the College at oil locations in the Middle East and worldwide where the company has training facilities, said the dean. Total will pay for room and board for these students and extend monetary gifts to them.

Regional Director of Total-Kuwait company Lionel Lev said meanwhile that the company highly values education as it is seminal to economic growth and development. He extolled the company's partnership with Kuwait University's College of Engineering and Petroleum as it affords the students the opportunity to develop their potentials in the vital field of energy. —KUNA



KUWAIT URGED TO HOST FCB'S CONSTITUENT MEETING

SFAX: A Tunisian writer urged the State of Kuwait on Tuesday to host the constituent meeting of the federation of children book in the Arab world. At the conclusion of the Sfax Children Book Fair, Mahmoud Harshani expressed his hope that Kuwait would host the meeting as it enjoys rich cultural heritage.

He said that the federation will form a tool of communication among children's literature writers in the Arab countries so as to

remove difficulties facing them in this field. He noted that writing for children has been developed in the Arab world despite many challenges, indicating that magazines of children have benefited from modern technology. He called for developing the scientific message in children's books. Many forums and workshops on children's literature in the Arab world were held during the book fair which concluded its events late Tuesday. Many writers took part in the event. —KUNA

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Al-Anbaa

WORDS YOU DON'T MEAN

By Dr Nermin Al-Houti

I am sorry, but I mean every word that my pen writes. Every now and then, my column drifts away from political and economic struggles, and focuses on some social problems that are sent by my readers. I then rephrase them with their permission, so that people can stop at them and think, or they could serve as lessons for people to avoid them in the future.

The theme of our issue today is built on the oppressor and the oppressed, as each one of them has a view towards the other. The story begins where it ends when a husband sent a letter to his wife when she begged him to listen to her to justify what happened. But unfortunately, the husband played the role of the judge and made a verdict without listening to the wife's defense. He sent her a text message that reads "enough playing the role of love with me, and selecting words you do not mean."

After reading the letter and the events that it covers, I have summarized it, and would like to present you with a summary about the issue. The story talks about a wife who made friends who in turn destroyed her life without knowing what is going behind doors. She was always telling her husband "those are my friends." The story does not stop here. One of her friends conspired with domestic workers at the wife's house in order to work on separating her from her husband following a three-year marriage.

What surprised me was the husband's stand, as he knows that his wife loved him before they got married. He did not know that at the time, as she did not tell him her feelings. Rather, she waited until they got married, and on the wedding night, she confessed to him about her love and prayers that he becomes her husband.

After all of this love and all of those days, spiteful and envious friends targeted the wife, because of what she enjoys of good living and love with her husband. Her own friends conspired against her to separate her from her husband! And indeed, they succeeded in that. The wife then begged her husband to listen to her, but the story ends with the man forgetting how much love that woman had for him, and he issued his verdict without listening to her defense. His resolution was that all what she did for him in the form of love, loyalty and faithfulness all those years were only artificial feelings and lies.

Our story ends here, leaving that woman without help, and we only have prayers for her that Allah guides her husband to the good path, and restore things to where they were. Those lines teach us that we should not give those we do not know total trust. And when we find ourselves in the role of the judge, we must hear and think so we do not do injustice.

Finally those who make mistakes should be punished, but when you know that he loves you, then forgiveness is possible. The best conclusion: "And let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is forgiving and merciful." (24:22) (Holy Quran)

— Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Anbaa

UKASHA AND OTHERS

By Saleh Al-Shayji

Egyptian MP Tawfiq Ukasha is considered the most famous at the level of the current Egyptian parliament. He had collected the most votes among all MPs, which prompted him to think about running for speaker.

At the Egyptian media level, Tawfiq Ukasha is the most famous.

Those are facts, which I am mentioning not in an attempt to praise Ukasha who I do not know as a parliamentarian, but I know him as a media personality through watching him on TV. I believe that he drove the media to extreme lows.

He is a man who does not possess the minimum of media work principles, then he adopted what can be called 'low clowning' methods in most if not all cases.

My opinion in the man is not important, but I am writing after he was kicked out of parliament following his invitation of the Israeli ambassador in Egypt to his house.

I write while wondering; can members of parliament cancel the membership of an MP who came by people's votes and was not a parliamentary employee, or someone who was given a job as a charity from MPs to 'make a living'?

The nullification of an MP's membership in this fashion, that is through a vote by members, is not a just and

correct matter regardless of what crime this MP has committed, because the arena of crimes is court, not the parliament's chamber.

For colleagues to become judges while in dispute is not fair.

If meeting the Israeli ambassador is a crime, then crimes have their categories and punishments. Courts have the authority to categorize the crime and punishment after enabling the suspect to defend himself.

Tawfiq Ukasha stirs much disappointment and rejection by many, including myself, through his low methods which reach the point of insolence, and even may be lower. Meanwhile, his actions stir the envy of some people who believe that he achieved fame and stardom that went beyond the Egyptian country's horizons. And as I learned, the law stands in the way of the MP whose membership is dropped, and he or she cannot resort to court.

It was possible for those who reject Ukasha's membership to drop him on the bases of forging the PhD he claims to have. So why his adversaries did not resort to that legal path, and resorted instead to suspicious methods, to a point that made the man leave as if he was a victim of a conspiracy by those who hate him?

— Translated by Kuwait Times

Crime

Report

KD 130,000 embezzlement case uncovered

KUWAIT: Capital detectives recovered KD 16,000 out of KD 130,000 that were embezzled by an accountant, who was arrested. The accountant said during questioning that he transferred the funds over several periods to his home country of Egypt. The company's owner said an inventory revealed the embezzlements and the accountant disappeared. He was later arrested, confessed to embezzlement and said he still has some of the money.

Man arrested for stabbing

Hawally traffic police arrested a citizen who stabbed on Egyptian man and his son during a fight. He was taken to Salmiya police station. The fight took place in Salmiya, then when police arrived they found a 59 year old Egyptian with various stab wounds to the head and chest, while his son was stabbed in his left hand. Both were taken to hospital, as the father was admitted to ICU in critical condition.

Guns found at farm

Weapons detectives campaign in Kabd farms netted two shotguns and ammunition, all unlicensed, they also arrested a citizen who was found wanted to serve a jail sentence after checking her ID.

Prize winning fraud

An Egyptian man told police that he received a phone call telling him he won KD 20,000, and the money will be transferred to his account in minutes, provided he gives his account and pin numbers to complete the process. When the victim asked about the reason behind the win, he was told that his number was selected in a random draw. When he obliged, it took only seconds to find out that KD 3,146 was stolen from his account.

Molester sent to jail

Hawally prosecutor sent an Egyptian man to central jail on charges of molesting a child. The prosecutor took his decision after a medical report proved the child's father's claims. The father had earlier claimed that the building's janitor molested his son, and this was confirmed by the medical examiners. — Al-Rai, Al-Anbaa

IRAN KEEN ON REGIONAL DIALOGUE: ENVOY

KUWAIT: Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Ali Riza Enayati said that his country is ready to engage in talks with regional countries in order to plan a bright and promising future for their respective people. Hard times have passed, he added, and years of hardships should be replaced with more promising days.

Enayati said in a statement to Al-Rai daily that Iran spares no efforts to do so by sending envoys to cement relations starting by dialogue. "Ever since his election, [Iranian President Hassan] Rouhani stressed Iran's decision on cementing relations with its neighbors," he said.

Enayati pointed that with the celebration of Nowruz, "we should start a new year based on cooperation and consolidation leaving behind what disturbs our relations, and head towards creating cheerful atmosphere for our people, reject wars and destruction and replace them with joy and wisdom."

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Minister of Public Works Dr Ali Al-Omar denied any Kuwaiti mediation between Iran and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states to bridge the recent troubled waters between the two sides. Speaking on a reception held by the Tunisian embassy to celebrate its national day, Omar denied reports which suggested that the letters recently sent by His Highness the Amir to GCC leaders included an Iranian wish to bridge the gaps and reduce regional tension. — Al-Rai, Al-Jarida

SAADOUN RENEWS CORRUPTION CALLS EVEN IF LAW IS AMENDED

KUWAIT: Former parliament speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun reiterated his call for boycotting the next parliamentary elections, announcing that those who participate in the elections are "partners in corruption." He also rejected participation even if the parliament approves a proposal to replace the single-vote system with a new one that gives voters the right to vote for two candidates in their respective constituencies.

Saadoun spoke during a gathering at the dwianiya of former MP Dr Mohammad Al-Kandari in Rumaihiya. He said that "there are those who are saying 'let us reform from inside the parliament' while the majority of corruption came through law amendments made by people who say that they are achieving reform from inside [the parliament]."

Corruption seen in recent years cannot be changed from inside the National Assembly, Saadoun proclaimed. "There is no party, be it individual or political faction, that can enter the next elections and change the current situation," he said. "Therefore, those people will eventually become partners in corruption."

Saadoun explained his stand by saying that a majority of 33 MPs is needed to change the reality of corruption. "So whoever thinks that he can do that, then let him go, but he should not say later that he could not," he said. Meanwhile, Saadoun asked the opposition to continue with its boycott even if the proposed parliamentary elections' law is approved. He said the current situation will not continue "if there was a reliable popular movement because the corrupt [people] cannot stand being faced with their corruption." — Al-Rai



ABK RECEIVES 'BEST RETAIL BANK IN KUWAIT' AWARD BY THE ASIAN BANKER

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) was recently recognized as the 'Best Retail Bank in the Middle East' by the Asian Banker; one of the most prestigious awards programs in the industry of financial services and one of Asia's leading consultancies in financial services research, benchmarking and intelligence. The award was received by Stewart Lockie, General Manager Retail Banking at ABK, during an awards ceremony that was held on 16th March, 2016 at the W Hotel in Hong Kong.

The 'Best Retail Bank in the Middle East' award reaffirms the Bank's outstanding initiatives and solid performance and demonstrates its unwavering efforts to provide superior services to its customers through the implementation of its 'Simpler Banking' strategy, which focuses on creating a simpler banking model offering convenience, speed and security.

Commenting on the Bank's achievement, Stewart Lockie, General Manager Retail Banking at ABK said, "It is an honor to be recognized as the 'Best Retail Bank in the Middle East' by the Asian Banker since we received the award last year for Most Improved

Retail Bank. ABK made a tremendous effort throughout 2015 to make substantial enhancements and developments to its services and systems with the aim of to simplify the banking process. I would like to thank the judging committee for realizing this effort and rewarding us for it and I would also like to congratulate the Retail Banking team on this award, and thank them for their continuous hard work and diligence."

ABK recently deployed a series of new enhancements to its systems as part of its 'Simpler Banking' strategy, such as reducing 'End to End Loan' processing time from six days to one day and the account opening process from nine hours to six minutes. It also introduced 'Biometric Verification' as an enhancement to its mobile banking system, as an additional security measure, in addition to several other developments. The Bank will continue to build on this great success and introduce further developments and enhancements that serve to differentiate ABK's services and support its 'Simpler Banking' strategy, with focus on delivering more convenience, security and speed.

EPA TO FINE MINISTRY OVER WATER WASTE IN CELEBRATIONS

KUWAIT: The Environment Public Authority (EPA) inspectors have judiciary powers under the environment protection law to go after activities in which water is wasted, including the excessive use of water guns during national celebrations in Kuwait. Articles 88 and 96 of the law give EPA inspectors the power to check the quality and reservoirs of fresh waters in the country, as well as protect water resources from exhaustion, EPA Deputy Director Mohammad Al-Enezi said. EPA would also file citations against the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) unless it acts to stop activities that lead to water waste or cuts down consumption rates. "This would help protect the environment by reducing pressure on desalination plants and thus reduce air pollution resulting from operating them," Enezi underlined. — Al-Anbaa

KFH PLATINUM SPONSOR OF FRESHMAN ORIENTATION WEEK

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the annual freshman orientation week in coordination with the Finance Club at College of Business Administration at Kuwait University. The freshman orientation week contributes in providing freshman students with all what they need, while education

them on the scientific subjects and the educational process at the university. KFH's participation in both events comes according to the strategic partnership with the College of Business Administration, and it reiterates the bank's keenness to take part in all social events of interest to the society.



KIB TAKES PART IN KUWAIT CSR CONFERENCE, EXHIBITION

KUWAIT: As part of its leading CSR program and participation in the local and regional events that serve the society, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced its golden sponsorship of the Kuwait CSR Conference and Exhibition that will be held on March 16th and 17th under the Patronage of His Excellency Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of the Ministry of Electricity and Water. The summit that is organized by Promedia International aims at discussing the most current developments and best practices in CSR and sustainability that are adopted by organizations and the government.

Nawaf Najia, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, stated that KIB's participation in this exceptional congregation translates the bank's mission to improve the overall quality of life in our society and keenness to participate in such events highlighting KIB's leading initiatives that were launched to serve the



community and its individuals.

He added that during 2015, KIB was keen on reinforcing its humanitarian contributions through adopting various initiatives and social programs that the bank has implemented since its transformation to a Sharia-complaint bank in 2007.

Najia praised the key role of the bank's CSR program during 2015 in ensuring people's welfare in the society and country's advancement by carrying out and supporting numerous CSR initiatives that covered various sectors and activities such as religious, humanitarian,

social, charity, sports, health, medical, national, cultural, educational and many more.

Najia concluded by saying that the various awards attained by the bank are a solid proof of its leading CSR program and the pioneering role it plays in the field, making it a role model of social responsibility locally and globally. It received many awards and recognitions such as the "CSR Excellence Award" from the Arab Organization for Social Responsibility, the "My Ambition for Social Responsibility" award from the



organizing committee of the "My Ambition Defeats My Disability" exhibition and the

"Social Responsibility" award from the Banker Middle East Magazine.

MECHANISM TO WAIVE OFF GOVT WORKERS' DEBTS

KUWAIT: The Finance Ministry formed a new task force to find a mechanism to waive the debts of government employees. This would happen provided that the task force presents a comprehensive study in regards to the debts that ministries demand to drop based on a Cabinet decision that authorizes the finance minister to suspend judicial demands on some debts under certain conditions. Sources said that the task force will work on discussing the reasons how the debts came to be and were left to increase without being paid. The committee would also place a suitable mechanism to address this situation. — Al-Qabas



Saudi executed; 76th execution this year

MYANMAR FINANCE MINISTER DISCOVERS 'HIS PHD IS FAKE'

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US STRIKE KILLS 40 QAEDA MILITANTS AT YEMEN CAMP

ADEN: A US air strike on an Al-Qaeda training camp in Yemen has killed at least 40 fighters, in a major blow to the jihadists who have been expanding their territory in the war-torn country. The extremists have exploited a security vacuum in the Arabian Peninsula nation since Iran-backed Houthi Shiite rebels seized the capital in September 2014, forcing the internationally recognized government to flee.

Tuesday's strike in Hajr in the vast south-eastern province of Hadramawt killed at least 40 militants and wounded 25 more, a provincial official said. A tribal source, who confirmed the toll, said the casualties were new Al-Qaeda recruits training at the camp, adding that "other fighters survived the strike." Dozens of Al-Qaeda militants were seen rushing to hospital to donate blood, according to residents.

Yemen-based Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) is regarded by Washington as the network's most dangerous branch, and has carried out deadly attacks on the West in the past. It has taken advantage of the war between the Houthis and pro-government forces backed by a Saudi-led Arab coalition to expand in the south, seizing parts of Hadramawt including its provincial capital Mukalla in April last year.

'Unacceptable' expansion

The United States has waged a long-standing drone war against AQAP militants, killing several of its leaders. But Tuesday's raid was unusual because US strikes usually target a small number of suspected Al-Qaeda members while they are travelling in a vehicle. "The Americans felt that Al-Qaeda has started to expand its influence in an unacceptable manner after it established fixed camps to train its supporters," said Mustafa al-Ani, an analyst at the Gulf



SANAA: Yemenis check the damage following reported air strikes carried out by the Saudi-led coalition in the capital Sanaa yesterday. —AFP

Research Centre. He said Tuesday's strike was the first by Washington in nearly a year against a fixed Al-Qaeda position in Hadramawt.

The Pentagon said the camp was used by more than 70 fighters. The raid "deals a blow to AQAP's ability to use Yemen as a base for attacks" that threaten US citizens,

Pentagon spokesman Peter Cook said in a statement. "We continue to assess the results of the operation, but our initial assessment is that dozens of AQAP fighters

have been removed from the battlefield," he added. "It demonstrates our commitment to defeating Al-Qaeda and denying it safe haven."

Formed in 2009 when Al-Qaeda in Yemen merged with its Saudi counterpart, AQAP was behind the 2000 bombing of the USS Cole in Aden harbor that killed 17 American sailors. The group also has a record of abducting foreigners, including US journalist Luke Somers and South African teacher Pierre Korkie who died during a failed rescue bid by US commandos in 2014. More recently, AQAP claimed responsibility for the deadly January 7, 2015 attack in Paris on French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, targeted for its cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed.

'Qaeda could strike back'

The group could strike back "if the human losses were as big as the Americans say," Ani warned. AQAP, which often attacks both Yemeni loyalists and rebels, has expanded its presence in the country's south in recent months while the Saudi-led coalition was focused on fighting the Houthis and their allies. In the past few weeks, Al-Qaeda and the rival Islamic State group have tightened their grip on parts of the main southern city of Aden where the government has set up its temporary base.

The Arab coalition, which has waged a nearly year-long bombing campaign against the Houthis, began targeting jihadists for the first time last week in Aden. Fearing further strikes, Al-Qaeda militants yesterday evacuated public buildings they had occupied in Mukalla, and deployed five military vehicles around a hospital in the city where wounded militants were taken. The World Health Organization says fighting in Yemen since March 2015 has claimed the lives of almost 6,300 people. —AFP

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CALM BEFORE THE STORM AT BAGHDAD PROTEST CAMP

BAGHDAD: Sitting in the shade near the protest tents, Raad Al-Haeri watched as convoys of armored SUVs ferried politicians and diplomats in and out of Baghdad's Green Zone. The 27-year-old scrapes together around \$400 a month working odd jobs and has the spare time to join the thousands of supporters of cleric Moqtada Sadr in their protest against corruption. "When you see those MPs driving their huge armored cars getting salaries of \$12,000 or whatever it is, you don't feel good. These people are stealing Iraq's money," he said. A few steps away, behind coils of razor wire and rows of anti-riot police, VIP traffic through one of the main gates of the Green Zone continued as usual.

Sadr's followers set up protest camps on Friday at several entrances to the restricted zone, which houses Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi's office, parliament and foreign embassies, including the huge US mission. They have vowed to stay until the expiry of a deadline Sadr gave Abadi to present names for a cabinet of technocrats meant to replace party-affiliated politicians they accuse of perpetuating a system based on nepotism and patronage. The protest camps were not authorized but no incident has been reported so far and the demonstrators even bonded with the security forces. But the mood could change in a week when the deadline expires as Sadr has threatened that his supporters will storm the Green Zone if

their demands are not met.

"I sit here and struggle to buy bread. They still don't understand that we are ready to die here and go into the Green Zone if Sadyed Moqtada asks us to," said Raad. As the protesters wait for orders from Moqtada Sadr from his base in the Shiite shrine city of Najaf, clips of his speeches aired by his Al-Taif TV channel play on a giant screen. "There's a good atmosphere here, it's a big family. We meet friends we haven't seen in a long time," said Mohammed Mahmud, a 29-year-old from Zafaraniya, a large southern neighborhood of Baghdad. "It's well organized and we are provided with food."

Street power

The protesters, all of them men, only stay three days in the camp and rotate with other volunteers from Sadr's Shiite strongholds in Baghdad and beyond. At the entrance of the camp, on a patch of grass, cooks prepare huge quantities of baked beans in massive pots. Meanwhile Hossam Jabbar "the teaman" lines up dozens of paper cups of heavily sweetened tea for the constant flow of protesters. "Some Sunnis say the Shiites have it good because they are ruling but I want to say we are like dead, we are the worst off," said Jabbar, wagging a finger while holding his kettle in the other hand. "Only the parties have benefited, those politicians only represent themselves, not the Shiites," he shouted, to cheers from the little crowd



BAGHDAD: A supporter of Iraqi Shiite cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr walks past tents on the fourth day of a sit-in calling for governmental reform and elimination of corruption outside the main gates of Baghdad's Green Zone. — AFP

that gathered at his stand.

Many protesters are prepared to see Abadi as an exception in his party and think he is sincere about reform. They see no reason for him to oppose their movement, which they see as handing him

political victory he could never achieve alone. "If he implements our demands, he will liberate himself from his corrupt political bloc, it will be a big achievement for him," said Ali Hashem, a 40-year-old Baghdad city council employee who took

three days off to join the protest. "If he doesn't, he's either too weak or one of them." Hashem said Abadi already had strong support from top Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and many foreign allies. "We can give him the street." — AFP

AUSTRALIAN WOMAN JAILED IN SINGAPORE FOR SEDITION

STIFFEST SENTENCE EVER IMPOSED FOR THE OFFENCE

SINGAPORE: An Australian woman whose website published made-up stories about foreigners that prosecutors said incited racial hatred was jailed in Singapore yesterday after falling foul of colonial-era seditious laws. Law student Ai Takagi was jailed for 10 months, the stiffest sentence ever imposed for the offence in strictly governed Singapore, which clamps down hard on any activity seen as promoting racial and class hatred.

Takagi was the Australia-based editor and owner of "The Real Singapore" (TRS), which enjoyed huge popularity but was shut down after she and her Singaporean husband were arrested while visiting the island last year. Prosecutors said Takagi, 23, posted fabricated stories to generate hundreds of thousands of dollars in online advertising revenues for her site. Court documents said the TRS website had close to 13 million views a month while its Facebook page had more than 400,000 likes. District Judge Salina Ishak said a strong sentence was needed. Calling Takagi a "shrewd businesswoman" motivated by financial gain, the judge noted that the language used in the posts in question was intended to provoke "unwarranted hatred against foreigners in Singapore."

'Vitriol and hatred'

"From the comments posted in response to the articles, it was clear that the articles had in fact engendered vitriol and hatred from the readers of TRS," the judge said. Posts on TRS' Facebook page often attracted hundreds of comments, many of them profane, with some calling for severe curbs on the intake of foreign workers. Takagi, who is eight weeks pregnant with her first child, read an apology in court before the sentence was

handed down. "Before this case started, I was not fully aware of the level of sensitivity needed when dealing with topics related to racial and religious issues in Singapore," she said in court.

"I sincerely apologise for the harm I have caused through my actions," said the Japanese-Australian, who expressed hope that she would someday be allowed to settle permanently in Singapore. After the sentence was handed down, she was seen wiping away tears while in the dock. Takagi was given a month to settle her personal affairs before serving her prison sentence. She will have to surrender herself to the court at noon on April 22. Singapore's seditious laws make it an offence to promote hostility between different races or classes in the multiracial society, which is mainly ethnic Chinese with large Malay and Indian minorities.

Huge foreign presence

But critics say seditious laws, dating back to British colonial rule, can be used to clamp down on free speech. About 40 percent of the labor-starved island's 5.5 million people are foreigners, many of them from China, India and the Philippines. Singapore has also cracked down on foreigners for seditious. Last September Filipino nurse Ello Ed Munsdel Bello, 29, was jailed for four months after insulting Singaporeans online and calling on his countrymen to take over the city-state.

Takagi had pleaded guilty to four counts of seditious lodged against her and her Singaporean husband, Yang Kaiheng, 27. The cases included a fabricated article which said that a Filipino family instigated a fracas at a Hindu festival, and another alleging that a Chinese woman made her grand-



SINGAPORE: Ai Takagi, the Australia-based editor and owner of "The Real Singapore" leaves the state court in Singapore yesterday. — AFP

son urinate into a bottle inside a metro train. Yang, however, is fighting the charges and has pleaded not guilty. They were also charged with withholding from police information on the website's advertising

revenues, which were estimated at Sg\$473,000 (\$342,000) over a 17-month period. Each seditious charge carries a penalty of up to three years in jail and a maximum fine of Sg\$5,000 (\$3,620), or both. — AFP

MYANMAR FINANCE MINISTER DISCOVERS 'HIS PHD IS FAKE'

YANGON: Myanmar's incoming finance minister said yesterday he was shocked to discover his PhD is fake after netizens pointed out he had been a victim of a high profile scam run out of Pakistan that ensnared thousands of others. Kyaw Win was one of 18 people named on Tuesday to the incoming cabinet of democracy veteran Aung San Suu Kyi, whose National League for Democracy (NLD) will take office at the end of the month ending decades of military-led rule.

The 68-year-old was one of six NLD members in Suu Kyi's big-tent cabinet-which also includes three army officers as well as opposition party figures. Suu Kyi, who is banned from becoming president, was confirmed as foreign minister while the other roles are expected to be formally announced later in the week. However local media widely published a leaked list of earmarked roles, with Kyaw Win, a career bureaucrat and adviser to the NLD's economics committee, taking the influential finance and planning portfolio.

An official CV issued by the NLD shortly after the cabinet announcement stated he held a PhD from a college in the United States called Brooklyn Park University. But social media users quickly pointed out that Brooklyn Park was one of a number of fake online organizations created by a Pakistani group that ran a global fraudu-

lent degree empire out of Karachi until its exposure last year. "I openly admit it that I studied at this fake online university in my older age," Kyaw Win, who confirmed he would take on the finance portfolio said.

He explained how, like many others in junta-run Myanmar, he had a thirst for education but little opportunity to study abroad. "Education has been my dream since I was young. I never stopped studying my whole life. But I could not study abroad because I did not have enough money," he said. Kyaw Win said he did not discover the degree was fake until the news spread on Facebook after his cabinet nomination Tuesday, an experience he described as "really painful". Myanmar has undergone a dramatic political transformation since 2011 after almost a half-century of isolation under a military junta.

Its growing political openness was crowned by a historic November election that saw the NLD storm to victory. Suu Kyi, 70, is the only woman on the incoming cabinet. There is widespread speculation she will take on four ministerial portfolios: foreign affairs, education, energy and the president's office. Blocked from becoming president by a junta-era constitution because she married and had children with a foreigner, she has vowed to rule through a proxy president, the recently elected Htin Kyaw. — AFP

SINGAPORE COUPLE CONVICTED FOR STARVING PHILIPPINE MAID

SINGAPORE: A Singaporean couple were convicted yesterday of violating employment laws for starving their Philippine maid until her weight dropped to 29 kilograms. Trader Lim Choon Hong and his wife, Chong Sui Foon, both 47, admitted failing to provide enough food for a foreign domestic worker over a 15-month period. They will be sentenced at a later date. The offence is punishable by up to a year in jail plus a maximum fine of Sg\$10,000 (\$7,300). A district court heard that Thelma Oyasun Gawidan, 40, lost nearly 20 kg, shed hair and stopped menstruating while working for the couple at their condominium in the posh Orchard Road area.

Gawidan was only allowed two meals a day, usually a few slices of white bread and small portions of instant noodles prepared by Chong. Even when Kawidan went with the family on a Hong Kong holiday, Chong made sure to pack white bread and instant noodles

for her maid. Gawidan had no access to her mobile phone and was not allowed to go out on her own to buy food, court papers showed. About a year into her employment, she was made to use a bathroom next to the condominium's swimming pool whenever she had to relieve herself or take a shower, and had to be accompanied by a family member.

She was only allowed to shower twice a week. Gawidan ran away in April 2014 and called a compatriot for help. She was taken to a migrant worker shelter which helped her file a complaint with the manpower ministry. Many Singapore households depend on foreign domestic help. In 2015 there were 231,500 foreign maids working in the affluent city-state, mostly from Indonesia and the Philippines. Lim and Chong will appear before the court again on April 22 after a psychiatric assessment of them is completed. — AFP

IS CLAIMS KILLING OF CHRISTIAN IN BANGLADESH; 'LESSON TO OTHERS'

DHAKA: Islamic State claimed responsibility for stabbing a Christian to death in Bangladesh as a "lesson to others", an online group that monitors extremist activity said, the latest killing declared by the militant group in the Muslim-majority nation. The South Asian country has seen a surge in Islamist violence in which liberal activists, members of minority Muslim sects and other religious groups have been targeted. The US-based SITE Intelligence Group said Islamic State claimed responsibility for killing Hussein Ali Sarkar in Kurigram, north of Dhaka. The group reported on Twitter that a "security detachment" killed the "preacher" to be a "lesson to others". Police said the 68-year-old victim converted to Christianity from Islam in 1999 but was not a preacher.

Kurigram district police chief Tobarak Ullah said three attackers stabbed him while he was having his morning walk on Tuesday. "They left the scene exploding crude bombs to create panic," Ullah told Reuters by telephone. "We have started an investigation into the murder.

So far, we have not found any militant link." Five men were picked up for questioning, he said. Over the last few months, Islamic State has claimed responsibility for the killings of two foreigners, attacks on members of minority Muslim sects and other religious groups, but the government has denied that the militant group has a presence in Bangladesh.

Police say home-grown militant group Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen, thought to have been lying low since six of its top leaders were hanged in 2007, was behind the recent attacks. Dozens of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen members have been arrested and at least five killed in shootouts since November, as security forces have stepped up a crackdown on militants seeking to make the moderate Muslim nation of 160 million a sharia-based state. In 2005, the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen set off nearly 500 bombs almost simultaneously on a single day, including in Dhaka. Subsequent suicide attacks on courts killed 25 people and injured hundreds. — Reuters

TRUMP SAYS MUSLIMS NOT REPORTING TERROR ACTIVITY

LONDON: US presidential hopeful Donald Trump yesterday said Muslims were "absolutely not reporting" suspected attackers in an interview with British television following the Brussels attacks. "I would say this to the Muslims, and in the United States also, when they see trouble they have to report it," Trump told ITV television, a day after triple blasts killed some 30 people at Brussels airport and on the city's metro system.

"They're not reporting it, they're absolutely not reporting it and that's a big problem," said Trump, who is the favorite to win the Republican nomination for the US presidential election on November 8. "It's like they are protecting each other but they are really doing very bad damage... They have to open up to society, they have to report the bad ones," he told interviewer Piers Morgan. Trump's comments were immediately rejected by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), which represents hundreds of mosques and charities, and by one of Britain's top counter-terrorism officers, Neil Basu.

"He is wrong," Basu, a deputy assistant commissioner at London's Metropolitan Police, told BBC Radio. "If we demonize one section of the community that is the worst thing we can do. We are absolutely playing into the terrorists' hands of making people feel hate," he said.

Miqdaad Versi, the MCB's assistant secretary-general, said Trump's comments "fuel this idea of bigotry". They "really fuel the thing that terrorists themselves want—that Muslims are apart from the West and cannot be seen as equal citizens,"

he said. Trump has drawn controversy before by calling for Muslims to be barred from entering the United States following a deadly shooting attack in San Bernardino, California in December. — AFP



Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump

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US SUPREME COURT TO DECIDE ON KEY BIRTH CONTROL CASE

WASHINGTON: Religious and secular views on women's rights over their bodies take center stage at the US Supreme Court yesterday, with the justices hearing arguments in a controversial case involving Obama care and birth control.

The hearing, over seven combined lawsuits, marks the fourth time in as many years that the highest court in the land has taken up a challenge to President Barack Obama's health care law. The impact of late conservative justice Antonin Scalia's death, and Senate Republicans' refusal to vote on a replacement until Obama leaves office

next year, will face another major test in the case, with a court now evenly split along ideological lines.

A 4-4 tie between liberal and conservative justices would leave lower court rulings in effect and put off resolution of an issue with important ramifications on women's lives for another year or more. The outcome in the case of a tie would be further complicated because federal appeals courts disagreed when they heard the cases.

At the nub of the cases is the Affordable Health Care Act's requirement that employer health plans provide free contraceptive coverage to

employees. The act, popularly known as Obamacare, granted an exemption to houses of worship like churches, mosques and synagogues, but not to non-profit groups such as religiously-affiliated schools, colleges, hospitals or charities. Those groups were instead given a way to opt out by notifying the government or their insurer of their refusal to provide coverage. The government then simply makes sure that employees can freely access contraception. But some non-profits argue that this arrangement still burdens their free exercise of religion, which is banned under a federal law.

'Substantial burden' test

When it agreed in November to hear the case, the Supreme Court denied part of the challenge to the Obamacare contraception mandate, narrowing its focus on whether the mandate violates the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Under the 1993 federal law, the government cannot "substantially burden" the free exercise of religion unless it is the least restrictive means to advance the government's interest. In a landmark 2014 decision in a similar case, the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that closely held, for-profit corporations can

deny contraceptive coverage to employees for religious reasons. Court watchers are eager to see whether the justices will rule differently this time.

A decision is not expected until late June. The eight justices currently serving on the bench also heard its most important abortion case in a generation earlier this month and appeared sharply divided. With the official mourning period over for Scalia, all justices but Chief Justice John Roberts will take new seats on the bench. Scalia, a dominant conservative on the bench, had been the most senior justice serving on the bench.—AFP

COLOMBIANS FEAR MORE TROUBLE AFTER PEACE

TORIBÓO: Colombia is on the verge of ending half a century of conflict, but bereaved locals in ruined regions such as Cauca struggle to believe that peace will come easily.

In the mountain town of Toribio, bullet holes in the walls show the violence that has ravaged this region, in fighting between state forces and guerrillas. "Between 1982 and 2015 there were 6,000 armed clashes. They were our daily bread," said local leader Mauricio Casso, a member of the Nasa indigenous group. "There are thousands of widows, orphans and people maimed, and hundreds dead. The park used to be deserted. The streets were closed off. The children did not play outside," he told AFP.

At peace talks hosted by Cuba, the Colombian government and the leftist FARC rebel force are closing in on a peace deal to end the conflict. They had hoped to sign a deal this Wednesday, but that deadline now looks like it will pass with key issues in the negotiations still unresolved. Progress in the talks has eased the atmosphere in Cauca since the FARC declared a ceasefire in July, but security forces remain on alert.

The local police station lies behind high green walls pocked with bullet holes, its entrance protected by a bunker of sandbags. "The mountains are nearby. The guerrillas used to fire from there. They are still around there. But we haven't heard any shooting for more than a year," said Major Rodriguez, head of the local brigade. "I hope it lasts." The road in front of the police station is still torn up from where attackers blew up a bus there, wounding 70 people and killing a policeman. The blast was blamed on the FARC. Nearby mud houses damaged by the explosion are now covered in paintings calling for peace.

Families driven from homes

The Colombian conflict started as an uprising by the Marxist FARC in 1964 and ground into an entrenched territorial conflict, drawing in various rebel groups and drug gangs. It has killed 260,000 people and left 45,000 missing and 6.6 million displaced, according to officials and NGOs.

The conflict has driven families from

their homes. Mariela Patino, 56, is still looking for her son, who she says was abducted by guerrillas in 2003. Threats drove her to abandon the farm where she lived and move to another town. "I reported it and started putting up notices everywhere. The FARC told me if I didn't leave they wouldn't be responsible for my life or my family's."

Left to grow drugs

Cauca's mountainous terrain also draws the drug trade which has fuelled the conflict. Its winding roads are lined by coca and marijuana plantations. Among the local people sorting marijuana leaves by the roadside is Fernanda, 21. She gets paid about 90 dollars for helping pick a crop of the herb, which is harvested four times a year. "If the state helped us, we would plant something else," she says. "But here we get nothing. We are abandoned."

Locals fear that if the rebels and the government make peace, the drug gangs will move in or other groups such as the left-wing ELN, a rival rebel force not party to the peace talks. "Here in the north of Cauca, in recent months we have been seeing a big presence of ELN. They have painted on the walls and held rallies," said Giovanni Yule Zape, representative of a grouping of indigenous groups in northern Cauca.

On Tuesday the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights hailed progress towards peace in Colombia. But it warned the deal risked leaving a power vacuum that other armed groups would fill, fighting over drugs and other sources of criminal revenue.

It said the breaking up of various armed groups posed a "permanent challenge to peace." Local woman Yolanda Millan, 58, is shocked to see pro-ELN graffiti stenciled on a hut in her village of El Palo. "That's new," she says. "Who knows what is going to happen?"

Elsewhere, in central Colombia where the FARC presence is still strongly felt, locals in the village of La Macarena share the apprehension. "There will never be peace," said Jairo Garcia, a butcher of 66. "The army left, the guerrillas came. The army came back. Now other groups will come to bother us."—AFP



BUENOS AIRES: President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama arrive at the International Buenos Aires Airport early yesterday.—AP

OBAMA IN ARGENTINA TO RESET BOTH NATIONS' RELATIONS AMID REGIONAL POLITICAL SHIFT

'THE TIMING OF THE VISIT IS PROVOCATION'

BUENOS AIRES: US President Barack Obama arrived in Argentina yesterday to reset diplomatic relations and strengthen trade ties with a country that was part of South America's left-wing bloc until pro-business President Mauricio Macri took power in December.

Obama's two-day visit marks a rapprochement after years of sour relations and is a sign of support for Macri's investor-friendly reforms aimed at opening up Latin America's No. 3 economy. The visit comes as once high-flying leftist governments in the region face corruption scandals and economic weakness.

Obama and his family landed in Buenos Aires shortly after 1 a.m. and were met by Argentina's foreign minister, Susana Malcorra, before being whisked to the US ambassador's residence.

The US leader will hold talks with Macri ahead of a joint press conference. "It will mark a 180 degree turn in relations between Argentina and the United States," local newspaper Clarin said in a headline. Under the sunny skies of a crisp Southern Hemisphere fall day, Obama will also lay a wreath at the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Cathedral and meet young entrepreneurs before attending a state dinner. French President Francois Hollande and Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi also recently visited Argentina, quick to reach out to a South American leader whose predecessor forged closer ties with Venezuela, Iran and China.

"It's good that Obama is visiting. Closing ourselves off in a Chavez-like system was not the way to go," said Claudio Mazzakalli, a 32-year-old locksmith, referring to Venezuela's former socialist president, Hugo Chavez.

In his first 100 days in office, Macri lifted capital and trade controls, slashed bloated power subsidies and cut a debt deal with "holdout" creditors in the United States. US officials say Obama has been impressed by the pace of reform. Macri still has to grapple with double-digit inflation, a yawning fiscal deficit and a shortage of hard currency.

Luring foreign investors is a cornerstone of his strategy to revive the economy, and Obama arrives with a large business delegation in tow.

'DIRTY WAR'

Left-wing political parties have promised protests during Obama's visit, which coincides with the 40th anniversary of the coup on March 24, 1976, that installed the "dirty war" military junta.

Some are wary of too warm a detente with Washington, an early supporter of the bloody 1976-1983 dictatorship. "The timing of the visit is a provocation," said Miguel Funes, 39, a lawmaker from former President Cristina Fernandez' Front for Victory party.

The United States initially backed the dictatorship, which killed up to 30,000 people in a crackdown against Marxist rebels, labor unions and leftist opponents.

Many were "forcibly disappeared" - a euphemism for kidnapped and murdered - and hundreds of children were stolen from their imprisoned parents. The United States announced last week it would declassify documents from US military and intelligence agencies related to the dictatorship, a move aimed at soothing criticism over the timing of the trip. Obama will also honor the victims of the dictatorship on Thursday before flying to Patagonia. The last US president to visit Argentina was George W. Bush, who attended the Summit of the Americas in 2005, when South America's leftist

"Pink Tide" was in full flow and anti-US sentiment ran high across the region. In the 1990s, relations between Washington and Buenos Aires were so close the foreign minister of then President Carlos Menem described them as "carnal".

But a 2001-2002 economic depression left millions of Argentines fuming against the US-backed neoliberal reforms. Relations soured during Fernandez's 2008-2015 rule. Macri has urged a "productive and intelligent" relationship. He and

Obama will discuss the economy, climate change and drug trafficking. US officials say a number of bilateral agreements are expected.

Carlos Guglielmi, a bank worker, welcomed the thaw in relations but said his main concern is Macri's economic reforms. "It's good that Macri has Obama's support. But what he needs is the support of the Argentine people," said Guglielmi. "If he governs only for the rich and keeps cutting state spending, his popularity won't last."—Reuters



TORIBIO: A Colombian police officer guards a street.—AFP

LAWSUIT DEMANDS HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS FROM MALAYSIAN PM

KUALA LUMPUR: Hundreds of millions of dollars that ended up in the personal bank accounts of Malaysia's prime minister must be handed to the government, a lawsuit filed by his predecessor demanded yesterday.

Najib Razak, 62, has been under fire for months over allegations that perhaps billions of dollars were stolen from a state investment company he founded, and his own admitted acceptance of a mysterious \$681 million overseas payment.

Both Najib and the now debt-stricken company, 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), strongly deny wrongdoing and reject accusations that the money paid directly into his personal accounts in 2013 involved 1MDB funds.

The suit by Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysia's strongman leader from 1981-2003, demands that Najib compensate the Malaysian government for the \$681 million, according to a copy of the complaint. The former leader, a prominent critic over the affair, also accused Najib of abusing his position "to undermine, subvert and compromise the various respective institutions" investigating the scandals.

It remains to be seen whether the case will have any effect against Najib, who has

taken a number of heavily criticised steps to tamp down the affair. These included sacking Cabinet members, including his deputy prime minister, who had called for transparency and replacing Malaysia's attorney-general with an appointee who abruptly halted his predecessor's investigations.

Whistle-blowers have been arrested or faced other threats, while media outlets reporting on the allegations also have come under pressure, raising growing concerns over rights and free speech. Also named as plaintiffs in the case were two people who were booted out of Najib's ruling party after they criticised his actions and called for accountability.

Swiss authorities said recently up to \$4 billion may have been stolen from Malaysian state firms including 1MDB and that they were investigating possible fraud and money-laundering. US, British, Singaporean and Hong Kong authorities also are looking into 1MDB-related fund flows. Najib's handpicked attorney-general in January summarily absolved him of any wrongdoing in the mysterious overseas payment, claiming it was a personal gift from the Saudi royal family, most of which was returned. The Saudis are yet to confirm that alibi, which is widely rejected in Malaysia as implausible.—AFP

AUSTRALIA SAYS EUROPE LET SECURITY GUARD DOWN

SYDNEY: Yesterday Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said that Europe had "allowed security to slip", as he questioned the EU's Schengen passport-free zone in the wake of the Brussels attacks.

Turnbull's comments came as Belgium's neighbors France, Germany and the Netherlands tightened border security after some 35 people were killed in Belgium's worst extremist assault.

Security at Australia's major airports, including Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra, was increased in the wake of the European attacks, police said.

Turnbull said that while it was up to Europe to set its policies, his nation's border protection measures and domestic security arrangements "are much stronger than they are in Europe, where regrettably they allowed security to slip". "That weakness in European security is not unrelated to the problems they've been having in recent times," he told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, alluding to the wave of migrants who have flooded into the continent, many of them from Syria.

Turnbull added that the open-borders Schengen travel regime, which covers 26 European countries, meant "people are able to freely travel across borders within Europe—that poses security challenges, coupled with clearly very porous external borders as we've seen plenty of evidence of that." "My point really was to say that those arrangements have security consequences," he told reporters in Sydney.

The Schengen agreement, considered a symbol of European unity and prosperity, has been under scrutiny amid the unprecedented influx of migrants, and revelations that some of the jihadists in November's Paris attacks which killed 130 people came from Belgium. Both the Brussels and Paris attacks were claimed by the Islamic State group.

IS using refugee crisis

Turnbull added that intelligence showed IS was "using the refugee crisis to send operatives into Europe". "Brussels are an unfortunate reminder of how violent Islamist extremism appears to have reached a crisis point in Europe," he said in a foreign policy speech late Wednesday.

"European governments are confronted by a perfect storm of failed or neglected integration, foreign fighters returning from Iraq and Syria, porous borders and intelligence and security apparatus struggling to keep pace with the

scope and breadth of the threat." Two of the suicide bombers involved in the Paris attack were found with fake Syrian passports and several crossed into Europe posing as refugees.

Canberra has been increasingly concerned about home-grown extremism and the flow of Australians travelling to the Middle East to fight with jihadist organizations such as IS in Iraq and Syria. Up to 49 Australians have been killed in the conflict in Iraq and Syria, with some 110 currently fighting or working with militant groups, Australia's domestic spy agency said in February. Another 190 nationals were actively supporting IS back home through fundraising.

Australian Federal Police, which manages the counter-terror response at major airports, said it was working with immigration officials, local police and airlines and airports to ensure security. "Security operations and patrols have been increased at each of the designated airports in the wake of the Brussels attack," the force said in a statement.

Australia has had three attacks since raising its terror threat level to "high" in September 2014, including a cafe siege in the heart of Sydney in December 2014 which left a self-declared Muslim cleric and two of his hostages dead. In September 2014 an 18-year-old suspected militant was killed after he stabbed two police officers in Melbourne and last October a 15-year-old boy was killed in Sydney after he shot dead a civilian police employee.—AFP



SYDNEY: Australia's Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull speaks at the annual Lowy Lecture, a foreign policy think tank yesterday.—AFP

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MODI UNDER FIRE AS RISING COSTS PUT SQUEEZE ON 'MIDDLE INDIA'

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI: Sharp rises in education and healthcare costs in the last two years have hit India's burgeoning middle class hard, denting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popularity among the relatively well-off ahead of a series of state elections.

Price increases for services deemed a luxury for most Indians could also complicate the central bank's plans to cut borrowing costs, with decades of low investment in schools and hospitals meaning they will remain expensive for some time.

"Spending on my son's education and medicine for the family has gone up sharply," said Sambuddha Banerjee, a 47-year-old IT professional, who works for local government in Kolkata in the northeast of the country. "The government also cut fuel subsidies and tried to impose taxes on our pension savings. This is not acceptable."

Banerjee is thinking twice about voting for Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at elections scheduled for 2019. That view is far from universal, but is already on the radar of a government that swept to power in 2014 with promises of economic reforms and pro-business policies that appealed to aspirational Indians living in big towns and cities.

Modi has already seen support among the huge agriculture sector ebb following several crop failures, so appeasing the middle class, which accounts for about a quarter

of the 1.3 billion population, looks increasingly important.

"Rising prices of commodities and services which have a higher weight in the consumption basket of middle class households is an issue that cannot be ignored," said a senior finance ministry official. "This is a supply side issue and can't be addressed in the short term," he added. To ease some pressure on middle income earners, the government plans to hike salaries of its nearly 10 million employees by 24 percent this year.

GOVERNMENT BACKS DOWN

Education costs have risen 13 percent, housing 10 percent, healthcare 14 percent and electricity 8 percent since Modi took charge in May 2014, time series data on CPI inflation collected by the Ministry of Statistics showed.

That puts a disproportionate strain on middle class incomes, with education costs accounting for 7 percent of urban households' monthly spend compared with 3.5 percent of rural households, data showed.

Food and beverage prices, meanwhile, which account for more than a half of the CPI basket, fell 10.5 percent since Modi's election victory, although there, too, items like milk and eggs favoured by middle income Indians have actually risen.

Owners of motorcycles and cars are further upset that the government took away

some windfall gains from falling oil prices in the form of taxes, and people across the country are cutting back on discretionary spending as expenses outstrip earnings.

Underlining the government's sensitivity to a "squeeze" on the middle class, earlier this month it agreed to roll back plans to tax pension fund withdrawals following a backlash from salaried workers. While national elections are three years away, the BJP's popularity faces earlier tests, with ballots in states including West Bengal and Assam later in 2016, and the key battleground of Uttar Pradesh due next year.

RATE CUT

A disgruntled middle class also poses problems for Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Raghuram Rajan, who has pledged to bring down consumer price inflation to 5 percent by March, 2017 and 4 percent in the medium term.

Headline retail inflation eased to 5.18 percent in February from 5.69 percent in January, but core inflation, which strips out food and fuel, rose to 4.9 percent from 4.75 percent, mostly due to increases in education, housing and personal care.

The RBI is widely expected to cut its policy interest rate by 25 basis points on April 5, after lowering it by 125 basis points last year thanks in part to easing inflation and the government's fiscal consolidation roadmap.



NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi. — AFP

"The spare capacity in the economy is not getting reflected in the core inflation number, which means the challenge for monetary policy to control the demand side pressure is much more," said one senior policymaker, hinting at the difficulty of deep rate cuts beyond April.

That could be a bad news for middle income Indians who are looking to the central bank to bring down their borrowing costs, particularly after deposit rates fell. The government slashed the federal pension

fund rate and deposit rates offered to millions of small savers to align with market rates, triggering protest from opposition parties.

Despite the complaints, many are willing to give Modi more time to address their concerns. "Our expectations of him were very high, and he needs more time to solve these age-old problems," said Kundan Mukherjee, a 51-year-old from the eastern state of Jharkhand, who works for a pharmaceutical company. — Reuters

GERMAN PRESIDENT CRITICIZES COMMUNISM ON CHINA VISIT

'THIS FREEDOM IS A PRECIOUS COMMODITY'

SHANGHAI: Germany's president condemned the illegitimacy of communist rule in East Germany while on a visit to China yesterday lauding the benefits of human rights in a provocative speech to Shanghai university students.

China has been ruled by the Communist Party as a one-party state since 1949. Under the current administration of President Xi Jinping, authorities have tightened control over academics, lawyers and the media, activists say.

Drawing on Germany's history and his own life in the former East Germany, President Joachim Gauck, whose role is largely ceremonial, condemned "dictatorship" to students at Shanghai's prestigious Tongji University. "Most people were neither happy nor liberated," he said of Communist East Germany. "And the entire system lacked proper legitimacy."

"Free, equal and secret public elections were not held. The result was a lack of credibility, which went hand in hand with a culture of distrust between the rulers and those they ruled," he added, according to an official English translation of his speech. "It was a state that, as part of the union of Communist countries dependent on the Soviet Union, silenced its own people, locked them up and humiliated those who refused to comply with the will of the leaders."

His outspoken comments are a marked contrast to most diplomatic visitors to China, who prefer to focus in public on the benefits of trade ties with the world's second-largest economy. Gauck, who was in the commercial hub Shanghai as part of an official visit, said Germany was "concerned" about recent news regarding China's civil society, though he gave no specific examples.

"Vibrant and active civil society always means an innovative and flexible society," he said. He also told the students that academic freedom could benefit society. "A university has to be a place of unhampered research and free and frank discussion," he said, speaking in German with translation into Chinese to an audience of around 100 students and professors. "This freedom is a precious commodity."

Anti-China forces

Gauck said the Nazis and Communist-ruled East Germany distrusted free trade unions, but



SHANGHAI: German President Joachim Gauck gestures during his speech at Tongji University in Shanghai yesterday. — AFP

such institutions for workers had later helped support Germany's economic development. China has only one trade union, which is controlled by the government.

Gauck dismissed the notion that human rights as outlined under a United Nations declaration were a "Western product." "Even if the universal applicability of human rights does not yet mean that every person can de facto enjoy those rights... they can nonetheless lay claim to them," he said. In Beijing, the foreign ministry sought to play down his comments. "China and Germany have different cultures and political systems," spokeswoman Hua Chunying told reporters. "But as long as we respect each other, we treat each other as equals, and we have equal dialogues and consultations, these differences will not get in the way of bilateral relations." A day before Gauck's speech in

Shanghai, the English-language edition of the Global Times newspaper said that human rights were only a "trivial matter" for his visit.

"The West should evaluate China's human rights based on the facts. The progress China has made in its 1.3 billion citizens' rights of life and development deserve applause," the newspaper, known for its nationalistic stance, said in an editorial.

But a Chinese translation of the speech posted on the verified micro blog of the German consulate in Shanghai was attacked by critics. Germany was "injecting political correctness into China," one commenter said.

Another read: "On the one hand, Germany... opens the door for anti-China forces. On the other hand, it wants to seize opportunities in the China market." — AFP

BHUTAN AUTHORITIES TACKLE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

THIMPHU: Sonam Zangmo endured abuse at the hands of her husband for two years before finally walking out on him after the birth of her daughter.

"He used to lay his hands on me at every opportunity," said the 28-year-old Bhutanese woman, who is now bringing up her daughter, 6, alone. She is happier as a single parent, she says, even though she earns just \$100 a month working at a resort in Bumthang district in central Bhutan, popular for its ancient Buddhist temples and monasteries. "There were no better options," said Zangmo. "I want my daughter to have a good life."

But without drastic changes in attitudes towards women in the tiny Himalayan nation wedged between China and India, it is likely her daughter will also suffer domestic abuse. A national health survey in 2012 revealed 74 percent of women in the majority Buddhist country had been victims of physical violence.

Another survey from Bhutan's National Statistics Bureau revealed that 68 percent of Bhutanese women believe a man is justified in beating his wife if she neglects the children, argues with her husband, refuses sex or burns the dinner. The findings were a wake-up call in a society that enshrines non-discrimination in its constitution, and through its Gross National Happiness Commission prioritizes the happiness of its citizens, taking into account factors other than economic well-being.

"It is surprising and shocking," said Karma Tshiteem, secretary of the happiness commission, formed in 2008. "The attitude is totally inconsistent with Buddhist teachings."

Another victim of violence at home, retired schoolteacher Mewang Zam, 49, left her husband after 20 years of marriage. Her husband was a jobless alcoholic and would hit her and her children regularly. She decided to throw him out one night after he threatened to beat her with an iron rod. "I lived with him in the hope he would change but he never did," said Zam who now lives with her son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren in the capital, Thimphu. Her husband has tried to convince her to take him back but she has refused.

FUTURE OF OUR DAUGHTERS

Since the non-governmental organisation Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women (RENEW) was established in 2004, more than 4,000 cases of gender-based violence have been reported. But many more go unreported

in the country of around 780,000 people.

RENEW's more than 2,400 volunteers work across the mountainous kingdom to raise awareness and offer information about domestic violence and sexual health, and provide support and shelter to families who have suffered abuse.

"Violence against women is a serious health, mental and human rights issue," said 28-year-old Rinzin Lhamo, a teacher who works as a RENEW volunteer in the commercial hub, Phuentsholing. "We must stand up together now to secure the future of our daughters." Apart from giving counselling and providing protection, Lhamo teaches victims of domestic violence tailoring, baking and bamboo basket-making to boost their incomes.

Another volunteer, Ambika Neopaney, herself a victim of domestic abuse, has worked with RENEW for more than 10 years. "There are a lot of women out there who need help," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "We help them come forward and get counselling and legal assistance," she said, adding at times they also help couples to reconcile. The NGO says it receives half a dozen complaints of violence against women every day, due to growing awareness of the problem. It deals with cases of assault, sexual harassment, child labour, sexual exploitation, physical abuse and rape.

In 2014 alone, RENEW referred more than 50 cases to the high court, and the group currently houses 132 domestic violence victims in shelters. "Many women know about the service we provide, and many are coming forward," said RENEW's director, Pema Gyelsten. He said the most common complaints are physical abuse, including wife and maid battery, followed by emotional abuse, neglect, abandonment and extra-marital affairs.

The National Commission for Women and Children and the women and child protection unit of the Bhutan police, established in 2007, have introduced an emergency number for reporting violence. Speaking at an International Women's Day event in Phuentsholing this month, the queen mother Sangay Choden Wangchuck, founder of RENEW, told the audience: "It is your duty to show and tell your sons that women deserve respect and love and should never be abused." The influential mother of King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck said sexual and gender-based violence were on the rise in Bhutan, with children bearing the brunt of the abuse. — Reuters

SAUDI EXECUTED; 76TH EXECUTION THIS YEAR

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia put to death a citizen convicted of murder yesterday, bringing to 76 the number of executions it has carried out this year. Authorities carried out the sentence against Abdullah Al-Harbi in Buraydah, north of Riyadh, after his conviction for shooting dead another man, the interior ministry said. Most people put to death in Saudi Arabia are beheaded with a sword. The executions so far this year include 47 for "terrorism" carried out in a single day on January 2. In 2015, Saudi Arabia executed 153

people, most of them for drug trafficking or murder, according to an AFP count. Human rights group Amnesty International says the number of executions in Saudi Arabia last year was the highest for two decades. The kingdom is one of the world's top executioners, although its tally in 2015 was far behind those of China and Iran. Saudi Arabia has a strict Islamic legal code under which murder, drug trafficking, armed robbery, rape and apostasy are all punishable by death. — AFP

SYRIAN REGIME FORCES AT IS-HELD PALMYRA

BEIRUT: Syrian pro-government forces advanced to the edge of the famed ancient city of Palmyra yesterday, eyeing a major symbolic victory over the Islamic State jihadist group, a monitor said. "The regime forces are now two kilometers away on the south side and five kilometers away on the west side," Syrian Observatory for Human Rights director Rami Abdel Rahman said. IS seized the city in May last year, sending shock waves around the world as the group demolished some of the most treasured monuments of its UNESCO-listed World Heritage Site. Regime forces launched an offensive to retake the city at the start of the month backed by heavy Russian air strikes. Moscow said last week that it was flying up to 25 sorties a day to

help government forces liberate what President Vladimir Putin described as a "pearl of world civilization".

But IS has fiercely resisted the advance, killing at least 26 pro-government fighters on Monday alone, the Observatory said. Aamaq, an IS-linked news agency, claimed that 30 troops were killed in an attack by a jihadist suicide bomber. IS has also claimed to have killed five Russian soldiers as well as fighters of Lebanese Shiite militant group Hezbollah in the battle for Palmyra. But there has been no confirmation from Moscow of the deaths of any soldiers or even of the presence of any military advisers on the ground. The Kremlin has said that the offensive is being carried out by the Syrian army. — AFP

PAKISTAN VOWS TO END TERRORISM

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's President Mamnoon Hussain praised his country's security forces and pledged to continue the fight against terrorism, speaking at a rally during a national holiday. Yesterday Hussain spoke at a military parade to mark Pakistan's Republic Day at a stadium in Islamabad. The event was held amid tight security, with authorities disabling mobile phone services in the city to thwart possible attacks.

During the rally, attended by several thousand people, Pakistan displayed nuclear-capable weapons, tanks, jets, drones and other weapons systems. Pakistan in 1998 announced it had become a nuclear power by launching a weapons test. Hussein said that an ongoing military operation against militants in the northwest of the country had reached its "final phase." In recent years, Pakistan has been rocked by numerous militant attacks.

Gunmen slay four

In another development, gunmen on motorcycles shot dead two policemen and a former intelligence official in a northwestern Pakistani province bearing the brunt of a decade-long war against terrorism, police said yesterday. Pakistan is battling a homegrown Islamist insurgency, with groups such as the Pakistani Taliban routinely carrying out attacks as part

of their struggle to overthrow the government. The policemen were shot dead yesterday on a roadside in the town of Dera Ismail Khan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, senior police official Abdul Ghafoor Afridi said.

In a separate incident, gunmen on a motorcycle shot dead a

retired intelligence official in the provincial capital Peshawar, said senior police official Kashif Zulfikar. Abdul Latif retired from the intelligence service some 18 months ago. He was targeted near his house late Tuesday as he was going to mosque for night prayers. A shopkeeper was also shot dead

by gunmen on motorcycles in the northwestern town of Shabqadar on Tuesday, local police said. They said they suspected the man was targeted after declaring himself a prophet, which Muslims consider an un-Islamic act. No one has claimed responsibility for the killings. — Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's President Mamnoon Hussain, center on a military vehicle, reviews a military parade to mark Pakistan's Republic Day yesterday. — AP



BRUSSELS: A picture shows planes outside Brussels Airport at Brussels Airport, in Zaventem, a day after triple bomb attacks at the Brussels airport and at a subway train station killed over 31 people and wounded more than 200. — AFP

TRUMP AND CLINTON WIN BIG IN ARIZONA

BUSH ENDORSES CRUZ; SANDERS FIGHTS ON

WASHINGTON: A clash of worldviews is intensifying as the presidential contenders in both parties fight to convince voters they can best protect the nation from a renewed threat of Islamic extremism. As the world grappled with a new wave of attacks in Europe, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton traded wins with their chief rivals on Tuesday in primary contests across three Western states. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for blasts in Brussels that left dozens dead and many more wounded.

"This is about not only selecting a president, but also selecting a commander in chief," Clinton said in Seattle as she condemned Trump by name and denounced his embrace of torture and hardline rhetoric aimed at Muslims. "The last thing we need is leaders who incite more fear." Trump, in turn, branded Clinton as "Incompetent Hillary" as he discussed her tenure as secretary of state. "Incompetent Hillary doesn't know what she's talking about," the billionaire businessman said in an interview with Fox News. "She doesn't have a clue." The back and forth between the front-runners came on a day when voters were eager to make their voices heard in the 2016 election.

In another development, former Florida Gov Jeb Bush, who dropped out of the race after the Super Tuesday primaries, endorsed Cruz. Bush tweeted yesterday that "Ted is a consistent, principled conservative who has shown he can unite the party." Bush added on his Facebook page that Republicans "must overcome the divisiveness and vulgarity Donald Trump has brought into the political arena" or risk losing to Hillary Clinton. Trump and Clinton scored victories in the night's biggest prize of Arizona, while Democratic challenger Bernie Sanders won caucuses in Utah and Idaho. Republican Ted Cruz claimed the GOP caucuses in Utah.

The victories for Sanders and Cruz kept the front-runners from dominating another election night, but both Clinton and Trump maintained a comfortable lead in the race for delegates who decide the presidential nominations. As voters flooded to the polls, the presidential candidates lashed out at each other's foreign policy prescriptions, showcasing sharp contrasts in confronting the threat of Islamic extremism. Clinton - and Trump's Republican rivals - questioned the GOP front-runner's temperament and readiness to serve as commander in chief, and condemned his calls to diminish US involvement with NATO.

Addressing cheering supporters in Seattle, Clinton said the attacks in Brussels were a pointed reminder of

"how high the stakes are" in 2016. "We don't build walls or turn our back on our allies," she said. "We can't throw out everything we know about what works and what doesn't and start torturing people." Cruz seized on Trump's foreign policy inexperience while declaring that the US is at war with the Islamic State group.

"He doesn't have the minimal knowledge one would expect from a staffer at the State Department, much less from the commander in chief," he told reporters. "The stakes are too high for learning on the job." In London, a senior British counter-terrorism police officer condemned Trump's assertion on the "Good Morning Britain" TV show that that British Muslims are not reporting extremists in their communities to police. Deputy Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu told BBC Radio yesterday that Trump's comments are wrong and could raise tensions.

"If we demonize one section of the community, that is the worst thing we can do," he said. "We are absolutely playing into the terrorists' hands of making people feel hate." The debate between Trump and Cruz took a detour late Tuesday night as they engaged in an unusual Twitter exchange about their wives. The billionaire warned Cruz he would "spill the beans on your wife" after an anti-Trump group ran an ad in Utah featuring a picture of Trump's wife, Melania, from a photo shoot that ran in GQ magazine more than a decade ago.

Cruz shot back with a tweet of his own, saying in part, "Donald, if you try to attack Heidi, you're more of a coward than I thought." Trump's brash tone appeared to turn off some Republican voters in Utah, where Cruz claimed more than half of the caucus vote - and with it, all 40 of Utah's delegates. Yet that wouldn't make up for Trump's haul in Arizona, where he earned the state's entire trove of 58 delegates. Trump supporter Easton Brady, 19, of Provo, Utah, cheered the billionaire's brash style, even as he acknowledged Trump doesn't play as well in Utah as other parts of the country. "I think Trump says a lot of dumb things, but he's human," Brady said. "I don't care."

The win in Arizona gave Trump a little less than half of the Republican delegates allocated so far. That's still short of the majority needed to clinch the nomination before the party's national convention this summer. However, Trump has a path to the nomination if he continues to win states that award all or most of their delegates to the winner. Ohio Gov John Kasich was shut out for the night. Overall, Trump has accumulated 739 delegates, Cruz has 465 and Kasich 143. It takes 1,237 delegates to win the GOP nomination. — AP

GULF MIGRANT WORKERS - THE BIGGEST...

Continued from Page 1

Even before the slump, the unemployment rate for Saudi nationals was 11.7 percent, according to the International Monetary Fund. But unemployment was much worse for certain demographic sections including women (33 percent) and young people aged 15-19 (49 percent), 20-24 (41 percent) and 25-29 (22 percent).

Unemployment is worse in some politically important and conservative regions, such as Riyadh, Hail and the Northern Borders. "It is not that job creation has been a problem - employment growth has been strong - but rather the majority of these jobs have been filled by expatriates," the IMF observed about the economy before the slump. With growth slowing, a youthful population, and the government unable to afford to create more public sector jobs, the need to create more employment for nationals has become urgent.

Saudisation has been stepped up which has left many migrants fearful about their continued employment and residency prospects. As the government seeks to maintain social and political stability and conserve cash amid a prolonged drop in oil prices and revenue, payments to migrant workers and even their jobs are the most attractive source of savings.

Regional impact

The same pressure to reduce the number of migrants is

likely to play out across the other oil-dependent economies around the Gulf. In addition to the 10.1 million migrants in Saudi Arabia, there are 8.1 million in the United Arab Emirates, 2.9 million in Kuwait, 1.8 million in Oman, 1.7 million in Qatar, and 700,000 in Bahrain. In most of these countries, migrants make up an even larger share of the local population than in Saudi Arabia, according to UN calculations.

The situation in each of these economies is different. Some are more petroleum-dependent than others. Some have larger foreign reserves. And the origin of the migrants varies significantly. Western Asia, which includes the Gulf Arab countries, has the highest share of migrants in the population of any region of the world after North America. In the Gulf itself the share is much higher. In total, there are more than 25 million migrants across the Gulf, including 8 million from India, 3 million from Pakistan, 3 million from Bangladesh, 2 million from Egypt and 1.8 million from Indonesia.

None of these countries is a major net oil exporter but they all seem set to suffer ripple effects from the oil shock. If remittances from the Gulf region slow, or workers are sent home, it will hit some of these poor economies particularly hard. Gulf economies absorbed a lot of young, mostly male, workers from some of the poorest countries in the world, so the implications stretch well beyond the simple economic impact to include the effects on social stability and counter-terrorism — Reuters

BELGIUM MOURNS, HUNTS IS SUSPECTS

Continued from Page 1

RTBF said Khalid El Bakraoui had rented under a false name the apartment in the city's Forest borough, where police hunting Abdeslam killed a gunman in a raid last week. He is also believed to have rented a safe house in the southern Belgian city of Charleroi used to mount last November's Paris attacks. The Syrian-based Islamist group claimed responsibility for Tuesday's attacks, four days after Abdeslam's arrest in Brussels, warning of "black days" for those fighting it in Syria and Iraq. Belgian warplanes have joined the coalition in the Middle East, but Brussels has long been a centre of Islamist militancy.

Security review

The attacks sent shockwaves across Europe and around the world, with authorities racing to review security at airports and on public transport, and rekindled debate about European security cooperation and police methods. Prime Minister Charles Michel cancelled a trip to China and convened his inner cabinet to discuss security. Belgium observed a nationwide minute's silence at noon (1100 GMT). King Philippe, the premier and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker attended a memorial event at Commission headquarters.

More than 1,000 people gathered around an improvised shrine with candles and street paintings outside the Brussels bourse. The Brussels blasts fuelled political debate across the globe about how to combat militants. "We can and we will defeat those who threaten the safety and security of people all around the world," said US President Barack Obama. Donald Trump, the front-runner for the Republican nomination to succeed Obama in November's US election, suggested suspects could be tortured to avert such attacks.

Police searched an apartment in the northern Brussels borough of Schaerbeek late into the night, finding another bomb, an Islamic State flag and bomb-making chemicals. Local media said authorities had followed a tip from a taxi driver who may have driven the bombers to the airport. An unused explosive device was later found at the airport and a man wearing a light-col-

ored jacket and a hat, believed to be Laachraoui, was seen running away from the terminal after the explosions. Security experts believed the blasts, which killed about 20 people on a metro train running through the area that houses EU institutions, were probably in preparation before Friday's arrest of locally based French national Abdeslam, 26, whom prosecutors accuse of a key role in the Nov 13 Paris attacks. He was caught and has been speaking to investigators after a shootout at an apartment in the south of the city a week ago, after which another Islamic State flag and explosives were found. It was unclear whether he had knowledge of the new attack or whether accomplices may have feared police were closing in.

Islamic State said in a statement that "caliphate soldiers, strapped with suicide vests and carrying explosive devices and machineguns" struck Zaventem airport and Maelbeek metro station. It was not clear, however, that the attackers used vests. The suspects were photographed pushing bags on trolleys, and witnesses said many of the airport dead and wounded were hit mostly in the legs, possibly indicating blasts at floor level. The two men in dark clothes wore gloves on their left hands only. One security expert speculated they might have concealed detonators. The man in the hat was not wearing gloves.

About 300 Belgians are estimated to have fought with Islamists in Syria, making the country of 11 million the leading European exporter of foreign fighters and a focus of concern in France and other neighbors over its security capabilities. Reviving arguments over Belgian policies following the Paris attacks, in which 130 people were killed in an operation apparently organized from Brussels, French Finance Minister Michel Sapin spoke of "naïveté" on the part of "certain leaders" in holding back from security crackdowns on Muslim communities.

Belgian Foreign Minister Didier Reynders retorted that each country should look to its own social problems, saying France too had rough high-rise suburbs in which militants had become radicalized. Life began to return to normal in Brussels yesterday, with some public transport working and cars returning to the European district, but the metro system remained closed and the airport was still shut to travelers. — Agencies

KUWAIT SPORTS LAWS 'NOT THE REASON FOR IOC SUSPENSION'

KUWAIT: Kuwait's sports laws are not the real reason that led the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to suspend the country, the head of the Kuwaiti government negotiation delegation with the IOC Dr Mohammad Alfili said. Sports laws similar to the Kuwaiti ones exist in many world countries, Alfili told a press conference at the Public Authority for Sports yesterday, adding that the IOC took the suspension decision, then tried to find a "pretext."

He called for a review of the IOC, for the good of international sports, after it "went too far from the noble goals it was based on." The Kuwaiti side did not intend to talk about the details of the negotiations with the IOC, but the latter proceeded with a document that does not reflect the "truth" of the meeting. There were negotiations that would have reached a further point, but got "trapped" on the side of the IOC, as revealed by its document, Alfili said.

He referred to exchange of proposals, saying that one, close to the conviction of the Kuwaiti side, was almost concluded. A formula was reached, not ideal, but one that could be built on to reach a point, he stated, before, all of a sudden, the IOC retracted. The IOC's document is not "true" and offers "naïve and false information," he said.

It is nothing but normal that the Kuwaiti negotiators referred to the



KUWAIT: Head of the Kuwait government delegation and the IOC Dr Mohammad Alfili (left) and member of the negotiating team Saqr Al-Mullah attend the press conference. — KUNA

"state, which is ruled by a constitution and institutions" before "making promises we cannot fulfill," he said, noting that the IOC delegation sought to impose "a fait accompli" by "unilaterally signing the document." Alfili said that the conviction of the Kuwaiti representatives in the negotiations was to reach an agreement in line with the "Kuwaiti legal rules."

The IOC then spoke of topics that were not listed on the agenda of the meeting, and finally issued a document that did not reflect what was

agreed upon between the two sides, as a "maneuver" he stressed. The real reason why the Kuwaiti negotiators did not sign the document was that it did not "reflect what happened in the meeting," member of the negotiating team, Saqr Al-Mullah, said. It was really surprising that the nine points relevant to the suspension decision were only addressed after other topics that were not originally listed on the agenda, such as that of the Asian Olympic Council, which itself took six hours, Al-Mullah added. — KUNA

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BRUSSELS BOMBS
EXPOSE TRANSPORT
VULNERABILITIES

By Sonia Wolf, Helene Duvigneau

The Brussels bombings exposed the vulnerability of publicly accessible zones in crowded airports, railway stations and subway systems to terror attacks, and it is a risk that can never be completely eliminated, security analysts say. Islamic State-linked jihadists targeted that weak spot when they detonated bombs that tore through the main hall of Brussels airport and blew up a city-centre metro train, killing about 30 people and wounding more than 200.

The bombers carried out their attacks in high profile transport hubs in the Belgian capital, home of NATO headquarters and the European Union, during a period when the country was under a high security alert just four days after the arrest in Brussels of Salah Abdeslam—the prime suspect in the Paris attacks four months earlier that killed 130 people. “While aviation and public transport in general remain an attractive target for terrorist groups, the risk can never be 100 percent eliminated as the threat remains,” said Ben Vogel, editor of IHS Jane’s Airport Review.

The challenge of stopping an attack is greater when the perpetrators target unsecured areas such as the check-in area of the departure hall in Brussels’ Zaventem airport, prior to the passport and baggage controls, he said. “This causes a headache for security agencies that have focused primarily on the passenger screening checkpoint, with some success as terrorist organizations seem to have altered their modus operandi,” Vogel said. In Europe, most airport arrival and departure halls are freely accessible outside of the secured zone that lies beyond baggage, passport and customs controls.

Targets for terrorists

Security at airport arrival, departure and check-in areas can be improved, experts said, but it is difficult to restrict access without paralyzing ever larger airport terminals. “You have to be rational and seek maximum efficiency,” said French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve. “If you set up checks at the entrance to airports you going to clog up the airports, you are going to make it impossible for the economy to work,” Cazeneuve said. “If you create queues in front of airports, you also create targets for terrorists,” he added.

Extremists will always find a weak spot, said David Bentley, British aeronautics expert, in a written reply to questions from AFP. “They will attack people arriving in vehicles, on public transport etc,” Bentley said. “The logistics of locking down an airport like that is contrary to the free-flow of traffic by which it sustains itself. Imagine if cars were stopped kilometers from the airport to be searched. Where, exactly, without causing huge traffic jams?” Bentley added. “Realistically, only better intelligence will prevail.”

French lawmaker, Gilles Savary, proponent of a new transport security law passed by parliament this month, said the aim was to “tighten the net as far as possible, knowing that someone can always get through.” “If Zaventem was an inaccessible bunker they would have hit a market in Brussels. So we have a choice between ‘bunkerization’ and daily life, and between the two there is a risk,” he said. Europe is the “big missing piece” in transport security, Savary said, urging the bloc to enact ground transport security legislation such as that implemented in the air industry after the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington.

Trains are the big challenge

A foiled jihadist attack in August last year on a high-speed Amsterdam-Paris train operated by Thalys, followed by the November 13 Paris attacks, prompted Thalys to install passenger metal detectors and baggage X-ray scanners for access to its platforms in December. France’s national railway operator SNCF said this week that it spends more than 400 million euros (\$450 million) a year on security. The SNCF is also developing new systems to detect explosives and weapons, as well as behaviour analysis software, in coordination with the French regulator of personal data protection, management said in an email to AFP.

Extending the high security perimeter right up to the entry and exit points of airport terminals would require a complete reconfiguring of terminals at a high financial cost and would mean even longer waits for passengers, said Vogel of IHS Janes. “The security challenge for land transport, particularly rail modes, is even harder,” Vogel added. “The cost of securing their rail networks is so daunting that the 28 member states have blocked the Commission for years from making any proposals at the EU level regarding rail security. Whether that blockage can hold against public pressure for action is the test for the coming months.” — AFP

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BRUSSELS ATTACKS ANOTHER REMINDER OF SECURITY’S WEAK LINK

By Robin Emmott

The Belgian government warned at the weekend that there might be an attack after the security services captured their most wanted man. It came swiftly. Tuesday’s explosions, which killed at least 30 people at the main Brussels airport and an underground rail station, came just days after Belgium’s security services caught the last surviving suspect in November’s attacks on Paris. Belgium has announced 400 million euros (\$450 million) of extra spending to upgrade its security capabilities since it emerged that the country of 11 million people served as the base for the Paris attackers who killed 130 people. But Tuesday’s bombings at home show how much further it still has to go.

Security experts say squabbling layers of government, under-funded spy services, an openness to fundamentalist preachers and a thriving black market in weapons all make Belgium among the most vulnerable countries in Europe to militant attacks. One US government official told Reuters that Tuesday’s attacks showed Belgian authorities still “have not upped their game”. Catching Paris attack suspect Salah Abdeslam on Friday was a coup for Belgium’s security services. But his four months apparently hiding and moving about the capital were also proof of how difficult the task of securing Belgium is likely to be.

It is still too early to say whether Tuesday’s attacks were directly linked to Abdeslam’s capture. US officials believe they may have been

already in the works before his arrest, and was not highly sophisticated or the type of attack that required a huge amount of ingenuity. Nevertheless, Prime Minister Charles Michel, who had locked down the capital for days in November after the Paris attacks, warned on Sunday of “a real threat”. US government sources said that, while the United States and Belgium had believed that another attack after Paris was highly likely, they did not have hard intelligence about where or when such an attack would occur.

Reviving arguments over Belgian policies in the wake of the Paris attacks, in which 130 people were killed in an operation apparently organized from Brussels, French Finance Minister Michel Sapin spoke of “naivete” on the part of “certain leaders” in holding back from security crackdowns on Muslim communities. A lawmaker from Michel’s party, Didier Ducarme, hit back on French television. He said comments like Sapin’s “are starting to seriously irritate me” and noted that it was a France-based gunman who killed four at Brussels’ Jewish Museum in 2014.

Beneath the radar

Catching up after years of neglect was always going to be a problem for Belgium’s intelligence agency, which has just 600 staff, a third as many as in the neighboring Netherlands, a country not much larger and with fewer home-grown jihadists fighting in Syria or Iraq. Belgium has supplied the highest per capita number of fighters to Syria of any European nation, and the crowded Brussels borough of Molenbeek has

been described as a “jihadist air base” because of the number of militant suspects believed to be living there. To follow a single suspect around 24 hours a day without being detected, security agencies need crews of as many as 36 officers, US and European officials estimate, meaning even well-staffed agencies such as Britain’s MI5 can only closely follow a limited number of suspects at any particular time.

According to Alain Winants, head of the Belgian intelligence service from 2006 until 2014, Belgium was one of the last places in Europe to obtain modern techniques to gather information, such as telephone taps. On one occasion, police had to deny they let Abdeslam slip due to a law banning house raids at night. Michel has already said he accepts more is needed. It is impossible for any country to completely secure “soft targets” like busy railway stations and airports. But Belgium also has unique challenges. The patchwork country divided between French- and Dutch-speakers has a bureaucracy that hinders the sharing of information, with six parliaments for its regions and linguistic communities, 193 local police forces and, in Brussels, 19 autonomous mayors. That allows militants to hide below the radar in a way they cannot in the much more centralized Netherlands, as well as slowing the passing of new laws to rein in the preaching of hate in mosques and a roaring trade in illegal weapons. Nearly 6,000 firearms are seized every year in Belgium, more than in all of France, police data shows, often sold by Balkan crime networks to home-grown Belgian jihadists.

Vanishing in Molenbeek

Belgian authorities have been accused of neglecting Muslims and failing to help find jobs to shield them from people seeking to radicalize desperate young men. Youth unemployment can reach up to 40 percent in some parts of wealthy Belgium. “Because of the difficulty of fitting into a hostile society, they look for alternative networks where they can blend in,” said counter-terrorism expert Rik Coolsaet at the Brussels think-tank Egmont. “Gang activities and the foreign fighters’ undertakings are carried out on the margins of the local environment, where they grew up,” Coolsaet said. Just a few miles from the power of the headquarters of NATO and the European Union, but effectively a world away, Molenbeek on the poorer side of the city’s industrial-era canal has become a notoriously difficult place to track militants.

Abdeslam was able to vanish into the streets of Molenbeek, some quarters of which are 80 percent Muslim, for four months, protected by family, friends and petty criminals, not far from his parents’ home. Some problems go back to the 1970s, when Belgium, still heavily industrial at the time, sought favor and cheap oil from Saudi Arabia by providing mosques for Gulf-trained preachers. European officials acknowledge that no amount of quick funding increases for Belgium’s intelligence services will immediately solve the multitude of challenges. “We know that it will take a long time,” said General Gratien Maire, deputy head of the French defence staff, said at an event in Brussels on Sunday. “So we have to be honest and clear with our people.” — Reuters

PARIS, BRUSSELS JIHADIST NETWORK: WHAT WE KNOW

More than 30 people have been identified as being involved in a network behind the Paris attacks on November 13, with links now established to this week’s bombings in Brussels. This is what we know so far about the attackers and their support network.

Paris attacks

A 10-man team of suicide bombers and gunmen launched attacks on the Bataclan concert hall, the Stade de France national stadium and a string of bars and restaurants around eastern Paris on the night of November 13, 2015. Seven of the attackers died on the night, and two more were killed the following week. The last member of the team, Salah Abdeslam, was arrested in Brussels on Friday after four months on the run. The coordinated assaults claimed by the Islamic State group killed 130 people and wounded another 350.

Stadium bombers

The attacks began when three men blew themselves up outside the Stade de France where President Francois Hollande was watching a match between France and Germany. Only one of that trio has been identified: Bilal Hadfi, a 20-year-old French national who was living in Belgium and who had travelled to Syria. The other two were carrying fake Syrian passports they apparently used to enter Greece in October, posing as refugees. IS said in a video they were Iraqi.

Bars/restaurants gunmen

As police and emergency services rushed to the stadium, a group of three gunmen, including alleged ring-leader Abdelhamid Abaaoud, drove around spraying cafes and restaurants with bullets, killing 39 people. Brahim Abdeslam eventually blew himself up outside a bar, injuring one person.

Abaaoud, a notorious Belgian jihadist of Moroccan origin, escaped unharmful but was killed in a massive police operation in the northern Paris suburb of Saint-Denis on November 18. The third gunman, Belgian-Moroccan Chakib Akrouh, 25, blew himself up during the Saint-Denis operation. Abaaoud’s 26-year-old French-born cousin Hasna Aitboulahcen, who helped him hide after the attacks, was also killed in the operation.

Bataclan attackers

The worst bloodshed took place at the Bataclan concert hall, when three French gunmen—all of whom had spent time in Syria—stormed a concert by American rock band Eagles of Death Metal, killing 90. Twenty-three-year-old Foued Mohamed-Aggad was part of a group of 10 that left Strasbourg for Syria in 2013. He was identified after his DNA was matched with that of his mother. The other two attackers were 28-year-old former bus driver Samy Amimour and Omar Ismail Mostefai, 29. Both were from the Paris area and were known radicals. Two of them blew themselves up and the third was shot by police.

Salah Abdeslam

A French national of Moroccan origin, Salah Abdeslam, 26, is thought to be the last surviving member of the cell directly involved in the Paris assault. He is believed to have played a key logistical role, renting cars and an apartment-hotel used by the jihadists. His role on the night has been one of the biggest mysteries, as he fled back to Brussels while his brother, Brahim, and other members of the team, committed suicide or were killed. A suicide vest was found dumped in southern Paris. Phone signals suggest Abdeslam had been in the area.

He was captured on March 18

after a four-month manhunt and has told investigators he planned to blow himself up outside the Stade de France but changed his mind. Prosecutors remain cautious: Abdeslam’s version does not explain why he abandoned his car in the 18th district that night, an area which was not hit despite a claim by the Islamic State that it had been targeted.

The Brussels link

After the Paris attacks, attention turned to Belgium, home and hide-away for several of the suspects. Just days after Friday’s dramatic arrest of Abdeslam, four people carried out coordinated attacks at Brussels airport and a metro station that left 31 people dead and another 270 wounded. Abdeslam had told investigators he was planning further attacks in

Brussels, and links have emerged between him and the suspected Brussels attackers.

Two brothers, Khalid and Ibrahim El Bakraoui were identified as suicide bombers—one at the airport and one at a metro station—who had already been sought for links to Abdeslam. Another suicide bomber at the airport has yet to be identified, as well as a third person seen there on surveillance footage who is now on the run. Belgian television said Khalid had rented an apartment in Brussels last week under a false name where Abdeslam’s fingerprints were found after a bloody police raid. He is also linked to another apartment in southern Belgium that Abdeslam and other jihadists used before the Paris attacks.

Another key suspect is Najim Laachraoui, whose DNA was found on

explosives used in the Paris attacks, as well as at an apartment in Brussels where bomb-making equipment and one of Abdeslam’s fingerprints had been found in December. Prosecutors have said he “travelled to Syria in February 2013,” and was registered under a false name at the border between Austria and Hungary last September. He was travelling with Abdeslam and Mohamed Belkaid, who was killed in the Brussels raid three days before Abdeslam was captured. Belkaid is believed to have provided logistical support to the Paris attackers.

Charged

Belgian authorities have so far charged 11 suspects, including three men accused of helping Abdeslam escape. — AFP



BRUSSELS: People hold a minute of silence around a makeshift memorial at Place de la Bourse (Beursplein) in Brussels a day after blasts hit the Belgian capital. — AFP

BOLT TO RUN IN LONDON OLYMPIC STADIUM



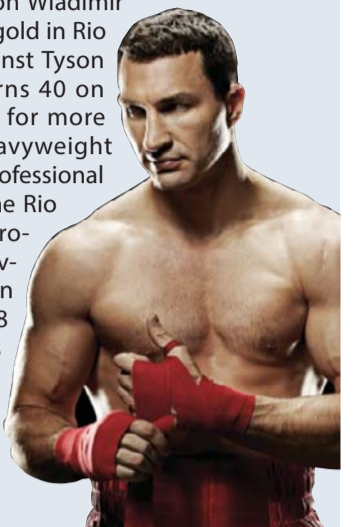
LONDON: Usain Bolt will prepare for the Rio de Janeiro Olympics by returning to the site of the last games for the London Diamond League meet. The Jamaican will compete in July's Anniversary Games, four years after winning three Olympic gold medals in the Olympic Stadium in the 100, 200 and 4x100-meter relay races. Organizers say Bolt will appear on July 22, but didn't specify in which races. In a statement, Bolt says it's "one of my last races before the Olympic Games in Rio. It will be good to return to the Olympic Stadium on the Friday night and get more of the special atmosphere that the fans always produce." The stadium is being redeveloped to accommodate Premier League club West Ham from August while retaining athletics facilities. —AP

EVANS RAPE APPEAL VERDICT DUE IN APRIL

LONDON: The outcome of British footballer Ched Evans's appeal against his conviction for raping a 19-year-old woman is due to be announced in April, said judges at London's Court of Appeal on Wednesday after a two-day hearing. The former Wales striker was released from prison in October 2014 after serving half of a five-year sentence for raping the woman in a hotel room in Rhyl, north Wales in May 2011. His case was referred to the Court of Appeal by the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC), which investigates possible miscarriages of justice in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The CCRC announced last October that it had unearthed new evidence that could have supported Evans's defence. This week's hearing saw Court of Appeal judges consider the safety of his conviction, but details of the legal argument cannot be reported under English law. However, it can be reported that, if Evans wins his appeal, the prosecution will seek a retrial. Evans was present in court for both days of the hearing, with girlfriend Natasha Massey by his side. —AFP

KLITSCHKO HOPES TO BOX FOR OLYMPIC GOLD IN RIO

BERLIN: Former world heavyweight champion Wladimir Klitschko hopes to box for a second Olympic gold in Rio de Janeiro, if the timing of his rematch against Tyson Fury allows. Hamburg-based Klitschko turns 40 on Friday and would relish the chance to box for more Olympic medals having won the Super heavyweight gold for Ukraine at the 1996 Atlanta Games. Professional boxers are set to be eligible to compete at the Rio Olympic Games this August under radical proposals being pushed through by the world governing body, AIBA, and set to be voted on in June. But Klitschko, who has won 64 of his 68 bouts since turning professional in 1996, says his priority is to win back the WBA, WBO, IBO and IBF belts he lost on points to Britain's Fury in Duesseldorf last November. A date for their rematch has yet to be confirmed. —AFP



PROTOTYPE HEADBAND TO TRACK ATHLETES SUFFERING CONCUSSION

SYDNEY: A prototype headband to record brain trauma is being designed in Australia, researchers said yesterday, as sports such as football and rugby around the world grapple with how to manage knocks to the head. The experimental brainBAND technology has sensors to record the impact on players of hits on the field. It aims to transmit that data in real time to medics, coaches and referees. Neuroscientist Alan Pearce said currently the question of whether a player is considered

fit to remain on the field after a big tackle or head clash is a subjective matter debated on the sidelines. "That's at the elite level but at the non-elite level... there's no one there to really assess them properly," Pearce, from the Swinburne University of Technology, told AFP. "Using the device can notify in real time that a player has had a head knock so we have an objective measure for them to come off the field." The headband could also alert medics to trauma sustained from a glancing or seeming-

ly harmless contact, he said, as the device has LED lights to indicate the severity of an impact. "So the idea is that for weekend warriors if they get a head knock they can actually take that data... to the hospital and the emergency physician has some objective data to make a more accurate diagnosis," he said. The headband prototype, which has been tested in Australia by amateur rugby union players to fine tune its design, could also

record the smaller knocks that can have a cumulative impact. "It's not necessarily the one or two big hits but it's those constant, repetitive knocks to the head that don't actually cause any symptoms that are leading to the long-term problems that a lot of the players are having," he said. Pearce, who worked with industrial designer Braden Wilson and Samsung on the device, said much more testing needed to be done. But he said the hope was that understand-

ing more about repeated concussions could help prevent damaging injuries at every level of the game. Rugby union star Israel Folau, who switched to the sport following stints as a rugby league and Australian Rules football player, said he believed he had been lucky to avoid concussion so far in his career. But he told Sydney's Daily Telegraph that "raising awareness about the subject of concussion in sport is only ever a good thing". —AFP

AUSTRALIAN BOXER BROWNE 'DEVASTATED' BY POSITIVE TEST

SYDNEY: Australian boxer Lucas "Big Daddy" Browne protested his innocence and said he was "devastated" yesterday after failing doping test in wake of his victory in a world title fight two weeks ago. The 36-year-old former bouncer won the "regular" version of the World Boxing Association (WBA) heavyweight title when he knocked out Russian Ruslan Chagaev in Chechnya on March 5. A letter from the Las Vegas-based Voluntary Anti-Doping Association (VADA) confirming that Browne's "A" sample had contained traces of clenbuterol was leaked to ESPN on Tuesday, however. "I would like to assure all my fans, the whole of the boxing world and all of Australia that I'm not a drug user or a drug cheat," Browne (24-0-0) told reporters in Perth on Wednesday. "The news of this positive test has shocked and devastated me and I'll be fighting for as long as it takes to clear my name." Clenbuterol is a performance-enhancing substance sometimes found in weight-loss pills that is on the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) banned list.

VADA, which provides anti-doping programmes for boxing and mixed martial arts, has said that Browne will have to pay for his "B" sample to be tested. Browne said he was seeking legal advice. "I wouldn't be able to live with myself deep down if I knew that I had cheated and tried to get away with it, sort of thing. I know I'm innocent and that's all that matters," he added. Trumpeled in the Australian media as the country's first heavyweight world champion, Browne would have been hoping that his victory over Chagaev would have earned him a fight against Briton Tyson Fury or Luis Ortiz. Fury is considered the WBA world champion as he also holds the World Boxing Organisation (WBO) title, while Cuban Ortiz holds the "interim" WBA world heavyweight title. The WBA, which will change the result of the Browne-Chagaev fight to a "no-decision" if Browne's "B" sample confirms the positive test, said their tournament involving the three fighters to "recognise one world champion" was "on hold". — Reuters



EGYPT'S EL SHORBAGY STARTS BRITISH OPEN TITLE DEFENCE

KINGSTON: Mohamed El Shorbagy admits he got exactly what he didn't want to begin the defence of his British Open title, but managed to handle the discomfort anyway. The world number one from Egypt's well-taken 11-7, 12-10, 11-4 win over Nicolas Mueller, the former top-20 player from Switzerland, suggested he has been developing the knack of keeping the mindset he needs. "I said to my brother (Marwan) that Nicolas Mueller was the one guy I didn't want in the first round - and I got him," El Shorbagy admitted. "He can be very dangerous and today I had to be focused the whole match." Winning the second game, in which Mueller was only prevented from taking an 8-7 lead by El Shorbagy's successful video appeal against the referee's penalty point decision, was doubly important. Not only did that prevent difficulties from becoming prolonged, it assisted with El Shorbagy's need to preserve energy early in the tournament, ready for probable big battles later. He kept the pace high, his mind calm, and the ball tight, and was prepared to play out the rallies for as long as it took. Eventually Mueller, who often attacked creatively, was pressured into landing three drop shots into the tin in the last four rallies of that pivotal game. It supported El Shorbagy's contention that he has continued to improve his mentality, something which came under scrutiny again after his

failure to get past the third round of the World Championships at Washington in November. "When I got to world number one I placed a lot of pressure on myself and I didn't enjoy it at all," he admitted. "But when I lost it for a month I realised what I had - and I appreciated getting it back. "It relaxed me and made me thankful. Not many people have the opportunity to be where I am. I know I have already won the British Open and it makes me more relaxed - and I think it shows." **Willstrip up next** He may indeed need to show it again, because his second-round match is against James Willstrip, the former world number one who was his conqueror in that sensational World Championship upset. The 32-year-old Englishman, now ranked 13, proved again that on his day he can still beat anyone with a 5-11, 11-4, 11-6, 11-7 victory over Tarek Momen, the world number six from Egypt. **PLAYING ON A GLASS SHOWCOURT** "I approached playing Tarek like a final, put everything into it and managed to pull out a performance," he said. "I'm just thrilled to be able to play a big match again against Mohamed." The last match of the day produced the most significant exit of a seed so far. Karim Gawad, the 24-year-old Egyptian who rose to a career-high world number seven after capturing the

Swedish Open title last month, overcame his compatriot Omar Mosaad, the fourth seed, in four games. Mosaad failed to capitalise on leads of 7-5 and 9-8 in a pivotal third game and gradually slipped to a 11-13, 11-7, 14-12, 11-4 loss. Gawad now faces another Egyptian, Fares Dessouki, a former quarter-finalist here, in a section in which Mathieu Castagnet, the eighth-seeded Frenchman, has also departed - beaten in four games by Indian Saurav Ghosal. Earlier three of the women's front-runners progressed, but with less trouble. Laura Massaro, the world number one from England, needed only 26 minutes to come through 11-2, 11-5, 11-6 against Olivia Blatchford, an American qualifier, while Raneem El Welily of Egypt, her predecessor at the top, took five minutes less to win 11-5, 11-3, 11-3 against Nele Gilis, a Belgian qualifier playing on a glass showcourt in a competitive match for the first time. Camille Serme, the British Open titleholder from France, needed just a little longer to get past Fiona Moverley, a qualifier playing in her home city, 11-7, 11-6, 11-3 - but perhaps this was not entirely surprising. Serme is trying to find a way of dealing with memories of here last year, the greatest day of her life. "I try to get into the same state of mind as then," she explained. "But that's not easy. Everywhere I go I see my face on a poster." — AFP

HIELD'S 36 POINTS LEAD OKLAHOMA PAST VCU 85-81

OKLAHOMA CITY: Buddy Hield let Oklahoma's fans witness one last vintage hot streak. Playing at Chesapeake Energy Arena, just a half-hour drive from campus, the senior guard scored 19 of his 36 points in the final eight minutes to help the second-seeded Sooners hold off No. 10 seed VCU 85-81 Sunday in the second round of the NCAA Tournament. Hield, the nation's No. 2 scorer, posted at least 30 points for the 11th time this season. As he stood at the free-throw line late in the game, the fans stood and chanted, "Buddy! Buddy!" "This is the big stage," Hield said. "It's win or go home. It's my senior year. NCAA Tournament. Everybody is watching. You don't get these moments very often, so you go out there, you've got to bring it." Hield didn't score for more than 10 minutes to start the game, yet, as he often has done, he eventually got going. He made 9 of 12 shots in the second half after going 2 for 8 in the first. "He's done it so many times for us throughout his career, and especially this year, and again today," Oklahoma coach Lon Kruger said. "It seemed like every shot that he had that we needed, he stepped up and made it. And it's not that easy to do, especially with the defense leaning on you and targeting you." Hield scored 29 points in the second half. "Best player I've seen in college basketball," VCU coach Will Wade said. Jordan Woodard scored 17 points and Isaiah Cousins added 15 for the Sooners (27-7), who advanced to the Sweet 16 for the second straight year. Melvin Johnson scored 18 of his 23 points in the second half, JeQuan Lewis scored 22

points and Michael Gilmore matched a career high with 12 for VCU (25-11), which was trying to reach the Sweet 16 for the first time since its Final Four run in 2011. "It was a win-win situation. Everyone pretty much counted us out, so our backs were against the wall, and when your back is against the wall, all you've got to do is fight," Johnson said. Hield scored seven points on 2-for-8 shooting in the first half, sitting the last four-plus minutes with two fouls. Lewis scored 13 points in the first half to keep the Rams within range. Johnson, who struggled in the first half, sparked the Rams in the second half with two quick 3s. The Rams led 65-63 before Hield scored eight points in just under two minutes, including two 3-pointers, to put the Sooners ahead for good. Even with Hield's closing flurry, the Rams remained in the game until the end. "We're tough, we're gritty. We fight," Wade said. "We fight, fight, fight, fight, fight. We just didn't have enough." **MANYANG OUT** Oklahoma backup center Akolda Manyang was not available because of a death in the family. A team spokesman said Manyang flew back to Minnesota on Sunday morning. Manyang, a 7-foot junior, averages 2.5 points and 1.4 blocks in 8.0 minutes per game. **ON THE RISE** Gilmore. The sophomore didn't even play in the first round against Oregon State, but he was needed to match up with Oklahoma's size. It was only his second time scoring in double figures this season, and the fourth time in his career. — AP



KUWAIT: Qutayba Al-Bassam, Senior Manager, Corporate Communication, Boubyan Bank officially inaugurating the Boubyan trophy by cutting a cake.

BOUBYAN BANK SPONSORS TROPHY FOR BANKING SECTOR EMPLOYEES

KUWAIT: The inauguration of Boubyan trophy was held at Kuwait Cricket's Sulaibiya turf ground amid much fanfare in the presence of Chief Guest Qutayba Al-Bassam, Senior Manager, Corporate Communication, Boubyan Bank. Boubyan trophy is being organized by Kuwait Cricket, the apex body of controlling cricket in Kuwait for bank teams affiliated to Kuwait Banks club. Qutayba Al-Bassam officially inaugurated the tournament by cutting a cake along with Boubyan cricket team members and other dignitaries at Kuwait Cricket's Sulaibiya ground.

The tournament will be played in league format followed by the 4 semifinals and two finals. Nine bank teams divided in two groups will play a total of 22 matches at the Sulaibiya ground. The nine participating teams are Ahli United Bank, Ahli Bank of Kuwait, Boubyan Bank, Burgan Bank, Commercial Bank, Kuwait Finance House, Kuwait International Bank, Gulf bank and National Bank of Kuwait. Qutayba stated that Boubyan Bank was always happy to promote and encourage the game of cricket for banking sector employees and wished all the participating teams the very best.

POLITICAL CRISIS RELEGATES RIO TO AN AFTERTHOUGHT

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil's economic and political crisis has relegated Rio de Janeiro's Olympic preparations to an afterthought with South America's first games just over four months away.

Rio's Olympics are being sidelined by an even bigger show: Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff's fight against impeachment with millions on the streets marching against her. All of this amid multiple corruption scandals with the country mired in the worst economic recession since the 1930s.

"If this was five years ago, we could have even lost the games," organizing committee spokesman Mario Andradá told The Associated Press. "I have never experienced such political turmoil in my whole life," he added. "If you ask me what's next on the political front, I don't have a clue."

Brazil's leaders were hoping attention from the Olympics - and the 2014 World Cup - would burnish the country's image. Instead, they may have done the opposite with the ominous impeachment getting intense coverage, highlighting graft trials, endemic corruption and a sharp fall in the value of country's currency.

Earlier this month an estimated 3 million people took to the streets across the country in anti Rousseff demonstrations, which were reported to be larger than protests in 1984 demanding elections

and an end of the country's military dictatorship. Andradá sounded buoyant, saying: "We are almost there. The things that we need from the government - they are smaller, day-to-day things."

However, there are worrying signs. The city of Rio de Janeiro, which is building many of the new Olympic venues, has rescinded contracts on at least two venues - the tennis and equestrian center - and delays have been reported on at least four other Olympic projects. The city says about 95 percent of the building work is done and venues will be delivered in time.

"The political crisis at the federal level does not affect the last building mile for the preparation of the games in any way," the city hall said Tuesday in a statement.

On Monday, the head police for the state of Rio de Janeiro, Jose Mariano Beltrame, said his budget had been reduced by 2 billion reais (\$600 million), a cut sure to impact Olympic security.

CHAOS

Sergio Praca, a political scientist at the respected Getulio Vargas foundation, said the Olympics would not escape the government chaos.

"The federal bureaucracy is completely paralyzed right now; for lack of money, for lack of knowing where all of this is headed," he said. "So all the securi-

ty planning, any planning that has to do with the Olympic Games is made more difficult now."

It was different in 2009 when Rio was awarded the games, championed by then-President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. He called it a "sacred day" and praised the "strength of Brazil's economy," which shrank by 4 percent in 2015 with no improvement in sight.

"This is a day to commemorate because Brazil has left its status as a second-class nation," Silva said in Copenhagen as thousands back home celebrated on Copacabana beach. "Today we're getting the respect that Brazil has been deserving."

The promises now seem hollow, and so does the legendary Silva. A few weeks ago he was hauled into a police station for questioning in a graft and money-laundering investigation.

Last week Rousseff named him her chief of staff, which would grant him some legal immunity - an appointment subsequently blocked by a court ruling. Hours later he told a screaming rally: "There will be no coup," a reminder of the military dictatorship that ended 31 years ago.

"I assure you the Olympic Games are the last thing on everybody's mind right now," Praca said. "This was supposed to be a great year for Brazil and Rio, but it's been anything but that - even if the

Olympic Games go well."

It's possible that Rousseff will be out as president when the games open on Aug. 5, which may leave the ceremonial opening of the games to vice president Michel Temer. Lula's future is also murky with some newspapers suggesting he and some family members could face jail time.

"Part of me wishes the Olympics Games would not happen here just so people don't see how politically disorganized the country is, the economic chaos and the recession," Praca added. "This is the worst time in Brazilian history to hold the Olympic Games. Brazil's image, which had gotten a lot better in the last few years, will now completely tank."

Organizers, led by Rio Mayor Eduardo Paes, have been downplaying expectations for at least a year as endless problems have surfaced: virus-infested venues for sailing, canoeing and rowing; the mosquito-borne Zika virus; \$500 million in spending cuts; charges the \$10 billion spent to ready the city is benefiting mostly construction companies and real estate developers.

UNPRECEDENTED EVENTS

Paes has repeated often that Rio "is not a developed city like London or New York or Chicago. You can't expect as much from us." Several email requests for

comment from the Switzerland-based International Olympic Committee went unanswered.

This is not the first time in recent memory that unprecedented events have pushed the Olympics off the radar. The May 2008 Sichuan earthquake in China killed tens of thousands and left millions homeless. It muted protests in the three months before the games began, sparking a wave of goodwill toward the Beijing Olympics that had been battered by pro-Tibet protests, noxious air pollution and attacks on the torch relay as it circled the globe.

Paes, seen by the IOC as the main force behind the games, was caught on a tapped telephone call earlier this month with Silva - one of dozens of calls released by a judge investigating Silva. The calls also included Silva talking with Rousseff and show the powerful speaking candidly - and often crudely.

Viewed as a potential 2018 presidential candidate, Paes seems to lament how the games are going.

"You have no idea how I'm suffering. It's screwed," he tells Silva. Silva reminds Paes that other mayors across Brazil have bigger problems, and less political and financial clout.

"But you, with all those problems - my dear friend. You still are blessed by God because of the Olympics." "That's true," replies Paes. "It's true." — AP

'HONEY BADGER' DOES HARD YAKKA IN RIO RUGBY BID

SYDNEY: From ploughing through Norwegian snowfields to running in the red dirt of Australia's remote Northwest, Wallabies winger Nick Cummins had prepared himself as best he could for the return to the high octane world of sevens rugby.

It was never going to be enough, though, and after his first session with the Rio-bound Australia squad on Wednesday, he joked that had it gone on any longer, he would have been choosing a tree on which to empty the contents of his stomach. "Beautiful time of day, nice and warm, different to Japan, but look, these boys are fit, fitter than I am, as you can see," the 28-year-old said between gasps on the side of the training pitch.

"I just did two full weeks of training in Sydney just so I could come last here today..." Cummins, the self-anointed "Honey badger" of Australian rugby, is as well known for his look and creative use of local slang as he is for his try-scoring feats.

The shaggy blond hair, porn star moustache and larrikin language should not distract from a serious rugby talent that has earned him six tries in 15 tests for his country. Not that his pedigree won him any deference from the other members of the squad yesterday.

"I know when I was a younger rooster, you'd be a bit worried about saying something to Matt Giteau or Drew Mitchell, you'd be bogging yourself thinking you'd get a flogging," he said. "But these blokes are legit, the young ones stand up and put you in your place and that's what we need to have our best shot in Rio."

SHIFT MANAGER

Unlike the other Wallabies targeting

Rio, Quade Cooper and Henry Speight, Cummins is no stranger to the Australian sevens set-up and played in the team that won silver at the 2010 Commonwealth Games.

Cummins said he was confident he could quickly manage the shift from the obsession with gainline advantage in the 15-man game to a more opportunistic frame of mind. "It all comes down to your fitness, but your mind's more creative when you are not as bloody shagged," he grinned. "There is a potential Olympic spot there, what a year to do it, but it's more about getting myself back 'Eye of the Tiger' like I was as a youngster there, and being as good as I can be." At the conclusion of the Japanese season, Cummins decided he needed a break after four seasons of back-to-back rugby and visited relatives in Norway and the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

Between chopping wood in the Arctic north and fishing in the Timor Sea, he found time to drop in on the inaugural Sydney Sevens last month and enjoyed what he saw from the Australians. "I was really impressed with youngsters having a go," Cummins said.

"The old fashioned just give it a crack, it doesn't matter how big you are or how small, just up the guts and have a lash at them."

It is an attitude which Cummins has always brought to his own game and will fuel his bid for selection for next month's Hong Kong Sevens, the seventh stop on the 10-leg World Series. "He looked alright, the Badge, didn't he?" Australia coach Andy Friend said.

"With him he's a fighter. As he just said to the group, he's not there yet... but on first-session viewing he's a good fit." — Reuters



AUSTIN: Jason Day of Australia watches his second shot on the second hole during the first round of the World Golf Championships-Dell Match Play at the Austin Country Club yesterday in Austin, Texas. — AFP

TIGER'S INJURIES SELF-INFLICTED

LONDON: Tiger Woods's long-term injuries may have been self-inflicted but he will win again - although probably not a major, according to his former caddie Steve Williams. "I don't doubt that he'll come back to the winner's circle," Steve Williams said in an interview broadcast by the BBC. "But whether he comes back and wins more major championships? That's going to be a very difficult task," added the New Zealander. Williams was Woods's right-hand man between 1999 and 2009, carrying his bag for 13 of the American's 14 major victories and an astonishing 84 tournament wins in all.

"He has an incredible work ethic, when he can work hard, so I wouldn't go as far as saying he won't get back into the winner's circle because one thing he does know how to do is win," Williams said.

The former world number one has plummeted to 467th in the rankings having not picked up a club competitively after undergoing two back operations in September and October.

Williams agreed when his interviewer suggested that Woods's spate of injuries was "self-inflicted" by an intensive training and strengthening regime in his younger days.

"It's very hard to pinpoint how he's got to where he is now, but there's a lot of merit in what you've just said," Williams said. "When he looks back he might question some of the activities he did, some of the gym work he might have done that had all these injuries escalate."

Nicklaus record

Williams now works part-time for Adam Scott and will carry for the Australian when the season's first major, the US Masters, begins at Augusta in just over two weeks.

He also worked for other former major winners in Greg Norman and Ray Floyd before he picked up the job with Woods, but says Tiger is unique in his "unbelievable desire to win".

"Now other guys would be happy if they had a top-five finish, a top-10 finish, some weeks even if they made the cut... but the only time (Tiger) enjoyed was when he won."

"The rest of it didn't matter. Unless you won it wasn't a satisfactory week."

Williams and Woods do not speak since they parted company in 2009, despite the pair being

once so close that they were best man at each other's weddings. And Williams caused a furore when writing in his book last year that his former boss treated him like "a slave". But he still recalls with pride their heyday between 1999 and 2005, when Woods won nine of his major titles. "He had this amazing drive to want to break Jack

Nicklaus's record (of 18 major wins), which of course I bought into," admitted Williams. "I saw no reason to believe he wasn't going to do that. It's just a shame that it looks very difficult at this time that he's going to achieve that. "I'm not saying it's going to be impossible but it looks harder and harder." — AFP

BRITISH AUTHORITY TIGHTENS ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES

LONDON: The British Horseracing Authority (BHA) pledged yesterday to work more closely with the betting industry and other sports and regulators in the fight against corruption.

Publishing its Integrity Review, a wide-ranging initiative launched in 2015 and overseen by an independent panel, the BHA made six main recommendations to improve and maintain the sport's standing.

It said one was to "extend our partnerships with other organisations across the betting industry, other racing jurisdictions, other sports and regulators in order to increase our access to intelligence".

Other recommendations were to establish a "stakeholder integrity forum to act as an advisory group, forming a united front to help keep corruption out of horseracing" and make improvements to the disciplinary process.

The BHA said it would also work closely with stakeholders to review the processes of the disciplinary panel, licensing committee and appeal board.

British horse racing was in the spotlight in 2007 when six-times champion jockey Kieren Fallon and five members of an alleged syndicate were acquitted after being accused of fixing 27 races over a 21-month period.

The BHA review involved consulting more than 100 interested parties across the

sport including trainers, owners, jockeys, the betting public, media and legal representatives. Paul Stephenson, the former Metropolitan Police Commissioner who joined BHA last year, was the review sponsor and has encouraged whistleblowers to come forward.

"As I know from my professional past, dealing with people who have something to say but are frightened of the consequences is one of the most difficult things you can deal with," Stephenson told reporters.

"Are there people in racing who feel they want to speak out but feel they can't? Yes. Well they can."

BHA chief executive Nick Rust told the Guardian newspaper that when he took on the job last year he felt technology was posing new threats.

"We were looking at phone records and text messages but people are moving on to undetectable communications like WhatsApp," he said.

"We were getting bogged down in more complex defences and to see high-profile cases taking three years was not where we wanted to be."

"It's not that we were in a bad place but we were in danger that if we didn't take a good look at ourselves we may not maintain our leadership position," he added. — Reuters

'SYSTEMATIC' DOPING IN RUSSIAN SWIMMING

LONDON: Evidence of "systematic" doping has been unearthed in Russian swimming, a report in British newspaper The Times claimed yesterday.

Russian athletes have been banned from international competition after a World Anti-doping Agency (WADA) report uncovered evidence of state-sponsored doping and The Times said the situation in Russian swimming was similar.

It claimed that Sergei Portugalov, the doctor said to be the mastermind behind doping in Russian athletics, had pushed swimmers on Russia's national team to take performance-enhancing drugs.

The paper, which carried out its own investigation, cited a witness who testified that "pills and medicines" were available by the side of the pool during one competition in Moscow.



Sergei Portugalov

Other allegations are that two Russian swimmers were not punished after testing positive for the banned blood-booster EPO and that witnesses were "terrified" of going public due to the fear of reprisals.

Quoted by The Times, WADA president Craig Reedie said: "If these allegations are correct, they will certainly concern Wada and we will examine them in detail."

The paper said that neither Portugalov, the Russian Swimming Federation nor swimming's world governing body FINA had responded to questions.

But in a statement published by the R-Sport news agency, the Russian federation said: "The Russian Swimming Federation condemns doping."

"The Federation developed an anti-doping programme aimed at preventing doping in sport that has already been working for a few years. Information about concealed doping cases is not true."

The federation added that from 2012 to 2015 — the period identified for the alleged concealment of positive EPO tests - Vitaly Melnikov was the only Russian swimmer suspended by FINA for using EPO.

Russian swimmers have produced over 40 failed drug tests over the past decade - more than any other country.

Last week, four-time world breaststroke champion Yuliya Efimova was suspended from competition for alleged doping, amid reports she now faces a life ban for using the illegal substance meldonium. — AFP



ICC WORLD TWENTY20

BATTING 'WRONG WAY' IS WAY TO GO, SAYS STUDY

LONDON: Cricketers who face up the 'wrong way round' are seven times more likely to become professional batsmen, according to a new study published in the journal Sports Medicine yesterday.

Young players have traditionally been told to place their dominant hand lower down the blade, with the result that natural right-handers have their weaker left hand on top.

But given that in batting the top hand should guide and control the path of the bat to hit the ball, there has long been an anecdotal belief that it is an advantage for the hand with the greatest dexterity to perform this role.

The study found that cricketers adopting a reversed stance (right-handers batting left-handed, and vice versa) are far more likely to reach first-class and international level.

Indeed, the study said "professional batsmen are seven times more likely to use a reversed stance than amateurs".

The study tested 136 cricketers, ranging from international and first-class standard to amateur, and examined their hand and eye dominance.

As well as the technical advantage of having the dominant hand on top, there was a visual benefit, too.

The study found that as hand and eye dominance are matched in approximately two thirds of cases, using the reversed stance increases the likelihood that the dominant eye is the 'front' eye in a side-on activity like batting, allowing an unobstructed view of the ball.

Co-author Peter Allen, Professor of Optometry and Visual Science at Anglia

Ruskin University in Cambridge, eastern England, said: "The 'conventional' way of holding a cricket bat, with the dominant hand on the bottom of the handle, has remained basically unchanged since the invention of the game and is modelled on the stance used for other bimanual (two-handed) hitting tasks.

"For instance, the first MCC coaching manual instructs batters to pick up a bat in the same manner they would pick up an axe.

"While that might be beneficial for beginners, switching to a reversed stance gives elite players a technical and visual benefit."

MAXIMISE POTENTIAL

He added: "By adopting the conventional stance, batsmen may have been unintentionally taught to bat 'back to front' and

might not have maximised their full potential in the game."

Some of the world's leading batsmen of recent times have used a reversed stance, including Clive Lloyd, David Gower, Brian Lara, Matthew Hayden and current England pair Alastair Cook and Ben Stokes.

In a telephone interview with AFP, Professor Allen said the research had come about by chance.

"David Mann, one of the other co-authors, was doing some separate work with Cricket Australia when he noticed that players who batted one way were throwing the ball another," he explained.

"But the advantage of being a left-hander who bats left-handed is significantly outweighed by that gained by a batsman who adopts a reversed stance," said Professor Allen.

An example cited by the study was that of Australia's Michael Hussey, a right-hander who learnt to bat left-handed so he could emulate childhood hero Allan Border.

Professor Allen added: "We have limited our study to cricket, but the results may apply to other sports."

"In golf, three of the four men to have won a major playing left-handed were right-hand dominant, while other legendary golfers, such as Ben Hogan and Arnold Palmer, were left-hand dominant but played, right-handed." —AFP

BLACK CAPS NOW WORLD T20 FAVOURITES: KIWI MEDIA

WELLINGTON: The Black Caps' undefeated march to the World Twenty20 semi-finals means the side that international pundits initially dismissed as "a lesser team" are now tournament favourites, New Zealand media said yesterday.

The New Zealanders seized their place in the final four with a 22-run win over Pakistan in Mohali on Tuesday, adding to a string of scalps that already includes India and Australia.

All three results would have been considered upsets at the start of the tournament, but NZ Herald cricket writer Andrew Alderson said the Black Caps were on track for their biggest-ever achievement on the world stage.

"New Zealand's three convincing victories mean they now loom as a favourite to take out their maiden World Cup or World T20 title," he wrote.

Former England captain Michael Vaughan ruffled Kiwi feathers last week when he criticised India for allowing "lesser teams into the game" during their tournament opener against the Black Caps.

New Zealand fans also noted that Indian television commentators seemed incredulous that the underdogs ground out a 47-run victory over the highly-fancied hosts in Nagpur. But the win over Pakistan means they will no longer be underestimated, with Fairfax New Zealand's Duncan Johnstone labelling them "the team to beat

at the Twenty20 World Cup". "While we marvelled at their bold spin-win over hosts India and delighted in seeing old foe Australia, the nature of the victory over Pakistan has New Zealand looking like the real deal to win the World T20 title," he said.

Johnstone pointed to New Zealand's potent young spin attack and their batting depth, underlined by Martin Guptill's 80 off 48 balls in Mohali.

He said the most impressive aspect of the win was the way the Black Caps refused to panic as Pakistan made a strong start to their run chase, instead setting about strangling the innings.

"This is a team that looks increasingly good at defending totals as well as setting them," he wrote.

Radio Sport cricket commentator Bryan Waddle praised skipper Kane Williamson, who is new to the job after replacing Brendon McCullum but has shown a willingness to pick players on form and forged a winning unit.

"They've done it in style against some of the best teams in the world... it just highlights where this team is at the moment," he said. New Zealand have only reached the semis of the World T20 once before, at the inaugural event in 2007. They were the form team going into the final of last year's World Cup before collapsing against Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. —AFP



NEW DELHI: England's Ben Stokes (L) watches as Afghanistan's Shafiqullah Shafaq successfully reaches the crease during the World T20 cricket tournament match between England and Afghanistan at The Feroz Shah Kotla Cricket Stadium in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

ALI THE STAR AS ENGLAND SURVIVE AFGHAN SCARE

NEW DELHI: Eoin Morgan breathed a sigh of relief about England's strength in depth after a late flourish from Moeen Ali and David Willey spared the team's blushes yesterday against Afghanistan at cricket's World Twenty20.

Ali and Willey shared an unbroken 57-run partnership for the eighth wicket to reach 142 for seven after being 85 for seven at one stage as England eventually beat the minnows by 15 runs.

After losing early wickets, Afghanistan never looked like overhauling their illustrious opponents but went down fighting as they reached 127 for nine at New Delhi's Feroz Shah Kotla stadium.

The result means that Afghanistan have now no chance of progressing to the semi-finals but England are in second place in their group ahead of their final match on Saturday against Sri Lanka.

After last Friday's dramatic victory over South Africa when England pulled off a record run chase in Mumbai, the batting performance was a major letdown. And Morgan, who was bowled for a golden duck, said that the team should not have been caught unawares by the more turning conditions in New Delhi and had failed to adapt to their new surroundings.

"I think it was simply a matter of not adapting," Morgan told reporters. "Coming here and playing a T20 World Cup I think this is the type of wicket that every single one of us were expecting," he added.

Moeen's unbeaten 41 was the one innings of real note but he was ably supported by Willey who hit two sixes in a sparkling 20 off 17 balls. The penultimate over yielded 25 runs as Amir Hamza took a battering. "I think difference between 120 and 140 is huge. Our strength is that we bat right down the order. But I thought he (Moeen) batted really well," said Morgan.

ENGLAND MADE TO SWEAT

The Afghan slow bowlers made England sweat on a hot and sunny afternoon in the Indian capital to reduce them to 85 for seven.

Skipper Asghar Stanikzai gave the new ball to Hamza and the left-arm spinner did not disappoint, snaring dashing opener Jason Roy in the third over. James Vince, who came into the side in place of the injured Alex Hales, then tried to counter-attack along with in-form Joe Root with a 26-run second wicket partnership.

But Mohammad Nabi's introduction reaped immediate rewards as the veteran off-spinner soon had both danger men trudging back to the dugout.

Vince was caught and bowled while the departure of Morgan and Root—who was run out in quick succession spelt big trouble for England.

With the batting was in a shambles, leg-spinners Rashid Khan and Samiullah Shenwari joined the party to remind England of their humiliating

SCOREBOARD			
NEW DELHI: Scoreboard of the World Twenty20 match between England and Afghanistan at the Feroz Shah Kotla ground in New Delhi yesterday:			
England:		Noor Ali Zdran c Morgan b Ali	17
J. Roy b Hamza	5	A. Stanikzai c Root b Jordan	1
J. Vince c & b Nabi	22	G. Naib c Stokes b Willey	0
J. Root run out	12	R. Khan c Morgan b Ali	15
E. Morgan by Nabi	0	M. Nabi c Jordan b Rashid	12
B. Stokes b Khan	7	S. Shenwari c Root by Stokes	22
J. Buttler c Nabi b Shenwari	6	Najibullah Zdran run out	14
M. Ali not out	41	Shafiqullah not out	35
C. Jordan c & b Khan	15	A. Hamza run out	1
D. Willey not out	20	Shapoor Zdran not out	0
Extras (lb 6, w 8)	14	Extras (lb 2, w 4)	6
Total (for 7 wickets, 20 overs)	142	Total (for 9 wickets, 20 overs)	127
Did not bat: A. Rashid, L. Plunkett		Fall of wickets: 1-16 (Roy), 2-42 (Vince), 3-42 (Morgan), 4-42 (Root), 5-50 (Buttler), 6-57 (Stokes), 7-85 (Jordan)	
Bowling: Shapoor Zdran 4-0-34-0, Hamza 4-0-45-1, Nabi 4-0-17-2, Khan 4-0-17-2, Shenwari 4-0-23-1		85-7 (Najibullah Zdran), 8-94 (Shenwari)	
Afghanistan:		Bowling: Willey 4-0-23-2, Jordan 4-0-27-1, Plunkett 4-1-12-0, Ali 2-0-17-1, Rashid 3-0-18-2, Stokes 3-0-28-1	
M. Shahzad lbw b Willey	4	Result: England win by 15 runs.	

2014 World T20 exit when they lost to the Netherlands. But Ali's 33-ball knock, which was laced with four boundaries and a six, knocked some of the gloss off the Afghan figures.

"They played good cricket especially Moeen Ali so they were able to take the score to 140. He played according to the situation," said Rashid.

Afghanistan's chase was dealt a severe blow after destructive opener Mohammad Shahzad (four) was trapped lbw off David Willey with the third ball of the innings.

Willey and new-ball partner Chris Jordan kept up the pressure to rattle the Afghan top-order with danger men Stanikzai and Gulbadin Naib managing one and nought respectively.

The minnows slipped further after spin was introduced as Moeen and Adil Rashid struck in their first overs to give Afghanistan a taste of their own medicine.

The Afghans were never in the mix after being reduced to 13 for two and then 39 for five as England gained control of proceedings.

Leg-spinner Rashid soon got another scalp in Mohammad Nabi and Afghanistan's journey in their fourth World T20 appearance was all but over.

Shenwari (22) and Shafiqullah (35 not out) tried to breathe some life into the chase with a few lusty blows in the finale but could do little to alter the outcome. "If we play with these international teams we have the capability to play good cricket. So we need to play more cricket against these sides," said Rashid. England stand second in the Super 10 group table after two straight wins, while Afghanistan remain bottom of the heap. —AFP



NEW DELHI: England's Joe Root plays a shot during the World T20 cricket tournament match between Afghanistan and England at The Feroz Shah Kotla Cricket Ground in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

BANGLADESH'S TASKIN LOSES SUSPENSION APPEAL

NEW DELHI: Bangladesh failed in their frantic bid to get pacer Taskin Ahmed's bowling suspension overturned to help revive their flagging World Twenty20 campaign after a judicial commissioner upheld the ban for an illegal bowling action.

The right-arm bowler and his team mate, left-arm spinner Arifat Sunny, were suspended from bowling on Saturday after both were reported for illegal actions following a March 9 qualifier against the Netherlands in Dharamsala.

"...Taskin Ahmed's suspension from bowling in international cricket has been upheld, following a review hearing conducted by a Judicial Commissioner," the International Cricket Council (ICC) said in a statement on Wednesday.

After Taskin requested an expeditious review of his case and judicial commissioner Michael Beloff held a teleconference on Tuesday, the global governing body explained their decision.

"Having carefully considered those arguments and the responses of the ICC, Mr Beloff has now notified all parties con-

cerned of his decision that Taskin's suspension from bowling in international cricket shall be upheld and indicated that a written reasoned decision will be provided in due course," it said.

After being reported in Dharamsala, Taskin, was assessed at the ICC-accredited test centre in Chennai where, according to media reports, his bouncers were found to exceed the ICC limit of elbow extensions.

After fixing his action, Taskin, who turns 21 next month, could apply for a re-assessment, the ICC said. "In the event of such re-assessment concluding that Taskin has remedied his bowling action and that his elbow extension is within the permissible level on all of his standard deliveries, his suspension shall be lifted and he shall be permitted to resume bowling in international cricket." It has been a forgettable World Twenty20 for Taskin's team so far, with Bangladesh losing their first two main draw matches against Pakistan and Australia, and they are heavy underdogs when they take on hosts India in Bangalore later yesterday. —Reuters



MOHALI: Australia's cricket team captain Steven Smith plays a shot during a training session at the Punjab Cricket Stadium Association Stadium in Mohali yesterday, ahead of their World T20 Cricket tournament match against Pakistan tomorrow. — AFP

SERENA HOPES MIAMI HOME TURF CAN BRING TITLE

MIAMI: World number one Serena Williams, who lost finals at the Australian Open and last week at Indian Wells, is counting on the Miami Open to revamp her title-winning form.

The 34-year-old American is top seed for the WTA and ATP hardcourt event as well as the three-time defending champion with eight wins overall.

"This is a tournament I've grown up with. This is my home," Williams said Tuesday. "Things click for me here."

The 21-time Grand Slam singles champion failed to add another major title to her haul in January, falling to Germany's Angelique Kerber in the Australian Open final. And she lost to Victoria Azarenka of Belarus at the

Indian Wells final, dropping back-to-back finals for the first time since 2004.

"Feeling positive and really good," Williams said. "You have to keep going. You can't stop. That's kind of my attitude. At this point in my career, I'm just having a lot of fun."

Watching Azarenka show top form after battles the past two seasons with nagging foot injuries helped motivate Williams in more ways than one.

"We all know I hate losing more than anything," Williams said. "Seeing someone else do well motivates me. It's a rivalry. It's a friendly rivalry but it's an intense rivalry."

"It was really impressive. She has been through a lot. She has always been

a really good player." While seeing a star fall short of the crown could offer encouragement to sharks circling ever closer, none of Williams' top-rated rivals saw a drop in form coming in an event she has dominated for years.

"Always when she's in the tournament, she's the favorite," said Spain's Carla Suarez Navarro.

"She's not like a machine or a robot. She can't win every tournament she plays. She's always the best because she always wants more."

No one realizes that more than Kerber, who imposed a fifth career Grand Slam singles final loss upon Williams. "She is still the best player," Kerber said. "She's still the number one.

She is still a champion." But Kerber, who like Azarenka could see Williams in the Miami final, has a big confidence boost after her Melbourne breakthrough.

"I recognize I am a Grand Slam champion. I have a lot more things to do," Kerber said. "It's a different pressure than I had before."

"I have much more confidence inside of me. It feels different but I know I need to go with what worked because this is why I had the highlight of my career."

SERENA 'ALWAYS THE TARGET'

Two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova says there is less shock in Williams losing but she is still the player

to beat. "She's always the target," Kvitova said. "But I'm not surprised. Women's tennis is always open and the level is really close. Vika just played very good."

Azarenka's return impressed Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska, who was stunned by both Williams defeats.

"I didn't expect her to lose in Australia," she said. "And back here Vika played great tennis. She was on fire. You could see she was back."

Williams said her focus was on the three remaining Grand Slam events of the year more so than the Olympics. And she did say she hopes to become a mother one day. "I want to have kids," Williams said. "I am pushing the envelope, though." — AFP

BIG-SPENDING CHINA FACING WCUP WOE

BEIJING: China's spending power has taken football by storm but the national team is facing more World Cup heartache heading into a qualifying showdown today.

Chinese clubs splurged a world-leading 331 million euros (\$371 million) on players in the January-February transfer window, and President Xi Jinping is leading a concerted push to turn China into a footballing power.

But Team Dragon will probably have to wait until Qatar 2022 to reach their second World Cup after a stumbling attempt to make the next edition in Russia in 2018.

While Japan, Australia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and even lowly Thailand look likely to join already qualified South Korea and Qatar in the next round, 96th-ranked China's hopes are hanging by a thread.

China host Maldives on Thursday and unbeaten Qatar on Tuesday, needing to win both games to leapfrog Hong Kong into second place in Group C.

Even then, China have five countries ahead of them in the race to progress as one of the four best-performing second-placed teams, along with the eight group winners. The matches double as qualifiers for the next Asian Cup, meaning China is likely to have to go through a separate round of games to reach the 2019 tournament in the UAE. "Frankly speaking, from China's point of view, the Maldives national team doesn't represent the slightest threat," striker Yang Xu told Chinese broadcaster CCTV before the game in Wuhan.

"We have to be confident. And we should seal the game early." Interim coach

Gao Hongbo leads the team after Frenchman Alain Perrin was shown the door following November's 0-0 draw with Hong Kong which left China staring at elimination.

HARRY'S HOTSHOTS

Elsewhere former Tottenham Hotspur boss Harry Redknapp will hope to inspire Jordan's campaign as he begins a two-game stint with the Middle Eastern team.

AI Nashama (The Chivalrous) trail Australia by two points in Group B with two matches left, culminating in Tuesday's clash with the Asian Cup-holders in Sydney.

"Do I think we will reach the finals? I hope so," Redknapp said this week, ahead of Thursday's home game against Bangladesh. "We will try everything in our power to do that. We will give everything we have to do that."

Unfancied Thailand, the world number 118, play their final game against Iraq on Thursday needing only a draw to take their place in the third round of qualifying.

Chilly conditions in neutral venue Tehran are among the major concerns for the champions of steamy Southeast Asia, who have drafted in a doctor to help them cope. "The weather in Tehran is a concern as it is quite cold," said coach Kiatsuk Senamuang, according to the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) website.

"We have contacted a doctor in Iran already so the boys will be looked after well. We have come many days in advance to help the players get used to the weather here." — AFP



CHICAGO: Dallas Stars' Johnny Oduya, left, collides with a former teammate, Chicago Blackhawks center Andrew Shaw, during the third period of an NHL hockey game Tuesday, in Chicago. The Stars won 6-2. — AP

CAPS BEAT SENS TO CLINCH TOP SPOT IN EASTERN CONFERENCE

OTTAWA: Alex Ovechkin scored his 43rd goal as the Washington Capitals clinched the Metropolitan Division title and the top seed in the Eastern Conference playoffs with a 4-2 victory over the Ottawa Senators on Tuesday night. Mike Richards, Nicklas Backstrom and T.J. Oshie, into an empty net, also scored for the Capitals. Braden Holtby stopped 28 shots. Chris Wideman and Mika Zibanejad scored for the Senators. Craig Anderson made 18 saves. Ottawa lost defenseman Dion Phaneuf after he took a hit from Brooks Orpik in the second period. Phaneuf managed to play a few more shifts, but did not return for the third period because of a lower-body injury.

STARS 6, BLACKHAWKS 2

Vernon Fiddler scored two of Dallas' four goals in the first period to help the Stars clinch a playoff spot with a victory over Chicago. Dallas stretched its win streak to three and improved to 4-1 against Chicago, outscoring the Stanley Cup champions 20-11 in the season series. Colton Sceviour and Patrick Eaves also scored in the first, and Jamie Benn had two assists in his 500th NHL game. The Stars lead the Western Conference with 97 points with eight games left on their schedule. They are on track for their first division title since they took the Pacific in 2006. The Blackhawks played without starting goalie Corey Crawford for the fourth straight game due to an upper-body injury, and Scott Darling was pulled after Dallas' big first period. Michael Leighton made 16 saves in his first NHL appearance since January 2013. Chicago has dropped six of seven to fall off the pace in the tough Central Division, including a pair of losses to the Stars. Andrew Shaw and Richard Panik scored for the second straight game.

LIGHTNING 6, RED WINGS 2

Erik Condra ended a 20-game drought with a pair of goals to lead Tampa Bay past Detroit. Steven Stamkos, Nikita Kucherov and Ondrej Palat each had a goal and an assist, and Vladislav Namestnikov also scored for the Lightning. Brian Boyle, Tyler Johnson and Victor Hedman added two assists apiece. Tampa Bay tied the Florida Panthers atop the Atlantic Division with 89 points. Both teams have nine games remaining. Justin Abdelkader and Darren Helm scored for the Red Wings, who were outshot 34-25. Coupled with Philadelphia's shootout loss at Columbus, Detroit fell into a tie with the Flyers for the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference, two points behind the New York Islanders.

BLUE JACKETS 3, FLYERS 2, SO

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) - Boone Jenner scored late in the third period and again in the shootout after Cam Atkinson's tying goal with 8 seconds left, rallying Columbus to an improbable victory over Philadelphia. Jenner scored in the fifth round of the shootout when he faked goalie Steve Mason out of the net and fired the puck in. Sergei Bobrovsky turned away Sean Couturier moments later to secure the victory. Jenner and Atkinson both scored in the final 1:04 of regulation to force the extra session. Atkinson lifted a shot over Mason to tie it 2-2 after Jenner tipped in a shot by Seth Jones nearly a minute earlier.

Mason finished with 51 saves for the Flyers, who blew a two-goal lead in the final 65 seconds but still earned a point. That was enough to pull them into a tie with Detroit for the final playoff position in the East. Ryan White and captain Claude Giroux scored for the Flyers. The loss was Philadelphia's eighth straight in Columbus since December 2005.

WILD 2, KINGS 1

Devan Dubnyk made a season-high 38 saves and Minnesota's penalty kill kept up its strong work as the Wild beat Los Angeles to move back into possession of the final playoff spot in the Western Conference. Erik Haula and Mikko Koivu scored for the Wild, who have killed 15 straight penalties over the last eight games since March 6. Tyler Toffoli had the goal for the Pacific Division leaders, who lost for the second time in two nights after winning 11 of their previous 14 games.

BLUES 1, SHARKS 0

Brian Elliott made 37 saves in his second consecutive shutout since returning from an injury and Robby Fabbri scored midway through the third period to lift St. Louis over San Jose. Elliott has stopped all 56 shots he's faced against Vancouver and San Jose after missing nearly four weeks with a knee injury sustained in a loss to the Sharks last month. His return helped the Blues finish their road trip 3-2-0 to remain two points behind Central Division-leading Dallas. Martin Jones made 23 saves but the Sharks failed to convert on a late two-man advantage and missed an opportunity to clinch a playoff berth.

CANADIENS 4, DUCKS 3

Lucas Lessio scored his first goal in 11 games with Montreal to help the Canadiens defeat Anaheim. Torrey Mitchell, Alex Galchenyuk and Mike Brown also scored for the Canadiens. Jakob Silfverberg scored twice and Corey Perry reached the 30-goal mark for the Ducks. It is the sixth time in his career that Perry has scored 30 or more goals and the third season in a row. Joel Hanley assisted on the goals by Mitchell and

Brown for his first two NHL points in his second career game.

SABRES 3, HURRICANES 2

Johan Larsson scored with 2:49 left as Buffalo rallied to beat Carolina. Larsson's winner came a minute after Evander Kane tied it, and Carlo Colaiacovo also scored to help the Sabres earn their third win in five games. Joakim Nordstrom gave the Hurricanes a 2-1 lead with 6:20 remaining. Chris Terry also scored for Carolina, which has lost five straight. Chad Johnson stopped 25 shots for the Sabres, while Cam Ward made 22 saves for the Hurricanes.

JETS 2, CANUCKS 0

Ondrej Pavelec made 28 saves for his first shutout of the season to help Winnipeg beat reeling Vancouver. Adam Lowry and Mark Scheifele scored for the Jets. Scheifele's empty-netter was his team-leading 24th goal of the season. The Canucks were shut out for the third consecutive game, tying a franchise record. Their goal drought is at 228 minutes. The Canucks having not scored in 11 periods going back to the first period of their March 16 matchup at home against Colorado. Vancouver goalie Jacob Markstrom made 47 saves.

COYOTES 4, OILERS 2

Tobias Rieder scored the winning goal in the second period and Oliver Ekman-Larsson returned from injury to spark Arizona against Edmonton. The Coyotes extended their point streak to 23 games (19-0-4) over their division rivals with the help of Mike Smith's 27 saves on his 34th birthday. Alex Tanguay and Martin Hanzal also scored, Max Domi added an empty-netter and Ekman-Larsson chipped in with an assist. After missing six games with an ailing shoulder, he was on the ice for all four Arizona goals. Jordan Eberle and Mark Letestu scored for the Oilers, and Connor McDavid had two assists to extend his point streak to five games. Cam Talbot stopped 27 shots in Edmonton's second straight loss and 24th defeat in 29 meetings with the Coyotes. — AP

SERENA, DJOKOVIC DIFFER ON ISSUE OF EQUAL PAY IN TENNIS

KEY BISCAYNE: Some of the top players in tennis expressed disgust Tuesday with the comments made by the now-former director of the BNP Paribas Open tournament in Indian Wells, with Serena Williams also disagreeing with fellow No. 1 Novak Djokovic on the issue of equal pay.

Raymond Moore, the former chief operating officer and tournament director, resigned late Monday, a day after telling reporters that female players should be thankful to their male counterparts "because they ride on the coattails of the men."

"If I was a lady player, I'd go down every night on my knees and thank God that Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal were born, because they have carried this sport," he added. Moore later apologized, but stepped down 24 hours later.

Players, both men and women, quickly denounced the comments and that continued Tuesday at the Miami Open. But there was also concern raised about comments Djokovic made suggesting the men should seek more money because their matches tend to attract more spectators.

"I think that our men's tennis world, ATP world, should fight for more, because the stats are showing that we have much more spectators on the men's tennis matches," Djokovic said earlier this week. "I think that's one of the reasons why maybe we should get awarded more."

Williams disagreed when asked about the comments. "If I have a daughter and she plays tennis, and I have a son who plays tennis, I wouldn't say that my son deserves more money because he's a man," she said. "I would say they deserve the same amount of money."

"I think (Djokovic) is entitled to his opinion," she added. "But if he has a daughter - I

think he has a son right now - I think he should talk to his daughter and tell her his son deserves more money than you because he's a boy." vAndy Murray, ranked No. 2 in the world, believes in equal pay.

"I think there should be equal pay, 100 percent, especially at all combined events," Murray said. "The timing of it was just so strange. It was right before you had a great women's final with like 16,000 people sitting in the stadium."

He also noted that interest and attendance differs depending on the matches, saying a Williams match in Miami will pack a stadium more than many men's matches.

"Men's tennis has been lucky over the last 10 years because of the quality of players," he said. "But the whole of tennis should capitalize on that and not just the men's game, in my opinion."

WTA chief executive officer Steve Simon, who came to the WTA last fall after being the tournament director of the BNP Paribas Open, released a statement related to Moore's departure on Tuesday.

"Raymond Moore has taken full responsibility for the unacceptable comments he has made," Simon said. "It is the right decision for him to step down. The BNP Paribas Open has supported the payment of equal prize money to all players since 2009. The WTA looks forward to working with Mr. (Larry) Ellison and the Indian Wells team on continued efforts in making the sport better and equal for all players."

American John Isner also expressed his disappointment over the Moore incident. "I think those comments were in a bit of poor taste," Isner said. "It has caused somewhat of a controversy now. As far as our tour is concerned, the ATP is fighting for what we think we're worth and the WTA is doing that as well." — AP



KEY BISCAYNE: Michael Mmoh plays a match against Alexander Zverev of Germany during Day 3 of the Miami Open presented by Itau at Crandon Park Tennis Center yesterday in Key Biscayne, Florida. — AFP

NHL Results/Standings													
Buffalo 3, Carolina 2; Columbus 3, Philadelphia 2 (SO); Montreal 4, Anaheim 3; Washington 4, Ottawa 2; Tampa Bay 6, Detroit 2; Winnipeg 2, Vancouver 0; Dallas 6, Chicago 2; Minnesota 2, Los Angeles 1; Arizona 4, Edmonton 2; St. Louis 1, San Jose 0.													
Western Conference													
Central Division													
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS								
Dallas	44	21	9	242	213	97	Florida	40	24	9	207	181	89
St. Louis	43	22	9	195	185	95	Boston	39	26	8	216	197	86
Chicago	42	25	7	205	185	91	Detroit	36	26	11	186	196	83
Nashville	37	23	13	202	187	87	Ottawa	34	32	8	213	227	76
Minnesota	35	28	11	196	187	81	Montreal	34	34	6	196	212	74
Colorado	38	31	4	198	204	80	Buffalo	30	34	10	176	200	70
Winnipeg	30	37	6	186	216	66	Toronto	26	35	11	174	209	63
Pacific Division													
Los Angeles	44	24	5	199	167	93	Metropolitan Division						
Anaheim	40	23	9	185	168	89	Washington	52	15	5	231	170	109
San Jose	41	26	6	214	186	88	NY Rangers	41	24	8	207	192	90
Arizona	32	34	7	192	219	71	Pittsburgh	40	24	8	204	179	88
Calgary	31	36	6	202	228	68	NY Islanders	38	24	9	197	181	85
Vancouver	27	33	12	167	207	66	Philadelphia	35	24	13	188	193	83
Edmonton	29	40	7	183	223	65	New Jersey	35	31	7	166	189	77
Eastern Conference													
Atlantic Division													
Tampa Bay	42	26	5	202	173	89	Carolina	31	28	14	177	198	76
						Columbus	30	35	8	191	225	68	

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

DJILOBODJI BANNED FOR CUT-THROAT GESTURE

BERLIN: Werder Bremen defender Papy Djilobodji received a three-match ban from the German FA on Tuesday after making a throat-slitting gesture during Saturday's 1-1 draw with Mainz in the Bundesliga.

Referee Manuel Graefe missed the incident, but German football officials reviewed the matter after Djilobodji pulled his index finger across his throat in

the direction of Mainz winger Pablo de Blasis. The Senegal international, who joined on loan from Chelsea until the end of the season in January, is set to miss Bremen's trip to Borussia Dortmund after the international break as well as home games against Augsburg and Wolfsburg.

On top of being accused of unsportsmanlike conduct, the 27-year-old also faces a further one-

game suspension after picking up his fifth yellow card against Mainz.

In November 2009, St Pauli forward Deniz Naki made a similar gesture to Hansa Rostock fans during a German league match and received a three-match ban from the DFB.

However, Werder have appealed the decision in a bid to free up Djilobodji as they battle to avoid

relegation, with Viktor Skripnik's side just one point above the drop zone with seven games left to play.

"We maintain that the ruling of a three-match ban is unjustifiable. Above all, we believe that, under the circumstances, the severity and the wrongdoing in this case was lesser than that of the Deniz Naki case," said Bremen chief executive Thomas Eichin. — AFP

MESSI, SUAREZ RETURN FOR S AMERICAN QUALIFIERS

MONTEVIDEO: Barcelona team-mates Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez will make a long-awaited return to World Cup duty this week when South America's marathon qualifying competition for the 2018 finals in Russia resumes.

Suarez has not kicked a ball for Uruguay since he was slapped with a global ban after chomping on the shoulder of Italy defender Giorgio Chiellini at the 2014 World Cup finals in Brazil.

Messi meanwhile missed the opening four matches of Argentina's 2018 qualifying campaign earlier this season after suffering a knee injury while on club duty for Barcelona in September.

The five-time FIFA World Player of the Year could not be returning at a better time for Argentina, who face a demanding trip to Santiago on Thursday to face reigning champions Chile in a rematch of the Copa America final. Argentina made a shaky start to qualifying, suffering a shock home defeat against Ecuador in October, before draws against Paraguay and Brazil. However the 2014 World Cup runners-up breathed life into their campaign with a 1-0 away win against Colombia in November, a crucial victory that lifted them from near the bottom of the table to within striking distance of the automatic qualifying positions.

Messi's return however has been offset by a wave of injuries that has deprived Argentina coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino of a slew of foreign-based stars, most notably Juventus's in-form striker Paulo Dybala, Paris Saint-Germain's Javier Pastore and Benfica's Nicolas Gaitan. With Carlos Tevez dropped, Martino has turned to unheralded Argentina-based forward Lanus to bolster his attacking options for Thursday's clash. The 28-year-old was a team-mate of Messi's in the Argentina squad that won the gold medal at the 2008 Olympics but is yet to win his first full international cap for the two-time World Cup winners.

RELAXED SUAREZ

Argentina will face a Chile side more or

less at full strength, with Bayern Munich midfielder Arturo Vidal (suspension) the only significant absentee. Arsenal's Alexis Sanchez, Barcelona goalkeeper Claudio Bravo and Inter Milan's Gary Medel are all available for newly appointed Chile coach Juan Antonio Pizzi, who took over in January following the abrupt resignation of Jorge Sampaoli, the Argentine who master-minded Chile's Copa America triumph. Uruguay striker Suarez meanwhile is relishing the prospect of being reunited with his international team-mates for the first time in nearly two years when La Celeste travel to Recife to take on Brazil on Friday. "Obviously after a long time without seeing them (Uruguay team mates and staff) it will be a strange feeling, but there is also the pleasure of seeing them all again. I haven't seen them for nearly two years," Suarez told Spanish newspaper El Pais in a recent interview.

"There is pleasure and satisfaction that (the ban) is all over and now I can enjoy being with them again," added the 29-year-old, who has scored 37 goals in all competitions for Barcelona this season. Suarez meanwhile said Uruguay's solid start to qualifying—three wins in four games—showed that the team were more than a one-man band. "I am quite calm because these days the national team works as a group, it is not about the individual," he said.

"I am just going to work together and do my little bit for what Uruguay is doing in these qualifiers. I am not under any pressure, on the contrary I am just there to contribute what I can with my football." In other matches this week, Ecuador will be looking to maintain their 100 percent start with victory over Paraguay in Quito on Thursday while Colombia travel to the thin air of La Paz aiming to bounce back from the disappointment of defeat to Argentina in their last outing.

Peru meanwhile will be chasing their second win of the qualifiers when they host Venezuela-bottom of the table after four defeats from four matches-in Lima. — AFP



OKLAHOMA: Houston Rockets guard James Harden, right, shoots in front of Oklahoma City Thunder center Enes Kanter during the third quarter of an NBA basketball game in Oklahoma City, Tuesday. Oklahoma City won 111-107. — AP

WESTBROOK'S TRIPLE-DOUBLE LEADS THUNDER PAST ROCKETS 111-107

OKLAHOMA: Russell Westbrook had 21 points, 15 assists and 13 rebounds to help the Thunder beat the Houston Rockets 111-107 on Tuesday night. Westbrook has 15 triple-doubles this season and 34 in his career. It's the most triple-doubles by a player in a season since 1988-89, when Magic Johnson had 17 and Michael Jordan had 15. It was also Westbrook's sixth triple-double in March. According to STATS, it's the most by a player in a calendar month since Jordan had seven in April 1989. It was his third in a row and fourth in his past five games. Kevin Durant scored 23 points and Dion Waiters added 17 to help the Thunder win their fifth straight. James Harden had 24 points, a career-high 16 assists and seven rebounds for the Rockets. Dwight Howard had 16 points and 13 rebounds and Patrick Beverley added 16 points.

LAKERS 107, GRIZZLIES 100

Jordan Clarkson scored 22 points and Kobe Bryant added 20 as the Lakers snapped a four-game losing streak. Bryant scored 12 points in the third quarter, but the superstar sat out the final 4:20. Brandon Bass got eight of his 18 points in the fourth while Los Angeles' younger players closed out an unlikely victory over the playoff-bound Grizzlies, who had won the clubs' first three meetings of the season. The Western Conference-worst Lakers wrapped up an eight-game homestand with three wins, beating contenders Golden State and Memphis. Tony Allen made all 12 of his shots while scoring 27 points for the Grizzlies, who had won two straight. Zach Randolph and Lance Stephenson added 16 points apiece.

HEAT 113, PELICANS 99

Hassan Whiteside had 24 points, 14 and three blocked shots to lead Miami past injury-ravaged New Orleans. Dwyane Wade and Goran Dragic each scored 23 points for the Heat, who've won nine of 12 games to put Miami in position to grab a playoff seeding as high as third in the Eastern Conference. Jrupe Holiday scored 24 for New Orleans, but missed 16 of his 23 shots. His shooting struggles against Miami's stout defense was part of a theme for New Orleans, which shot only 39.1 percent (34 of 87) for the game. Luke Babbitt scored a season-high 23 points for the Pelicans, who trailed by double digits for much of the game before briefly getting as close as five points in the fourth quarter.

HORNETS 105, NETS 100

Nicolas Batum scored 23 points to lead Charlotte past Brooklyn. Jeremy Lin added 21 points, a night after scoring 29 in Charlotte's rally from 23 down to beat the San Antonio Spurs. Brook Lopez had 29 points, nine rebounds and a season-high six assists, and Sean Kilpatrick added a career-high 25 points for the Nets. Batum hit two big shots down the stretch to key the win. Batum had a four-point play to put Charlotte up 91-84 with 4:11 left and 3-pointer to extend the lead to 96-88 with 2:44 remaining. Bojan Bogdanovic cut the deficit to 98-97. Kemba Walker then sank two free throws to push Charlotte's lead to 100-97 and the Hornets never looked back. — AP

NBA results/standings

LA Lakers 107, Memphis 100; Brooklyn 100, Charlotte 105; New Orleans 99, Miami 113; Oklahoma City 111, Houston 107.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference				
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB				
Toronto	48	21	.696	—	Oklahoma City	49	22	.690
Boston	41	30	.577	8	Portland	36	35	.507
New York	28	43	.394	21	Utah	34	36	.486
Brooklyn	19	51	.271	29.5	Denver	29	42	.408
Philadelphia	9	62	.127	40	Minnesota	22	48	.314
Central Division				Pacific Division				
Cleveland	50	20	.714	—	Golden State	63	7	.900
Indiana	37	33	.529	13	LA Clippers	43	26	.623
Chicago	36	33	.522	13.5	Sacramento	27	43	.386
Detroit	37	34	.521	13.5	Phoenix	19	51	.271
Milwaukee	30	41	.423	20.5	LA Lakers	15	55	.214
Southeast Division				Southwest Division				
Miami	41	29	.586	—	San Antonio	59	11	.843
Atlanta	41	30	.577	0.5	Memphis	41	31	.569
Charlotte	41	30	.577	0.5	Dallas	35	35	.500
Washington	35	35	.500	6	Houston	35	36	.493
Orlando	29	41	.414	12	New Orleans	26	44	.371



BERLIN: P Mario Gomez, second right, jogs during a training session of the German national soccer team in Berlin, Germany, yesterday. Germany will face the team of England on Saturday, March 26, 2016 for a friendly soccer match in the German capital Berlin. — AP

EX-OFFICIAL TAKKAS PLEADS NOT GUILTY IN BRIBERY CASE

NEW YORK/ZURICH: Costas Takkas, former secretary-general of the Cayman Islands Football Association, pleaded not guilty on Tuesday to US charges that he participated in bribery schemes under investigation at world soccer's governing body, FIFA.

Takkas, who was extradited from Switzerland, pleaded not guilty in federal court in Brooklyn, New York, to charges that include engaging in conspiracies to commit racketeering, wire fraud and money laundering.

He was released on a \$1 million bond, said Nellin McIntosh, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Attorney's Office in Brooklyn, said in an email. Takkas will be under house arrest in Miami, she said.

A lawyer for Takkas did not respond to a request for comment.

Takkas, a British citizen, is among 42 individuals and entities charged as part of a U.S. investigation into more than \$200 million in bribes and kickbacks sought by soccer officials for marketing and broadcast

rights to tournaments and matches.

He was arrested in Zurich along with six other soccer officials in May 2015 as the U.S. Justice Department unveiled the blockbuster case, which has sent Switzerland-based FIFA and other governing bodies into an unprecedented crisis.

The Swiss Federal Office of Justice (FOJ) approved the extradition of Takkas, a former attaché to the president of the Confederation of North and Central American and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF), in October. The FOJ said on Tuesday in a statement that his appeal of the extradition was rejected on March 3.

It said it had turned down a similar appeal from Julio Rocha, former president of the Nicaraguan Football Federation and the last remaining FIFA official in Swiss custody. "This decision is not yet legally binding as Rocha has 10 days in which to lodge an appeal with the Federal Supreme Court," the FOJ said. — Reuters



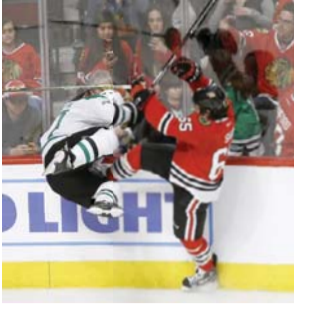
ABIDJAN: Ivory Coast's Serge Aurier (C) and his teammates take part in a training session at the Felix Houphouët-Boigny stadium in Abidjan yesterday, ahead of the 2017 Africa Cup Nations football match between Ivory Coast and Sudan. — AFP

Sports

Egypt's El Shorbagy starts British Open title defence



Caps beat Sens to clinch top spot in Eastern Conference



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MESSI, SUAREZ RETURN FOR S AMERICAN QUALIFIERS

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BANGALORE: India's Hardik Pandya jumps to celebrate India's win against Bangladesh in the ICC World Twenty20 2016 cricket match in Bangalore, India, yesterday. — AP

INDIA BEAT BANGLADESH BY ONE RUN

NEW FIFA PRESIDENT VISITS WAR-TORN SOUTH SUDAN

JUBA: Newly-elected FIFA president Gianni Infantino visited war-torn South Sudan yesterday, the world's newest nation, on one of his first official trips since taking up the post. Infantino, who formally inaugurated the office of the South Sudanese Football Association (SSFA) in the capital Juba, is also due to watch an African Cup of Nations qualifier between South Sudan and Benin. Officials dressed Infantino in traditional robes and made him dance. They also produced a large cake to celebrate Infantino's 46th birthday yesterday. "It is a great pleasure for me to be here today in Juba," Infantino said after cutting a ribbon to mark its opening of the SSFA, calling it "the first of many projects to come, for the development of football here in South Sudan."

Infantino promised a "new era of developing football." After gaining independence from Sudan in 2011, South Sudan erupted into civil war in December 2013, setting off a cycle of retaliatory killings that have split the poverty-stricken, landlocked country along ethnic lines. Tens of thou-

sands have been killed. Both the government and rebel sides have been accused of perpetrating ethnic massacres, recruiting and killing children and carrying out widespread rape, torture and forced displacement of populations to "cleanse" areas of their opponents.

Infantino, who met with South Sudan President Salva Kiir, but whose visit was not announced in advance amid security concerns, said he would help develop football in a country left in ruins after decades of war. "There is a lot of work to be done, it is not at the standard that it has to be...South Sudan is one of my key elements of my campaign and program to help develop football," Infantino said. "We will come up with something concrete that people of South Sudan will be proud of." Infantino's first official international visit was earlier this month to the United Kingdom. Later this month he is due to visit the scandal-hit South American football confederation CONMEBOL on March 28-29 in Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay.—AFP



JUBA: New FIFA President Gianni Infantino (center) celebrates his 46th birthday in Juba yesterday. — AFP

BANGALORE: India scraped to a one-run win against a tenacious Bangladesh in Bangalore in a thrilling match yesterday, keeping their hopes of World Twenty20 glory alive. India were restricted to 146 for seven after being sent in to bat at the Chinnaswamy Stadium, thanks to some spirited Bangladesh bowling. Bangladesh came tantalizingly close to chasing down the total, but poor shots and three critical dismissals by skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni eventually saw the home side scramble home by the slimmest of margins. India's group stage victory bolsters their chances of reaching the semi-finals, but they must now defeat Australia on Sunday to secure a place in the final four.

But defeat means that Bangladesh, who have lost all three of their Super 10 games so far, have no chance of progressing further. Opener Tamim Iqbal top-scored for Bangladesh with 35 off 32 balls, before he was stumped by the Indian skipper just as he was looking dangerous. The aggressive batsman put on 44 runs with Sabbir Rahman for the second wicket, but Rahman was also stumped for 26 as he looked to carry on the momentum. Shakib Al Hasan made a quick-fire 22 off 15 before he was caught by Suresh Raina at slip off Ravichandran Ashwin.

Soumya Sarkar managed 21 as the required runs were gradually ticked off, but Indian spinners Ravindra Jadeja and Ashwin kept their cool under pressure and continued to take wickets. With Bangladesh needing 10 runs off five balls in a gripping final over sent down by Hardik Pandya, Mushfiqur Rahim (11) smashed two consecutive fours, before holing out to Shikhar Dhawan on the mid-wicket boundary. With two runs needed from two balls, Mahmudullah was inexplicably also caught in the deep for 18.

Incoming batsman Mustafizur Rahman had no choice but to race down the wicket, after Shuvagata Hom stabbed and missed the final ball, and was run out by Dhoni. Confirmation of the dismissal by the TV umpire sent the crowd and the Indian team into wild celebrations. India, with one loss and one win heading into yesterday's match, couldn't afford to lose if they were to keep their dream alive of becoming the first country to win the World T20 title twice. But their total of 146 for seven seemed below par, thanks to some gritty bowling by Bangladesh, who were looking to beat India in this format for the first time.

Al-Amin Hossain took two wickets for Bangladesh off two balls, while newcomer Shuvagata Hom claimed the critical scalp of Virat Kohli for 24. Indian openers Dhawan (23) and Rohit Sharma (18) put on a patient 42-run partnership

before both lost their wickets in the space of six balls as they tried to accelerate. Kohli and Raina put on 50 before Hom clean bowled Kohli just as he was looking dangerous. Al-Amin then struck,

with Raina caught by Sabbir Rahman for 30, and Sarkar taking a spectacular diving catch on the boundary to claim Pandya for 15. Dhoni battled to an unbeaten 13 runs off 12 balls.—AFP

SCOREBOARD

BANGALORE, India: Scoreboard of the World Twenty20 match between India and Bangladesh at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore yesterday:

India			
R. Sharma c Sabbir b Mustafizur	18	M. Mithun c Pandya b Ashwin	1
S. Dhawan lbw b Al Hasan	23	S. Rahman st Dhoni b Raina	26
V. Kohli b Hom	24	S. Al Hasan c Raina b Ashwin	22
S. Raina c Rahman b Hossain	30	M. Mortaza b Jadeja	6
H. Pandya c Sarkar b Hossain	15	S. Sarkar c Kohli b Nehra	21
M.S. Dhoni not out	13	Mahmudullah c Jadeja b Pandya	18
Y. Singh c Hossain b Mahmudullah	3	M. Rahim c Dhawan b Pandya	11
R. Jadeja b Rahman	12	S. Hom not out	0
R. Ashwin not out	5	M. Rahman run out (Dhoni)	0
Extras (lb 2, w 1)	3	Extras (lb 4, w 1)	5
Total (7 wickets, 20 overs)	146	Total (for 9 wickets, 20 overs)	145
Did not bat: A. Nehra, J. Bumrah		Did not bat: A. Hossain	
Fall of wickets: 1-42 (Sharma), 2-45 (Dhawan), 3-95 (Kohli), 4-112 (Raina), 5-112 (Pandya), 6-117 (Yuvraj), 7-137 (Jadeja)		Fall of wickets: 1-11 (Mithun), 2-55 (Iqbal), 3-69 (Rahman), 4-87 (Mortaza), 5-95 (Al Hasan), 6-126 (Sarkar), 7-145 (Rahim), 8-145 (Mahmudullah), 9-145 (Rahman)	
Bowling: Mortaza 4-0-22-0, Hom 3-0-24-1, Hossain 4-0-37-2, Rahman 4-0-34-2, Al Hasan 4-0-23-1, Mahmudullah 1-0-4-1		Bowling: Nehra 4-0-29-1, Bumrah 4-0-32-0, Ashwin 4-0-20-2, Jadeja 4-0-22-2, Pandya 3-0-29-2, Raina 1-0-9-1.	
Bangladesh:		Result: India won by one run.	
T. Iqbal st Dhoni b Jadeja	35		



BANGALORE: Indian fans cheer for their team before the start of ICC World Twenty20 2016 cricket match between India and Bangladesh in Bangalore yesterday. — AP

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stocks bounce back

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TOYOTA TOPS THE IIHS 2016 'TOP SAFETY PICK+' AWARDS

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DETROIT: In this Monday, Jan 11, 2016, file photo, the Chevrolet Bolt EV debuts at the North American International Auto Show. — AP

ELECTRIC, HYBRID CARS NO LONGER GAS-SIPPERS CARS ARE FASTER AND QUIETER THAN THEIR COUNTERPARTS

NEW YORK: When Toyota aired a Super Bowl television ad featuring a surprisingly quick Prius gas-electric hybrid eluding police, it marked a turning point for the auto industry. For years, automakers pushed fuel efficiency to sell hybrid and electric vehicles. Now, in an era of cheap gasoline, the message is: These cars are faster and quieter than their gas-powered counterparts. And, yes, you still save on fuel.

"They've graduated out of the class of something that's a bit of an oddity to drive," says Mike O'Brien, vice president of product planning for Hyundai. "It's all about making these cars better." Until now, hybrids and electrics have largely appealed to the environmentally-conscious crowd. The vehicles cost thousands of dollars extra, and although drivers eventually recouped their money in fuel savings, the vehicles lacked the power and handling of gas-powered rivals. Electrics also suffered from driver concern that the battery could run out of juice on a trip.

Now, the tide is slowly turning. General Motors and Tesla will bring electric vehicles to market next year priced around \$30,000, including a \$7,500 federal tax credit. Battery range has improved significantly, experts expect gasoline prices to eventually climb higher, and the advent of autonomous vehicles favors motors powered by electricity over gas.

New models

At the New York International Auto Show this week,

Hyundai will join Toyota in showing off new electric and hybrid vehicles. Hyundai will unveil battery, gas-electric hybrid and plug-in versions of a new car called the Ioniq, while Toyota will show a plug-in Prius that can run on electricity alone, as well as both gas and electricity. The new Prius has an increased battery range.

The Prius hybrid, powered by both gas and electric motors, started the alternative fuel movement in the US in 2000. Toyota deliberately made it look different than other cars, knowing that buyers wanted to make a statement about being environmentally friendly. Other companies set their green cars apart as well.

Even though sales grew as manufacturers added models, they never really caught on, partly because of the improved fuel economy of gas-powered vehicles. At their peak in 2013, with gas averaging \$3.50 per gallon, Americans bought only 341,000 hybrids and electrics, about 2.2 percent of total U.S. car sales, according to Kelley Blue Book.

Many companies spent millions developing the cars, taking losses to meet government fuel economy standards that gradually increase and require the new-car fleet to average 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025.

As gas prices fell below \$2 per gallon, sales of hybrids and electrics dropped further. Last year, automakers had 16 hybrid and electric models on sale, but sales sank to just over 274,000. All of this makes for a bad environment to roll out more

hybrids and electrics. But automakers will press on, now trying to sell them on style, acceleration, handling and reliability.

"It looks better. It drives better. People can have more fun behind the wheel, but it still has new technologies and safety in it, and it also gets the benefits of a hybrid," Bill Fay, Toyota's US general manager, said of the Prius.

As a power source, electricity outpaces gasoline in just about every area, says Karl Brauer, senior auto analyst for Kelley Blue Book. Advancements have made batteries smaller, increased their storage capacity and brought prices down. Electric motors can take off faster than gas engines, and hybrids can power wheels with both electric and gas motors for better acceleration. Electrics also are far quieter. And with fewer moving parts, they're more reliable, he said.

Fair comparison

Yet at \$2 per gallon, it would take more than 10 years to recoup the \$3,720 price difference between a base model Toyota Camry hybrid and its four-cylinder gas-engine counterpart. But that's not always a fair comparison, said Stephanie Brinley, senior analyst for IHS Automotive. Hybrids often come with more equipment and are comparable to better-equipped, pricier models, she said.

The coming debuts of the Chevrolet Bolt and Tesla Model 3, which will have 200 miles of electric range, should make bat-

tery electric vehicles more appealing, even with cheap gas, Brauer said. A lack of charging stations, once thought to limit adoption of electrics, becomes almost moot because of the longer range, he said.

Self-driving cars, which would use electric motors that can be recharged without humans, also would boost sales. Brauer thinks electrics and hybrids will make up more than half of US sales in the next 12 years as SUVs and trucks get the new systems. Hyundai's O'Brien thinks the shift will happen sooner. Any spike in gas prices will only help. The International Energy Agency last month predicted that oil prices will more than double by 2020 because drillers are cutting investments due to current low prices, which will eventually reduce supply.

But even with cheap oil, Mick Roberts, a 46-year-old hydrogen engineer from Lowell, Indiana, bought a 2015 Chevrolet Volt hybrid in October when gas was \$2.20. He got a good deal on an outgoing model, but Roberts says he likes the smooth-shifting, quiet motor and quick acceleration. "It would be tough to go back to gas," he said. Still, the automakers know it will take a lot of marketing to get mass adoption. Toyota's Fay says there will be more chapters in the Prius police chase ad series, including one for the new plug-in. "The early adopters understand the differences in the technology," he said. "But with the mainstream customers, we all still have a ways to go to explain the benefits." — AP

ZIMBABWE GIVES FOREIGN FIRMS WEEK TO COMPLY WITH INDIGENIZATION LAWS

HARARE: Zimbabwe yesterday gave foreign businesses until April 1 to comply with controversial equity laws that compel them to cede majority stakes to locals or risk closure. "The law is the law. The law must be adhered to," Indigenization Minister Patrick Zhuwao said at a news conference. The minister said the cabinet had on Tuesday "unanimously passed a resolution directing from 1 April 2016 all line ministries proceed to issue orders to licensing authorities to cancel licenses of non-compliant business." Zimbabwe's controversial indigenization scheme, adopted in 2008, forces foreign companies to transfer 51 percent of their shares to local entities or individuals.

Government says the move is aimed at empowering the majority black population who were disadvantaged by colonial rule, but

critics say the law has benefitted President Robert Mugabe's allies. Zhuwao said some companies had "continued to disregard" the law, prompting the government's latest decision to order the closure of non-compliant companies.

"The failure to adhere with the laws to the laws of our land must attract immediate consequences that must be severe and dire enough to ensure that the law is respected and adhered to," he said. Critics say the law scares away desperately needed foreign investment. But Zhuwao dismissed those fears.

"We are a market driven economy and when there is a vacuum others will come in," he said. "From 1 April 2016 indigenous Zimbabweans will be looking with expecta-

tion to see the law that enables them to own their economy begin to be effectively enforced." The International Monetary Fund has urged Zimbabwe to review the indigenization policy to give potential investors confidence.

Major multinational firm operating in Zimbabwe include mining firms, banks and retailers. This the second deadline government has issued in as many years. A January 2014 deadline attracted little compliance. Mugabe has in the past threatened to nationalize foreign companies that refuse to comply. Zimbabwe's economy has been on a downturn for more than a decade-and-a-half since veteran Mugabe's government oversaw the often violent eviction of white farmers under controversial land reforms. — AFP

GOOGLE'S CLOUD BUSINESS NABS HOME DEPOT AS CLIENT ANDROID PAY TO LAUNCH IN UK

SAN FRANCISCO: Google Inc, long an also-ran in cloud services, has scored an important victory in its effort to win corporate clients: Home Depot is moving some of its data to Google's cloud. The deal, flagged Tuesday by Google executive Greg DeMichillie in a briefing and expected to be announced formally on Wednesday, highlights the momentum Google Cloud Platform has gained under the leadership of Diane Greene, a co-founder of VMware who joined Google late last year.

VMware sells its "virtualization" technology for improving the efficiency of data centers to many of the same customers that Google Cloud is targeting. Many of Google Cloud's more prominent customers, including message service Snapchat, are new Internet-based companies - not always the best references for chief information officers at more traditional companies.

Landing Home Depot, the Atlanta-based construction and home-improvement retailer with over 2,000 stores in the US, Canada, and Mexico, bolsters Google Cloud's standing among bricks and mortar businesses. Home Depot declined to provide any details on its deal with Google. Google's cloud business generated about \$500 million in revenues last year, according to analysts at Goldman Sachs. That compares to \$74.5 billion overall for parent company Alphabet Inc, but the cloud business is one of its fastest-growing business areas.

Overall, Google is the No.4 player in cloud infrastructure services, according to Synergy Research, with 4 percent market share last year.

Amazon's AWS took 31 percent of the market, Microsoft's Azure 9 percent, and IBM, 7 percent.

But there are signs Google is gaining ground. Apple, long a user of Amazon's AWS and Microsoft's Azure, has started using Google's cloud for its iCloud, the service that allows Apple customers to store music, photos, and documents, according to an industry executive. And last month, music service Spotify, a high-profile customer of Amazon's AWS, said it would use Google's cloud for some computing infrastructure. Google is also building up its data centers across the world, launching two new regional centers in Japan and Oregon to bring the number of regions it serves to five.

Android Pay

Alphabet Inc's Google unit said yesterday its one-touch payment app for Android devices, Android Pay, will be launching in the UK in the next few months. Android Pay will support MasterCard Inc and Visa Inc credit and debit cards issued by UK banks such as Bank of Scotland, HSB, Lloyds Bank and M&S Bank, the company said in a blog post.

Commuters traveling around London will be able to pay using the app on the city's buses, trains and the London Underground, Google said. The payment platform will also be available at outlets such as supermarket chains Waitrose and Aldi, British sandwich chain Pret A Manger and pharmacy chain Boots. Android Pay will compete with Apple Inc's Apple Pay, which launched in the UK in July. — Reuters

S AFRICA'S CONSUMER INFLATION JUMPS TO SEVEN-YEAR HIGH

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's consumer inflation accelerated 0.8 percentage points to 7.0 percent in February, its highest in nearly seven years, official data showed yesterday. The rise in the consumer price index (CPI) released by StatsSA was the largest since May 2009 when the rate was 8.0 percent.

A sharp fall in the rand currency and the

worst drought in a century pushed food prices higher, taking the consumer price index up from January's annual rate of 6.2 percent. The rise in the inflation rate has forced the central bank to increase interest rates twice in a row this year.

Last week the central bank hiked its benchmark repurchase rate by 25 basis points to 7.0

percent after an aggressive 50 basis points in January. Inflation is increasing at the same time that growth is slowing, with the World Bank and the IMF predicting economic growth will drop to less than one percent this year. Africa's most advanced economy is battling to avoid a credit downgrade in the face of slow growth and a weak currency. — AFP



Alghanim Industries launches legendary British sports car Lotus in Kuwait



Alghanim Industries proudly announced its official appointment as exclusive distributor for the luxury sports car brand 'Lotus' in Kuwait. Lotus, the British pioneer in sports cars has made its debut in the Kuwait marketplace in March 2016. This auspicious occasion was celebrated during a launch event inaugurated by Samir Kasem, Chief Operating Officer, Alghanim Industries, alongside Aslam Farikullah, Chief Operating Officer, Group Lotus PLC, and H.E. The British Ambassador to Kuwait, Matthew James Lodge. The local press and Kuwait's prominent industry officials attended the event.

The brand-new Lotus showroom was designed to reflect the sports car's powerful design and intense performance. The spacious, modern interior and the striking full-glass fascia exude the beauty of pure simplicity. There is also a lounge area where customers can make themselves comfortable while choosing the Lotus model of their choice.

Coinciding with the official Launch of the Lotus brand in Kuwait was the unveiling of the exhilarating Lotus Evora 400 sports car. Invitees were presented with the opportunity to experience the car first hand at the SIRBB racing circuit, conveniently located across the road from the Lotus showroom. Guests could ride alongside professional drivers flown in by Lotus for the occasion, and get an authentic glimpse into the world of speed that embodies Lotus sports cars, including the Evora-400 and the Exige.

Speaking on the occasion, Samir Kasem, COO, Alghanim Industries, stated, "We are delighted to announce the introduction of the Lotus sports luxury car brand to the Kuwaiti market, under the exclusive patronage of Alghanim Industries. This is a significant partnership for Alghanim Industries as it correlates to our unceasing commitment to deliver the finest products and services to the Kuwaiti market and to be unparalleled market leaders in the automotive industry. We are very excited with the opportunity to work closely with Lotus and we look forward to building a successful partnership for years to come."

Aslam Farikullah, Chief Operating Officer of Group Lotus plc commented, "When it comes to high performance, and highly desirable sports cars, Lotus sets the standard, and we have never had a stronger or faster line up. Kuwait remains an important market with great potential and, with Lotus Cars Middle East and Alghanim Motors, we're looking



forward to welcoming the next generation of customers in Kuwait to the Lotus brand."

Additionally commenting on this celebrated partnership is H.E. the British ambassador, Matthew James Lodge, "Lotus for me has a family connection, and it gives me huge pleasure to be here tonight to support both Alghanim Industries and Lotus and share the experience of the unveiling of the Evora 400. This is the 1st time this model is here in the region, this evening marks a positive outlook for both corporations".

Lotus Cars – speed and style

Regarded as the fastest Lotus road car of the new millennium, the Lotus Evora 400 was created keeping Lotus' core values of high performance and exceptional handling in mind. An alluring and vibrant driver's car, the Evora proves to be a wonderfully sublime ride that consistently delivers an uncompromisingly dynamic experience on the road due to its lightweight and aerodynamic construction that furthers its splendid agility. With the Evora 400, nothing is superfluous; it is designed to perform with no compromise, reflecting the true legendary Lotus racing heritage.

In true Lotus fashion, the Lotus Exige traces its origins back to motorsport. The aggressive lines of the Exige underline its racing pedigree; its track-inspired aerodynamics is a testament to its excellent performance. Lotus' engineering and motorsport expertise have come together to deliver a sports car that performs exceptionally on the road and track while its lightweight chassis and remarkable supercharged engine provide a perfect balance of power and weight.

Customers are encouraged to visit the showroom and experience the pure power of the Evora 400 or adrenaline-pumping Exige.

Since first entering the Kuwaiti automotive landscape in 1945, Alghanim Industries has always distinguished itself by its leadership and innovative approach to automotive sales, after-sales, customer service, automotive finance and insurance. This is highlighted by the multiple state-of-art showrooms and service facilities, including the largest GM Service Center in the world. Alghanim now brings this decades-long experience to its partnership with Lotus and is committed to establishing the brand as a leader in the luxury sport segment.

About Alghanim Industries:

Alghanim Industries is one of the largest, privately-owned companies in the Gulf region. Originally founded in 1932 by Yusuf Ahmed Alghanim in Kuwait, the company has since grown into a multi-billion dollar conglomerate, employing over 14,000 people in 30 businesses, and present in 40 countries across the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Asia. Alghanim Industries is a market leader in almost every major sector of its operations. These sectors include engineering, retail, automotive sales and services, insulation and pre-engineered steel building structures, logistics and warehousing, fast moving consumer goods, food & beverage, oil & gas, office automation, advertising, insurance, consumer credit and travel. This range of business activities has allowed it to develop long-standing partnerships with more than 300 global brands, including household names such as AC Delco, American Express, Avis, British Airways, British Petroleum, Cathay Pacific, Costa Coffee, Daewoo, General Motors, Honda, Saint-Gobain, Toshiba, Wendy's and Whirlpool. Alghanim Industries has also created successful regional businesses such as X-cite by Alghanim Electronics, a leading electronics player in the region, and Safat Home, a lifestyle and home furniture concept.



2016 LOTUS EVORA 400

2016 LOTUS EXIGE S COUPE



The picture shown above does not accurately represent this model contents



The picture shown above does not accurately represent this model contents

BODY STYLE: Coupe, Sport Car, rear wheel drive.

ENGINE: Alloy 3.5L DOHC V6 VVT-I, 24-valve, equipped with Edelbrock Supercharger, light weight low inertia fly wheel Max Power 400 HP @ 7,000 RPM
 Max Torque 410 Nm @ 3500 RPM 0 – 100 km/h 4.2 seconds
 Max speed 280 km/h (electronically restricted)
 Driver selectable active exhaust valve control
 Multi-point sequential fuel injection and direct ignition system Lotus Electronic Throttle Control system

TRANSMISSION: 6-speed Automatic.

CHASSIS: Lightweight, extruded aluminium and bonded structure

Composite body panels
 Lightweight composite rear sport diffuser

SUSPENSION: Front and rear, fully independent suspension, forged aluminium double wishbone suspension, anti-roll bar, Eibach springs and Bilstein dampers

STEERING: Lotus tuned hydraulically assisted steering, mechanical rack and pinion

BRAKES: AP-Racing four-piston calipers, Servo assisted 2-piece cross-drilled discs.

Lotus / BOSCH tuned ABS system.
 Hydraulic Brake Assist (HBA)
 Electronic Brake Distribution (EBD)
 Cornering Brake Control (CBC)

LOTUS DPM: Dynamic Performance Management system with DRIVER/SPORT/RACE

INTERIOR FEATURES: Driver and passenger airbags CD/MP3/WMA receiver with 5 speakers, USB, Navig-

tion Cruise Control Air Conditioning
 Immobiliser and remote activated alarm
 Tire Pressure Monitoring System
 Engine start button
 Central door locking
 2 + 2 seat configuration, heated
 Premium Leather Trim Pack Interior (Black/Red/Tan) - (or)
 Alcantara Trim Pack, seat trimmed with leather (Black/Red)
 Black leather steering wheel with racing line indicator
 Aluminium gear knob
 Plain leather sun-visors
 Premium black carpet
 Cup holder

EXTERIOR FEATURES: Diamond Cut forged 10-spoke alloy wheels (19" front and 20" rear)

Front Michelin 235/35 R19
 Rear Michelin 285/30 R20
 Rear parking sensors
 Rear camera
 Outside power mirrors, power foldable, heated
 Bi-Xenon headlights
 LED daytime running lights

DIMENSIONS: Length: 4385 mm
 Width: 1972 mm
 Height: 1229 mm
 Wheelbase: 2575 mm
 Fuel Tank capacity: 60 liters

WARRANTY: 3 YEARS / 100,000 KM. IN FULL COMPLIANCE WITH GCC REGULATIONS.

Note: Specifications are subject to change without prior notice by the manufacturer.

BODY STYLE: Coupe, Sport car, Mid mounted, transverse, rear wheel drive.

ENGINE: Alloy 3.5L DOHC V6 VVT-I, 24-valve, equipped with Harrop HTV 1320 Supercharger utilising Eaton TVS™ Technology
 Max Power 345 HP @ 7,000 RPM
 Max Torque 400 Nm @ 4500 RPM 0 – 100 km/h 3.9 seconds
 Max speed 233 km/h (electronically restricted)
 Multi-point sequential fuel injection and direct ignition system Lotus Electronic Throttle Control system

TRANSMISSION: 6-speed Automatic.

CHASSIS: Lightweight, extruded aluminium bonded structure Composite body panels Aerodynamically optimised front splitter, rear diffuser and wing

SUSPENSION: Fully independent double wishbone suspension with front and rear anti-roll bar. Bilstein high performance gas dampers, front and rear

STEERING: Solidly mounted, mechanical rack and pinion

BRAKES: AP-Racing four-piston calipers with ventilated and cross drilled cast-iron Discs. Lotus / BOSCH tuned ABS system.

Hydraulic Brake Assist (HBA)
 Electronic Brake Distribution (EBD)
 Cornering Brake Control (CBC)

LOTUS DPM: Lotus Dynamic Performance Mana-

ment system with TOUR/SPORT

INTERIOR FEATURES: Driver and passenger airbags CD/MP3/WMA receiver with 4 speakers, USB connection Cruise Control Air Conditioning Immobiliser and remote activated alarm
 Central door locking
 Premium Pack Interior with Leather trim (or)
 Premium Sport pack with Leather/Suedetex combination
 Black leather steering wheel
 Polished aluminium gear knob
 Plain leather sun-visors
 Black carpet
 Cup holder

EXTERIOR FEATURES: Lightweight cast alloy wheels (17" front and 18" rear) gloss black Front Pirelli P-Zero 205/45 R17 Rear Pirelli P-Zero 265/35 R18 Rear parking sensors LED front DRL, LED rear lamps

DIMENSIONS: Length: 4084 mm
 Width: 1802 mm
 Height: 1129 mm
 Wheelbase: 2370 mm
 Fuel Tank capacity: 40 liters

WARRANTY: 3 YEARS / 100,000 KM. IN FULL COMPLIANCE WITH GCC REGULATIONS.

Note: Specifications are subject to change without prior notice by the manufacturer.

EUROPEAN TRAVEL SECTOR STOCKS BOUNCE BACK

European stock markets pushed higher with airline and travel stocks in positive territory after the previous session's losses caused by the Brussels bombings broadly retreated, playing back losses incurred Tuesday on Wall Street following the attacks in the Belgian capital. Investors continue to show confidence in the face of yesterday's volatility moving higher in early trade. "The defiant stance from our early market shrug off their yesterday's finish in positive territory," said Rami Hafez, head of investment at Global Investor.

Around 1030 GMT, London's benchmark FTSE 100 index was up 0.1 percent compared with Tuesday's close. In the Eurozone, Frankfurt's DAX 30 won 1.0 percent and the Paris CAC 40 gained 0.5 percent. The Euro dropped against the dollar. Two suicide bombers who struck Brussels were identified yesterday as brothers linked to the prime suspect in the November 13 Paris attacks, as a manhunt for a third assailant in Belgium's bloodiest terror assault gained pace.

A day after the triple blasts that killed some 30 people and left around 250 injured, in an operation claimed by the Islamic State jihadist group, RTBF television said police had identified two suicide attackers as Khalid and

Ibrahim El Bakraoui.

After sliding Tuesday, travel and airline stocks fought back with slight rebounds. Nearing midday, easyJet was up 1.0 percent, tourism group TUI won 0.2 percent, hotels company Accor gained 0.4 percent and airline Deutsche Lufthansa rose 0.7 percent. Asian investors played it safe with few catalysts to drive trade as dealers eye the long Easter break that starts Friday, analysts said.

The mood across regional trading floors remained "cautious to negative", Jackson Wong, Hong Kong-based associate director at Simsen Financial Group, told AFP. "Investors are reluctant to get in (the market) at this point," Wong said. All Nippon Airways lost

0.51 percent and Korean Air Lines dropped 1.48 percent in trading yesterday. In US deals on Tuesday, Expedia, American Airlines and Delta all slipped. Bernard Aw, a market analyst at IG trading group, said "the impact of terror attacks on financial markets has become less and less dramatic in recent years, compared with the aftermath of the September 11 attacks".

5 day winning streak ends

Emerging market stocks ended a five-day winning streak on Tuesday as talk of more US rate hikes and a general drop in sentiment following bomb attacks in Brussels raised questions over the stamina of the recent EM rally.

MSCI's 23-country EM index dipped 0.5 percent as falls across most of Asia were followed by minor slips in Poland and the Czech Republic and in Russia and Nigeria as oil prices fell back. Currencies were also feeling the pressure as talk about further US interest rises from some of the Federal Reserve's policymakers lifted the dollar to a one-week high.

Philadelphia Fed President Patrick Harker said on Tuesday the central bank should consider another hike as early as next month, while Chicago Fed President Charles Evans said he expects at least two rate increases this year.

"The big question is will this emerging market rally continue and the fact is it is very hard to find a trigger," said

Credit Agricole emerging market analyst, Guillaume Tresca, "the glass is half full" and "we have the feeling of improvement in market sentiment returning into EM with a virtuous circle."

The day's dip in emerging markets was creating too many winners, a red-hot last couple of days have seen them sell off. Hungarian stocks extended their bonanza after it became a leading market on Tuesday. "The likes of the European Central Bank and the world of negative sentiment," Turkey's Halkbank added to an 8 percent rise, offering another

arrest in the US as it accused of transacting with Iran. Halkbank's general manager was not charged in an earlier case, but there are fears the case will widen and drag the market down.

South Africa, which is struggling and worries about its investment grade rating, has been hurting market sentiment. "Expected inflation and a central bank to raise rates," Harker said, "This will be very painful for a country that is struggling to grow," Capital Economics' Ashbourne said. — Ag

Global Stock Exchange Report

March 2016

Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low
▲ 1.92	5,253.72	5,251.80	5,260.85	5,234.31
▲ 1.74	358.62	356.88	358.94	356.57
▲ 6.38	841.53	835.15	842.46	834.23

Trades					
Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
104	500	52	1	104	▲ 0.0
77	106	8	2	82	▲ 0.0
275	15,050	4,189	5	275	▼ -25.0
0.0	0	0	0	730	▲ 0.0
48.0	225,587	10,967	22	49.0	▲ 2.5
39.5	2,201,083	87,784	57	39.5	▼ -1.0
0.0	0	0	0	104	▲ 0.0
2,442,326 103,000 87 783.70 ▼ -9.65					

Trades					
Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
0.0	0	0	0	200	▲ 0.0
470	145,975	69,286	11	470	▼ -10.0
0.0	0	0	0	610	▲ 0.0
192	44,026	8,477	11	194	▲ 2.0
190,001 77,763 22 930.37 ▼ -2.93					

Trades					
Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
0.0	0	0	0	375	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	320	▲ 0.0
310	358	112	4	320	▲ 0.0
138	115,830	16,048	11	138	▼ -2.0
0.0	0	0	0	1,020	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	420	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	72	▲ 0.0
290	1,740	505	1	290	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	450	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	134	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	310	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	250	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	236	▲ 0.0
50	214,363	10,843	11	52	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	99	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	102	▲ 0.0
69	393,500	27,337	30	69	▼ -2.0
455	2,329,139	1,093,141	61	480	▲ 15.0
0.0	0	0	0	210	▲ 0.0
38.5	378,395	14,594	9	39.0	▲ 1.0
435	5,003	2,178	3	435	▼ -5.0
0.0	0	0	0	45.0	▲ 0.0
200	72,457	15,017	12	200	▼ -6.0
700	4,005	2,804	2	760	▲ 10.0
144	20,149	2,901	3	144	▼ -2.0
0.0	0	0	0	265	▲ 0.0
30.0	14,000	426	6	31.5	▲ 1.5
18.5	10,008,546	191,466	110	19.5	▲ 1.0
0.0	0	0	0	800	▲ 0.0
83	431,988	36,183	16	83	▼ -2.0
670	12,000	8,178	6	680	▲ 0.0
206	324,813	67,801	38	210	▲ 2.0
64	20,000	1,280	2	64	▲ 0.0
64	473,000	30,677	13	65	▲ 2.0
0.0	0	0	0	85	▲ 0.0
78	592,000	46,178	10	78	▼ -4.0
64	150,000	9,600	2	64	▲ 1.0
71	511,354	36,310	8	72	▲ 0.0
98	10,000	980	1	98	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	79	▲ 0.0
16,082,640 1,614,558 359 986.74 ▲ 0.24					

Trades					
Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
0.0	0	0	0	174	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	63	▲ 0.0
102	31,500	3,307	11	106	▲ 4.0
0.0	0	0	0	132	▲ 0.0
72	326,655	23,519	12	72	▼ -1.0
0.0	0	0	0	182	▲ 0.0
2,380	93,925	224,682	10	2,420	▲ 40.0
452,080 251,508 33 1063.74 ▲ 12.82					

Trades					
Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
0.0	0	0	0	210	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	920	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	172	▲ 0.0
0 0 0 0.00 ▲ 0.00					

Trades					
Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
950	85,820	84,960	4	1,020	▲ 30
0.0	0	0	0	210	▲ 0.0
66	1,000	66	1	66	▲ 1
26.0	2	0	1	26.0	▼ -3
0.0	0	0	0	385	▲ 0.0
180	10	2	1	180	▲ 0
112	73,382	8,265	15	112	▼ -2
0.0	0	0	0	83	▲ 0.0
870	11,000	9,575	4	880	▲ 0
112	4,251	476	5	112	▲ 0
0.0	0	0	0	110	▲ 0
77	250	19	1	77	▲ 2
142	752	107	2	146	▲ 0
52	7,544,068	404,440	235	53	▼ -1
0.0	0	0	0	100	▲ 0
1,080	181,700	196,239	8	1,100	▲ 40
7,902,235 704,150 277 928.76 ▲ 0.03					

Trades					
Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
375	6,128,845	2,340,104	89	380	▲ 5
1,180	18,892	22,590	10	1,200	▲ 0
28.5	215,300	6,186	6	29.0	▼ -1
990	83,935	83,291	67	1,000	▲ 10
6,446,972 2,452,171 172 621.02 ▲ 3.59					

Trades					
Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
690	2,000,911	1,391,427	19	700	▲ 10
208	25,000	5,200	1	208	▲ 2
0.0	0	0	0	485	▲ 0
330	50,000	16,500	1	330	▼ -5
425	285,970	122,192	7	425	▲ 0
196	880,216	174,010	18	198	▲ 4
335	21,000	7,065	4	340	▲ 0
485	4,123,803	2,018,949	59	485	▲ 0
410	542,134	222,559	23	410	▼ -5
200	401,268	80,394	6	202	▲ 0
35.0	1,907,753	66,832	26	35.0	▼ -1
168	784,950	133,579	88	170	▲ 2
11,023,005 4,238,706 252 803.31 ▲ 0.77					

Trades					
Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
280	35,039	10,214	9	295	▲ 15
0.0	0	0	0	700	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	470	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	116	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	200	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	50	▲ 0.0
40.5	4,215	171	1	40.5	▲ 0.0
0.0	0	0	0	355	▲ 0.0
39,254 10,385 10 1087.80 ▲ 9.80					

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
SOKOUK	33.5	33.0	730500	24,434	14	33.5	▼ -0.5
KRE	52	51	3,614,810	185,406	48	52	▲ 1.0
URC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	92	▲ 0.0
NRE	97	93	201,866	18,999	9	93	▼ -5.0
SRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	365	▲ 0.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	560	▲ 0.0
AREEC	140	138	2,000	279	2	140	▲ 0.0
MASSALEH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	51	▲ 0.0
ARABREC	29.5	28.0	1,190,679	34,281	17	28.0	▲ 0.0
ERESCO	52	49.5	223,669	11,077	13	49.5	▼ -0.5
MABANEE	870	870	10,100	8,787	3	870	▲ 10.0
INJAZAT	80	79	28,200	2,254	8	80	▲ 5.0
INVESTORS	20.5	20.0	2,930,068	58,602	46	20.5	▲ 0.5
IRC	28.5	27.5	510,000	14,285	8	28.5	▲ 0.5
ALTUJARIA	81	81	2,500	203	1	81	▲ 1.0
SANAM	35.5	31.5	3,900	125	6	33.5	▼ -0.5
AYANRE	69	68	112,100	7,675	4	69	▲ 1.0
AQAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	70	▲ 0.0
ALAQARIA	20.5	19.0	310,871	6,081	16	19.5	▲ 0.0
MAZAYA	108	108	50,000	5,400	1	108	▲ 0.0
ADNC	18.5	16.5	19,792,567	343,687	212	16.5	▼ -2.0
THEMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	80	▲ 0.0
TIJARA	36.0	34.0	10,196	347	2	36.0	▲ 1.0
TAAMEER	24.0	22.5	709,580	16,363	24	23.5	▼ -1.0
ARKAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	93	▲ 0.0
ARGAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	174	▲ 0.0
ABYAAR	25.0	24.5	230,044	5,636	7	25.0	▲ 0.0
MUNSHAAT	47.0	47.0	84,000	3,948	6	47.0	▼ -0.5
FIRSTDUBAI	42.0	41.0	315,980	13,016	9		



(From third left) Scott Gegenheimer, Asaad Al Banwan, Bader Al Kharafi and Ossama Matta during the General Assembly Meeting.

ZAIN MAINTAINS POSITIVE OUTLOOK AT ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

Chairman's message to the Board of Directors

On behalf of my fellow members of the Board of Directors, it gives me great pleasure to welcome our honorable shareholders to the annual general assembly and review the financial results of Zain Group's operations for the year ending 31 December, 2015. I will also look to highlight a number of important accomplishments that were achieved during the course of the year.

Mobile telecom services witnessed a number of positive developments in the region during 2015; where customer growth rates were positive and continued demand for mobile broadband services and corresponding smartphone boom persisted. This was coupled with the expansion of the digital economy, though at a macro-economic level, the Middle East region suffered the negative impact from the sharp decline in oil prices, as well as the threat of escalating political tensions and social unrest.

Zain Group was not immune to these political tensions, and the resulting security risks, which in turn influenced the region's social conditions, and factors such as human displacement in several of our markets impeded Zain's operational progress. Based on these challenges, Zain Group reviewed its operating procedures, and adapted them accordingly in order to maintain its leading market position in most of our markets growing the customer base by 3% in 2015 to reach 45.6 million.

Creating a sustainable digital company

Today, the telecom industry is facing higher operational costs. As a consequence of this, profit levels are under increasing pressure, driven primarily by the need to invest further in networks and applications, as well as maintaining physical security of infrastructure. Therefore, the traditional core telecom business is facing real challenges, with Zain Group investing heavily in future-proofing its networks. In 2015 the company invested USD 797 million (excluding Zain Saudi Arabia) in CAPEX, reflecting Zain's increasing commitment to improving the customer experience.

Amidst the relatively high penetration rates and fierce competitive nature of the region's telecom market, Zain Group has continued to adopt its strategy, which is based on creating a sustainable digital telecom company that caters to the needs of both individuals and the business sector alike. The Group has already achieved substantial progress in its strategic goals, also investing in digital applications and partnering with successful third parties to ensure high quality delivery of its traditional services; further helping the company become one of the most effective service providers in the region.

One of our main goals is to become a leading mobile service provider with respect to operational efficiency. This has led Zain Group to concentrate on initiatives relating to its OPEX and CAPEX optimization. These initiatives have helped the Group maintain healthy financial results, as the management focused on operational alignment and cost optimization efforts. Zain has proactively reduced the costs related to international connectivity and network maintenance, among other things.

Financial indicators

Our major financial indicators at Zain Group were impacted by the political and security challenges in the region, as well as extremes in currency exchange rate fluctuations and intense price competition across our footprint. Performance was further affected by an erosion and a sharp decline in traditional revenue due to the presence of OTT messaging and VoIP players capturing a large part of the market. Notably, additional amortization on both Zain Iraq's 3G license fee and Zain Jordan's additional 3G and newly acquired 4G spectrum license fees impacted the bottom line by USD 52 million.

Accordingly, Zain Group's net income amounted to KD 154 million (USD 513 million) for the fiscal year 2015; with earnings per share amounting to 40 fils. The Group achieved consolidated net profit of KD 1.14 billion (USD 3.78 billion) compared to consolidated net profit of KD 1.21 billion (USD 4.27 billion) in 2014. Zain's earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) reached KD 499 million (USD 1.66 billion), down from KD 507 million (USD 1.78 billion) a year earlier.

Our operational performance for this challenging fiscal year was characterized by Zain's ability to address the difficulties it faced competently, as the company managed to reinforce both its competitive positions in data related services. Data revenues (excluding SMS and value added services) witnessed a 15% growth rate in 2015, ending the period representing 20% of total revenues.

Operation's performance

Focusing on our customers' needs represented a top priority for the Group's operations as each operating company catered to the needs and aspirations of its respective customer bases. This was achieved by offering customers flexible, bundled options in addition to providing them with state-of-the-art telecom technologies. Accordingly, Zain's operations in Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Jordan and Bahrain saw significant operational gains in 2015.

Zain Group's flagship operation in Kuwait continues to maintain its leadership position in terms of market share and revenues having grown its customer base by 9% during the year to serve 2.9 million customers. The healthy EBITDA margin of 49% for the year reflects the efficiency drive implemented by the operation, with Zain Kuwait's nationwide 4G LTE network which saw data revenues grow 8% for the year.

Zain's operation in Iraq maintained its leading market position in 2015, serving 11.1 million customers, despite very difficult social circumstances. For example, there has been widespread relocation and displacement of civilians across the country and portions of the operator's network suffered

from service outages. The introduction of a 20% sales tax on mobile services and many other items in the country had a drastic impact on consumption habits of the people, with telecom revenues being affected. Nevertheless, the operation's efficiency drive saw its EBITDA margin increase to 39%, and with the launch of 3.9G services at the beginning of the year, data related revenue grew by 34%.

Zain Sudan continued to achieve positive results in 2015, as all its major financial indicators pointed to very impressive growth rates both in US dollars and in local SDG currency, serving 11.9 million customers. Data related revenues grew an impressive 91% in USD terms in Sudan and with the expected granting of a 4G license in 2016, we expect further growth in this area.

Similarly, Zain Saudi Arabia's financial results witnessed marked improvement as the operation continues to implement its transformation plan. The operator successfully reduced its net loss for 2015 by 23% to reach USD 259 million, serving 11.9 million customers, with data related revenues growing an impressive 58%.

Zain Jordan continued to maintain its leadership position in one of the most competitive telecom ecosystems in the Middle East. In 2015, the company managed to grow its customer base by 6% year-on-year to serve 4.1 million, with the launch of 4G services early in the year contributing to 18% growth in data revenues. Furthermore, Zain Bahrain's annual fiscal results were encouraging as they reflected a healthy EBITDA margin of 39%. The totally revamped 4G network in which Zain Bahrain has invested in excess of USD 134 million over the last two years resulting in data revenues increase by 11%.

Corporate governance

The success of Zain Group in achieving its goals rests in the company's ability to understand the nature of the environment and deal with the challenges in which it operates, while aiming to achieve profitable growth. Given its forward-looking nature, Zain was one of the first companies in Kuwait to embrace new reporting regulations issued by the Kuwait Capital Markets Authority, which oversees and defends the interest of all stakeholders and Zain will continue to operate in a transparent manner and champion the principles of good corporate governance.

The commitment to the company's Code of Conduct is the responsibility of every employee in the Zain Group, and through these values and principles, the company looks to make a positive impact on the telecommunications sector, and in the communities in which it operates.

Corporate sustainability

2015 was an important year for Group corporate sustainability and social responsibility initiatives, and it was unfortunate that conflicts in the region continue to affect so many lives and businesses. In early 2015 the Group became a Strategic Partner Associate at the World Economic Forum as we see our contribution and related participation fundamental towards the region's growth.

Across our operations, we launched several initiatives that focused on capacity-building skills in order to address societal deficits and supporting the communities we serve. We also published our annual sustainability report, which highlighted the role the ICT sector can and does play in helping create knowledge-based economies, reflecting our key role in supporting the socio-economic development of the region we operate in.

Our people

Zain's ambition is to inspire its employees to achieve excellence through active engagement and motivation. The Group is intention encouraging all its employees to embrace and support every aspect of the strategy through engagement and key initiatives to substantiate 'Talent Development'; which is one of Zain Group's core strategic pillars.

Zain's people are critical to the success of the organization and under the theme TOGETHER, the company put in place a meaningful framework by which people could relate to the organization and make sense of the employment dynamic.

We realize that the company's vision alone will not build its future. Employees are central to the success of delivering on the strategy, and during the year Zain launched its first ever employee value proposition initiative, known as 'The Promise', which looks to 'Build the Best Zain Team Together'.

Furthermore, Zain has built a central learning and development hub that is set to build capacity and ensure our people utilize value adding development opportunities, with the focus being to link the learning and development activities directly to the strategic objectives and core competencies of the organization.

Appreciation

In conclusion, I would like to express my genuine appreciation for the trust given to us by our shareholders, who have always given us support throughout our journey. Let me also extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to my fellow Board members and the executive management team for the commendable efforts they exerted in the face of considerable challenges.

On behalf of all my fellow members of the Board of Directors and the executive management, as well as all employees of the Group, I would like to offer our deepest gratitude and appreciation to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah; His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah; His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah; and to the esteemed members of our Government for their continued support of Kuwait's national organizations and institutions.

CEO SCOTT GEGENHEIMER REVIEWS 2015 RESULTS, CHALLENGES AND FUTURE STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF ZAIN

Zain Group continues to operate in the midst of highly complex and dynamic environment in a number of markets, and the company's adaptability to rapid and often drastic changes in socio-political and economic conditions is what defines it as a successful, sustainable entity.

During the course of 2015 the Middle East and North Africa region witnessed the destabilization and mass migration of huge populations of people. The global economy also came under sustained pressure as economic output in key markets such as China slowed, and the price for commodities, primarily oil-based ones, decreased dramatically, driving local governments to seek alternative income sources including additional telecom taxes and fees.

Local currencies in most countries across emerging markets weakened in comparison to the US dollar, making imports more expensive, and driving up inflation forecasts. It is unfortunate that these factors outside of our control have impacted overall performance for the year considering the sound operational progress and transformation we have undertaken across all our markets.

Despite these macro-economic developments, Zain Group maintained a steady course in 2015, committed to our strategy that will take advantage of our competencies, including our people, brand, impressive customer experience, cutting edge innovations and geographic coverage. We shall also continue on the path towards implementing operational efficiency initiatives, looking to develop new business areas and becoming a diversified and innovative digital lifestyle operator.

How would you describe Zain Group's performance in 2015?

I would describe Zain Group as being on a journey to solidify business fundamentals whilst focusing on creating future revenue streams, and that 2015 was another significant step in that direction. As you might note, in 2014 Zain outlined its focused five-year strategy to create a strong and sustainable platform for growth against a backdrop of higher mobile penetration, increasing competition, unique externalities, challenging operational performance, and accelerating adoption of over-the-top (OTT) solutions.

Our five-year strategy has the vision of building a sustainable digital communications company serving consumers and enterprises with a rich lifestyle experience and during 2015 we focused on strategy execution across all of our strategic pillars.

Might you give some insight into the main pillars of the five-year transformational strategy at Zain?

Zain's strategy is premised on six transformational initiatives: **Customer Experience:** Putting the customer at the heart of everything we do and allowing customers to feel a connection to Zain.

Operational Effectiveness: Enhancing the bottom line through operational efficiency initiatives, looking to run our business differently and enabling additional group-wide synergy benefits.

Value Management: Establishing the building blocks to create more value, focusing in particular on data monetization and keeping our core products relevant to our customers.

B2B: Leading the ICT market in the Middle East, delivering a world class enterprise service, transforming Zain from being a consumer centric mobile operator to a full telecom operator providing enterprise services.

Digital Frontier and Innovation: Become a regional trendsetter in the digital space, focusing on identifying additional verticals for Zain in the digital value chain.

Talent Development: Inspiring employees to achieve excellence through engagement, and transforming our workforce to be future ready with required new skills and competencies.

These initiatives are more relevant today - given the way global and regional markets are evolving and the impact major trends are having on the ICT industry. In particular, Zain is focused on sustaining value in its core business of voice, messaging and mobile broadband, as well as exploiting fully new revenue streams in the lucrative, but regionally-fragmented B2B segment. In addition, Zain is seeking to build scale in the emerging regional digital landscape covering areas such as e-Commerce, digital content, mobile advertising and gaming, smart cities and mobile application development. Zain is enhancing its competitive positioning by expanding its role in the value chain of new business areas beyond connectivity.

What strides were taken during the course of the year to bring Zain closer to its five-year strategy, and do you believe you are on track to meeting your timeline?

During the course of the year Zain made significant progress in achieving its vision, having identified internally that it cannot do everything it wants to do in the digital space alone, so a big proportion is finding and cooperating with value-creating partnerships.

The strategic collaboration with NeXGen Group, a leading smart city advisory and consulting services provider based in the UAE is an example of such. This cooperation enables Zain to advise governments and mega real estate developers facilitating the deployment of smart city solutions across the region. The two companies have recognized the value the other brings in this respect and plans are afoot to solidify the relationship even further.

We also invested in three venture capital funds - MEVP, Wamda and Earlybird - that are focused on early-stage and growth-stage digital opportunities in Central and Eastern Europe, Turkey, the Middle East, and Africa.

Earlier in 2015, we announced the expansion of our existing Partner Market Agreement with Vodafone, to deliver M2M services to enterprise and government sectors across the region, with

our operations in Kuwait, Bahrain, Jordan and Saudi Arabia at the forefront of this initiative. More recently, Zain has tied up with leading technology and content companies including UBER and global games developer, Zeptolab, in order to bring to market a number of popular applications, in many cases under some pretty unique and pioneering circumstances. Our efforts appear to be resonating as our agreement with UBER was recognized by global research company Ovum, as its most innovative service for November 2015, from a selection of 82 innovative services launched by network providers around the world.

How important is tailoring the user experience to your customers' needs to Zain?

Customer Experience is one of the buzz words in the service industry and everyone is talking about how important the customer is. However at Zain we believe that customer experience is driven by our actions, not our words. It's critical to make sure that we listen to our customers' feedback and act accordingly while running our business.

We take it very seriously at Zain, and during the course of 2015 we further enhanced customer experience across all touch points in the customer journey by utilizing customer feedback, developing a thorough understanding of customer needs, and by linking frontline performance with rewards to drive relevance, simplification, and optimization in all customer interactions. Across our footprint, the Group continued to roll-out its Voice of the Customer (VoC) platform to provide real-time monitoring and analytics of customer feedback.

Zain has standardized Transactional net promoter score (TNPS), Customer Effort Score (CES) and Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) metrics across all markets and now utilizes a broad range of KPIs to assess the effectiveness of channels and make sure we haven't missed important customer feedback.

The "Voice of the Customer Day" program, which enables senior executives to take on the role of front-line agents in retail shops and contact centers helps to develop a first-hand understanding of customer pain-points, and has further helped to institutionalize customer experience management across the Group.

How do you expect digital developments in the telco space to advance in 2016, and what will Zain Group's approach to such be?

Zain Group will continue along its path of identifying opportunities in the digital space, and partnering with strong and innovative digital service players.

Overall, Zain is focusing on the future verticals, be that e-Commerce, education, next generation TV services or digital advertising. Our goal is to utilize our unique regional presence and common brand to push development of the digital economy and our role in the business environment of the future.

We will also focus on aligning our network investments to ensure we continue to lead our markets and enable future revenue streams. We believe the richness of content being delivered over mobile devices will continue to increase and drive even more applications to come to market, with commensurate investment in infrastructure required to support such.

Might you touch on what value management relates to at Zain, given this area is a key strategic pillar?

With respect to value management, Zain is the market leader in most of its markets, both in terms of value share and market share. Our objective is to sustain our leadership position and to counter market erosion threats from OTT players and aggressive competition from operators present in our markets. Zain utilizes its business intelligence platforms to build a strong customer value management framework premised on well-defined customer segments in each of its markets. Data monetization is another key area for the company and initiatives are underway to implement data centric pricing across our footprint.

Can you also elaborate on how Talent development is another strategic pillar?

As for talent management, we believe the best employers successfully align their people practices with company strategy and create a high performing environment. During the course of the year we introduced initiatives focused on improving employee engagement and empowerment, as well as learning and development programs to adapt to and encourage employee regional mobility. New technologies and digital services require our workforce competencies to stay at leading levels and we are investing accordingly. Furthermore, as a testament to the strength of the management of the company and focus on succession planning, several key management positions were filled with internal resources, such as the appointment of Zain Group stalwart Mrs. Eaman Al Roudhan, who was promoted to become the CEO of Zain Kuwait.

What are Zain's aspirations for the current period and the year ahead?

In 2016, we are set to continue strategic executions reinforced by employee engagement, empowerment and leverage our leading technology, presence and strong brand. Going forward Zain Group and its operating entities are looking to remain vigilant and agile to market opportunities. We are all well aware that the telco industry is changing rapidly, and as one of the leading service providers in the region, we believe it is imperative for us to embrace these changes and be forward-looking in our approach. These are exciting times for all stakeholders in the ICT value chain, traditional as well as new, and opportunities abound for the creation of significant value for all participants should they be agile enough to grasp them.



2016 IIHS TOP SAFETY PICK+

TOYOTA TOPS THE IIHS 2016 'TOP SAFETY PICK+' AWARDS

KUWAIT: Toyota once again led the industry on the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's (IIHS) annual list of safety awards. Nine Toyota, Lexus and Scion models received the IIHS' highest award for 2016, the TOP SAFETY PICK+, the most of any manufacturer. Toyota continues to focus on the safety and peace of mind of customers. Recognition by IIHS is a testimony of Toyota's commitment to helping protect drivers and passengers.

According to IIHS, automakers were required to meet tougher criteria to be considered for the 2016 awards. For this year's TOP SAFETY PICK+ awards, the IIHS recognized the addition of Toyota's pre-collision system to the Avalon and the RAV4, rating both models superior for front crash prevention.

All award winners were required to achieve good ratings in five crashworthiness tests and have an available front crash prevention system. TOP SAFETY PICK+ award winners must also have a superior- or advanced-rated front crash prevention system with automatic braking capabilities. The full list of 2016 Toyota, Lexus TOP SAFETY PICK+ winners are: Toyota Prius v, Toyota Camry, Toyota Avalon, Toyota RAV4, Lexus CT 200h, Lexus ES, Lexus RC, Lexus NX and Scion iA.



2016 IIHS TOP SAFETY PICK+

AL BABBAIN LAUNCHES 'MARCH CAMPAIGN' ON LUXURY INFINITI MODELS FOR ONE WEEK

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babbain Co, the exclusive agent of the luxury vehicles Infiniti in Kuwait launched a one week exceptional March promotion with unbeatable prices on different models of the luxury Infiniti. This promotion includes all of the Q60 coupe, Q60

cabriolet, Q70, QX60, and QX70. This promotion gives the clients and lovers of the luxury brand a unique chance to purchase one of the luxury vehicles for unbeatable prices. The Q60 cabriolet is the first of the included vehicles in this campaign, which prices starts from KD 11,999. This luxury vehicle was equipped with features that provides exciting ride. Its V6 engine utilizes 3.7 liters achieving a net system rating of 328 horsepower is run by 7 speed automatic transmission controlled by Adaptive Shift Control (ASC) system.

The Q60 coupe can be owned for just KD 10,999, and it's the perfect vehicle for the lovers of creativity, materials, such as the handmade wood accents and luxury leather. The high performance Q70 is run by a V6 inline 6-cylinder engine utilizing 3.7 liters producing 329 horsepower. It's also available in 8-cylinder engine utilizing 5.6 liter producing 402 hp.

The luxury cabin was equipped with a seven seats and first of its kind innovations with advanced safety technology. It also provides second row foldable seats and flat platform floor that easily welcomes all seven passengers. All these features make it the perfect family crossover vehicle.

The luxury multipurpose Infiniti QX70, which combines exceptional elegance with tremendous performance can be purchased for a price starting from KD 12,999. With its unique features, it's the perfect combination of sports vehicle and multipurpose SUV. It's also a unique harmony combining breathtaking elegance and high performance.

The eye-catching exterior of QX70 that looks like luxury coupe design and has stunning V6 (six valves) engine performance of 3.7 liters producing 329 horsepower was also enhanced with the Variable Valve Event and Lift (VVEL) control system.

On this occasion, Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babbain Co, would like to invite its clients to benefit from the exceptional 'March Campaign' through visiting its showrooms in all off Al Rai, Ahmadi, and the Infiniti pavilion at the Kuwait Finance House located in Shuwaikh. The Company aims through its new promotions' strategy to strengthen its sales of the luxury Infiniti vehicles, ensuring that Infiniti is the leading brand of luxury vehicles in Kuwait and the Middle East, which attracts the VIP clients to own it.



adventure, and excitement. This perfectly sports car was empowered by and engine producing 329 horsepower and can easily fit four adults. The Infiniti Q70 is the stylish and voluptuous luxury sedan with advanced performance that's available for KD 12,750. The elegant interior is a masterpiece in all of its details, which was made form best

The price of the multipurpose crossover QX60 starts from KD 11,999. It represents the super advanced hybrid vehicle, as it was designed to be a masterpiece by all measures. It's also the desired vehicle for those looking for smart features. This creativity vehicle is considered an example that should be followed to the future due to the advanced technology of Infiniti, as it

February that his company had been "strongly impacted" by the deadly Paris attacks in November and was eyeing the effects of currency volatility, lower oil prices, the Chinese economic slowdown and other geopolitical situations. It reiterated yesterday that sales growth in 2016 could be "below the medium-term goal of eight percent revenue growth at constant exchange rates due to the economic, geopolitical and monetary uncertainties around the world". —AFP

FRANCE'S HERMES BAGS LUXURIOUS NET PROFITS

PARIS: French luxury goods group Hermes said yesterday that net profit rose to skim the billion-euro mark last year despite an economic slowdown in China, the Paris terror attacks and currency fluctuations. Hermes, known for its leather handbags such as the Birkin named for the British singer and its silk square scarves, posted growth across the regions last year, led by Japan, it said.

Net profit jumped more than 13 percent to 973 million Euros (\$1.1 billion) after the company rung up sales of 4.8 billion Euros, an eight-percent increase from a year

earlier once currency fluctuations were stripped out. Operating profit also soared 19 percent to 1.5 billion Euros.

The company faced heavier tax charges due to a three-percent levy on dividends linked to the payment of a one-off additional dividend last year, it said. Hermes said its profit margin on operations had improved slightly from the previous year, to nearly 32 percent of sales "despite the dilutive impact of currency fluctuations".

Hermes chairman Axel Dumas had told AFP in

BURGAN BANK 'YOUTH' ACCOUNT CUSTOMERS WATCH 'BATMAN V SUPERMAN' FOR FREE

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, in collaboration with Grand Cinemas, announced yesterday that all its "Youth" account customers will be offered the exclusivity to watch "Batman v Superman - Dawn of Justice" movie for free at Grand Cinemas, Al Hamra Tower.

Accordingly, Burgan Bank in collaboration with Grand Cinemas, has allocated two free shows exclusively for "Youth" account customers, on Saturday, March 26th, 2016 at 5:00 pm and 7:45 pm. In addition, each "Youth" account customer is entitled to two free tickets, to be collected from Grand Cinemas - box office at Al Hamra Tower to attend the movie for the mentioned show times. Youth account customers are requested to show their "Youth" card to the box office, in order to receive the free tickets. (Limited Seating)

The bank's Youth Account was launched for young individuals, around the ages of 15 to 25, who seek to attain a successful future. There is no KD limit to open an

account, and no minimum balance required to maintain it. Furthermore, account holders receive free prepaid card and an ATM card which entitle them to discounts at select merchants along with a special discount at Grand Cinemas.

Customers transferring their education allowances to the bank will be automatically enrolled into a draw, whereby for every KD 20 in their Youth Account, customers will be given a chance to win KD 1,000 every quarter. Additionally, the second and third prize winners will each receive a remarkable gift of two free "yearly unlimited access tickets" from Grand Cinemas every quarter.

Having now expanded the successful Youth draw to include many valuable prizes and promotions, demonstrates the bank's philosophy of providing greater chances of rewarding its young customers while encouraging new account holders to benefit from its unique offers.

Watch "BATMAN v SUPERMAN" for free DAWN OF JUSTICE only for "Youth" account customers

1804080 www.burgan.com

1801801 nbk.com

7 DAYS REMAINING FOR AL DANAH'S KD200,000 DRAW LIVE ON MARINA FM

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank has announced that its KD 200,000 draw is scheduled to take place 7 days from today at 1pm, 31 March 2016, on Marina FM's Diwaniya Show. The Al Danah draw will be for a cash prize of KD 200,000. In addition, the Salary & Red Account draws will be taking place and include a brand new Cadillac CTS and cash prizes up to KD1,000. The draw event will be held in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

To participate in the Al Danah draws, customers must have an Al Danah account containing at least KD 200. Customers can open a new Al Danah

account at any one of the 55 Gulf Bank branches in Kuwait. Those who already have an account can increase their chances of winning by increasing their deposits. This will also increase their chances of winning one of the two KD1,000 prizes, which are drawn each working day.

For further information about the Al Danah, Salary and Red accounts and prize draws, visit one of Gulf Bank's 55 branches, or call Gulf Bank's Customer Contact Center on 1805805. General information about Gulf Bank's products and services, can also be found at the Bank's website at www.gulfbank.com

AL DANAH 7 DAYS LEFT TO WIN KD200,000

e-gulfbank.com • 1 805 805

FOUR WINNERS IN NBK'S AL JAWHARA WEEKLY DRAWS FOR FEBRUARY

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) announced four lucky winners in Al Jawhara weekly draws during the month of March. The draws were conducted under the supervision of Ministry of Commerce Representatives.

The minor Abdulla Faraj Al khashab, Bassel Attie, Amal Ibrahim Al Omran, and Hadeel Saleem Salem each won KD 5,000. The winners expressed their gratitude and thanked NBK for its great services and promotions. The upcoming winner of Al Jawhara KD 125,000 quarterly draw will be announced live on Marina FM in Al Hamra Mall on Thursday 31st of March 2016

NBK has doubled customers' chances to win in the weekly, monthly and quarterly draws when they do not withdraw or transfer from their accounts. NBK customers have chances to win KD 5,000 weekly, KD 125,000 monthly and a grand prize of KD 250,000 quarterly. Each KD 50 in a customer's account entitles them to one entry in the draw, thus more money in an account means more chances in each draw. The new feature introduced to Al Jawhara Account enables customers to double their chances when maintaining their balance without withdrawing or transferring from Al Jawhara account.

Al Jawhara is the most popular prize-

giving account in Kuwait. Al Jawhara account entitles account holders to enter the weekly, monthly and quarterly Al Jawhara draws. All prizes are automatically credited to the winners' accounts the day after the draw. Al Jawhara accounts are available for both Kuwaitis and expats and can be opened at any of NBK's branches around Kuwait, or through NBK website for existing customers. For more information, please contact NBK Call Center at 1801801 or visit NBK official website www.nbk.com.

Al Jawhara Double Your Chances to Win

250,000 125,000 5,000

1801801 nbk.com



What if following the map isn't your style? You would need a vehicle that's as open to adventure as you are. With the capability to take you where you want to go. And the comfort and technology to make the trip back just as much fun. And while you're at it, why not bring a real sense of style and a unique point of view? So load up and let's go. We're ready. The all-new Nissan X-TRAIL.

The scenery may be rugged, but X-TRAIL's accommodations are luxurious. Sit back and enjoy tasteful touches like an available Power Panoramic Moonroof, available double-stitched leather appointments, LED interior lighting and gloss black trim with metallic accents. All to create a stunning view wherever you look.

Breathtaking from top to bottom

Whether it's an inspiring view on a starry night, or just a cosy place to sit on a chilly morning, X-TRAIL makes sure you're well looked after. Comfortable zero-gravity inspired seats with spinal support. With your comfort in mind, Nissan engineers looked to the cosmos, where astronauts float weightlessly in a relaxed posture. To recreate this 'neutral posture' when you're behind the wheel, they designed an articulated front seat that supports you from the pelvis to the chest, along with seat cushions that flex in response to your unique pressure points. The result is exceptional comfort wherever you're in a spacesuit or not.

Power panoramic moonroof

More cosmic inspiration. With the available Power Panoramic Moonroof, all aboard have breathtaking vistas of sky, stars and maybe your next destination.

Heated and cooled cupholders

Help keep your drinks frosty or toasty wherever you like them.

Quick Comfort Cooled front Seats

Nissan innovation to the smallest detail. By focusing on key areas of the body and cooling them in sequence,



you get cooled as soon as possible.

Slide, glide and Swing Wide

A smarter second row. This second row is truly first class, thanks to X-TRAIL's flexible seating system. The 60 /40 split seat slides forward for easy access and adjusts to give you a little more cargo space, more legroom or anywhere in between. The seats also recline, when it's time to just relax. Optional third row. Perfect when you need to transport the team or bring extra friends along. X-TRAIL's 50/50 split folding third row seat gives you added flexibility carrying passengers and their gear, and folds down to make a flat cargo floor for maximum carrying space.

Power liftgate

Whether it's kid seats or snowboards, X-TRAIL gives you easy access with rear doors that swing out and

Xtronic (Continuously Variable Transmission)

In the newest version of our Xtronic, friction is reduced by up to 40 percent and the ratio coverage is increased to greater than that of some 8-speed automatics. A new eco mode improves fuel economy at the touch of a switch. All this, and performance so smooth, it's like riding a continuous wave of power.

What if your car knew when you were cornering?

And how to react to your commands? That's the kind of intuitive response we've engineered into every X-TRAIL. So you can enter any situation with more confidence, and exit with a big grin. And with X-TRAIL's All-Mode 4x4-i, you've got a system that's capable on-road and off. You can choose full-time 2WD for maximum efficiency. Auto Mode constantly monitors conditions and adjusts the balance of power between front and rear wheels for best traction. Challenging conditions? 4WD Lock Mode is your choice.

Keeping your most precious cargo safe

At Nissan, safety is more than just a philosophy; it's an integral part of every vehicle we make. Our comprehensive approach to safety guides the engineering and development of all our cars and it not only works to keep you and your family physically safe, it gives the driver the self-assurance to know that they can rely on their vehicle, and confidently handle unexpected situations.

Vehicle dynamic Control assists in maintaining your steering path. The anti-lock braking system maintains steering control when braking heavily. Electronic brake force distribution varies the braking force in accordance with load distribution to maximize stopping power. Brake assist helps apply maximum braking force when it detects emergency hard braking. Six air bags. Dual front, dual side and dual curtain SRS airbags that extend to the second row will protect the driver and passengers in case of a front or side impact.

an available power liftgate that opens by a tap of a liftgate button, your Nissan Intelligent Key or a switch mounted by the driver.

Configurations divide-n-hide.

Single-handedly reinventing capability, the Divide-N-Hide Cargo System lets you adapt in a snap. An adjustable set of shelves and dividers gives you a variety of configurations, and it's so easy, you can do it with one hand.

Get a little dirty with a clean Conscience

What if you got excellent fuel economy in a roomy SUV that's lots of fun to drive? With X-TRAIL, we got there by developing everything from exterior aerodynamics that whisper through the wind, to advanced engines, to a virtually gearless Xtronic transmission that maximizes efficiency and performance.





KUWAIT: (Left) Dr Mohamed Ismail Al-Ansari, Chairman and CEO of Global Clearinghouse Systems and Paul Baker, Managing Director, Smiths Detection upon signing the agreement. (Right) A group photo with Matthew Lodge, the British Ambassador to Kuwait.

CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT TO IMPLEMENT X-RAY SCREENING TECHNOLOGIES THROUGH GCS FROM SMITHS DETECTION

KUWAIT: The Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) announced that it will be implementing state of the art screening equipment through Global Clearinghouse System (GCS) in an effort to further strengthen security and speed up commercial activities at the various ports of entry into Kuwait. This new equipment will be procured from Smiths Detection, a global leader in threat detection and screening technologies for military, transportation, homeland security, and resilience applications, owned by the UK based Smiths Group.

This is a part of several customs modernization programs that GCS currently manages for the Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) under a 25 year, Built Operate and Transfer (BOT) contract GCS manages for KGAC. The contract is currently in its tenth year.

At a signing ceremony held at the British Embassy in Kuwait to formalize the agreement, Khaled Al-Saif, General Manager, KGAC highlighted, "We are always grateful for the strategic support provided by GCS in our modernization programs. When we wanted to further boost security in our operations, GCS worked with us to review all available options. We decided to go ahead with Smiths Detection because it provides us with a complete solution to our varied requirements."

Latest technologies

Dr Mohamed Ismail Al-Ansari, Chairman and CEO of GCS said: "We are pleased to be working with Smiths

Detection Inc on implementing the latest equipment and technologies for the KGAC. GCS has been working with KGAC for the last ten years to continually raise the levels of security at all the ports of entry into Kuwait. Now, with this new equipment, the first of its kind in Kuwait definitely aims to raise the bar higher by providing increased levels of security and faster movement of goods at all the major land borders as well as sea and airports in the Kuwait."

Abdullah Al-Mesbah, Managing Director of GCS said: "The new equipment includes two types of cargo scanners (mobile and gantry) implemented at the land and sea ports, state of the art X-ray dual view package scanners at Kuwait International Airport and vehicle scan-

ners for civilian cars at Kuwait's land borders. This set of equipment utilizes the latest security technology and will be implemented for the first time in the country; He added that the new equipment from SDI follows a full body X-ray scanner recently installed by GCS at Kuwait International Airport and at the Shuwaikh Port.

Key market

Paul Baker, Managing Director of Smiths Detection Inc added: "Kuwait is a key focus market for Smiths Detection and we are delighted to establish a new long term strategic relationship with the Kuwait General Administration of Customs. Smiths Detection is a global leader in developing technologically

advanced security inspection systems that are designed to easily adapt to our customers' needs while helping them optimize security checks at ports, airports, and border crossings. The combined Smiths Detection solutions of cargo, baggage and car screening systems that will be deployed across Kuwaiti ports, borders and airports will help customs officials meet the challenge of rapid detection without delaying daily flow of goods."

The official ceremony held in the presence of Matthew Lodge, Her Majesty's Ambassador to Kuwait, and was also attended by Tarek Sultan, CEO, Agility, along with other officials from the KGAC including, Osama Al-Roomi, Faisal Al-Qidhebi, Sulaiman Al-Fahah, and Sheikh Faisal Al-Sabah.

HOW THE FBI MIGHT HACK INTO AN IPHONE WITHOUT APPLE'S HELP

FBI OFFICIAL: TIME NEEDED TO KNOW IF PHONE CAN BE UNLOCKED

NEW YORK/LOS ANGELES: For more than a month, federal investigators have insisted they have no alternative but to force Apple to help them open up a phone used by one of the San Bernardino shooters. That changed Monday when the Justice Department said an "outside party" recently showed the FBI a different way to access the data on the phone used by Syed Farook, who with his wife killed 14 people in the Dec 2 attack.

The magistrate judge in the case postponed a hearing scheduled for Tuesday and gave the government two weeks to test its method. But federal officials have been mum about who came forward and what method they've proposed. Here are some of the leading options outside experts think the FBI might be exploring.

Back up and attack

One likely scenario involves making multiple copies of the iPhone's flash memory, which investigators could use to restore the phone's data should they inadvertently trigger the phone's "self-destruct" feature by making too many wrong guesses at the passcode.

That feature doesn't actually erase all the files on the iPhone. Instead, it erases a section of the iPhone's memory that contains one of the keys necessary to unlock the data on the phone. This section, known as the "effaceable storage," sits in a memory chip that theoretically could be removed and plugged into a reader device that's capable of electronically copying what's stored on the chip - and then replacing the data if it's been erased.

While the technique hasn't been proven for this purpose, forensic expert Jonathan Zdziarski said it was demonstrated in a widely circulated video that shows a Chinese smartphone vendor using a similar procedure to install more memory capacity on an iPhone. FBI Director James Comey was asked about the technique during a congressional hearing on March 1, but Comey didn't say directly whether the FBI had considered the approach.

Reset the count

A more nuanced approach would involve isolating the portion of the phone's memory where the count of how many passcode attempts have been

made is stored, said Ajay Arora, CEO and co-founder of Vera, an encryption software company. In theory, the person working on the phone would then be able to reset the count each time it approached 10, allowing investigators to make an infinite number of guesses.

"This is more technical and a little more difficult, because you'd have to isolate the section," he said. Apple hasn't provided any maps to show where that data is stored. The main problem: The FBI would run the risk of losing information if something went wrong.

Shane McGee, chief privacy officer at the FireEye cybersecurity firm, agreed that this kind of approach could potentially work. "All the government really needs is the opportunity to do a very simple, brute-force attack," he said.

De-capping

Another approach, sometimes known as "chip de-capping," calls for physically removing the casing of the iPhone's processor chip, using acid or a laser drill. In theory, investigators could then connect electronic probes capable of reading the phone's unique identification code bit by bit from the location where it is "fused" into the phone's hardware. This method would also have to read the algorithm that combines that code with the user passcode to unlock the phone.

Once they get that information, investigators could then load it onto another computer, where they can run thousands of attempts at guessing the passcode without worrying about triggering the auto-erase function on the phone itself.

Forensic investigators have used similar procedures to read other kinds of data from computer chips, according to McGee. But experts say the process of physically dismantling a chip is technically demanding and has a high risk of causing damage that would make the data unreadable.

A brand new 'zero day'

Even a tiny flaw unknown to the software's creator - known as a zero-day vulnerability - could potentially give the government, or someone else, a way in, said Jay Kaplan, CEO of Synack and an former NSA counterterrorism researcher.

Those exploits are considered valu-

able to hackers, who often sell them to others, and to intelligence agencies that use them for gathering data. It isn't clear if the government would share the information with Apple - which might then try to fix the vulnerability - or if the government would try to keep the information "in its back pocket" so it can be used for future cases, Kaplan said.

While in theory it's possible that investigators could go with some kind of brute-force attack, Kaplan thinks it's more likely that the FBI's mystery assistant found a zero day instead. "There's plenty of them out there that vendors don't know about," Kaplan said. "Regardless of the method, it's going to be a pretty complex process, whether it involves a zero day or not. I'm sure a lot of really smart people are working on the problem."

Head of the FBI's Los Angeles office had stated Tuesday that it will take at least two weeks to know whether an alternate method will unlock an encrypted iPhone used by one of the San Bernardino attackers, adding that federal investigators think they have "a good shot."

Government officials were asked to file a status report in court about the alternate method by April 5 because that's how long they think it will take to know if the method will unlock the phone without compromising the data it contains, said David Bowdich, an assistant FBI director in charge of the office in Los Angeles. At the government's request, a judge canceled a court hearing in the matter that had been set for Tuesday. The government was "very ready" to try to force Apple to help unlock the phone when a third party emerged with an alternate method Sunday, Bowdich said. "For us to seek a continuance, we felt it was a good shot," Bowdich said. "I'll leave it there because we just don't know."

The publicity around the case generated a number of proposed solutions, but none was deemed potentially usable until Sunday's demonstration, according to two law enforcement officials close to the case who are not authorized to speak publicly about the matter and spoke on condition of anonymity. The unexpected new

method is going to be tested on other phones before it's perfected - to avoid deleting the data on the target device, one of the law enforcement officials said.

One official said FBI Director James Comey testified in good faith about the FBI exhausting options to get into the iPhone, but investigators had not canvassed every possible option that could exist because of the urgency factor in terrorism investigations. The longer the government waited, the more its arguments of urgency would be negated.

New method

Speculation about the source of the new method has centered on a little-known but thriving industry of computer forensics in which firms work with the FBI and other police agencies around the world. While it could be an independent hacker, several experts said the proposed solution most likely came from one of those firms, possibly one that already works for the government.

"The FBI contracts out a lot of work, like every other government agency, and a lot of stuff gets shipped off to data-recovery contractors," said Jonathan Zdziarski, an independent iPhone forensics researcher. He said the most straightforward possibility is that the FBI described the problem to a variety of contractors and one of them came forward with a proposed solution.

Other experts mentioned an Israeli company, Cellebrite Inc, that is a leader among several firms selling smartphone forensics services and software tools to US police agencies. The programs can extract data from iPhones running older versions of Apple's operating system, but they have been stymied by the latest version, known as iOS 9. That's the version running on the San Bernardino iPhone.

Cellebrite hasn't announced any new product that works with iOS 9, but it's likely working on developing one, said Darren Hayes, a computer scientist and cybersecurity expert at Pace University in New Jersey. Cellebrite representatives couldn't be reached for comment Tuesday. The company did not respond to an email and phone message left at its US offices in New Jersey. —AP



CHICAGO: In this Friday, Sept 25, 2015, file photo, a customer tries out a new Apple iPhone 6S at an Apple store in Chicago. —AP

SECURING SMART CITIES ISSUES GUIDELINES TO KEEP CITIES OF THE FUTURE SAFE

DUBAI: Securing Smart Cities, the not-for-profit global initiative that addresses the cyber security challenges of smart cities, released guidelines on the role of information security within a smart city department (SCD). The guide aims to provide public and private organizations with a baseline when developing the information security role within the SCD they are creating, supporting the promotion and propagation of smart city services.

In smart cities, information security plays a major role in protecting the higher levels of confidentiality, availability, and integrity as well as the stability that national services and organizations need to support sustainable and livable smart environments. This guide provides an illustration of the key elements that organizations need to examine, and be aware of, when defining the role of SCDs, in order to achieve the best safety and resilience. From the influence of technology adoption, services quality, and legislative compliance, to the efficiency and sustainability of operations.

"These guidelines are yet another step towards Securing Smart Cities (SSC), as the name of the initiative suggests. We're trying to enhance everyone's understanding of the smart

city requirements, by developing useful insights and sharing expertise with the people who will be responsible for the development and management of smart cities. The document is based on the experience of the SSC community members, who are involved in large scale cyber governance, as well as other security specialists: from penetration testers to industrial security experts," said Mohamad Amin Hasbani, Securing Smart Cities board member and security expert at Kaspersky Lab.

"In-keeping with our efforts to provide practical resources for organizations, the Securing Smart Cities initiative is releasing these new guidelines to help provide valuable recommendations in making our current and future cities more secure," said Cesar Cerrudo, Securing Smart Cities board member and chief technology officer for IOActive.

The outline of the Smart City Department Cyber Security Role and Implications guide includes the description of SCD and its cyber security responsibilities, including:

- Governance and leadership support,
- Infrastructure support,
- Risk management optimization,
- Legal support,
- Collaborative threat intelligence.

WILL AMERICANS LIKE BLENDLE, THE iTUNES FOR NEWS?

NEW YORK: Americans pay to download music. They pay for TV episodes. Will they pay a few cents for news articles to escape ads and bypass subscription requirements? The news service Blendle launches yesterday in the US with 20 news outlets, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and Bloomberg Businessweek. You pay 9 cents to 49 cents to read a story (with a refund if you don't like it).

For news outlets, it means a new source of revenue and a potentially younger audience. Readers can cut through the sludge of online content and get higher-quality stories from human editors and software formulas. Although Blendle has more than 100,000 pay-

ing, active users in the Netherlands and Germany, it could be a hard sell for Americans used to free stories online.

For one, there's more online news available in English than in Dutch or German, and a lot of it is free. And news outlets that block almost all stories from non-subscribers are more prevalent in Europe, said Rick Edmonds, a media business analyst for the Poynter Institute, a journalism teaching organization.

In addition, Americans also haven't warmed up to past micropayments efforts. Subscriptions with set monthly fees tend to be more popular than something that requires watching the tab. In music, for instance,

Americans are increasingly spending more on subscription services like Spotify while revenue slips from downloads of individual songs and albums.

Yet any payments, however small, are better than nothing. "If a customer chooses to buy just one article a day from The Wall Street Journal, then I am happy they're choosing to do that," said Katie Vanneck-Smith, the chief customer officer for Journalism owner Dow Jones. She says it's not likely someone reading just an article a day would have subscribed anyway. But at the Journal's price of 39 cents a story on Blendle, that's \$100 a year for the newspaper. - AP



NEW YORK: This photo provided by Blendle shows newspapers and magazines with stories available for purchase through the Blendle app. —AP

FIRST CONTACT IN DECADES WITH RARE RHINO IN INDONESIA'S BORNEO

JAKARTA: Environmentalists have made physical contact with a Sumatran rhino on the Indonesian part of Borneo island for the first time in over 40 years, the WWF said yesterday, hailing a "major conservation success". The critically endangered rhino was caught in a pit trap this month in East Kalimantan province in an area close to mining operations and plantations, where the WWF said it was struggling to survive. The female animal, thought to be aged around six, is now in a temporary enclosure and will later be airlifted by helicopter to a safer habitat on Borneo, Efransjah, head of environmental group WWF-Indonesia, told AFP.

The contact with the rhino comes after environmentalists discovered in 2013 that the Sumatran rhino was not extinct on Indonesian Borneo-as had long been thought-when hidden cameras captured images of the animals. Borneo is the world's third-largest island and is shared between Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei. Efransjah, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, hailed the capture of the rhino on March 12 as "an exciting discovery and a major conservation success". "We now have

proof that a species once thought extinct in Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo) still roams the forests, and we will now strengthen our efforts to protect this extraordinary species."

The capture of the rhino was a joint effort between environment ministry officials, the WWF and the Rhino Foundation of Indonesia. The Sumatran rhino is the smallest of the living rhinos. They are the only Asian rhino with two horns, and are covered with long hair. There were once Sumatran rhinos all over Borneo but their numbers have dwindled dramatically, with poaching, and expansion of mining and plantation operations considered the main reasons for the decline. The International Union for Conservation of Nature classifies the Sumatran rhino as critically endangered. The WWF estimates there are fewer than 100 remaining in the wild. There are only a few substantial populations still in existence, most of them on Indonesia's main western island of Sumatra. The wild population of Sumatran rhinos on the Malaysian part of Borneo was declared extinct last year, according to the WWF. — AFP



KUTAI, Indonesia: This photo released by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF-Indonesia) shows activists handling a Sumatran rhino at a sanctuary in Kutai, East Kalimantan. — AFP



CHINA: In this photo, officials from China's State Food and Drug Administration inspect vaccines stored at the local Center for Disease Control and Prevention office in Rong'an county in southwestern China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. — AP

CHINA VACCINE SCANDAL STOKES ANGER; REGULATORS UNDER FIRE

ARRESTS MADE IN EASTERN SHANDONG PROVINCE

SHANGHAI: A widening scandal over illegal vaccine sales in China has sparked anger and drawn criticism from the government over glaring loopholes in the regulation of the world's second-largest medicine market. Police detained 37 people in Shandong province, official news agency Xinhua said yesterday, after a nearly \$90 million black market vaccine ring was exposed over the last week. The vaccines, including ones against meningitis, rabies and other illnesses, are suspected of being sold in dozens of provinces around China since 2011.

The scandal has stirred angry debate, casting a shadow over government ambitions to bolster the domestic drug industry and underlining the challenge it faces to regulate a widespread and fragmented medicine supply chain. "We

don't know if our children have properly had the vaccine or whether it is ineffective or even if they are at risk," said Zhang Jieqi, 32, who works at a tourism company in the city of Chengdu and has a child under two years-old.

She said she was angry that the case, which started early last year, had not been made public widely until now. The government has said the vaccines themselves were real, although traded illegally. The issue of regulation, from food and drugs to online sales, has become increasingly contentious in China as it looks to cast off a reputation for poor quality and safety. However, regulators such as a Food and Drug Administration (CFDA) have pointed to a lack of resources and personnel to adequately regulate their sectors.

The vaccine case drew fire from

Premier Li Keqiang, who said regulatory bodies - including the CFDA, health ministry and police - needed to work more in tandem, and that "dereliction of duty" would not be tolerated. "This vaccine safety case has drawn close attention, and shows there are many gaps in terms of regulation," Li said in a statement posted on the central government's website late on Tuesday.

'Swindled every day'

Some people said the case echoed a scandal in 2008 when milk tainted with the industrial chemical melamine led to the deaths of six infants and made thousands sick. Xinhua cited the health ministry as saying it had not found any spike in abnormal reactions to inoculations. The World Health Organization (WHO) said in

a statement that improperly stored or expired vaccines rarely cause a toxic reaction and the most common risk is that they are ineffective.

Nonetheless, the case - centered on a mother and daughter illegally selling vaccines to re-sellers around the country - raises questions about regulators, even as China vows to boost its domestic market and raise exports. Some parents also went online to vent their anger. One mother said she wanted to take her child out of China to escape "poisoned milk, gutter oil and ineffective vaccines". Gutter oil refers to sub-standard, recycled cooking oil. "It seems every day we are being swindled with something," she wrote on China's the Sina Weibo site, using the handle "Sunziyue". "No one is coming to sort it out." — Reuters

MEDITATION, COGNITIVE THERAPY HELP BACK PAIN

WASHINGTON: Meditation and cognitive behavioral therapy-not conventional treatments for back pain-seem to be effective in alleviating the common condition, researchers said Tuesday. After 26 weeks, researchers said patients treated with cognitive behavioral therapy or mindfulness-based stress reduction and yoga had "clinically meaningful improvement" of functional limitations compared to those with usual care. The improvement was measured at 61 percent for MSBR and yoga, ahead of 58 percent for CBT and 44 percent for conventional medicine. The study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), was a clinical trial with 342 adults ages 20-70 who had

suffered from lower back pain for an average of seven years.

One third, selected at random, was treated with MBSR and yoga, while another third used cognitive behavioral therapy, which helps patients identify and resolve bad behavioral choices and negative thoughts. The last third was treated with pain medications. "These findings suggest that MBSR may be an effective treatment option for patients with chronic low back pain," the authors wrote. "Although understanding the specificity of treatment effects, mechanisms of action and role of mediators are important issues for researchers, they are merely academic for many clinicians and their patients." — AFP

RUNAWAY ZEBRA DIES

TOKYO: A runaway zebra led police on a dramatic chase across a golf course in Japan, until its bid for freedom ended in death when it collapsed in a water trap. The creature's odyssey, which was broadcast live on national television, saw officers in hot pursuit as they tried in vain to recapture it alive. After unsuccessfully attempting to corral the stripy animal, vets shot it with a tranquilizer dart-only to watch as it plunged into a small lake on the golf course.

"It collapsed in the pond, so we hurriedly pulled it ashore, but its heart had already stopped beating," said Takahiro Taniguchi, a police spokesman in central Gifu. "Veterinarians performed cardiac massage," he said, but it was not enough to prevent the "bitter aftertaste" of the animal's demise. The zebra had bolted on Tuesday from the Mikuni West Farm in neighboring Aichi. The failed attempt to recapture the creature

came just a month after a Tokyo zoo held a drill practicing this very eventuality. Every year, a zookeeper dresses as an animal and stages an escape, giving colleagues the opportunity to hone their techniques.

This year's creature was a zebra, which was successfully collared and returned to its pen. But as if to prove that practice doesn't always make perfect, this week's real life response didn't quite go to plan. According to Ueno Zoo, which staged the zebra escape drill last month, the animals are easily panicked. Japan has previously had more success with animal escapes. In 2012 a penguin on the run from a Tokyo aquarium outwitted authorities for 82 days before being caught. There were more than 30 sightings of the 60-centimetre (two-foot) bird, known only as Penguin 337, who was spotted around various locations, including swimming in Tokyo Bay. — AFP



TOKYO: This file photo shows zookeepers (background) holding a net to capture a zookeeper dressed as zebra during a drill to practice what to do in the event of an animal escape at the Ueno Zoo. — AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
د. فهد علي المخيزيم

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

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



Member of the Administrative Faculty, Chairperson of the Social Committee at the Teaching Faculty of Kuwait University Dr Amthal Al-Huwaila said the social committee in cooperation with some members of the teaching faculty at the college of engineering held an open charity day titled "the Charity Bake Sale by COEP women professors."



Science department at Omayya Bin Qais Intermediate girls school held a workshop titled "My teacher lead me towards creativity", prepared by teacher Nawal Al-Rashidi and science technicians Intisar Al-Shimmari and Khazna Al-Harby.

SABAH AL-AHMAD CENTER PARTICIPATES IN CULTURAL SYMPOSIUM
Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity, one of KFAC centers, participated in the second cultural symposium organized by the technological scientific society under the slogan "positive giving and my innovations exhibition," at the technological studies college building. The center announced the start of registration for patent certificates for 2016, in addition to displaying some creations that are internationally registered as examples of what became a reality.



MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART CURATOR GIVES LECTURE ON ISLAMIC TEXTILES



Dr Friedrich Spuhler is one of Europe's most important rug scholars particularly on classical carpets. Former curator of the Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin, Spuhler has lectured all over the world and published articles in many important publications. He is the author of several books including two books on carpets and textiles in the Al-Sabah Collection, Carpets from Islamic Lands and Pre-Islamic Carpets and

Textiles from Eastern Lands. This lecture deals with more than 400 textile fragments we prepared for a third book on carpets and textiles in The Al-Sabah Collection, focusing on the textile-treasures from Samagan, in the northern part of Afghanistan. The process of organizing the objects will be discussed, as this was the first challenge to be addressed, given the enormous variety of designs.

Methods used by the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, the Kunstgewerbe-Museum in Berlin, and the Textile Museum in Washington over the last century were reviewed and adapted to suit the collection. This gives us a historical overview and the easiest way to find related pieces. While talking about the objects, a selection of 50-60 pictures will be presented. These images will clarify the rationale for the groupings.





IAA HONORS MANAGERS OF ADVERTISING DEPARTMENTS



The International Advertising Association (IAA) honored the managers of advertising departments of daily newspapers, weeklies and monthly magazines in appreciation of their efforts and continued cooperation and support for the activities of the International Advertising Association and outstanding success gained by the IAA during 2015. The participants in the ceremony were welcomed by the president & board members of IAA. The dinner

banquet was held at the Holiday Inn, Salmiya. Then president of the IAA, Kuwait Branch, Walid Kanafani spoke on behalf of the association. In his speech he paid tribute for the continuous support and cooperation believing in the goals of the association as well as its role to enhance relations among the dailies, magazines and the advertisement agencies. At the end of the ceremony all participants were given mementoes and wished success for such future occasions.



MARRIOTT HOTELS IN KUWAIT PARTICIPATE IN EARTH HOUR 2016

The JW Marriott Hotel Kuwait City, Courtyard by Marriott Hotel Kuwait City, Residence Inn by Marriott Kuwait and Arraya Ballroom managed by Marriott International participated in the Earth Hour 2016 - a global environmental event that took place on March 19th - to raise awareness about the importance of

protecting the environment for now and generations to come. All the four properties have successfully observed Earth Hour 2016 by taking energy-saving measures for one full hour from 8.30 pm to 9.30 pm, further underscoring the company's international commitment to environmental sustainability.

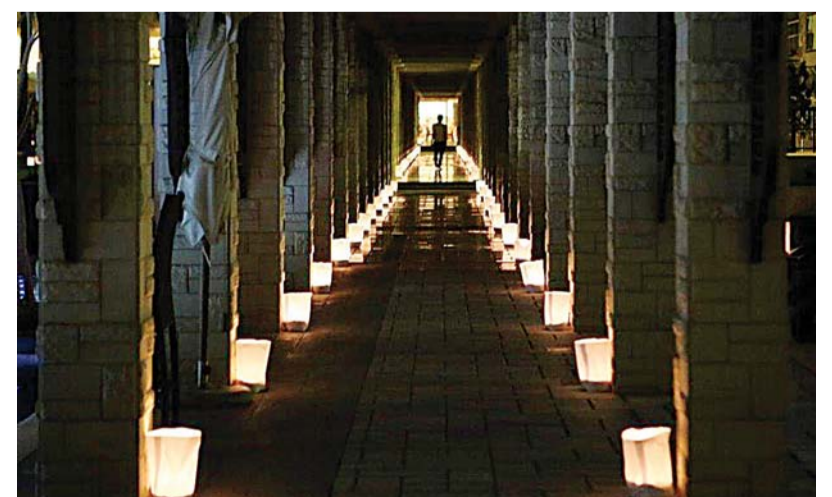
During the event, all Marriott Hotels in Kuwait dimmed lights in all public areas, restaurants and outside the buildings. In addition, they also turned off most of the lighting in operation areas.

Moreover, guests were invited to participate in this global initiative by minimizing electric usage to as low as possible and

using the bed sheet re-use cards to reduce laundry.

Restaurants at the JW Marriott Kuwait, especially La Brasserie Restaurant and Terrace Grill Restaurant, celebrated the Earth Hour 2016 by hosting candle-lit dinners in a very special ambience. "We are honored to be part of such a global move-

ment and join millions of people around the world in turning off lights to show our support and lower our impact on the environment" said George Aoun, Cluster General Manager at Marriott Hotels in Kuwait. "This initiative also falls in line with our ongoing spirit to serve environmental and sustainability programs." Aoun added.



JUMEIRAH MESSILAH BEACH HOTEL AND SPA MARKS EARTH HOUR

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa dimmed the lights around the resort in support of Earth Hour, a global green initiative by the World Wildlife Fund. For the third consecutive year, the landmark resort

switched off non-essential lights and turned off the fountains to conserve energy. The hotel's recorded volume of power conserved during Earth Hour was 280 Kilowatt Hours. General Manager, Hakan Petek, said: "Earth

Hour is a remarkable initiative that symbolizes our proud commitment to environmental responsibility in the local community and around the globe. We have taken various measures designed to create a greener envi-

ronment and to raise awareness on the importance of this movement."

Colleagues celebrated the initiative by lighting candles in the shape of the globe and guests were encouraged to dim the lights in

their rooms. Since 2015, the luxury resort had been recognized by Green Globe for its dedication to sustainable management and operations, which represents the hotel's long-term pledge to sustainable practices.

AMC logo and program list including The Patriot, Suspect Zero, and Breaking Bad.

ANIMAL PLANET HD logo and program list including River Monsters, Mountain Monsters, and Dog Rescuers.

BBC FIRST logo and program list including Eastenders, New Tricks, and Silent Witness.

Bloomberg TELEVISION logo and program list including With All Due Respect, Charlie Rose, and First Up With Angie Lau.

CNBC logo and program list including Dialogue, News Update, and World InSight.

Discovery SCIENCE logo and program list including Strangest Weather On Earth, Invenit It Rich, and Stephen Hawking's Universe.

crime & investigation network logo and program list including The Haunting Of..., The Ghost Inside My Child, and My Haunted House.

Discovery CHANNEL HD logo and program list including Fast N' Loud, You Have Been Warned, and The Weapon Hunter.

Discovery SCIENCE logo and program list including California Investigator, Dr. G. Medical Examiner, and Fatal Encounters.

Discovery world logo and program list including Mao's Cold War, Aircrash Confidential, and Origins.

Discovery CHANNEL HD logo and program list including Fast N' Loud, You Have Been Warned, and The Weapon Hunter.



I GIVE IT A YEAR ON OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

Programme Start At 7:00am KSA and a list of comedy programs including Austin & Ally, Star vs The Forces Of Evil, and K.C. Undercover.



I, ROBOT ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

Programme Start At 08:00 and a list of action programs including Charlie Rose, Countdown, and On The Move.

Programme Start At 00:00 and a list of programs including Henry Hugglemonster, Calimero, and Loopdidoo.

Programme Start At 00:00 and a list of programs including Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry, The Grace Helbig Show, and Keeping Up With The Kardashians.

OSN FIRST HD logo and program list including Coronation Street, Big Star's Little Star, and Tracey Ullman's Show.

NAT GEO people HD logo and program list including Eat Street, David Rocco's Dolce India, and Tales From The Bush Larder.

HISTORY HD logo and program list including Aussie Pickers, Storage Wars: New York, and Duck Dynasty.

OSN FIRST HD COMEDY logo and program list including Community, Playing House, and The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore.

OSN FIRST HD COMEDY logo and program list including Community, Playing House, and The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore.

OSN SPORTS 1 HD logo and program list including Premier League Darts, Top 14 Highlights, and Golfing World.

OSN SPORTS 2 HD logo and program list including Premier League Darts, Top 14 Highlights, and Golfing World.

OSN FIRST HD logo and program list including I Hate My Teenage Daughter, The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon, and Playing House.

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION logo and program list including 22 Bullets, Deceived, Big Ass Spider!, and The Prince.

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY logo and program list including All The Wrong Reasons, I Give It A Year, and Jingle All The Way 2.

OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL logo and program list including Carrington, What Dreams May Come, Secret Window, and Half A Yellow Sun.

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY logo and program list including Community, Playing House, and The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore.

OSN SPORTS 1 HD logo and program list including Premier League Darts, Top 14 Highlights, and Golfing World.

OSN SPORTS 2 HD logo and program list including Premier League Darts, Top 14 Highlights, and Golfing World.

OSN SPORTS 3 HD logo and program list including NRL Full Time, Gillette World Sport, and NFL Premiership.

OSN SPORTS 3 HD logo and program list including NRL Full Time, Gillette World Sport, and NFL Premiership.



PARKLAND ON OSN MOVIES HD

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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (24/03/2016 TO 30/03/2016)

SHARQIA-1			
KUNGFU PANDA 3	1:00 PM	THE INVITATION	8:45 PM
KUNGFU PANDA 3	3:00 PM	THE INVITATION	10:45 PM
KUNGFU PANDA 3	5:00 PM	THE INVITATION	12:45 AM
KUNGFU PANDA 3	7:00 PM		
THE INVITATION	9:00 PM	FANAR-2	
THE INVITATION	11:00 PM	KUNGFU PANDA 3	1:00 PM
THE INVITATION	1:00 AM	KUNGFU PANDA 3	3:00 PM
		KUNGFU PANDA 3	5:00 PM
		KUNGFU PANDA 3	7:00 PM
		KUNGFU PANDA 3	9:00 PM
		LONDON HAS FALLEN	11:00 PM
		LONDON HAS FALLEN	1:00 AM
SHARQIA-2		FANAR-3	
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	11:45 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:00 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	2:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	3:00 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	5:45 PM	ROCKY HANDSOME- Hindi	6:00 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	8:45 PM	ROCKY HANDSOME- Hindi	9:00 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	11:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:05 AM
SHARQIA-3		MARINA-1	
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	1:45 PM	TRIPLE 9	11:45 AM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	4:45 PM	KUNGFU PANDA 3	2:00 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	7:45 PM	KUNGFU PANDA 3	4:00 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:45 PM	KUNGFU PANDA 3	6:00 PM
		KUNGFU PANDA 3	8:00 PM
		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:00 PM
		TRIPLE 9	1:00 AM
MUHALAB-1		MARINA-2	
THE INVITATION	12:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:15 PM
KUNGFU PANDA 3	2:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	3:15 PM
KUNGFU PANDA 3	4:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	6:15 PM
KUNGFU PANDA 3	6:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	9:15 PM
KUNGFU PANDA 3	8:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:15 AM
THE INVITATION	10:00 PM		
THE INVITATION	12:05 AM	MARINA-3	
MUHALAB-2		KUNGFU PANDA 3	12:00 PM
ZOOTOPIA	11:30 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	2:15 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	2:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	5:15 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	5:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	8:15 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	8:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	11:15 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	11:00 PM	AVENUES-1	
MUHALAB-3		KUNGFU PANDA 3	11:30 AM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	1:30 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	3:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	4:30 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	6:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	7:30 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	9:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:30 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:15 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	1:30 AM
FANAR-1			
THE INVITATION	12:45 PM		
THE INVITATION	2:45 PM		
THE INVITATION	4:45 PM		
THE INVITATION	6:45 PM		

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 hereby change my name to Karuna Vikas Kandragula.
 (C 5148)

I, Shaikh Asma Mohammed Rauf, holder of Indian Passport No. L0082285,
 Dadamiya Chawl 52115, Jaku Club Santacruz East Mumbai 55, Maharashtra, India, hereby change my name to Baig Asma Akbar. (C 5149)

I, Rehana holder of Indian Passport No. Z2518899 Katka Muslim Colony Banswara, Rajasthan, hereby change my name to Rehana Zainuddin Katka. (C 5150)
 23-3-2016

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MINIMUM QUALIFICATION: GRADUATE CANDIDATE SHOULD BE COMPUTER LITERATE & KNOW TYPING.

SOUND KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH AND ONE OR MORE INDIAN LANGUAGES IS ESSENTIAL. KNOWLEDGE OF ARABIC WOULD BE AN ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATION.

CANDIDATE SHOULD NOT BE MORE THAN 35 YEARS OLD.

STARTING MONTHLY SALARY WILL BE KD 375/-

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Candidate would be selected based on a written examination followed by an Interview

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Isha: 19:19



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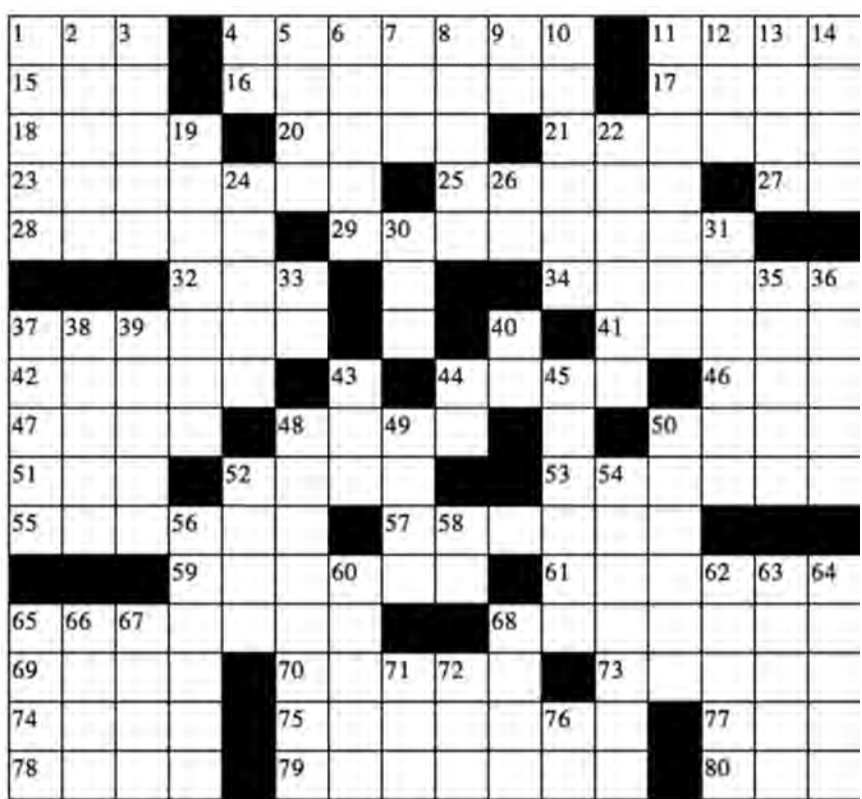
In case you are not travelling, your proper cancellation of bookings will help other passengers to use seats

Flight Schedule

Arrival Flights on Thursday 24/3/2016				Arrival Flights on Thursday 24/3/2016			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	415	Sohag	00:05	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
KLM	411	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:20	JZR	528	Asyut	00:05
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	BBC	044	Dhaka	00:10
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	FDB	072	Dubai	00:40
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:55
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	MSC	416	Sohag	01:00
THY	772	Istanbul	01:05	KLM	411	Amsterdam	01:35
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
DLH	635	Doha	01:35	SAI	442	Lahore	02:30
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:45	DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:35
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	02:45
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	UAE	854	Dubai	03:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	PGT	859	Istanbul	03:55
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
FDB	067	Dubai	03:05	FDB	068	Dubai	04:00
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	MSR	613	Cairo	04:10
QTR	1076	Doha	03:15	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:15
KKK	6507	Istanbul	03:20	KKK	6508	Istanbul	04:20
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:25	QTR	1077	Doha	05:00
LMU	510	Cairo	04:05	LMU	511	Cairo	05:05
JZR	503	Luxor	04:25	THY	765	Istanbul	05:15
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:40	JZR	560	Sohag	06:10
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	FDB	070	Dubai	06:30
QTR	8511	Doha	06:20	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
FDB	0561	Dubai	06:30	RJA	643	Amman	07:05
BAW	157	London	06:40	THY	771	Istanbul	07:05
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50	FDB	5062	Dubai	07:10
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	06:55	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
KAC	412	Manila/Bangkok	07:20	JZR	240	Amman	07:15
KAC	204	Lahore	07:40	QTR	8512	Doha	08:20
QTR	1086	Doha	07:40	KAC	537	Sohag	08:20
FDB	053	Dubai	07:45	FDB	054	Dubai	08:30
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50	KAC	1087	Doha	08:40
SVA	512	Riyadh	07:50	BAW	156	London	08:45
KAC	382	Delhi	08:00	SVA	513	Riyadh	08:50
KAC	206	Islamabad	08:25	JZR	534	Cairo	09:15
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	08:30	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:25
KAC	344	Chennai	08:30	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
KAC	352	Kochi	08:30	UAE	856	Dubai	09:55
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	KAC	101	London/New York	09:55
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:50	KAC	541	Cairo	09:55
KAC	362	Colombo	08:50	IRA	668	Mashhad	10:00
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	KAC	561	Amman	10:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	671	Dubai	10:05
KAC	284	Dhaka	09:10	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:25
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:20	KAC	501	Beirut	10:30
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25	JZR	778	Jeddah	10:30
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
OMA	641	Muscat	10:05	KAC	153	Istanbul	10:40
IRA	673	Ahwaz	10:10	KAC	677	Abu Dhabi/Muscat	10:50
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	QTR	1071	Doha	11:00
UAE	873	Dubai	11:05	KAC	165	Rome/Paris	11:00
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:15	OMA	642	Muscat	11:05
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	IRA	672	Ahwaz	11:10
NIA	151	Cairo	11:55	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	RBG	554	Alexandria	12:00
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:20
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30	UAE	874	Dubai	12:30
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
JZR	241	Amman	12:50	NIA	152	Cairo	12:55
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	KAC	785	Jeddah	13:00
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	FDB	076	Dubai	13:10
THY	766	Istanbul	13:45	MSC	402	Alexandria	13:30
KNE	460	Riyadh	13:50	JZR	786	Riyadh	13:45
FDB	057	Dubai	14:10	JZR	176	Dubai	13:45
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
AXB	393	Kozhikode	14:20	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:30	THY	767	Istanbul	14:45
KAC	415	Kuala Lumpur/Jakarta	23:40				

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

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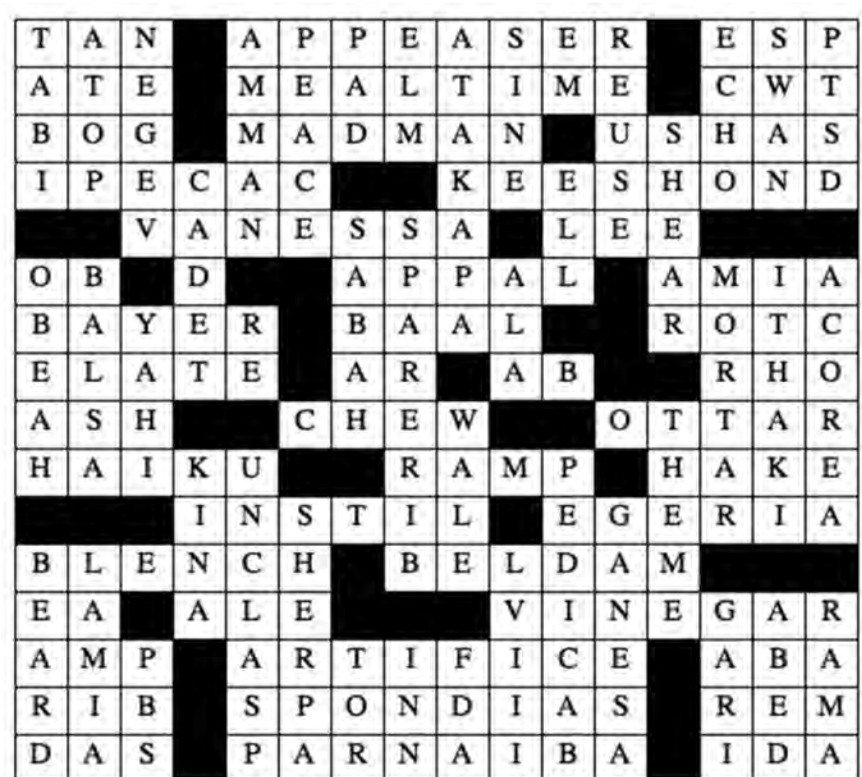
ACROSS

1. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
4. Coarse fabric used for bags or sacks.
11. City in southwestern Colombia in a rich agricultural area.
15. 1,000,000,000 periods per second.
16. A mountain peak in the Andes in Bolivia (20,870 feet high).
17. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
18. Evergreen tree of eastern Asia and Philippines having large leathery leaves and small green-white flowers in compact cymes.
20. An amino acid that is found in the central nervous system.
21. The sister of your father or mother.
23. Resembling or characteristic of or appropriate to an elegy.
25. A student who studies excessively.
27. A state in midwestern United States.
28. A rechargeable battery with a nickel cathode and a cadmium anode.
29. Trees or shrubs of the families Ebenaceae or Sapotaceae or Styracaceae or Symplocaceae.
32. A beverage made by steeping tea leaves in water.
34. West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
37. East Indian tree whose leaves are used for fodder.
41. Food mixtures either arranged on a plate or tossed and served with a moist dressing.
42. A track or mark left by something that has passed.
46. A defensive missile designed to shoot down incoming intercontinental ballistic missiles.
47. Informal terms for a meal.
51. Used of a single unit or thing.
53. Someone who cuts and delivers ice.
55. Some point in the air.
57. One of the evil spirits of traditional Jewish and Christian belief.
59. An employee who mixes and serves alcoholic drinks at a bar.
61. United States writer of poems and plays about racial conflict (born in 1934).
65. A festival featuring African-American culture.
69. A quantity of no importance.
70. Pasture grass of plains of South America and western North America.
73. A device (trade name Aqua-Lung) that lets divers breathe under water.
74. Any of various strong liquors distilled from the fermented sap of toddy palms or from fermented molasses.
75. Beautiful daughter of Minos and Pasiphae.
77. A rapid escape (as by criminals).
78. A beautiful and graceful girl.
79. Of or relating to Linnaeus or to the system of taxonomic classification that he proposed.
80. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. English psychologist who collaborated with I. A. Richards in designing Basic English (1889-1957).
2. (Mexican) Ground beef and chili peppers or chili powder often with tomatoes and kidney beans.
3. A member of the Nahuatl people who established an empire in Mexico that was overthrown by Cortes in 1519.
4. A heavy brittle diamagnetic trivalent metallic element (resembles arsenic and antimony chemically).
5. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
6. Used especially of fruits.
7. Light informal conversation for social occasions.
8. An iconic mental representation.
9. A radioactive transuranic metallic element.
10. Hard greenish-brown wood of the lignum vitae tree and other trees of the genus Guaiacum.
11. The basic unit of luminous intensity adopted under the System International d'Unites.
12. A legal document codifying the result of deliberations of a committee or society or legislative body.
13. Being three more than fifty.
14. The content of cognition.
19. Kauri pine.
22. Untie the lashing of.
24. Conforming to an ultimate standard of perfection or excellence.
26. A radioactive gaseous element formed by the disintegration of radium.
30. Any of various units of capacity.
31. A deep bow.
33. Before noon.
35. A coffee cake flavored with orange rind and raisins and almonds.
36. Someone whose business is advertising.
38. A native or inhabitant of Iran.
39. Fed beyond capacity or desire.
40. A Mid-Atlantic state.
43. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
44. A Loloish language.
45. (used of arms and legs) Bent outward with the joint away from the body.
48. Australian wild horse.
49. An informal term for a father.
50. Small often spiny insectivorous mammal of Madagascar.
52. Portuguese explorer who in 1488 was the first European to get round the Cape of Good Hope (thus establishing a sea route from the Atlantic to Asia) (1450-1500).
54. Make or become coarse or coarser.
56. A member of the Algonquian people of Maine and southern Quebec.
58. An associate degree in nursing.
60. Very large red gum tree.
62. Scale-like structure between the base of the wing and the halter of a two-winged fly.
63. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
64. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
66. Articles of the same kind or material.
67. The sixth month of the civil year.
68. A golf shot that curves to the right for a right-handed golfer.
71. Belonging to or on behalf of a specified person (especially yourself).
72. An adult male person (as opposed to a woman).
76. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Whatever the specifics of your individual circumstances, such as breaking in a new job or adding some new responsibilities, life can seem overwhelming. Determined to change old habits or to get rid of repeat problems, you may find yourself doubting. Doubts are normal, although this does not make the going easier. As you adapt to your new circumstances, know that you will be motivating yourself forward. Take small steps to help you get oriented to new schedules, projects or surroundings. You always show appreciation for the things people do for you; now it is time for you to appreciate you. Celebrate your life, as there will be new opportunities for good things to come.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may be interested in making money more through rational, intellectual processes than with brute, physical action. In other words the panic is not so great to pull in money now and you probably will not join in on the undercover bets. Your next best day for money is in about three days-until then, careful! Shift your attention to the home now. It is time to relax the on-going pressures of the business world. Let's face it, job responsibilities have demanded much of your time. There is mammoth pleasure in group activities that involve your friends and family this afternoon. You will find a stabilizing factor in your relationships this evening. There is plenty of time tonight to concentrate on affairs of the heart.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may find it difficult to get things off to a good start this morning. Careful, harsh criticism to yourself or others may not be warranted or appropriate. This can be a stressful day if you allow yourself to break concentration. You may find yourself working on the next moneymaking venture this afternoon. You put in a great deal of effort to secure finances. There is an open door of motivation present now that will help you in any endeavor you discover. The good life and all that is fine and luxurious, may be what you value just now. You could enjoy making your own way. Someone from your past comes back into your life. Make plans to visit later in the week if today is not convenient. Grab the chance to enjoy a walk down memory lane.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Work will progress steadily today. You are highly productive and may find that you need very little sleep. Think about this again-after a few years you may wish that you took time to recoup and to be with loved ones or friends for a beneficial balance in life. Take care, now to keep a good healthy balance of activities in your day. Money comes suddenly and unexpectedly as a result of some speculation or creative project. With a good day for money, you will find yourself most persuasive with others and eloquent in your communications. A co-worker or friend comes to you with a lucrative proposition. You could come up with new solutions. Put your money in the bank... It may be a while before the next windfall. Your current relationship is progressing.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

A need to be respected is an emotionally charged issue in your life. You develop a knack for organizing things and people-a sense of ambition and practicality takes hold. Work, achievement and ambition mean a lot to you. This respect and recognition you need so badly will begin to surface on its own; patience. This last part of march is the perfect time for a vacation or just taking some time off work. The energies are perfect to set sail for the destination of your desire. Perhaps you have never been to an area that is cold, or perhaps; tropical. Of course, a country retreat would be fun too. Also, if you need a loan for that trip, today and tomorrow are great times to obtain a loan. You may appear at ease and relaxed-you help sooth others.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Somehow, fun seems more important than work today and if possible, you should not schedule too many tasks. The feeling that you have done this before when it concerns your work may occur again and again. You are busy and that is good but there is a need for communications between friends or like-minded people later today. You simply have a real need for people. You feel genuine warmth and affection for all of your loved ones, especially the kids. If you cannot find a party, you might set one up for this evening-perhaps a jam session, so to speak. Young friends from the neighborhood may be the ones to make you laugh. This is a good time to think about beautifying your surroundings. This may mean a new coat of paint or a new sofa.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

There may be a great deal of panic with reference to your financial affairs now. An elevator going up and down may be easier to gauge than your financial affairs. Look at this situation as an opportunity to show your resourceful, creative, problem-solving abilities. Perhaps you could even pretend it is someone else that has the financial problems and you will be helping him or her come up with solutions. Sage advice is available from others, if needed-listen. There is a chance to understand those around you and to have a special time with someone you love. Communicating feelings becomes most important. You could become involved in helping some friends out this afternoon. A sense of harmony makes this a successful and rewarding day.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may feel left out or passed over just now. Your own requirements may appear to limit and separate you from where the rest of the gang is headed. This could mean you are new on the job or project-it would be normal to feel these feelings. It is not a reality to think you are limited. Stop and give your project more thought before you dive in blindly. You will be amazed at either some shortcut or some creative vent you will be able to offer. This afternoon you are in a good position to communicate concerning groups-perhaps educational or community affairs. Having and appreciating things of beauty and value plays a bigger role in your life now. This can also be a financially favorable period-provided you do not spend it all on fancy things.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

A challenging day is ahead so keep your cool and practice going with the flow. Times of irritability will pass relatively quickly. Obtaining and exchanging information takes on more emotional significance for you now. Let intuition guide you while dealing with a strong-minded individual. Time in contemplation or reflection is important-each day, through the end of this month. Being more involved with neighbors or siblings satisfies a deep emotional need this afternoon-it is great to be included! Your attention may be forced to become more organized and more conservative with all this activity today. You strive to have a better focus and may decide to make a list that will help guide and remind you of your goals.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

It is important to develop a team attitude so as not to alienate your co-workers today. Many will find you witty and eccentric and that will help you to move into discussions that others would fear. Co-workers value you for your independence and unique qualities. Communicating what you really mean is at a high and your timing should be perfect. People around you should find you most spontaneous and alive. A strong need for nurturing this evening is a bigger than usual element in your life. The need to care for others is expressed as you wait on your customers in the workplace today. You have needs and you sense the needs of others: fitting the two together makes life a little easier. This evening is a good time for a movie.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You can demonstrate great understanding and sensitivity to the needs of others just now and are in a good position to communicate in groups while working together. You may find that customers will be discussing all sorts of things besides business today-you may even have to work to keep them focused. Be wise and ignore the green monster of jealousy. If you have to busy your mind elsewhere, do so. This will pass and is fully unnecessary. A little shopping trip may be in order this afternoon. You will be prepared to adjust your wardrobe to a few simple pieces that can be turned into something quite classy for after-work dates or social affairs. You may be inclined to jump from work to a group social gathering several times this week.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Sometimes your emotions rule your actions and you may find yourself excited if anything negative violates your space or your creative expression. While this is understandable, your reactions may not be suitable. Find ways to relieve your frustration until you have had time to get a handle on how you want to proceed. Start making plans for the beginning of your next project and you will soon gain a positive focus on just what is needed to accomplish the best results. Your psychic senses are in focus today. Your creative side is active and you could come up with some wonderful ideas that will bring monetary rewards. Family members may want to help and if you take notes, the path will be clear and no misunderstandings will occur.

WORD SEARCH

Beatles Songs 2

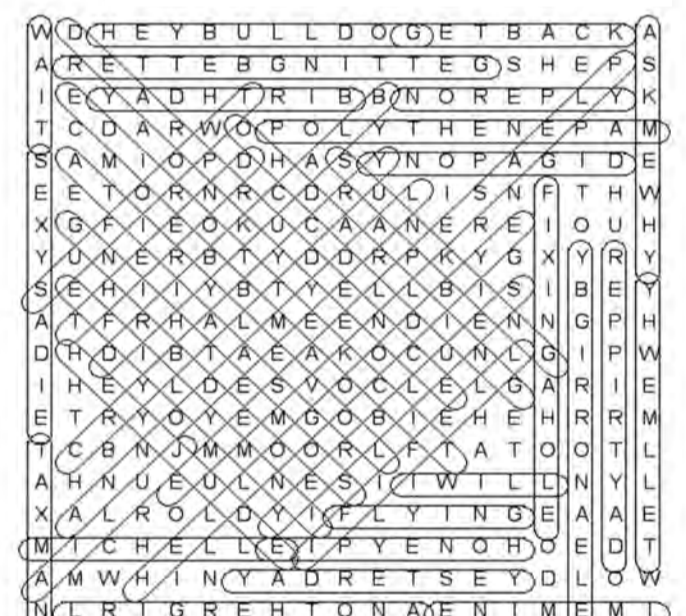
Find and circle all of the songs by The Beatles that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional Beatles song.



- | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| ALL MY LOVING | GIRL | I'M SO TIRED | PIGGIES |
| AND I LOVE HER | GLASS ONION | LET IT BE | RAIN |
| BECAUSE | GOLDEN SLUMBERS | LOVE ME DO | REVOLUTION |
| BLUE JAY WAY | GOOD NIGHT | LOVE YOU TO | ROCKY RACCOON |
| COME TOGETHER | HELP | MAGGIE MAE | SAVOY TRUFFLE |
| DIG IT | HELTER SKELTER | MARTHA MY DEAR | SHE LOVES YOU |
| DOCTOR ROBERT | HER MAJESTY | NOWHERE MAN | THE WORD |
| DRIVE MY CAR | I FEEL FINE | OLD BROWN SHOE | THIS BOY |
| FOR NO ONE | I NEED YOU | PAPERBACK WRITER | WHAT GOES ON |
| FOR YOU BLUE | I'M A LOSER | PENNY LANE | WILD HONEY PIE |

Yesterday Solution

Beatles Songs 1



- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| ANOTHER GIRL | FLYING | IN MY LIFE | SOMETHING |
| ASK ME WHY | GET BACK | JULIA | SUN KING |
| BIRTHDAY | GETTING BETTER | LADY MADONNA | TAXMAN |
| BLACKBIRD | HELLO GOODBYE | LOVELY RITA | TELL ME WHY |
| CRY BABY CRY | HEY BULLDOGG | MICHELLE | THE END |
| DAY TRIPPER | HEY JUDE | NO REPLY | TICKET TO RIDE |
| DEAR PRUDENCE | HONEY PIE | OH DARLING | TWO OF US |
| DIG A PONY | I ME MINE | PLEASE PLEASE ME | WAIT |
| ELEANOR RIGBY | I WILL | POLYTHEME PAM | YER BLUES |
| FIXING A HOLE | IF I FELL | SEXY SADIE | YESTERDAY |

The hidden song is: SHE CAME IN THROUGH THE BATHROOM WINDOW

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



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

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 Khalidiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khalidiya 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

Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antiga	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

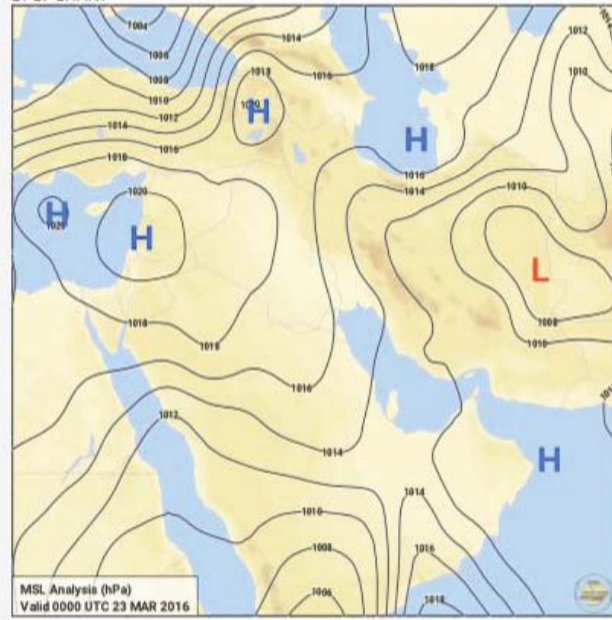
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 23/03/2016-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 28 °C

By Day : Sunny with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 35 km/h .
By Night : Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 32 km/h .

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Expected Weather				
Min Temp °C	15	16	17	20
Max Temp °C	30	32	31	33
Wind Direction	north westerly	south easterly	southerly to south easterly	south easterly
Wind Speed km/h	08 - 30	08 - 30	15 - 40	20 - 45

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	19		29	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	14		28	
ABDALLY	14		29	
BUBYAN	15		29	
JAHRRA	16		30	
FAILAKA ISLAND	17		28	
SALMIYAH	19		27	
AHMADI	19		25	
JAL ALIYAH	14		28	
QAROH ISLAND	20		24	
UMM AL-MARADEM	20		24	
NUWAISIB	16		27	
WAFRA	14		30	
MANAGISH	14		27	
SALMY	13		26	
MUTRIBA	14		30	

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	29
Min Temp (°C)	18
Max Rel Hum (%)	53
Min Rel Hum (%)	12
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	46 NW
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

	Sunrise	05:48
	Sunset	18:01

Prayer Times

Fajr	04:29
Sunrise	05:48
Zuhr	11:55
Asr	15:23
Sunset	18:01
Isha	19:18



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	2455050 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	2455050 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	
DrAdrian 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 Gupare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foaid 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	2455050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123

Worlds collide in 'Batman v Superman'

Zac Snyder's thundering and grim "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice" offers the kind of blunt, mano-a-mano faceoff usually reserved for Predators, Godzillas and presidential candidates. And just as has often been said of this election year, "Batman v Superman" takes a once almost charming tradition and plunges it into the gutter. Long gone are the telephone booths, corn fields or any other such tokens of innocence. And given the prevailing climate, Snyder may have judged the rock'em-sock'em moment wisely. Gentlemen, keep your fists up and your capes neatly tucked.

"Batman v Superman," as heavy and humorless as a Supreme Court decision, is an 18-wheeler of a movie lumbering through a fallen world. It hurtles not with the kinetic momentum of "Mad Max: Fury Road" nor the comparatively spry skip of a Marvel movie, but with an operatic grandeur it sometimes earns and often doesn't. This is "Paradise Lost" for superheroes. It twists and grinds two of the most classic comic heroes, wringing new, less altruistic emotions out of them until their dashing smiles turn to angry grimaces.

After a handsome, impressionistic montage of Batman's iconic childhood, the film picks up where Snyder's Superman reboot "Man of Steel" left off but from a different perspective. Bruce Wayne (Ben Affleck) is driving through the falling debris of Metropolis while Superman (Henry Cavill) careens carelessly above. Snyder has channeled the backlash over the high death-toll finale into Wayne, who bitterly watches Superman from the dust-filled air on the ground - a cheap evocation of Sept. 11 designed to add solemnity where there isn't any.

'The bat vigilante problem'

Months later, the two are still distrustfully circling each other. Snyder, working from a script by Chris Terrio ("Argo") and David Goyer ("Man of Steel"), delves into their opposite

natures: one a godlike power from another planet who favors primary colors, the other a well-equipped human prone to a darker palette. At a party thrown by Lex Luthor (the badly miscast Jesse Eisenberg), the billionaire-inventor who's secretly weaponizing Kryptonite, their two alter-egos are surprisingly passive aggressive. Kent, the reporter, queries Wayne about "the bat vigilante problem," while Wayne, citing the laudatory coverage of Superman in the Daily Planet, voices his distaste for "freaks who dress like clowns."

Both are combating a new environment for superheroes best articulated by none other than astrophysicist Neil DeGrasse Tyson, who, on TV, describes supermen as altering man's assumed supremacy in the universe like Copernicus' discoveries did. "We're criminals, Alfred," Batman, fresh from torturing a foe, tells his butler (Jeremy Irons, adding an icy flare to the character). "We've always been criminals."

Luthor's plot gradually brings the heroes into the same orbit, along with Wonder Woman (Gal Gadot). But it's the genuine rigor of Snyder's engagement with the psychology of Superman and Batman that keeps the film grounded and the rivalry plausible. Seeing the two warp toward villainy may be a trick, like "Seinfeld's" Jerry and Kramer switching apartments, but "Batman v Superman" is serious about contemplating the curious positions these all-powerful beings occupy in a world that has grown to resent their might.

Individual performance

It's in some ways an ideal film for Snyder, an exceptionally un-subtle filmmaker with the sensibility of a car crash. But as the director of "300," he knows his way around a ramming collision. And unlike Marvel films, DC Comic adaptations have, for better (Christopher Nolan's "Dark Knight" trilogy) and worse ("Man of Steel"), been works of distinct directors. Snyder's com-

mand is less sure when it comes to, well, normal life. "Batman v Superman" would rather spend its lengthy running time in the throes of myth than somewhere like the offices of the Daily Planet, where the eminently pert Amy Adams (Lois Lane) breezes in and out.

As for the much discussed casting of Affleck, Keaton and Bale have little to worry about. But Affleck is a worthy heir to the part, albeit with a chin that's a dead giveaway in the suit. If anything, there's only so much room for individual performance here; when armored, Affleck's already beefed-up Batman looks like a tank. There's an elemental fun in posting the winners of superhero square offs. Is the Flash faster than Superman? Is Aquaman or Wonder Woman the better tipper? Is everybody just kind of weirded out by the Silver Surfer?

Such debates are predicated on their inherent silliness, something the self-serious "Batman v Superman" ignores. Snyder's task is considerable in that he's marrying the realistic crime world of Batman and the more fantastical realm of Superman, plus providing the requisite cameos (including Jason Momoa's Aquaman and Ezra Miller's Flash) to tease movies to come. But what's there to fight about anyway? The most important battle was already decided: Batman, long our favorite, already has top billing. "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice," a Warner Bros. release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for "intense sequences of violence and action throughout, and some sensuality." Running time: 151 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four. — AP



This image released by Warner Bros Entertainment shows Ben Affleck as Batman, left, and Henry Cavill as Superman in a scene from, 'Batman v Superman: Dawn Of Justice.' — AP



This image released by Universal Pictures shows a scene from 'My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2'. — AP photos

'Big Fat Greek Wedding 2' is a big fat letdown

Ever been to a wedding where you don't know anyone very well? It's pretty deadly, no matter how good the food or the band might be. Everyone's laughing really hard at jokes you don't find funny, or even understand. On the other hand, if you know and love everyone, you'll have fun even if the champagne is flat and the canapes soggy. And that, dear moviegoer, is about as deep as we need to go in analyzing "My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2," an overstuffed, under-achieving sequel that took more than a decade to come to the screen. If you've been dying for a reunion with those aggressively lovable folks known as the Portokalos family, maybe you'll be happy. But if you didn't miss them that much or, maybe didn't even know them in the first place, stay away from this wedding. Send a gift and call it a day.

Same gags

The fact that the film took 14 years to arrive - Nia Vardalos is again the star and writer - is both a blessing and a curse. It may have stoked huge

interest - the original was a ginormous sleeper hit - but it also implies that we're about to see something worth the wait. Instead, the script is a tired pastiche of what seem like the same gags we heard the first time. Greek families are big and affectionate! Greek families get involved in each other's business! Greek families smother you with love! And so on.

We begin in snowy Chicago, where Toula (Vardalos) is still married to her Waspy hunk of a husband, Ian (John Corbett, amiable but peripheral), now the high school principal. Her father, Gus (Michael Constantine), is still very much the patriarch, a man who swears he's related to Alexander the Great and believes that every word in the English language comes from Greek, even "Facebook." The rest of the gang is back, too, including Lainie Kazan as Toula's mom, Maria, and the terrific Andrea Martin as Aunt Voula, who still likes to talk raunchy.

Spread her wings

But 14 years HAVE passed; Toula and Ian are

now parents of a high school senior, pretty Paris (Elena Kampouris), who's aching to spread her wings. Paris rolls her mascara-heavy eyes when her grandfather, on the way to school, instructs her to quickly find a Greek boy and marry him. Such grandfatherly advice is par for the course, but poor Paris really suffers when this theme is stretched to ridiculous proportions as the entire clan - cousins, aunts, uncles - shows up at the school's college fair, where they virtually accost the representative from Northwestern and threaten him with punishment should Paris not be admitted. Oh, families. So silly.

This is a recurring problem with the film, directed by Kirk Jones; what seemed quirky and funny in the original is exaggerated to un-funny extent here. It's as if Vardalos was trying to take things to a darker, more interesting place, but at every such turn, got scared and went for slapstick humor instead. And so we have an extended scene in which Gus gets stuck, naked, in his bathtub, and the entire family comes to extract him. But they have to cover his private parts with a towel! And that's about the extent of the joke!

History of cinema

But OK, given the title, there's got to be ... a wedding, right? Well, Toula's already married, and Paris is too young. And so, we have a plot device whereby Gus discovers that his original marriage license from Greece was never signed. Time for a wedding! More importantly, time for a wedding-dress shopping montage! Because that's what every movie in the history of cinema has done when a woman needs a wedding dress!

Of course, there are a few obstacles along the way. But we all know that we'll get our happy wedding, some way, somehow. And you'll surely smile at a few points - who's not a sucker for a big wedding, right? It's only when those credits roll that you'll likely find yourself thinking: 14 years, for this? "My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2," a Universal Studios release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America "for some suggestive material." Running time: 94 minutes. One and a half stars out of four. MPAA definition of PG-13: Parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13. — AP



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Nia Vardalos, left, and John Corbett in a scene from 'My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2'. — AP

Actress Rita Gam dies at age 88

Rita Gam, who had a lengthy acting career on film, television and stage, has died. Publicist Nancy Willen says the actress died in Los Angeles of respiratory failure. She was 88. Gam starred with Gregory Peck in 1954's "Night People" and 1971's "Shoot Out" and with Jack Palance in 1954's "Sign of the Pagan." Her television credits included "The Rockford Files." She was born in Pittsburgh in April 1927

and made her Broadway debut in 1946 before going on to a decades-long career in film and television. Gam was married to the late director Sidney Lumet from 1949 until 1955, and was a close friend of Grace Kelly. She is survived by a daughter and son from her marriage to publisher Thomas Guinzburg, and three grandchildren. — AP



In this Aug 25, 1953, file photo, actors Gregory Peck and Rita Gam stand together in West Berlin where 20th Century Fox took shots for 'Night People'. — AP

Rolling Stones promise 'historic' Cuba concert

The Rolling Stones took to Cuban media to promise a "historic" occasion when they give their first Havana concert this Friday in a communist country where rock 'n roll was long considered subversive. "Hola Cuba!" the elderly but still hugely popular British superstars call out in a short clip posted on the staterun cubainformacion.tv website late Tuesday. Speaking in Spanish, Stones' frontman Mick Jagger says: "We've performed in many incredible places, but this concert in Havana is going to be an historic event for us. We hope it will be for you too."

The concert, lasting about two and a quarter hours is due to start at 8:30 pm Friday (0030 GMT Saturday) in Havana's Ciudad Deportiva, a sporting complex where a vast crowd is expected to gather on the playing fields. The band is not charging for tickets in the impoverished country and state news

media estimate that as many as 500,000 to a million people, out of a total population of about 11 million, may come.

The Havana concert was a surprise addition to a Latin America tour that has seen the Rolling Stones play in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay. A huge stage is being erected in the sports park as well as 10 giant video screens, something never seen before in Cuba where technology mostly lags far behind. The concert comes immediately after US President Barack Obama's groundbreaking visit to Cuba, in which he said he had come to "bury" decades of US-Cuban animosity and to promote the isolated state's opening up to the world. — AFP



Rolling Stones

Chili Peppers to play Lollapalooza as new album emerges

Red Hot Chili Peppers will headline the Lollapalooza festival, it was announced yesterday, as the alternative rock greats complete work on their first album in five years. The July 28-31 festival in Chicago, which is marking its 25th anniversary, also said that Radiohead would perform, in the latest date for the acclaimed British arthouse rockers whose small arena tour sold out within minutes. Red Hot Chili Peppers frontman Anthony Kiedis last month told a radio station that the band had written "two dozen songs" and was "in the home stretch" of selecting and recording them for the new album.

Band members have said they were in the studio with longtime Radiohead collaborator Nigel

Godrich as well as Danger Mouse, a diverse producer with a background in hip-hop who worked on the latest albums by Adele and U2. The album, whose release date and title have not been revealed, will be the first since the Chili Peppers' 2011 "I'm With You," which brought in new guitarist Josh Klinghoffer. The Chili Peppers emerged in 1980s Los Angeles as they brought funk elements into punk rock.

Each of the band's albums has entered the top five on the US chart since "Blood Sugar Sex Magik," which came out in 1991 during a surge of interest for music outside the pop mainstream. Lollapalooza was launched that year by Jane's Addiction frontman Perry Farrell, who envisioned a

traveling festival to celebrate music and alternative culture. The festival declined as fans increasingly found it too commercialized, but was reborn in 2005 as an annual event in Chicago's Grant Park.

Lollapalooza has since expanded internationally, with editions in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Germany, with a Colombian version to debut in October. For the 25th anniversary, Lollapalooza is expanding to four days in Chicago, one day longer than usual. Other performers include LCD Soundsystem, the influential New York electronic act that is reuniting for April's Coachella festival in California, as well as rappers J Cole and Future. — AFP



This file photo shows the Red Hot Chili Peppers perform during Super Bowl 48 at MetLife stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, on February 2, 2014. — AFP

Phife Dawg of hip-hop legends A Tribe Called Quest dies

Phife Dawg, the high-pitched but street-smart rapper whose pioneering group A Tribe Called Quest brought a fresh artistic aesthetic to hip-hop, has died, a colleague said yesterday. He was 45. DJ Chuck Chillout, a prominent New York hip-hop DJ who has long played A Tribe Called Quest, announced Phife Dawg's death on Twitter but did not reveal further details. Phife Dawg, whose real name was Malik Taylor, has long spoken of health problems including his struggles with diabetes and had a kidney transplant in 2008.

Phife Dawg formed A Tribe Called Quest in the mid-1980s with Q-Tip, his classmate in the New York borough of Queens whose thoroughfare of Linden Boulevard would feature in the lyrics. The two rappers became one of hip-hop's defining pairs, with Phife Dawg, whose voice in early recordings was markedly high, generally playing the shrewd back-up man to the cerebral Q-Tip. Tensions were never far from the surface, with Phife Dawg gradually taking more vocals but Q-Tip becoming the face of A Tribe Called Quest and going on to a successful solo career, recently being named the first artistic director for hip-hop at the Kennedy Center in Washington.

A Tribe Called Quest at times a four- or three-man group and best known for the hit song "Can I Kick It?" helped chart a new direction for rap beyond straightforward rhyming and beats, with the group often described as pioneers of alternative hip-hop. The group's debut album, 1990's "People's

Instinctive Travels and the Paths of Rhythm," on which Phife Dawg appeared on only four tracks, offered quirky humor that brought an early following. The group's two follow-up albums, "The Low End Theory" and "Midnight Marauders" quickly became considered hip-hop classics for their incorporation of jazz which eschewed standard radio formulas.

"Midnight Marauders" also brought in a more political edge, with references to racial oppression and spiritual uplift. Phife Dawg, in an interview last month as A Tribe Called Quest prepared to reissue its albums, said that he never expected to become famous out of his neighborhood. He attributed the group's success with thinking big rather than pursuing individual tracks, unlike many rappers. "We wanted the longevity of Earth, Wind and Fire and Prince and people of that nature. We didn't want to be two-hit and three-hit wonders," he told Rolling Stone. Phife Dawg—who called himself the Five-Foot Assassin for his short physique—tried a solo career with a 2000 album, "Ventilation: Da LP," but met mixed reviews and eventually saw his career clouded by health issues. — AFP

This file photo shows Rapper Malik 'Phife Dawg' Taylor at the premiere of 'Beats, Rhymes & Life: The Travels of a Tribe Called Quest' during the 2011 Tribeca Film Festival at BMCC Tribeca PAC in New York. — AFP



In this Feb 9, 2016 photo, John Taylor from the band Duran Duran poses for a portrait. — AP

Bassist John Taylor spills Duran Duran secrets ahead of tour

John Taylor is an only child, but if he's ever experienced anything like a family road trip, it's been while on tour with Duran Duran. The British rockers are about to get that old family feeling again as they head out for a North American tour with dates scheduled through summer. The "Paper Gods Tour," which kicks off Friday, is split into two month long legs: the first covers the east coast from Canada's Niagara Falls to San Juan, Puerto Rico; the second launches July 6 in Nashville, Tennessee, and wraps in Glendale, Arizona.

Sitting in a sunny room at Warner Bros. Records recently, Taylor, 55, shared a few secrets about himself and the musical family he calls Duran. Touring now is not like it was in the 1980s: "When people say how's it like now compared to how it was, they're probably thinking of the '80s, the crazy '80s - particularly the early '80s, where the band sort of cruised at a very high altitude for a couple of years. Well, I wouldn't want to work like that again... I think when fame hits you - we were quite young, we'd only been in the business for like two years really when it started taking off. We weren't really - well I wasn't really ready for it. It's like being given your first car - and it's a Ferrari. So now we're in a Buick. It's a very sedate Buick, but it gets around into all the sightseeing trips. It's good."

Duran Duran reinvents itself with every album: "It's like a restyling exercise always. And I think that's the blessing and the curse of being in Duran, which is a band whose blueprint was really based on being modern. We weren't like the Stones, who are really rooted in R&B. We just had this thing, and it's essentially kind of a

good thing, because it allows us to change and morph."

- The band never knew what lead singer Simon LeBon was talking about in some of their early songs: "In the '80s, Simon had very specific way of writing lyrics - which was amazing - and half the time I had no idea what he was singing about. And none of us really did. But it didn't matter, because the pictures he was making were extraordinary."
- Taylor was disappointed the "Paper Gods" album didn't get a Grammy nod: "That was just something that was driving me through the second year of the making of 'Paper Gods'. I was like, 'This is why I'm doing it.' None of the rest of the band could care less, but it was driving me."
- He regrets that the Internet has made music so easy to "burn through": "All art, whether it's music or painting or cinema, it's got a shelf life. It doesn't matter how good you like it, you're going to burn through it. And there's something about delayed gratification. And certainly to me, some of my favorite music, it took me a long time to get hold of it and when I got it, it was precious. I knew every note, every beat of those songs. And now, music's almost too accessible. It's too easy to get a hold of... Now I almost want music to be harder to get. I want the experience to be a little bit harder. I need to appreciate it. I need to work for it. And that way I will appreciate it more." — AP

Leonardo DiCaprio says China can be 'climate change hero'

Leonardo DiCaprio praised China's work to combat climate change on a trip to Beijing on Sunday, and said he believes the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases could be "the hero of the environmental movement." The actor and environmentalist, who called for action to combat climate change during his Oscar acceptance speech last month, praised China's shift toward renewable forms of energy to lower carbon emissions. "As we all know, the United States and China are the two biggest contributors, and I think that China has made radical movements forward as far as alternative energy and ways to be sustainable," he said at a news conference.

"I really think that China can be the hero of the environmental movement, they can be the hero of the climate change movement," he said. "They have an opportunity to change the world and I have all the confidence in the

world that that is their intention." DiCaprio was in Beijing to promote "The Revenant," which won him his first Oscar, for best actor, at this year's ceremony. The movie was released in mainland China on Friday and has already earned 100 million yuan (\$15 million) at the Chinese box office, according to an announcement at Sunday's news conference.

DiCaprio, who has made several trips to China in the past, is one of China's most popular Hollywood actors, mainly because of his performance in "Titanic," one of his few films that have been shown in mainland Chinese cinemas. He is affectionately called Xiao Li, or Little Lee, by Chinese. China is the world's largest coal user and producer, but has also become a leading investor in renewable forms of energy, such as solar and wind power. — AP



American actor Leonardo DiCaprio pounds the casks of Japanese sake to celebrate the Japan premiere of his new movie 'The Revenant' in Tokyo, Japan, yesterday. — AP

Hilary Swank announces engagement to former tennis pro

Hilary Swank has announced she is engaged to former tennis pro Ruben Torres. The two-time Oscar winner on Tuesday announced her engagement on the social media site Instagram. Swank wrote that Torres proposed while on a hike, and she posted a photo the couple hugging and smiling.

Swank won best actress Academy Awards for "Boys Don't Cry" and "Million

Dollar Baby." The 41-year-old actress was previously married to actor Chad Lowe. The Colombian-born Torres attended the University of Southern California and played his last professional tennis match in 2008. — AP



In this file photo, actress Hilary Swank, left, and Ruben Torres attend the Vanity Fair Oscar Party in Beverly Hills, Calif. — AP

Dealing with loss helped Bonnie Raitt tackle songwriting

After back-to-back tours and albums, Bonnie Raitt said finally finding time to deal with the deaths of her father, mother and brother helped her break writer's block and craft songs for her latest album and tour. "I don't write often and easily... This particular time after a period of about 10 years when my family - my parents and my older brother - were all ill and passed away in a short period of time... I was pretty fried, and I took 2010 as a complete break from thinking about what I wanted to do next," she said. "I did some grief work with a support person and I just really felt all the things that had been pushed aside by all that loss and trauma. And I came out of it really grateful."

"Dig In Deep," released last month, features a number of personal songs Raitt co-wrote as well as her signature guitar. She also said she got a boost from her last album, 2012's "Slipstream," which won the Grammy for best Americana album. "I was rejuvenated by 'Slipstream'... and I co-wrote a song on that one with my guitarist... The words didn't go, so it forced me to write some songs that went with what my experience was, and that kind of got the wheels greased," she said. "I kind of wrote on assignment... After all that loss, to finally have the time and freedom and not have to be worrying about family members, I had more opportunity to write."

International dates

On the new album, 66-year-old Raitt co-wrote five of the 12 tracks, including upbeat album opener "Unintended Consequence of Love" and the political "The Comin' Round Is Going Through." The album also includes her versions of INXS' "Need You Tonight" and Los Lobos' "Shakin' Shakin' Shakes." She said the second verse of the piano ballad "The Ones We Couldn't Be," which she co-wrote, is "really about family members." "I know they were sorry they couldn't be what I needed and I was sorry I couldn't live up to the expectations," she said. "And at the time when the relationship's not working or you're under stress, you tend to put blame not necessarily where it's really accurate - it's all about them, if only they acted different - so the reckoning that happens years later is your realize you both just did the best you could."

The Rock and Roll Hall of Famer, whose hits include "I Can't Make You Love Me," "Something to Talk About" and "Love Sneakin' Up on You," said she's thrilled to be touring with the new songs. The "Bonnie Live in 2016" tour kicked off last week and will visit New York City, Oakland, Austin and Nashville, Tennessee. She will also play international dates in the summer. Raitt also said there was some anxiety when she began writing for her new album. "It made me nervous knowing I was going to be writing more of the songs and I was saying, 'Oh my God, I know so many people out there, they're gonna say, 'This one unfortunately is not as good,' she said. "I don't like to be compared (to myself), I just wish everybody would say, 'She's doing the best she can' - especially because it was more risk with my own tunes. But so far everyone's relating to them so I'm really smiling a lot these days."

Raitt also wants more people outside of her fan base to gravitate to the new music: "I hope people can relate to it, no matter what age they are." Though it's hard to tell, Raitt said she started to play guitar and write songs as a "hobby." She recalls getting her first guitar for Christmas and playing some much her fingers bleed. "I just played till I had calluses and my fingers bleed and I just learned every Joan Baez song I could learn, and I became the camp fire counselor that sang the songs at my camp," she said. "And I just thought music can change the world, and I still feel that way." — AP



In this March 7, 2016 photo, singer Bonnie Raitt poses for a portrait in New York to promote her new album, Dig In Deep. — AP



A cafe and market appear at the foot of abandoned cave homes in the Cavusin village in the Cappadocia region of Turkey.



Photo shows hot-air balloons floating over the Cappadocia region of Turkey, near the town of Goreme.



Tourists wander by mushroom-shaped fairy chimneys at Pasabag, in the historical Cappadocia region of Goreme, Turkey.

Up, up and away: Balloon over unique Cappadocia, Turkey

A few whooshing breaths of fire and up we went, a yellow orb rising in a sea of hot-air balloons like the sun brightening the morning sky. Others followed close behind, climbing over craggy canyons, pink mountains and mushroom-shaped rock formations called fairy chimneys. Suddenly, our basket, packed with tourists

operators and to share the experience with fewer people - something you will value as you try to shoot photos that don't include an errant hand or head.

Almost all offer a continental breakfast before the ride, transportation to the launch site and a "Drink toast" - usually sparkling cider - and certificate after landing. The

my credit card and pay at checkout instead of needing cash.

My hotel contracted with three balloon companies of different price levels. I went with the midrange after looking up the operators on TripAdvisor. I saved 50 euros by skipping the top-rated balloon company, but I still had an unbelievable experience taking in the alien-like landscape from the sky. The formations and hillsides served as year-round homes, and the caves also provided safety for persecuted Christians of the 10 to 13th centuries. Visitors can climb through some of the houses of worship, decorated inside with elaborate murals, at the famed Goreme Open Air Museum. The museum is walkable from Goreme's town center. The Christians also built extensive underground cities where they hid from attackers, sometimes for months at a time. Two are open to visitors.



angling for a perfect picture, bounced as it got bumped by an ascending balloon.

"Don't worry! It's OK, sometimes," our young pilot hollered out, smiling behind his Ray-Bans and turning up the flame on the balloon's burner to climb faster. We chuckled nervously, but it got our blood pumping in the thinning atmosphere. So did what we saw next.

We slowly spanned up a hillside and hundreds of balloons exploded into view, a colorful melange hovering above the valleys cut like lightning into the Turkish region of Cappadocia. But before the breathtaking views comes the preparation. Online travel searches are good ways to scope out top-rated balloon companies in a region renowned for the rides. You will pay more for reputable

region is a UNESCO World Heritage Site whose economy survives on tourists flocking to see the fairy chimneys, cave dwellings, vast underground cities and ancient Christian churches carved into the mountainsides. Because of its popularity, hundreds of hotels are poised to handle balloon bookings.

Top-rated balloon

The cave hotels, hundreds of which are packed onto a hillside in the small tourist town of Goreme, are a must-do. Pick one with windows to avoid feeling claustrophobic - my large, modern-but-rustic room with a terrace went for about 90 euros (about \$100 US). I booked my balloon ride through the hotel, which allowed me to put the ride on

Cave castles

At Kaymakli Underground City, you duck through narrow entryways into family rooms, living quarters, kitchens and even chambers where they buried their dead. They also brought down their livestock carved into the soft stone walls. Aboveground, you can hike through valleys with names like Love, Red and Rose; climb up cave castles, which are natural fortresses pitted with tunnels; and scramble through fairy chimneys at Pasabag.

The fairy chimneys have been created over eons by erosion. The soft, white rock at the bottom of the formation erodes more quickly than the sturdier rock at the top, leaving the mushroom shape. Soaring over this otherworldly landscape is the ride of a lifetime. Getting up at 4 am, wrapping up against the chill and cramming into a bucket next to other tourists is not for the unadventurous or those on a tight budget. But as you dip low into the valleys and fly high above the mountains, even those afraid of heights will want to look down.

If you go...

Balloon rides in Cappadocia, Turkey: The area is an hour by car from Kayseri airport and a bit closer to Nevsehir airport. Most visitors arrive the day before and stay overnight in a hotel because the balloons typically take off shortly after dawn. Multiple flights leave Istanbul daily for Kayseri and Nevsehir. — AP



Mushroom-shaped fairy chimneys line the landscape at Pasabag, in the historical Cappadocia region of Goreme, Turkey.



An early Christian church is carved into the hillside at Goreme Open Air Museum a popular tourist destination in Turkey.



Art Dubai closes its most diverse and exceptional edition to date

Art Dubai's tenth edition closed on Saturday March 19 with participating galleries and artists reporting one of the most successful years of the fair to date. Welcoming international and regional artists, collectors, private museums, institutions and curators from over 90 countries worldwide, Art Dubai reaffirmed its position as the world's most global fair.

Held under the patronage of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, who toured the fair during its opening night, the fair preview was inaugurated by Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, accompanied by, among others, Sheikh Nahayan bin Mubarak Al-Nahyan, UAE Minister of Culture, Youth and Community Development; Abdul Rahman bin Mohammed Al-Owais, UAE Minister of Health and Chair of Dubai Culture; Hilal Al-Marri, Director General of Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing; Saeed Al-Nabouda, Dubai Culture and Arts Authority Acting Director General; Mattar Al-Tayer, Chairman of Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority (RTA); Essa Kazim, Governor of Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC). Art Dubai is a joint venture between the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) and Middle East Fairs Ltd.

The popular Art Dubai ladies preview was opened by the children of Sheikh Manal Bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, President of UAE Gender Balance Council, President of Dubai Women Establishment and wife of Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs.

Art Dubai 2016 was held in partnership with The Abraaj Group, who celebrated their inaugural Abraaj Week alongside the fair, and was sponsored by Julius Baer and Piaget. The fair took place at its home, Madinat Jumeirah. Maserati was the Automotive Partner of Art Dubai 2016. The Dubai Culture and Arts Authority is a strategic partner of Art Dubai and, along with Dubai Design District (d3), supports the fair's year-round education program.

Defying apparent market trends, Art Dubai saw solid sales from the VIP preview through to the last day, with around a quarter of galleries selling out, and the vast majority reporting healthy interest and acquisitions from a diverse collector base. Sales ranged from emerging artists under \$10,000 through to works well beyond the \$300,000 mark by artists such as Ai Wei Wei, Faiq Hassan, Yayoi Kusama, Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, Marwan, Nasreen Mohammed, Jaume Plensa, among others.

Antonia Carver, Art Dubai's Director, said: "With our tenth edition, we're looking forwards not back, embracing the potential of the UAE and the region's arts scenes. The exceptional feedback received from collectors, galleries, artists, museums and curators and the ever-increasing attendance figures from both local and international audiences - from ever more diverse locations - illustrate the maturity of the fair and the crucial role it plays in both the wider region and

the art world calendar."

Among its record number of visitors, Art Dubai 2016 hosted 95 international museums and institutions, including Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museum of Modern Art, the Solomon R Guggenheim, the Metropolitan Museum, New York; London's British Museum, V&A, Tate; among many others. Many museums brought groups of curators and patrons to the fair, taking advantage of Art Dubai's extensive, Gulf-wide VIP programs.

A group of UK institutions visited the fair for the first time as a result of Art Dubai's ongoing partnership with the British Council, including the Whitworth, Ikon Gallery, Ashmolean Museum, Glasgow Sculpture Studios, National Galleries of Scotland and Iniva, among others.

Galleries: CONTEMPORARY, modern and marker Art Dubai Contemporary's two halls were dominated by large-scale installations and stand-out works by internationally acclaimed artists, presented alongside works by the most exciting emerging artists from the region. Art Dubai 2016 boasted the highest participation to date of galleries from the UAE, illustrating the growing strength of the local scene. Indian contemporary art was also well represented, with eight of the leading galleries from Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata taking part; Dubai's role as an international hub for collectors, artists and galleries from South Asia is growing fast.

Across its wider programming, Art Dubai presented an extremely strong representation of female artists, particularly from the Middle East and South Asia region, with over 45% of the artists participating in the fair being women.

Art Dubai Modern, the only exhibition of its kind worldwide, focusing on the masters of the Middle East, Africa and South Asia, sponsored by Mashreq Private Banking for the third consecutive year, attracted particularly significant interest from international museum representatives. Comprised of solo and two-person exhibitions of museum-quality works from 1903 to the 1980s, the sector illustrated the development and artistic history of the region and the fast-growing market demand for these historical works.

Marker, Art Dubai's thematic gallery program, was curated this year by artist and writer Ringo Bunoan and featured works by emerging artists from artist-run spaces in Manila, the Philippines. Throughout the week, in this highly popular and dynamic section of the fair, artists established new connections and interest in their work, with sales of pieces by emerging and established artists from the Philippines reasserting the fair as a site of discovery.

The Abraaj Group Art Prize

Now in its eighth year, the Abraaj Group Art Prize is the most significant annual artists' prize in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia, and part of the Abraaj Group's dedicated philanthropic support for both emerging and mid-career artists. The 2016 Abraaj Group Art Prize exhibition, curated by Nav Haq, was particularly well-received; it

included a major new film commission awarded to Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme, plus works by shortlisted artists Dina Danish, Mahmoud Khaled and Basir Mahmood.

Art Dubai projects & education

Art Dubai's not-for-profit program, the largest program of its kind in the world, included residencies, commissions, radio and film programs, plus new site-specific commissions by eight rising artists from the region. Curator of Art Dubai Projects 2016 Yasmina Reggad presented ambitious interventions throughout the fair, such as transforming the lower ground floor of Madinat Jumeirah into a Sleep Therapy Clinic by Emirati artist/musician Jumairy, which visitors could check into throughout the opening hours of the fair. Jumairy was one of a group of artists that has spent the past two months in-residence at Tashkeel through A.I.R (Artist in Residence) Dubai, a collaboration between Art Dubai, Dubai Culture and Arts Authority, Tashkeel and Delfina Foundation.

Fulfilling its aim to embrace the eclectic fabric and economy of an art fair, the Projects program this year enabled visitors to become unknowing participants in a performance by Lydia Ourahmane, which used the hotel's Wi-Fi network as a platform for a new video commission, realized on visitors' own mobile phones. Additional highlights included performances by Doa Aly and Areej Kaoud that took place throughout the grounds of the fair, plus major new installations by Shreshtha Rit Premnath and Massinissa Selmani.

The educational role the fair plays in the region also continues to grow: a revamped volunteers program saw 123 young UAE-based enthusiasts involved in all aspects of the fair, while an expanded student program welcomed over 1000 young people to the fair.

The Sheikh Manal Little Artists Program, a partnership between Art Dubai and The Cultural Office of Sheikh Manal bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, featured artist Polly Brannan leading theatrical workshops for children aged 5-17, plus a range of discovery tours for all ages. The program also included visits to schools in the week before Art Dubai, plus the commissioning of a limited edition poster by Khalid Mezzaina, among other additional activities. 2016 saw a record 510 children participate in the program.

The global art forum

The Global Art Forum, now established as the leading annual arts conference in Asia, attracted capacity audiences throughout its three-day run at Art Dubai with record attendance to date. Supported by Dubai Culture and Arts Authority and Dubai Design District (d3), the Forum continues to consolidate its reputation as one of the world's most innovative and eclectic talks programs and, this year, under the title 'The Future Was', hosted more than 50 speakers from across art, science, technology and architecture.



Yankari Game Reserve is one of Nigeria's largest and most famous protected areas, with a wide variety of animals and birds as well as natural warm springs and archaeological sites. — AFP photos

Nigeria bets on elephants and warm springs to lure tourists



A luxury safari is probably not the first thing that comes to mind when potential tourists think of Nigeria but that's exactly what Yankari Game Reserve is hoping to change. In Africa's largest economy, suffering from the collapse in global oil prices, tourism is being touted as a panacea to slow growth and a depreciating naira. Leading the charge is the governor of northeast Bauchi State, an area targeted by Boko Haram insurgents, which is also home to Yankari—one of the last wildlife reserves in Nigeria with elephants, lions and buffalo.

"It is now too expensive to go to London, Dubai and America. Come and holiday in Yankari!" Governor Mohammed Abdullahi Abubakar, the self-described "chief marketing officer" of the state, said on Twitter series of upbeat posts coaxing Nigerians to visit. "We need to diversify the state revenue base and tourism is a low hanging fruit," Abubakar told AFP. "Bauchi is Africa's best kept secret. With due respect to other tourist destinations, I see Yankari as a fragment of Jannah—or Eden—beautifully designed by God to be tendered by man."

With some 300 elephants, countless birds and crystal-clear warm springs 31 degrees Celsius (87.8 Fahrenheit) all year round, Yankari should be raking in cash. Wildlife watching constitutes 80 per cent of trips to Africa, where visits by international tourists generate \$36 billion, according to a October 2015 report published by the African Development Bank Group. Yet years of mismanagement by previous administrations have left the reserve in desperate need of an upgrade and visitors.

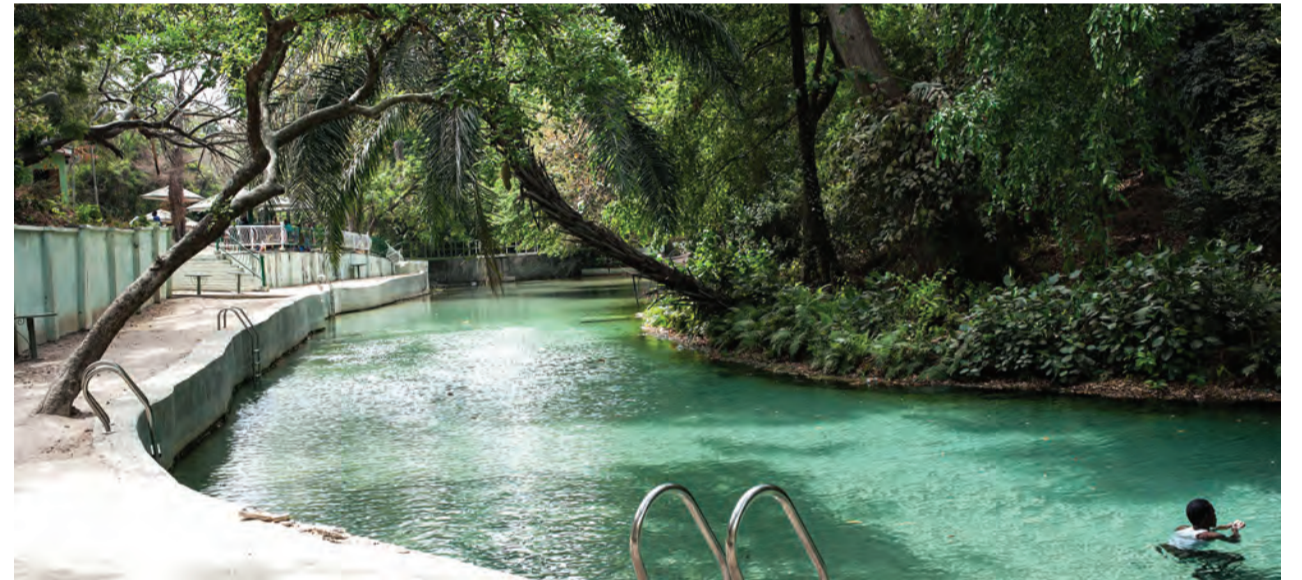
Archaeological mystery

A poor road network limiting animal sightings and sputtering electricity in the main camp are the most basic of Yankari's problems. But the sole administrator of the reserve says he can already see progress in Yankari since Abubakar, who worked at Yankari as a legal advisor in the 1980s, came into power last year. "The governor knows that Yankari, if done right, can make a lot of revenue," Engineer Habu Mamman said over a dinner of chicken and rice on a patio overlooking the park, empty except for the occasional curious warthog. "Most people in previous administrations were much more interested in lining their pockets. But he's looking for a way to seriously put Yankari on the world map," he added.

There is no denying the draw of the warm springs, which are shaded by leafy trees and perfect for swimming, or the archaeological mystery of over 50 human-sized caves carved out of sandstone in a swampy forest patrolled by baboons. The animals, however, prove elusive in Yankari, where uncontrolled poachers and herdsmen have made the game shy. Taking one of the reserve's handful of safari vehicles out for a spin, guide Haruna

continent.

But it wasn't so long ago that Yankari was on the world map. Phil Marshall worked at the park for just under a decade from 1972, when 20,000 visitors—mostly expatriates—visited the reserve yearly. Along with the expats there were also the "overlanders", groups of 20-something men and women travelling from London to Cape Town realizing their dream of following in David Livingstone's

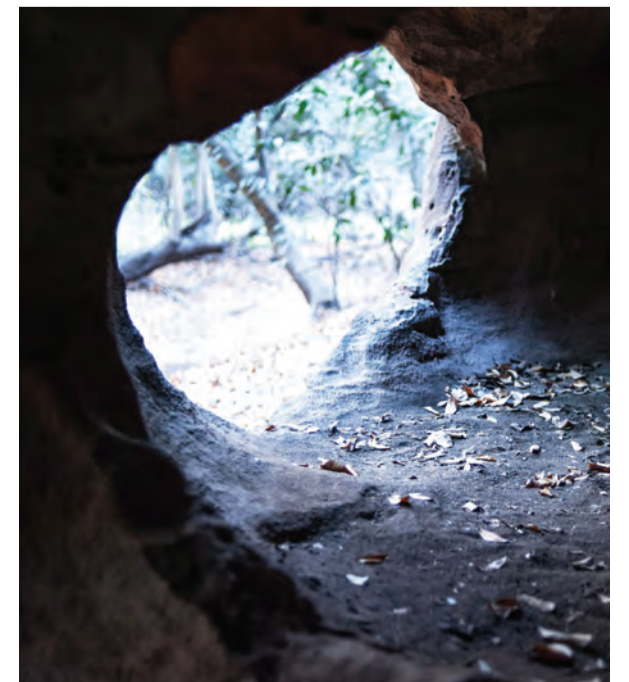


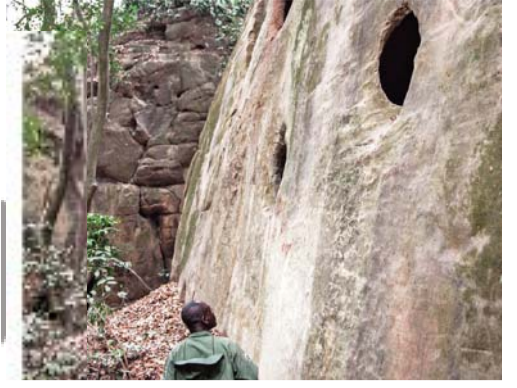
Dandango headed into the dry bush, pointing out a herd of waterbuck by the river and white-whiskered tanzania monkeys sitting in the scrub. But when asked to see the elephants and lions, Dandango gave a cryptic answer: "Safari is a game of luck, safari is a game of chance."

'Totally different world'

In some ways, Yankari is subject to forces beyond its control. The Boko Haram insurgency, which has raged throughout northeast Nigeria since 2009, leaving at least 17,000 dead, is not a direct threat to the park. Nevertheless it has frightened visitors from making the journey north. The Ebola outbreak in west Africa in recent years also resulted in cancelled trips across the whole

footsteps in the twilight of the colonial empire. "There were no serious security problems about driving across the Sahara desert, no terrorism, and the road was much travelled," 66-year-old Marshall said. "You could drive all the way across, hear about Yankari's Wikki warm springs, before heading to Cameroon, Bangui in the Central African Republic was always on the route, then across to East Africa and down." After a pause, Marshall reflected that back then, it was a "totally different world."—AFP





Bjorn, 6, poses for pictures with Owl butterflies during a photocall at the Natural History Museum in central London yesterday. The photocall was to promote the Museum's 'Sensational Butterflies' exhibition which runs until September 11. — AFP

Parachute jackets and bandage skirts: Fashion in communist Poland



An elegant former hotel employee remembers dyeing gauze bandages and turning them into ruffled skirts to remain fashionable despite chronic shortages in communist-era Poland. "It was a major challenge; to make something that was impossible to get your hands on otherwise," recalled Iwona Koczwanska who groaned when asked her age. "We had to be creative. I remember once sewing myself a lovely summer dress out of a duvet cover," she told AFP at the "FASHIONable in Communist Poland" exhibition at the National Museum in Krakow.

Dressed in a leopard-print hat, beige turtleneck and long brown skirt with tassels, Koczwanska reminisced while watching old fashion reels projected onto a gallery wall. "Look how drab the women are. That's how it was. Mostly drab women. All alike, in brown, navy blue, grey, grey, grey," she said of footage that showed women queuing before empty shelves at a shop. Inventiveness was a must for looking good in Poland's communist decades from 1944 to 1989 faced with the limitations of a planned economy.

"This exhibition is largely about a time when to participate in fashion, cultural capital mattered more than financial capital," said Malgorzata Mozdzynska-Nawotka, one of the curators who had been mulling the idea for this exhibit for years. Fashion under communism reflected the impact of the system on social reality-showing the resourcefulness of Poles now on display in Krakow.

Recycled fashion

In the immediate post-World War II period, with the economy in ruins and privation everywhere, it was the reign of recycled fashion. Examples in the exhibition include a Girl Scout jacket made out of a parachute and a blouse sewn out of one of the silk maps carried by World War II airmen for when they were shot down over enemy territory. By the time Christian Dior's cinched, full-skirted New Look debuted in the West in 1947, the situation in Soviet-con-

trolled Poland had worsened.

"The Stalinist period was a period of repression, a period when communist ideology was heavily enforced, when there was censorship and no shows of sympathy with the West were allowed," co-curator Joanna Regina Kowalska said. The regime highlighted the values of a worker or peasant, stressing that daily wear should be comfortable and practical. Aspiring to a higher echelon was a no-no.

Dior's "New Look" still managed to seep into Polish fashion, though toned down. The exaggerated lines were softened in the copy-cat items because Poles had little access to the right materials or necessary tools to give a skirt its proper form.

Coat gangs

The confrontation between the desired and the feasible under communism could be seen in the popular mid-1960s raincoat made of a polyamide fabric called ortalion. "The desire was for an Italian ortalion coat, which hung nicely and didn't rustle. But the available alternative was a Polish ortalion coat, which was a lot stiffer and gave off a very distinctive sound," said



Mozdzynska-Nawotka.

"The Western originals were so sought after that there were these gangs in Poland who would switch out the originals for coats of domestic production at restaurants." This scam even inspired the 1968 short comedy "Ortalionowy Dziadek" or "Ortalion Grandpa" about a charming old man who supplements his pension by swapping out coats only to get caught by the intrepid militia. A popular accessory at the time was the mesh bag, nicknamed Anuzka for the phrase in Polish that means "What if I buy something?"

'Whatever they had, you bought'

"Even an elegantly dressed woman could fit a mesh bag in her purse, so if a store happened to get merchandise that day, you could queue up and you were ready," said Kowalska. "Which is typical of the communist era. You didn't go out to buy anything in particular, you just went to the stores. And whatever they had, you bought it." Store shelves were literally bare by the 1980s, when Poland was in deep political, social and economic crisis and a pair of Western jeans

could cost an entire month's salary.

This brought back the kind of DIY creativity that saw Poles dye cotton diapers and turn them into colourful skirts or make tennis wristbands out of sock cuffs. Fashion under communism was also an outlet for blowing off steam, said Kazimierz Bujak, a 66-year-old university lecturer visiting the exhibition, which moves to the National Museum in Wroclaw in May. "At the very beginning, in the 1950s and 60s, the regime tried to gain some control over how people dressed, but then fashion became a kind of safety valve," he told AFP.

It was also a status symbol, whereas today he says what matters more is the car you drive or the house you own. "Soon it'll be like it is in the US," said Bujak. "Who do you find at stores for millionaires on Fifth Avenue but a guy in a stretched out T-shirt, distressed jeans and tattered sneakers, right?" "He has so much money he no longer needs to show he's better than others... we're heading in that direction." — AFP



Photos show the exhibition 'FASHIONable in Communist Poland' which presents Polish fashion in the time of communism. — AFP photos